

VP FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS

Christina Brakken-Thal

Monday, September 14, 2009

Madame President and Esteemed Colleagues of the Assembly,

The Board of Regents has met several times since last May, June 11th-12th, June 17th, June 24th, July 8th, and September 9-10th. The following is a summary of the important points that I found to be relevant to graduate and professional students.

The June meeting largely focused on setting the budget for 2009-2010. For this coming fiscal year, the university has seen a significant decrease in funds from both the state funding and payouts from the endowment forcing the regents to both raise money in tuition increases and cuts in funding. Although there was some discussion on trying to mitigate the increases of tuition and fees for graduate and professional students those efforts were unsuccessful leading to approximately a 7.5% increase for most programs. The regents also requested a report on how graduate and professional student programs are funded. This report was presented at the September meeting.

The July meeting was a short meeting that primarily focused on setting the agenda for this coming year. The student representatives advocated in all the committee meetings to get issues of graduate and professional students on the docket materials. The Educational Policy and Planning Committee is reserving the entire May meeting to focus on Graduate and Professional Student Education.

The Board of Regents did not meet in August.

The Board of Regents met September 9-10th. There were not resolutions that were voted on by the entire board that directly affects graduate and professional students this month.

The Faculty, Staff and Student Affairs Committee had an update on H1N1 preparedness for the coming school year. The major messages they are trying to communicate to students is: if you have flu like symptoms do NOT come to class. Professors have also been told that they cannot require doctor's notes for students who miss class for flu like symptoms because doctors offices do not want to see students with uncomplicated flu symptoms.

The Board of Regents had a work session: Graduate and Professional Student Education: Quality, Tuition, & Financial Aid. This report can be downloaded at <http://www1.umn.edu/regents/docket/2009/september/index.html> by clicking on Board of Regents Work Session link. The presentation very closely followed the report. The report primarily outlines where the funding is coming from: grants, work study, or loans for various Graduate and Professional Programs. It also discusses if the tuition charged covers the full operating costs of the program. The main point the report tried to make was funding comes from many different sources for different graduate and professional programs and the approach to determining the tuition rates and financial aid packages varies greatly between different



programs. I gave a short response to the report to the board reminding them that they also need to look at the long term consequences of the amounts of debt students are taking on to fund their educations.

I am also currently serving on the search committee for the new Dean of the Graduate School. We are hoping to make public 3 finalists on Friday, September 18th. There will be public interviews of the finalists the week of September 21st. I will send out an e-mail when the dates and times of the interviews are finalized. I encourage students to attend or watch the interviews and send me your opinions to brakken-thal@cems.umn.edu.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The October Board of Regents meeting is October 8-9th.

If you have any questions, concerns, or comments please contact me.

Sincerely,

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