

News Notes

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
Minnesota State University, Mankato

September 2000



Organization and Staffing

As I mentioned last spring, we have been reviewing the organization and positions within our division to determine how to proceed with filling the vacancies in Human Resources, Purchasing and the Business Office. Steve Smith moved from the Budget Office to the Comptroller position in the Business Office. Purchasing has moved to the Business Office and now reports to Steve Smith. Phyllis Wisen has been serving as Interim Human Resources Director while handling her Affirmative Action responsibilities. We have worked out a mobility agreement with MnSCU to have Beth Arntson assist Phyllis and the other Human Resources staff on a half-time basis during the next three months. A search for a permanent Director of Human Resources will begin in November. Todd Wirth has been hired to fill the Budget Officer position. I am confident that these new members of our staff will do an excellent job in serving the University community.

Budget

We are in the process of closing the books on FY2000 and should have final numbers in early October. Overall, total tuition income exceeded estimates by \$238,438, and in June we received a one-time legislative supplemental allocation of \$461,370 for enrollment growth. Expenditures will be about \$554,518 less than budgeted. Given these positive developments, in order to avoid having to make cuts in our base budget, we had to use only \$1,063,469 from institutional reserves rather than \$2,317,795.

The FY2001 budget plan is not balanced at this time. It appears as though estimated expenditures will exceed projected income by \$800,000. However, it is too early to know for sure, but there is a strong possibility that enrollment may exceed budget estimates; thus, increased tuition income of \$200,000 to \$300,000 might be available to reduce the estimated FY2001 budget shortfall. Work continues on the MnSCU allocation model. Although the state universities have had a united approach to numerous issues in the development of the model, it appears as though we will not achieve what we had hoped for—an equitable distribution of dollars based on institutional comparisons with our peers. The model, as it is currently proposed, does nothing to enhance Minnesota State University, Mankato's funding situation relative to the current distribution of MnSCU resources.

Student Financial Services

Office of Financial Aid:

It has been a busy summer for the staff in the Office of Financial Aid. The MnSCU module for delivery of financial aid was implemented for fall 2000 which meant that staff were learning and working with a new system again this year. The results, however, have been tremendous. With the assistance of Office Support Services staff and volunteers, the Financial Aid staff had aid totaling \$11,654,000 ready for disbursement on September 8 to 5,520 students. This compares with \$6.6 million which was disbursed to 4,022 students on the initial disbursement date in fall 1998. The unit's goal was for aid to be ready for 95% of those students who applied by July 14. We met that goal! Over \$41,000,000 of aid has been offered during the current academic year. Please congratulate the staff for their hard work and dedication to the University and our students. They are very proud of the excellent work that has been accomplished in preparation for fall disbursement. A special recognition and thank you is given to the Office Support staff and volunteers for their work during the summer.

Finance & Admin Office

Budget

Student Financial Services

Human Resources

Office of Business Affairs

Facilities Management



The Financial Aid Office was also pleased to welcome a new member on September 5, 2000. Karen Taylor joined the Office of Financial Aid as the Assistant Director for Operations and Information Systems. Karen brings over 9 years of experience in financial aid to the University.

Another new staff member, Kate Tepe, was hired earlier in the summer as an advisor. She filled a shared position with the Admissions Office. Kate worked with orientation students during the summer months and now has assumed her Admissions responsibilities.

Accounts Receivable:

Accounts Receivable staff are disbursing aid for fall semester and have sent invoices for fall charges. Students who have signed up for direct deposit had aid proceeds in their bank accounts on Friday, September 8. Checks were mailed beginning September 8 to those students who have not taken advantage of direct deposit. This semester the University will offer an installment plan. Students must sign up for the plan and will be assessed a \$15 charge for participation. Payments will be due (in 3 equal amounts) on September 25, October 23, and November 20, 2000. An installment form will be sent with the bills and is to be returned with the first payment.

Campus Access HUB and MavCard Office:

The "Campus Buzz" and "The Reporter" recently contained articles about the changes in The Hub's website. If you have not already done so, please check it out at www.mnsu.edu/dept/thehub/. Or, it can be accessed through the University's Home page (www.mnsu.edu). Select "Contact Us" and then select "THE HUB". Many forms that students currently complete and turn in at The Hub can be completed online directly to The Hub. Hub staff were especially busy answering a wide array of questions and selling parking permits and bus passes during the first two weeks of the semester. Additionally, they are responsible for updating student addresses on the student record system. This is a major activity at the beginning of fall semester as students notify the University of their current addresses.

We also wished Jim Whiteoak a happy retirement. After over 33 years with the University, Jim retired on August 25, 2000.

Scott Scheldberg recently resigned his position as MavCard Office Manager. He has been replaced by Shawn Abbas who has eagerly assumed his new responsibilities. Shawn has previously worked in the MavCard office as a student employee.

Human Resources

Open Enrollment:

Open Enrollment for insurance and pre-tax benefits will take place October 1 through 31. A new insurance plan will be offered this year—long-term care (LTC) insurance. The State has contracted with CNA Insurance to provide and administer the LTC plan. Employees will receive Open Enrollment information/instruction packets this fall from both the Department of Employee Relations and CNA and will have opportunities to attend workshops here at MSU.

Also new for 2001, each employee's low-cost health plan will be determined by the county in which the employee lives rather than the county in which s/he works. Employees are receiving notices from the Department of Employee Relations if their county of residence does not appear to be correct in the personnel/payroll system or if they have a post office box or rural route number. Employees must report residence county changes or corrections to Human Resources (ext. 6942 or 1190) immediately to ensure that they receive the appropriate health insurance information during Open Enrollment and the correct premiums are applied to payroll beginning in January.

Watch for more information about Open Enrollment and LTC insurance this fall.

New Training Coordinator/Benefits Assistant:

The office of Human Resources is pleased to welcome Cherie LaFleur as MSU's new Training Coordinator/Benefits Assistant. Cherie graduated from MSU in 1997 with a major in Human Resource Management. She was recently employed in Human Resources at Northwestern Health Sciences University in Bloomington. Here at MSU, Cherie will coordinate employee development workshops and provide assistance with employee benefits administration. She can be reached at ext. 2017.

Campus Beautification

I want to thank everyone who assisted with the clean-up day and the planting of flowers in April and May. The assistance of many volunteers has helped the Grounds staff accomplish a great deal in upgrading the appearance of our campus this year.

Speaking of volunteers, I would like to ask offices or work groups to adopt a flower garden on campus to not only plant it but maintain it (15-20 minutes a week) throughout the growing season. We will put pictures of the various gardens on The Shop Web site <http://www.mankato.msus.edu/dept/theshop> with numbers to identify the gardens. Please send to The Shop your first and second choices of flowerbeds to plant and maintain. Recognition for those who adopt the garden

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will be provided. More details on how to adopt a garden will be available about October 6, 2000. Your help will be very much appreciated.

The Ellis Avenue project that was completed in August has further enhanced the attractiveness of the campus and has improved the traffic situation to and from the pay parking lot. The removal of 14 parking spaces has allowed us to have three traffic lanes for effective movement of cars and buses along Ellis Avenue.

Have you noticed the purple outdoor furniture? Places to sit and enjoy the outdoors around the campus were very limited. The purple furniture has changed that. Each year we hope to add a few more tables, chairs and benches to the mall and other outdoor gathering places to create an environment where people can take a few minutes to sit down and enjoy interacting with one another between classes or during a break.

Facilities

The Facilities staff had an extremely busy summer accomplishing numerous tasks and projects. An update on their summer activities will be communicated in the next two weeks.

Credit Card for Faculty and Staff

In an effort to provide you with enhanced service and convenience, we are pleased to introduce the Platinum Plus for Business MasterCard program from MBNA America Bank. Applications are available at The Hub. Please complete both sides of the application and return it to Nancy Hallett, WA334.

If you have questions about the MBNA Platinum Plus for Business MasterCard, please call 1-800-673-1044 to speak with an MBNA customer service representative.

Purchasing

Airline Tickets, Registrations, Subscriptions and Memberships:

In conjunction with offering faculty and staff a new MBNA corporate credit card for business expenses, the Business Office now strongly encourages faculty and staff to utilize their corporate credit card for purchasing (1) airline tickets, (2) conference/workshop registration fees, (3) subscriptions, and (4) memberships. For most situations, there will be no need to process purchase orders for these items through the Purchasing Office. This procedural change comes about in response to more and more organizations accepting credit cards and utilizing the internet for selling these services. Additionally, this change should make purchasing these services easier for MSU departments. Faculty and staff utilizing their corporate card for these purchases are encouraged to follow these steps.

Step 1)

Obtain prior approval from your supervisor for travel

- In-state travel requires verbal prior approval
- Out-state travel requires written prior approval (CS1404 Form)

Step 2)

Charge airline ticket, registration fee, subscription fee, or membership fee to your personal MBNA corporate credit card.

Step 3)

Request a travel advance (CS1404 Form) for airline ticket and registration expenses as soon as a charge is incurred to provide funds to pay the credit card bill and avoid any interest charges. Request travel advance (CS1404 Form) for other travel expense (food, lodging, etc.) a minimum of 14 business days prior to date needed. For subscriptions and memberships, as soon as an expense is incurred, submit a SEMA4 Employee Expense Report and all required receipts to the Business Office travel clerk, WA236.

Step 4)

After the trip is completed, submit a SEMA4 Employee Expense Report and all required receipts to the Business Office travel clerk, WA236. Any travel advances will be deducted in payment of the advance when the Sema4 Employee Expense Report is processed. If you have any questions regarding the procedures for using your MBNA corporate credit card for purchasing airline tickets, registrations, subscriptions, or memberships, please contact Cheryl Haefner at 389-5006 or the Purchasing Office. Our website www.mnsu.edu/dept/busoff and our travel brochures will be updated soon with these changes.