

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
DIVERSITY AND MULTICUTURALISM COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
July 20, 2010**

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**Diversity and Multiculturalism Committee Members Present:** Trustees Louise Sundin, Chair; Jacob England; Alfredo Oliveira; Christine Rice; James Van Houten

**Diversity and Multiculturalism Committee Members Absent:** Trustee Duane Benson, Vice Chair

**Other Board Members Present:** Trustees Christopher Frederick, Thomas Renier

**Leadership Council Members Present:** Whitney Stewart Harris, Executive Director; Phil Davis, President

A meeting of the Diversity and Multiculturalism Committee was held on July 20, 2010, at Wells Fargo Place, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Board Room, 30 7<sup>th</sup> Street East, St. Paul. Chair Sundin called the meeting to order at 10:32 a.m. Trustee Sundin welcomed the new members of the committee and President Phil Davis.

**1. Minutes of June 15, 2010**

The minutes of the June 15, 2010, meeting were approved as written. Trustee Sundin called the committee's attention to recent successes, indicated by the substantial increase in underrepresented students at system institutions, which are detailed in the minutes on page two in point number three.

**2. Diversity and Multiculturalism Division Update**

Due to a shortage of time, this issue was not addressed.

**3. Access, Opportunity and Success Programs**

Chair Sundin called on Dr. Harris, to introduce the campus representatives that were presenting about their programs. Dr. Harris began by thanking Trustee Benson for his work as chair of the committee and said he looked forward to working with Chair Sundin and the new committee. He introduced the presenters from Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM) and Bemidji State University (BSU).

Donna Brown, Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs for Diversity and Inclusion at MSUM, spoke about their Summer Bridge Program. She described how they first recognized the need for the Summer Bridge Program by noting the discrepancy in graduation rates among various demographic groups.

The MSUM Access and Opportunity and Success program includes a new program coordinator; Access, Opportunity and Success apprentices, students that assist with the program; a Living and Learning Community; the American Indian Research and Resource Center; and the Summer Bridge Program.

Jered Pigeon, MSUM Program Coordinator for Multicultural Affairs, said that the Summer Bridge Program was a three-week retention program for underrepresented students which served 18 students this year. The grade point averages of students that attended the Summer Bridge Program courses increased dramatically over their high school grade point averages. The program features mandatory study hours in the evenings, mentors who attend class with the students, and close monitoring of the students' work.

Dr. Brown said that MSUM has been conducting an academic development program. This year the program will be made available to everyone who has participated in the Summer Bridge Program, everyone in the Living and Learning Community and everyone who has been a student apprentice. This program includes meeting with faculty twice a year, intrusive advising with Multicultural Affairs staff, social and cultural events, involvement in student organizations, and consultations with academic advisors prior to registration.

In answer to a question from Trustee Oliveira, Dr. Brown said that the Summer Bridge Program is a retention program rather than a recruitment program. Trustee Van Houten asked whether using a pool of voluntary candidates for the program would skew the measurement results. Dr. Brown responded that although this is a concern, the program's initial concern was recruiting enough participants, and that several participants joined through the influence of their parents and were not necessarily outstanding students or interested in joining on their own. It was also pointed out that there are ways to assess programs to adjust for this issue.

In answer to a question from Chair Sundin about the Living and Learning Community, Dr. Brown said the students live together, take all but one of their courses together, have study hours for the floors, faculty members joining the students in the evenings and eating lunches with the students at noon, and peer mentors on each floor in addition to the resident assistants.

Dr. Harris called on the guest presenters from BSU to talk about their Advising Success Center.

Dr. Lisa Erwin, Vice President for Student Development and Enrollment at BSU, said that one of the motivations for applying for the Access, Opportunity and Success funds was an especially low campus retention rate in 2007. BSU's strategy includes personalized interventions, collaborations across departments, and building students' awareness of their own strengths.

Underrepresented and academically at risk students are eligible for participating in this program; students may belong to more than one category. Twenty percent of the school's students are academically at risk. There is also a large number of first generation students.

Dr. Donald Day, Executive Director of the American Indian Resource Center at BSU, said that BSU's Access, Opportunity and Success work is being supported by an increasingly diverse faculty and staff. The number of American Indian students, for example, increased from 146 in the fall of 2008, to 252 this spring. Much of this increase is a result of the Access, Opportunity and Success funding.

One of BSU's programs is Campus Preview Days, where eighth through twelfth grade students are brought in from all over the state and are given tours of the campus. Another activity is the "Days of Welcome" every year, usually the first week of school, held at the American Indian Resource Center as part of a campuswide orientation for students and their families.

Mary Ward, Director of the BSU Advising Success Center, said that in 2010, 554 students were invited to meet regarding the intrusive advising program. Of these, 229 agreed to use the program. Students averaged four appointments with a retention counselor or others in the Advising Success Center during the semester and completed an end-of-the-year assessment of the program. The fall to spring retention of this group of students was 82 percent, and their average GPA was 2.42 for males and 2.23 for females.

BSU also offered six sections of a First Year Experience course, taught by a retention counselor, covering 140 students. In this group there was a fall to spring retention rate of 92 percent.

The Access, Opportunity and Success money also funds peer tutoring. Fourteen peer tutors served 326 students, providing 1,126 hours of tutoring. Peer tutors developed their own learning outcomes and formed their own cohort group.

Ms. Ward described StrengthsQuest, an assessment instrument developed by the Gallup organization, which is being used to identify student strengths. It is being used in all First Year Experience sessions this year. This year 756 students participated in StrengthQuest. Assessment showed increased levels of effectiveness for students following this program.

#### **4. Diversity and Multiculturalism Committee/Division Work Plan for FY 2011**

Dr. Harris called attention to the work plan included in the Board documents. Items in this work plan include most of the points from the work plan presented to the Board earlier in the day by President Thiss. Dr. Harris acknowledged a continuing key issue: finding ways to analyze return on investment. Sometimes this will be done through numbers; sometime it can only done through anecdotal evidence.

President Davis said that the Leadership Council Diversity Committee is in perfect alignment with the Board's interest in measuring results, especially the success of underrepresented students. There has been considerable success in increasing access; the next step is to focus on persistence, including transfer and graduation rates. It is also a priority to focus on the success of campuses in diversifying the work force; a diverse work force plays a role in the success of underrepresented students.

Trustee Sundin asked if the Power of You program is embedded in the work plan. Dr. Harris said that this is an important tool and a successful program, but that some of the campuses have opted for other tools which have the same goal but different methodologies.

Trustee Sundin said that the work plan would be discussed in more detail in September, and she requested that there be further discussion of point 2.1.

## **5. Discussion of Committee Goals**

Trustee Sundin introduced a draft document she had distributed to the committee concerning proposed goals. The document describes the "R" Factor Program, where "R" represents relationships. Programs are successful in so far as they build relationships among students, faculty and staff.

The program would pilot a performance award grant for programs that enhance the education and success of underrepresented students. Dr. Harris would lead the research and possible development of this program, with advice from President Davis and the Leadership Council Diversity Committee.

Trustee Sundin said that Trustee Benson is supportive of this issue. Trustee Van Houten said that it is an important issue and will take more discussion. Chair Sundin asked that committee members consider the proposal, and it will be discussed at a future meeting. She expressed appreciation for the reports from the Access and Opportunity Centers.

The meeting adjourned at 11:33 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Gale Rohde