

President's Advisory Council

Thursday, October 9, 2025

4 p.m.-6 p.m.

Room 1514

Minutes

Present: Brenda Burnside, Anika Bowie, Ryan Caulfield, JP Holwerda, Dana Krueger, Matt Lindgren, Blessing Norvell, Greg Rathert, Scott Wilson, Wendy Roberson, Paula Kinney, Austin Calhoun, Kay Francis Garland, Sarah Carrico, Sonya Zuker, V.A. Hayman Barber

Absent: Ling Becker, Keith Colvard, Andrew Collins, Erica Valliant, Yusef Carrillo, Sarah Crippen, Tamara Mattison, Karin McCabe, Khalique Rogers, Dee Dee Peaslee, Raji Geneti, Maggie Zimmerman

Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

Mr. Rathert commenced the meeting at 4:12 p.m. and conveyed Dr. Peaslee's regards as she recovers from foot surgery and is unable to attend the council meeting.

Hot Topic Conversation—Building a Future-Ready Workforce

Ms. Carrico introduced the meeting's topic and facilitated a discussion on workforce readiness and hiring trends. Mr. Lindgren said when his organization is hiring, the focus is on attitude, reliability, and availability, and noted that technical skills can be developed through training. Ms. Bowie added that problem-solving and innovative thinking are also important hiring in the hiring process.

Mr. Lindgren asked if there were programs at Saint Paul College where students were hired before completing their programs. Ms. Hayman Barber said this occurs in some Trade and Technical Education programs, primarily due to labor market demands and employers' willingness to provide on-the-job training. She added that the goal is to partner with employers who will hire and support students in completing their degrees.

Ms. Carrico asked the council members what Saint Paul College should keep in mind in regards to curriculum to prepare students for future careers. Mr. Holwerda recommended creating in-roads for students to connect to employers. Ms. Roberson noted the importance of ensuring that positions designated as "entry-level" truly meet that definition. Ms. Francis Garland added that incorporating situational analysis into interview questions can help assess candidate attitudes. Ms. Norvell shared that, from the student perspective, having experiential learning opportunities within the classroom can be helpful to prepare students when entering the workforce.

Strategic Plan Launch—Our Promise Plan

Dr. Kinney introduced Saint Paul College's new strategic plan. She said the college embarked on a new planning process last year, which included partnering with Education Design Lab to develop the strategic plan. Key drivers for the strategic plan included national trends and the shifting perception of the value of higher education; expanding access and flexibility, including planning for Workforce Pell; relevancy and transparency, including how to make skills visible and relevant to employers; evolving student expectations; and innovation and accountability, including demonstrating how students are able to complete their

programs and have opportunities to earn a living wage. Dr. Kinney added that the college's commitment to becoming an Anti-racist and trauma-informed institution remains unchanged, and anti-racist and trauma-informed principles are embedded throughout the strategic plan. An anti-racist and trauma-informed philosophy has been developed and will be posted to the college's website. This philosophy is the lens through which we design, measure, and carry out our work.

The planning process included a review of the five design questions by the strategic planning steering committee, and a strategic planning workshop that included both internal and external stakeholders who represented a variety of industries. The strategic planning workshop created 28 strategies to address the five design questions and other trends, which were then refined to eight, and ultimately became three strategic pillars.

Dr. Kinney introduced the three strategic pillars. The Purpose pillar focuses on making skills visible and helping students align education with career paths. This includes real-world learning opportunities, such as clinicals or problem-based learning. The People pillar focuses on developing an organizational culture for innovation. This includes a safe-to-try innovation ecosystem, including the development of the Innovation Fund, an internal grant fund, and investing in people to transform student outcomes. The Place pillar focuses on the college becoming a voice in the community, as well as advocacy for student success, including basic needs support. The college's operational plans, including the Strategic Enrollment Plan, the Student Success Plan, and the Moonshot for Social and Economic Mobility initiatives would help with operationalizing the strategic plan. Dr. Kinney said next steps in the planning process include gathering feedback through both surveys to internal and external stakeholders, and focused facilitated conversations with the college's leadership team, as well as faculty. An Action Planning workshop will be held in November, which will help identify key metrics.

Ms. Hayman Barber shared a project that demonstrates alignment with the college's strategic plan. She said Saint Paul College recently signed a contract with the city of North Saint Paul to build a duplex near the downtown area. Students in the Carpentry program will construct the house, and Cabinetry students will make the cabinets. Ms. Hayman Barber added scholarships will be given to students participating in the project. Mr. Wilson noted that the concept of "place" for Saint Paul College extends beyond the immediate campus community, and Mr. Rathert added that this project reflects both the Place and Purpose pillars, as students not only gain hands-on experience, but may be building homes they could purchase in the future.

Federal Administration and Higher Education Update

Ms. Lewis provided a brief overview of federal administration actions, and highlighted the new institutional accountability measures under the One Big Beautiful Bill. She added Saint Paul College received Department of Education funding for the TRIO program for the current academic year, with funding scheduled to end in August 2026 unless Congress renews funding to support the remaining grant cycle.

Small Group Activity—Advocacy in Action

Dr. Calhoun said she recently attended an Advocacy Summit in Washington, D.C., with Dr. Peaslee, which included time to meet with Senator Amy Klobuchar and Representative Betty McCollum, as well as with Senator Tina Smith's office. During these meetings, they shared Saint Paul College's legislative priorities for student success. Dr. Calhoun shared the federal legislative priorities with the council members, and had members discuss in small groups how these priorities can be adapted to be more regional and local. Members then shared their insights with the full group.

Ms. Burnside said her group discussed partnerships, including how to connect students to unions. They also discussed how the federally funded TRIO program connects with basic needs support and the college's coordinated care model. Ms. Bowie said her group discussed advocating for rental assistance. Mr. Wilson said his group also discussed basic needs support, including healthcare and food insecurity. Dr. Calhoun thanked the members for their feedback and encouraged them to share any other advocacy ideas with her.

Meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Jennie Lewis.