

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
DIVERSITY AND EQUITY  
MEETING MINUTES  
October 17, 2012**

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*Diversity and Equity Committee Members Present:* Cheryl Dickson, Chair; Trustees Brett Anderson, Vice Chair; Ann Anaya, Duane Benson, Louise Sundin.

*Diversity and Equity Committee Members Absent:* None

*Other Board Members Present:* Trustees Dawn Erlandson, Clarence Hightower, Margaret Anderson Kelliher, Philip Krinkie, Alfredo Oliveira, David Paskach, Maria Peluso, Thomas Renier, and Michael Vekich.

*Leadership Council Members Present:* Steven Rosenstone, Chancellor; Whitney Stewart Harris, Chief Diversity Officer; Gail M. Olson, General Counsel; Rassoul Dastmozd, President; Sue Hammersmith, President.

A meeting of the Diversity and Equity Committee was held on October 17, 2012, at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, 4th Floor, McCormick Room, 30 7th Street East, St. Paul. Chair Dickson called the meeting to order at 8:50 a.m.

### **1. Review of Minutes**

The minutes of the June 19, 2012 meeting were approved as published.

### **2. Proposed Amendments to Board Policy 1B.1 Nondiscrimination in Employment and Education Opportunity (First Reading)**

Associate Director for Diversity and Equity, Renée Hogoboom, introduced the proposed Board amendment by reminding the committee of the Equal Education and Employment Opportunity policies that fall under the auspices of the Diversity and Equity committee:

- 1B.1 - Nondiscrimination in Employment and Education Opportunity
- 1B.2 - Affirmative Action in Employment
- 1B.3 - Sexual Violence Policy
- 1B.4 - Access and Accommodation for Individuals with Disabilities

Board Policy 1B.1 was first approved in 1994 and amended in 2006.

Associate Director Hogoboom reviewed the proposed changes in Board Policy 1B.1 - Nondiscrimination in Employment and Education Opportunity. The proposed changes were:

- The addition of gender identity and gender expression to the protected classes (also included in the definition of sexual orientation in the Minnesota Human Rights Act);
- The clarification that retaliation is prohibited if individuals have made a complaint or assisted or participated in an external complaint process, such as with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, the Minnesota Department of Human Rights or other enforcement agencies; and;

- The definition of student now mirrors the definition in the student conduct code. The new definition covers individuals who are not currently enrolled as a student, but have a continuing relationship with a college or university.

Trustee Anaya expressed concerns that the title of the policy might be negative. She suggested renaming it as an equal opportunity statement. Associate Director Hogoboom told her it had been named a nondiscrimination policy because the U.S. Department of Education requires both an equal opportunity and a nondiscrimination policy. The term nondiscrimination also assists users in recognizing the purpose of the policy.

Trustee Anaya felt that an equal opportunity statement should be incorporated into the policy as a way of fostering a more welcoming environment for students. At a minimum, the policy should include a definition of equal opportunity.

Chief Diversity Officer Whitney Harris commented Trustee Anaya's concerns will be discussed with General Counsel.

### **3. Proposed Work Plan for Diversity and Equity Committee 2012-2013**

Committee Chair Dickson reviewed the Proposed Work. Trustee Anaya commented that she felt the goals were lofty and broad. She suggested that the committee should concentrate on the retention of current staff and students and the recruitment of students and staff of color.

Chancellor Steven Rosenstone said that he felt that the study sessions could be framed in such a way that responded to Trustee Anaya's request. Committee Chair Dickson said that it was important to look at access and affordability, and to explore what strategies might be effective in reducing barriers, recruitment, access and success for underrepresented students. Committee Chair Dickson commented that affordability is a big piece, but so is the under-preparedness of students and the cost associated with remediation.

Trustee Sundin said that Dr. Larry Litecky previously provided the board with a list of recognized strategies for retention. She suggested the committee revisit those strategies.

Trustee Benson agreed on the need to identify barriers. He gave an example that Post-Secondary Education Opportunity (PSEO) programs seem to attract many upper-middle-class students and not the underserved/underrepresented populations.

Committee Chair Dickson passed out the definitions of underserved and underrepresented students. Trustee Sundin inquired as to whether the definitions could be changed and gave some recommendations. Chief Diversity Officer Harris suggested taking a systematic approach in looking at the definitions by doing research and making recommendations.

Committee Chair Dickson and Trustee Sundin commented on the under-preparedness of students and the lack of alignment between K-12 curriculum and incoming expectations for students at our colleges.

Chancellor Rosenstone assured the board that a group has been meeting with Commissioner Brenda Cassellius and that work is underway on strategies to better align the standards.

Legislation will be introduced in the upcoming session to improve secondary and post-secondary alignment.

Committee Chair Dickson commented that there are five things to consider (when looking at students): preparation, admission, retention, graduation and placement. It is important that an attempt be made to track placement for the underserved and underrepresented. She added that we need serious outcomes measured with a clear, firm critical eye.

Trustee Benson agreed that outcomes and measurements are needed, and he asked for suggestions on measurement strategies that support access.

Chair Hightower stated he was not convinced the board knew how to frame the question about whether the Diversity and Equity committee should be sunsetted at the end of this year. He suggested the committee frame the question so that an answer could be discerned.

The meeting adjourned at 9:43 a.m.  
Respectfully submitted by Christine McGing