

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
DIVERSITY AND MULTICUTURALISM COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
November 17, 2009**

Diversity and Multiculturalism Committee Members Present: Trustees Duane Benson, Chair; Clarence Hightower, Vice Chair; Christopher Frederick, Tom Renier, Louise Sundin

Diversity and Multiculturalism Committee Members Absent: Terri Thomas

Other Board Members Present: Trustees Cheryl Dickson, Scott Thiss, James Van Houten.

Leadership Council Members Present: Dr. Whitney Harris, Executive Director; President Edna Szymanski.

A meeting of the Diversity and Multiculturalism Committee was held on November 17, 2009, at Wells Fargo Place, 4th Floor Board Room, 30 7th Street East, St. Paul. Chair Benson called the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m.

1. Minutes of the July 21, 2009 Diversity and Multiculturalism Committee

The minutes of the July 21, 2009 meeting were approved as written.

2. Diversity and Multiculturalism Update

1) Planning

- Dr. Whitney Harris reported that the staff of the Diversity and Multiculturalism division has completed over 25 campus meetings or work sessions over the past quarter, meeting with leadership and addressing issues of access and success. Most of these visits included training sessions with faculty, staff and students.
- During the same period, staff from the division also conducted six seminars and workshops on issues of diversity, with a total of over 500 students participating.

2) Evaluation, assessment and accountability

- This fall the division held a joint meeting of diversity officers and affirmative action officers. One of the issues the group explored was the tension between meeting the needs of students, faculty and staff from historically underrepresented communities and the needs of new immigrants or new Americans. A major goal of this work is to review best practices with campus staff.

3) Operations

- The Male Access and Success Study Group has concluded its work. The final report is being edited. The plan is to bring it to Leadership Council Diversity Committee and then to the January Diversity and Multiculturalism Board Committee. A primary outcome will be the development and implementation of best practices that enhance higher education access and opportunity for males.

3. Enrollment and Retention Data for Underrepresented Students

Dr. Harris invited Dr. Craig Schoenecker, System Director for Research, to explain the trends in enrollment and retention of underrepresented students. Dr. Schoenecker said that there has been a steady increase in underrepresented students in both the colleges and universities. There was a significant increase in underrepresented students (Pell eligible, students of color, and first generation students) this fall as compared to a year ago. Perhaps because of the economic recession, there is an increased percentage of new male students and students twenty-five years and older.

There was also a substantial increase this year in the fall-to-fall retention rate of underrepresented full-time students. In response to a question, Dr. Schoenecker said that the goal is to reduce the gap between the retention rate of underrepresented students compared to that of other groups.

Trustee Hightower requested that the retention information be drilled down by underrepresented category. In answer to a question from Trustee Frederick, Dr. Schoenecker said the information about graduation and transfer rates is available on a drill down tool, accessible from the website as part of the accountability dashboard. Trustee Hightower also asked if there was a way to track whether the infusion of cash is making a difference or whether the change is from other factors. Dr. Harris said the answer is yes and no: There is no way to know the precise difference made by the programs, but the results for students participating in a given program can be compared to those of nonparticipants. Dr. Schoenecker said that this year there will be a systemwide analysis of the effects of the Access, Opportunity, and Success Initiative, using data of the individual students that receive services.

Trustee Hightower commented that the eighteen percent overall increase in underrepresented students, as compared to a seven percent increase in students as a whole, is an occasion for celebration. Trustee Benson asked that future reports not only include percentages but actual numbers. Chancellor McCormick commented that ultimately he would like the records to show the completion of degrees and programs, and that there might be recognition given to campuses that increase their completion rates.

In response to a concern raised by Trustee Van Houten, Dr. Schoenecker reported that through NASH, the National Association of System Heads, the Minnesota State system

will be participating in a study working with national researchers on identifying ways to improve the success of underrepresented students.

4. Access, Opportunity and Success Programs for FY 2009

Dr. Mike López, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, and Mr. Shahzad Ahmad, Director of Multicultural Student Services at St. Cloud State University, were introduced to speak about some of the accomplishments of the Access, Opportunity and Success programs at system institutions in FY 2009. Dr. López said that since the Board has received a recent report on the college Access and Opportunity Centers, he would focus on the other uses of the funds in this report.

Dr. López summarized a few of the many successes of the Access and Opportunity Centers. For example, students with the St. Cloud State University Center for Access and Opportunity who were attending St. Cloud public high schools had a 76 percent graduation rate compared to 70 percent graduation rate for all seniors in the district. The center has been selected as a model college access program by the Minnesota College Access Network.

Dr. López reviewed his handout to the Board on the recruitment and retention results from the \$7.4 million that was allocated to system institutions on a formula basis. Universities spent \$564,000 on outreach and recruitment. Although some of the recruitment efforts were directed at middle school and younger high school students, there were still 1,781 new underrepresented students and 831 new students of color. State colleges spent approximately \$1.6 million, which resulted in about 6,800 underrepresented students and students of color.

For retention, the state universities spent close to \$1.4 million to provide services to about 11,000 students. The retention rates for the students receiving access and opportunity services were roughly 68.5 percent for underrepresented students and 66 percent for students of color, compared to 71 percent for the fall-to-fall university retention rate. For colleges, the retention rate for students receiving services is better than the retention rate for the college student body as a whole.

Dr. López called on Shahzad Ahmad to speak about the St. Cloud State University summer bridge program. This program, the Advance Preparation Program (APP), began in 1988 and is now being funded by Access and Opportunity funding. One of its goals has been to reduce student isolation as a way of increasing success. The four components of the program are academic opportunities, out-of-classroom experiences, university orientation, and study skill development. The APP has had a 79.3 percent retention rate between fall 2008 and fall 2009. In addition, the participants in the bridge programs have been student leaders and strong alumni as well.

5. Access, Opportunity and Success program Funding for FY 2010

Dr. López called attention to a handout summarizing the underrepresented money given to the campuses and the strategies for using that money. The \$7.4 million used for funding these programs was allocated on a formula basis, based on the total enrollment and the number of underrepresented students. Since the handout was merely a summary; Dr. López provided further detail on a sample campus program.

This year campuses have been asked to provide requests for funding, similar to grant proposals, outlining the outreach or retention activities planned, academic performance goals and assessment and tracking strategies.

Trustee Sundin raised a concern about the lack of funding for the men's basketball program at Minneapolis Community and Technical College.

In response to a question about whether there were competitive programs for funding, Dr. Harris responded that the \$3.4 million for the access and opportunity centers was competitive, and that the diversity and Multiculturalism division is initiating some small competitive programs.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Gale Rohde