BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

BOARD ACTION
AMERICAN INDIAN PROJECT PLAN

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the American Indian Project is to assist our colleges and universities find ways to enroll and graduate more students of American Indian heritage. The plan addresses such issues as recruitment, retention and success for these students. In addition, this project also addresses Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System’s commitment to increasing the number of American Indian faculty, staff and administrators. The plan proposes strategies for both institutions and the Office of the Chancellor. When implemented, the project will enhance the system’s ability to serve all Minnesotans.

This proposal is base upon data collected from numerous stakeholders. Chancellor James H. McCormick and Trustee Will Antell have visited the chairs of nine of the eleven American Indian bands. As a follow-up to their visits, teams composed of Dr. Mike Lopez, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, appropriate campus leaders, including presidents, and Dr. Whitney Harris, Executive Director of Diversity and Multiculturalism visited the education leaders of the bands. The information gathered during these visits was this plan.

More than 70 faculty and staff of American Indian heritage gathered at the Office of the Chancellor on January 20th to share their thoughts and concerns regarding higher education opportunities for Minnesota's American Indians.

As part of their information gathering for the development of American Indian higher education initiatives, Trustee Will Antell and Chancellor James McCormick along with Presidents Phil Davis, Minneapolis Community and Technical College and Donald Day, Fond Du Lac Tribal and Community College attended a hearing at the American Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC), in Minneapolis. The hearing, held on February 28, 2006, was arranged by Dr. Lee Antell, director of the American Indian OIC. Various leaders of the urban American Indian communities of the Twin Cities were invited to the hearing. Deputy Chancellor Janice Fitzgerald, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Mike López, Underrepresented Student Recruiter Raúl Ramos and Executive Director of Diversity and Multiculturalism Whitney Harris also participated in the hearing.

More than 30 individuals participated in the event. Ten community leaders gave public testimony regarding issues that impact the access and success of American Indians in Minnesota’s institutions of higher learning. Among the presenters were representatives from local school systems as well as such organizations as the American Indian Chamber of Commerce.
Whitney Harris met with two groups of American Indian students, one at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College and another at Minneapolis Community and Technical College. Both groups of students provide important suggestions. In addition, Harris has also met with various American Indian community leaders to discuss issues that impact the access and success of American Indians at our institutions.

In addition, the proposed plan has been reviewed and discussed by wide array stakeholders. The Diversity and Multiculturalism committee of the Board of Trustees, the Leadership Council and its Diversity and Multiculturalism committee, the cabinet and various members of the Office of the Chancellor have been consulted. It also has been submitted to the students’ associations and the unions for their review and comments. The plan has been submitted to the participants of the abovementioned gatherings of American Indians.

Ultimately, this plan will be integrated into the system’s action plan. Then, both the institutions and the Office of the Chancellor will develop detailed diversity plans, with measurable outcomes.

**RECOMMENDED COMMITTEE MOTION**
The Diversity and Multiculturalism committee recommends that the Board of Trustees supports inclusion of the proposed American Indian Project Plan into the System Action Plan.

**RECOMMENDED BOARD MOTION**
The Board of Trustees supports the inclusion of the proposed American Indian Project Plan in the System Action Plan.

*Date of Adoption:*
*Date of Implementation:*
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system  
Office of the Chancellor  
Diversity and Multiculturalism

Systemwide Strategic Work Plan  
For  
American Indians  
2006 – 2010

Recommend Goals and Strategies for 2006 – 2010

This systemwide strategic work plan for American Indians is designed to help colleges and universities “focus on enhancing the access and success of American Indian students at our system’s colleges and universities.” This plan will be incorporated into the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System’s 2006-2010 Action Plan.

System Strategic Direction 1: Increase access and opportunity

Goal 1.1

Evaluate the effectiveness of current American Indian focused programs and activities

Institutional Strategies

- Each institution will prepare an inventory of its current American Indian focused programs and activities.
- Each institution, in conjunction with the Office of the Chancellor, will develop and implement a protocol for evaluating the effectiveness of its current American Indian focused programs and activities.

Office of the Chancellor Strategies

- The Office of the Chancellor will coordinate the institutional inventory of American Indian focused programs and activities.
- The Office of the Chancellor will prepare a systemwide inventory of American Indian focused programs and activities to be shared with all units of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system.
- The Office of the Chancellor will assist institutions to evaluate the effectiveness of their American Indian focused programs and activities.
- The Office of the Chancellor, based upon an evaluation of the effectiveness of the American Indian focused programs and activities, will compile a compendium of best practices.

1 Specific time tables for the implementation of the strategies will be developed in consultation with the Office of the Chancellor.
Goal 1.2

Increase the number of American Indian students who enroll at Minnesota State Colleges institutions

Institutional Strategies

• In consultation with the Chancellor, each institution will establish goals for increasing the number of students of American Indian heritage.
• Selected institutions will create pilot projects to:
  o explore new ways to provide information regarding registration and financial assistance to American Indian students;
  o provide comprehensive career counseling to American Indians at sites such as on reservations and at urban community centers;
  o collaborate with tribal and urban American Indian leaders and through the use of American Indian culture and language, will develop appropriate youth self-esteem building and academic enhancement programs.
• Appropriate institutions, through working with tribal education chairs, will expand partnerships with American Indian to increase youth participation in new and existing pre-college bridge programs.
• Appropriate institutions will, in collaboration with urban American Indian organizations and tribal leadership, establish outreach programs for prospective non-traditional American Indian students.

Office of the Chancellor Strategies

• The Office of the Chancellor will support and monitor each institution’s progress towards achieving its recruitment goals for American Indians.
• The Office of the Chancellor will provide professional development opportunities for recruiters, financial aid officers, advisors and admission officers to develop specific and appropriate cultural competency skills specific to American Indians.
• The Office of the Chancellor will facilitate a Best Practices Forum for the recruitment, retention and graduation of American Indian students.
• The Office of the Chancellor will collect and disseminate employee and student data on persons of American Indian heritage.

Goal 1.3

Increase the number of postsecondary education opportunities to American Indian communities, reservations and areas with significant American Indian populations.

Institutional Strategies

• Appropriate institutions will establish postsecondary education opportunities for American Indians, using traditional and electronic modalities, to reservations and community centers. The programs should be based upon the needs of the American Indian reservations and communities.
• In order to improve the feasibility of reservation based postsecondary education programs, appropriate institutions will assist American Indians develop programs to increase the participation of local non-American Indians in education programs offered on the reservations.
• Appropriate institutions will provide suitable assistance to tribal colleges in such areas as program development, accreditation issues and other institutional concerns.

Office of the Chancellor Strategy
• The Office of the Chancellor will seek funds to assist colleges and universities provide postsecondary education opportunities to American Indians on their reservations.
• The Office of the Chancellor will assist American Indians to develop programs to increase the participation of local non-American Indians in education programs offered on the reservations.

Strategic Direction 2: Promote and measure high-quality learning programs and services

Goal 2.1
Afford students enrolled at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System’s institutions the opportunity to increase their knowledge of American Indian history, culture and legal status.

Institutional Strategies
• Faculty will be encouraged to, in appropriate courses and learning experiences, integrate information regarding American Indian history, culture and legal systems.
• Faculty will be encouraged to, in appropriate courses and learning experiences, integrate information regarding American Indian sovereignty.

Office of the Chancellor Strategies
• The Office of the Chancellor will provide/coordinate professional development opportunities for faculty to enhance their knowledge of American Indian epistemologies and corresponding learning styles.
• The Office of the Chancellor will continue to monitor and support credit transfer agreements with accredited tribal college postsecondary programs.

Goal 2.2
Increase the number of American Indian faculty and staff at each institution.

Institutional Strategies
• Each institution, in consultation with the Office of the Chancellor, and, based upon underutilization information in its affirmative action plan, set goals for hiring faculty and staff of American Indian heritage.
• Each institution will ensure that search committees and search processes adhere to the system’s commitment to a diverse workforce.
• Each institution will develop and implement plans for retaining faculty and staff of American Indian heritage.
Office of the Chancellor Strategy
• The Office of the chancellor will develop and implement appropriate cultural competency professional development opportunities for individuals who serve on search committees.

Strategic Direction 3: Provide programs and services integral to state and regional economic needs

Goal 3.1

Enhance relationships with local and regional business

Institutional Strategies
• Appropriate institutions will provide customized training designed to meet the needs of American Indian businesses such as casinos and federally contracted services provided by certain American Indian reservations.
• Institutions will consider the needs of American Indian economic and business needs in designing customized training programs

Goal 3.2

Enhance the relationship between American Indian communities and organizations and the Minnesota State College and Universities System.

Institutional Strategy
• Appropriate institutions will establish a formal mechanism designed to serve as a liaison between the institution and American Indian communities, reservations and organizations.

Office of the Chancellor Strategies
• Create an American Indian Advisory Board to the Office of the Chancellor. This board should have a liaison to the Community Action Diversity Council.
• Given their unique political status, the Diversity and Multiculturalism division should designate a staff member as liaison to American Indian people.

Strategic Direction 4: Innovation to meet current and future educational needs efficiently

Goal 4.1

Increase the knowledge of issues related to the access and success of American Indians in higher education

Institutional Strategy
• Each institution will provide appropriate support to qualified faculty and staff to conduct approved research related to American Indians and higher education. Research designed
to enhance the access and success of American Indian students in higher education will be given priority.

Office of the Chancellor Strategy

• The Office of the Chancellor will develop and support a three year research project for faculty and staff interested in conducting and sharing research on issues of access and success of American Indians in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System.

Goal 4.2

Recognize institutions that develop innovative programs that enhance the access and success of American Indian students

Office of the Chancellor Strategy

• The Office of the Chancellor will recognize institutions that develop innovative and efficient policies, programs and activities that enhance the access and success of students of American Indian heritage.