

Equity, Access, and Diversity Committee (EAD)
November 26, 2018
Minutes of the Meeting

These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions or actions reported in these minutes reflect the views of, nor are they binding on, the senate, the administration or the Board of Regents.

[**In these minutes:** Disparities in Graduation and Retention Rates of Students from Underrepresented Groups; Supports for Students from Underrepresented Groups; Resolution on Education on Best Practices for Disability Accommodations and Supporting Students with Disabilities]

PRESENT: Keisha Varma (chair), Noro Andriamanalina, Priscilla Flynn, Jonathan Gerteis, Jeremy Jenkins, Tayler Loiselle, Tina Marisam, Wanda Marsolek, Jair Peltier, Ross VeLure Roholt, Deena Wassenberg, Nan Thurston

REGRETS: Teddie Potter, Marcella Windmuller-Campione

ABSENT: Diane Cilengi, Rafael Contreras-Rangel, Oscar Garza, Caleb Pedersen

GUESTS: Bob McMaster, vice provost and dean, Undergraduate Education; Sandra Olson-Loy, vice chancellor, Student Affairs, University of Minnesota Morris; Ben Munson, chair, Disabilities Issues Committee

OTHERS: Sean Garrick, associate vice provost, Office for Equity and Diversity (for Michael Goh); Julie Reuvers, deputy chief of staff, Office of the President

1. Disparities in Graduation and Retention Rates of Students from Underrepresented Groups

Professor Keisha Varma, chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed Bob McMaster, vice provost and dean, Undergraduate Education, who was present to update the committee on graduation and retention rates of students from underrepresented groups.

McMaster informed the committee that the gap between the first year retention rate of students of color (as a whole, including Asians) and white students is currently negligible on the Twin Cities campus. In 2007, he said, there was a gap of 6.3 percentage points; in 2017 there was virtually no gap: 92.8% of white students returned after their first year, compared to 92.9% of students of color. Disaggregated, the data show that only 90.7% of American Indian students return after their first year, which represents the largest gap, McMaster continued. He added that there are few American Indian students on the Twin Cities campus. The first year retention rate for Black and Latinx students was at 92.8% for 2017, largely thanks to programs such as the [President's Emerging Scholars Program \(PES\)](#), the [University of Minnesota Promise Scholarship](#), etc. However, as the years go on, the retention gap between white students and students of color increases.

The first year retention rate of Pell-eligible students in 2017 was 90.3%, compared to 93.5% for non-Pell-eligible students. For first generation students, it is 89.1%, versus 93.9 for other domestic students. This trend has been persistent over time.

Four-year graduation rates show larger gaps than first year retention. 73.3% for white students, versus 55% for American Indian students, 58.4% for African American students, and 51.2% for Latinx students. McMaster remarked that in 2016, there was a 26.9 point difference between white and African American students, but that was an anomaly.

Six-year graduation rates show smaller gaps. 80.8% of white students graduate in six years, compared to 78% of students of color as a whole. About 71% of American Indian students graduate in six years, as do about 82% of African American students. 82.6% of Latinx students graduate in six years. The gap between first generation students and other domestic students is 9 points, and between Pell-eligible and non-Pell eligible students it is 10 points.

McMaster clarified that he did not include data for Asian students, because that group is not usually considered underrepresented, although it is included in data on students of color. However, he said, Hmong students have more in common with traditional underrepresented students.

Regarding enrollments, continued McMaster, good progress has been made since 2008 (numbers are based on new, full time, students just out of high school). This is largely due to targeted recruiting efforts by the Office of Admissions.

Group	2008 Enrollment	2018 Enrollment
African American	1397	1903
American Indian	280	424
Asian	2791	3755
Latinx	645	2620
Pacific Islander	0	107

Sean Garrick, associate vice provost, Office for Equity and Diversity, asked whether there is a difference between the number of credits taken for students who graduate in four years versus six. McMaster said that overall, students who graduate in six years have taken more credits, but often take lighter loads in individual semester. Many students who graduate in six years have had to work a lot to pay for tuition, or have switched majors more than once, he added.

McMaster said that much of this work has been driven by the Board of Regents' resolution to close the graduation gap by 50% by 2025. The Office of Admissions has been working to build

pipelines, assist students with their FAFSA, etc. The PES program has been a game changer in terms of ability to increase first year retention rates for students of color, said Mc Master; in addition, the University of Minnesota Promise Scholarship, which provides \$30 million systemwide for low and middle income students, has also contributed to this success. McMaster concluded that although the University continues to make positive progress in this area, the work will not be done until all gaps are at zero. The key to closing the gaps, he stated, is to provide much more financial aid for students of color, but this is difficult because scholarship criteria cannot be based on race or ethnicity.

Deena Wassenberg asked what the SERU data show about the campus climate for students of color, and McMaster replied that campus climate has been deteriorating for these students, which unfortunately is a trend nationwide.

Tina Marisam asked how the University compares to other Big 10 schools. McMaster answered that the University is in the top two or three for the four-year graduation rate, and in the middle of the pack for the six-year graduation rate. Marisam then asked if PES programming ends after the first year, and McMaster said yes.

Varma asked whether there are other programs for students of color to support retention, and Garrick said that he co-chairs the Multicultural Student Success Committee, which has about 50 members and is looking into this question. He said that there are about 85 separate programs, but that some might be inactive.

Jeremy Jenkins asked whether the gaps uniform across colleges. McMaster said there is lots of variation between colleges.

In the interest of time, Varma thanked McMaster for the presentation, and he departed.

2. Supports for Students from Underrepresented Groups

Next, Varma welcomed Sandra Olson-Loy, vice chancellor, Student Affairs, University of Minnesota Morris and noted that the University of Minnesota Morris had been ranked fourth in the country overall for black student equity. Olson-Loy thanked the committee for the invitation, and said she was happy that Morris had been noted for the successes. However, she said, all of Minnesota has work to do in terms of equity in higher education participation. She added that the Rochester campus is the only University of Minnesota campus whose percentage of black students matches the state's population.

In terms of programming for black students at Morris, said Olson-Loy, the Gateway summer bridge program attracts many students from underrepresented groups. In addition, there are four very active black student groups on the Morris campus: the Black Student Union, United Students for Africa, Women of Color, and the Muslim Student Association. Varma asked whether most students participate in one or more of those student groups. Olson-Loy replied that 80-90% of Morris students participate in some sort of student group, and estimated that 90% of black students interact with at least one of the four groups. Wanda MArsolek asked whether most students at Morris lived on campus, and Olson-Loy said that 95% of first year students live on

campus and overall over 50% live on campus. Students who do not live on campus typically live within 1 mile, she added; the city of Morris has a population of about 5000 people, including students.

Varma asked how the committee could help, and Olson-Loy suggested thinking about how to help students on each campus connect with each other would be a good idea. Varma commented that a critical mass of students of color is needed for a welcoming community, so combining systemwide resources to create a larger community made sense.

Noro Andriamanalina asked whether anyone from SERU had presented to this committee about the challenges of underrepresented students in terms of retention. Varma noted that this was a good idea for a future agenda item. Garrick remarked that he had recently met with 25 students about campus climate, and many students had reported not feeling respected in the classroom by their instructor or their peers. Wassenberg remarked on the need to advocate for best practices around race and ethnicity in the classroom. Varma acknowledged that creating a welcoming classroom environment for all students takes a lot of work and reflection, and commented that it would be nice to have more support for faculty in such endeavors. Marisam added that the [President's Initiative to Prevent Sexual Misconduct](#) had revealed that the climate in many departments needs work in general. Garrick said that he had heard stories about the same courses many times; frequently, the courses are large lecture courses that have up to 800 students and gateway classes where many students get poor grades. People know these things happen in some courses, he said. Jenkins said that if there are no consequences for such actions, the problem will continue. Wassenberg remarked that K-12 teachers have to do work to maintain their licensure, but there is no such requirement for college professors. Maybe there should be, she ventured. There are ample opportunities for faculty to engage in training around these issues, but they are optional, she said. Andriamanalina noted that there is a graduate/professional student group on campus that is pushing for mandatory training for faculty on equity and inclusivity.

3. Disabilities Issues resolution on Resolution on Education Around Best Practices for Disability Accommodations and Supporting Students with Disabilities

Finally, Varma introduced Professor Ben Munson, chair, Disabilities Issues Committee. Munson gave members an overview of the Disabilities Issues Committee's Disabilities Issues resolution on [Resolution on Education Around Best Practices for Disability Accommodations and Supporting Students with Disabilities](#), which advocates for mandatory training for faculty and staff on how to work with students with disabilities. Members expressed support for the resolution, but wondered about possible pushback for additional training for faculty. Munson said that because of federal regulations around disability access and possible related lawsuits, he feels advocating for such training has a good chance of success. He added that if the University is committed to a broader sense of shared values that go beyond individual labs and classrooms, such training should be welcome. Marisam said that in the wake of the newly-implemented mandatory training on preventing and responding to sexual misconduct, the University community has an increased appetite for professional development, and therefore it is a good time to advocate for additional professional development. She remarked that training around mental health and other invisible disabilities would be especially important, given the increased incidence of and focus on mental health issues on campuses nationwide.

In the interest of time, Varma said that the committee would vote on the resolution at its next meeting. She thanked Munson for his time and adjourned the meeting.

Amber Bathke
University Senate Office