ST. PAUL, Minn., Jan. 22, 2014 – The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees today announced five leadership appointments.

MALHOTRA NAMED INTERIM PRESIDENT, METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY
Devinder Malhotra was named interim president of Metropolitan State University. His appointment is effective July 1, 2014.

Malhotra has served as provost and vice president for academic affairs at St. Cloud State University since 2009. Previously, he served as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Southern Maine from 2005 to 2009. He also served on the faculty of the University of Southern Maine, and Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Akron (OH). He holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in economics from the University of Delhi, India, a doctorate in economics from Kansas State University, and has completed the Management Development Program at Harvard University’s Graduate Institutes of Higher Education.

In recommending Malhotra’s appointment, Steven Rosenstone, MnSCU chancellor said, “As provost, Dr. Malhotra has been deeply engaged in nearly every aspect of university operations. He brings a thorough understanding of what it means to lead a university and how to do so in a collaborative fashion. He is an outstanding leader who works effectively with faculty, community leaders, elected officials, and business and industry.”

Malhotra succeeds Sue Hammersmith, who is retiring after six years of service as president of Metropolitan State University. A national search for a permanent president will be initiated in 2015.

RODRIGUES APPOINTED MnSCU CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER
Leon Rodrigues was named MnSCU’s chief diversity officer by Chancellor Rosenstone. His appointment is effective January 27, 2014.

Rodrigues has served as chief diversity officer, special assistant to the president, and associate professor at Bethel University since 2006. Previously, he served as associate dean for Diversity and Community at Bethel from 2003 to 2006 and as the multicultural youth development educator and assistant professor at the University of Minnesota from 1999 to 2003. He holds a
bachelor’s degree from the University of Western Cape in South Africa, and master’s and doctoral degrees from the University of Minnesota.

In commenting on his appointment of Rodrigues, Chancellor Rosenstone said, “Dr. Rodrigues is a creative, inspiring, and dynamic leader. He will be a great partner with our colleges and universities in fostering diversity and improving our service to Minnesota’s many diverse communities. In short, Dr. Rodrigues is the right leader at the right time to help transform our higher education community and ensure that we are meeting the interests and needs of all Minnesotans.”

Rodrigues succeeds Whitney Harris, who was named chief diversity officer of Minneapolis Community and Technical College in June 2013.

O’BRIEN NAMED MnSCU SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR, ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS
John O’Brien was named senior vice chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs.

O’Brien has been serving as vice chancellor for academic and student affairs on an interim basis since June 2013. Previously, he served as president of North Hennepin Community College from 2010 to 2013, and as director of MnSCU’s “Students First” initiative from 2008 to 2010. He also served at Century College as acting president from 2008 to 2009 and as academic vice president/chief academic officer from 2005 to 2008. O’Brien holds a bachelor’s degree in English and English education from Augustana College, a master’s degree in Anglo-Irish literature from the University of Dublin, Trinity College, and a doctorate in English from the University of Minnesota.

In recommending O’Brien’s appointment, Chancellor Rosenstone said, “Dr. O’Brien brings strong, thoughtful, effective leadership to Academic and Student Affairs, a division that’s at the heart of our service to our colleges and universities. He is action-oriented, dedicated to student success, and passionate about ensuring access to an extraordinary education for all Minnesotans. In addition, he is a proven innovator who will help Minnesota State Colleges and Universities effectively implement the strategic changes necessary to meet the challenges facing higher education.”

LARSON APPOINTED INTERIM PRESIDENT, NORTH HENNEPIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Lisa Larson was named interim president of North Hennepin Community College. Her appointment is effective July 1, 2014.

Larson has been serving as acting president of North Hennepin Community College since June 2013. Previously, she served as vice president for academic and student affairs at Hennepin Technical College from 2007 to 2013; as dean of Business and Industry at Lake Superior College from 2004-2007; dean of Construction, Manufacturing and Transportation at Hennepin Technical College from 2000-2004; and general education coordinator at Dakota County Technical College from 1999-2000. Larson has taught at Hennepin Technical College; Minnesota State University, Mankato; Minneapolis Business College; and the University of Minnesota –
Crookston. Larson holds a bachelor’s degree in secondary education, speech communication and political science from Northern State University (SD), a master’s degree in speech communication and industrial relations from Minnesota State University, Mankato, and a doctorate in educational leadership from St. Mary’s University (MN).

In recommending Larson for the role, Chancellor Rosenstone said, “Dr. Larson is an experienced academic leader dedicated to student success and strong partnerships with faculty, staff and the community. She is committed to the mission of community colleges. Under her leadership, North Hennepin Community College will continue its tremendous momentum.”

A national search for a permanent president will be initiated in 2014.

PADILLA NAMED MnSCU VICE CHANCELLOR, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
Ramon Padilla was named vice chancellor of Information Technology and chief information officer. His appointment is effective February 18, 2014.

Padilla has served as associate vice chancellor and deputy chief information officer for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill since 2011. Previously, he served as assistant vice chancellor and CIO, Information Resource Management for the Board of Governors, State University System of Florida from 2005 to 2010, as senior project manager for Keane Corporation/Kyra Infotech assigned to the Kentucky Department of Education from 2003 to 2005, and in a variety of information services roles for Jefferson County/Louisville Metro Government, Louisville, Kentucky from 1988 to 2003, including five years as chief information officer. Padilla holds a bachelor’s degree in psychology from the University of Kentucky and an MBA from the University of Louisville.

In recommending Padilla’s appointment, Chancellor Rosenstone said, “Mr. Padilla is a seasoned IT leader with a broad understanding of the many ways technology can advance the mission of our colleges and universities. He has outstanding experience in large, complex higher education systems and a reputation for the collaborative, service-oriented leadership necessary to meet the needs of the students and communities we serve.”

*The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities include 24 two-year community, technical, and comprehensive colleges and seven state universities serving more than 430,000 students. It is the fifth-largest higher education system of its kind in the United States.*