

**President's Advisory Council**  
**Thursday, January 30, 2025**  
**4 p.m.-6 p.m.**  
**Room 1514**

**Present:** Anika Bowie, Andrew Collins, Dana Krueger, Matt Lindgren, Karin McCabe, Gozel Rahymjanova, Khalique Rogers, Mindy Travers, Tamara Mattison, Erica Valliant, Dee Dee Peaslee, Austin Calhoun, Paula Kinney, Greg Rathert, Wendy Roberson, Scott Wilson, Sonya Zuker

**Guests Present:**

**Absent:** Ling Becker, Brenda Burnside, Nanette Virnig, Yusef Carrillo, Ryan Caulfield, Sarah Crippen, Adam Evenstad, Tom McCarthy, Kay Francis Garland, Sarah Carrico, Raji Geneti, Jennie Lewis

*Note:* Originally, this meeting was focused on advocacy and scheduled to occur at the Minnesota State Capital. Foundation members were also invited to join. However, due to the uncertainty at the State Capitol, the meeting was relocated to campus.

**Welcome and Land Acknowledgement**

Dr. Peaslee commenced the meeting at 4:34 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions were made. The Council welcomed JP Holwerda, Senior Director of Workforce Development at the International Institute of Minnesota. JP is replacing Brooke Antilla-Escoto, who has relocated to Texas.

**Advocacy Tips & Tricks**

Mr. Khalique Rogers gave a presentation focused on the importance of advocacy in shaping policy, funding, and systemic change. Key themes included the role of influence, persistence, community power, and relationships in driving impactful advocacy efforts. He discussed what makes advocacy effective, emphasizing that it extends beyond raising awareness—it's about influencing decisions, shaping policies, and securing funding that impact communities. For advocacy to be successful, it must be purpose-driven, strategic, and sustained over time. Having a clear understanding of the issue, identifying the right decision-makers, and delivering concise, solution-focused messaging are all critical factors in advancing an advocacy agenda.

A central theme was the power of collective action in advocacy efforts. Rather than working in isolation, he suggested forming coalitions with businesses, youth, families, and community organizations to create a stronger and more compelling voice. These alliances help bring greater attention to key issues and increase the likelihood of change. Additionally, media engagement—whether through op-eds, social media, or community meetings—serves as a powerful tool to amplify advocacy efforts and expand public awareness. Another key focus was the importance of persistence and long-term engagement. Advocacy is rarely successful after just one meeting. It requires ongoing follow-ups, tracking progress, and staying visible to ensure issues remain a priority. The group acknowledged that setbacks are part of the process and emphasized the need for adapting strategies, celebrating progress, and continuing to push forward.

Finally, the discussion centered on turning advocacy into action and results. Setting clear and measurable goals is essential to staying focused on specific policy or funding objectives. Tracking progress through milestones helps gauge momentum and allows for necessary adjustments. Recognizing and celebrating small wins along the way ensures continued motivation and engagement, reinforcing that advocacy is a long-term commitment that evolves over time.

### **Workshop Activity: Elevator Speech: *Advocacy Strategy Discussion***

Dr. Austin Calhoun led an interactive activity that provided contextual background data on the Minnesota state budget and the timeline for state funding decisions. This activity helped members gain a clearer understanding of the financial landscape and key decision points that impact funding allocations.

Following the presentation, members engaged in a collaborative discussion to develop the structure and key messaging for a concise 60-second elevator speech. The goal was to create a compelling and effective narrative that clearly communicates priorities, funding needs, and the broader impact of state budget decisions. Participants explored essential elements such as audience engagement, clarity of message, and a strong call to action to ensure the speech would be both persuasive and impactful.

Following the discussion, additional opportunities for legislative advocacy were provided. A calendar of committee standing hearings on higher education and capital investment for both the House and Senate was also included.

### **Critical Conversation: Impact of New Federal Administration on SPC**

The critical conversation topic discussion included concerns regarding immigration, equity, and continued federal funding of grants. Council members, from city government, public schools, and non-profits, offered their own insights and responses representative of their various workplaces. Dr. Calhoun shared an overview of a new five-week “Mission Monday” communication campaign series, designed to address and acknowledge the concerns related to executive orders and administrative actions that raise concerns for students and employees. The weekly communication seeks to provide resources, reinforce commitment to a safe and inclusive learning environment, and build community trust.

**The meeting was adjourned at 6:05PM.**