



Equity in Education and Job Connection Grant Program: 2017 Annual Report

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About the Minnesota Office of Higher Education

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education is a cabinet-level state agency providing students with financial aid programs and information to help them gain access to postsecondary education. The agency also serves as the state's clearinghouse for data, research and analysis on postsecondary enrollment, financial aid, finance and trends.

The Minnesota State Grant Program is the largest financial aid program administered by the Office of Higher Education, awarding up to \$180 million in need-based grants to Minnesota residents attending accredited institutions in Minnesota. The agency oversees tuition reciprocity programs, a student loan program, Minnesota's 529 College Savings Plan, licensing and early college awareness programs for youth.

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Executive Summary

Minnesota's citizens are some of the most educated in the country, across all age groups. Minnesota ranks second nationally in the number of adults, ages 25-64, with an associate degree or higher. The state's overall high educational attainment ranking, however, masks severe disparities between racial and ethnic groups:

- Students of color graduate from high school within four years at a rate lower than White students.
- Students of color enroll in college at a rate lower than White graduates.
- Undergraduates of color enroll primarily at two-year institutions.
- Undergraduates of color enroll part-time in college at higher rates than White undergraduates.
- Undergraduates of color and non-English speakers enroll in developmental education at higher rates.
- Undergraduates of color have lower college graduation rates.

Given that Minnesotans of color are comprising a larger share of the state's population each year, the state's changing demographic profile requires the state to begin reducing educational attainment racial gaps or the state's economic future will be threatened. In response, the Minnesota Legislature enacted legislation in 2015 setting a target that 70 percent of Minnesota adults age 25 to 44 will have attained a postsecondary certificate or degree by 2025, both for the general population and by racial/ethnic subgroups in the state.

Given the importance that postsecondary institutions and organizations have in producing more people with credentials, the Legislature created an Equity in Education and Job Connection Grant Program to assist selected colleges, universities, and organizations in providing evidence-based best practices to increase retention, completion, and employment outcomes for historically underrepresented students. The Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE) awarded grants this year to three Minnesota State institutions that will aid the institutions in providing best practice services that improve attendance, retention, completion, and potentially impact gainful employment outcomes for the targeted student group. To make the aforementioned improvements, institutions and organizations had the choice to provide a service under (but not limited to) one of the following categories:

- Social and Campus Integration
- Services that Promote Long-Term Academic Success
- Appropriately-Structured Developmental Education
- Expanding Paid Internships that Directly Relate to Degree Programs

On August 1, 2016, the Request for Proposals was made available to all interested parties. Sixteen two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions (all within the Minnesota State system) indicated an intent to submit a proposal for the grant. Seven Minnesota State institutions ultimately submitted completed applications. A five-person panel met to review and score the applications. Evaluation of proposals was based on the following criteria:

- Need for the Service
- Project Significance

- Quality of Service Design
- Quality of Services
- Quality of Personnel and Adequacy of Resources
- Quality of Operation Plan
- Quality of Budget
- Quality of Project Evaluation
- Quality of Sustainability Plan
- Quality of Organizational Commitment

Three Minnesota State institutions were selected for receiving grant funds totaling \$480,000:

- **Saint Paul College (two-year college)** \$163,825
- **Riverland Community College (two-year college)** \$190,602
- **Minnesota State University, Mankato (four-year university)** \$125,573

All three institutions are using grant and matching funds to support expansion of proactive advising services. As a condition of receiving the Equity Grant, each institution's administrative leadership has committed to create a student-centered culture of retention and completion on their campuses. This effort requires not only that of the administrators, but the institutions' faculty and staff as well. As such, payments of grant funds will occur on a recurring basis, parallel to progress at each institution. Each of the grant recipients must submit interim reports in January and final reports in June to OHE identifying their service(s), along with the student goals, activities, and outcomes associated with the service(s).

Introduction

2015-16 Minnesota Laws Chapter 189 provided the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE) \$480,000 to support equity in higher education programs, through Equity in Education and Job Connection Grants (Equity Grants). Three postsecondary institution grants were funded. Funded institutions intend to enhance program activities to increase attendance, retention, and graduation rates for historically underrepresented college students. The intent of the grant is to help the state reach the legislatively-set 70 percent postsecondary attainment goal (*Minnesota Statutes, section 135A.012*), for adults aged 25-44, close, as well as racial disparities in postsecondary attainment.

OHE accepted proposals in September 2016 to improve outcomes for historically underrepresented college students in attendance, retention, completion, and the obtaining of gainful employment after graduation. Three grants were awarded to Minnesota State institutions in October 2016. The funding period for the grants is December 1, 2016 to June 30, 2019.

Background

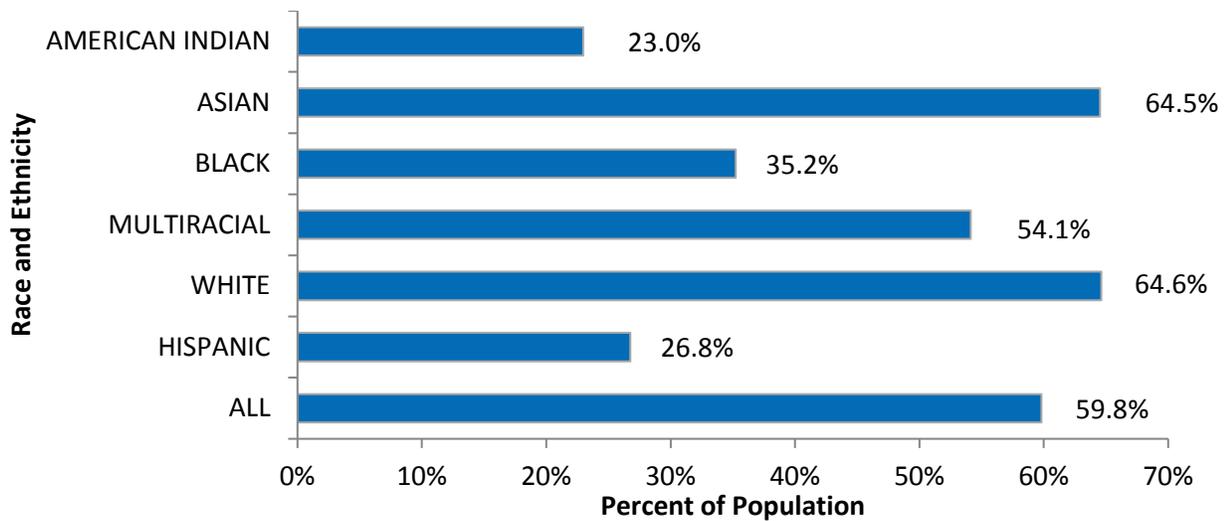
Minnesota's citizens are some of the most educated in the country, across all age groups. Minnesota ranks second nationally in the number of adults, ages 25-64, with an associate degree or higher. The state's overall high educational attainment ranking masks severe disparities between racial and ethnic groups, which is also consistent across age groups. These disparities include:

- Fewer Minnesotans of color attaining a postsecondary degree.
- Students of color graduating from high school within four years at a rate lower than White students.
- Students of color enrolling in college at a rate lower than White graduates.
- Students of color disproportionately concentrated at two-year institutions.
- Students of color disproportionately enrolling part-time in college at higher rates than White students.
- Students of color and non-English speakers enrolling in developmental education at higher rates.
- Students of color graduating from college at lower rates.

Minnesota's students of color come from populations growing the fastest in the state. Projections are that Minnesota's minority population will grow from 14 percent to 25 percent of the total population by 2035, and within postsecondary education, students of color are becoming a larger share of undergraduate enrollment. The state's changing demographic profile requires efforts to begin reducing these gaps, or the state's economic future will be threatened.

In response, the Minnesota Legislature enacted legislation in 2015 setting a target that 70 percent of Minnesota adults ages 25 to 44 will have attained a postsecondary certificate or degree by 2025, both for the general population and by racial/ethnic subgroups in the state. Estimates released by OHE and the Minnesota State Demographic Center provide a snapshot, depicted in this report, of the disparities by race in educational attainment:

Figure 1. Minnesota’s Estimated Population Ages 25 to 44 with a Certificate or Higher Credential, by Basic Race and Ethnicity Categories. 2010-2014¹



Given the importance that postsecondary institutions and organizations have in producing more people with credentials, the Legislature created an Equity in Education and Job Connection Grant Program (2015-16 Minnesota Laws Chapter 189, See Appendix A) to assist selected colleges, universities, and organizations in providing evidence-based best practice services that have been proven through research to be effective in increasing retention, completion, and employment outcomes for historically underrepresented students. It is the discretion of institutions applying for funds to determine which best practice services will be the most effective for them in improving outcomes for these students.

Grant Eligibility

Proposals for the grant could be submitted by institutions under the Minnesota State system or private organizations. No proposals were submitted by private organizations. University of Minnesota and private postsecondary institutions were not eligible to apply.

Eligible Services

OHE awarded grants to three Minnesota State institutions to assist them in providing research-based best practice services that improve attendance, retention, completion, and gainful employment

¹ Source: IPUMS microdata version of U.S. Census Bureau 2010-2014 American Community Survey for Associate's or Higher Degree, with tabulations by the MN State Demographic Center. Holders of certificates as their highest post-secondary award were estimated using a cohort analysis method applied to administrative data on certificates awarded (supplied by the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system and the Minnesota Office of Higher Education) and produced by the MN State Demographic Center.

Notes: Estimates are centered on green intervals indicating a 90 percent confidence interval. Users are cautioned that these estimates contain sampling and other sources of error, not shown here. Race was imputed for certificates earned in which the race of the individual was unknown. Percentages were not calculated for the small group of individuals self-identifying as "other" race.

outcomes. To make the improvements, institutions and organizations had the choice to provide a service under one of the following categories:

- Social and Campus Integration
- Services that Promote Long-Term Academic Success
- Appropriately Structured Developmental Education
- Expanding Paid Internships that Directly Relate to Degree Programs

Social and Campus Integration

Successful social integration into a college environment is necessary for students to be able to complete their postsecondary education. Social integration requires a sense of belonging on campus, which is fostered by the informal connections created with peers and faculty outside of the classroom. The underserved student population, first-generation college students (whom are disproportionately students of color), are often at a distinct disadvantage because of their lack of knowledge about postsecondary processes. Because campus integration is often more challenging than for students whose parents attended college, first-generation students are often less likely to persist and complete their degree than their peers. Strategies that address social and campus integration include:

- **First-year programs and seminars:** Bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on skills (including critical analysis, intensive writing, information literacy, and collaborative learning) that simultaneously develop students' intellectual and practical competencies. First-year seminars can also provide students the opportunity to answer cutting-edge questions in scholarships and engage with faculty members in their own research.
- **Summer bridge programs:** Students who are first-generation, lower-income or in need of developmental education can enhance their college going knowledge and skills by participating in a summer bridge program at their institution. Summer bridge programs help ease the transition from high school to postsecondary education, so first-year students can be on an equal footing with their peers. While various bridge programs at institutions serve a wide array of students (including international, underrepresented, and disabled students; along with students in specific fields of study), the main focus of all of these programs is to provide support for underprepared students.

Services that Promote Long-Term Academic Success

Academic success is one of the strongest factors in predicting whether or not a student will complete their postsecondary education. Grade point average (GPA), both in high school and during college is one such predictive factor. However, research suggests retention programs that focus primarily on helping students master course content alone only address immediate, rather than longer-term, deficiencies. Students who master course content, but fail to develop adequate academic self-confidence, academic goals, institutional commitment, achievement motivation, social support, and involvement are still at risk of dropping out.

Upon enrolling in college, students are provided with an extensive list of courses and choices of majors that may hinder their understanding of how to fulfill degree requirements. Students may not know how term-by-term course choices align or fail to align with requirements to complete a certificate or

degree, and their chosen major or program. A related issue is the number of credits students accumulate upon graduation. Students do not always understand how their program or major choice, lack of major choice, or changing of majors adds to the number of “unnecessary” extra credits they might accumulate. While some states and postsecondary institutions are beginning to limit expansion of the number of credits required for a degree, many students still graduate with more than 60 credits for an associate degree or 120 credits for a bachelor’s degree. An example of a research-based, best practice that facilitates long-term academic success is:

- **Proactive Advising:** Proactive or intrusive advising is a form of academic advising that involves a professional advisor regularly reaching out to the student, as opposed to leaving the student to take the initiative themselves. Each student is assigned a professional advisor to assist with degree program modifications, financial aid issues, and classroom-based issues. During advising sessions, the advisor helps develop the student’s problem-solving and decision making skills by working through problems together. In this centralized advising structure, full-time professional advisors can focus solely on assisting students with their academic, career, and life goals, as well as provide complete, and relevant information for degree mapping. Degree mapping lays out the required sequence of classes a student needs to obtain a given certificate or degree. It provides students with a pathway from entry to completion by detailing classes required for each semester and, in turn, the institution commits to offering those classes, with adequate capacity, for all students enrolled in a specified program. Based on the selected degree plan, a student can see how many semesters it will take and how much tuition it will cost to complete a degree based on future course offerings. If a student withdraws or fails a course or decides to switch degree programs, their plan automatically gets updated, including updated tuition costs of program completion. Students can also see how their degree plan changes before they make any permanent changes, allowing them to play with hypothetical scenarios in the system.

Many proactive advising programs involve the usage of an “early alert system,” which allows advisors to identify and assist students who are at risk or failing particular courses or withdrawing from the college. An early alert system tracks students’ attendance in all their classes, as well as when they use on-campus resources, such as tutoring centers and the fitness center. Students slide their identification card upon entry and exit of using such resources. When students are at-risk, they are contacted by their advisor so they can meet with them about their progress.

Appropriately Structured Developmental Education

According to the Office of Higher Education’s 2016 Getting Prepared report, 26 percent of 2013 public high school graduates in Minnesota enrolled in one or more developmental courses within two years of graduating high school. These students are disproportionately students of color and low-income students. Studies have shown that developmental education requirements and the added time to completion negatively impacts the likelihood of degree completion. One reason for this is that these students have the potential to run out of financial aid either before they complete their developmental course sequences or before they complete their degree. The alternative models of structuring developmental education include, but are not limited to:

- **Paired courses:** In the paired course model, institutions connect a developmental course to a college-level course in the same subject area. Students learn content in the college-level course (history, for example), while developing basic skills in the developmental course (writing). This method of instruction allows students to receive college credit while still getting extra support from a non-credit course.
- **Mainstreaming with support:** This model allows developmental students to enroll in college-level courses immediately. Supplemental support can come in the form of mandatory companion classes, lab sessions, integrated tutorial support and additional class sessions. This addresses time concerns and the stigma of students taking developmental courses.
- **Co-curricular programming:** This is a model of acceleration that requires students to take fewer developmental courses overall. This can involve collapsing multiple developmental courses into a one-semester course that has more content or hours than one of the courses that it replaced, or developing a single remediation course for a specific academic program.

Expanding Paid Internships that Directly Relate to Degree Programs

Completing an internship within the field of study prior to graduation has proven beneficial to a student’s ability to find career-oriented employment after school. This occurs because of the job experience gained and professional network developed before graduation. Additionally, paid internships facilitate academic success because they provide “relevancy” to students’ program of study. Increasing the availability of paid internships for college students is also an equity issue. Students who cannot afford to spend the summer or academic term at an internship related to their study, rather than working for pay, are at a disadvantage in the job market after degree completion.

Content of Proposals

Service Description and Demonstrated Need

Institutions applying for the grant need to identify the service(s) to be funded and the specific student need(s) that shape the design of the service. Also:

- A description of the characteristics of the students to be served.
- A description of how the services will foster postsecondary retention and completion for targeted historically underrepresented college student groups.
- Documentation of the service’s history in supporting retention and graduation at the institution, reflective of the needs of historically underrepresented college students toward the purpose of helping to reach the 70 percent attainment goal set by the state.
- The service’s effect on assisting students to obtain well-paying jobs.

Plan of Operation

The service and student outcome goals must be clearly stated and measurable. This includes an identification of the service’s objectives and a timeline for implementing strategies to reach the service’s goal. This requires a description of how the service’s activities and evaluation plan are directly related to the service’s objectives and reflective of participants’ needs. Descriptions are required of how each objective will be accomplished with information on types of actions taken, time allotted, and the staff person responsible.

Evaluation Plan

Details of a rigorous evaluation plan that measures impact of program activities and attainment of service goals. This includes how participation and outcome data will be collected, analyzed, and reported to document progress toward meeting program goals. As such, program and student outcome goals, along with performance measures for each goal require specification. The plan also includes a description of how the service will be evaluated to determine whether or not the service's goals were met.

Adequacy of Resources, Quality of Personnel

A description of organizational resources to support the desired service(s). The roles of staff and their time commitment to the project are outlined here. Abbreviated staff vitae documenting relevant service-related experiences and training are required in this section. The institution's history in achieving successful improvements using services toward which a grant is sought is included in this section.

Sustainability Plan

Institutions must explain how the service will be maintained and continued once the grant period has ended. The grant funding is seed money that will allow a new or existing service to be self-sustaining years after the grant period has expired.

Organizational Commitment to Student Retention and Completion

A description of how the postsecondary institution and organization's culture would be transformed upon receipt of the grant and implementation of the desired service. The implementation of this service is the starting point for creating a campus-wide culture of student-centered programming, with the goal of retention and graduation of students specifically those from historically underrepresented backgrounds, fostered by not only the institution's president and administrators, but the faculty and staff of the institution as well. As such, signatures from the institution's president and vice president of student affairs are included as part of the application.

Budget, Budget Narrative, and Cost Effectiveness

Institutions must include a budget and a detailed budget narrative, relating expenditures to service objectives and indicating how proposed costs were derived. The budget narrative thoroughly describes each line item and provides justification for the expense. Grant funds can pay for the salaries and fringe benefits of grantee staff who coordinate programs and work directly with students. Operational costs are limited to what is necessary to effectively and efficiently administer the program, so that grant funds may be maximized. Grant funds can provide support for supplies, curricula, evaluation, and related service expenses. Equipment purchases or capital expenditures are not allowed. Included in the budget is documentation of the source and proposed usage of matching funds. An assumed cost per student of achieving success is required as part of the budget.

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation of proposals was based on the following criteria:

1. *Need for the Service* (9 points): Extent to which the project:
 - identifies college students eligible for service as defined by the legislative statute.
 - documents the service's history in facilitating attendance, retention, and graduation of historically underrepresented college students.
2. *Significance* (8 points): The ability of the proposed project to:
 - address successfully the specific service's focus within the broader goal of increasing the retention and graduation rates of historically underrepresented college students and reaching the state's 70 percent postsecondary education attainment goal.
3. *Quality of Service Design* (10 points): The extent to which:
 - the service's goals, objectives, activities, and outcomes have measurable and clearly specified outcomes.
 - if applicable, the extent to which the existing program has been successful.
4. *Quality of Services* (10 points): The likelihood that:
 - the proposed service will meet need and fulfill the stated objectives and outcomes.
 - the service provided will assure success for historically underrepresented college students.
5. *Quality of Personnel and Adequacy of Resources* (9 points):
 - the qualifications, training, and experience of key personnel are appropriate for their assignments.
 - resources are adequate to meet the service's goals and objectives.
6. *Quality of Operation Plan* (9 points):
 - the adequacy of the management plan to achieve the proposed service on time and within budget.
 - the service's timeline and milestones for accomplishing tasks are clearly defined.
 - the staff size, time commitment, and responsibilities are clearly defined and are appropriate for a quality project.
7. *Quality of Budget* (5 points):
 - the extent to which the budget is cost effective and reflective of program requirements, project objectives and outcomes, and number of students to be served.
 - the required matching support is documented, and additional resource support is provided, as needed.
8. *Quality of Project Evaluation* (10 points): The extent to which the proposed evaluation:
 - is objective and adequately measures achievement of goals and effectiveness of activities.
 - assesses participant outcomes (i.e., changes in attendance, performance, retention, and completion for the targeted student group).

9. *Quality of Sustainability Plan* (12 points): The extent to which the proposed sustainability plan:
- explains how the service will be maintained and continued once the grant period has ended.
 - shows how resources will be allocated in areas of service where grant funds were used.
10. *Quality of Organizational Commitment* (18 points):
- the ability to which the proposed service will lead to a campus-wide transformation toward a culture of student-centered services that are operated through the lens of facilitating student retention and graduation for historically underrepresented college students.
 - a description of how college/institution administrators, faculty, and staff will each commit to ensuring the institution has a student-centric culture of facilitating high retention and graduation rates for historically underrepresented college students.

Chronology of Award Selection Process

On August 1, 2016, the Request for Proposals was made available to all interested parties. A technical assistance session for interested parties was held at the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, and facilitated by Dr. Shaun Williams-Wyche (Grant Program Manager) and Nekey Oliver (OHE Legislative Liaison).

The deadline for receipt of Intent to Submit form was September 9. Sixteen two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions indicated an intent to submit a proposal for the grant. On September 26, seven schools actually submitted applications. On October 10, a five-person panel of independent experts on the retention and graduation of postsecondary education students from underrepresented backgrounds met to review and score the applications. Three Minnesota State institutions were ultimately selected for receiving grant money totaling \$480,000:

- Saint Paul College (two-year) **\$163,825**
- Riverland Community College (two-year) **\$190,602**
- Minnesota State University, Mankato (four-year) **\$125,573**

Every awarded institution was required to provide a dollar-to-dollar match with grant funding. Information on planned activities for each grant award is provided in the next section.

Awarded Institutions

Saint Paul College - \$163,825

Program Name: Guided Pathways Advising at Saint Paul College

Program Director: Dr. Kristen Raney, kristen.raney@saintpaul.edu, 651-846-1514

Saint Paul College's student body includes a lot of students who are academically underprepared for postsecondary education. Underprepared students who enter Saint Paul College in developmental courses are disproportionately students of color and succeed at lower than average rates. Saint Paul College plans to improve its retention and completion rates for students of color enrolled in one or more developmental courses through the development of a comprehensive and proactive pathways advising model.

This advising model will be a Guided Pathways Model, replacing the traditional self-service model. It features proactive advising supported by full integration of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) technology. The model involves ensuring student access to individualized academic and career planning, ongoing progress monitoring, and early alert warnings. The Guided Pathways Model integrates student services with academic affairs through professional, full-time Career Pathways Advisor positions. These special advisors help students transition into college and persist through programs, while faculty advisors will work with students once they begin credit-bearing courses.

Riverland Community College - \$190,602

Program Name: Closing the Achievement Gap by Improving Retention and Completion

Program Director: Dani Heiny, dani.heiny@riverland.edu, 507-433-0517

Riverland's student population is increasingly diverse. Among full-time, non-international students of color at Riverland, 68 percent are low income/Pell eligible and 81.5 percent are first-generation in college. The institution's overall graduation rate is 31.3 percent with only 10.7 percent of Riverland's students of color students graduating.

Riverland is committed to a multi-year Completion and Retention Initiative (CRI), using interventions that have a disproportionately positive affect on students of color. First, Riverland is adding additional full time advisors to reduce the student load on each current advisor and support full integration of assigned, proactive advising. Second, training will be provided for all 30 enrollment advisors, multicultural advisors, counselors and other designated staff on cultural competency. This is in addition to proactive advising training for 15 enrollment advisors, multicultural advisors, counselors, and other designated staff. Third, Riverland plans to pilot and implement a student management technology platform similar to InsideTrack that will enable the college to plan and track appropriate interventions to support student retention and completion. Fourth, using matching funds, Riverland will establish and dedicate scholarship funds to support students of color. At least \$30,000 in new scholarship funding (with academic year 2015-16 as a baseline) will be available over the course of the three-year grant period to support retention and completion of targeted students. Finally, tutoring and/or academic enrichment support services will be provided for students of color who are enrolled in one or more of Riverland's targeted initiatives to increase retention and completion. These initiatives include, but are not limited to: Cycles for Success Scholarship program (a performance-based scholarship

program), Be Your Best Summer College Prep Academy, Parent Center, TRIO Student Success Services, and pending funding, R-STEP Riverland Summer Transitions Engineering Program.

Minnesota State University, Mankato - \$125,573

Program Name: Guiding Pathways to Success for Underrepresented Students

Program Director: Briana Williamson, briana.williamson@mnsu.edu, 507-389-1459

As Minnesota State University, Mankato (MSU) has risen to the top of increased enrollment for historically underrepresented students amongst four-year Minnesota State institutions, the same growth has not been experienced in graduation rates for these students.

In order to increase graduation rates for historically underrepresented students, MSU will use the grant award to expand their currently-existing Guided Pathways to Success (GPS) program, which provides underrepresented students with the information, encouragement, and direction through high-impact practices that facilitates each student's ability to navigate college life, have success in the classroom, and reach their academic, personal, and professional goals.

GPS will assist in the increase of graduation rates for these students through six elements:

- Targeted recruitment process
- Summer bridge program
- Proactive advising
- Supplemental instruction
- Common first-year experience courses
- The creation of a registered student organization on campus for the students participating

Payment Schedule

In order to assure a match between actual spending needs of higher education grantees and dollar flow to the projects, a five-stage schedule of payments has been established to help facilitate accountability and monitor progress of funded projects. Upon final execution of the grant award, about a quarter of the grant amount will be forwarded to the grantee. After submission and approval of an annual narrative report showing that adequate program progress has been made, close to 20 percent of the grant amount will be paid. Three more identical payments of close to 20 percent will be paid after submissions of subsequent interim and annual narrative reports. The balance of grant expenditures will be paid after project completion and submission and approval of the final financial and narrative reports.

Reporting Outcomes

To facilitate regular reporting of results, each of the grant recipients must submit interim and final reports to OHE throughout the grant period. The final reports will identify their service(s), along with the student goals, activities, and outcomes associated with the service(s). Interim reports will be submitted to OHE every January during the grant period, while final reports will be submitted at the end of each fiscal year during this period, a total of four reports.

Next Report

The Minnesota Legislature should expect the next report on the Equity Grants on January 15, 2018. The report will include updates on each institution's delivery of services, along with data on student outcomes for the first time. Outcomes data will include but not be limited to, information on:

- The number of students served by each service.
- Courses taken, along with the GPA of students served by each service.
- Persistence and retention rates of students participating in each service.
- Postsecondary graduation rates of students participating in each service.
- The number of students who require postsecondary academic remediation and the number of remedial courses taken.

For comparison, the above information must be reported for students who were not served by the service. The reports must break down all outcomes by race and ethnicity.

Appendix A: Legislation for Equity Grant

2015-16 LAWS OF MINNESOTA, CHAPTER 189

Sec. 31.

EQUITY IN EDUCATION AND JOB CONNECTION GRANT PROGRAM.

Subdivision 1.

Grants.

(a) The commissioner of the Office of Higher Education shall award grants to improve postsecondary attendance, completion, and retention and the obtaining of well-paying jobs for which the postsecondary education provides training by providing services to historically underrepresented college students. Grants must be awarded to Minnesota state colleges and universities and private organization programs that help the state reach the attainment goals under Minnesota Statutes, section 135A.012. Programs must provide services targeted to make the improvements including, but not limited to:

- (1) academic and nonacademic counseling or advising;*
- (2) mentoring in education and career opportunities;*
- (3) structured tutoring;*
- (4) career awareness and exploration including internships and post graduation job placements;*
- (5) orientation to college life;*
- (6) financial aid counseling;*
- (7) academic instruction programs in core curricular areas of mathematics and language arts;*
- (8) supplemental instruction programs for college courses with high failure and withdrawal rates;*
and
- (9) co-requisite college course models for delivery of academic support.*

(b) The office shall structure the grants for sustainability of programs funded by a grant.

(c) To the extent there are sufficient qualified applicants, approximately 50 percent of grant dollars must be awarded to private organization programs.

(d) A grant must not be made to a private organization that is a postsecondary institution.

Subd. 2.

Application process.

(a) The commissioner shall develop a grant application process. The commissioner shall attempt to support projects in a manner that ensures that eligible students throughout the state have access to program services.

(b) The grant application must include, at a minimum, the following information:

- (1) a description of the characteristics of the students to be served reflective of the need for services listed in subdivision 1;*
- (2) a description of the services to be provided and a timeline for implementation of the service activities;*
- (3) a description of how the services provided will foster postsecondary retention and completion;*
- (4) a description of how the services will be evaluated to determine whether the program goals were met;*
- (5) the history of the applicant in achieving successful improvements using the services for which a grant is sought;*
- (6) the assumed cost per student of achieving successful outcomes;*
- (7) the effect of the grant on assisting students to obtain well-paying jobs;*
- (8) the proposed grant match;*
- (9) the organizational commitment to program sustainability; and*
- (10) other information as identified by the commissioner.*

Grant recipients must specify both program and student outcome goals, and performance measures for each goal.

Subd. 3.

Advisory committee.

The commissioner may establish and convene an advisory committee to assist the commissioner in reviewing applications and advise the commissioner on grantees and grant amounts. The members of the committee may include representatives of postsecondary institutions, organizations providing postsecondary academic and career services, and others deemed appropriate by the commissioner.

Subd. 4.

Outcome report.

Each grant recipient must annually submit a report to the Office of Higher Education identifying its program and student goals and activities implemented. A report must include, but not be limited to, information on:

- (1) number of students served;*
- (2) course taking and grade point average of participating students;*
- (3) persistence and retention rates of participating students;*
- (4) postsecondary graduation rates of participating students;*
- (5) the number of students who required postsecondary academic remediation and number of remedial courses for each of those students and in the aggregate; and*
- (6) jobs and wage rates of students after postsecondary graduation.*

To the extent possible, the report must breakdown outcomes by Pell grant qualification, race, and ethnicity.

Subd. 5.

Legislative report.

By January 15 of each year through 2021, the office shall submit a report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the committees in the house of representatives and the senate with jurisdiction over higher education finance regarding the grant recipients and their activities. The report shall include information about the students served, the organizations providing services, program activities, program goals and outcomes, and program revenue sources and funding levels.

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