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Scholastic minutes 02/04/2003

Scholastic Committee

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University of Minnesota, Morris
Scholastic Committee
Minutes #8, February 4, 2003

The Scholastic Committee met on February 4th, 2003, in the Behmler Conference Room. The next meeting will be on February 11th in the same location.

Members present: L. Meek (chair), W. Cox, B. McQuarrie, S. Gashaw, R. Heyman, R. Richards, N. McPhee, M. Uttke, C. Gonzalez, K. Sharp, C. Specketer, K. Klinger (coordinator), R. Thielke, J. Mullin. Clare Strand will no longer represent the Commission on Women, because the funds used to relieve her have been contributed to this year's debt recovery.

Guest: Dr. Jim Mootz.

The minutes for January 28th were approved as corrected.

The entire meeting was reserved to discuss Admissions with Dr. Jim Mootz, appointed as Vice-Chancellor for Enrollment on an 18-month contract. Mootz has been working more than full-time. He said the numbers of admitted students are not where we want them. We are behind in applications, offers, and confirmations, but he credits his staff with closing the gap by 50% in one month. We are almost even with where we were two years ago and ahead of where we were three years ago. Given UMM's situation, Mootz has sent admissions counselors back on the road. This fall, a significant group of students who expressed interest did not receive an important follow-up mailing (view book, application, catalog). Counselors are in contact with some of those students from a 16,000 pool who have expressed interest in UMM. We want to be careful not to lose any more admitted students than we need to. He knows that quality of incoming students is an important issue. He reported that this year's admitted students have an ACT of 25.3, up from 24.9 last year. Their High School Rank is about 1% lower.

Mootz described the enrollment cycle as 18 months, which leaves us only six months to bring in the class. In the future, he would like to see UMM working with sophomores and recruiting juniors instead of seniors. Juniors ahead of the cycle should be visiting campus early. Last year, the Admissions Office used admissions deadlines, having target days by which applications were received and reviewed. Mootz does not believe cut-off dates are working for us and immediately restored rolling admission. He would also like to see financial aid and housing deadlines moved up so that students have answers to their questions well before fall term. He anticipates that tuition will rise as much as 12.5%. He expressed concern about the anticipated 30 million dollar cut in financial aid next year, noting that 55% of the aid goes to 25% of the students who attend private colleges. The private colleges have a well-developed network to lobby the legislature.

The Minneapolis Star Tribune recently had an article of admissions at other colleges. UM is up 28%, Mankato 55%. UMM was not mentioned, with reason. Wayne Sigler, director of Twin Cities Admissions, has shared the names of 2200 qualified students who could not be admitted due to enrollment caps and are on the wait list. Mootz has picked about 1200 students who meet our admissions criteria and will be sending information to them. His staff is calling prospective students. He hopes the open position will be filled in spite of the freeze, since his office is understaffed. Admissions will hold two receptions at Eastcliff and two receptions at LaFave House, one for school counselors and one for prospective students. We want to recruit at home as well as in the region. If admissions counselors have 4 or 5 high school counselors who are

willing to meet for breakfast, Mootz will drive wherever they are to join them. UMM has re-established contact with Chicago. A bus of minority students will be coming to UMM from Chicago, and three vans will come from the Twin Cities. He has a number of ideas for reaching prospective students. He would like to see current UMM students go back to their high schools to promote higher education; he would like to hire two seniors to take the term off to work as admissions counselors and represent UMM in the field; he would like to find four to six alumni to represent us in Chicago, since there are more high schools there than in all of Minnesota. The further you go to recruit, the higher the cost, and the less likely it is students will come. He would like to reduce the number of mailings to an individual school and concentrate instead on the high school counselor.

He ran through examples of applicants, using the formula of two times the ACT plus the high school rank to equal an AAR of 115. He indicated those students he had refused and those he would think more about. Applicants who meet the criteria are automatically admitted. He reviews marginal students. In response to criticisms of the use of the AAR formula, including both the ACT and high school rank, he said he would love to be able to measure a student's willingness to learn. He, too, finds the high school rank less meaningful, since the average grade is now a B rather than a C. Though there are problems with the use of a formula, we need a standard. What else should we use? If ACT is a criterion, then perhaps we should purchase names of students who take the ACT who meet our criteria. When asked how specific he should be about our numbers, several members thought it was important for the campus to know that the numbers aren't ok. During the past few years, actual numbers have not been given to the campus community during the final months—there is a “history of fuzziness.” It was suggested that he and the administration should provide a context for thinking about what the numbers mean and to help staff consider how we can help raise them. For example, Mootz had mentioned earlier that faculty have been asked to write to students who express interest in their area of expertise.

Chair Meek thanked Mootz for his presentation. Mootz offered to return at a later date. The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by Karla Klinger