



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Tim Pawlenty

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

February 15, 2007

Lawrence J Pogemiller
Senate Majority Leader
235 State Capitol
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

David H. Senjem
Senate Minority Leader
147 State Office Building
Saint Paul, Minnesota, 55155

Margaret Anderson Kelliher
Speaker of the House of Representatives
463 State Office Building
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Marty Seifert
House Minority Leader
267 State Office Building
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

**Re: *Governor's Recommended Slate of Candidates
University of Minnesota Board of Regents***

Dear Legislative Leaders and Joint Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to recommend qualified candidates to serve on the University of Minnesota's Board of Regents. In 2005, the legislature created new statutory procedures for the identification of highly qualified regent candidates. I am pleased to have received the recommendations from the Regent Candidate Advisory Council and to have the opportunity to present these qualified individuals to the Joint Committee, as required by Minnesota Statutes, Section 137.0245 (2006). I believe this process was successful in making the regent selection process more inclusive and diverse. We are directing our letter to the majority and minority legislative leaders because the House has not officially selected its members for the Joint Committee.

In making these recommendations, I have been mindful of the legislative directive to "consider the needs of the Board of Regents and the balance of the board membership with respect to gender, racial, and ethnic composition." Minnesota Statutes, Section 137.0246, subd. 1 (2006). The current membership on Board of Regents consists of 8 white males, 2 white females, 1 African American male and one African American female student. One female member, the African American male and the African American female student each occupy positions that are subject to the current election. Thus, if they are eliminated from the calculation, the remaining board members consist of 7 white males and one female. The candidates I am recommending will contribute significantly to making the Board of Regents more reflective of the gender and racial diversity of the state and the student body.

Each of the following regent candidates were recommended by the Regent Candidate Advisory Council and possess the experience and background identified as priorities by the Legislature in statute and by the Advisory Council. In addition to the descriptions provided below, I am also attaching copies of the public application materials and essay answers submitted by these applicants.

Fifth Congressional District: Peter Bell

Mr. Bell has served as a regent since 2002. He was appointed to a vacant position by Governor Ventura and elected as a regent by a Joint Convention of the Legislature in 2003. This is his first opportunity to serve a full term as a regent.

As a regent and in his personal life, Mr. Bell has exhibited his personal commitment and dedication to the University of Minnesota and has the requisite knowledge and experience that relate to the needs of the Board. He has professional experience in both the private and public sectors and has served on the governing boards of large for-profit, non-profit and governmental institutions. Mr. Bell has also overcome personal adversity and has worked to motivate others to access education and to overcome barriers to success. Mr. Bell will make his continued service as a regent a top priority committing his time, energy and thought.

In addition to his personal and professional qualifications, Mr. Bell is African American and contributes to the racial and ethnic diversity of the Board of Regents. Mr. Bell's experience demonstrates his personal commitment to excellence at the University of Minnesota and in helping underrepresented groups understand the importance of education in their lives and communities.

At-Large: Cynthia Leshner

Ms. Leshner has served as a regent since 2006 when she was appointed to a vacant position. She is President and Chief Executive Officer of Northern States Power Company, an Excel Energy Company, has significant experience operating a large enterprise and brings beneficial contacts with many of Minnesota's key business partners. Ms. Leshner also has significant experience on the governing boards of other large companies, including serving as the board chair for the St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Leshner is one of Minnesota's prominent female business leaders. She exhibits a personal and professional commitment to quality education and its importance to the future of the state. Her personal integrity and experience in the governance and operation of large entities are consistent with all of the personal and professional needs of the Board as identified by the Advisory Council. In addition to her personal and professional attributes, Ms. Leshner will contribute to the gender diversity of the Board of Regents, which has historically underrepresented professional women.

At Large: Linda Cohen

Ms. Cohen is a licensed psychologist and a marriage and family therapist. She obtained her doctoral degree from the University of Minnesota and is currently serving as an Advisory Council member to the University's Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. As a school board chair, consultant for business-education partnerships and former school administrator, Ms. Cohen developed extensive knowledge regarding the state's educational systems and the important relationship between Minnesota secondary schools and the University of Minnesota. Ms. Cohen is personally committed to practices of good governance, increased diversity and excellence at the University of Minnesota.

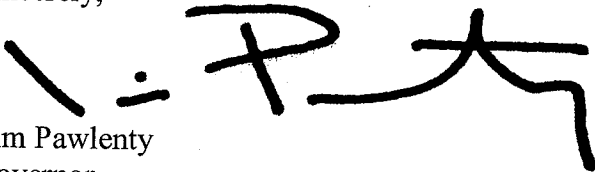
In addition to her personal and professional attributes, Ms. Cohen will contribute to the gender diversity of the Board of Regents, which has historically underrepresented professional women.

Student At-Large: Venora Mun-Ling Hung

Ms. Hung is currently a student at the University of Minnesota Law School and anticipates earning her *juris doctorate* in 2009. She also earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Minnesota. Ms. Hung brings an important perspective on how decisions of the Board affect students and knowledge about the transition of students from the academic realm into the business community. Ms. Hung is also Asian American and will contribute to the gender, racial and ethnic diversity of the Board of Regents.

Thank you for your consideration of these extremely qualified candidates.

Sincerely,



Tim Pawlenty
Governor

cc: Joint Selection Committee Members:

Senator Sandra L. Pappas, Chair, Higher Education Budget and Policy Division
Senator Claire A. Robling, Ranking Minority Member, Higher Education Budget and
Policy Division
Representative Tom Rukavina, Chair, Higher Education and Workforce Development
Policy/Finance Committee
Representative Bud Nornes, Ranking Minority Member, Higher Education and
Workforce Development Policy/Finance Committee

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Senator Charles W. Wiger, Chair, Education Committee

Senator David W. Hann, Ranking Minority Member, Education Committee

Representative Carlos Mariani, Chair, E-12 Education Committee

Representative Sondra Erickson, Ranking Minority Member, E-12 Education Committee

Senator Ann Lynch

Senator Richard Cohen

Senator Kathy Sheran

Senator Amy Koch

Senator Geoff Michel

Senator Gen Olson