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MINNESOTA
HIGHER EDUCATION BOARD

Projected Merger
Impact on
System Office
Positions

January 1, 1995

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE

This report is submitted by the Minnesota Higher Education Board in response to Laws of Minnesota 1993, First Special Session, Chapter 2, Article 9, Section 10, which states:

CURRENT EMPLOYEES. It is the policy of the State of Minnesota that any restructuring of the higher education systems be accomplished while ensuring that fair and equitable arrangements are carried out to protect the interests of higher education system employees, and while facilitating the best possible service to the public. The higher education board shall make every effort to train and retrain existing employees for a changing work environment and shall report to the legislature on plans for this training by September 1, 1994.

For employees whose positions will be eliminated by merging higher education systems, options presented to employees must include but not be limited to job and training opportunities necessary to qualify for another job within their current institution or a similar job in another institution. The board shall report on its plans to eliminate positions by January 1, 1995.

Implementation of this section, as well as procedures for notifying employees affected by the merger, must be negotiated in good faith under Minnesota Statutes, chapter A. Nothing in this section shall be construed as diminishing any rights defined in collective bargaining agreements under this chapter or Minnesota Statutes, chapter A.

SUBMITTED BY CHANCELLOR JAY NOREN ON BEHALF OF THE MEMBERS OF THE MINNESOTA HIGHER EDUCATION BOARD

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REPORTS SCHEDULE

This is the eleventh in a series of reports required in Laws of Minnesota 1993, First Special Session, Article 9. The reports are:

HIGHER EDUCATION BOARD	
Reports	Due Date
1. Initial Staffing Plan	July 15, 1993
2. Preliminary Merger Plan & Timetable	September 1, 1993
3. Administrative Structure	January 1, 1994
4. Technical College Labor Issues	January 1, 1994
5. Technical Colleges Transfer of Property	January 1, 1994
6. Legal Services Proposal	January 1, 1994
7. Proposed Budget Format	January 1, 1994
8. Co-located Campus Report	February 15, 1994
9. Restructured Staff Retraining Plan	September 1, 1994
10. Unified Accounting System Plan*	January 1, 1995
11. Projected Merger Impact on System Office Positions	January 1, 1995

* To be submitted by the Commissioner of Finance

PROJECTED MERGER IMPACT ON SYSTEM OFFICE POSITIONS

In 1991, the Minnesota Legislature affirmed its policy that restructuring of the higher education systems should "*protect the interests of higher education system employees, and while facilitating the best possible service to the public.*" It also stated that:

For employees whose positions will be eliminated by merging higher education systems, options presented to employees must include but not be limited to job and training opportunities necessary to qualify for another job within their current institution or a similar job in another institution.

Implementation of this section, as well as procedures for notifying employees affected by the merger, must be negotiated in good faith under Minnesota Statutes, chapter A.

(Laws of Minnesota 1991, Chapter 356, Article 9, Sec. 10.)

In 1993, this language was expanded to require a report on the Higher Education Board's plans to eliminate positions.

In keeping with the Legislature's direction, the Higher Education Board has had two primary goals in structuring and filling positions in the new Minnesota State Colleges and University (MnSCU) system offices:

1. to create a structure that is efficient and avoids duplication of services; and
2. to treat employees of the existing system offices "fairly and equitably."

This report will describe the Higher Education Board's plans for eliminating positions in the existing system offices, establishing and filling new positions in MnSCU, and administering the early retirement incentives and memoranda of understanding with the bargaining units.

ELIMINATION OF POSITIONS IN THE SYSTEM OFFICES

Baseline Employee Numbers

On July 1, 1993, the State University, Community College, and Technical College systems offices had a total of 279.5 positions. As employees have resigned over the last year, the system offices have evaluated whether the positions should be filled on a permanent or

temporary basis. Most positions have been filled temporarily so that the number of employees displaced by the merger would be as small as possible. There are fewer employees in the system offices now than there were in July of 1993. Thirty-seven employees have already been offered positions in MnSCU.

Transfer of Atypical Functions to Colleges

Several functions which have been performed over the years by staff in the system offices will be transferred to individual colleges or universities as of July 1, 1995. Although the functions are important, they relate to only one college or university system rather than to all. These functions include:

- ▶ the Fire, Emergency Medical Service, and Library/Media Service Unit of the Technical Colleges; and
- ▶ the Air Traffic Control Center of the Technical Colleges

All of the employees currently employed in these functions will be transferred with the jobs. Combined, these functions employ 35 individuals. In addition, the Community College Central Services Units which provide direct service to the campuses will continue to provide these services under MnSCU at current staffing levels. These units provide computer, fiscal and payroll services to the Community Colleges. The 52 positions in this unit will be open for application to all current system employees.

FILLING MNSCU POSITIONS

We have projected a complement of 206 positions in the new Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system office, which is 20% fewer than the baseline of the three system offices combined exclusive of the Community College's Central Services. This goal would be achieved during the 1996-97 biennium and assumes there will be no increased mandates or unforeseen problems, particularly in the areas of contract negotiations, administration and financial auditing.

All employees in the system offices have been given descriptions of the new positions in MnSCU and asked to submit letters of interest or bids (depending on the bargaining unit of the position). Because the memoranda of understanding with the three bargaining units and the individual contracts vary, we will use different criteria from one bargaining unit to another in deciding which employees will be hired for MnSCU positions. In AFSCME, for instance, positions will be filled on the basis of the most senior qualified applicant who is currently in the class; in MAPE and MMA, on the other hand, applicants will be chosen on the basis of their qualifications and ability to meet the exam criteria for the class. All current system employees will be given preference over outside candidates.

To make sure that all existing employees receive ample consideration for MnSCU positions, managers have been instructed to interview every employee who indicates an interest in a position within their own bargaining unit. Employees who indicate interest in positions outside their own bargaining unit will also be interviewed whenever possible.

ADMINISTRATION OF EARLY RETIREMENT INCENTIVES

Those employees who are not chosen for positions within MnSCU, or who are not transferred to one of the colleges as part of an atypical function, will be certified by the Chancellor as eligible for early retirement incentives. These employees must also, of course, meet the legislative guidelines for age and number of years served. Employees who are eligible for regular retirement may choose to retire at any time.

PROVISIONS OF MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING

AFSCME

Position Filling: All positions in MnSCU will be filled on the basis of employees' state seniority and relative ability to handle the job duties.

Options for employees who are not offered MnSCU jobs:

- ▶ early retirement
- ▶ a position at a college or another state agency
- ▶ enhanced separation - a one-time payment of \$7500 on separation that would allow the employee to finance a portion of an educational program

MAPE

Position Filling: Positions in MnSCU will be filled on the basis of employees' qualifications and ability to pass the examination for the class. Employees will be considered for classifications outside their existing class.

Options for employees who are not offered MnSCU jobs:

- ▶ early retirement
- ▶ a position at a college or another state agency

We do not yet have a final memorandum of understanding with MAPE to cover options for enhanced separation.

MMA

Position Filling: Positions in MnSCU will be filled on the basis of employees' qualifications and ability to pass the examination for the class. Employees will be considered for classifications outside their current class. If there are no supervisors who currently meet the exam criteria for the class, other supervisors may be appointed with the understanding that they will meet the exam criteria within a defined amount of time and will be given resources for retraining.

Options for employees who are not offered MnSCU jobs:

- ▶ early retirement
- ▶ a position at a college or another state agency
- ▶ a one-time separation payment equal to nine weeks' salary

Unrepresented, Non-Managerial Plan

Position Filling: Positions in MnSCU will be filled on the basis of employees' qualifications and ability to pass the examination for the class. Employees will be considered for vacancies outside of their current class.

Options for employees who are not offered MnSCU jobs:

- ▶ early retirement
- ▶ a position at a college or another state agency
- ▶ enhanced separation (yet to be approved by LCER)

Managerial Plan

Position Filling: Positions in MnSCU will be filled on the basis of employees' qualifications and ability to pass the examination for the class. Employees will be considered for vacancies outside of their current class.

Options for employees who are not offered MnSCU jobs:

- ▶ early retirement
- ▶ a position at a college or another state agency
- ▶ enhanced separation (yet to be approved by LCER)

SERVICES TO EMPLOYEES WHO DO NOT RECEIVE MN SCU POSITIONS

The Higher Education Board received a Retraining Grant from the Department of Employee Relations to establish a Retraining Coordinator position expressly to assist employees in finding positions. The coordinator was hired in July.

Although there may be some early retirements, we expect that most employees who are not offered jobs with MnSCU will ask for assistance in finding jobs in the colleges or in other state agencies. Assistance will include:

1. Individual sessions with the retraining coordinator to discuss the employee's skills, education and work background; assistance in choosing likely classifications and agencies for transfer, and guidance on how to find vacancies in the state system.
2. Assistance in placing "claims" on vacancies in other agencies. Claims are statements of interest in vacant positions held by other state agencies. They can only be made by employees facing layoff. All system employees who have not been chosen for jobs at MnSCU will be able to claim positions, but the claims must be placed by the Retraining Coordinator or another Personnel Specialist in HEB.
3. Classes on resume writing, interviewing, and finding jobs in the state system. All of these classes have been offered for Higher Education System employees in the last several months, but will be offered again if there are enough employees who need the assistance.
4. Packets of information on job classes and exam requirements within the employee's current bargaining unit. The Higher Education Board has applied for additional retraining grant funds to finance a collaborative project between the Department of Employee Relations and the Higher Education Board to consolidate information on state classifications into a simple, useable brochure or pamphlet.
5. Information about specific positions. The Retraining Coordinator will distribute information about vacancies to individual employees whose skills and background fit vacancies.
6. Skills assessment and retraining. Employees who are not able to find positions within their current classification may be referred for a skills assessment to determine which state classes would fit their skills and background best. If retraining is required, the Assessment Center and the Retraining Coordinator will determine what kind of retraining is necessary, whether it is feasible within the time limits, and whether there are other options.

UPDATE FROM SEPTEMBER REPORT

In the "*Restructured Staff Retraining Plan*" that was submitted in September, we included a list of merger activities that we intended to accomplish in the fall months. The status of those projects follows:

1. "Managing Your Career" class for system employees—This intensive class was completed in November. Twenty-three employees attended the class which included information on job preferences and values, how to choose a new career, and how to plan a job search.
2. Resume-writing and interviewing classes—These classes were scheduled in November and December and conducted by a trainer from the Employment and Training Center of the Dakota County Technical College. 49 employees signed up for the resume-writing class and 46 employees for the interviewing course. The interviewing course included practice in answering interview questions and an opportunity for participants to have a mock interview video-taped.
3. Announcement of positions—Because of problems getting all of the new MnSCU positions defined and classified, this was postponed until December. MnSCU administrators will interview candidates and make hiring decisions on all positions by March of 1995.

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