



DIVERSITY & EQUITY STRATEGIC PLAN

FY 2017 - FY 2020

RIDGEWATER COLLEGE
Hutchinson, MN • Willmar, MN

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PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT



This diversity plan establishes Ridgewater College's commitment to issues of equity, inclusion and diversity that are critical in preparing the college and especially our students to meet the challenges of the global community in which we live. This plan articulates our goals for meeting those challenges and improving the access and welcoming environment that lie at the core of our mission and values.

This plan was created by a cross-section of faculty, students, staff and administration, but its value and effectiveness will only be realized if the entire college community works toward its goals and embraces its vision. I call upon the members of the community to embrace the plan's strategic initiatives and desired outcomes. Minnesota has a rich tradition of valuing and embracing diversity—working together we can continue and build upon that tradition.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph P. Opatz". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Joseph P. Opatz
Interim President

RATIONALE

The demographics in the Ridgewater College regional service area are changing quickly. In five years, the population over 50 years of age will increase by 17%, while high school graduating class size will decrease by 5% and the population age 25-34 will decrease by 1.4%. Population growth in five of the six counties surrounding the college is projected to slow to 1-3% and it is projected that by 2045 populations of color in the Ridgewater College geographic area will increase by 60%.

The MnSCU Trends of Performance Metrics indicate that Ridgewater College continues to have a trend of lower completion rates for students of color to white students. We will expand on student support services and enhance early alert and interventions to better support retention and completion.

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION STATEMENT

Ridgewater College provides quality educational opportunities for diverse student learners in an inclusive, supportive, and accessible environment.

INCLUSIVE VISION & VALUES STATEMENT

Ridgewater College will be a dynamic educational leader exemplifying innovation and excellence within a student-centered learning environment.

Ridgewater College values a learning environment that:

- Focuses on student needs and student success.
- Demonstrates and reinforces the value of lifelong learning.
- Reaches beyond the college's walls to the community, the region, and the world.
- Promotes ethical and honest behavior and accountability at both an institutional and individual level.
- Equips students to think critically and creatively, solve problems, and adapt to rapidly changing world.
- Embraces diversity of thought, diversity of individual background, and affirms the worth and dignity of each individual.
- Centers on continuous improvement by establishing success indicators, measuring against those indicators, and using the results to make strategic decisions.

OBJECTIVES

Ridgewater College provides quality educational opportunities for diverse student learners in an inclusive, supportive, and accessible environment.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPERATIVES

Assessment & Accountability	Budget & Fundraising
Improve assessments of and accountability for inclusivity at every level of the college.	Create and sustain an institutional financial infrastructure that effectively supports inclusivity.

OBJECTIVE: ACCESS, EQUITY & OPPORTUNITY

Goal #1	Action Steps	Primary Stewards	Proposed Partners	Tracking	Completion Target
Reduce and eliminate the achievement/opportunity gap.	<p>Clarify common language especially between sporadic attender and academic alert.</p> <p>Academic Alert System resource (instructional for faculty use).</p> <p>Increase early alert usage by faculty to increase advisor intervention for at risk students.</p>	<p>Faculty</p> <p>Deans</p>	<p>Counselors</p> <p>Student Services Advisors</p>	<p># of early alerts per semester</p> <p># of students that successfully complete course after alert and action was taken</p> <p># of students that met GPA of requirement of 2.0</p> <p>Image Now Query</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date of alert • Type of faculty • Completion Rate • GPA 	Starting Fall 2016; reports will be generated for each semester completion.

ADDITIONAL ACTION STEPS FOR CONSIDERATION:

- General reminder dates with recommendations on using Early Alert.
e.g.) if an instructor does not track attendance consider alerting the first low assignment score or missed assignment.
e.g.) Before end of first week of semester; instructor could alert for no-shows.
- Training for faculty on how to use Early Alert System.

OBJECTIVE: ACCESS, EQUITY & OPPORTUNITY

Goal #2	Action Steps	Primary Stewards	Proposed Partners	Tracking	Completion Target
Increase the outreach to diverse populations to achieve greater diversity in the student body.	Continue to increase off campus outreach opportunities that include faculty and current students.	Admissions Deans Faculty/ program Current Students	WAM-BC (Willmar Area Multicultural Business Center) Vision 2040 Heartland Community Action Business Owners African Development Center	Host two off-campus recruitment events and document the impact of these events on recruitment of diverse populations. Establish a baseline from these numbers to evaluate effectiveness of off-campus recruitment events. Increase database usage and collection of data for Admissions and events.	May 2017
Increase the outreach to diverse populations to achieve greater diversity in the student body.	Incorporate translation services into the college website and make available key admission and financial documents in the language of Somali and Spanish.	Marketing IT/ Johnson Group/ Webmaster	ARCH Language Network Office of Higher Education Student Services	Google Analytics for translation of website information. Translate Financial Aid documents; Business Office FAQ, and Parent/Student Support System Packet into Somali and Spanish.	December 2018

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/NOTES:

- Increase proposed partnership lists for both campuses.
- Google Translating Apps (or app in similar function) incorporated into website.
- Get materials such as FAQs and financial aid forms translated and be willing and able to provide additional required forms upon request.

OBJECTIVE: EMPLOYEE DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Goal #3	Action Steps	Primary Stewards	Partners	Tracking	Completion Target
Employ and train culturally competent staff and faculty.	Increase Cultural competency among faculty/staff through workshops and dialogue.	Administration	MnSCU Speakers/ Trainers Conferences	Will offer 5 opportunities related to cultural competency each academic year.	May 2017
		Faculty	Diversity Training Programs; Student Success Staff Session		Fall 2016
		Staff	Complete IDI Assessment for student services staff and all administrators.		

OBJECTIVE: SUPPORTIVE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT

Goal #4	Action Steps	Primary Stewards	Partners	Tracking	Completion Target
Ensure a welcoming & supportive campus environment.	Complete PACE climate survey establish trend using previous surveys.	Administration	PACE Survey Representatives	Complete the PACE survey spring 2016, compare to previous survey results, and identify action steps to increase satisfaction.	Fall 2016
Ensure a welcoming & supportive campus environment.	All institutional policy revisions will be reviewed by the Diversity Committee to insure culturally consistent language and best practices.	Diversity Committee Administration	Ridgewater College Employees Student Senate	Number of policies reviewed.	Ongoing
Ensure a welcoming & supportive campus environment.	Provide training opportunity to students in leadership roles that build cultural intelligence.	Student Life Advisors Students in leadership roles (Clubs)	Ridgewater Employees Community Resources	Before and after surveys to track development of cultural competence.	April 2017 Reevaluate Fall 2017

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/NOTES:

- CCSEE DATA from 2010 will be used for student data.

KEY TERMS & DEFINITIONS

Achievement Gap/Opportunity Gap: Refers to the observed disparity on a number of educational measures between the performance of groups of students, especially groups defined by gender, race/ethnicity, ability, and socioeconomic status.

Affirmative Action: Specific action in recruitment, hiring, upgrading and other areas designed and taken for the purpose of eliminating the present effects of past discrimination, or to prevent discrimination. It is one aspect of the federal government's effort to ensure equal employment opportunity. Executive Order 11246 prohibits federal contractors from discriminating against employees on the basis of race, religion, sex, creed, color, or national origin, and requires contractors to implement affirmative action plans to increase the participation of minorities and women in the workplace. Pursuant to federal regulations, affirmative action plans must consist of equal opportunity policy statement, an analysis of the current work force, identification of problem areas, the establishment of goals and timetables for increasing employment opportunities, specific action oriented programs to address problem areas, support for community actions programs, and the establishment of an internal audit and reporting system.

Campus Climate: Campus climate is a measure - real or perceived - of the campus environment as it relates to interpersonal, academic and professional interactions. It refers to the experience of individuals or groups at the institution as they interact with community members. A healthy campus climate is one in which people feel welcome, safe and valued. In an unhealthy campus climate, people often feel isolated, marginalized, and unsafe.

Cultural Competence: Cultural competence is the ability to successfully teach students who come from a culture or cultures other than our own. It entails developing certain personal and interpersonal awareness and sensitivities, understanding certain bodies of cultural knowledge, and mastering a set of skills that, taken together, underlie effective cross-cultural teaching and culturally responsive teaching.

Diversity: The MnSCU system recognizes and respects the importance of all similarities and differences among human beings. The system and its institutions are committed, through their programs and policies, to fostering inclusiveness, understanding, acceptance and respect in a multicultural society. Diversity includes, but is not limited to: age, ethnic origin, national origin, race, color, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, color, religious beliefs, creeds, and income. MnSCU's system's commitment to diversity compels it to confront prejudicial, to diversity compels it to confront prejudicial discriminatory or racist behavior and policies.

Equal Employment Opportunity: Where all personnel activities are conducted so as to assure equal access in all phases of the employment process. Employment decisions are based solely on the individual merit and fitness of applicants and employees related to

specific jobs, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, handicapping conditions, marital status or criminal record.

Equity (student focus): The creation of opportunities for historically underrepresented populations to have equal access to and participation in educational programs that are capable of closing the achievement gaps in student success and completion.

Equity (employee focus): The creation of opportunities for historically underrepresented populations of employees (faculty and staff) to have equal access to professional growth opportunities and resource networks that are capable of closing the demographic disparities in leadership roles in all spheres of institutional functioning.

Inclusion: The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity – in people, in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect – in ways that increase one’s awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions.

Inclusiveness: How people from all backgrounds are involved in the organization, how their perspectives are valued, and how their needs are understood.

Minority: The term "minorities" as used in affirmative action refers to four historically underrepresented ethnic groups: American Indians, Asians or Pacific Islanders, Blacks, and Hispanics.

Underrepresented: Underrepresented students include underserved students (African American/Black, Asian, Hispanic, American Indian, and multiracial), plus first-generation students and low-income students. (In specific instances, other groups of students may be considered underrepresented. For example, in a traditionally female discipline, males may be considered underrepresented.)

Underserved: Underserved students are those who have been traditionally excluded from full participation in our society and its institutions and include African American/Black, Asian, Hispanic, American Indian, and multiracial students. The basis of exclusion has been primarily on race and color.

Reference MnSCU: www.diversity.mnscu.edu/resources/glossary/index.html