



**MINNESOTA STATE**  
Office of Equity and Inclusion

# 2024 – 2028 Strategic Plan



# Contents

- At a Glance: Minnesota State Office of Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. . . . . 03
  - Office of Equity and Inclusion Mission . . . . . 03
  - Office of Equity and Inclusion Vision . . . . . 03
  - Minnesota State Non-Discrimination Statement . . . . . 03
- Strategic Planning Background and Purpose. . . . . 04
- Strategic Priority Areas . . . . . 05
- Embedding Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility within Minnesota State . . . . . 06
- Strategic Plan Strengths, Limitations, and Opportunities. . . . . 07
- Proposed Process and Partnerships . . . . . 09
- Key Definitions . . . . . 10
- Strategic Priority Areas and Goals . . . . . 12
  - Priority Area 1: Operationalizing Equity . . . . . 13
  - Priority Area 2: Operationalizing Access and Opportunity . . . . . 16
  - Priority Area 3: Campus Climate . . . . . 20
- References . . . . . 22



# At a Glance: Minnesota State Office of Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan

## Office of Equity and Inclusion Mission

The Minnesota State Office of Equity and Inclusion works to center equity, as well as embed equity-minded and anti-racist practices throughout all Minnesota State operations. To realize equitable outcomes for both students and employees, our collective pursuit of Equity 2030 necessitates intentionality, broad culture change, innovation, collaboration, and a holistic approach. The values that guide this work include anti-racism, intersectionality, access and opportunity, and cultural competency and responsiveness.

## Office of Equity and Inclusion Vision

It is the Office of Equity and Inclusion's vision that our educational environments are culturally relevant, responsive, and innovative to the students we serve. Our students are assets, we affirm their identities and lived experiences, and provide spaces that are emotionally safe and reflect who students are. We are recognized and valued as thought leaders on equity and inclusion and feel empowered to lead as experts in the field.

## Minnesota State Non-Discrimination Statement

Minnesota State prohibits discrimination and harassment against persons in the terms and conditions of employment, personnel practices, or access to and participation in educational programs, services, and activities on the basis of membership or perceived membership in any of the following protected classes: race, sex (including pregnancy, child birth, and related medical conditions), color, creed, religion, age, national origin, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, familial status, and membership or activity in a local human rights commission. Protected class also includes genetic information for employees.



# Strategic Planning Background and Purpose

The Office of Equity and Inclusion began its most recent strategic planning process in Fall 2022, to continue advancing and aligning strategies for equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging with the overarching goals of Minnesota State. This plan builds on previous equity and inclusion strategic plans (both 2015–2017, and 2020–2023), and draws on the commitment of the Minnesota State chancellor and chancellor’s cabinet to address equity gaps through the strategic vision of Equity 2030.

Equity 2030 aims to close the educational equity gaps across race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and geographic location at every Minnesota State college and university by 2030.

This strategic plan is intended to guide the Office of Equity and Inclusion’s work in the immediate and long-term future (2024–2028).

# Strategic Priority Areas

The Office of Equity and Inclusion - through its strategic planning process - has identified three strategic priority areas that are important for ensuring equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging within Minnesota State. The priority areas are unique and distinct from each other, yet interconnected in critical ways. They are:



## Operationalizing Equity

Defining and measuring progress toward Equity 2030 goals, identifying and applying best practices, and implementing structures that standardize equity.



## Operationalizing Access and Opportunity

Ensuring campus policies/procedures and federal/state guidelines are met to provide supports and opportunities for students and employees.



## Campus Climate

Assessing a sense of inclusion, belonging, and safety for students and employees across Minnesota State to support evidence-based decision-making.

# Embedding Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility within Minnesota State

The Office of Equity and Inclusion's long-term goals are that:

- » Disparities in student and employee outcomes and experiences are eliminated across Minnesota State.
- » Minnesota State workforce diversity is strengthened through equity in recruitment, hiring, promotion, retention, and advancement.

The Office of Equity and Inclusion strives to embed equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging into all Minnesota State operations. This integration is essential in the daily activities of administrators, faculty, and staff, as well as in the overall experiences of students across all colleges and universities within Minnesota State. To be more specific, every student, faculty member, and staff member will not only understand the impact of equity, diversity, and inclusion on themselves and their respective roles but also to proactively work toward achieving equitable outcomes, enhancing diversity, and fostering an inclusive environment for all members of the Minnesota State community.

# Strategic Plan Strengths, Limitations, and Opportunities

## Minnesota State Equity Strategy

- » Provide a framework for Equity 2030 and elevate promising practices that influence Minnesota State equity strategies.
- » Develop, review, and shape policies with an equity lens.
- » Ensure compliance with civil rights policies, regulations, and laws across the colleges and universities.
- » Consult with Minnesota State divisions to inform their equity strategy.
- » Partner with academic and student affairs to impact equitable academic outcomes.
- » Promote statewide community engagement and advocacy.
- » Collaborate with human resources to address workforce diversity and talent development.
- » Partner with workforce development to reduce barriers preventing historically underrepresented groups from accessing meaningful employment opportunities.
- » Collaborate with the executive cabinet and advocate for adequate funding to support equity strategies and actions.

## Colleges and Universities Equity Areas of Focus

- » Identify and support the role of diversity officers to shape campus strategy for equity and inclusion.
- » Partner with the academic and student affairs division to address disparities and ensure equity in academic outcomes.
- » Conduct campus climate assessment.
- » Support the recruitment, hiring, and retention of a diverse workforce.
- » Establish partnership with diversity officers and finance/facilities divisions to provide equity in budgeting and facilities management.
- » Establish community partnerships that are culturally responsive to students and the workforce.
- » Apply an equity lens to the use of data to inform practice and support evidence-based decision making.

This strategic plan is intended to serve as a guidepost for our collective work. The Office of Equity and Inclusion sees the strengths, limitations, and opportunities in the plan and will continue to revise and refine strategic priorities as needed to ensure the plan is as strong as it can be, responsive to the needs of colleges, universities, and Minnesota State, and nimble enough to react to a changing environment.

As such, the strategic plan to improve and support equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility throughout Minnesota State is a journey – much more than a destination.

We also recognize that simply closing numerical gaps may not address the cultural and social “education debt” that underpins structural racism (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Therefore, it is important to call attention to the need for this work to carry forward beyond 2030 and ensure that we transform the way our campuses and system operate on a day-to-day basis. Cultures change slowly and intentional culture change requires dedication and time. Our collective work and intentional commitment to equity will help provide a more resilient future for our colleges and universities, our communities, and the state of Minnesota.

**The strategic plan should be considered a work in progress. “Acts of diversity, must be intentional and measurable in order to accrue the educational benefits for students and the institution. In this sense, diversity is a process toward better learning rather than an outcome.”**

- Milem, Chang, and Antonio, 2005



# Proposed Process and Partnerships

The proposed process for implementation of the Office of Equity and Inclusion strategic plan is multipronged and requires the Office of Equity and Inclusion to strengthen collaborative partnerships with colleges, universities, and the Minnesota State system office. It is the Office of Equity and Inclusion's intention to focus on system level goals and outcomes that are within its sphere of influence and that can help guide and support colleges and universities in the work they do to address campus level diversity, equity, and inclusion goals. The Office of Equity and Inclusion intends to provide colleges and universities with the Minnesota State equity strategy to be utilized as a guiding framework for strategic diversity planning and capacity building for diversity, equity, and inclusion. The following flow of activities is proposed to best enable the Office of Equity and Inclusion to maximize their impact, while allowing flexibility for colleges and universities to select the pathway and specific contribution to the overall diversity, equity, and inclusion goals that best fit their needs, available resources, and opportunities for action.

Importantly, the Office of Equity and Inclusion envisions this plan to be a living document. While it is intended to serve as a guiding reference in its current state, we intend to revisit the plan annually and make updates and revisions as certain goals are achieved, as the environment changes, and as new opportunities arise.

*NOTE: An accompanying Strategic Diversity Planning Toolkit is available for use as Minnesota State colleges and universities engage in the development of institutional equity, diversity, and inclusion plans.*

# Key Definitions

A more comprehensive list of key terms and definitions related to equity and inclusion can be found on the Minnesota State Office of Equity and Inclusion website.

**Academic Outcomes:** Outcomes that are the result of activities and time spent in the classroom. At present, these are measured by reviewing student retention, persistence, and graduation rates.

**Affirmative Action:** A set of policies and practices designed to eliminate unlawful discrimination among applicants, remedy the results of such prior discrimination, and prevent such discrimination in the future.

**Affirmative Action Program:** The purpose of the Minnesota State's affirmative action program is to assure that all positions of civil service are equally accessible to all qualified persons, and to eliminate the underutilization of qualified members of protected groups and veterans. Minnesota State is committed to eliminating harassment and discrimination in the workplace and to creating diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplaces.

**Civil Rights Act of 1964:** One in a series of monumental acts of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement that outlawed segregation and employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin (The Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Pub. L. 88-352)).

**Co-Curricular Outcomes:** Outcomes that are the result of activities and time spent outside the classroom. Activities include but are not limited to cultural programming, tutoring services, mental health support, physical activity facilities, and nutrition education. Co-curricular programming is designed to increase students' sense of belonging and provide holistic support to ensure that desired academic outcomes are possible to achieve.

**Equity:** Considered to be distinct from equality, the term acknowledges that addressing unequal outcomes for different groups in society may require a re-distribution of inputs/resources, to addresses the impact of historical and systemic oppression.

# Key Definitions

**Equity Gap (Education):** The educational equity gap is a disparity in a metric, such as graduation completion, term-to-term persistence, etc., along racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, geographical or other major demographic grouping. Educational equity gaps can be measured in many areas. The Equity 2030 goal has a focus on the credential completion rate of students of color, Indigenous students, low-income students, and first-generation students when compared to majority students. The difference in completion rates for each of these groups of students, compared to those students who have experienced historical access to and success in higher education, is what constitutes the educational equity gap.

**Goal:** Desired high-level results for each priority area.

**Priority Area:** A key area of interest and activity that impacts equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging in Minnesota State.

**Strategies:** Activities the Office of Equity and Inclusion will engage in and collaborate with key partners on to work toward achieving the stated goal.

**Title IX:** Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 (commonly referred to as Title IX) is a federal law that protects people from discrimination based on sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity, and pregnancy and related conditions) in education programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance, which includes all Minnesota State colleges and universities (34 C.F.R Part 106).

# Strategic Priority Areas and Goals

The Office of Equity and Inclusion has identified three strategic priority areas which outline specific goals within each area. Each area relies on strong partnerships and collaboration across our colleges and universities to achieve equitable, diverse, inclusive, and accessible working and learning environments throughout Minnesota State. They are:



**Operationalizing Equity**



**Operationalizing Access and Opportunity**



**Campus Climate**

## Priority Area 1: Operationalizing Equity



Operationalizing equity focuses on defining and measuring progress toward Equity 2030 goals, identifying and applying best practices, and implementing structures that standardize equity. The goals and respective strategies within this priority area aim at taking a holistic approach in addressing the academic and non-academic facets of our collective pursuit toward Equity 2030 by ensuring that equity, diversity, and inclusion are woven into the fabric of the operations of Minnesota State and integrated into the work of administrators, faculty, and staff, as well as in the experiences of all students. Faculty, staff, and administrators will not only understand how equity, diversity, and inclusion affects them, but also how they can in their roles act with intention to improve equity in outcomes, embrace diversity, and provide an inclusive experience for all members of the Minnesota State community. Furthermore, we acknowledge that success means more than academic progress within the classroom. To become truly student-ready colleges and universities, we must reimagine how we operate and intentionally undertake transformative action.



# Goal 1.1

Support capacity building of campuses and leadership groups in our pursuit of Equity 2030, and the mechanisms that catalyze systemic change.

## Strategies

## Key Partners

Strategy 1: Provide guidance on and tangible methods for realizing Equity 2030 with associated goals, milestones, expectations, and evaluation and reporting mechanisms.

- » System Office Cabinet
- » Board of Trustees
- » Leadership Council
- » Campus diversity officers
- » Statewide Student Associations
- » Bargaining Units
- » Workforce Development
- » Other System Office Divisions

Strategy 2: Work to normalize the practice of data disaggregation and analysis with an equity and anti-racist lens by providing campuses with guidance on how to utilize data for equity-focused and evidence-based decision making.

- » Center for Data Access and Analytics
- » NextGen
- » System Office Research
- » Bargaining Units
- » Workforce Development

Strategy 3: Develop and facilitate an Equity Leadership Education Institute.

- » Human Resources
- » Campus Diversity Officers
- » Industry Partners

Strategy 4: Create a process to leverage Access and Opportunity funds to support high impact practices and advance the goals of Equity 2030 across Minnesota State.

- » Innovation and Collaboration
- » Finance
- » Statewide Student Associations
- » Campus Diversity Officers

Strategy 5: Develop systemwide guidance on an equity-focused policy, procedure, and operations review processes for campus use.

- » Board of Trustees
- » Campus Diversity Officers
- » Policy Review Committee
- » Chief of Staff

Strategy 6: Partner with the Center for Data Access and Analytics to continue development of the Equity Scorecard to meet the needs of Minnesota State, alongside associated training and tools.

- » Center for Data Access and Analytics
- » Equity Scorecard Working Group
- » Leadership Council
- » Bargaining Units
- » System Office Research

# Goal 1.2

Advance equitable academic outcomes by establishing and supporting systems and processes that identify, address, and remove barriers to student success. This includes leveraging anti-racist practices in the development, execution, and oversight of academic and co-curricular programming and support services.

## Strategies

## Key Partners

Strategy 1: Develop a framework for institutionalizing, normalizing, and sustaining academic Equity by Design across Minnesota State.

- » Campus Diversity Officers
- » Academic and Student Affairs
- » Faculty and Deans
- » Leadership Council
- » Centers for Teaching and Learning
- » System Office Research

Strategy 2: Continue to support Academic and Student Affairs Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) pilot, integration of the EbD methodology into SEM, and development of a SEM dashboard.

- » Student Affairs
- » Center for Data Access and Analytics
- » System Office Research
- » Information Technology
- » Campus Enrollment Management

Strategy 3: Work with System Office Academic and Student Affairs to embed an equity-focused and culturally responsive approach to teaching and learning.

- » Academic and Student Affairs
- » Centers for Teaching and Learning
- » Bargaining Units
- » Network for Educational Development
- » Faculty
- » Academic and Student Affairs Councils and Committees

Strategy 4: Provide professional development opportunities to increase inclusive, culturally validating, and anti-racist competencies for all employee groups.

- » College/University Leadership and Staff
- » Campus and Diversity Officers
- » Human Resources
- » Faculty Development
- » Centers for Teaching and Learning

Strategy 5: Explore co-curricular considerations and metrics for integration into the Equity Scorecard.

- » Student Affairs
- » Center for Data Access and Analytics
- » System Office Research
- » Campus Student Affairs
- » Statewide Student Associations
- » Leadership Council

## Priority Area 2: Operationalizing Access and Opportunity



Operationalizing access and opportunity focuses on ensuring campus policies/procedures and federal/state guidelines are met to provide supports and opportunities for students and employees. It guarantees personal rights, equal protections of opportunities within education and employment, and freedom from unfair treatment and discrimination regardless of protected classes for perspective and current students and employees, as prohibited by federal and state civil rights laws. To accomplish this work, we strive to provide relevant support and resources, updated training and educational opportunities, and bold examination of processes and outcomes to enhance the learning and work environments across Minnesota State.

# Goal 2.1

Ensure civil rights compliance for campuses receiving federal funding.

## Strategies

## Key Partners

Strategy 1: Conduct Office of Civil Rights site reviews, targeting, and monitoring in accordance with the Methods of Administration program.

- » Career and Technical Education
- » Student Affairs
- » Facilities

Strategy 2: Provide investigator and decisionmaker training and opportunities for collaboration (i.e., communities of practice).

- » Office of General Counsel
- » Labor Relations
- » Academic and Student Affairs

Strategy 3: Create systemwide investigation intake process; annually collect and centralize 1B.1 case information from campuses and system office.

- » Office of General Counsel
- » Labor Relations
- » Human Resources

Strategy 4: Provide systemwide informal resolution training through webinars, ELM, fliers/brochures, or another student-facing platform.

- » Office of General Counsel
- » Labor Relations
- » Human Resources

## Goal 2.2

Establish a comprehensive systemwide Affirmative Action Program and work to eliminate disparities in employee outcomes and experiences across all dimensions of diversity.

### Strategies

### Key Partners

Strategy 1: Work with systemwide partners to explore and develop revisions to Minnesota State policy 1B.2 Affirmative Action to address equity, diversity, and inclusion in all recruitment, hiring, and retention processes and practices. Embed anti-racist approaches and advancement opportunities in the entire employment lifecycle.

- » Human Resources
- » Affirmative Action Officers
- » Campus Diversity Officers

Strategy 2: Engage in strategic partnerships to explore avenues for enhancing the employee onboarding process for employees at all levels; refine the onboarding experience and integrate education on Minnesota State's equity, diversity, and inclusion priorities and efforts.

- » Human Resources

Strategy 3: Partner with key collaborators to examine possibilities for incorporating equity, diversity, and inclusion metrics in performance reviews for all supervisors and managers.

- » Human Resources
- » Bargaining Units

Strategy 4: Enhance partnerships and collaboration between Affirmative Action Officers and other key campus stakeholders to make progress toward affirmative action plan.

- » Affirmative Action Officers
- » Human Resources

Strategy 5: Partner with System Office Human Resources to provide ongoing support and resources for statewide employee resource groups.

- » Human Resources

Strategy 6: Work with systemwide partners to establish mentorship and sponsorship programs that connect employees from underrepresented groups with senior leaders or colleagues who can provide guidance, support, and advocacy.

- » Human Resources
- » Bargaining Units

Strategy 7: Provide ADA training and opportunities for collaboration (i.e., community of practice).

- » Accessibility Coordinators



# Goal 2.3

Establish a Title IX compliance review process and a systemwide sexual assault prevention training and support program.

## Strategies

## Key Partners

Strategy 1: Develop a comprehensive approach for supplying resources to campuses to aid both pregnant and parenting students.

- » Title IX Coordinators
- » ADA Coordinators
- » Student Affairs
- » Advocates
- » Campus Collaborators

Strategy 2: Provide resources to campuses with athletics programs.

- » Title IX Coordinators
- » Athletic Directors
- » Campus Administrators

Strategy 3: Collaborate with key partners for sexual assault prevention training for new incoming and transfer students.

- » Title IX Coordinators
- » Academic and Student Affairs
- » Campus Prevention Specialists

Strategy 4: Conduct a sexual assault climate survey (mandated); develop a framework for integration and uptake of information into other processes (e.g., campus climate, equity scorecard).

- » Title IX Coordinators
- » Campus Safety

## Priority Area 3: Campus Climate



The campus climate priority area focuses on assessing a sense of inclusion, belonging, and safety for students and employees across Minnesota State to support evidence-based decision-making. It seeks to support the evidence-based component of the Equity 2030 strategic vision, and also facilitates systemic longitudinal tracking of students' and employees' sense of belonging, inclusion and safety. In 2022, Minnesota State established a Campus Climate Assessment Framework. The initiative is coordinated by the Office of Equity and Inclusion, in partnership with the Center for Data Access and Analytics.

The first three-year cycle of assessment began in FY23, and will conclude in FY25. Select indicators from the assessments will be tracked longitudinally through Key Performance Indicator 6 of the Equity Scorecard. To support this work, the Office of Equity and Inclusion will continue to coordinate engagement in assessments, and provide system-level guidance on leveraging the data collected.

# Goal 3.1

Maintain a systemwide framework for campus climate to cultivate improved experiences and outcomes for students and employees.

## Strategies

## Key Partners

Strategy 1: Coordinate systemwide campus climate survey over three-year cycle (for students and employees).	» Campus Points of Contact » Leadership Council	» Campus Leaders
Strategy 2: Conduct system level analysis, dissemination, and engagement of campus climate survey results.	» Center for Data Access and Analytics	» Human Resources » System Office Research
Strategy 3: Provide guidance and consultations on dissemination and uptake of survey results to inform planning, decision-making, program design, policy creation, resource allocation, and hiring practices.	» Academic and Student Affairs » Equity and Inclusion Council	» Human Resources » Campus Diversity Officers

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