The 2021-2022 academic year was a year of transition, as well as partnership and capacity building. Great things are on the horizon, and I am extremely grateful for the welcoming and innovative nature of my interactions with both of our institutions!

The Affirmative Action Office utilizes a comprehensive model that addresses the unique compliance, recruitment, education, and retention needs of Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical College. It is our goal to become transformative, anti-racist, inclusive, and equitable in our access to opportunities, talent development, and outcomes for our employees.

The 2022-2023 academic year will be a continuation of this work to become data-driven and inclusive institutions. Institutions that are desirable employers of choice for the diverse populations we serve and employ. I look forward to this work with you all!
Review of Affirmative Action

Academic year 2021-2022 served to build the groundwork for the Affirmative Action Office. More than compliance with mandatory planning cycles, our program now follows a model that focuses on four key areas, recruitment, retention, education, and compliance*. Our program centers protected group status employees, with programming based in the four prongs of our model. Protected groups are racial/ethnic minorities, women, veterans, disability, and 2SLGBTQIA+. Veteran status is added as a Minnesota State requirement, beyond federal compliance. We aspire to be more inclusive by monitoring, recruiting, and retaining 2SLGBTQIA+ persons at Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical College. Additionally, high attention is given to our service as an employer and educator of our Ojibwe communities.

Currently, the Minnesota State system and the State of Minnesota utilize multiple applicant tracking systems (ATS), which do not share data through the applicant to hire to retirement cycle. This makes consistent data and an employee experience narrative difficult. To address this concern, Minnesota State is pursuing a next generation solution through Workday*. Current conversations are looking at unifying our hiring processes to utilize this singular platform, which would resolve many major issues. However, this will not be implemented until 2023 at the earliest. We are currently utilizing Power BI* to access and analyze our data as a temporary solution on its own, in the hope that after Workday implementation we will be able to gather similar data points in a streamlined manner.
For the 2022-2023 academic year, we will also be seeking advertising data on job views and clicks, job posting channel success, and spending data. This will help to make the best use of current channels, and to pursue new channels that may be more successful with specific protected group populations. In this way, we will make more intentional and informed decisions in how we affirmatively seek candidates. The result of this effort will be individualized recruitment plans for Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical College.

*Compliance in this context means operating within federal or state-mandated hiring requirements, data reporting, a good-faith effort to pursue diverse recruiting, and meeting equal employment opportunity standards.

*Workday is the replacement for the current Integrated Statewide Records System (ISRS). I will connect student services, human resources and finances.

*Power BI is a database used across Minnesota State colleges and universities. It compiles data centering variables such as demographics.
Our Services

The Affirmative Action Office strives to provide proficient and intentional services to employees. With this as our aim, we have developed and supported the following services.

Recruitment services offered to ensure equal employment opportunity, good-faith efforts for diverse recruitment, and accessible and inclusive language, including:

- Affirmative Action Goal Setting and Review
- Applicant and Candidate Pool Review
- Diverse Recruitment Advertising
- Notice of Vacancy Language Auditing

Retention efforts and services to ensure the elimination of disparate outcomes for protected and underrepresented employee groups, including:

- Campus and Community Resources
- Employee Resource Groups
- New Hire Onboarding
- Workplace Accessibility, Pay Equity and Position Description Review
The 2020-2022 affirmative action plan cycle was a time of transition for the university and college. During this period, the inaugural Director of Civil Rights and Affirmative Action was hired and the development of the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion was established. The Affirmative Action Office of the Center for Civil Rights was created from this institutional development.

Separation Analysis

Women comprised 59.26% of total separations. Minority employees comprised 20.37% of total separations. Both populations are overrepresented, primarily through resignations. Employees with disability or veteran status were not largely represented in separations for 2020-2022 cycle.

2020-2022 University Results

The 2020-2022 affirmative action plan cycle was a time of transition for the university and college. During this period, the inaugural Director of Civil Rights and Affirmative Action was hired and the development of the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion was established. The Affirmative Action Office of the Center for Civil Rights was created from this institutional development.

Separation Analysis

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Education opportunities to increase DEIA+ competency for all stakeholders, including:

- Affirmative Action 101
- Employer and Employee DEIA+ Training
- Search Committee Training
- Unconscious Bias in the Search Process Training
Utilization Goal Progress

2020-2022 utilization goals included women in skilled craft category, minority hires in officials/administrators, professionals, and skilled craft categories, and veterans as professionals. The university did not meet any of the set utilization goals for this cycle.

Corrective Actions Progress

The following corrective actions were not completed due to the transitions happening within the university.

- Evaluate and monitor promotions for tenured positions by June 30, 2022.
- Training strategy for protected groups to prepare for promotional opportunities by March 1, 2022.
- Proficient mentoring program for faculty of color.
- Professional development plans for employees in feeder jobs to Officials/Administrators positions by June 30, 2022.
- Participate in one or more virtual career fairs as an employer.

2020-2022 College Results

The 2020-2022 affirmative action plan cycle was a time of transition involving the departure of the original affirmative action officer who began the process, and the hiring of the inaugural Director of Civil Rights and Affirmative Action.
Separation Analysis

Separation numbers were limited and cannot be disaggregated for the purposes of this report. However, women comprised the vast majority of separations.

Utilization Goal Progress

2020-2022 utilization goals were not established. Women and veterans were well-represented in total new hires. Individuals with disabilities and racial/ethnic minority individuals were not well-represented in new hires. Females represented a large portion of promotions within the college. Minority, disability, and veteran groups were not promoted.

Corrective Actions Progress

Individualized actions for each category and protected group underutilized were not established by the end of the cycle. Standard actions included:

- Continuously meeting with hiring authorities and departments to discuss inclusive recruitment strategies.
- Identifying targeted publications, listservs, and organizations per underutilized group.
- Posting positions for additional time to increase applicant pool diversity.
Both university and college affirmative action plans are currently in the draft stage, as data is analyzed and entered into the plan narrative template. Based on the findings of the data in terms of progress toward previous goals, applicant availability (internal and external) by category, and an analysis of separations (termination, resignation, etc.), the draft will be shared with stakeholders to discuss new goals and corrective actions to be taken. Feedback will be solicited from executive leadership and other hiring authorities prior to submission for peer review. The deadline to submit drafts for peer review is set for July 31, 2022.

For the 2022-2024 affirmative action plan cycle, initial review has revealed that the primary areas of concern are:

**Officials/Administrators:** Utilization goals have not been met, or representation is not present, among all protected groups at both institutions.

**Service Maintenance:** Utilization goals have been set for female, disability, and veteran groups at Bemidji State University.

**Faculty:** Utilization goals have been set for all protected groups in the faculty category for Bemidji State University, and for the minority group at Northwest Technical College.
Our Projects

Each fiscal year the Affirmative Action Office establishes priorities aligned with the mission, vision and various strategic plans (i.e., Affirmative Action Plans, Strategic Plans for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and the institutional strategic plans). Through our priorities we carry out projects. Below we have discussed two primary projects that we led through the Office.

Power BI Collaboration

During the 2021-2022 academic year, the Affirmative Action Office partnered with the Department of Human Resources and the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness to establish processes and exploration of employee data. With this new framework and understanding, many doors have opened to analyzing trends and creating new processes including pay equity gaps and Affirmative Action reporting.

*Primary Goal: Inform hiring decisions based on workforce data.*

Vector Solutions Learning Management System

A formal proposal was drafted to utilize Vector Solutions as our LMS for Affirmative Action virtual training for the incoming academic year, specifically focused on diversity issues in the workplace. Summer 2022 saw the contract phase engaged with implementation aimed for fall 2022.

*Primary Goal: Provide workforce DEIA+ training at all levels.*
Data Driven

Within the Affirmative Action Office, quantitative and qualitative data are valued in decision making. We ground our work in data as best practice to ensure that we are equitable and transparent as we engage this critical work.

**Affirmative Action Data Workgroup**

Both institutions were represented on a taskforce to audit and create uniformity in how our positions are coded in the Minnesota State system. This work addressed how positions are tracked by EEO category, what a *promotion* is, and how to organize faculty positions within a coding system that is not representative. This will allow us to work with more effective data with our partners at the system and state level.

**Monitoring the Hiring Process**

The Affirmative Action Office collaborated with the Department of Human Resources to amend the current database which contained active and completed searches. This includes information on searches that were non-competitive and affirmative hiring data related to our goals. *Monitoring the Hiring Process* is a mandated reporting process with Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) oversight.

**REPL Data Access/HR-High Data**

This year we initiated a data-gathering expedition to establish baseline access to data. As Minnesota State institutions and agency members within the State of Minnesota, there are multiple processes and gatekeepers of employee data. The typical process for an Affirmative Action Officer is to receive access to data every two years in accordance with Affirmative Action planning. Going forward, we will now have access to our data upon request.
Affirmative Action Planning

Affirmative Action is a crucial strategy that allows us to engage in equitable praxis in hiring. Our planning process is comprehensive and inclusive. We aim to ensure that all stakeholders have a stake in the Affirmative Action planning process. Below is a simplified layout of our planning process. We have also determined components of on-going practice that will inform our planning process.

Phase 1: Affirmative Action data analysis/goal setting

Phase 2: Affirmative Action plan stakeholder tour

Phase 3: Affirmative Action committees

Data-Driven Decisions

- Employee Data Reporting
- Recruitment Plan Development
- Separation Analysis

Education and Evaluation

- Vector Solutions Training Module Development

Staffing

- Position development for pre-professionals (student) in the Center for Civil Rights: Affirmative Action Office
Glossary

Language is everchanging and sometimes complex. For that reason, we have added a glossary of terms to assist with navigating this year-in-review. The glossary is alphabetical for easy review.

**2SLGBTQIA+:** Two-spirited, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, asexual/agender, plus other sexual orientations and gender identities or expressions.

**Affirmative Action:** A set of procedures designed to eliminate unlawful discrimination among applicants, remedy the results of such prior discrimination, and prevent such discrimination in the future. (Cornell)

**Affirmative Hire:** A hiring decision that meets stated affirmative action goals based on underutilization of protected groups within available applicant pools.

**Compliance:** operating within federal or state-mandated hiring requirements, data reporting, a good-faith effort to pursue diverse recruiting, and meeting equal employment opportunity standards.

**DEIA+:** Diversity, equity, inclusion, anti-racism, plus other access and social justice goals addressing hate, bigotry, and systemic challenges to protected groups.

**EEO:** Equal Employment Opportunity.
**Evaluation:** The purpose of evaluation is to better understand the realities, climate, and functions of the University as it relates to diversity, equity, inclusion, anti-racism plus. The process of evaluation is comprehensive, cyclical, and rooted in best-practice.

**Non-competitive:** Hiring processes that do not complete the full, competitive search process, open to all applicants.

**Protected Group:** A group that is qualified for protection under equal employment laws.

**Separation:** Includes death, dismissal, early/enhanced retirement, layoff, non-renewal/non-cert, reduction in workforce, resignation, retirement, termination, and transfer.

**Utilization Goals:** Hiring goals set based on calculation of internal and external availability within the workforce. Protected groups covered by the Minnesota State system of colleges and universities include women, ethnic/racial minorities, disability status, and veteran status.