

**MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATION
OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND SERVICE FACULTY MEET and CONFER Via Zoom NOTES
Thursday, January 14, 2021 | 1:15-2:45 p.m.**

PRESENT: David Jones, Katie Hodgden, Melissa Iverson, Marie Slotemaker, Mark Johnson, Debra Schulz, Shirley Murray, Matt Cecil, Liz Steinborn-Gourley, Jennifer Velstos, Richard Davenport, Matt Cecil, Amanda Weister, Steve Barrett, Henry Morris, Carolyn Nelson, Lynn Akey, Brian Martensen, Rick Straka, Oscar Gonzalez

Meeting Chair – Mandy Weister, MSUAASF President

I. Information Items

- A. Review of Notes**-No concerns or items to be re-addressed.
- B. MSUAASF President's Report- M. Weister:**

A dichotomy is a division or contrast between two things that are; **or are represented** as being opposed or entirely different. As I reflect not only on our personal & professional states, but also our community, national, and societal state during the month of *January* in the year 2021, I cannot help but be struck by the nuances of this noun for the New Year: dichotomy.

As a *society* living through this moment in history, we face both HOPE & DESPAIR as we navigate our health, scientific possibility & limitations, and the divisive & dangerous state of our political arenas.

As *humans* living through this season of the year, we face both BREAK & BREAKDOWN as we navigate holidays, new beginnings, and heightened concerns for mental health & isolation.

As an institution of higher education living through a global pandemic, we face both TRADITION & CHANGE as we navigate what it means to hold on to parts that define us and let others go in hopes of remaining nimble in the storm; as we navigate starting semester #2 in an untraditional way; and as we find ourselves in the middle of a search for our next Presidential leader that will define and shape or next decades.

But the dichotomy of the sliding scale between black and white is not filled with shades of grey, but rather, is a kaleidoscope of every shade and design possible. In my office I have magnet that hangs on my desk. It was a gift from a past supervisor and I keep its message near because to me it represents everything an accessible, affordable education can mean. It reminds me the power I have as an educator and how a single interaction or intervention with a student can change everything. It reads: "Life is like an ever-shifting kaleidoscope: a slight change and all patterns alter." - quote by Sharon Salzberg.

I am energized to be part of a team, ASF members and colleagues at MNSU, who keep working towards those slight changes that can positively alter patterns for student success despite the dichotomy & uncertainty we find ourselves in during this era. Allow me to share a few examples of these slight – and not so slight – alterations we have been up to since our last gathering.

- Global Education and the Kearney Center for International Student Services have committed to financially support 22 NEW on-campus international student employment positions across eight departments in Spring of 2021 to aid in their recruitment and retention. The Memorial Library, Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship, University Security, Center for Academic Success, Mathematics & Statistics, the Centennial Student Union, University Admissions, and the Center for Education Abroad & Away have created new positions to assist in the retention of our international students and provide employment opportunities and experiences to help build their skills and resumes.
- In other efforts to support our international student populations the Career Development Center has gathered a listing of employers for international graduates to help identify employers who have been

willing to hire and/or sponsor international grads. Finding willing employers to sponsor CPT and OPT candidates has been a past challenge so this compiled list is a promising start for job seekers.

- The Career Development Center has also upgraded their Graduate Follow-Up Stats found on their website by use of a display that is much more user friendly and includes employment rate, related employment rate, continuing education and institution, employers and top employer, job titles, and geographic location. Previously, static PDFs received from the System Office had been utilized. Thanks to a partnership with Jerry Oman in IT, users can now search up to 5 years of data which allows both current students and alumni to access relevant career information for their own decision-making.
- Student Events Team hosted Mavericks in the Kitchen – 3 virtual cooking shows in collaboration with Sodexo chefs; hosted a Make-N-Take craft virtual night for the Thanksgiving Holiday as well as in-person reindeer event on the UDC lawn in addition to a Mavericks Got Talent Virtual Event.
- Education Learning Community students packed 418 goodie bags to give to students at Franklin Elementary. The project was led by Jean Clarke, Director of Learning Communities.
- The Centennial Student Union House of Serendipity Music Series with Mae Simpson had over 1200 views and was filmed live in Ostrander with pre-recorded interviews.
- On ASF side:
 - ASF Negotiators began meetings in January with regular meetings being scheduled, this includes Oscar Gonzalez and Tracy Stokes-Hernandez as our local Negotiator and Alternate Negotiator.
 - A dedicated committee from all of the ASF Negotiators are going through the contract from a racial equity lens, we thank Oscar Gonzalez from our campus for serving in this capacity.
 - **ASF actively partners in supporting University needs with the testifying of our Statewide President, Tracy Rahim, at the Senate Higher Ed Finance & Policy Committee.** Tracy is **among** other faculty units and student associations as 1 of 9 total presentations. She will be focusing on ASF 2021 Legislative Priorities including the biennial budget request and the capital projects request.

Thank you to every ASF member who I could not name here – who continue to make changes, both *slight and significant*, for the benefit of our students even while living in unsettled dichotomies. And thank you to those in this room for the support and belief in the power our roles have in doing so.

Thank you and I welcome any questions.

C. MSU President's Report- R. Davenport:

- Let me just start out by welcoming everyone back this semester, we have all been through a great trial this last semester and all a lot more optimistic moving forward. We are not there yet; still need to execute caution, help students navigate their way. Thank you all for helping the institution moving along as smoothly as we can considering the circumstances. It will be wonderful when we can all get back in person to interact in a safe manner. Interesting to hear what Dr. Jones has to say in his report and a lot of unanswered questions in the COVID discussion. Based on an early morning meeting today, based on working with the City, Mankato itself is in really good shape. One of the concerns with the vaccines and process—no one knows exactly how it will roll out regarding quantity, etc. Consistently heard twin cities area is really struggling, it is much more complex and working on communication on what that will look like regarding who will get the vaccine. I am encouraged with the conversations we are having with Mankato and wanting to get back to more in person.
- Budget situation---we are asking as a system for about a \$120 million increase —Rick will go through the break down. Good news is that the Armstrong Hall bonding bill that we have worked so hard for is on the list—governor plans to support a bonding bill, does not necessarily mean ours but it would be wonderful to get funding for the first stage.
- Foundation board will be making a decision on purchasing further land and houses off-campus---we already earn some, but we need a detailed a plan to move forward with a different kind of student housing (it may be years ahead, but work is very important) and Dr. Jones is right in the center of that, which is one of his areas of expertise based on his experience prior to here to help us look at our needs,

not just today but as we go out. We heard the Chancellor refer to our school as a flagship institution. What does that really mean—with the work that we are doing, looking for a new President, new development plan, I think it will be a page turner as we think of our future.

- Rather significant plans working with our local and regional medical partners and MDH regarding COVID.

D. Vice President Student Affairs & Enrollment Management Report- David Jones:

- Welcome back hope all could be rejuvenated.
- Finish fall head count up 3.2% up from last fall; massive success compared to peers at this point in time
- Today down 0.6%; average decline is 5.1% percent among peers
- Looking to next fall of 21---improvements in application numbers, we are down 12.9%, we want to do better but doing better than where we were
- Across the country FAFSA is down 11% nationwide and down 10% in MN; people will come around, but it will be later than what we are used to experiencing
- As we get close to Feb. -virtual and traditional visit plans depending on what is open for us. We

R. Davenport: In actual numbers with declines with our sister institutions—do you have those numbers at hand

D. Jones:

- Winona: down 5.7%
- St. Cloud State: down 11.2%
- SMSU: down 4.0%
- MSU, Mankato: down 0.6%
- Moorehead: down 6.7%

H. Morris: nuance around the opportunity gap and diverse student situation. The pandemic has affected students of color health wise and educationally. FAFSA are even more down in communities of color. And for the first time in a few years---our gap actually grew again. It was decreasing, it was at half of what it was, we will not get the hard numbers until 10th and 30th day of the semester. You have heard us say—it takes a University to close the opportunity gap and we need to continue to look at those ways we can be supportive to all our students. It is hard to say when everyone is hurting but our students of color are impacted more. Academically, financially, or environmentally are the 3 areas in the gap. One way we have tried to help with the environment was opening the campus cupboard opened over break. Also helps international and other students on campus. Hope it is a blip and not a trend.

M. Weister: Thought I read that the EFC portion of FAFSA is going away—can we confirm if that is true and how that impacts our completing and rewarding?

R. Straka: would have to talk with my staff to know more

D. Jones: Alexandar Lemar, this was his flag in the ground issue, he reduced the number of items so it should be faster, but changes will not be completed until 2022. EFC (estimated family contribution) is being renamed to avoid the assumptions that come with that.

R. Straka: I do not know how else we would package if it went away completely. (noted in chat later by Rick confirming that EFC will be replaced with: Student Aid Index)

M. Weister: It was from a New York Times Article that shared it was going away for good: 'FAFSA's Expected Family Contribution Is Going Away. Good Riddance.

E. HR Topics (Steve Barrett)-

- Human Resources Vacancies-A note on the Fixed Term document sent out –there were a number of things in this month's report and the service center has to go in to update those and working to update at least 3-4 that need to be updated. If you notice others, please let me know.
- Workplace Environment Investigations- 8 complaints into HR compared to 7 last year at this time, averaging 34 (goal is 30).
- COVID-19 Leave, Accommodations- Not a lot to report here. We get requests periodically, and work through those with supervisors on a case-by-case basis. One note, MMB has recently revised their COVID leave policy—have been simplified significantly, have implemented and

expanded school leave provision for those who need to be home due to their children needing to be at home when their school is closed. Encouraging employees contact us (Brian Breck) to navigate these issues.

- Human Resources Surveys- Many have been randomly selected. Been doing quick 1 minute pulse surveys since October to get a sense, generally, of satisfaction levels. To assess are we delivering what they expect. Geared towards helping us shift delivering based on what employees are looking for.
- President Search- Search Advisory Committee, began screening applicants back in December—we held interviews on Monday and Tuesday of this week. From there recommendations to chancellor, executive search team meets with chancellor next week and from there the Chancellor determines the finalists are then on schedule to have them do campus visits, remotely, Feb. 8th-11th. Specific schedule and sessions will be coming out once we get closer to the events. The Board of Trustees will meet March 16th and 17th in which they will select our next President. They will announce shortly after that meeting, then will work with President Davenport and other campus leaders to make the transition. Special Kudos to those on the search committee. Can check out the timeline and events on the search website within the University.
- M. Weister: the update on leave—will that go out to employees?
- S. Barrett: yes, working on to be out soon
- M. Weister: surveys, I will share that with membership just so they know what to expect, are they anonymous?
- S. Barrett: 100% yes

II. Discussion Items

A. COVID-19 Update (Matt Cecil & Cabinet)

M. Cecil:

- In an Orange plus status, (plus a few minor mitigations we have added) and have started to resume some things based on guidance from MDH (such as theatre rehearsals) and continue to monitor for guidance.
- Acknowledge gaps but making decisions based on guidance we have in front of us. If people have questions on what is authorized or not, please share those questions or frustrations with us so that at our weekly meetings or other channels we can continue to monitor. Starting next week, will start to look really closely at hyflex starting remote and seeing when we can open things up.
- We felt it was wise to take our time to be as safe as we can, given people traveling over the break. 12 active –not a problem but any number is a problem. This was the wise way to go.

D. Jones:

- Vaccination Plan-- brand new board for vaccination plan in the state:
<https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/data/index.jsp> The state has decided each county is responsible for deciding who gets the vaccination next.
- Phase 3 is our general population which most of us fall into within the University. As we meet with the MN coalition—determine –asking if we have people that work in the different phases and if you believe your team fits into the phases, will be asked to submit something, no names included, to justify being in the phase. County receives that request as a group and then will come back with link to sign up for vaccine.
- Your personal choice—you will not be required, and we will never know whether you do or don't.
- We will be looking into: can we get at least aggregate numbers. –How many have received shot in community. As part of a normative campaign to share those numbers---to get back into person it will take a lot of people getting the vaccine to open back up.

M. Weister: Are we still hoping for March date for anyone that wants it?

D. Jones: no correction to that yet. You may have an additional identity besides working at MSU, Mankato so if you have another opportunity, we encourage you to use that additional avenue and not just rely on getting it through MSU.

M. Weister: Is that still following same timeline guidance?

D. Jones: MDH –it's the march deadline

R. Davenport: I have been in touch with the city, along with hospitals, one of CEOs shared about 80% of employees at Mankato Clinic have elected to sign up and others are either waiting to decide or not going to get it. Our practice by not requiring but encouraging, it is an issue we will have to address. Honor the choice but also not out of the risk because the risk is still out there. It adds another layer and dimension to understand how it impacts our institution and community going forward.

From Dr. Jennifer Veltsos (she/her) to Everyone: 01:56 PM

David, considering how many students have had COVID, I hope the PR campaign reminds students who were sick to get the vaccine and not rely only on possible immunity from their illness.

From David Jones to Everyone: 01:57 PM

Jennifer, good idea. We will be sure to do that. Thanks.

M. Iverson: talking about norming campaigns—will you looking at students being willing to say they got the vaccine? Looking for people being willing to be the face? What if members want to be part of that process?

D. Jones: no specifics yet, it is common in other areas for people to post to social media that the received the vaccine, first in line will be Stomper, we will be in touch as we figure it out. If you have suggestions on how to make that a positive thing, please share. There are members of the medical community that are hesitant, but we want to make sure students know this is how we can get back in person.

H. Morris: Additional outreach to individuals of color

R. Davenport: More than 250 participants; why are medical personnel not getting the shot?—a part of the rationale is that the research is showing that the vaccine in MN is more effective in some populations, so some are waiting it out to see if we get a different vaccine. It is complicated, we do not have all the answers.

From David Jones to Everyone: 02:02 PM

Mayo Web Presentation on the Vaccine <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWLD1-HWCvo&feature=youtu.be>

From Shirley Murray to Everyone: 02:03 PM

Will HR be sharing when our primary health care providers (Mankato Clinic, Mayo) open vaccines for different groups?

S. Barrett: we are consulting with other HR depts. throughout system on how we can message that out effectively. This is all being done by the county and while we all work in Blue Earth County not all of us live in Blue Earth. So, we have to navigate that as well.

M. Weister: So complicated but the fact that we are having this conversation gives me hope.

D. Schulz: Are there guidelines for staff or students that are going on a vacation and coming back to campus. Anything in writing?

M. Weister: Some of our all-campus e-mails mentioned laying low for when we came back

M. Cecil: lay low is recommendation and encouragement, not specific requirements that things have to be done

L. Akey: Originally in March there was but no new additional requirements have been made other than people encouraged to think through exposure to help reduce risks to others. Not official guidance of that nature

S. Barrett: Chancellor HR---consistent with system guidance is lay low, monitor symptoms, be smart about it.

M. Weister: Deb, are you thinking in general or spring break?

D. Schulz: In general, just thinking of those taking vacation at times.

M. Weister: We all have different levels of judgement on what is safe and what is not. Blanket statement from HR would help.

L. Akey: Chandler and members on our safety committee share that we ensure we are encouraging our guidelines of social distancing, masking, washing hands—do not lose vigilance. We are not at the end yet. Those are the actions, regardless of travel to help us minimize our exposure.

D. Schulz: Thank you

B. Budget (Rick Straka):

\$120 million in new funding over the biennium

- \$75 million for **campus responsiveness and stabilization** to support increases in campus expenses resulting from the pandemic and inflationary costs over the biennium
- \$45 million for **equity and affordability** to directly support our students' critical needs:
 - Student Basic Needs
 - Mental Health Needs
 - Additional Campus Support Services
 - Career and Technical Education
 - Open Educational Resources
 - New Scholarship programs

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- Usually in the past when there is a deficit in the State budget, Minnesota State system has helped address the deficit to do our share. There is support but we will see where we end up. Targets to know affects may be in April.
- State appropriations is 1/3 of our budget, we also have tuition, which is based on enrollment and inflation, so great pressure to hold tuition low but then the third piece is inflation area increases from collective bargaining. Also add timing of appropriation has impacted. We have been tending to get 50/50 or even less which causes issues. They are front loading math, to slow the growth in state government as a purposeful way is how it is being framed.
- <https://www.aacc.nche.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Baime-CRRSA-FAQ-December-2020.pdf> --New Coronavirus---stimulus act. Really good news. Short term and one-time news for higher education. About \$22.7 billion going to higher education. Expected to use at least the same amount of aid given to students last time will be given---great news that there will be more aid money coming to students. Details and process is not determined yet. We are waiting for guidance. Change of administration (DeVos led vs Biden led) will also be interesting looking forward to seeing the outcome and guidance including definitions on lost revenue, students, etc. Need to stress this is 1 time money to cover a number of our 1-time expenses. Will not help us address structural base budget problems but it will help our reserve levels moving us forward in a must stronger state. \$1.4 billion is a tough nut to crack but our legislatures have some difficult decisions to make and we have a split government, it could take well over the mid May (constitutional) deadline.

C. **University Policy-Formal Review** has Started (<https://www.mnsu.edu/policies/whatis/review/>)

-Brian Martensen: Open and Started on website until Feb. 26th. We encourage all of you to respond.

D. IT Review-Mark Johnson:

- I ask the team to put together presentation on Ask Stomper—it is a PDF. ([SEE HERE](#)). If you look at the progression on a timeline for this effort. It started slight, but ultimately it will be a significant change and think it will really have a big impact and excited to be a part of A team that is working to meet the needs of students. This came from when students struggle to find an answer to their question, it is not super easy to get an answer to a simple question. 18k+ conversations have occurred in Ask Stomper and 40% are happening after business hours. Top 5: admissions, applications, transcripts, scholarship, tuition.

- Goal 1—serving students, this is one of the unique approaches right now. It is a solution for a one stop for all questions both online and in person through virtual kiosks and at any offices. Trying to avoid sending students multiple places. Trying to add value to YOU as well. University benefits: cleaner data and allow us to spend our time on other things we need.
- Timeline: started in March 2020 with just a 2-way chat, then in April, we morphed what other offices were using and turned it into Ask Stomper---from Ask Purdy to Ask Stomper was a huge increase. Hopeful for a full integration by December 2021.
- Campus Partners: 32 partners across campus. 13 depts. using chat bot and live chat. 19 using knowledge base. We are all unified to do one thing to help students and employees succeed.
- 90% of questions asked in the chatbot can be asked by AI. Students prefer that quick and ready answer. Would rather have the personal interaction for complex questions.
- Want to get involved: Make your dept. an ask stomper partner, e-mail itsolutions
- HyFlex is for faculty and classroom as Ask Stomper is for student services.

M. Weister: I would like to ask for the document and to invite you to membership meeting

M. Johnson: Happy to do so

From Carolyn Nelson to Everyone: 02:34 PM

So important as our online and distance learning community and programs grow in the future too- -post-pandemic.

E. Opportunity Gap-Henry Morris:

- Not a lot more to what I have said earlier that we have had a blip—it takes at least 3 blips to have a trend. We are counting on all of you will to help our students in general to persist but also an extra step out for those who have been impacted more than others by the pandemic.

FY21 MSUAASF Meet & Confer

February 4, 2021

March 4, 2021

April 1, 2021

May 6, 2021