Diversity and Multiculturalism Committee Members Present: Trustees Duane Benson, Chair; Clarence Hightower, Vice Chair; Allyson Lueneburg, Tom Renier, Louise Sundin, Terri Thomas.

Diversity and Multiculturalism Committee Members Absent: none

Other Board Members Present: Trustees Cheryl Dickson, Jacob Englund, David Paskach, and Christine Rice.

Leadership Council Members Present: Dr. Whitney Harris, Executive Director; President Larry Lundblad.

A meeting of the Diversity and Multiculturalism Committee was held on May 19, 2009 at Wells Fargo Place, 4th Floor Board Room, 30 7th Street East, St. Paul. Chair Benson called the meeting to order at 12:50 p.m.

1. Minutes of the March 17, 2009 Diversity and Multiculturalism Committee

The minutes of the March 17, 2009 meeting were approved as written.

2. The Center for College Readiness – Minnesota State Community and Technical College

Committee Chair Benson called on Dr. Mike López, to introduce the presenters from the Center for College Readiness at Minnesota State Community and Technical College. This is the third of three presentations to the Board of Trustees on the three Access and Opportunity Centers. Dr. López introduced Michael Cary – Director, Center for College Readiness, Minnesota State Community and Technical College and Paul Carney – Program Coordinator, Ready or Not Writing and Step Write Up, Minnesota State Community and Technical College. Don Drummond, who was also scheduled to present, was unable to attend.

Michael Cary said that the center’s overall philosophy was to establish and maintain collaboration between k-12 and post-secondary faculty, to give customized feedback to students and teachers and to create and cultivate support networks. The three primary programs of the center are Step Write Up, Ready or Not Writing, and Math Works. The Center for College Readiness is also sponsoring summer camps as a part of its program.
Paul Carney spoke of how students have been given distorted pictures of their college readiness. Of the incoming students at his school, he said, 20 percent of students who earned As in high school English and 45 percent of those given Bs were placed in remedial writing in college. An ACT national survey demonstrated that 76 percent of high school faculty members believe high school students are prepared for college-level work but only 33 percent of college faculty believe they are prepared. The Ready or Not Writing program was developed as an online assessment program through which high school students submit essays to college English instructors in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. These instructors review the essays and tell the students whether or not they are ready for college-level writing. The high school gets feedback on the types of errors found in these papers, and the students get specific feedback on their writing strengths and weaknesses and strategies for improving. Both the high school teachers and the students have access to the college reader for questions. Students may resubmit papers until they get college-ready ratings.

After the success of Ready or Not Writing, Step Write Up was developed to address the writing needs of eighth graders. Step Write Up is an eighth grade to ninth grade transition program using the same model. The students submit essays to high school language arts teachers who read them and rate them. The same reader stays with the student throughout the program, developing a mentoring relationship.

Michael Cary added that the teachers receive aggregate data reports on the writing abilities of the students, strengths and weaknesses, so that they can modify their teaching appropriately. The program goals were to serve 400 students between the two programs for 2008-2009; but the writing programs served 431 students, submitting 630 essays, through April 7, 2009.

Math Works is a program which uses hands-on applications to teach the mathematical skills needed for high-need industries, such as nursing and manufacturing. The high school math teacher is paired with a college faculty partner. The college faculty member teaches the class modules remotely via Wimba software, freeing up the teacher to work with the students one on one. The majority of students found this program helpful in improving their math skills. The program goal was to serve 200 students for the 2008-2009 school year; however 605 have been served thus far by the Math Works program.

Ready or Not Reading, a program addressing and assessing reading skills related to specific academic disciplines, is currently being developed, with a projected 2009 launch date. Science Works is to be piloted in the spring of 2010.

Science and Technology camps are scheduled to start this summer. There will be three camps: one in Fergus Falls at Minnesota State Community and Technical College, one at Minnesota State University Moorhead, and one through White Earth Tribal and Community College. These are week-long camps for seventh through ninths graders.

Trustee Sundin commented that the program looks to be dynamic and exciting. She asked the following questions: Is this consistent with state standards in every category?
How do the teachers find out about the program? Is student involvement contingent on teacher participation in the program? Is there a gender breakdown of the students involved by category? Is the feedback to teachers timely enough for them to modify their teaching?

Mr. Cary answered that for the Math Works program feedback is immediate. Programs have been on a classroom level, so they have been teacher dependent. The current survey, will ask the demographic questions: gender, race, parent education level, socio-economic status, etc.

Regarding the state standards, Mr. Carney said that the rubrics have been heavily vetted with the K-12 teachers, and he works closely with the Department of Education. The Department of Education is involved in the research and assessment of the success in the program.

Most of the promotion thus far has been done at professional conferences. The center is developing packets of material to send out to schools. The website also has a “how do I get my school involved” section.

3. Diversity and Multiculturalism Update

Dr. Harris said that the division is working hard to increase recruitment and retention of American Indians.

Staff recently completed the system’s Office for Civil Rights Review at Vermilion Community College, bringing the current fiscal year total to four.

The Community Action Diversity Council has been serving as an advisory group to the division for about three years. The members expressed interest in a “meet and greet” with members of the Board of Trustees. Dr. Harris is currently exploring this possibility with Trustee Benson.

The Diversity Awards will be presented in conjunction with the Student Affairs awards on Thursday, May 28, 2009. These awards are made to institutions in recognition of best practices, and the award money is to be used to expand or replicate the programs. Trustee Benson encouraged members of the Board to attend if possible.

Trustee Hightower asked about the impact and use of the $11 million dollars designated for serving the underserved. A report on the outcomes of the funding will be given to the Diversity and Multiculturalism Committee in September or October. In response to Trustee Hightower’s concern about the vulnerability of money for the underserved, Dr. Harris mentioned that campuses have been told of the expectations for documenting outcomes.
In response to a question, Vice Chancellor King said that the unallotment is likely to occur sooner rather than later. The board will be asked in July to approve the recommended allocation on the green sheet. This decision can be changed if necessary.

Trustee Sundin raised the issue of whether the board should make a recommendation regarding funding at least a portion of the Power of You program, saying that it is an important part of the diversity and multiculturalism effort and would be hard to bring back if it is dropped.

Vice Chancellor King said the Board would need to clarify whether it was proposing funding the current Power of You programs or funding the launch of new Power of You programs. She made the point that the Power of You discussion does not need to be linked with the underserved money. The Power of You commitment could come from anywhere on the green sheet.

Trustee Rice wondered what had happened to the outside support that had been provided. In answer to Trustee Rice’s question, Vice Chancellor Baer said that the Power of You received start-up funding to launch. The whole intention of this money was to make the first two years more affordable, but the state knew this funding was not permanent.

Dr. Harris reminded the committee that another option was that the formula money could be shifted. Trustee Benson suggested that Whitney and staff come back with some options in terms of spending the money.

The meeting adjourned at 1:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Gale Rohde