



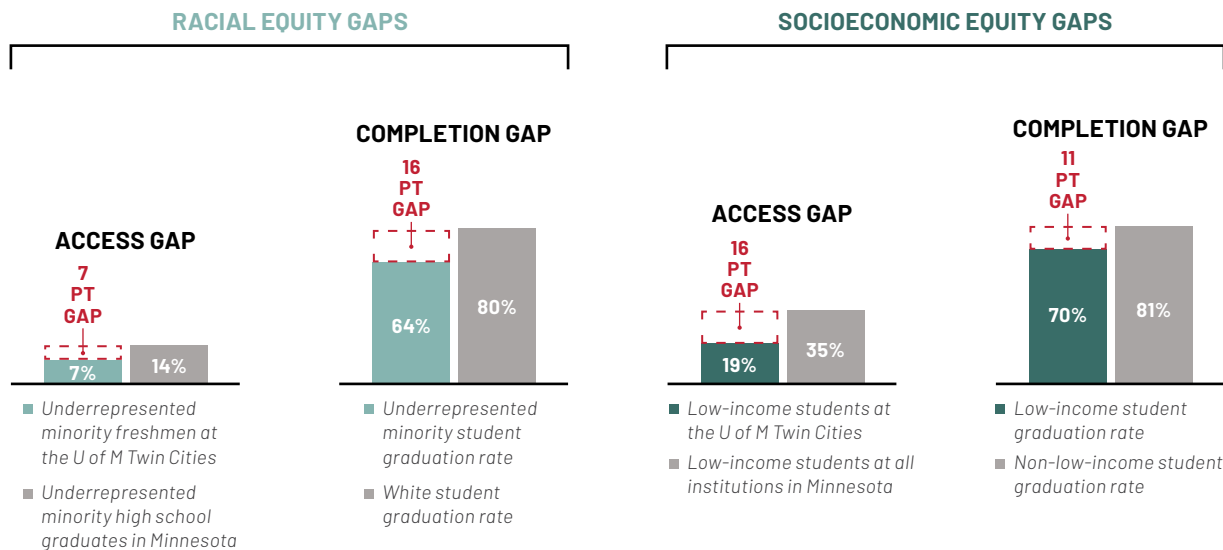
Equity Snapshot

University of Minnesota – Twin Cities

Public flagship universities were established with a mission to provide an excellent education to their states’ residents and are therefore well-positioned to enhance social and economic mobility within their states. Yet in many cases, too few low-income students and students of color have access to these elite colleges and the opportunities they provide. This analysis of racial and socioeconomic equity at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities (U of M Twin Cities) finds large and growing gaps in college access and completion by race and socioeconomic status (Figure 1). To serve as a catalyst for mobility and equity for the state of Minnesota, the U of M Twin Cities must do a better job enrolling and graduating low-income students¹ and students of color.

EQUITY AT A GLANCE

Figure 1. Racial and Socioeconomic Equity Gaps in Access and Completion at the U of M Twin Cities, 2016



Source: Racial equity gaps: IHEP analysis of first-time, full- and part-time undergraduate fall enrollment, 2016 IPEDS data and public high school graduates 2015-16 Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) data retrieved from <https://knocking.wiche.edu/data/>; IHEP analysis of first-time, full-time undergraduate six-year graduation rate by race/ethnicity, 2016 IPEDS data. Socioeconomic equity gaps: IHEP analysis of first-time, full-time undergraduates receiving Pell Grants at the U of M Twin Cities and at public, private not-for-profit, and for-profit two- and four-year Title IV participating institutions in Minnesota, 2015-16 IPEDS data; IHEP analysis of first-time, full-time undergraduate six-year graduation rate by Pell receipt, 2016 IPEDS data.

WHO HAS ACCESS TO THE U OF M TWIN CITIES?

RACIAL EQUITY: More students of color attend the U of M Twin Cities today than 30 years ago, but Black and Hispanic students are nonetheless more underrepresented compared with the state population than they were 15 years ago. Between 1980 and 2016, the number of underrepresented minority students at the U of M Twin Cities nearly doubled (Figure 2). See sidebox, “Who are Underrepresented Minority Students?”

Yet the U of M Twin Cities’ enrollment of underrepresented minority students has failed to keep pace with the growing racial/ethnic diversity in the state. In 2001, underrepresented minority student enrollment at the U of M Twin Cities aligned with the demographic makeup of the state’s high school graduates. Since then, however, racial gaps between the flagship’s freshmen class and the state’s high school graduates increased to 7 percentage points (Figure 3).

Black students are especially underrepresented at the U of M Twin Cities.² While 7 percent of high school graduates in Minnesota were Black in spring 2016, only 3 percent of U of M Twin Cities freshmen (fewer than 200 students) were Black that fall (Figure 3). Despite a growing proportion of Black high school graduates in Minnesota, the flagship’s enrollment of Black students has actually declined in the last decade—perpetuating and worsening the status quo.

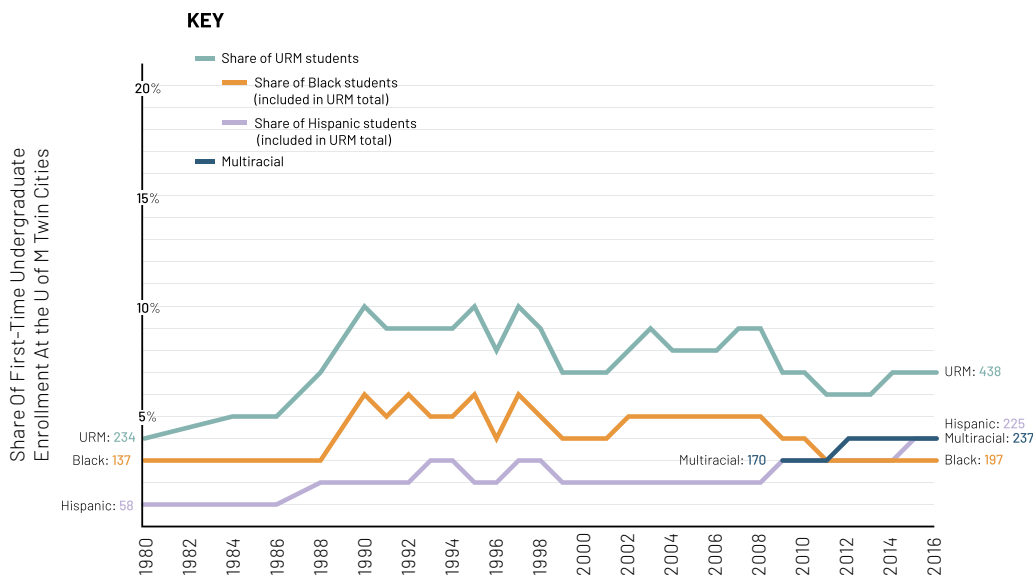


Figure 2. Change in Racial/Ethnic Diversity at the U of M Twin Cities, 1980–2016

Source: IHEP analysis of first-time, full- and part-time undergraduate fall enrollment, 1980–2016 IPEDS data. Note: Cohorts of American Indian/Alaska Native students are too small and therefore not shown separately. However, American Indian/Alaska Native students are included in the underrepresented minority (URM) category.

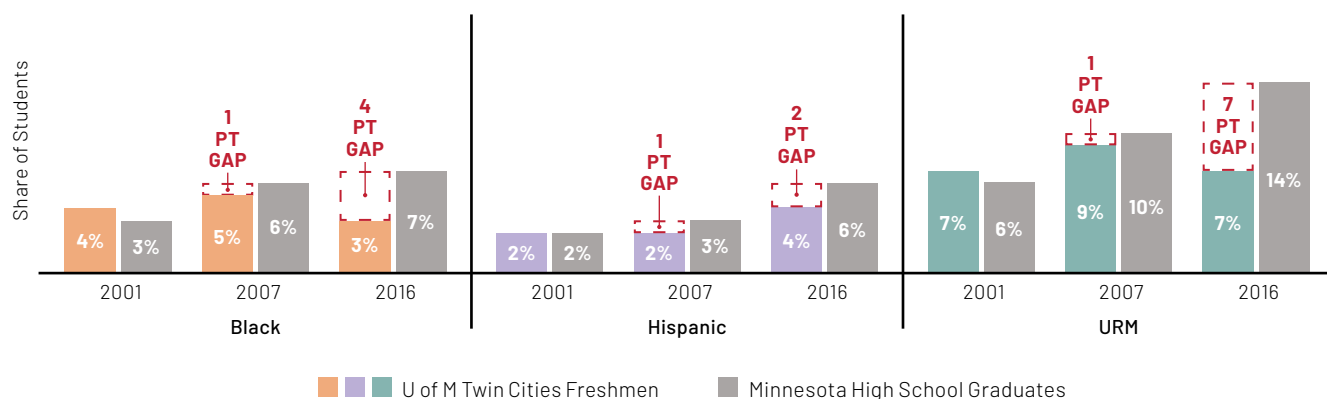
Who are Underrepresented Minority Students?

In this analysis, underrepresented minority (URM) students or students of color refers to Black, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native students. Other populations, such as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, Southeast Asian Americans, and other underserved Asian students, also are underrepresented within higher education and deserve attention.³ However, current data are insufficient to measure access and completion for these critical populations over time.

Also, due to small population sizes and to protect students’ anonymity, this paper includes American Indian/Alaska Native students as part of the collective underrepresented minority group but does not discuss or depict them on their own. In 2016, American Indian/Alaska Native students comprised approximately 1 percent of undergraduates in the United States.⁴ And just 40 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native students at public four-year colleges earned a degree within six years in 2014, compared with 61 percent of White students.⁵

We urge institutions to examine trends for all underrepresented groups to develop recruitment and intervention strategies targeted to their needs.

Figure 3. Change in Racial/Ethnic Gaps Between Minnesota High School Graduates and U of M Twin Cities Undergraduates, 2001, 2007, and 2016



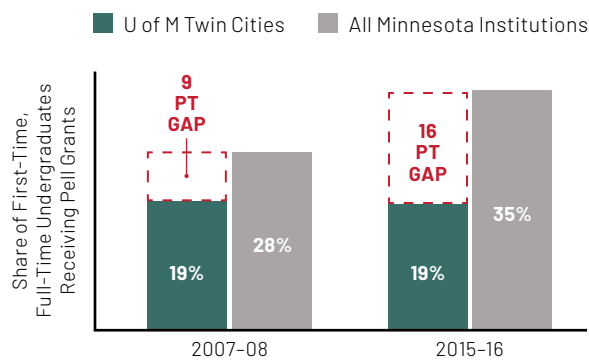
Source: IHEP analysis of first-time, full- and part-time undergraduate fall enrollment, 2001-16 IPEDS data and public high school graduates 2000-01 (earliest available data) through 2014-15 Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) data retrieved from <https://knocking.wiche.edu/data/>. 2000-01 through 2012-13 data on high school graduates are based on the Common Core of Data (CCD), and 2013-14 through 2015-16 high school graduate data are WICHE projections. Note: IPEDS cohorts of American Indian/Alaska Native students are too small and therefore not shown separately. However, American Indian/Alaska Native students are included in the underrepresented minority (URM) category.

SOCIOECONOMIC EQUITY: Low-income student enrollment at the U of M Twin Cities has remained flat over the last decade, failing to keep pace with increases in low-income student enrollment in Minnesota overall. Low-income students made up the same share of first-time, full-time students at the U of M Twin Cities in 2015-16 as in 2007-08 (19 percent), despite the fact that low-income student enrollment at all Minnesota colleges increased by 7 percentage points during that same time (Figure 4).



NET PRICE: Price is one barrier to college access for low-income students. In 2015-16, the lowest income in-state students at the U of M Twin Cities—those with family incomes of \$30,000 or less—paid about \$7,700 in college expenses after accounting for grant aid. This means students with the fewest resources at the U of M Twin Cities must devote 25 percent or more of their income to college costs.⁶

Figure 4. Change in Socioeconomic Gaps between the U of M Twin Cities and All Minnesota Colleges, 2007-08 and 2015-16



Source: IHEP analysis of first-time, full-time undergraduates receiving Pell Grants at the U of M Twin Cities and at all public, private not-for-profit, and for-profit two- and four-year Title IV participating institutions in Minnesota, 2007-08 to 2015-16 IPEDS data.

WHO SUCCEEDS AT THE U OF M TWIN CITIES?

RACIAL EQUITY: The U of M Twin Cities has made impressive gains in graduation rates for all students in the last two decades. Yet the flagship must continue to improve completion rates for students of color to close persistent—and growing—equity gaps. Over the past twenty years, graduation-rate gaps between underrepresented minority and White students at the U of M Twin Cities have grown slightly (from 13 percentage points in 1997 to 16 percentage points in 2016) as noteworthy gains in graduation rates for White students have outpaced those for students of color (Figure 5).

In 2016, less than two-thirds of students of color graduated from the U of M Twin Cities in six years, compared with 80 percent of White students – a staggering gap of 16 percentage points (Figure 5).

The flagship must continue working to improve completion rates for underrepresented minority students but do so without increasing admissions requirements that could exclude many students poised to benefit from a U of M Twin Cities education. Indeed, increasing selectivity likely contributed to the U of M Twin Cities’ graduation-rate gains over the past several decades. The flagship became more selective, increasing the median SAT/ACT scores of incoming students by approximately 13 percent between 2002 and 2016. This trend, however, is at odds with the need to enhance socioeconomic and racial diversity.⁷



OUT-OF-STATE ENROLLMENT: Many flagships have increased out-of-state enrollments, a practice that can hurt socioeconomic or racial diversity.⁸ In 2016, 36 percent of first-time, full-time undergraduates at the U of M Twin Cities were from outside of Minnesota, an increase of 19 percentage points since 1986. 13 percent of these out-of-state students were from Wisconsin, 1 percent were from North Dakota and 1 percent were from South Dakota—states with which Minnesota has an in-state tuition reciprocity agreement.⁹

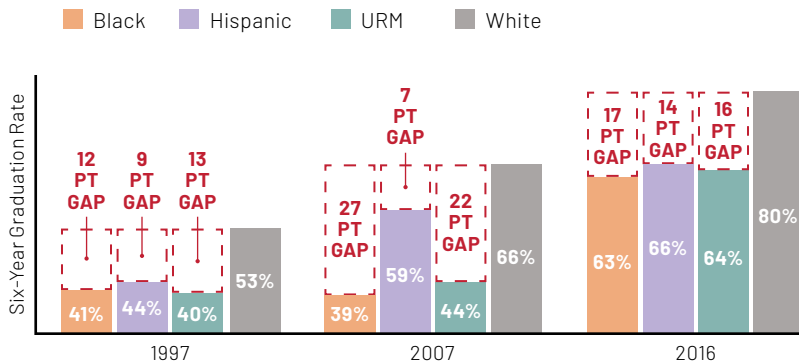


Figure 5. Graduation-Rate Gaps by Race/Ethnicity at the U of M Twin Cities, 1997, 2007, 2016

Source: IHEP analysis of first-time, full-time undergraduate six-year graduation rate by race/ethnicity, 1997–2016 IPEDS data. Note: Cohorts of American Indian/Alaska Native students are too small and therefore not shown separately. However, American Indian/Alaska Native students are included in the underrepresented minority (URM) category.

SOCIOECONOMIC EQUITY: Low-income students have a lower chance of graduating from the U of M Twin Cities than their higher-income peers. In 2016, the U of M Twin Cities graduated 70 percent of low-income students within six years compared with 81 percent of non-low-income students (Figure 6).

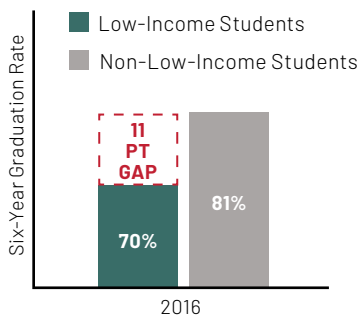


Figure 6. Graduation-Rate Gap by Socioeconomic Status at the U of M Twin Cities, 2016

Source: IHEP analysis of first-time, full-time undergraduate six-year graduation rate by Pell receipt, 2016 IPEDS data. Data on graduation rates for low-income students became available in 2016, allowing for analysis of socioeconomic gaps in student success at individual institutions.

EQUITY-MINDED POLICIES AT THE U OF M TWIN CITIES

What institutions do matters.

Colleges and universities must commit to increasing racial and economic diversity and supporting students of color and low-income students through to completion. That commitment requires unwavering leadership, alongside a solid financial investment. That institutional commitment plays out in a number of ways, including through university policies, which shape the opportunities available to low-income students and students of color. Public flagship institutions should design admissions and financial aid policies that encourage historically underrepresented students to gain access and succeed at high levels. The checklist below includes examples of policies that can encourage, or impede, enrollment and success for low-income students and students of color. Interviews with Great Lakes flagship administrators provided context on the motivations behind enacting these policies and how they impact equity on campus.

While designing and implementing the policies below can open more opportunities for students of color and low-income students, this list is illustrative—not exhaustive. Furthermore, fully closing gaps in access and completion is about more than checking a handful of policy boxes. Institutions need consistent leadership that sets equity goals as top institutional priorities. Doing so compels administrators, faculty, and staff to re-examine and question all policies and practices—large and small. Institution-wide policies matter, but so do the day-to-day decisions made and priorities set on a campus. As a public university founded on the principal of providing an excellent education to Minnesotans, the U of M Twin Cities has a responsibility to examine its policies and practices with the goal of opening doors of opportunity within the state.



NEED-BASED FINANCIAL AID

The U of M Twin Cities awards more than three-quarters of institutional grant aid based on need. Low-income students are sensitive to the price of college and financial aid offers. Need-based grant aid helps ease the financial burden of attending college, promote affordability, and narrow access inequities.¹⁰ In 2015–16, 80 percent of U of M Twin Cities institutional grants (\$53.3 million) were awarded based on need.¹¹ The University of Minnesota Promise Scholarship offers annual need-based grants of \$300 to \$4,000 to first-time and transfer Minnesota students whose families earn up to \$120,000 and who are enrolled in classes full-time.¹²



EARLY DECISION

The U of M Twin Cities does not accept early decision applications. Binding early decision policies increase the admissions chances of students who have the preparation and financial means to apply early to only one college and commit to enroll there if admitted, without comparing financial aid packages across multiple institutions. Affluent students are almost twice as likely as low-income students to apply to early decision deadlines, and thus benefit disproportionately from the advantages these policies offer.¹³ The U of M Twin Cities does not offer early decision.¹⁴



DEMONSTRATED INTEREST

The U of M Twin Cities does not consider students' demonstrated interest in the admissions process. Institutions that favor applicants who show "demonstrated interest" in the school can disadvantage low-income students. While affluent students have the financial means to demonstrate their interest by visiting college campuses, low-income students are often unable to do so because of the high costs associated with these trips.¹⁵ The U of M Twin Cities does not consider "level of applicant interest" in the admission process.¹⁶



LEGACY PREFERENCE

The U of M Twin Cities considers legacy status during the admissions process. Legacy admissions policies that give preference to students with familial ties to the institution can increase admissions chances of the children of alumni, a benefit exclusively available to students with college-educated parents.¹⁷ These policies disadvantage low-income students and students of color, who are more likely than their White and non-low-income peers to be the first in their family to attend college.¹⁸ The U of M Twin Cities considers "alumni/ae relation" as part of their application review process.¹⁹



INTERACTIONS WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

The U of M Twin Cities only asks applicants to disclose their criminal justice involvement if it includes sexual offense convictions or pending sexual offense charges.²⁰ Requiring applicants to check a box disclosing interactions with the criminal justice system, a practice that has not been shown to have any impact on campus safety, disadvantages applicants of color to a larger degree than White students.²¹ Notably, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)—of which the U of M Twin Cities is a member—recently called on its membership to remove questions about criminal history from applications for admissions.²²

Endnotes

1. Low-income students are those who receive Pell Grants; 82 percent of all Pell recipients have incomes below \$40,000. U.S. Department of Education, 2015–16 Federal Pell Grant Program End-Of-Year Report, Table 71. Retrieved from: <https://www2.ed.gov/finaid/prof/resources/data/2015-2016eoyresearchreports.zip>
2. In 2009, the U of M Twin Cities began reporting race/ethnicity data for multiracial students in response to changing federal guidelines, but data on the demographics of high school students does not include a multiracial category for the years included in Figure 2. If all multiracial students in 2016 were counted as Black, the U of M Twin Cities would be enrolling Black students at a rate even with their representation in Minnesota’s high school graduating class in the same year. Census data show, however, it is more likely that approximately one-third of multiracial students at the U of M Twin Cities identify as Black in combination with one or more other races. Source: Jones, N., & Bullok, J. (2012), The two or more races population: 2010. The Census Bureau. Retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-13.pdf>
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