

STUDENT REP. TO BOARD OF REGENTS/V.P. FOR ADMIN AFFAIRS
Joshua Colburn

Mon., Oct. 23, 2006

Distinguished Assembly Members,

The following is my report for the period September 25 through October 23, 2006.

October Board of Regents Meeting:

This month's Board Meeting was held in Crookston, MN at the University of Minnesota Crookston Campus.

In addition to two committee meetings and a full Board meeting, we celebrated the ribbon cutting for the new residence hall, aptly named Centennial Hall after the Crookston campus's 100th birthday last fall.

Board Approval Thresholds:

The Board reviewed a proposal to increase the maximum levels of expenses the institution may incur without seeking Board approval.

Category	Current Threshold	Proposed Threshold
Goods & Services	\$10,000	\$50,000
Construction Expenses	\$10,000	\$100,000
Architectural & Engineering Expenses	\$50,000	\$100,000

As you can see by the differences between current and proposed thresholds, the Board has not reviewed this issue for quite some time. At the current level, something like a single copier purchase could easily require Board approval despite its minimal impact on the University as a whole. The proposed thresholds are comparatively lower but dramatically closer those of peer institutions. This issue is subject to Board approval at the November meeting.

Stadium Underwriter:

The Board approved Lehman Bros., a New York firm, as the underwriter for the stadium project. The administration's recommendation of Lehman Bros. has come with substantial criticism from other Minnesota-based underwriters who bid to provide similar services for the stadium project. VP Pfutzenreuter explained most of the selection criteria to the Board and noted that Lehman's ability to minimize the stadium project's impact on the University's bond rating was a persuasive factor. Several Regents made it clear that while the Minnesota-based corporations are significant donors, their generosity does not necessarily translate into University preference.

Work Session:

This month's work session was focused on commercialization opportunities for University research. It is apparent that the University's ability to optimize the commercial success of its discoveries is critical to both its financial strength and its public image.

Biennial Budget Request:

President Bruininks presented his proposed Biennial Budget Request to the Full Board on Friday. Under his framework, students will see 4.5% average tuition increase.¹ It is not yet clear what the tuition increases for various graduate and professional programs will be.

If approved by the Board in November, the University budget request paints the following picture:

2008–09 Biennial Investments

State Support (subject to legislative approval)	= \$123.4 Million
Tuition Increases	= \$45.9 Million
Internal allocation of 1.0% of Institutional Resources	= \$23.0 Million
Total	= \$ 192.3 Million

For more information, please see the Agenda for the September meeting at <http://www1.umn.edu/regents/agendas/2006/october/pdf/agenda.pdf>

OTHER DUTIES:

I have attended all of the meetings of the Executive Committee and the Public Affairs Committee during this period.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The next Board of Regents meeting is scheduled for November 9–10, 2006.

Thank you for the continued opportunity to serve you,

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¹ This is actually in line with inflation under the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) model. The University tends to prefer the HEPI over the better-known Consumer Price Index (CPI). The reasoning is that the HEPI better incorporates the special considerations of the Higher Education Market.