

President's Advisory Council

Thursday, March 13, 2025

4 p.m.-6 p.m.

Room 1514

Minutes

Present: Ling Becker, Brenda Burnside, Yusef Carrillo, JP Holwerda, Dana Krueger, Tamara Mattison, Karin McCabe, Gozel Rahymjanova, Erica Valliant, Dee Dee Peaslee, Austin Calhoun, Paula Kinney, Jennie Lewis, Wendy Roberson, Scott Wilson, Sonya Zuker

Absent: Anika Bowie, Ryan Caulfield, Andrew Collins, Sarah Crippen, Adam Evenstad, Matt Lindgren, Tom McCarthy, Mindy Travers, Khaliq Rogers, Nanette Virnig, Sarah Carrico, Kay Francis Garland, Raji Geneti, Greg Rathert

Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

Dr. Peaslee commenced the meeting at 4:19 p.m.

Meeting Recap

Dr. Calhoun said at the January President's Advisory Council meeting, council members participated in advocacy training, including how to develop an elevator speech. Materials have been developed to help build on the foundation, including a template letter members can send to their local legislator. In addition to sending letters, Dr. Calhoun encouraged Council members to attend committee hearings, as their presence alone can be seen as a form of advocacy on the topic being discussed.

Dr. Calhoun said the "Mission Monday" communication campaign that launched at the end of January had recently ended its series. Topics discussed included what to do if one encounters ICE or law enforcement on campus; safeguarding information and data privacy and security; pride on campus; universal design; and mental health and wellbeing.

What the New Federal Administration Means for Higher Education

Ms. Lewis provided an overview of federal actions and initiatives that have taken place since the new federal administration took office. Four key policy initiatives were discussed, including the impacts the federal funding freeze would have on Saint Paul College; the National Institute of Health research funding cap; diversity, equity, and inclusion guidance given in the February 14 "Dear Colleague" letter issued by the Department of Education; and actions regarding the state of the Education Department. Additionally, if other federal activity and budget cuts occur, including potential reductions in the Medicaid program, that could have a trickle-down effect on the state's budget, as well as state appropriations.

Ms. Becker noted if the federal funding freezes impacts any programs within the Housing and Urban Development Department, that could affect numerous individuals within our community. She added the Medicaid program is the largest funder of mental health support for the state of Minnesota, and reductions in that program could impact services and support.

What's Next for Saint Paul College: Strategic Planning Workshop

Dr. Kinney provided a recap of the strategic planning process that was initiated in the fall. She said the Core Design Team, which included President Peaslee, Ms. Roberson, Dr. Kinney, and Ms. McCabe—who served as a community stakeholder—steered the foundational work for the process, which included holding four design sessions facilitated in partnership with Education Design Lab. A strategy planning workshop will be held in May, with the goal to introduce the strategic plan in Fall 2025. An action planning workshop will then be held on how to operationalize the plan.

Dr. Kinney introduced the Operating Framework. Council members meet in small groups to review the framework and identify any areas that may be missing, focusing particularly on the value proposition and competitive advantage. Council members then shared what their groups discussed.

Mr. Carrillo said his group discussed the importance of highlighting industry-informed, high-quality instruction and career-driven outcomes, and noted the strong placement rates of students after they graduate. Ms. McCabe said the college's central location could generate a level of excitement, and Ms. Burnside recommended increasing visibility at local festivals to better engage with the city's diverse population. Dr. Calhoun said the college's Marketing unit has had conversations on ways to have a neighborhood presence, and added Saint Paul College is about to launch a new mascot, which could create some more energy with events. Ms. Rahymjanova said the college's sense of community and safe campus can also be a value proposition.

When discussing Saint Paul College's competitive advantage, Ms. McCabe noted the college's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion as a strength. Mr. Holwerda said his group discussed the importance of having a targeted approach rather than a broad approach. Ms. Becker added having tactical strategies focused on specific groups could be more beneficial. She added the need to identify a differentiator that defines what Saint Paul College is in the community's mind. Dr. Kinney thanked the members for their feedback and said it would be shared with the Core Design Team and Education Design Lab.

Dr. Kinney introduced a draft of the focus question. She said in human-centered design, the focus question is framed as "How might we..." that encourages open exploration and invites collaboration, to ensure solutions are relevant and feasible. Council members reviewed the draft question in small groups before providing feedback to the larger group.

Mr. Carrillo and Ms. Kruger both appreciated the concept of Saint Paul College being an anchor institution, however, other council members did not understand the meaning, and recommended including language to be a "trusted college of choice." Ms. McCabe added the language was jargon heavy, and recommended revising the question to be clearer and more concise. Council members also had feedback regarding the phrase "family-sustaining wage," as some saw the phrase as exclusionary, with the recommendation of changing the phrase to be family and community sustaining. Dr. Mattison noted high school students may not be prepared for college, and asked for clarity around the term being "student-ready."

Dr. Kinney thanked members for their feedback and asked for one additional piece of input. She said to gather broad input from identified stakeholders, an environmental scan will be conducted, as well as stakeholder engagement, including focus groups and surveys. She asked in terms of the environmental scan, what information, data, or topic areas the college should explore to assess current challenges and opportunities. Council members recommended exploring artificial intelligence; workforce needs, including skill sets needed, industry certifications, public sector employment and pathways, and entrepreneurship; and community and cultural relevance. Members also recommended having demographic data, including general demographic data on the five-county metro-area, Saint Paul Public Schools students, and new Americans. Additionally, council members recommended having disaggregated data regarding student success and completion. Dr. Kinney thanked the members for their feedback, and said she would share the information with Education Design Lab. She added if members were interested in attending the strategy planning workshop, to reach out to her.

Miscellaneous

Ms. Lewis reminded council members to complete the President's Advisory Council year-end survey, and added the responses were anonymous and would help inform the structure for the council meetings. She also reminded council members of the Spring Luncheon with the Friends of Saint Paul College Foundation Board, held on May 1, and presented by Saint Paul College's Culinary Arts students.

Meeting adjourned 6:05 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Jennie Lewis