



Tab 7 Equity Update

Coordinating Board for Higher Education
December 9, 2020

BACKGROUND

To meet the “Big Goal” of having 60 percent of Missourians hold a high-quality postsecondary credential by 2025, the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development has undertaken several efforts to identify equity gaps and disparities in educational attainment, and leverage a number of strategies through education, partnerships, and convenings to reduce these disparities. The department’s equity agenda aligns to goal 1.5 in the *Blueprint for Higher Education*, which commits the state to reduce inequities in higher education by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and disability by 50 percent.

CURRENT STATUS

Building Bridges to Success Monthly Webinars and White Paper Series: The annual Equity Summit and Hackathon in-person event scheduled in October was cancelled this year due to COVID-19. Instead, DHEWD has planned monthly 75-minute webinar sessions to cover varying equity topics to provide an opportunity for the department to engage with constituents and stakeholders around the state to facilitate, elevate conversations about equity, and to highlight best practices. During equity week October 26-30, DHEWD offered daily sessions and featured a welcome by Governor Mike Parson and Commissioner Zora Mulligan, the personal story of a Missouri student who created opportunities to expand the equity conversation on her campus, and much more. To view the recordings from prior webinars and equity week, or to register for future webinars, please go to the department’s [Equity Webpage](#).

DHEWD is also releasing a series of white papers to coincide with and complement the monthly webinar series. The monthly webinars will feature presentations from higher education and community partners from around the state, while the white papers will examine issues from the national context.

Equity Report – Success: A detailed report on DHEWD’s second Equity Report is provided at Tab 23. Work is already underway on the third Equity Report in the series focused on Affordability. That report is planned to be released during Equity Week in October 2021.

Missouri’s Equitable Access, Success and Engagement (MoEASE): The MoEASE Statewide Equity Leadership Council, comprised of commissioners and several assistant commissioners from the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and staff from the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry, has begun establishing the framework for improving communication and streamlining equity work across the agencies. The Council is working with both commissioners to craft a statement on equity that sends a strong message of commitment toward equitable outcomes. The Council is also working to finalize a state-level project and metrics for prioritization and piloting through an identified regional hub.

Internal Audit: DHEWD and DESE, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) have continued to meet to lay the groundwork for an internal audit of policies and procedures impacting equity. Currently, DESE and DHEWD are defining project goals and determining next steps.

Equity Statement: Department staff have drafted an Equity Statement that affirms the CBHE’s commitment to educational equity and commits the board and the department to embracing the challenges ahead and making the necessary changes to ensure every Missourian is empowered with the skills needed for success.

NEXT STEPS

The department will update the CBHE as each project continues. Further, the department will revise the Equity Statement based on feedback received in the December CBHE meeting, and will present an updated Equity Statement for approval at the March board meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

This is an information item only.

ATTACHMENT

- CBHE Equity Statement



DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

<Enter Date Here>

Being together today for our regularly scheduled board meeting gives our group the opportunity to weigh in on the important, historic conversations taking place in our country.

As members of the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education (CBHE), we've been entrusted to provide coordination and oversight of our higher education institutions. With this trust, comes the obligation to act in the best interest of the Missouri's citizens, some of whom rely more heavily than others upon our institutions to prepare them to contribute meaningfully to our world.

Education must fulfill its promise of being the great equalizer. This important work must shed light on intolerance, discrimination, and systemic racism. But it doesn't stop there. Leaders together must further their efforts to identify and remove policies and practices that have fostered oppression of people of color and historically underrepresented, underserved, and marginalized groups for generations.

Today, we re-affirm our commitment to advancing educational equity and assert the following as the Coordinating Board for Higher Education:

1. Every Missourian deserves a quality education and the opportunity to develop into contributing, self-sufficient citizens.
2. In partnership with DHEWD and our legislature, we embrace the challenge to examine long-standing structures and policies that may now be hindering wide-spread educational equity and the preparing of a workforce-ready constituency.
3. We promise to look beyond our present approaches and explore new pathways and partnerships, mindsets and methodologies, and innovations and technology available to us to create the education system that all citizens in this great state deserve.

Our society has reached a race relations tipping point and we have been challenged to respond to the moment. History will judge us on what we do with this opportunity.