

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES JOINT STUDY SESSION:
ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS AND
DIVERSITY AND EQUITY COMMITTEES
JANUARY 16, 2013**

***Academic and Student Affairs Committee Members Present:** Chair Duane Benson; Trustees Alexander Cirillo, Cheryl Dickson, Dawn Erlandson, Maria Peluso and Louise Sundin.*

***Diversity and Equity Committee Members Present:** Chair Cheryl Dickson, Brett Anderson, Duane Benson and Louise Sundin.*

***Academic and Student Affairs Committee Members Absent:** Margaret Anderson Kelliher.*

***Diversity and Equity Committee Members Absent:** Ann Anaya*

***Other Board Members Present:** Trustees Clarence Hightower, Philip Krinkie, Alfredo Oliveira and Michael Vekich.*

***Leadership Council Representatives Present:** Chancellor Steven Rosenstone, Vice Chancellor Douglas Knowlton, and Executive Director for Diversity and Equity Whitney Harris.*

A Joint Study Session with the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Academic and Student Affairs Committee and Diversity and Equity Committee was held on January 16, 2013 at Wells Fargo Place, 4th Floor, Board Room, 30 East 7th Street in St. Paul. Academic and Student Affairs Committee Chair Benson called the session to order at 10:17 am.

1. Closing the Achievement Gap

The goal of the study session was to review and assess the current and planned strategies designed to reduce the academic achievement gap. The achievement gap refers to the disparity between the educational performance of groups of students, especially groups defined by gender, race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status. It can be observed on a variety of measures, including standardized test scores, grade point average, participation, completion and persistence rates.

Chair Benson said addressing the achievement gap is critical for the system. Future growth will come from the diverse populations and the system is in jeopardy if achievement gaps of underrepresented populations, including students from low-income families, first-generation students and students of color, are not addressed.

Research and Planning System Director Craig Schoenecker offered data that shows the system in the past few years has had modest success in narrowing the participation rate gap and completion rate gap for students of color as a group.

But more work needs to be done, Executive Director Harris said. Aggressive system goals are being set: In five years, the system will eliminate the participation gap, reduce the persistence gap by one-half and reduce the completion gap by one-quarter. By 2023, the goal is that all gaps will be eliminated.

There are five significant challenges to achieving these goals, Vice Chancellor Knowlton said:

- Inadequate academic preparedness of students at the time of admission;
- Limited student financial resources;
- Effective use of institutional resources to support high-impact practices;
- A need for more diverse and culturally competent MnSCU faculty and staff
- Active and meaningful collaboration with communities of color to support the strategies.

Vice Chancellor Knowlton said well-researched, multi-impact strategies are being put into place to meet these challenges:

- Improve academic preparedness by partnering with K-12 to close the gap and achieve college readiness for all students. Current initiatives in this area include Generation Next and the Minnesota P-20 Education Partnership. Generation Next is a partnership between the Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts, higher-education, businesses and nonprofits to leverage research and available funding to tackle the achievement gap. Minnesota P-20 Education Partnership works collaboratively to maximize achievements of all students, from preschool through postsecondary education, while promoting the efficient use of financial and human resources.
- Meet students' financial needs by working to increase scholarships, supporting and broadening access to the state grant program for part-time students with financial needs and striving to keep tuition increases modest.
- Implement effective academic strategies statewide, such as increasing access to learning communities and expanding supplemental instruction. Developmental courses can be redesigned and predictive analytics can be used to track student progress and target interventions.
- Increase student support services by enhancing the range of TRIO programs and adding summer bridge or transition programs. The number of first-year experience and extended orientation programs can be expanded and instructive advising increased. Establishing more resource centers for specific populations and increasing relevant co-curricular activities and engagement in student organization are additional examples.

- More supportive climates can be created by enhancing communication and partnerships with underserved communities, including low-income, American Indian, recent and new immigrant populations and communities of color.

Vice Chancellor Knowlton said key partnerships with businesses are integral to the gap-reduction efforts. Through these partnerships, underrepresented populations will see more work-based internships, apprenticeships and job-shadowing opportunities.

In terms of measuring the success of these efforts on campuses, Chancellor Rosenstone said metrics developed last year as part of the implementation of the strategic framework will be used. These metrics will be an important part of the conversations he will have with presidents during performance reviews.

Just as the presidents will be held accountable for progress made on campuses, Chancellor Rosenstone said he will be held accountable to the Board for overall system progress on narrowing the gaps.

There was a discussion on monitoring efforts and the timing of reports made to the Board. Chair Benson voiced concern that an annual reporting cycle may not be sufficient.

Many of the metrics are oriented toward an annual reporting cycle, System Director Schoenecker said. However, some performance-based measures, such as enrollment figures on students of color, can be reported by semester.

Trustee Cirillo said two sets of metrics could be developed. One set could be geared toward reporting outcomes on a yearly basis, while another set of process metrics could operate on a shorter timeframe. Examples of process metrics would be how many projects are put into place or the amount of money spent on an initiative during a specified timeframe.

Board Chair Hightower said the goals pertaining to closing the achievement gap are ambitious, but they are the right ones. He sees the Board of Trustees being involved on the governance side of the effort in the following ways:

- Holding campus leadership, as well as themselves, accountable;
- Passing policies that support the forward movement of this goal;
- Monitoring and measuring the work that leads to the right outcomes;
- Being a strong advocate for programs that work and lead to the right outcomes.

The meeting adjourned at 11:35 am
Respectfully submitted,
Margie Takash, Recorder