

Equity, Access, and Diversity Committee (EAD)
November 4, 2019
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:** The ROTC and Military Policy on Transgender People Serving; Diversity Resources on System Campuses; The Role of the Office for Equity and Diversity on System Campuses]

PRESENT: Teddie Potter (chair), Tracey Anderson, Noro Andriamanalina, Caroline Bender, Thu Danh, Miguel Fiol, Veronica Fisher, Oscar Garza, Jonathan Gerteis, Anna Horning Nygren, Jeremy Jenkins, Josephine Lee, Wanda Marsolek, Nan Thurston

REGRETS: Vincente Diaz, Tayler Loiselle, Ross VeLure Roholt, Marcella Windmuller-Campione

ABSENT: Jair Peltier, Angelina Sonnen

GUESTS: Gail Myers, disability specialist, University of Minnesota Crookston

OTHER: Chuck Turchick, student

1. The ROTC and Military Policy on Transgender People Serving

Professor Teddie Potter, chair, called the meeting to order. She welcomed members and guests, and asked Amber Bathke, senate associate, University Senate Office, to provide background on the first item on the agenda. Bathke explained that the issue had been raised by Chuck Turchick, continuing education student, who was present at the meeting. In summary, transgender individuals are barred from serving in the military except under certain conditions. Turchick feels that this is in conflict with the University's nondiscrimination policy, and that it is inappropriate for the University to support a program—the ROTC—that is part of such an organization.

Jeremy Jenkins pointed out that the situation is somewhat analogous to the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy in the 1990s, and wondered what the University did at that time. Turchick said there were movements on many college campuses to disassociate with the ROTC at that time, and that the University did form a committee to investigate the issue. Turchick was unable to locate the report from that committee. Anna Horning Nygren said that she would follow up with the Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Office. She added that because the University is a land grant institution, it is required to offer military instruction, and ROTC fills that obligation. Turchick pointed out that there are other ways the University could fulfill this obligation. However, he continued, the issue may not be ripe, as it is working its way through the federal court system. Potter thanked Turchick for bringing the issue to the committee’s attention.

2. Diversity Resources on System Campuses

Next, Potter reminded members that she had asked representatives from each campus to give an overview of services at their location.

First, Tracey Anderson spoke to the committee about resources available at Morris. She noted that the Morris campus was a Native American boarding school from 1887-1909. It was then a residential high school until 1963. When it became part of the University of Minnesota in 1964, it was mandated at the federal level that Native American students should receive full tuition waivers to attend. It is now a Native American Serving Nontribal Institution (NASNTI). Thus, about 20% of students enrolled at Morris are Native American. About 10% of students are people of color, around 59% are white, and around 11% are international students. As for faculty, about 11% are faculty of color. Morris offers many programs related to equity and diversity, and has recently hired a chief diversity officer.. Current priorities related to diversity are land acknowledgement, an Equity and Diversity Advocate Pilot Program, campus conversations about difference, and recruitment and retention of diverse faculty/staff. More detail is in the [PowerPoint](#).

Next, Nan Thurston introduced Gail Myers, disability specialist, University of Minnesota Crookston (UMC), to give an update on disability issues at Crookston. Myers shared the following information:

- UMC placed first in [US News' Top Midwest Regional Colleges](#) in the Top Public Schools category, and 21st in the Top Social Mobility category, for graduating large portions of Pell-eligible and first generation students. UMC is now a test optional college, which means that no ACT scores are required for admission. This affects disability services because it allows more students with disabilities to qualify for admission, including students who received special education services in K-12. While other University campuses have specific coaching services for such students, said Myers, UMC does not.
- About 15% of UMC students are registered with and/or receiving services from the Disability Resource Center. This constitutes about a 400% increase since 2014, and Myers anticipates that it will continue to increase.
- Disparities between the system campuses, especially with regard to the rural campuses, persists. Over 40% of students registered with the DRC at Crookston report mental health issues as their primary disability, with many others having secondary disabilities involving mental health. Concerns the cost of treatment for mental health for UMC students persist. While students, regardless of which insurance they have, can receive services for free at Boynton Health on the Twin Cities campus, Crookston students do not have access to free diagnostic services or treatment and therefore rely on their insurance. The community mental health facility has opened up walk in hours for students, she said, but many students still cannot access services because they cannot afford the copays or have high deductibles. This creates a situation where the Americans with Disabilities Act specifies that students must have a diagnosis to receive accommodations, but not all students can afford diagnostic evaluation and testing. Myers noted that she has also brought this issue to the Disabilities Issues Committee.

- Morris has access to some telecare for psychiatric issues.
- Duluth has created a database for youth with disabilities and is sharing it with Morris and Crookston. It includes an online portal for students, which is great for Crookston, as UMC has a large population of online students.
- Crookston's testing facilities are effective and pretty great, because all sorts of testing takes place there (make up tests, teacher exams, etc.) so students with disabilities are not singled out.
- Eight years ago, UMC lost its [TRIO grant](#). The campus is working to get it reinstated.
- [Crookston has received](#) a [First Forward](#) designation, for its commitment to first generation student success.

Thurston clarified that UMC has about 1800 students, half of whom are online students. About 47% of students are first generation college students.

Next, Veronica Fisher informed members about resources at the Rochester campus. With only 400-500 students, Rochester is the smallest system campuses, and it often struggles to provide on campus resources. For example, the campus clinic only has walk-in hours for one hour a day on weekdays. There is no meal plan, and the only grocery store within walking distance is very expensive. Recently, a food pantry has been started.

Fisher went on to say that low income and first generation students feel that there are not many resources for them on campus, and same with students in the LGBTQIA community. There are no gender neutral restrooms, said Fisher—because the University leases space for the Rochester campus, it cannot make structural changes.

There are some good resources and programs, though, continued Fisher. For instance, she noted that the director of the Disability Resource Center, Jeff Baier, is awesome and goes to bat for students. There is also a new Vice Chancellor for Equity, Access, Diversity. Also, all students take the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) during their freshman, junior, and senior years. There is a big focus on developing intercultural competence, especially how students, as future healthcare providers, can support different communities of patients.

Potter thanked Anderson, Myers, and Fisher for the presentations. Wanda Marsolek asked what the committee could do to support the other campuses. Potter expressed interest in the land acknowledgement initiative at Morris; all campuses should be doing that, she stressed, and wondered if the committee could do something systemwide.

3. The Role of the Office for Equity and Diversity on System Campuses

Potter then invited Virajita Singh, vice provost, Office for Equity and Diversity (OED), to speak about OED's role on system campuses. Singh thanked the committee for making system campuses a priority. She explained that Michael Goh, vice president, OED, and the system campus chancellors all report to the president, and that OED does not have an oversight role with regard to the system campuses. Furthermore, each system campus is unique in context and character, said Singh, and therefore there is no one-size-fits-all approach to equity and diversity

work, and that Goh therefore approaches collaboration with system campuses with humility, emphasizing sharing and collaboration.

Often, added Singh, engagement with the system campuses is ad hoc, project, or crisis based. The team visits all campuses each year. All OED units have connections to system campuses, but DRC and EOAA have the most. The Education director, Stef Jarvi, conducts training on the system campuses as well. In the future, she said, there is room to grow with more coordination and collaboration.

Miguel Fiol asked whether OED works with any college-level programs. Singh replied that they do have some college-specific initiatives, such as [College MADE](#) (which is currently Twin Cities only, but they would like to expand to other campuses).

Noro Andriamanalina stated that the Graduate School is working on recruiting more indigenous students to come to the Twin Cities campus for graduate school. To this end, they are offering diversity fellowships where graduate students teach at Morris or Duluth with the chance of getting a tenure-track position, in order to to increase faculty diversity.

Potter thanked members for their time and adjourned the meeting.

Amber Bathke
University Senate Office