



## REIMAGINING MINNESOTA STATE

### Forum on Reimagining Minnesota State Session 4: The Student-The Student: Emerging populations and changing needs and expectations

#### Session 4 Summary

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**Overview:** Session 4 will dive into the changing nature of students and the demographic, generational, social and economic forces that will impact their needs and enrollment patterns in the future. *Session 4: The Student* will create opportunities to discuss how differing student populations bring different needs and learning and service expectations to higher education settings and how institutions are responding to serve those needs in innovative and impactful ways.

**Guiding Question:** *How will Minnesota State reimagine how it responds to the diverse student populations that will look to its colleges and universities to further their professional and personal aspirations? How will it position itself to both drive new enrollments and continuously improve student outcomes?*

#### Forum Participation

The Forum was attended by approximately 60 people in person and by approximately 140 people online.

#### Briefing Paper Executive Summary

One challenge of developing an overview of today's college student is that there is no one single profile of individuals attending postsecondary institutions. When many think of a college student, it brings to mind what are described as "traditional" students (18-22 years old, attending full-time, financially dependent on their parents, and living on campus). This group of students, while labeled as traditional, are increasingly in the minority of students attending colleges and universities today. Estimates are that this makes up about 15-17% of today's college students and that percentage is declining.

The remaining 83-85% of individuals attending U.S. postsecondary institutions fall into the category of "non-traditional" which is defined by the National Center for Education Statistics as having one of the following seven characteristics: Has delayed enrollment in post-secondary education beyond the first year after high school graduation; attends part time; is financially independent from his or her parents; works fulltime; has dependents other than a spouse; is a single parent; or has no high school diploma or GED test credential.

The profile of students within this large category of "non-traditional" represents a diverse group of individuals with very different attendance patterns and support needs. They include:

- 38% are over the age of 35
- 26% are parents
- 43% attend community colleges
- 40% enroll part-time
- 58% of students work while in college
- 55% are financially independent
- 34% of undergraduates are first-generation college students

While the percentage of students attending colleges and universities directly after high school is a declining percentage of the overall student population, they still constitute a significant segment of the college student market for many institutions, and it is important to understand their changing views and expectations of college. The generation of students currently entering college is known as “Generation Z.” They were born between 1995 and 2012 and are just beginning to enter college. Demographically, this cohort of students will be the most diverse population of traditional students. Demographic predictions are that Gen Z will include a smaller number of students, a greater proportion of non-white students, a greater proportion of students from low-income families, and a greater proportion of first-generation students.

As the traditional student becomes an increasing minority, some are questioning how to accurately describe the remaining 80% of the population served by today’s colleges and universities. One term that is being explored is the “post-traditional’ learner,” as a way to recognize that students within this population come to higher education with their own unique set of needs and expectations. Post-traditional learners have been described as students who:

- Are needed wage earners for themselves or their families
- Combine work and learning at the same time or move between them frequently
- Pursue knowledge, skills, and credentials that employers will recognize and compensate
- Require developmental education to be successful in college-level courses
- Seek academic/career advising to navigate their complex path to a degree

Segmenting students into traditional and post-traditional categories provides some insights into the unique educational and support needs of each group. This method has been criticized because it relies on segmenting students based solely on demographic and socio-economic factors, which provides an incomplete picture of the goals, needs and motivations of the students themselves and creates definitions that are convenient for institutions rather than the students.

Another way to understand different segments of students is to look at their deeper motivations for attending college and use this information to create better and more relevant educational delivery and support programs and services that more closely reflect their needs. Cutting across the different segments of college students are a series of non-academic challenges that are impacting the student’s ability to be successful and the postsecondary institution’s ability to serve them well. Providing academic and support services in the future will need to include considerations of mental health, learning disabilities, financial and food insecurity, and homelessness.

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#### **Forum Session 4: Speaker Key Points**

***Timothy Renick, Senior Vice President for Student Success and Professor at Georgia State University and Recipient of the 2018 McGraw Prize in Higher Education***

Georgia State is on the leading edge of demographic change and a campus that has gone through transformation. Data from the *New York Times* disaggregated over the last 40 years shows that there

has been significant changes in the level of bachelor's degree attainment in the United States. This is good news. But all of that growth has been in the upper half of the income spectrum. If you are in the top half of households, your prospects of attaining a college degree have nearly doubled, from 40 to 80%. We want to celebrate that but it's not the story of Georgia State and it's not the story of Minnesota State. Our story is largely embedded in the lower household income bands. This story is much more sobering. With all our efforts, we have hardly moved the needle at all on degree attainment and as a result the attainment gap is getting larger.

Now consider that for the first time in U.S. history or at least since this data has been collected, the majority of K-12 students in the U.S. are from low-income households. Put these two pieces of data together and they should give us pause because we have not figured out how to serve low income students at scale and yet low income students are the ones we will need to serve in the future.

In this way, Georgia State University (GSU) was grossly underperforming. In the late 1980s the majority of students at GSU were white. Forty years later, there has been a significant shift. Today, there is no majority population at GSU. Students have changed financially as well. In a five year period, GSU nearly doubled the number of low income students – from 31% to 59% Pell eligible.

This year, GSU enrolled 28,900 Pell students. As a reference point, the entire Ivy League combined enrolls a total at 9800 Pell students. Over the last 10 years, GSU's incoming SAT scores have gone down by 33 points. This is not a story of getting better retention rates by admitting an academically better group of students. GSU also does not have additional resources. They have received about \$40 million less in state funding. Georgia has a lower performing high school system. So they could point fingers at K-12 and say they will start performing better when they receive better prepared students. They could point the finger at state government and say they'll start performing better when they stop slashing their budgets. Instead they did something that was initially uncomfortable but then ultimately liberating. That was to put the mirror on themselves and ask if they were the problem. If 7 out of 10 students are leaving with debt and no degree to show for it, what are they doing to contribute to these very high dropout rates? To find out, they got much better at the data and began to use the data to analyze their own bureaucracies and find out what was tripping up students and to better track new initiatives and find out what was working. When they found something that worked, they didn't set up a program for specific student populations (a program for Pell students; a program for African-American students, etc.) they changed the way they did things for all students and that was when they saw significant results.

Following are examples:

*Summer melt:* Nineteen percent of confirmed freshman class never enrolled in the first day of class – a phenomenon known as summer melt. It is one of the early causes of the achievement gap. They used National Student Clearinghouse Data to track where these students went and found out that there were nearly 300 students who were eligible to attend GSU who a year later never attended a post-secondary institution anywhere in the US. They melted out of the system, and they were mostly students of color and low income students that were good prospects for college. They finished high school with B+ GPAs but something happened between high school graduation and the first day of fall semester to change their plans. And what was that something? It was the higher education system. It was the bureaucracy that was put in front of them. As a result, GSU did a census of all the different steps they asked students to complete before enrolling, and they found that there were about 14 different processes. These included steps like completing the FAFSA and the verification process. The federal government selects certain FAFSAs for verification. At GSU of the 30,000 students eligible, 34% were selected for verification. So in July, their admitted students were receiving a communication from the Federal Government asking them to provide written verification of the details of the FAFSA submission. A subset of their students were experiencing these verification requests as an insurmountable barrier to

attendance. Immunization requirements are another big differentiator. For middle and high income students, this request is easily handled by parents. But students from less stable households may not have access to their immunization records and see that as an insurmountable obstacle to attending college.

As a response, they created an online portal for students that takes them through the 14 steps. The steps are color-coded as they are completed, and there's assistance right on the portal for questions. But the biggest advantage is that because it's a portal, GSU staff know where students are as they move through the process. They know when a student was engaged up until the point they stop engaging so they can reach out with much more intentional help.

GSU was one of the first in the country to develop an AI-chat bot to provide support. They built up a database of 2000 answers to questions normally asked by incoming freshman. They worked with a tech company and took these 2000 answers and put them on a 24/7 texting platform. The AI interface finds the answer in the database. It also can make a judgment that there is not a good enough answer in the knowledge database and refers the question to a staff person who responds and adds the answer to the knowledge base. In the first three months, they had more than 201,000 questions answered. The average response time was 7 seconds. Usage was higher at 1am than at 10am. It challenged them to think about if availability of services was convenient for students. But we also saw something interesting. We talked to a number of students and they admitted that they asked the knowledge base questions that they would have never asked an actual human being. They liked that they knew that it was an artificial assistant and saw it as a tool to help them solve problems for themselves. In the 3 years since launch, they've seen a 37% drop in summer melt. That translates into 362 students a year who enrolled in the fall who would have been not enrolled because of summer melt. These students are predominantly low income, first-generation students because those were the students being weeded out by the bureaucracy.

*Changing majors:* GSU students were cycling through 2.6 majors on average before graduation. Every time a student changes their major, they have added time to degree and wasted credit hours. Sometimes this results in them not completing a degree at all. GSU has more than 100 majors and offer more than 4000 courses each semester. Their previous onboarding process brought 200 new students into an orientation session and told them to pick a major. Most were picking blindly. Students then got into the major and realized it was not what they wanted and would switch to something else. They were bouncing around without good information.

GSU made simple changes. Now all students, including those in their community college, are required to join a learning community in which groups of 25 students take their classes together. We know from the national data that first-generation students drop out because they feel like they do not belong. Through learning communities, they form study groups and friendships. About 10 years ago, they organized all of our majors into meta-majors so first-year students don't select from the 100 majors offered but instead select a general area of interest. Through the learning community, they join 24 other students with their same interest, and they take classes together. Programs have started organizing information sessions and alumni activities for the students in meta-majors, creating more opportunities for students to make informed decisions and connections.

GSU has created a live job portal that takes jobs information from the *Atlanta Journal* and provides information about how many jobs are listed in their career of interest and other careers that might be of interest. Each advising session uses this tool but students have access on their own, as well. Students also are given a career-based e-portfolio so that faculty can build elements into classes that allow students to build and demonstrate career competencies and skill levels they have developed over the course of their education.

In a 3-year period, they have increased by 7 fold the number of students who are meeting with a career counselor on their own. Before on average, GSU students were meeting a career counselor for the first time in their senior year. Now the average is the first year. They have seen a huge reduction in the number of students switching majors after their first year (-32%).

*Drop for non-payment:* GSU was dropping more than 1000 students a semester for non-payment in 2011. National data shows that students have less than a 30% chance of coming back and completing their degree at that institution if they involuntarily leave for one semester. When they looked at the data, they found that the largest segment of students being dropped were seniors. Many were running out of aid eligibility because most state scholarships are for 4 years. In some cases students were leaving with balances of \$300 to \$500. In 2011, GSU started a program that was seen as radical at the time. Students were provided scholarships to cover their differences. Students did not have to self-identify or see an aid counselor. Through data analysis, GSU could determine which students were close to graduation and which students were about to be dropped because of non-payment. What they found is that for an average grant of \$900, 87% of the students who received a grant graduated within the academic year. Last year, 1300 students who walked across the stage as recipients of bachelor's degrees were recipients of one of these scholarships. How do they afford it? Boston Consulting Group did a study and found that this program generates more revenue for the institution than it costs.

*Drop outs:* GSU was losing 5700 students every year through drop out. In 2011, GSU staff explored if they could identify those students, not after the fact, but 6- or 12-months in advance. Looking at 10-years' worth of data, they explored if there were any identifiable markers that could be used to identify which students were at risk for dropping out. They found nearly 700 such markers. From the list, they created 800 alerts. Every GSU student is tracked on those 800 alerts. If any are triggered, a message immediately goes to the student's advisor for action and outreach. For example, they track registration records and letter grades that take students off track for major completion. Through predictive analytics, they found a strong correlation between the grade a student receives in the first course in their major and that student's likelihood of graduating on time. Knowing this allows for interventions at the earliest stage and not after the students are failing more advanced courses.

Another marker is attendance. For example, they look at a student's log-ins to the GSU network. If they see a sudden drop, it triggers an intervention. In the past 12 months, they've had 58,000 connections with students triggered by the system. They immediately saw an increase in retention, especially among their non-traditional students who are at greater risk for non-retention. They've also seen a significant drop in time to degree, which is saving students about \$18 million in tuition. They have seen increases in completion rates in some of their most difficult majors. One concern was that these interventions would channel students into the easier majors. But STEM majors have increased in the last five years because they are catching students early, and they are working with them before they encounter problems and have to drop out or change majors.

What is the aggregate impact? This is the way to put the institution on better financial footing. Every 1% increase in retention at GSU is worth \$3 million in tuition and fees. Through this work, GSU has improved retention and persistence by 23%. But the real difference is in the number of students graduating. GSU is graduating 2800 more students every year, and those gains are coming from populations from undeserved backgrounds. They have more than doubled graduation rates for black students (26% to 58%) and tripled graduation rates for Hispanic students (22% to 57%). These rates are higher than the graduation rate for the student body overall (50%). Three years ago, the state of Georgia consolidated the largest and most underperforming community college in Georgia with Georgia State. In just three years, they have doubled the graduation rate (6.5% to 14.9%) and the 3-yr graduation plus transfer rate from (41% to 58%).

***Kristen Hodge-Clark, Vice President for Best Practice and Innovation, Association of Governing Boards***

The focus of the presentation is on looking at the role of governance and the perspective of the board and their distinct role in advancing equity and inclusion at their institutions. AGB is seeing the following trends:

- One is that the notion that the non-traditional student is now the traditional student and what does that mean as far as providing resources and support for these students. This includes issues of student mental health and the resources that need to be provided and having the capacities and facilities to accommodate their growing needs.
- Students are more outspoken on social issues, including freedom of speech and gun control. What is the institution and board doing to support, advance and manage these issues?
- Another topic is student use of social media and how disruptive social media has been to the industry over the past decade. Students are using social media to engage with their institutions, with other students, and to learn.
- Another issue is debt load and food and housing insecurities. Students are being active and taking a lead on these issues. How does the board step in and support their leaders?
- We're beginning to discuss Generation Alpha, who will come after Generation Z. They were born with an iPad in their hand. What will that mean when they get to campus?
- Students are wanting more spaces that are more inclusive and more equitable in design. This isn't new, but it manifests in different ways for this generation of students.
- As institutions move forward, there needs to be a desire to develop a shared definition and understanding of equity and inclusion that goes beyond faculty and institutional leadership to include the board and a shared approach to collectively think through these issues.
- Boards also need to pay attention to student outcomes by race. At many public institutions there remains a significant gap on outcomes.
- Disparities by family income and LGBTQIA issues. Inclusive bathroom spaces are one example.

A series of scenarios were presented to highlight the types of issues boards must consider as they provide leadership for an equity and inclusion agenda.

*Scenario 1: An institution is studying the current higher education market and the inherent challenges of serving an increasingly lower income and minority student population. They are struggling with how to be responsive to this segment of students.*

- Look left and right. Are the actors within this space reflective or representative of your student body? What are the implications of that and what needs to happen as a result?
- How does the composition of leadership, faculty, and staff impact new generations of students and the institution's ability to meet their needs?
- Is the tone and language used to discuss certain student populations focused on deficits rather than opportunities? Most often when we think about low income and minority students, it starts from a place of the challenges and how we provide greater support and how we deal with their readiness for success. We need to change our approach and see the opportunities and ways institutions can provide creative strategies. This is opposed to the normal response of "now we're going to have to provide additional resources." How do we change the narrative about these populations?

*Scenarios 2: Ableism. A recent weather event has resulted in significant snow mounds in and around campus as roadways were cleared. However, it has also created significant challenges for certain segments of the population.*

Is the notion of creating an equitable campus community reflected in every aspect of the institution, even outside of the classroom? How often is every arm of the institution thinking about equity and what they do, especially for those with disabilities that we can see and can't see? Are we having these conversations and are they being translated into action? Do you collect data on how many disabled students you have and does the board receive this data? We are encouraging our institutions to think beyond race and gender to a fuller definition of equity and inclusion.

*Equity issues manifest in every facet of the institution. What is the board's role in taking the lead and engage in these issues.*

- Boards have a fiduciary responsibility to monitor institutional policies. These include equity-focused policies promoting diversity and inclusion across campus. Boards should periodically review campus climate policies.
- Boards and institutional leaders can play an important role in modeling and advancing equity by looking inward and assessing their composition.
- It's also important to take stock of their current agenda to determine if equity related issues are among their list of priorities.
- Working with presidents and institutional leaders to establish a working understanding of equity in the context of their mission and goals
- Use equity-minded decision making to monitor institutional goals and progress. Ensure data used to inform board decisions are disaggregated across demographic and stakeholder experiences and take a meaningful interest in current challenges influencing different segments of the campus populations.
- Consider the role of shared governance in collectively addressing these issues is critically important.

*How do you establish an innovation agenda with equity at heart?*

- Institutions across the country are grappling with the innovation question. There's great opportunity in the context of these conversations to place equity issues at the center and to cultivate an equity-minded decision making process.
- Key questions for consideration:
  - What innovations currently exist at your institution with regard to creating a diverse and inclusive campus?
  - What resources are needed to develop an innovation agenda with consideration to equity?
  - What are some of the different areas/departments where an innovation and equity agenda can take shape? How can it be rolled up to the entire institution?

*Resources from AGB:*

- AGB's Board of Director's Statement, Campus Climate, Inclusion, and Civility
- AGB's Report: Freedom of Speech on Campus: Guidelines for Governing Boards and Institutional Leaders
- USC Equity Scorecard: It's a process that helps institutions understand how to act in order to improve equitable outcomes. It requires the commitment of an institutional team with representatives across the institution and in different roles
- Critical Higher Education Governance Collaborative: Faculty team studying governing boards effectively addressing issues of equity

***Richard A. DeMillo, Executive Director, Center for 21st Century Universities at Georgia Tech***

The purpose of the presentation is to recount the process Georgia Tech completed about 4 years ago to prepare for the future. Though Georgia Tech is very different than Georgia State and Minnesota State, the institutions do share some challenges.

The Georgia Tech process started with a task force, but they quickly realized that task forces were convened when things are going wrong. In fact, Georgia Tech was widely seen as a place that was getting things right. But thinking that you're doing things right is sometimes a red flag. Clayton Christenson's work on innovation found that those organizations that listen to the historical customer and pour resources into improving existing products and services don't always see the changes that will disrupt their business model. When Georgia Tech started the Commission on the Next in Higher Education, they were tasked with this challenge – can they envision the educational enterprise of the technological research university of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and recommend pilots and projects to move Georgia Tech towards that vision.

When they started, they did not think it would be difficult to imagine what that future would look like, but they had some surprises along the way. The commission was made up of stakeholders from across the university. These stakeholders knew what was going on at Georgia Tech and possibly Georgia State, but they didn't really have a sense of the industry that they were embedded in. So it became a discovery process – it was to lead people to consider the kinds of changes they had never thought about that could impact the success of the university years down the line. They picked 20 years as the time scale. They wanted first to have a feeling for the drivers of change before going into ideation and program design.

Georgia Tech got their students involved in what it would look like to be a Georgia Tech student in the year 2040. The current students (18 year olds) have a pretty clear idea of what they think life will look like. For example, almost none of the students thought that majors would be important. They thought big concepts like space would be what was important. Who are their heroes? In the past it would have been Bill Gates. For them, it was people like Elon Musk. Not people known for building large financial empires, but people who were driven to solve complex problems. Where will they be? Few thought students would be tied to the 300 acre campus in Atlanta. Some said the Matrix. Some said Mars. The idea of a traditional campus was not on their minds. The idea of 100-year life is very much on the minds of current freshman. And they're thinking about a lifetime beyond the point where a 40-year career makes sense. That's the world in which students imagine themselves. Students are no longer coming in to say they want to work for IBM for the next 40 years. They come in saying they want to study space or do other things that are not connected to a single career. An education becomes a smaller and smaller portion of that 100-year life. The episodic role higher education will play in the lives of students will become more important.

As they went through the discovery process, they began to understand what the drivers of change were going to be. The purpose was to raise the awareness of the commission members beyond their own institution. One idea was the concept of disappearing boundaries. In that context, K-10 is one thing that kept coming up. Students showing up as 18-year-olds and leaving as 24-year-olds is not what we will be seeing. The idea that high school graduates as the Georgia Tech freshman is going away. Instead Georgia Tech has a role to play in the two years between 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades as students are deciding what college means to them. Mainly these are students who will never come to the Georgia Tech campus. Even so, they will know what is going on in the intellectual life of students.

Georgia Tech has increased enrollment by 40% in the last 4 years, but it has come almost exclusively from students who come from outside of their key traditional demographic. These students already have degrees and will likely never show up on the Georgia Tech campus. Their online master's degrees have revealed a market for graduate education in computer science and engineering that they did not know existed. For the online master's in engineering, they thought they would be offering a cost effective graduate degree that would compete with similar degrees at peer institutions. This turned out not to be the case. They found that there was an underserved market for graduate degrees in computer

science for students in geographic locations who did not have ways for them to get the next set of skills they needed for career advancement. This one master's degree has expanded the national market for graduate education in computer science by 15%. This shows that one program done at scale with the right motives and identifying the right market can have significant impact.

Changing demographics and the decline of traditional aged students. For an institution like Georgia Tech, this means that they cannot continue to do the things that have made them successful in the past and continue to maintain their place in the STEM higher education ecosystem. When do you invest in a declining market? When you want to throw your money away.

The commission discussed the changing nature of work. Georgia Tech produces students who go into industries that are technologically based. The churn of knowledge was something professionals needed to master, and they realized they had no idea how to teach students how to do that. How to teach students about not only the skills they need at graduation but how they are likely to change? What the changes in the industry might be and how to prepare for those today? They heard from employers about t-shaped thinkers and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. This means someone who knows how to solve problems in a discipline (the vertical line) but also has a horizontal set of skills that allow them to exercise judgement, to act ethically, to form and manage effective teams, to know the value of information and make judgements from it. These are difficult to put into a skills inventory and weren't on their radar. This brought them to whole person education.

What was not going to be put on the table? They had difficult discussions about core values and how those determined what things they were not going to do. They also thought consciously about how they were going to engage in deliberate innovation. They did not want innovation to be accidental but intentional and took steps to do so. They developed a philosophy for change. Effecting change in a large, old-school institution means you do not run at it head on and try to change direction. You want to think about ways where the old way becomes obsolete and then pursue projects to move in that direction. A trim tab is a little piece of metal on a ship. If you want to move an ocean liner, you can push on it with a tug boat with minimal effect. You can have a lot of people pull on the rudder with limited effect. If you turn a small piece of metal on the edge of the rudder, you create an area of low pressure that allows for the momentum of movement in one direction and the ship turns. It's a great metaphor for how you want to effect change in large organizations. You want to find those projects that seem small, that don't take a lot of effort, but if they succeed they create the environment from change.

***Panel discussion:***

*The GSU model seems to be move fast, get an idea, and go. The Georgia Tech model is to recognize things change slowly and plan for the long-term. Can you comment on pace of change and the role of governance?*

The pace of change at GSU is a reflection of the challenges we are facing. We have students enrolling right now and the status quo left them disappointed and in debt. We felt we needed to be nimble and had nothing to lose. From the beginning, we've been using technology and data to deliver the kind of personalized attention that less resourced institutions have struggled to deliver. This has accelerated our ability to change. One criticism is that "if this works so well, why isn't everybody doing it". The simple answer is that 5 years ago even GSU couldn't have done it. We didn't have the access to big data and analytics then. We know technology is allowing us to change much faster than we have in the past. The problem we faced and tried to answer was different than Georgia Tech. Our challenge was how do we not let our students down. So we changed quickly.

What we hear from board members is about a disconnect between the pace of change they can create in their private sector roles compared to the higher education governance roles. We engage them in

conversations about the difference between private sector organizations and higher education. We have distinct factors that may enable or inhibit change at different institutions in different ways.

The apparent luxury of a 20-year timeframe is a bit of a trick. It was a slight of hand that we used to get people to develop a sense of the future. Anyone who tries to create change in higher education knows that the easy answer is that we can't. We can't do this because of current faculty governance. We can't do this because of current accreditation. We can't do this because the school chairs won't allow it, etc. Once you go out to a 20-year time horizon, you're not dictating massive disruptive change. You're giving people the option of not starting with the current state. We won't get to Georgia Tech on Mars without dealing with Georgia Tech at a geographic distance. This North Star gave people the opportunity to envision a different future without connecting it to the present.

*How did you develop these changes in a collaborative effort specifically involving shared governance?*

Shared governance is a complex issue, and there is not one model that is right for all institutions. Opportunity for shared ownership between leadership, faculty and board is important. We've seen failures in shared governance. At the heart of those failures was a diminished structure that didn't fit the institution. The starting point is defining it clearly and building a structure that works.

At Georgia State, a lot of the changes didn't require substantive changes for faculty on a day-to-day effort. Advising, student on-boarding, etc. can happen without going into the classroom. The faculty at GSU are very much partners. Once we were able to show that these efforts have a positive impact on student outcomes, faculty began coming forward with ideas about how we might extend these ideas into other areas. We've retooled our nursing sequence using predictive analytics. We had not envisioned that. But the trick is being intentional about making the case and making it very publicly. Let's make sure our faculty and staff know what we are doing and why it is important. Be intentional about partnerships and the communications that occur.

The Center for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education is an independent research center on campus. We don't have a directive from the President's Office to innovate in certain places. Because of that we tend to attract trim tabs. People who have big ideas that they can articulate in a concise way, so I can raise funds. We know that if those projects succeed they will draw people in. We don't need consensus to draw people in. Michael Crow's favorite quote is 99-1 is not a split vote. We understand that we only need 10-15% of faculty to get behind an effort for it to be successful. We also don't spend state funds on highly speculative initiatives. Everything we do is fundraised from private sources that gives freedom to act in ways that we couldn't using state funds.

*GSU is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest system in the country. This is the 4<sup>th</sup>. What role did the system have in all of this? And suggestions for how a system can spur innovation?*

It's always a delicate balance because it's easier to cite a model from afar than one of your fellow institutions that may only be a few miles away. We have found ways to collaborate with the other institutions in Georgia. For example, the Chatbot. What we found is that about 75% of questions are about financial aid. That means many of these questions are applicable to other institutions. We are working with 4 other institutions in the system to share the Chatbot and knowledge base. The 3000 Q&As can be shared and leveraged. The same can be said for predictive analytics. A lot of the lessons we've learned are transferrable to other campuses. Some of it is systematically applying common sense. These opportunities will only increase as we apply more of these systematic approaches.

Each system across the country has a different configuration. So systems have a great opportunity to share information but also recognize that how it manifests in different state systems will look different.

The lowest hanging fruit might be board education. State-wide trainings might be an opportunity for conversations that are also mindful of differences across systems.

Georgia Tech is very much aware of the GSU predictive analytics work. We do hear the “Ya buts”. “Ya but our student population is different.” GSU was becoming more diverse. Georgia Tech was becoming less diverse. This also means that we are taking more and more students from fewer and fewer zip codes. The notion of reaching into high schools and engaging with students around STEM outcomes is an attempt to develop students who may not have applied to Georgia Tech. There are some surprises. We received transfer students from all over the system. The students who did best at GT were those who came from Georgia Perimeter community college.

*How can governing boards start to use AI?*

It is not necessarily the role of the board to be the ones to produce the ideas, but the data they receive will be critical and for administrators to demonstrate they are staying cutting edge and thinking about these areas. This needs to be in partnership with the president /chancellor.

*Comment on t-shaped mentality. How is it achieved?*

I don't know of any circumstances where taking courses through a general education distribution model works to develop the whole person. Adding an extra course will be easy to implement and have no impact on student achievement. There are great examples. In the STEM fields, Harvey Mudd team teaches introductory calculus using English and math instructors. At Olin College, they use project-based learning to teach leadership. You have to exert leadership on these teams. There's no leadership course. Our thinking is not about working on the edges of the curriculum but making fundamental changes about how learning is delivered.

*What's one thing we should be focused on?*

Start with the data. These are really significant culture shifts to get campuses to behave differently than they are currently behaving at scale. Faculty are a diverse group. But one thing that links them together is that they have gone through rigorous evidence-based training in graduate school. They have been trained to respect evidence. We would never have gone to the nursing faculty and said you should do these things. We just shared the data with them. We asked them “did you know this is what is happening in your introductory course?” They looked at the evidence and then made changes. Trust the people who have committed their lives to higher education. Give them the evidence, and they will solve the problem.

There's an important role for shared governance. There needs to be an understanding on both sides of what that role is. What is the board's distinct role? What is the faculty's distinct role? When do they work together and separately?

Economic development gives you a lot of data on where you should go. If you have a choice between telling feel good stories and concentrating on data, use data. You will never figure out where to go from anecdotal stories. Focus on data and evidence.

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## **Forum Advisory Group Discussion:**

Interesting ideas that emerged from today's conversation:

- Addressing the churn of knowledge
- Personal board of directors at Georgia Tech
- Sense of belonging and sense of community on their campus
- Learning community model – the bump is the same as if the student is living on campus

- Thematic career and meta-major organization

What is the value add of the system?

1. Technology/AI/etc for scale up + greater student success
2. Use the system to strengthen local campuses via sharing courses
3. Student-centered mission
4. Student outcomes evaluation. Reliable, relevant measures
5. Accelerator of change
6. Leverage big partnerships
7. Intellectual center – smart resource for greater institutional effectiveness for student success
8. Coordinate institutions with different resources
9. Change management
10. Greater agility –link economic need of campuses
11. Apply predictive analytics – whole system need
12. Examine official goals/values/rewards and real incentives
13. Each institution is a portal to system-wide resources

Confirm positives: our vision – student success through technical through advanced education. A single vision is good if it means something tangible to students. Stay anchored in the community and what Minnesota needs – be the anchor and bridge.

Change strategies:

- Incentives/rewards/penalties
- Measures of success with evidence
- Blunt and honest – what would you do if you could not fail?
- Staged change process – short-term successes
- Having time anchors – if you have a longer range plan
- Build integrity and trust

Governance and leadership:

- What clarity of expectations need to emanate from them?
- Do your analysis within the system? Where is the power dynamic and what are those levers?
- Shared leadership in the governance and change process
- Elevating the presidents and their role