



REGENT CANDIDATE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Centennial Office Building | St. Paul, MN 55155 | Phone: (651) 296-9002 | www.rcac.mn.gov

January 15, 2025

Senator Zach Duckworth
Regent Nomination Joint Committee

Senator Omar Fateh
Regent Nomination Joint Committee

Representative Marion Rarick
Regent Nomination Joint Committee

Representative Dan Wolgamott
Regent Nomination Joint Committee

Re: Regent Candidate Advisory Council Recommendations Report

Dear Senator Duckworth, Senator Fateh, Representative Rarick, and Representative Wolgamott,

During calendar year 2025, there will be four six-year term positions on the University of Minnesota Board of Regents (“Board of Regents”) coming to term. The positions to be filled include one student at-large position, two at-large positions, and one Fifth Congressional District position.

Pursuant to Minn. Stat. §137.0245, et al., the Regent Candidate Advisory Council (“RCAC”) is tasked with recruiting, screening and recommending at least two, and no more than four, qualified candidates to the Regent Nomination Joint Legislative Committee (“Joint Committee”) for each opening on the Board of Regents. The following is the report of the RCAC concerning the recently completed candidate selection process (“Report”).

Background

The Minnesota Constitution requires that 12 Regents be elected by a Joint Convention of the House and Senate of the Minnesota Legislature (“Joint Convention”) to sit on the Board of Regents. Eight of the 12 Regents are elected as a resident of a Minnesota congressional district, one Regent being elected from each district. The four remaining Regents are elected from the state at-large, with one of these at-large positions being a University of Minnesota student at the time of election. Regents serve six-year terms with four seats coming up for election every two years.

The RCAC was established by an act of the legislature of the State of Minnesota (“Legislature”) in 1988 to advise the Legislature in the election of Regents to the Board of Regents. Its duties are to: 1) develop a statement of selection criteria guidelines for the position of Regent and to distribute these guidelines to potential candidates; 2) identify and recruit qualified candidates for open positions on the Board of Regents; and 3) submit Regent candidate recommendations by January 15 of every odd-numbered year to the Joint Committee for at least two, but not more than four, qualified candidates for each opening on the Board of Regents.

The Joint Committee consists of the members of the higher education budget and policy divisions of the Senate and the House. The Joint Committee is statutorily required to meet by February 28th of each odd-numbered year to consider Regent nominees and to recommend one nominee for each open Regent seat to the Joint Convention. Elected Regents take office immediately upon election by the Joint Convention.

Membership

The RCAC consists of 24 members who have been appointed by the Legislature in accordance with Minn. Stat. §137.0245. The members are appointed to six-year terms, with one-third appointed each even-numbered year, with the exception of the two student members who are appointed to two-year terms each even-numbered year. A list of the current RCAC membership is attached.

2024-2025 Process

In 2024, the RCAC was tasked with recommending candidates for four six-year term positions on the Board of Regents coming to term: one student at-large position, two at-large positions, and one Fifth Congressional District position. With respect to the current recommendations, the RCAC began its activity by electing Greg Clausen as its chair and Barb Farrell and Edward Reynoso as its vice chairs in October of 2024.

A number of committees were also appointed to carry out directives and make recommendations to the RCAC. These committees included Recruitment, Selection Criteria, Document Review, Reference Check/Interview Process, and Candidate Orientation. The work of the RCAC committees consisted of reviewing past practices, updating materials, and making a number of recommendations.

At the initial meeting and throughout the process, the RCAC placed a high priority on diversity and recruiting candidates that would provide the Legislature with options to improve the overall diversity of the Board of Regents. That includes diversity of gender, race, geography, occupation, and more.

The RCAC began actively recruiting candidates in October of 2024 for the four seats coming to term during this cycle. Forty candidates submitted applications to the RCAC by the December 6, 2024, deadline. The RCAC met on December 13, 2024, for the preliminary screening of candidates to interview. After extensive discussion and debate, 22 candidates were selected for interviews. This meeting was open to the public and streamed live to YouTube.

The RCAC met in open session to interview the 22 candidates on January 6, 7, 8, and 9, 2025. In the case of each of these candidates, the RCAC reviewed candidate application packets, written references from two individuals, and conducted an interview lasting approximately forty-five minutes featuring an extensive question and answer period.

Video of the candidate interviews, as well as all RCAC proceedings, is available on the [RCAC Meetings Webpage](https://www.rcac.mn.gov/2024-25meetings.html) (<https://www.rcac.mn.gov/2024-25meetings.html>).

On January 10, 2025, the RCAC met to discuss and debate the merits of the candidates, and respectfully voted in the final recommendation process.

Recommendations

The RCAC is forwarding 14 candidates for consideration by the Joint Committee. The finalists recommended by the RCAC are listed below in alphabetical order.

Student At-Large:

Kowsar Mohamed (Minneapolis)
Madeline Rowe (Minneapolis)
Flora Yang (Minneapolis)
Dylan Young (St. Paul)

Fifth District:

Robert Albright (Edina)
Benjamin Kaplan (St. Louis Park)
Ellen Luger (Minneapolis)

Statewide At-Large (Two Positions):

Jamal Adam (Maple Grove)
Jeffrey Ettinger (Austin)
John Gibbs (Bloomington)
Josh Lease (Monticello)
Scott Nagel (Maple Grove)
Ann Sheldon (Lino Lakes)
Dan Wolter (Lakeville)

This list of recommendations includes exceptional talent, experience, and passion for serving the State of Minnesota. We are confident that each of these candidates has the background and ability to ably serve if elected by the Legislature.

On behalf of my fellow RCAC members, I express our appreciation for the vast network of people whose cooperation and assistance made possible the recruitment of highly qualified and diverse applicants. We are grateful for all of the applicants' willingness and desire to serve the University of Minnesota. The members of the RCAC consider it a privilege to be charged by the Legislature with recruiting and screening the best possible candidates to oversee the University of Minnesota. With every round of activity, the RCAC seeks to build upon its experience to continually improve the way it conducts its operations and deliberations.

Pursuant to Minn. Stat. §137.0245, the RCAC's Selection Criteria Report is attached. The criteria listed in this Report were used by the RCAC for the selection of candidates.

If you wish, I am available to meet with you to further discuss the Regent selection process and/or candidates the RCAC has recommended.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Clausen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "G".

Greg Clausen, Chair
Regent Candidate Advisory Council

Attachments as stated above.

Members of the Regent Candidate Advisory Council

The Regent Candidate Advisory Council is composed of 24 members appointed to six-year, staggered terms. One-half of the members are appointed by the Speaker of the House, and one-half are appointed by the Senate Majority Leader. Each appointing authority must appoint one member who is a student enrolled in a degree program at the University of Minnesota at the time of appointment.

Members	Term Expires	Appointed By
Greg Clausen, Chair	January 2026	Senate
Barb Farrell, Vice-Chair	January 2026	House
Edward Reynoso, Vice Chair	January 2028	House
Rahma Ali (Student Member)	January 2026	House
Richard Andolshek	January 2028	Senate
Connie Bernardy	January 2026	House
Rep. Brian Daniels	January 2026	House
Debjyoti Dwivedy	January 2026	Senate
Kenny Devine	January 2030	Senate
Brenda Hilbrich	January 2030	Senate
Matt Hill	January 2028	Senate
Mark Jessen	January 2028	House
Amanda Matchett	January 2030	House
Cal Mergendahl (Student Member)	January 2026	Senate
Sen. Zaynab Mohamed	January 2030	Senate
Quentin Moore	January 2026	House
Wendy Ojala	January 2026	Senate
Bill Otto	January 2030	House
Shivangi Pandey	January 2030	House
Sen. Jason Rarick	January 2026	Senate
Lucas Sjostrom	January 2030	Senate
Megan Thielfoldt	January 2028	Senate
Steven Tyacke	January 2030	Senate
Ryan Winkler	January 2028	House



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Regent Candidate Advisory Council Selection Criteria Report

January 15, 2025

This Report is submitted pursuant to Minn. Stat. §137.0245, Subdivision 3, in connection with the work of the Regent Candidate Advisory Council (“RCAC”), established for the purpose of (i) recruiting and screening candidates for positions on the University of Minnesota Board of Regents (“Board of Regents”), and (ii) making recommendations to the Minnesota State Legislature and the Regent Nomination Joint Legislative Committee.

In October of 2024, a Selection Criteria Committee (“Committee”) was formed to review and update the Selection Criteria for Members of the University of Minnesota Board of Regents (“Criteria”). On the morning of October 11, 2024, the Governance and Policy Committee of the Board of Regents reviewed and provided feedback on the 2022-2023 Regent Candidate Selection Criteria in a public meeting that was recorded and made available on the webpage hosted by the Board of Regents. This feedback was given careful attention by the members of the Committee.

In the afternoon of October 22, 2024, the Committee met in an open meeting to review the Criteria. The Committee discussed the applicable portion of the October 11 Board’s Governance and Policy Committee meeting, taking the Board of Regents comments into consideration as the Criteria for the 2024-2025 candidate selection process was revised. The Committee unanimously adopted the Criteria for utilization as part of the 2024-2025 candidate selection process.

On the afternoon of October 29, 2024, the Selection Criteria Committee reported on its work to the full RCAC. The RCAC voted unanimously to adopt the Selection Criteria Committee Report.

Attached is the Criteria that was recommended by the Selection Criteria Committee and utilized by the RCAC in its evaluation and recommendation of candidates for the Board of Regents to the Regent Nomination Joint Legislative Committee and Minnesota State Legislature in 2025. All of the candidates recommended by the RCAC are believed to reflect, to a greater or lesser degree, the attributes included in the Criteria.



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Selection Criteria for Members of the University of Minnesota Board of Regents

Foundation for the Development of the Selection Criteria

University of Minnesota Regents are charged with stewarding the University toward successful outcomes for the people of the State of Minnesota. Primary focuses include development of the long-term vision, setting strategies for achieving that vision and ensuring the University president and their leadership team is effectively managing the operations of the organization.

Selection Criteria

The Regent Candidate Advisory Council ("RCAC") may take the following items into consideration throughout the application review, interview process and recommending candidates to the legislature for the position of Regent to the University of Minnesota:

1. A commitment to the University of Minnesota and an understanding of its role in education, economics and innovation in the state, nation and world.
2. Integrity along with a personal code of honor and high ethical standards which includes a willingness to comply with the Code of Conduct for Members of the Board of Regents and its conflict of interest policy.
3. An ability to maintain a respectful and professional relationship with administration, faculty, employees, students and external stakeholders.
4. The ability to negotiate, compromise, and build consensus.
5. The ability to define and strategically analyze choices to adequately balance long-term visions with short-term priorities.
6. An inquiring mind, a willingness to listen and the ability to speak articulately and succinctly.
7. The capacity to both challenge and support the administration, and each other, when appropriate.
8. The capacity to effectively coach, analyze and evaluate the performance of the president.
9. The ability to function as a member of a diverse team in an atmosphere of public transparency, collegiality and selflessness.

10. An appreciation of the public nature of the position of Regent.
11. An ability to address the issues of diversity in geography, gender, race, occupation, international awareness and operational needs of the Board of Regents.
12. A willingness to embrace and utilize current technologies needed to operate effectively as a Regent.
13. History of success that reflects a breadth and diversity in life experience, as well as any subject matter expertise, that would be beneficial to the priorities of the University of Minnesota.
14. Recognition and understanding of the differences between governance and management. Experience and willingness to learn and enhance personal knowledge of governance and strategic oversight of large, complex organizations.
15. An understanding of education trends nationally and in Minnesota.
16. An ability and willingness to devote the significant time necessary to serve as an effective and contributing member of the Board of Regents, and additionally to step into a board leadership role.