

President's Advisory Council
Thursday, January 11, 2024
4 p.m.-5:30 p.m.
Room 1514

Present: Brooke Anttila-Escoto, Ryan Caulfield, Sarah Crippen, Matt Lindgren, Karin McCabe, Khaliq Rogers, Rejoice Udochukwu, Erica Valliant, Dee Dee Peaslee, Austin Calhoun, Sarah Carrico, Kay Francis Garland, Paula Kinney, Jennie Lewis Greg Rathert, Wendy Roberson

Absent: Andrew Collins, Adam Evenstad, Bruce Kessel, Tom McCarthy, Erica Schumacher, Scott Wilson, Maggie Zimmerman

Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

Dr. Peaslee commenced the meeting at 4:10 p.m.

Meeting Recap

Dr. Peaslee said at the November meeting council members participated in an activity to address the question "How might we engage our community in ways that enrich it beyond the workforce?" After the meeting, the feedback and recommendations given were grouped into five different areas: partnerships; academic areas; facilities; services; and grants. Executive Cabinet then met and discussed which initiatives are already happening, as well as areas to explore further. Identified initiatives that are already occurring include having meeting space available for community partners; student showcases, which include the STEM student showcase, as well as art exhibits; programming for college to workforce; providing training for organizations, which is primarily done through the college's Workforce Training and Continuing Education department; and alumni relationships, which is a focus area for the Friends of Saint Paul College Foundation. Areas the college will explore further include service learning; having a business incubator; and convening an advisory group of community elders.

The Cost of Attending College

Dr. Calhoun provided an overview of the cost of attendance beyond tuition, which can include books, childcare, housing, and transportation. Altogether, these costs can total slightly over \$24,000. She said the maximum Federal Pell Grant award is \$7,395, leaving \$16,000 remaining to attend college. Dr. Calhoun noted the remaining amount does not consider unexpected costs or just-in-time support. The North Star Promise Scholarship program will begin in fall 2024, and is managed by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education. This program is a last dollar scholarship and will cover the remaining costs of tuition and fees after other scholarships and grants have been applied. She added there are numerous eligibility requirements for students to participate in the program, and that the Minnesota Office of Higher Education projects the program will impact fifteen thousand to twenty thousand students state-wide. While the North Star Promise Scholarship program will impact some students, a majority of the college's students will still have unmet needs.

Ms. Francis Garland said the Student Affairs unit is focused on creating a relationship-rich environment and a holistic approach to support student success. This includes a coordinated care model for basic needs; mental health supports; housing support and navigation; and academic support and interventions. Ms. Francis Garland provided some examples of the college's high impact practices, including mandatory orientation; mandatory advising in a student's first semester—this allows advisors to build and establish relationships with students; a review of the college's suspension policies, particularly for those who have had habitual suspensions, to identify ways the college can support and help them be successful; and reductions in default rates. The college has also implemented interventions within the course management system, D2L, which allows advisors to reach out to students at various points throughout the semester to see if a student needs support. In addition, emergency aid has helped students fund the gaps for the cost of college. These practices have contributed to an improvement in student persistence and student success.

Discussion

Mr. Lindgren asked about the D2L intervention. Ms. Francis Garland said the intervention allows advisors to see if a student has logged into a course, and if students are turning in assignments. It also allows advisors to gently remind faculty to see what a student's status is in the class.

Ms. Crippen asked how students can access emergency aid funds, and Ms. McCabe asked how emergency aid is funded. Ms. Francis Garland said faculty or advisors can refer students to the appropriate unit if they are looking for basic needs support. There is also a form available on the college's website students can complete to request emergency aid. Dr. Calhoun added if a student submits a request for emergency aid, they can receive up to \$1,000 and do not need to provide additional evidence to support their request. She said the issue arises when the allocated funds for emergency aid are exhausted for the semester, they cannot be replenished until the following semester. Dr. Calhoun added emergency aid is funded through operational, private, and the Friends of Saint Paul College Foundation funds.

Ms. Crippen asked if there were scholarships that could help with non-tuition expenses. Dr. Calhoun said many of the college's scholarships are restricted to an academic program or student profile. She added the Friends of Saint Paul College Foundation is conducting an audit on their current scholarships, as well as advocating for more college-level scholarships.

Ms. Anttila-Escoto noted at the International Institute of Minnesota, many of their Saint Paul College students have a degree from another country that is not eligible here. Due to the limitations with the North Star Promise Scholarship program, their students would not be eligible for the program, and asked if scholarships could be available for those students. Ms. McCabe asked if there were ways for the council members to reach out to their own connections to advocate for Saint Paul College. Dr. Calhoun encouraged council members to advocate on behalf of the college, and said council members were welcome to reach out to her in developing talking points to share with other people or organizations.

Group Activity and Discussion

Ms. Lewis introduced the group exercise, and had council members participate in an activity that provided them an overview of the experiences and challenges Saint Paul College students may face. After the activity, Dr. Kinney facilitated a debrief of the exercise.

Discussion

Dr. Kinney asked how the game unfolded, and if it was challenging to maintain control of their candy, which represented wealth. Mr. Lindgren said it felt rigged, and Ms. Udochukwu discussed the imbalance in the number of candy members were given. She added people do not all start with the same amount of resources, nor do they have control of the demands on their resources. Ms. Francis Garland added while the United Way resource cards were helpful for temporary assistance, they did not help solve the overall problem. Ms. Roberson noted she ended the activity with the same amount of candy she started with, and felt she could not get ahead.

Dr. Kinney asked how might their organizations collaborate with Saint Paul College to play a role in assisting students who are facing challenging times complete a college education. Mr. Lindgren recommended raising no strings attached scholarships. Ms. Crippen recommended educating community groups. Ms. Anttila-Escoto said to continue to develop trusting relationships, and to listen for what is not being said. Ms. Roberson said to be critical of the rules that are being set, especially if they are putting up barriers. Mr. Rogers recommended organizations having solidarity on issues.

Dr. Kinney thanked the members for their input. Dr. Calhoun said the council members were set up to be ambassadors for this cause, and asked members to make two connections or conversations to further ambassador the cause on supporting students' basic needs. She said the members will then share who they connected with at the March meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

**Minutes submitted by Jennie Lewis
January 31, 2024**