Progress Toward Reaching 2016-2018 Affirmative Action Goals
Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical College

Where BSU and NTC were at March 2016

To develop the 2016-2018 Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) for Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical College, I examined demographic snapshots for employees by employment category and compared that numeric picture to known availability percentages. Based on an evaluation of these percentages, I determined whether the university was underutilizing women, minorities, people with disabilities, and veterans and the numbers by which each category was underutilized. Table 1 depicts this information. A cell with an XX indicates that the university employed fewer individuals in a protected category relative to the percentage available for hire in the recruiting region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Categories</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Racial/Ethnic Minorities</th>
<th>Individuals With Disabilities</th>
<th>Veterans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Officials/Administrators</td>
<td></td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>XX</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education Administrators</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>XX</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td></td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>XX</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td></td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>XX</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protective Services: Nonsworn</td>
<td></td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>XXX</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office/Clerical</td>
<td></td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>XX</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technicians</td>
<td></td>
<td>XX</td>
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<td>XX</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skilled Craft</td>
<td>XX</td>
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<td>XX</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service Maintenance</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>XX</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In general, BSU and NTC are doing a better job at hiring women than at hiring individuals in other protected categories and is doing least well at hiring racial/ethnic minorities and individuals with disabilities.

Progress made to date in hiring

Based on the numbers presented above, as well as to demonstrate our commitment to affirmative action, Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical College identified four objectives and action steps: 1. Enhance recruitment efforts; 2. Review retention efforts; 3. Ensure a working environment and campus community that promotes and welcomes diversity; and, 4. Promote awareness and improve campus climate. Progress toward accomplishing the work associated with each objective is discussed below in italics.

Objective #1: Enhance recruitment efforts

Action Steps:

a. Identify additional locations to advertise positions to attract diverse applicants and use these as needed in searches. Done as needed with limited success. Additional steps are now taken to participate in virtual career fairs and seek to distribute vacancy notices more broadly. For key faculty searches, we also sent copies of vacancy notices to Ph.D granting institutions in ND, SD, MN, IA, and WI.

b. Create and implement a policy requiring diversity on Search Advisory Committees. This has been done and is monitored for every search.
c. Hold meetings with and/or disseminate information on best practices in vacancy notice creation, search evaluation instrument creation, search processes used. HR staff work with departments to evaluate vacancy notice content and suggest modifications.

d. Include modules in each Search Advisory Committee training addressing discrimination and unconscious bias and how to minimize their influence in the search process. This was accomplished during both 2016-2017 and 2017-2018. New this year was a case study.

e. Update BSU and NTC President, Vice Presidents, Associate Vice Presidents, and Deans having primary responsibility for searches regarding the need to create and review action plans in regard to underutilization goals. The Executive Leadership Team, meet and confer teams, and President’s Cabinet all have received updates on progress.

f. Educate Search Advisory Committees (SACs) regarding their roles and responsibilities, the hiring process, laws and policies governing searches (confidentiality, data practices, equal employment opportunity, affirmative action, diversity, Americans with Disabilities Act, Recently Separated Veterans and Vietnam Era Veterans, unconscious bias and mitigating its effects, and conducting a fair and effective search process) on an annual basis. Done and continuing.

g. Review, on a continuous basis, recruitment and hiring guidelines, in order to enhance BSU and NTC commitment to affirmative action and to assist SACs in identifying and selecting highly qualified candidates for positions including women, minorities, and individuals with disabilities. Done and continuing.

Objective #2: Review retention efforts

Action Steps:


b. Develop institutional professional support for all employees. Various opportunities have been provided (e.g., Marnita’s Table, May statewide conference, November training on recognizing and combatting microaggressions, Safe Zone training (BSU and NTC), development of a Diversity Certificate.

c. Create an ambassadorship program and provide infrastructure for its continuance. To help foster goodwill intended by these efforts, we will be putting in place one or more employee resource groups (ERGs). A survey has been conducted and leadership for the groups will be recruited early fall 2018. At least two groups will form 2018-2019 and another two 2019-2020.

d. Notify all employees annually of identified procedures for requesting and, if necessary, providing an accommodation. This is done at the beginning of every academic year.

e. Publicize the availability of confidential services through the Employee Assistance Program. This is done at the beginning of every academic year and information is available on the Human Resources website.

f. Publicize the tuition waiver program available, on a space available basis, to University or College courses. New faculty are made aware of this opportunity at the time of hire and information is available on the website.

g. Ensure that appropriate accommodations for newly disabled employees are researched in a timely manner. Responses to requests for accommodation have been timely.

Objective #3: Ensure a working environment and campus community that promotes and welcomes diversity

Action Steps:

a. Present information regarding diversity, affirmative action, sexual harassment, and code of conduct during new faculty and staff orientation. This was done fall 2017 and fall 2018. We may need to think about trainings for those hired throughout the year.

b. Highlight MnSCU, BSU, and NTC policies that encourage understanding of diversity and affirmative action during new hire orientation. Done and ongoing.
c. Improve calendaring to take note of events and holidays from around the world and from nondominant racial/ethnic groups. Not yet done, although key holidays were identified and a learning opportunity provided (e.g., Lunar New Year).

d. Review facilities and technologies for accessibility for individuals with disabilities and develop a schedule for addressing issues that arise. Facilities review occurred at NTC. New construction incorporates up-to-date accommodation requirements. Technology spaces need to be reviewed on both campuses.

e. Create diversity and inclusion committees at Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical College and a charge for those separate committees. This has been done and the committees meet 7-8 times each academic year.

f. Provide two or more cultural competence training and dialogue opportunities for employees each year. Several opportunities were made available to employees on both campuses. (e.g., Indigenous Peoples and Treaty Day, What is it Like to Raise a Child in China, Recognizing and Preventing Microaggressions workshop at BSU and NTC, Common Bonds for a Greater Minnesota).

**Objective #4: Promote awareness and improve campus climate.**

**Action Steps:**

a. Educate faculty and staff in the principles of engagement utilizing most recent results of faculty engagement survey. Results of the student climate studies have been shared with students and employees and. Employees on both campuses will be asked to complete a climate survey spring 2018.

b. Provide toolkit/ideas/training for how to manage conflict in departments and offices. Resources have been provided upon request and in conversation with departments and supervisors.

c. Promote civility and respect among all faculty, staff, and student groups on both campuses. Resources have been provided upon request and in conversation with departments and supervisors.

d. Engage leaders of classified and unclassified bargaining units in greater understanding of problem and non-confrontational behavior. Needs attention.

e. Provide information and answer questions related to sexual harassment/violence, racism, sexual orientation and disability awareness. Posters were disseminated on both campuses and information placed on BSU and NTC websites during 2016-2017 and 2017-2018. Print information is updated periodically and website information is updated as necessary.

f. Provide information on discrimination, harassment, and civility policies and procedures at least once per year to employees and supports available to complainants. Done and continuing.

g. Monitor campus climate for employees every two years beginning spring 2017. The survey will be administered spring 2018.
Where do we go from here?

It is obvious that we will only increase diversity to the extent that we engage in several and consistent efforts. One of the things that the AAO and HR staff will continue to do is monitor the hiring process. This means that each hiring authority will continue to be asked to justify non-affirmative hires. To date, all non-affirmative hires have been noted as justified. Minnesota Management and Budget provides several circumstances under which a non-affirmative hire may be justified:

   a. Contract/Plan provisions applied. Including, but not limited to: seniority, appointment form layoff, claiming, transfer/demotion in lieu of layoff or reassignment to avert a layoff.
   b. Appointment made in order to comply with grievance, arbitration, or litigation.

2. Workers’ Compensation/Disability
   a. Appointed workers’ compensation employee or appointed individual with a disability as a reasonable accommodation.
   b. Unable to make reasonable accommodation for candidate’s disability.

3. Human Resource, Protected Group or Requirement Issues
   a. No members of disparate groups were in the Applicant Pool.
   b. Member of disparate group failed to pass mandatory job requirements; such as: education, training, experience, certification/licensure, physical exam or background check.
   c. Member of disparate group did not respond to agency’s contact, voluntarily withdrew their name, or were not interested in the position.
   d. The person was not a member of the disparate group, but was substantially more qualified than the candidates not selected.

AAOs are also required to approve applicant pools as diverse prior to their release to SAC members. For situations where sufficient diversity is lacking, minimally there is a conversation about the potential greater yield with longer and more targeted recruiting efforts. With some positions additional efforts produce a more diverse applicant pool, whereas with others, the lingering gender-based funneling of people into positions is hard to counteract. Certainly where it makes sense to do so, HR and AA will continue to seek additional ways to engage in targeted recruitment efforts (e.g., virtual career fairs, sending vacancy notices to professional, degree-granting institutions, professional organizations, and listservs).

Efforts to bolster the diversity of the applicant pools has been shown to increase the likelihood that diverse applicants move to the next selection level. However, merely increasing the number of applicants does not necessarily mean that all are minimally qualified. A quick review of the hires at BSU for the first three quarters of 2017 show the relatively few numbers of applicants of color that make it to the interview stage.

Affirmative Action and Human Resources staff will also continue to review search-related materials for artificial selection mechanisms (the requirement that they know ISRS), to work with search chairs and committees to create sound evaluation instruments that assess qualifications against essential job functions, to monitor processes for bias.

It is also incredibly important that the hiring authorities and search advisory committee chairs help monitor committee processes. Encourage committees to determine acceptability and unacceptability instead of ranking candidates. Watch for language suggesting that committees have honed in on qualities that are not job-related in making their decisions (feel more comfortable with, they “fit,” “overqualified,” “accent,” they didn’t look at me, they were “loud”).

Thank you for your help in increasing the diversity of our faculty and workforce!