

The recommendations: direction and detail

The following sections offer additional detail about the six recommendations. Although we offer suggestions about ways to advance each recommendation, by no means do these ideas comprise implementation plans. Those plans must be developed through a highly collaborative process that engages all the system’s stakeholders.

1 Dramatically increase the success of all learners, especially those in diverse populations traditionally underserved by higher education.

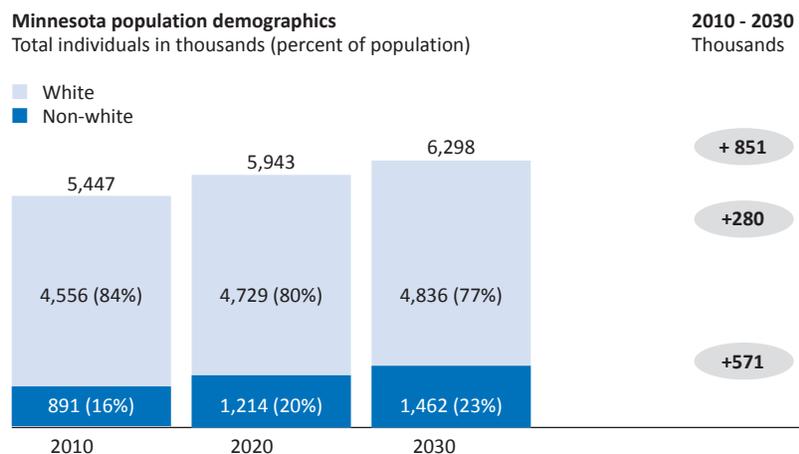
The diversity of our students benefits all of us – regardless of race, age or circumstances – as we learn about each other, other cultures, and other experiences. Diversity helps build our intercultural understanding and creates dynamic learning environments on campus and in the community.

In the years to come, the number of high school graduates will decline and Minnesota’s population will grow significantly more diverse. According to the state demographer, by 2035 Minnesota’s population will be 25 percent non-white. Latino, black, and Asian populations will more than double in the next 30 years. Of significant concern, Minnesota has one of the largest opportunity gaps in the nation with 50 percent of students of color

and American Indian students not graduating high school on time. Too many of those who do graduate on time are not ready for college-level coursework. Our colleges and universities are making modest progress to close the opportunity and completion gap, but there is much more to do. Fully 38 percent of our students receive Pell grants; 23 percent are students of color or American Indian students. We serve more students of color, more American Indian students and more students from modest financial means than all other higher education providers in Minnesota combined. The proportion of students of color and students from families of modest financial means has grown significantly during the past decade and will continue to do so. For our students to succeed, we must engage families,

FIGURE 3.
67 PERCENT OF THE MINNESOTA’S POPULATION GROWTH WILL BE AMONG PEOPLE OF COLOR

SOURCE: MN State Demographers Office, January 2009 Minnesota population projections by race and ethnicity, 2010 to 2030



communities, secondary schools, nonprofit organizations, and other entities to reduce gaps in academic preparation and to connect students to additional financial resources.

A second trend is a significant increase in the number of adult learners and those attending our colleges and universities part-time. Fully 39 percent of our students are over the age of 24. One-half of our students attend part-time – a seven-point increase during the past eight years. We must provide greater flexibility in our programs and academic support services to meet students’ needs and circumstances.

The diversity of our students benefits all of us – regardless of race, age or circumstances – as we learn about each other, other cultures, and other experiences. Diversity helps build our intercultural understanding, and creates dynamic learning environments on campus and in the community.

Strategies:

- Strengthen global competencies by adopting culturally relevant pedagogy and increasing diversity among our faculty, staff, leadership, and students.
- Implement research-based best practices for student success.
- Partner with nonprofit organizations, community groups, and other entities to connect students to additional financial resources and support services to make higher education more affordable and increase student success.
- Partner with diverse communities and families to create welcoming learning environments that expand access to educational pathways and increase student success.
- Deepen partnerships with secondary schools and ABE (adult basic education) to enhance student readiness for college-level work and accelerate degree completion.

“A growing number of students have families, jobs, and other demands on life that require more flexible options for completing their degrees. This will enable students to devote more time to classes, reduce student debt, and finish their degree in less time.”

–Stephen Sabin, student of Central Lakes College and past president of MSCSA

**FIGURE 4.
MORE STUDENTS ARE
ATTENDING OUR COLLEGES
AND UNIVERSITIES
PART-TIME**

Source: MnSCU Office of Research and Planning

