BUILDING ON SUCCESS: MULTICULTURAL STUDENT RECRUITMENT

Office of Admissions
Dear colleague,

It is an honor to work side-by-side with University colleagues, community partners, and students and their families to enhance the diversity of the University of Minnesota Twin Cities undergraduate student body and to support student success at all levels. We are honored to be a part of a transformative season in students’ lives. In our daily work, we have the privilege of working directly with eager young students as they progress to focused high school scholars, to high-achieving leaders on our own campus, to proud graduates who become leaders and advocates in our community.

In recent years, the University has increased its focus on the recruitment, enrollment, retention, and graduation of students of color and American Indian students. We are constantly developing and evolving our work to meet the needs of our students and their families. Staff in the Office of Admissions—in partnership and collaboration with staff and faculty from across the University—work tirelessly to connect with students and families, build personal relationships, and encourage students to take key steps toward enrolling at the University of Minnesota.

This report provides a high level overview of some of the University’s comprehensive student of color and American Indian student recruitment efforts. At the heart of each program and initiative described in this report is a strong campus-wide commitment to diversity.

We thank our campus and community partners. Your collaboration and partnership is so important to recruit, enroll, and educate our leaders of tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Heidi Meyer
Executive Director
Office of Admissions
University of Minnesota Twin Cities
Recruiting bright and curious students

As the Office of Admissions at the University of Minnesota, we orchestrate the University’s campus-wide recruitment efforts in collaboration with campus partners. Enrolling an academically qualified, diverse student body is essential to the University’s mission.

A diverse student body greatly enhances the academic and social environment of the campus and helps prepare students to thrive in a global society. One of the University’s Student Learning Outcomes is that graduates are expected to “understand diverse philosophies and cultures within and across societies.”

The recruitment and enrollment of students of color and American Indian students in the freshman class is a top priority of the University and the Office of Admissions. Twenty years ago, the University did not have a formal recruitment program in place. Since that time, the Office of Admissions has built an effective and highly regarded recruitment program. The majority of the University’s student of color and American Indian recruitment efforts are focused in the state of Minnesota.

Student Success Is A Core Value

Student success is at the center of everything we do in the Office of Admissions at the University of Minnesota. Recruitment is the start of that focus. The University’s emphasis on student success over the last decade has resulted in a steady increase of the freshman retention rate.

We review each applicant for strong student preparation at the high school level, as academic preparation is key to a student’s college success. We require a student to report all courses and grades from their high school career to confirm they are ready for the U of M’s rigorous university courses.

Although academic preparation is the foundation for a student’s success on campus, we also consider other factors that may lead to a student’s preparation for success at the University. The University’s goal is to provide an educational environment that prepares our students “to be responsible and engaged citizens who, upon graduation, are ready to participate in and meet the challenges of a complex, diverse, and global society.”
Our holistic review process ensures we look at the whole student, which allows us to admit students who are academically ready for University study, and will also benefit from and contribute to our thriving and diverse campus environment.

We do not base our admissions decisions on an automated or numeric process. Our review process considers many factors, including a student’s likelihood of success at the University. We consider those characteristics that lend themselves to the success of our enrolled students and consider characteristics we know enhance success with a likelihood of timely graduation.

Because no two students are alike, students with similar academic credentials may have different interests and experiences. The pool of applicants and fit for a particular program at the U of M can vary by student and freshman-admitting college. Our holistic review allows us to get to know each applicant, so that we can make the best admission decision possible for students and the University.

Using the holistic review process allows us to support students. Over the past decade the University has experienced record student satisfaction, retention, and graduation rates. These metrics inform our admissions practices as well as our recruitment and outreach practices.

A decade of enrollment and academic growth

Enrollment progress

At the University of Minnesota, through the use of our strategic recruitment and enrollment management practices, enrollment of students of color has increased significantly over the last 10 years.

Additionally, the percentage of multicultural Minnesota high school graduates who enrolled as freshmen continues to be strong.

Academic preparation

The academic preparation of the freshman class, and students of color, has continued to increase in the past 10 years.

Increased high school academic preparation has shown to result in higher college retention and graduation rates. Despite declining and shifting demographics in Minnesota and surrounding states, the Office of Admissions has consistently met the University’s enrollment targets and worked to enhance the diversity and academic preparation of the incoming freshman class. However, the recruitment environment is highly competitive.

We are recruiting a population of students who have numerous options for their college experience. The University’s ability to continue to meet enrollment goals—especially in the face of shifting demographics—requires that we evolve and improve our recruitment approach.
We increased the percent of enrolled freshman students of color through our recruitment and outreach programs by 2.12% last year.

Note: Students of color include African American, Latinx/Hispanic, Asian, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian students

Recruitment Overview
Numerous enhancements made to the undergraduate experience and admissions program directly contribute to the University’s outstanding enrollment success. Despite declining and shifting demographics in Minnesota and surrounding states, the Office of Admissions consistently meets the University’s enrollment targets and enhances the diversity and academic preparation of the freshman class. College recruitment is highly competitive. We are recruiting students with numerous college options. To continue to meet enrollment goals—especially in the face of shifting demographics—we must continually evolve and improve our recruitment approach.

We follow three basic philosophies in our freshman recruitment to ensure we recruit and enroll a bright, curious, and diverse (broadly defined) freshman class every fall.

1. Conduct early and frequent outreach
2. Provide authentic customer service to make enrollment easy
3. Sustain campus and community partnerships
Early outreach
We develop relationships with prospective students throughout their high school careers and assist them with each stage of the college choice, application, and enrollment processes.

Focused and frequent outreach
We simultaneously target recruitment efforts to high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors to provide key information in the format they want it, when they want it. Managing three freshman classes at a time means communicating with hundreds of thousands of high school students, their families and high school counselors.

During each outreach phase, we implement strategic marketing campaigns and relationship-building initiatives to encourage students and their support network influencers (such as parents and school counselors) to take the next step towards enrolling at the University.

Reaching Future Gophers
We continue to optimize our online information and included a couple of new ways to reach high school counselors and multicultural students.

>> Online Website Engagement - Our website serves as a resource for students, families and high school counselors 24/7. In the past year, more than 300,000 unique Minnesota visitors accessed the admissions site.

>> “Ask A Gopher” Minnesota Virtual Panel
To reach more future students, we hosted a student panel featuring 3 current U of M students from greater Minnesota and an Admissions Counselor. We broadcast the Q&A session using “YouTube Live” to bring it directly into the homes of potential new students across the state. Between the live broadcast and post-event viewings, the video reached more than 239 students, families and high school counselors.

>> Webinar for high school counselors - High school counselors may not always have time or budget to travel for professional development meetings. We hosted a webinar this year to help counselors stay updated about key U of M admission information and balance their busy schedules. Twenty-eight counselors participated.

The VIP Leadership Retreat is a multicultural student leadership opportunity for high school juniors hosted over three days and two nights in July by the University of Minnesota Twin Cities.

The Retreat provides students the opportunity to experience the University of Minnesota campus, meet with current U of M students, faculty, and staff, and learn more about the University’s academic and extracurricular programs. The special retreat curriculum covers college planning, diversity and leadership, college success, and academic skills. Last year 100 students attended the event and 62 enrolled in the fall.
Recruitment and Communications are interwoven to provide the most targeted and personal interaction possible with each prospective student and their family.

Recruitment is a campus-wide, collaborative effort led by the Office of Admissions in partnership with University faculty, staff, currently enrolled students, and alumni. Given that college-aged students are being aggressively recruited by colleges in Minnesota and across the country, it is essential that we make it easy for students to take key steps towards enrollment.

Recruitment programs and efforts include:

- **201** high school visits to schools across Minnesota, sending admissions counselors directly into the school buildings to build relationships with school counselors, career counselors, and college-bound students.
- **93** Minnesota college fairs attended across the state and a commanding and engaging presence at the National College Fair in the Minneapolis Convention Center.
- **41** presentations
- **20** high school counselor events
- **15** scholarship events
- **10** application workshops
- **5** system campuses partner throughout the year on state-wide recruitment events

NEW! **1** YouTube Live event (featured MN students sharing their experiences).

**Targeted communications** are designed to support a recruitment strategy to provide extra-mile customer service and develop personal relationships to bring a diverse and academically prepared student body to campus.

**Targeted recruitment communications include:**

- Showcase the benefits of attending the University of Minnesota Twin Cities
- Distinctly convey the inspiring tone surrounding curiosity and discovery
- Contain a clear call to action to facilitate next steps in admissions/enrollment process
- Use multi-channels and contain appropriate messaging to both students, families and high school counselors

**Commitment events** provide an opportunity for admitted students to come back on campus and learn more detailed information about their specific college and program. We hosted four special events in March designed to help multicultural students hear from current students about their experiences, provide an opportunity for future and current students to meet and ultimately help future students learn more about multicultural community opportunities on campus. More than 550 students and their family members attended, with nearly 80% choosing to attend the University in the fall.
Examples of Recruitment Activities include:

» Application Workshops hosted at high schools each fall.

» Community-specific recruitment events like: Multicultural Connections: A University of Minnesota Event for Young Men; VIP Leadership Retreat

» Group visits coordinated together with partners like La Raza, Hmong Student Association, American Indian Student Cultural Center, TRIO Program and more.

» Alumni Ambassador outreach to connect recent alumni with prospective students within multicultural communities.

### PROVIDE AUTHENTIC CUSTOMER SERVICE

Our admissions team is set up to provide exceptional customer service to build 1:1 relationships with students. This approach makes it easy to access and interact with the University and is often noted as a key differentiator for prospective students exploring our institution.

We strive to have personal outreach between students and our professional admissions counselors throughout the college search, application, and enrollment steps. This approach is strengthened by expansive communications outreach and cross-campus collaboration for events and visits.

#### Phone calls

A unique component of our customer service involves phone calls from our admissions counselors, student-staffed call team and admissions ambassadors. In addition to our tours, visits, mailings and emails, we reach out to students who’ve expressed interest in the University via phone for 1:1 communication and information sharing.

**Multicultural student calls:**

72,148

Our customer service includes calls and talks from current students, staff, and volunteer admissions ambassadors. Shown here are a few ambassadors.
Dedicated Multicultural Recruitment Team
While the entire Office of Admissions staff is committed to the recruitment of students of color and American Indian students, there is a team of five full-time, professional staff members and one shared position working 25-percent time in the Office of Admissions and 75-percent time in the Circle of Indigenous Nations.

The work of these staff members includes specific responsibilities for outreach to and recruitment of high school students of color and American Indian students. These staff members serve as personal contacts for students and their families. They build relationships with students and frequently visit high schools with high enrollments of students of color and American Indian students throughout the academic year. They also take the lead in coordinating the Office of Admissions’ involvement at community events.

Student staff component: Authenticity and engagement
The Office of Admissions also staffs a team of student territory managers. These currently-enrolled students build relationships with prospective students of color and American Indian students. They refer questions to professional admissions counselors and work closely with the student of color recruitment team to ensure that students receive quick answers to their questions. Student territory managers also follow up by mail and email with students they cannot reach by phone.

Our admissions counselors serve as a highly visible connection point between prospective students and families, community leaders, and campus communities. Our admissions counselors’ relationship building efforts are at the heart of our work.

Student group partnerships
The Office of Admissions continues to work closely with several on-campus student groups and involves current students in all aspects of student of color and American Indian student recruitment including:

» Student panels both on- and off-campus
» Recruitment events
» Student calling outreach
» Student visit experiences.

Campus Partners:
» Seven U of M freshman admitting colleges
» Office for Equity and Diversity
» The Multicultural Center for Academic Excellence (MCAE)
» Student cultural centers
» Ethnic studies programs
On-campus collaboration

In orchestrating the University’s recruitment efforts, the Office of Admissions collaborates closely with all seven of the University colleges along with key departments to plan events and communications with prospective students.

By working closely with the University’s colleges, we can leverage resources and increase touchpoints with students. Personal interaction with prospective students and collaborative efforts are central to effective student recruitment and enrollment efforts.

These partnerships have also been key to connecting prospective students with faculty, staff, and enrolled multicultural students, while also showcasing the academic, experiential and social opportunities at the University.

Specialized recruitment events

We coordinate targeted events to engage prospective Minnesota students and help them explore all that the University of Minnesota has to offer. Events are family-oriented and showcase the University’s current students, faculty and staff, academic programs, and student groups.

This approach ensures everyone is working toward a shared focus of attracting Minnesota’s students to the University of Minnesota.

Strong community partnerships

We are proud to partner with many community colleagues and organizations in our expanding access to students and in support of the University’s enrollment efforts. A cornerstone of the University’s commitment to Minnesota student outreach and recruitment is a focus on working with community members to support student college exploration and preparation as we encourage students to consider the University of Minnesota for their college home.

Community Partners Include:

**CLUES**
A linguistically and culturally relevant resource and service nonprofit organization founded by Latinos for Latinos. Their programs and services connect individuals and families to resources, skills, institutions, and systems and create an environment for people to be engaged and empowered.

**Genesys Works**
Provides pathways to career success for high school students in underserved communities through skills training, meaningful work experiences, and impactful relationships.

**Indian Education Program High School and Campus Visits**
The University’s American Indian Recruitment Coordinator works closely with Indian Education counselors in select high schools, and also with educators at Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, Fond Du Lac Band of Lake Superior Reservation, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux (Dakota) Community, White Earth Reservation, and Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe to host students on campus and learn about academic programs.

**Minnesota Association of Counselors of Color (MnACC)**
A post-secondary collaborative association of two and four-year public and private colleges dedicated to improving access to higher education for Minnesota’s students of color.

**The Tazel Institute**
This program exposes African-American male students to career opportunities. Over the past three years, the Office of Admissions has hosted more than 120 male students from the Rosemount, Apple Valley, and Eagan School District to share information about admission into the University and the opportunities that exist at the University.
Our community partnerships ensure that students gain important access to the opportunities that exist at the U of M, and provide the University with opportunities to connect and build relationships with students so they may fully consider the University of Minnesota as one of their college options. The interactions fostered through our partnerships provide students with the experiences and interactions that give students the information and tools they need to prepare for a successful undergraduate experience at the U of M.

A path for the future
The University has also teamed up with seven public two-year campuses around Minnesota to offer the Minnesota Cooperative Admissions Program (MnCAP), a guaranteed admissions program offered to transfer students only. Students who enroll in the program are guaranteed admission to select majors within seven University colleges so long as they complete an AA degree or the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum, complete appropriate prerequisite and introductory courses within the intended major while maintaining a minimum GPA, and meet the priority application deadline.

The University has also partnered with Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC) to offer a first-year experience course. Taught on the MCTC campus, Gopher Path FYST is designed for students planning to transfer. The course introduces students to college structure and expectations, resources, learning approaches, and provides academic and career exploration specifically as they relate to the student’s intention of attending the University of Minnesota.

Even though great progress has been made in recruiting students of color, further progress is needed. Recruitment of this critical community remains a top priority.

The Office of Admissions continually works to expand and enhance the effectiveness of its recruitment efforts.

Published June 2019. University of Minnesota Office of Admissions.