Present: David Berg, Brooke Anttila, Zahra Bahmani, Ryan Caulfield, Andrew Collins, Jean Echternacht, Zuki Ellis, Jeanelle Foster, Bruce Kessel, Joseph Kroeger, Matt Lindgren, Theresa Malone, Karin McCabe, Ryan O'Connor, Khalique Rogers, Mary Rothchild, Erica Schumacher, Ayesha Shariff, Austin Calhoun, Paula Kinney, Greg Rathert, Wendy Roberson, Jennifer Rohde, Ellen Roster, Scott Wilson

Absent: Amy Brendmoen, Sarah Crippen, Emmanuel Donaby, Jim Gleb, Gaye Adams Massey, Tom McCarthy, Craig Morris, Dee Dee Peaslee, Maggie Zimmerman

Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Roberson commenced the meeting at 4:08 p.m. She noted Dr. Peaslee was at the Minnesota State Legislature providing testimony to the Senate Higher Education Committee on the Minnesota State System, and was unable to attend the council meeting. Ms. Roberson welcomed everyone and had the council members introduce themselves.

College Partnerships and Basic Needs Support

Ms. Rohde provided an overview of the Thrive program at Saint Paul College, a basic needs support program for students, which includes the newly opened on-campus Food Pantry. She said research was conducted to help formulate the program, and noted in a Real College survey administered in 2019, 45% of respondents worried about running out of food, and 57% of respondents were housing insecure. The Real College survey will be administered again this spring. The Thrive program was created for students to have access to just-in-time support and services, as well as receive holistic advising that contributes to their academic success. Modeled off of the CUNY ASAP model, the Thrive program will provide support to the entire student body and is an evidence-based model that is focused on academic momentum; integration and belonging; and timely, relevant services—including intrusive and holistic advising, which can help identify and link advisors to students who need services. Goals for the program include having funding to support 2500 students by 2026, and to increase the one-year retention of students from 33% to 48% by 2026. Ms. Rohde said to date, the program has secured $608,000 in funding.

Discussion

Ms. McCabe asked if a student received emergency funds, if they also knew how to access and apply for scholarships. Ms. Rohde said when a student completes the application for emergency funds, it includes additional resources students have access to.

Mr. Lindgren asked if advisors are able to give funds to students. Ms. Rohde said a referral system has been set up within the EAB software platform for advisors to have students apply for funds, and faculty could also alert advisors or reach out to the Thrive Coordinator, Emma Kiley, for support.

Ms. Anttila-Escoto asked about rent assistance. Ms. Rohde said emergency funding could be utilized for rent assistance, and that students could apply for up to $1500/year in emergency funds.

Ms. Foster asked how the goal of supporting 2500 students was identified, and if there was a greater need. Dr. Calhoun said the goal was based on enrollment headcount and the level of need based on the time the 2019 Real College survey was administered.

DEI Needs of Employers Hiring Students

Ms. Roberson said ways to support an inclusive workforce, with a focus on retention, include creating opportunities for belonging, such as mentorship opportunities; allowing people to be their authentic selves; avoiding all forms of tokenism; and allocating resources to support a diverse workforce. Ways to support an inclusive workforce, with a focus on recruitment, include using skills-based job descriptions; ensuring position pay aligns with position responsibilities and requirements; providing equity minded training for all involved in the hiring process, including those who are part of the onboarding process; and utilizing inclusive onboarding strategies. She opened it up to discussion on what council members were doing to attract and retain talent.

Discussion

Mr. O'Connor said Ramsey County rewrote all job descriptions, which included a three-step review process, and noted only one person in the direct field was allowed to be part of the process. Ms. Schumacher said in the Ramsey County Attorney's office, they have created open houses for specific communities. In addition, when they interview candidates, questions are provided ahead of time and are focused on the candidate's philosophies to help identify what contributions they can offer to the organization.

Ms. Roberson asked how members knew they were supporting a safe and inclusive workforce. Mr. Rogers said having an organization's board be representative of their community was important. Ms. Schumacher said her organization held support groups for specific staff groups on how the office could be more inclusive, and developed recommendations including adaptability in connecting with colleagues, and having a flexible dress code.

Meeting adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Jennie Lewis
January 25, 2023