

# University of Minnesota Regent Election Process

NATHAN HOPKINS

LEGISLATIVE ANALYST, MINNESOTA HOUSE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

Presentation to House Higher Education Finance and Policy Committee

1/13/2021

## Composition of the Board of Regents

### University Charter / Constitution

Territorial Laws 1851, c 28;  
incorporated into the  
Constitution at Article XIII, § 3

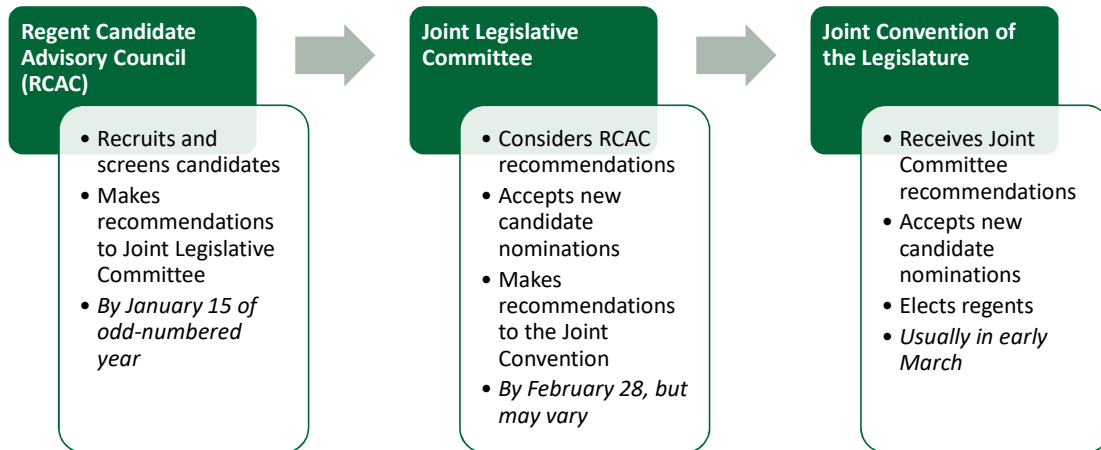
- Twelve regents
- Elected by a joint convention of the Legislature (House and Senate)
- Six-year terms (no term limit)
- Staggered into three “classes,” so four regents typically up for election every biennium
- Vacancies filled by the Governor until next election

### Statute

1976 Laws c 120 § 1–2;  
Minn. Stat. §§ 137.023–024

- One member from each congressional district
  - 8 designated seats; 4 at-large seats
- One at-large seat must be a current university student

## Process Overview



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA REGENT ELECTION PROCESS | MINNESOTA HOUSE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

## Regent Candidate Advisory Council (RCAC)

### Composition

Minn. Stat. § 137.0245, subd. 2

24 members

- Half appointed by Senate; half by the House
- Six-year terms (student members serve two year-terms)
  - Staggered so total of 8 new appointees each even-numbered year
- Two term limit

For each chamber's 12 appointees:

- At least one current student
- No more than 4 current or former legislators
- No more than 8 from the same political party
  - (but party affiliation not required for the appointment)
- Geographic diversity must be "taken into consideration"

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA REGENT ELECTION PROCESS | MINNESOTA HOUSE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

# Regent Candidate Advisory Council (RCAC)

## Duties

Minn. Stat. § 137.0245, subd. 3

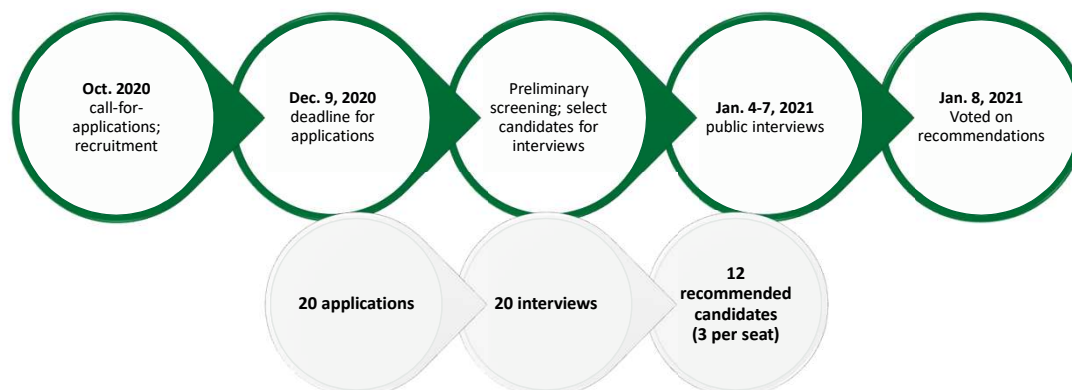
1. Develop selection criteria guidelines for regent applicants
  - Criteria must include diversity in geography; gender; race; occupation, including business and labor; and experience
2. Identify and recruit qualified candidates for open positions
3. Submit candidate recommendations to the joint legislative committee by January 15
  - 2–4 candidates for each open seat

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA REGENT ELECTION PROCESS | MINNESOTA HOUSE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

# Regent Candidate Advisory Council (RCAC)

## 2020-21 Results

Determined by RCAC procedures



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA REGENT ELECTION PROCESS | MINNESOTA HOUSE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

# Regent Candidate Advisory Council (RCAC)

## First District

- Val Aarsvold
- Ruth Johnson
- Randy Simonson\*  
(elected in 2018 to fill vacancy)

## Fourth District

- Daryl Alkire
  - James Farnsworth
  - Karen Schanfield
- Incumbent did not apply*

## Sixth District

- Dave Hoang
- Michael Hsu\* (elected in 2015)
- Kodi Verhalen

## Seventh District

- Doug Huebsch
  - Lucas Sjostrom
  - Michael Yost
- Incumbent did not apply*

\*incumbent regent

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA REGENT ELECTION PROCESS | MINNESOTA HOUSE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

# Joint Legislative Committee

Minn. Stat. § 137.0246; Joint Rule 4.01

## Composed of house and senate higher ed. committees

- Co-chaired

## Meets by February 28

- or other date set by concurrent resolution

## Interviews candidates recommended by RCAC

## May accept new candidate nominations

- Only committee members can nominate
- New nominations require three house members, two senate members
- Congressional district delegations may submit their recommendations to the committee (nonbinding)

## Recommends candidates to Joint Convention

- No more than **one** candidate for each vacancy (may be more when committee truly deadlocks)
- Viva voce roll-call vote
- Requires majority of house members; majority of senate members
- Must "consider" gender, racial, ethnic balance of board

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA REGENT ELECTION PROCESS | MINNESOTA HOUSE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

## Joint Convention of the Legislature

### Joint Rule 4.02

Collect nominations for each open seat:

- Recommendations of Joint Committee are automatically nominated
- Any member of the Legislature may submit additional nominations

Viva voce roll-call vote on each congressional district seat, ~~then student seats, then at-large seats~~

- Candidate receiving the majority of votes cast for the seat is elected
- If necessary, candidate with fewest vote gets dropped for subsequent round of voting

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA REGENT ELECTION PROCESS | MINNESOTA HOUSE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

## Irregular Vacancies

Minnesota Territorial Laws 1851, ch. 28, § 6 (U of M Charter)

- May arise due to a regent's death or resignation
- Replacement appointed by the governor or elected by the legislature (if it is in session) to serve remainder of the term
- If the **governor** appoints a replacement **before the legislature** elects a replacement, the governor's appointee serves only until the close of that annual or special legislative session in which the legislature elects a replacement.
- If the **legislature** elects a replacement **before the governor** makes an appointment, then there is no longer a vacancy for the governor to fill and the elected person immediately fills the vacancy

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA REGENT ELECTION PROCESS | MINNESOTA HOUSE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

# Previous Process

## Prior to RCAC (pre-1988)

Process not as tightly controlled by statute

Roughly four-phases:

1. Regent candidates would "self nominate" for a congressional district seat or an at-large seat;
2. Nominees would be reviewed by a caucus of all legislators from that district, which would vote to recommend candidates;
3. A joint meeting of the House and Senate educational committees would review candidates and congressional caucus recommendations and vote to recommend candidates to the full legislature; and finally
4. A joint legislative convention would review the recommendations and any additional candidates, and then elect the regents.

1986 independent study group on regents selection process

Motivations behind the creation of RCAC included:

- de-politicizing the regent selection process
- broadening citizen involvement
- addressing the perception that regent positions were part of a political spoils system
- diversifying regent candidate pool

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA REGENT ELECTION PROCESS | MINNESOTA HOUSE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

# Previous Process

## 2005 Governor's Role Expanded / Joint Committee Created

- 2005 Legislature formalized the joint committee in statute, and provided a role for the Governor (2005 Laws c. 107, art. 2, §§ 47–50)
  - RCAC made its recommendations to the governor (2–4 candidates per vacancy)
  - The governor then nominated **one candidate** per vacancy to the joint legislative committee
  - The joint legislative committee could only recommend to the joint convention candidates that the governor had nominated
  - If the joint committee did not recommend a governor's nominee, the governor had to submit a different nominee for that vacancy
- Governor's role eliminated in 2007. Composition of joint committee modified.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA REGENT ELECTION PROCESS | MINNESOTA HOUSE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

# Questions?

---



**MN HOUSE  
RESEARCH**

Minnesota House Research Department provides nonpartisan legislative, legal, and information services to the Minnesota House of Representatives.

[www.house.mn/hrd](http://www.house.mn/hrd) | 651-296-6753 | State Office Building | St. Paul, MN 55155