

Minnesota State Board of Trustees OHE Presentation

Tuesday, January 23, 2024

Minnesota Office of Higher Education

Office responsibilities

- Administer state financial aid programs
 - State Grant, Work Study and Childcare Grants, Minnesota Indian Scholarship Program, Tuition Reciprocity and SELF Loans
 - OHE awards more than \$224 million annually in need-based grants to Minnesota residents attending eligible colleges, universities and career schools in Minnesota.
- Register degree-granting colleges and license non-degree granting career schools
- Negotiate and administer tuition reciprocity agreements
- Administer federal grant funded Get Ready program
- Collect, maintain and report data on students and postsecondary institutions
- Research and report on the effectiveness of postsecondary institutions

Direct Admissions MN

- We have not solved the college access problem.
 - Gaps exist by race, ethnicity, gender, income, and geography.
 - Gaps exist based on a student perceptions of their ability.
- Applying to college is not “simple.” It’s a GAUNTLET.
 - Everyone follows a different path. Simplifying college admissions is not just creating a single application.
 - Students overestimate how selective colleges and university admissions really is.
- Instead, let’s send college to the student.

The image is a collage of college planning resources. On the left is a vertical 'TIMELINE FOR APPLYING TO COLLEGE' with sections for Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer of Junior and Senior years. In the center is a 'College Plan Checklist' with numbered steps: 1. Get Connected, 2. Online College Application, 3. Recommendation Letters, 4. Spring of Senior Year, 5. Visit Colleges, 6. Standardized Test Scores, 7. Supplemental Essay Responses. On the right is a 'Junior year' checklist with monthly tasks from September to May. At the bottom right is a 'NEED IN ORDER TO APPLY TO COLLEGE?' infographic with a checklist: Register for orientation, Send your college transcripts, and Finish Strong! (update transcripts, check grades, and update financial aid).

Direct Admissions MN

Project goals:

- Increase the number of students enrolling in college immediately after high school.
- Increase the number of students staying in Minnesota for college.
- Reduce anxiety around “will I get in?”
- Increase FAFSA completion among high school seniors.
- Close attainment gaps.

Minnesota has a decentralized model of Direct Admissions:

- Existing student information systems at each high school review academics, match to pre-set college admissions criteria, create a personalized letter for each student, send the letter, and record the college selections made by each student.
- The only data transferred to the state and then to the colleges are basic student information (Name, state ID, email), GPA & academic tier, and the colleges selected.
- High schools send the student’s transcript to fill in specific course or academic info.

Direct Admissions MN

Pilot Year (2022-2023)

- 51 participating colleges and universities
- 40 high schools
- 7,000 students (10% of HS seniors)

Year 2 (2023-2024)

- Approved and funded by Legislature in 2023
- 1 new FTE staff
- 55 participating colleges and universities
- 120 high schools sought to participate; 111 will likely actually fulfill program outcomes (92 have sent out letters to date, 19 still in progress)
- ~22,500 students (32% of HS seniors)
- 31 College Possible high schools
- Pilot testing eliminating the admissions application
- As of 1/12/24:
 - 29,053 student admissions inquiries from about 4,100 students taking advantage of the program:
 - Minnesota State colleges: 11,731
 - Minnesota State universities: 5,418

American Indian Scholars Program

- First-dollar tuition and fee-free pathway for Minnesota State and University of Minnesota students who are:
 - Eligible for resident tuition and an enrolled member or citizen of any federally recognized tribe or Canadian First Nation; or
 - Not eligible for resident tuition and an enrolled member or citizen of a Minnesota Tribal Nation.
- Available to eligible students who have not earned a bachelor's degree and attended fewer than 180 credits.
- Statute effective July 1, 2023. [M.S. 135A.121](#)
- \$17 million appropriated for the 2024-2025 biennium to support implementation of the statute at both systems.
 - \$4.468m per year for Minnesota State.
 - These funds were transferred to Minnesota State during the fall semester from MMB.

American Indian Scholars Program

- Program is administered at the campus level.
 - Minnesota State developed an application template for each campuses to use.
 - Many campuses are actively identifying eligible students and applying the waiver to student accounts including retroactively for the fall 2023 semester.
- OHE worked and will continue to work collaboratively with Minnesota State System Office and campus staff during and after implementation of the statute.
- Each campus that uses funds appropriated to implement the statute must provide an annual report; OHE Research plans to work with the systems to develop a reporting process.
- OHE has a website dedicated to this program: [American Indian Scholars Program \(state.mn.us\)](https://www.state.mn.us/ohe/aisp/)

Overall goals of the program

By making college accessible and affordable, NSP is intended to have a positive impact on multiple fronts:

- Help stabilize enrollment at Minnesota public institutions of higher education.
- Serve as an economic driver for Minnesota by educating qualified workers who are much needed to fill vacancies in the state's labor force.
- Create a viable higher education path for Minnesotans who may have previously thought education was not a possibility for them.
- We estimate this program will impact 15,000-20,000 students in the first academic year.
- Simplify application process: No additional application. Students apply by completing the 2024-25 FAFSA or MN Dream Act application.

Who is eligible for the North Star Promise?

- Any Minnesota resident who has a family Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) less than \$80,000 (as reported on the FAFSA or MN Dream Act).
- New, returning and current college students.
- Students who are attending a Minnesota public higher education institution or tribal college.
- Students who are taking at least one credit, enrolled in any program or course of study, working toward a degree, diploma or certificate.
- Students who are meeting Satisfactory Academic Program (SAP) standards.
- Students who have NOT already earned a baccalaureate degree and are NOT in default of a state or federal student loan.

What does the North Star Promise cover?

- As a “last-dollar” scholarship program, the North Star Promise will cover the remaining balance of tuition and fees after other scholarships, grants, stipends and tuition waivers have been applied.
- The North Star Promise will fully cover the remaining balance of a student’s tuition and fees, but students should still budget for books and supplies, food and housing, and transportation.

North Star Promise Award Amounts

- There is not a limit on the maximum term, yearly, or lifetime dollar amount of an award.
- The amount received is based on the "last-dollar" calculation of eligibility on a term-by-term basis. Students may receive up to 100% of the amount charged in tuition and required fees per term, minus all other sources of gift aid.
- There are credit limits. For students earning 2-year degrees, NSP is limited to receipt of the award for a total of 60 credits. For students earning 4-year degrees, NSP is limited to receipt of the award for a total of 120 credits.
- If funds are available, the highest need students may also receive North Star Promise Plus funds. The details on this provision of the program are still being determined.

Questions?

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