

Northeast Higher Education District (NHED)

Diversity Plan 2010 - 2012

November 2009



Minnesota
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Northeast Higher Education District Diversity Plan 2010-2012

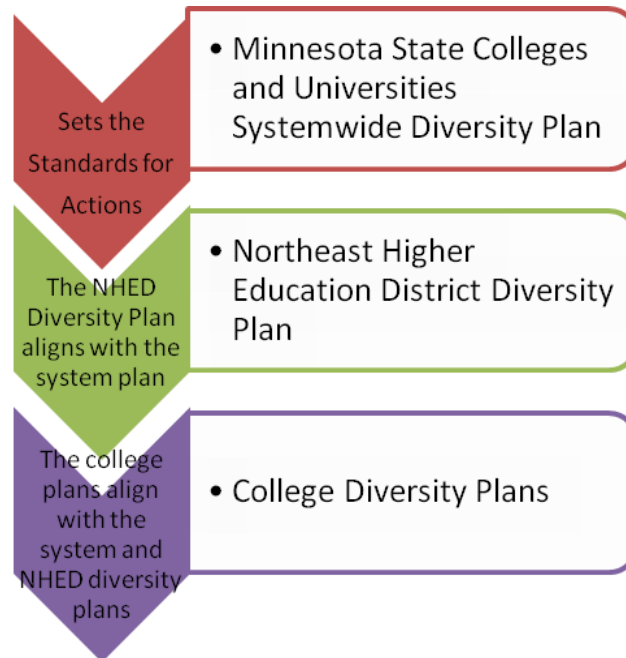
President's Message

The Northeast Higher Education District, a member of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, is committed to creating and sustaining a culture and environment of inclusivity and respect for difference within its colleges and the communities these colleges serve. Our institutions foster campus climates where each individual is valued, respected and supported within the learning organization.

We also recognize that our world, the Minnesota workforce and the Northeast Minnesota region is rapidly changing. We believe it is our responsibility to influence our students through acquisition of knowledge and skills to succeed in a world where they will be interacting with individuals who are different than them. We also recognize that Minnesota's achievement and opportunity gap is one of the highest in the nation. We must innovate to address this gap and employ strategies that have positive impact on our goal to provide equity in access and opportunity for these students.

To this end, this plan has been created to bring this commitment to the level of intentionality, presenting strategic priorities, strategies and action steps to examine our current state of attainment and create internal change that moves our institutions toward accomplishment of our goals of inclusivity.

Within our organization, each college has a diversity plan that identifies college goals, actions, measures and responsibilities. This district wide plan builds upon the strengths of the college plans and addresses the "regional landscape," creating opportunities for collaboration across our individual colleges and aspiring to have influence on regional community advancement through appreciation of difference. College and District plans are aligned with the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System Strategic Diversity Plan 2011-2015.



I thank the "NHED Diversity Task Force" for their role in developing this regional strategy and look forward to the opportunity to effect the actions described in this plan.

Sincerely,

M. Sue Collins, Ed.D.
President

**Northeast Higher Education District
Diversity Planning Task Force - 2009**

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**Northeast Higher Education District
Intercultural Advisory Council - 2011**

Rose Berens	Lorrie Janatopoulos
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Sue Collins	Tym Petron
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Key Definitions

Campus Climate

Campus Climate is a measure – real or perceived – of the campus environment as it relates to interpersonal, academic and professional interactions. It refers to the experience of individuals or groups at the institutions as they interact with community members. A healthy campus climate is one in which people feel welcome, safe and valued. In an unhealthy campus climate, people often feel isolated, marginalized and even unsafe.

Cultural Competency

Cultural Competency refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures. Cultural competency has four components: (1) awareness of one's own cultural worldview, (2) attitude toward cultural differences, (3) knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews, and (4) cross-cultural skills. Developing cultural competency results in an ability to understand, communicate, and effectively interact with people across cultures.¹

Diversity

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system recognizes and respects the importance of all similarities and differences among human beings. The system and its institutions are committed, through their programs and policies, to fostering inclusiveness, understanding, acceptance and respect in a multicultural society. *Diversity* includes but is not limited to, age, ethnic origin, national origin, race, color, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, religious beliefs, creeds and income. Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system's commitment to diversity compels it to confront prejudicial, discriminatory or racist behaviors and policies.

Inclusion

Inclusion today is widely thought of as a practice of ensuring that people in organizations feel they belong, are engaged and are connected through their work to the goals and objectives of the organization. Miller and Katz (2002) present a common definition: "Inclusion is a sense of belonging: feeling respected, valued for who you are; feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that you can do your best work."² Inclusion is a shift in organization culture. The process of inclusion engages each individual and makes each feel valued and essential to the success of the organization. Individuals function at full capacity, feel more valued and are included in the organization's mission. This culture shift creates higher-performing organizations where motivation and morale soar.

¹ Mercedes Martin and Billy, Vaughn, 2007. *Strategic Diversity & Inclusion Management*, pp. 31-36. DTUI Publications Division: San Francisco, CA.

² Frederick A. Miller and Judith H. Katz, 2002. *The Inclusion Breakthrough: Unleashing the Real Power of Diversity*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Underserved Students

Underserved Students are students who have been traditionally excluded from full participation in our society and its institutions and include African American/Black, Asian, Hispanic, American Indian and multiracial students. The basis of exclusion has primarily been race and color.

Underrepresented Students

Underrepresented Students include underserved students (African Americans/Black, Asian, Hispanic, American Indian and multiracial) plus first-generation students³ and low-income students.⁴ (In specific instances, other groups of students may be considered underrepresented. For example, in a traditionally female discipline, males may be considered underrepresented.)

Underutilized

Underutilized describes a situation in which the demographics of employees at institution does not reflect the demographic availability of qualified candidates in the labor market.

³ A first generation student as defined by the Minnesota State Legislature for accountability purposes is a student neither of whose parents attended college. The federal government's TRIO programs define a first generation student as students neither of whose parents received a college degree.

⁴ The state does not define low income. Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system uses Pell grant eligibility as an indicator of low-income.

Northeast Higher Education District Diversity Plan Priorities, Strategies, and Actions

Strategic Priority 1: Enhance Community Outreach and Involvement

Strategies:

1.1 Improve relationships between school districts and tribes within the region.

Actions

- Develop specific projects with measurable outcomes that improve these relationships.
- Expand Academic Journey program or Indian education to all school districts and colleges in the region and include career/technical components in the expanded program.
- Create tribal outreach program in concert with the Office of the Chancellor (OOC) through “Reconnection Visits” and other outreach activities.
- Make connections with Indian education directors in 17 school districts.

1.2 Build strategic alliances within the Northeast Higher Education District service area to foster collaboration and advance critical thinking and awareness about diversity.

Actions

- Facilitate forums and/or town hall meetings to gather information about how the colleges can best serve underrepresented communities.
- Northeast Higher Education President will convene a community-based Intercultural Advisory Council to recommend future strategies.
- Convene community meeting to build strategic alliances that instill ownership and awareness of diversity.
 - *Involve local leaders:* Law Enforcement, Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS), Range Mental Health, Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA), Social Services, Ministerial Groups/Churches, Tribal Leaders, Civic Organizations, Museums, Libraries, Human Rights Commission, St. Louis County Family Services Collaboration, Itasca Area School Collaborative (IASC), Business Leaders, Health Organizations

**Strategic Priority 2:
Expand Education and Intercultural Competency Learning Experiences.**

Strategies:

- 2.1 Increase student, staff and faculty educational opportunities in the areas of intercultural competency and appreciation of difference. Widely disseminate this programming to college constituents and partnering agencies and entities.

Actions

- Provide at least two hours of training on at least one day on an annual basis.
- Use appreciative inquiry approach (or other appropriate approach) to learn from faculty the many ways they infuse intercultural competency components into existing curriculum.
- Create subcommittee of diversity officers to identify training topics.
- Consider use of Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) or like instrument to assess training needs.

**Strategic Priority 3:
Align Recruitment, Access, and Success Goals of
System, District, and Colleges**

Strategies:

- 3.1 Reduce the opportunity/achievement gap of underrepresented students within the region we serve.

Actions

- Sustain current programs (TRIO, Access and Opportunity, etc.) that focus on access, opportunity and success for underrepresented group.
- Work with local education systems to strategize on a collective, regional strategy to address this goal.
- Examine the regional achievement gap as well as regional research available on current state of recruitment, access and success.

- 3.2 Create welcoming and inclusive college environment for diverse learners.

Actions

- Each college will use “Community College Survey and Student Engagement (CCSSE) data to improve campus climate.

Strategic Priority 3: Strategies Continued....

3.3 Increase and retain the number of diverse faculty, staff and administrators at the colleges of the Northeast Higher Education District.

Actions

- Northeast Higher Education District’s Human Resources, in cooperation with each college, will develop hiring strategy to increase candidate pool.
- Develop strategies, including a plan to increase retention of diverse employees, to sustain a diverse workforce.
- Evaluate and exceed regional demographics in setting goals for diverse faculty/staff levels.
- Evaluate the inclusion of diversity officers on screening committees.
- Aggressively market our region/communities to applicants from outside our region.
- Evaluate questions asked during screening/interviewing process.

3.4 Increase the enrollment and success rates of underrepresented students in the colleges of the Northeast Higher Education District.

Actions

- Colleges will evaluate and update recruiting and retention strategies.
- Create a cultural, competent advisory group to review all policies/procedures that impact enrollment, financial aid, registration, etc. to ensure they do not serve as barriers to success.
- Explore ways to identify ethnic and underrepresented students (self identification, etc.).
- Consider an “external review process” that compliments college advisory group review of policies and procedures.

3.5 Recognize college employees for accomplishing access and opportunity strategies.

Actions

- Colleges will develop reward and incentive system to celebrate and promote success.
- Establish a Northeast Higher Education District “Diversity Award” ceremony similar to the System’s Diversity and Multicultural Award event.
- Acknowledge efforts of faculty, staff and students through a personal thank you.

3.6 Develop a research agenda that informs diversity plan strategic priorities, strategies, and actions.

Actions

- Develop a template of access, opportunity and success measurements to be included in the Northeast Higher Education District Factbook.
- Identify steps to evaluate The Northeast Higher Education District’s Diversity Plan and college diversity plan.



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