

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES STUDY SESSION  
STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING CAMPUS CLIMATE CHALLENGES  
FACING OUR STUDENTS  
May 17, 2016**

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**Board Members Present:** Chair Michael Vekich, Trustees Ann Anaya, Margaret Anderson Kelliher, Duane Benson, Elise Bourdeau, Alex Cirillo, Jay Cowles, Dawn Erlandson, Bob Hoffman, Philip Krinkie, Maleah Otterson, Thomas Renier, Louise Sundin and Chancellor Steven Rosenstone

**Board Members Absent:** Erma Vizenor, Kelly Charpentier-Berg

**Call to Order**

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees held a study session on May 17, 2016, at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, Fourth Floor, McCormick Room, 30 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street in St. Paul. Chair Michael Vekich called the session to order at 3:03 PM.

**Strategies for Addressing Campus Climate Challenges Facing our Students and Update on the Chief Diversity Office and Chief Diversity Officer Position**

Chancellor Rosenstone introduced the subject of the study session, which will focus on campus climate and the needs for the future. Chair Vekich welcomed Toyia Younger, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Interim Chief Diversity Officer and Josefina Landrieu, Director of Diversity Programs and Evaluation.

**Updates**

Associate Vice Chancellor Younger provided an update on conversations, consultations, and activities regarding the Office of Diversity and Equity and the Chief Diversity Officer's (CDO) position. There will be a formal presentation about the CDO position and consultation in June.

Student Affairs and the Office of Diversity and Equity held a systemwide conference on student affairs and diversity issues in February 2016 for over 300 MnSCU employees.

Vice Chancellor for Human Resources Mark Carlson also has been working collaboratively with the Diversity and Equity Office. Members of the Inter Faculty Organization and the Minnesota State College Faculty were invited to attend the U of M symposium, "*Keeping Our Faculty of Color.*" MnSCU had its own symposium to share this information with all the bargaining units and to begin strategic planning for recruitment and retention practices within the system and on our campuses.

Josefina Landrieu, Director of Diversity Programs and Evaluation in the Office of Diversity and Equity, reported on work and other projects in her unit. Most of this work follows the

strategic diversity goals of the system including Campus Diversity Plans. The plans are due to the chancellor on June 1, 2016, and will be discussed during each campus president's evaluation. There campuses were provided a template and a toolkit that outlined the entire process to help them develop their plans, as well as to assess and implement these plans. Director Landrieu has visited many campuses to help support the committees working on the plans.

Other areas of work include professional development for faculty and staff on cultural competency and pedagogy, a system office Intercultural Passport Program, and an Educational Disparities Data Brief to be disseminated to all campuses in helping to inform the decision making process on educational disparities among our students.

Trustee Anaya asked what metrics are used to measure the success of the Diversity Plans. Director Landrieu said that the five equity measures from the system are: student and employee diversity, climate, and student success and completion, along with the six system strategic goals used to measure their progress.

Trustee Benson asked if there was a measurement on procurement. Director Landrieu replied that minority owned vendors/suppliers are one of the six strategic goals addressed in the diversity plans.

Chancellor Rosenstone said that the governor has invited MnSCU to be part of the State's Diversity Inclusion Council. The council is working with other state agencies so, everyone benefits across the system, not just at the campus level.

Trustee Cirillo questioned what cultural competency baseline was being used. Director Landrieu answered it was the Intercultural Development Inventory that is the most widely used in the system.

### **Campus Climate**

Associate Vice Chancellor Younger presented the campus climate challenges facing students, especially students of color and the strategies MnSCU has to address them. Campus climate can affect student success, retention, and completion rates. There are varieties of dimensions in diversity including race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and gender expression, disability and religion. Associate Vice Chancellor Younger said the focus would be on the six MnSCU strategic diversity goals:

- 1) Eliminate the achievement gap;
- 2) Increase the diversity of the student body;
- 3) Increase and retain diversity of staff and faculty;
- 4) Build partnerships with diverse communities;
- 5) Increase diversity in our vendors and suppliers;
- 6) Ensure a welcoming and supportive campus environment.

The last goal also pertains to campus climate, which is one of the MnSCU equity measures for institutional performance. Campus climate refers to the experiences and quality of interactions of individuals and groups on a campus. It is not monolithic and there is not a one size fits all approach. There are four elements/dimensions of climate:

- 1) Historical legacy of inclusion/exclusion;
- 2) Compositional diversity (basically numbers);
- 3) Psychological dimension (perceptions and attitudes);
- 4) Behavioral dimension (interactions).

Campus climate influences educational outcomes both positively and negatively for all students. The psychological dimension has tangible effects on the transition and adjustment to college especially for students of color, but it effects all students and their sense of belonging on campus. Climate has a direct and an indirect impact on retention, not just completion rates.

Trustee Anderson Kelliher commented that it is not only the students who are having this experience, but also their allies who are reacting or noticing these experiences of the student.

Behavioral dimension focuses on what actually happens and/or the interactions on a campus. It has a positive impact for all students. The exposure and interactions with faculty and staff can influence student outcomes and experiences.

Associate Vice Chancellor Younger said students, staff and faculty of color and other under-represented groups experience a different climate than their white counterparts. Because of this, the level of student activism on campuses has increased dramatically across the country. Students are demanding an end to systemic and structural racism on campus and are issuing Demand Letters. There are over 80 colleges and universities who have received Demand Letters. They can be found at “[thedemands.org](http://thedemands.org)”.

Associate Vice Chancellor Younger said she and the chancellor met with students leaders across the state to hear student experiences on MnSCU campuses. Some of the scenarios included a Muslim student who had trouble finding appropriate food in the cafeteria, a Jewish student penalized for missing class due to a Jewish holiday, and lack of diversity in campus publications. We need to be proactive rather than reactive in helping to create welcoming environments for our students. We need culturally competent leaders to ask questions and to be aware of the necessity to ask these questions.

Director Landrieu shared the steps that are being taken at the system office and on our campuses to address some of the climate issues. All campuses are working on diversity plans that will include action steps and outcomes. A Student Diversity Taskforce was created to act as an advisory group to address and inform system leadership of issues. Climate metrics throughout the system are being reviewed. Diversity mapping is happening on three campuses.

Trustee Anderson Kelliher complimented the presentation. She added that students leave campuses because people do not respond to issues that are happening on campus.

Trustee Erlandson asked if they system will be considering other factors of diversity when reviewing campus climate. Associate Vice Chancellor Younger said that racial diversity is the starting point, but the broader spectrum of diversity will be addressed.

Trustee Sundin said board members might benefit by hearing the stories of students featured in a video shown at the “Power of You” event at Minneapolis Community and Technical College.

Trustee Benson commented that it is urgent to address and make progress on diversity issues or else something disruptive is going to happen.

Trustee Anaya suggested having report cards on diversity that can be used as a campus measurement. Chancellor Rosenstone said report cards indicating progress on diversity will be included in each president’s upcoming performance review.

The meeting adjourned at 4:09 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kelli Lyng, Recorder