

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
DIVERSITY AND MULTICUTURALISM COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
March 15, 2011**

Diversity and Multiculturalism Committee Members Present: Trustees Louise Sundin, Chair; Trustee Duane Benson, Vice Chair; Jacob Englund; Alfredo Oliveira Christine Rice; James Van Houten

Diversity and Multiculturalism Committee Members Absent: None

Other Board Members Present: Trustees Cheryl Dickson, Clarence Hightower, Scott Thiss

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

A meeting of the Diversity and Multiculturalism Committee was held on March 15, 2011, at Wells Fargo Place, 4th Floor Board Room, 30 7th Street East, St. Paul. Chair Sundin called the meeting to order at 11:12 a.m.

1. Minutes of January 19, 2011

The minutes of the January 19, 2011, meeting were approved as written.

2. Diversity and Multiculturalism Division Update

Trustee Sundin called on Dr. Whitney Harris to give the update.

- Education Training
 - In February, the Academic and Student Affairs and Diversity and Multiculturalism divisions held their annual conference, with over 300 participants attending the event. At this event, colleges and universities shared best practices. More and more of these practices involve clearly articulated goals and measurable outcomes in their programs.

The Diversity and Multiculturalism division, under the guidance of President Davis and the Leadership Council Diversity Committee, held a forum with the chief diversity officers and presidents. President Davis said that at the same conference a year ago, three presidents met with the Chief Diversity officers, who expressed a need to communicate more closely with presidents. This year, a much greater number of presidents attended for the purpose of increased understanding of the role of diversity officers by using structured conversations.

- The division recently hosted a webinar, “Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Efforts on Access and Success for American Indian Students.” The webinar focused on best practices for working with American Indians in higher education.
- Recently, at the request of the Minnesota Minority Education Project, the Office of the Chancellor developed a ten-year recap of progress of underrepresented students in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. Some of the points made: (1) Between 2001 and 2010, the enrollment of students of color increased by 118 percent. This speaks highly of what is happening on the campuses. (2) Enrollment of students who were Pell-eligible (the proxy for low income) increased by 53 percent to 86,113 between 2001 and 2010. (3) Enrollment of underrepresented students (first-generations students, low income students, and students of color) increased by 29 percent.

Dr. Harris said that the division would be doing a training session in April for diversity officers and access and opportunity officers on techniques that work well for low-income and first generation students.

3. The Power of YOU Update

Whitney Harris invited Donovan Schwichtenberg, President of Saint Paul College, to introduce the presenters and the presentation on the Power of YOU program.

Dr. Schwichtenberg said that the Power of YOU program began in 2006 as a partnership between Minneapolis Community and Technical College, Metropolitan State University and Saint Paul College, with the support of the mayors of both Minneapolis and St. Paul. It was conceived as a result of a 2004 Citizens League report that said that only three percent of Minnesota’s African American and American Indian ninth graders, and five percent of Latino ninth graders, were projected to complete a bachelor’s degree before they were 25 years old. The Power of YOU makes college possible for many who would not otherwise have pursued higher education.

To be eligible for the program, students must reside in either Minneapolis or St. Paul, graduate from a Minneapolis or St. Paul high school, meet the college admissions requirements, meet the financial aid criteria, and meet the family adjusted gross income cap of \$75,000.

Reede Webster, Executive Director of the Minneapolis Community and Technical College Foundation and Dean of College Advancement, said that the inception of the program was not only influenced by the Citizen’s League report but by the Itasca Group’s *Closing the Gap* report and other reports that spoke of the large achievement gap in Minnesota. He helped the initial organizing team to flesh out the program and fundraise. The Power of You has three overall goals: 1) K-12 reach back, reaching back to students in the public schools and working with teachers, counselors and students, to raise awareness of post-high school options and the free tuition provided by Power of YOU

and Pell grants. 2) Provision of financial support and grants 3) Retention and support services. Each of the participating institutions put together a support team for the students.

Many of the students are first generation and are not always comfortable navigating the system, about 70 to 100 percent of them are low income, and many face academic and day-to-day life challenges: about 10 - 15 percent are homeless or have housing challenges. To support the program, over \$5.6 million was raised from more than 40 foundations, corporations and individuals. The Legislature granted one-time funding in fiscal year 2009. This program has been a demonstration project, showing that by building a different model, enrollment and success rates could be increased.

Kathleen Gordon, Director of the Power of YOU program at Saint Paul College, said that students were recruited through high schools, community events, and various organizations. There are financial aid workshops and information sessions for prospective students and their parents. Once students are accepted, each college offers them orientations, registration assistance and welcome events.

Each student is assigned a retention advisor. Other support services offered include tutoring, study sessions, parent support groups, leadership academies, study skills training, an early alert retention system, and summer bridge programs between high school and college.

Power of YOU students who began at Saint Paul College or Minneapolis Community and Technical College are encouraged to continue their education at Metropolitan State University. They are eligible for \$1,000 in educational support per semester for up to four semesters.

The recruitment process targets urban, low-income and first-generation students. Over the last five years, more than 70 percent of the students were low income. In 2010, 100 percent were low income. The vast major of participants are students of color. Most require developmental coursework to raise their skills to the college level.

Nasreen Mohamed, Director of the Power of YOU program at Minneapolis Community and Technical College, described the results of an independent evaluation conducted by the Wilder Foundation. According to this evaluation, eight out of ten students reported that the Power of YOU program influenced their decision to go to college. The enrollment of new high school graduates from Minneapolis and St. Paul high school students nearly doubled at Minneapolis Community and Technical College and St. Paul College. Enrollment of students of color increased by 150 percent; and enrollment of low-income students increased by 115 percent. The Power of YOU students had a fall-to-fall retention rate of 65 percent, which is higher than the rate for the general student population. Ms. Mohamed said that the program empowers students and helps students who were underprepared in high school.

President Schwichtenberg distributed a Power of YOU newsletter and described some of the successes of participating students.

Trustee Van Houten said that the issue is too important not to evaluate the program more vigorously. Trustee Sundin said that there was also value in the individual stories that cannot always be quantified.

Trustee Oliveira asked whether they place students after they graduate. President Schwichtenberg answered that all students who attend the college are able to receive employment or transfer assistance.

Trustee Rice asked about whether there was data after the 2006 date referenced in the graph in the PowerPoint and whether the program received funds from Achieving the Dream. President Davis said that the Wilder study was focused on the change between the period before the inception of the program and the early cohorts. There is data available for later years. The establishment of an income cap after the second year flattened the trend line, because many of the more recent students are very low-income students. Except for the recent addition of Century College to Achieving the Dream, none of the system colleges are members, so they do not receive any money from Achieving the Dream; but there has been extraordinary support from private philanthropic organizations and from individuals.

Trustee Benson said he was interested in the change in people's perceptions: that many of the students did not initially think college was possible for them. He said that in general education for this population was free anyway; however, they didn't know about it, and they did not know they could be college students. The outreach made a big difference. A majority were underprepared, but they would have been more academically ready if they knew they could be college students. These are solvable issues addressed by giving people good information and assistance.

Trustee Dickson said she hoped the Power of YOU program can continue. It is important to provide hope. To get real reachback, she said, the program needs to be sustained over a long period of time. Trustee Hightower said that if there was the kind of rigorous review requested by Trustee Van Houten, if it could be demonstrated that this program is making a profound difference, it would challenge the system to find a way to sustain it.

Chancellor McCormick said the Power of YOU was initially fueled by grant money. The grantors did not intend to sustain it. The three presidents sustained it through a difficult time. If the system does the research and decides the program makes a difference, perhaps the system does need to get behind it, include it in the budget request and replicate the model.

Dr. Harris said he supports research, but he has talked to four Power of YOU students in homeless shelters. He thinks it is important to keep balance between the research numbers and the stories of the individuals affected by the program.

In response to a question, General Counsel Gail Olson said that selection of students has nothing to do with race. There is a misunderstanding for some people that special consideration is given in admissions or financial aid on the basis of race or ethnicity.

Trustee Sundin and President Davis expressed thanks to the guests for their presentation and the work they have done on the Power of YOU.

4. Demographic Characteristics of College and University Graduates

This agenda item was deferred to the next meeting because of a shortage of time.

The meeting adjourned at 12:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Gale Rohde