

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
JOINT STUDY SESSION OF THE ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS AND
DIVERSITY AND MULTICULTURALISM COMMITTEES
DECEMBER 2, 2010**

Academic and Student Affairs Committee Members Present: Chair Christine Rice; Trustees Duane Benson, Louise Sundin and James Van Houten. Trustee Christopher Frederick participated via telephone.

Academic and Student Affairs Committee Members Absent: Trustees David Paskach and Tom Renier.

Diversity and Multiculturalism Committee Members Present: Chair Louise Sundin; Trustees Duane Benson, Christine Rice and James Van Houten.

Diversity and Multiculturalism Committee Members Absent: Trustees Jacob Englund and Alfredo Oliveira.

Other Board Members Present: Trustees Clarence Hightower and Phil Krinkie.

Leadership Council Committee Co-Chairs Present: Academic and Student Affairs Interim Vice Chancellor Scott Olson, Diversity and Multiculturalism Executive Director Whitney Harris, President Sue Hammersmith and President Larry Litecky.

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Academic and Student Affairs Committee and Diversity and Multiculturalism Committee held a joint study session on December 2, 2010, at Wells Fargo Place, 4th Floor, Board Room, 30 East 7th Street in St. Paul. Chair Rice called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

Presenters:

Scott Olson, Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs
Whitney Harris, Executive Director, Diversity and Multiculturalism
Leslie Mercer, Associate Vice Chancellor
Mike López, Associate Vice Chancellor
Craig Schoenecker, System Director for Research
Barbara Read, Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, Inver Hills Community College
Mary Diedrich, Dean of Student Success Programs, North Hennepin Community College
Larry Litecky, President, Century College
Sue Hammersmith, President, Metropolitan State University

Chair Rice said the aim of the joint study session is to help Trustees gain a clearer understanding about the status of remedial education nationally and within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. The Academic and Student Affairs Committee has a goal of studying the pros and cons of moving all remedial education to two-year

colleges, she said, but decisions on policy cannot be made without first getting adequate information on the issue.

Interim Vice Chancellor Olson said remedial education is a complex issue since services are utilized by a wide variety of students. Students needing remedial help can range from recent high school graduates who are not prepared for college coursework, to adults who are returning to school with limited or outdated skills, to students who are in need of help with only a piece of coursework, such as college algebra.

The Board does not have a policy pertaining to developmental education, but there is a policy pertaining to class placement.

Executive Director Harris said if higher education systems were to adopt a policy that limits remedial education and developmental education services to students at two-year colleges, it would have a detrimental impact on the diversity of the student population at four-year institutions. There are a significant number of underrepresented students who need to pick up only one or two remedial courses at the four-year institutions, he said. Statistics show that students of color are more likely to receive a four-year degree if they start at a four-year institution.

In the system, students planning to attend a two-year college typically take the Accuplacer test for college course placement. The state universities use ACT scores for placement. Students who enter a university without an adequate ACT scores in specified subject areas often take a remedial course in that area.

Associate Vice Chancellor López reviewed national research by experts in the field of remedial education.

Thomas Bailey, Director of the Community College Research Center, says evidence suggests that, on average, developmental education is not very effective in overcoming student weaknesses. He suggests reforming the way remedial education is provided, such as accelerating the coursework over a shorter time span, may result in more successes.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is funding efforts toward boosting graduation rates at community college by replacing weak remedial programs with new technologies and ideas. Pilot strategies being studied include providing academic support to students through approaches such as learning communities, supplemental instruction, intrusive advising/case management and freshmen success courses.

Associate Vice Chancellor López cited a Florida study that used a statewide database to overcome methodical shortcomings when assessing students taking remedial education coursework. The study found remedial courses improved persistence and success in the short term, but it had relatively little effective on overall student completion.

Associate Vice Chancellor Mercer said Dr. Hunter Boylan, Director of the National Center for Developmental Education, has researched developmental education and offers a set of best practices. His research indicates that not all students benefit equally from the same remedial approach. The use of Action Analytics might enable us to determine not only what works best for students in general, but also what strategy works best for certain kinds of students, she said.

Associate Vice Chancellor López said Dr. Boylan maintains that both colleges and universities need to offer remedial coursework since a large percentage of all students come to higher education underprepared. If students with weak academic preparation are allowed to enroll, the system needs to provide needed remedial coursework and support services to help them succeed.

Trustee Van Houten said Boylan's research may be somewhat dated and some of his conclusions are in conflict with recent research. For example, his best practices don't include assessment of student readiness for remedial courses. Some students aren't even ready for the remedial coursework, he said, and there needs to be some research into that. Boylan also does not mention the need for the alignment of remedial coursework with successive coursework taken for credit.

Noting that the cost of providing remedial education is high, Trustee Rice asked if there is data available which shows which approaches have proven to be the most successful and beneficial to students in the system.

President Litecky said that for community colleges, the Achieving the Dream initiative has been the primary action research focus over the past seven years. It started with 82 community colleges participating nationwide and now has about 120. The former executive director of Achieving the Dream, along with the head of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, came to Minnesota last March and met with five-person teams from 26 system colleges.

Four main strategies were identified and discussed:

- Learning Communities;
- Student success courses which provide freshmen with information on effective study skills, student planning and motivation;
- Intrusive advising and case management;
- Supplemental instruction, including peer tutors and tutors linked to classes and supplements to online learning.

Each system college team was asked to pick three of the four strategies to focus on and pilot at their institution, President Litecky said.

System Director Craig Schoenecker offered a context for developmental education in the system, including trends in enrollment, courses and expenditures. He also offered

information on trends in developmental education course-taking, persistence, completion and course success.

Key points of his presentation included:

- Developmental courses and enrollments are increasing at the colleges and decreasing or are stable at the universities;
- 50 percent of developmental coursework at the colleges and 80 percent at the universities is in mathematics;
- The estimated direct expenditures for developmental courses were \$29.5 million in fiscal year 2009;
- The system's percent of fall entering students taking developmental courses has been stable since increases at the colleges were offset by decreases at the universities;
- Underrepresented students and female students are more likely to take developmental courses. Females are more likely to enroll in nursing programs, where math competency is needed and that may lead to more remedial services;
- Underrepresented students who take developmental courses have persistence and completion rates that are comparable to those of students who don't take these courses;
- As a sub-group of underrepresented students, students of color who take developmental courses have higher persistence and completion rates than students who don't take these courses.

For various reasons, including the economic recession, student demographics in higher education have changed in recent years and the data presented may not adequately reflect those changes, Trustee Van Houten said.

Trustee Benson said the Board of Trustees is in the position of trying to fix a problem that it didn't create. He asked how the system, as well as other higher education systems in the state, can better communicate to the system that provides most of the incoming students that many are not prepared for the rigors of higher education coursework.

Remedial education in the system is funded by tuition and state appropriations. Trustee Rice said it is frustrating that in times of tight budgets, remedial education is not resulting in a larger number of students getting degrees.

Trustee Krinke said Trustees cannot have a narrow view of student success. Just because a student who takes remedial education doesn't cross the finish line by getting a degree, that doesn't mean that he or she hasn't benefitted from the education received. Investment in any type education has value, he said.

Mary Diedrich, Dean of Student Success Programs at North Hennepin Community College, agreed. She said she worked with a student who is a barber and wanted to take some entrepreneurship courses so he could open up his own shop. Although he needed to take some remedial coursework and ultimately didn't leave with a degree, he was a

success since he left with the skills he needed to become a small business owner, she said.

Barbara Read, Inver Hills Community College Vice President of Student Affairs, offered insight on the Learning Communities approach at her college. To help students transition to successful college learners, they utilize “wrap around” student services to those in the learning communities, such as supplemental instruction, structured learning assistance and tutors linked to classes. A counselor is assigned to each learning community to work on career development and personal issues.

Inver Hills Community College and Century College have received funding as partners in an Access and Opportunities Center of Excellence. The center funds have allowed them to hire a research consultant from the University of Minnesota to follow learner outcomes from students in learning communities since 2007, she said, adding that a report on these outcomes could be compiled.

Their Access and Opportunities Center of Excellence will be hosting an institute at the end of spring semester, Dr. Read said. National experts on leaning communities from Kingsborough Community College, as well as from Century College and Inver Hills Community College, will be presenting information regarding successful remedial education strategies. It is hoped that this information will help other colleges and universities in the system to start their own learning communities, or help bring existing communities to a new level, she said.

Executive Director Harris pointed out that as a condition of receiving an Access and Opportunities grant, colleges agreed to share best practices models and strategies with other colleges and universities in the system.

In another effort to share information on best practices within the system, President Litecky noted that a system-wide conference will be held on February 28. A survey was sent to all colleges last August asking for best practices in developmental reading, writing and math courses. Information on selected best practices models will be presented to college and university teams attending the February conference.

Trustee Van Houten added there probably needs to be two approaches to remedial education in the system. Some students need basic remedial help to get through college coursework. Another group has the students who need some remedial help for a specific major. For example, a student who wants to pursue an engineering degree may only need some remedial help in math in order to be successful in that career path.

He said it might be worthwhile for the Board to consider having system-wide policies on developmental education so strategies are consistent.

Trustee Hightower said the study session presentations showed that the remedial education efforts happening in the system are having success. Most remedial education is

happening at colleges, not universities. Once taken, students were proving to be more successful. The biggest concern, he said, is that committing to access and opportunity is expensive. But the Board can't be hypocritical and recruit underrepresented students who may be less prepared for higher education coursework and then say the needed remedial services are too expensive to offer.

Chair Rice said the data provided by Dr. Schoenecker showed that for two-year colleges, 60 percent of incoming students require some sort of remediation. She asked if there is data to show what percentage of the group eventually go on to get a degree. This would help the committee evaluate how successful remediation efforts are in the system and determine a future course of action.

Dr. Schoenecker said information on degree completion for development education students could be gathered by reviewing data going back six years.

Associate Vice Chancellor Mercer said Trustees need to recognize that the older data may not be reflective of the current status of remedial education. The student population over the past six years has been changing and remedial efforts have changed as well, she said.

Associate Vice Chancellor López pointed out that the Board made a commitment to put a substantial amount of funding toward support services for underrepresented students beginning in 2007, so data on remedial education prior to this date may not be reflective of the current status.

Interim Vice Chancellor Olson said information on the degree completion rates for students in developmental education could be provided to the Academic and Student Affairs and Diversity and Multiculturalism Committees in January.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 am
Respectfully submitted,
Margie Takash, Recorder