

# Supplemental **Materials**

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*May 17, 2022*

**Prepared for:**  
Minnesota State Board of Trustees

**Prepared by:**  
Students United



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5/16/22

Dear Board of Trustees,

Students United has been the inclusive voice for all future, current, and former students. Their organizational goal is to ensure that higher education is rooted in student voices and student needs. Through the FY23 budgeting process, Students United has received more feedback than it has ever had in the past. This has allowed them to critically reflect on this proposed budget and fee increase, the Students United 2021-2026 Strategic Plan, and the data collected over the past five years.

We, the past board of directors and officers of Students United, endorse and support this fee increase by 0.19 cent per credit in order for Students United to continue serving Minnesota State University students and sustain their organizational stability. We also acknowledge the uniqueness and significance of Students United as a leading organization of student advocacy, student leadership, and student organizing for Minnesota State University system, and strongly ask the Board of Trustees to consider and support this fee increase for the future of Minnesota State University students.

Sincerely,

**Jonathan McNicholes** (he/him/his), State Chair from 2020- 2021  
**Emma Zellmer** (she/her/hers), Vice Chair from 2020-2021  
**Ola Abimbola** (he/him/his), State Chair from 2019 – 2020  
**Sandra Shimba** (she/her/hers), Vice Chair from 2019 - 2020  
**Prapti Niroula** (she/her/hers), Treasurer from 2019 - 2020  
**Kai Shelley** (they/them/theirs), State Chair from 2018-2019  
**Elijah Norris – Holliday** (he/him/his), Vice Chair from 2018-2019  
**David Shittu** (he/him/his), Treasurer from 2018 – 2019  
**Faiçal Rayani** (he/him/his), State Chair from 2017-2018  
**Lexi Byler** (she/her/hers), Vice Chair from 2017 – 2018  
**Ben Uecker** (he/him/his), Treasurer from 2017 – 2018  
**Sean Duckworth** (she/her/hers), Treasurer 2016 – 2017  
**Cara Luebke** (she/her/hers), State Chair 2015-2016

Kendra Draeger  
1500 Birchmont Drive NE Box #31  
Bemidji, MN 56601-2699

Dear Board of Trustees,

I am writing this letter of consultation as requested by Students United as a part of our internal financial transparency and consultation process.

Consider this letter as the official letter requested by the Minnesota State Universities Student Association Students United that consultation of a \$0.19 fee increase has occurred to the Board of Directors and at Bemidji State University.

The consultation process was presented first to me and the other board members of Students United in November 2021 by State Chair Emma Zellmer and Executive Director Diggins. During the first consultation, discussion on why the fee increase is important, recommendations on what to do, and alternative recommendations on what to do if the fee increase fails.

The fee increase is important to the organization because the organization would not be able to sustain and build up student programming without the fee increase. Students value this organization and the work we are doing to advocate for students and their experience within our higher education system. The recommendation was to increase the fee in order to sustain and grow the organization. The alternative recommendation included the inability to hire an Equity and Inclusivity Coordinator and make cuts to the Student Leadership Program.

A second consultation with the Board of Directors occurred in February 2022. This consultation had discussion on how much the fee increase should be. The board talked about two options and agreed to talk with students and alumni to see which option would be best to help sustain and build our programs. In March 2022, the final consultation with the Board of Directors happened in Washington DC. The Board of Directors voted unanimously to increase the fee to \$0.19 per credit.

On April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022, State Chair Zellmer, Vice Chair Maltare, and Treasurer Young consulted with the Bemidji State University Student Association (BSUSA) Student Senate on the proposed fee increase the Board of Directors voted on. The BSUSA Student Senate asked questions to understand what was being presented and gave feedback to the officers of Students United to support the fee increase.

As a Board Member of Students United and as President of the Bemidji State University Student Association Student Senate, I fully support the transparency of the process and the recommendations presented by the State Chair and Executive Director.

Thank you,

Kendra Draeger

Student | BSUSA Student Senate President | Bemidji State University

Students United Board Director Bemidji

May 16, 2022

Minnesota State Board of Trustees,

On behalf of the Minnesota State University, Mankato Student Government, I am pleased to share that our Senate has been properly consulted with about the Students United fee for the future academic years.

Students United first consulted with our Student Government in February of 2022 about their budget and collected survey responses and input at that meeting. The feedback that they collected during this visit was clearly reflected in the proposed budget with the fee increase that they presented on April 20, 2022. On this date, Students United State Chair Emma Zellmer, Vice Chair Arnavee Maltare, Treasurer Pierre Young, and finance intern Ryuto Hashimoto presented the Students United Fee increase. The presentation included thorough information about student survey results, Students United programming, revenue, development and advocacy over the last few years. A few members of our Senate asked clarifying questions about development and budget breakdown, but did not share any negative feelings towards the proposed \$0.19/credit increase.

Not only was Students United transparent with Minnesota State University, Mankato's Student Government and other student groups on our campus, they also ensured that as a Board member, I was well informed and educated on the process. We started talking about financial literacy and the organizations budget at our first training in August and were updated on a monthly basis about the budget process.

As the President of the Student Government at Minnesota State University, Mankato and as the Board member for Mankato on the Board of Directors, I am pleased to support the \$0.19/credit fee increase and the approved Students United budget.

Sincerely,

*Reauna Stiff*

Student Government President 2021-2022  
Minnesota State University, Mankato

May 16, 2022

Honorable Chancellor Malhotra and Board of Trustees,

This letter is in regard to the consultation process between Metropolitan State University Student Association (MSUSA) and Students United. On April 24, 2022, Students United State Chair Emma Zellmer and Treasurer Pierre Young presented the Students United budget with the proposed \$0.19/credit fee increase. During this time, they also answered all the questions that our members asked.

MSUSA understands the importance of Students United as the voice for Minnesota State University students at the local, system, state, and federal level. We also understand the situation that Students United is experiencing because of the COVID-19 pandemic, continued decline in enrollment, and skyrocketing inflation. MSUSA was consulted with on the Students United budget twice this semester and we were happy to see that our survey responses and feedback were reflected in the budget that that Board of Directors approved.

As a former member of the Students United Board of Directors for two years and Student Body President for three, I support the decision of my appointee, Jonathan McNicholes, in support of the \$0.19/credit increase and proposed budget of Students United.

Humbly,

كمونه آل هميشا

Hamisha Alkamooneh

MSUSA President



May 15, 2022

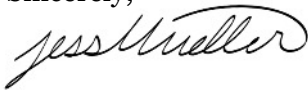
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees,

This letter is written at the request of Students United as a part of their consultation for the Students United Fee increase.

On April 28, 2022, Students United Vice Chair Arnavee Maltare and Treasurer Pierre Young presented to the MSUM Student Senate on the Students United Fee increase. The presentation included thorough information regarding Students United's current revenue and spending, student feedback from surveys, and the services Students United provides for students. Students United's officer's also had visited the MSUM Student Senate earlier in the spring semester on March 3, 2022 and collected feedback from students on our campus regarding student priorities for Students United. Throughout this process students and Senators had ample opportunity to have their questions answered, and the Student Senate had a transparent consultation experience. Our Student Senate understood the reasoning behind increasing the fee by \$0.19/credit in order to maintain the level of programming and operations students have expressed they desire from Students United. The MSUM Student Senate did inquire about the frequency of fee increases and expressed that they preferred more incremental fee increases over time rather than a relatively large increase after a long length of time; however, the Senators also expressed they understood the need for this increase currently, considering the extenuating circumstances that surround the pandemic and the impacts it has had on enrollment and revenue.

As a Board Member of Students United I received complete information on the options for Students United moving forward. We were offered resources to ensure we understood the financial status of the organization and had ample time to discuss, review, and ultimately vote upon this fee increase. I fully support the recommendation, and believe that students want to continue to support Students United and its mission. As a student, I see this increase as a valuable and necessary investment; Students United offers unparalleled advocacy support for and by students and maintaining its current capacity is important to continue providing that support. Feel free to reach out if you have any further questions regarding my support of this proposal. Cell: (320) 292-9592 ; email: jessmueller38@outlook.com.

Sincerely,



Jess Mueller  
Minnesota State University Moorhead Student Body President 2021-2022  
Students United Director of Moorhead

**May 16, 2022**

**Minnesota State Board of Trustees**

I am writing to inform you of the consultation process that took place at Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU) this past academic year regarding the Students United Fee increase. I am deeply honored for the opportunity to serve as the Student Association president at SMSU, and serve as a board member with Students United. Student involvement and advocacy are very important to me, and our administration ensured that students were involved in the decision-making process. I am writing this letter as requested by Students United as a part of our internal financial transparency and consultation processes.

After carefully reviewing all of the reasons for a fee increase, such as decreasing enrolment leading to decreased revenue, increasing program and operations costs, and several other factors, I understand the critical need for a fee increase. In the April board meeting held on April 3, 2022, I and other Students United board members reviewed the various recommendations proposed by the administration, and we decided to move forward with a fee increase. All board members agreed unanimously.

Students United values students' voices and students were given the opportunity to participate in the year 2022/2023 academic year's budget discussions, through completion of surveys. The results obtained from the survey further explained the need for a fee increase. Students largely supported advocacy at all levels as well as the student leadership program, which is reflected in the budgets and programs for the next academic year.

Students United visited the Student Association at Southwest Minnesota State University on April 22, 2022 to explain the need for a fee increase. The senate members at SMSU listened to the presentation of Students United and carefully understood the need for a fee increase. They understood that the fee increase largely supports programs that assists students throughout their academic journey. SMSU Student Association are in support of the Students United fee increase, which the board members decided on. The fee increase supports the fact that my opinion and concerns, as well as the inputs and concerns of other students at SMSU were adequately considered.

Please, feel free to contact me at [chidinma.ikwunze@smsu.edu](mailto:chidinma.ikwunze@smsu.edu) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

*Chidinma Ikwunze*

Student Association President

Southwest Minnesota State University

1501 State Street, Marshall, MN 56258





**Student Government**

720 4th Ave S, St. Cloud, MN 56301-4498

T 320.308.3751

To: The Board of Trustees  
Bill Maki, Interim Vice Chancellor of Finance and Facilities,  
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

From: Milan Raj Paswan, Student Government President

Date: Monday, May 16, 2022

Subject: Consultation letter on fee increase for Students United

The Student Government Association at St. Cloud State University believes affordability and success is a top priority for our student body. There were multiple discussions that took place during our Senate meetings in which students united presented the information about the potential increased needed in Student United Fees.

The request was brought forward to board of directors to discuss and vote on. We were presented with all the information that we needed, the potential cut in programming and staff that would be needed if the fee wouldn't be increased. On April 28<sup>th</sup>, the chair alongside vice chair and treasurer presented about the need for the increase in the fees to the senate. The senate asked necessary questions and got answers all their queries and concerns. The senate decided to approve the potential increase for this year based on the potential cuts that would adversely impact the organization and its ability to serve students across Minnstate System.

However, senate believes that with the increase in tuition and other fees to the students. This would cause an additional burden for the students. With the enrollment going down every year, the burden of these fees shouldn't be brought on students. Student United along with the Minnstate System should look into innovative ways to fund the organization since the goal of the organization aligns with Minnstate to make higher education accessible and affordable to every student. There needs to be other streams of revenue in place for the organization to sustain and keep advocating for better investment in higher education. This would not only ensure Students United ability to work in full potential but also eliminate the fees that might land on students again given the decrease in enrollment and rise in inflation.

We are happy with the decision to choose Students United as our advocating body on state and federal level and are extremely proud of the movement and conversations they have been able to bring in. We trust that the decision the board will make in June will ensure Students United can continue to advocate for students in the state and federal level and provide excellent opportunities for current and future students.

Cc: Emma Zellmer, State Chair  
Robbyn Wacker, President  
Daniel Gregory, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs and Acting Chief Financial Officer  
Dr. Katrina Rodriguez Vice President of Student Life and Development and Student Government  
Advisor

St. Cloud State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, disability, marital status, status with regards to public assistance, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or status as a U.S. veteran. The Title IX coordinator at SCSU is Dr. Ellyn Bartges. For additional information, contact the Office for Institutional Equity & Access, (320) 308-5123, Admin. Services Bldg. Rm 102. Contact the sponsoring department/agency listed above.

A member of Minnesota State

Page 1 of 1

Student Union  
Winona State University  
P.O. Box 5838  
Winona, MN 55987



May, 16 2022

**To:** Chancellor Malhotra and MN State Board of Trustees  
**From:** Kaitlyn Mercier, Winona State University Student Senate President  
**Subject:** Students United Fee Student Consultation

Chancellor Malhotra and Board of Trustees,

I am pleased to inform you all that the Winona State University Student Senate (WSUSS) has been properly consulted on the increase regarding the Students United fee for the 2022-2023 academic year. This was done in accordance with the Minnesota State's student consultation policy (Board Policy 2.3 and 5.11).

Students United has gone through the proper process at Winona State University to ensure that all students have been informed and consulted. This was completed by first consulting the Students United Board of Directors with the proper information in December of 2021 and having a final review in March of 2022. After approval from the Board of Directors, Students United representatives, State Chair Zellmar, Vice Chair Maltare, and Treasurer Young spoke at the weekly WSUSS meeting on Tuesday, April 19th where they provided students with materials such as Students United past work, previous years budgets, and possible budget outcomes with specific recommendations. Within this process Students United allowed time for questions as well as making themselves available after the conclusion of the meeting to hear any further questions, comments, or concerns from students.

As a Board Member of Students United and as President of Winona State University Student Senate, I fully support the transparency of the process and the recommendation given. Winona State University Student Senate and Students United has put a lot of thought and time into the discussion and recommendation of the proposed fee. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please reach me at [kaitlyn.mercier.2@go.winona.edu](mailto:kaitlyn.mercier.2@go.winona.edu) or by calling (507) 457-5316.

Thank you,

*Kaitlyn Mercier*

Kaitlyn Mercier

*President* | Winona State University Student Senate



## Students United

# FY22 Wins & Accomplishments

- Elected three officers for the next academic year that will support and guide next year's board in carrying out the mission, vision, and values of Students United.
- Appointed the next Executive Director of Students United.
- Successfully hosted the first in-person Advocacy Conference after a two year hiatus where students connected with other students from the seven university campuses to grow as student leaders and advocates.
- Student feedback on Students United's budget nearly tripled compared to last year, leading to a budget that better reflects the priorities of students.
- Secured a second \$5,000 grant from the ECMC Foundation, which will transition from the Student Leadership Program to core mission support. This will help build buy-in from other funders as we continue to pursue grants.
- Increased sponsorship and partnership from two to fourteen. These partnerships and/or sponsorships went to support our core work, Advocacy Conference, and debt cancellation work.
- Explored thirty potential grant funders, applied to fourteen foundations and secured grants from the ECMC Foundation and the Forest Foundation.
- Created and implemented a Donor Giving Policy that reflects Students United values and implements Community Centric Fundraising Principles.
- Students United Sustainability and E&I Commitments
- Advocacy to increase minimum wages – secured commitments from majority of universities to increase their minimum student-worker wage over the next couple of years.
- Secured the largest increase in Pell Grant funding in over a decade.
- Increased funding for the federal TRIO Program.
- Campus climate surveys to distributed across the universities.
- Strengthened consultation policies and practices with campus student associations by requiring any action by a university that requires approval by Board of Trustees to require a consultation letter from the campus student association.
- Student-written voter registration policy 2.3.1.1 set to be implemented prior to the commencement of the Fall 2022 semester.
- Minnesota State partnership with United Way 211 to create a webpage and call-center focused on connecting Minnesota State students to basic needs resources in their local community.



# Students United

## State Legislative Agenda

Did you know?



# 64%

of Minnesota resident students who are pursuing an undergraduate credential are doing so at a Minnesota State college or university.



# 3,885

academic programs offered at Minnesota State colleges and universities.

# 54k+



is the amount of students enrolled at a Minnesota State university.



# 1967

Students United has been organizing students for 55 years.



## 2022 Legislative Session

We set our legislative agendas on an annual basis. This year, we're advocating for funding to support student needs. This includes nearly **\$300 million to fix buildings on our campuses** which will improve learning environments and provide updated technology to support student success. We are also advocating for **\$60 million for campus support**, which will include freezing tuition, increasing access to mental health resources, and funding for student basic needs. Finally, we're supporting **Home Line's 2022 Minnesota Renter's Agenda**, which will ban the use of hidden fees and increase renter privacy protections.

### Supporting the Minnesota State Capital Investments Program

We support the Minnesota State system's \$292.9 million request for asset preservation and campus-specific capital projects. This funding will be used for nearly 100 projects and will support the most basic needs, such as updating roofs, windows, and exterior walls, and will update mechanical and utility systems to maximize efficiency and effectiveness. This will directly support student success by ensuring students continue to have safe spaces on campus to gather and learn. In summation, this funding will:

- Improve campus teaching and learning environments and improve student outcomes
- Reduce operating expenses and improve learning environments and student outcomes
- Enhance science, technology, engineering, math, allied health, technical, business, and education classrooms and labs
- Streamline student support services to increase student success

***Fixing our buildings will provide students with better learning environments and the updated technology needed for students to be more successful once they graduate.***

## Supporting the Minnesota State Supplemental Budget Request

We support the Minnesota State system's \$60 million request for campus support, freezing tuition, workforce development, mental health resources, and student basic needs.

- \$30 million to support increases in campus expenses resulting from compensation and other cost increases over the biennium
- \$25 million to protect access and affordability by not increasing undergraduate tuition while providing the base funding needed to meet ongoing operating costs
- \$2 million to address the workforce gap through programming serving business and industry
- \$2 million to fund student mental health resources
- \$1 million to fund student basic needs

## Renter Protections and Transparency Legislation

Basic needs insecurity has become an increasing problem for college students in recent years. Housing insecurity among college students has historically been under-examined despite being a critical issue for students in Minnesota and across the country. Housing insecurity impacts students' ability to attend class, study, complete coursework, and go to work. We support Home Line's legislation on eviction reform, tenant privacy protections, and increased lease fairness and transparency.

- We support eviction reporting to be prohibited until a court judgment is rendered in favor of the landlord. This will allow renters to solve the situation before it permanently harms their record. Expungement reform would also include pathways for a tenant's record to be cleared if the landlord and renter agree to expungement upon request or if the eviction was ordered three or more years ago. This type of legislation would also be able to provide more discretion for judges to consider the renter's circumstances that caused the eviction case when making a decision.
- Currently, Minnesota is only one of seven states that does not require a landlord to notify a tenant before filing an eviction. Pre-filing notice would be required 14 days before a formal eviction action can be brought to fix the problem, negotiate an agreement with the landlord, or quit the lease and vacate the unit making an eviction filing unnecessary. Information on how renters can seek legal help and apply for emergency assistance will be included in this pre-filing notice. This is a win-win, as landlords won't need to spend money filing court claims and tenants won't experience a detrimental mark on their record that may keep them from securing housing in the future.
- An increasing number of landlords are charging fees for non-operational services rather than including these costs in the advertised rent for an apartment – making the financial obligations for renting the space more than what the tenant originally expected. We believe non-refundable fees for non-operational services should be prohibited to ensure renters do not suddenly face unaffordable, concealed charges after signing a lease. This would make administrative costs incorporated in the tenant's rent for complete transparency.



**Emma Zellmer** | State Chair  
[ s h e / h e r ]  
[statechair@studentsunited.org](mailto:statechair@studentsunited.org)



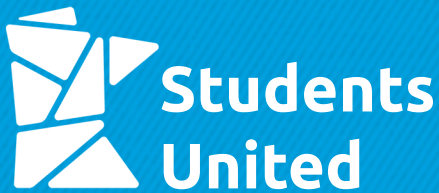
**Tom Anderson** | Director of Government Relations  
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**Follow us!** @students7united



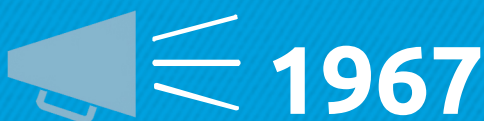


*Students United is an independent, non-profit organization funded and operated by students.*

*Did you know?*



is the amount of students enrolled at a Minnesota State university.



Students United has been organizing students for 55 years.



## Students United's Priorities

*This year, we are advocating for doubling Pell Grant funding, increasing funding for the Open Textbook Pilot program, increasing funding for the TRIO program, and asking for the Higher Education Act to be reauthorized.*

### Double Pell Grants

The Pell Grant has been fundamental to the affordability and accessibility of higher education for students from all backgrounds. State-level disinvestment in higher education and inflation has significantly reduced the Pell Grant's value. The current award does not meet students' needs, leaving them in financial crisis and with basic needs insecurity. Congress needs to double the maximum award and return Pell's purchasing power to its historic peak of approximately three-quarters of the cost of attending a four-year public institution. Doubling the Pell will create greater access to community colleges, technical colleges, and universities, and will allow students to enter the workforce without the burden of overwhelming student loan debt.

### Open Educational Resources

Nearly \$3 billion of student aid money is used every year to pay for textbooks. Textbooks are one of the largest out-of-pocket costs for students beyond tuition, and room and board. The high cost of textbooks forces students to drop classes, skip meals, and work long hours. A survey by the U.S. Public Interest Research Group (PIRG), found that 65 percent of students surveyed skipped buying a textbook because of cost. The Open Textbook Pilot program, which was extended in October 2021, saves students approximately \$6 for every \$1 spent. We are advocating for increased funding for this program to better support student success, increase access to higher education, and ensure our students are graduating.





*The  
future is  
better  
because  
of us.*

### **TRIO Program Funding**

TRIO is a set of federally funded college opportunity programs that assist individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds in their pursuit of a college degree. More than 800,000 low-income, first-generation students and students with disabilities — from sixth grade through college graduation — are served by over 3,100 programs nationally. TRIO programs provide academic tutoring, personal counseling, mentoring, financial guidance, and other support necessary for educational access, retention, and completion. TRIO programs provide direct support services for students as well as relevant training for directors and staff. Providing more funding to a program that is data-proven to increase graduation rates and prepare students to enter the workforce is a worthwhile investment in the future of Minnesota and our country.

### **Higher Education Act Reauthorization**

The Higher Education Act (HEA) is scheduled for reauthorization by Congress every five years. The HEA has not been updated since 2008 and fails to meet the needs of students today. Eventually, we want to see all the topics we are advocating for in this legislative agenda to be included in a comprehensive reauthorization of HEA. We believe these fundamental updates to the HEA will reduce barriers to education through additional Pell Grant funding, basic needs support for students and institutions, investments in open educational resources, and student borrower relief.



**Emma Zellmer** | State Chair  
[ s h e / h e r ]  
[statechair@studentsunited.org](mailto:statechair@studentsunited.org)



**Tom Anderson** | Director of  
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Students United

## 2022 Spring Advocacy Conference

### **Attendees:**

- 83 total student registrations (including board members, officers, and interns)
- 3 student volunteers
- 2 students as well as 1 prospective student wanting to get involved

### **Sponsors:**

- Metro Senate - MSUSA - Metropolitan State University Student Association
- St. Cloud State University
- Ampact
- MAPL
- DHS
- Mitchell Hamline School of Law
- New Leadership Council
- Be the Match
- City of Minneapolis

### **We hosted seven different sessions for students to engage with community and student leaders. Student sessions included:**

- Chris Stedman: What does it mean to have a calling?
- Leah DeGrazia & Michael Dahl (HOMELine): How to be the Smartest Renter on Your Block
- Metropolitan State University: MAPL Perspectives: Advocacy in & Around MN State
- Heather Lou & Katie Robinson (Voices for Racial Justice): Re-Imagining Our Radical Futures: Letting Our Ancestors Lead
- Christina DeVries, Caitlin Johnson, Lexi Byler: Let's Talk About Student Debt
- Kai Shelley: The What, Why, and How of Unions

# Development Timeline

## **Background:**

Since 2019, or the last fully approved fee increase, Students United began to examine and explore ways to grow our development work. Before 2019, fundraising centered around scholarships in two forms: Give to the Max Day and the Penny Golf Scramble. Years before a fund had been created to buy permanent property, which was then reversed by a different board. These dollars, now known as the Building Fund, have supported the gaps in the overall budget from the fee revenue. Sporadically during its history, Students United has also applied for the occasional grant. However, this was never a substantial or notable revenue stream.

**Figuring out Grant Funding:** *Yes, grants are a common way nonprofits receive funding. However, we are not a common nonprofit.*

Nonprofits are traditionally funded in a variety of ways that include individual donors, grants from government (county, city, state, federal), foundations (private or family foundations), donor-advised funds, endowments, or earned revenue. In the local grant community, there is a focus on funding direct services (homeless shelters, employment programs, direct benefits – Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Dislocated Workers (DW), or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)). This interest in funding is focused on programs with direct, measurable outcomes.

Students United describes itself as an Advocacy Nonprofit. This type of branding is not something local funders are interested in and our core advocacy work: trips to the Minnesota Capitol and Washington D.C., and the Advocacy Conference. However, we provide programs to students: Student Leadership Program, Advocacy Opportunities that provide leadership experience and learning opportunities, Student Organizing, and additional professional experiences through committee work. To outside stakeholders, this has not been communicated as a program-based nonprofit. So, over the past few years, we've been working on making sure our insides match our outsides without taking away from students' voices and working to meet funder interests. This has taken shape in seeking grant funding for the Student Leadership Program. We will continue to work on our external messaging.

**Individual Donors:** *We are our network, and our power is built in the community.*

Students United has never had an individual donor program where alumni or people interested in better higher education access, and more inclusive policy are asked to give to our core mission work (advocacy/student voice). In 2020 and 2021, this was done through peer-to-peer cohorts that both raised money and trained around race, class, and the current state of needs of students at universities. In 2022, this work will sit with the Director of Development and a small portion could sit with the new Executive Director. Individual donors will be asked to support advocacy trips, the Student Leadership Program, and Core Mission Support.

**Sponsorships:** *Students are valuable community leaders while in school and after they graduate.*

Organizations that are hiring, have services to offer students (e.g., AmeriCorp or leadership programs), or are continued educational opportunities are interested in getting in front of the student leaders that engage with Students United. These organizations are open and willing to pay for this in the form of sponsorship. These sponsorships show up at the Opportunities Fair at the Advocacy Conference or in our online presence. This work is grounded in finding partners who are first beneficial to students and have a shared interest in making student leaders' lives, skills, or communities better. We seek partners that mirror Students United values first before any monetary ability.

**Scholarships:** *Alumni and events support students*

The Students United Scholarship and Alumni Advisory Board have been taking on more responsibility to design and oversee fundraising efforts for seven scholarships Students United hosts. This will continue and will likely be a mix of 1-2 in-person events and Give to the Max Day.

# Students United

## Annual Actuals

### **FY20 July 1, 2019- June 30, 2020**

- Fee approval after preliminary year
- New Director of Development Hired

#### *Grants:*

Prospected (grants explored and explored as funders): 50

Applied: 6

Approved: 0

*Individual Donors:* This was the first year we began to explore fundraising for core mission support/general operations. Previously, Student United did not have a donation button on its website and solely focused on scholarship fundraising. This first year included an annual solicitation letter and participation in Give at Home, which GiveMN hosted as a response to COVID-19. We also held our first cohort/peer-to-peer model of fundraising, which we cut short when we all went home from the office. Total: \$1,473

*Sponsorships/Partnerships:* Students United was the fiscal sponsor for the Career Consortium. This included a \$250 service fee. Students United also entered into an MOU agreement with the Nellie Stone Johnson Scholarship Board to support their annual dinner and scholarship outreach. Total: \$7,250

*Scholarships:* Students United hosts scholarships for students throughout the system. College and university students are eligible and many of our scholarships came from the system office after the foundation dissolved. This year we received \$235,000 from the US Bank Foundation to support the Hull Endowment/Scholarship. Other fundraising events included an online event instead of the Penny Golf Scramble and Give to the Max Day, which had increased support from staff and the Scholarship and Alumni Board. Total: \$243,314

### **FY21 July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021**

- Hired a contract grant writer
- First year of program-based budgets

#### *Grants:*

Prospected (grants explored and explored as funders): 48

Applied: 14

Approved: 3

Students United received a PPP Loan, an ECMC Grant and a GOTV grant. Total: \$118,747

*Individual Donors:* This year, an online fundraising peer-to-peer fundraising cohort ran for three months. Another annual solicitation letter was sent, and Community Centric Fundraising Principles were enacted in our fundraising work. Online alumni fundraising cohort, annual solicitation letter introduced; Community Centric Fundraising Introduced. Core Mission Support/General Operations fundraising continued. Total \$7,630  
also include an end-of-year solicitation. Total to date: \$5,707

*Sponsorships/Partnerships:* This year we focused on increasing the number of vendors who came to the Advocacy Conference as part of a new Opportunity Fair for students who are job seeking or looking for internships. We continued as the fiscal agent for the Career Consortium and working with the Nellie Stone Johnson Scholarship Board. We have also increased our overall partnerships. Total: \$5,210

*Scholarships:* The Scholarship and Alumni Advisory Board has been raising money through Give to the Max Day and in a peer-to-peer cohort model. This fundraising will also include the annual Penny Golf Scramble. Total to date: \$2,448



Students United  
*Annual Actuals*

**FY22 \*as of March financials**

*Grants:*

Prospected (grants explored and explored as funders): 30

Applied: 14

Approved: 4

Pending: 2

Students United received another PPP Loan, an ECMC Grant and a Forest Foundation Grant and an ECMC Foundation Grant. The grant work is still ongoing and the current pending proposals support the Student Leadership Program. Total: \$125,950

*Individual Donors:* This includes fundraising for advocacy and core mission support. This will also include an end-of-year solicitation. Total to date: \$5,707

*Sponsorships/Partnerships:* This year we focused on increasing the number of vendors who came to the Advocacy Conference as part of a new Opportunity Fair for students who are job seeking or looking for internships. We continued as the fiscal agent for the Career Consortium and working with the Nellie Stone Johnson Scholarship Board. We have also increased our overall partnerships. Total: \$5,210

*Scholarships:* The Scholarship and Alumni Advisory Board has been raising money through Give to the Max Day and in a peer-to-peer cohort model. This fundraising will also include the annual Penny Golf Scramble. Total to date: \$2,448



Students United

## Student Leadership Program Feedback

### **Taken from 1-on-1s:**

*“[This] was a healing time from hostile workplaces...a reminder that jobs don’t have to suck.”*

### **About the work culture at Students United:**

*“I really liked the educational sources...to build knowledge that can be applied well in other sectors as well as in the program in general”*

### **About the weekly intern cohort meetings and lessons.:**

*“The work culture...I’ve been in many workspaces I have loved, but haven’t loved a work culture as much as I love it here...it feels lucky...something about it, the way the mission statement is upheld and allow students to be a part of the discussion and in any decision...students united is committed to their mission and values...implementation of work is really nice...doing efficient work or progressive doesn’t mean that you have to be professional or in a suit and tie...flexible and understanding and inclusive and I really love that...I hope I can take what I learned here about work culture to other places...Friday SLP meetings were always a joy and for bonding and learning...educational and a joy.”*

### **About the overall experience of the Student Leadership Program:**

*“One of the things that worked the best for me [was that] she gave me a lot of creative freedom and I felt comfortable enough to ask for help and for examples to work from...something I heard from her that I was good about was taking initiative and that came with independence in work.”*



Students United

## Student Leadership Program Feedback

### **About autonomy in work assigned by supervisors:**

*“Originally, I was gonna go to grad school, but after this internship I’ve turned everything around and feeling much more able to help people in this field, I didn’t think I’d be a good fit for this role before, but I learned a lot about myself in this role...I didn't know I’d enjoy it so much. I’m glad I had this internship.”*

### **About Student Leadership Program affecting post-program trajectory:**

*“The biggest strength of Students United is how professional and developmental minded the staff are. Staff aren’t in it for the money, they care about the development of the organization and students.”*

### **About Students United’s commitment to their mission (from survey results):**

*How would you describe the Student Leadership Program to a friend?*

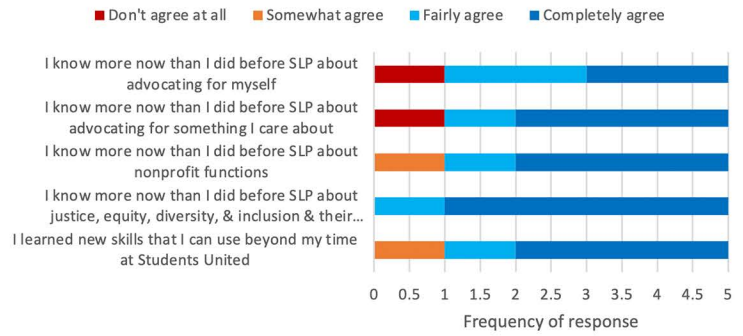
*“It is an eye-opening and fantastic opportunity that they should apply for if they are eligible.”*

*“A program that focuses on educating and bringing together the interns in a way that would excel their work in a nonprofit sector and as an activist.”*

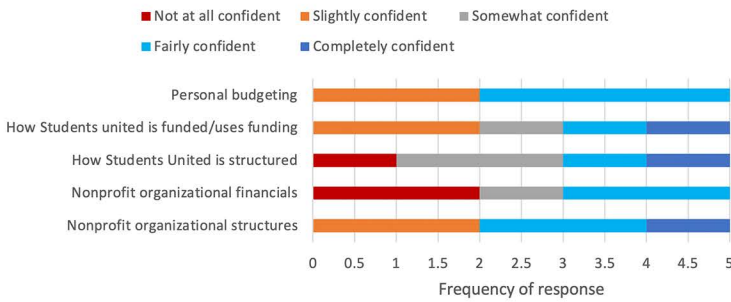
*“An amazing opportunity that not only teaches you about specifics in the position you have, but you also learn about nonprofit organization structures, fundraising, and social change as a whole (and the many different aspects of social change). This program improves the individual as a whole and not just their technical skills or general knowledge. Overall, it sets the standards for what all students should be looking for in an internship and a job and teaches you how to advocate for just workplaces in the future (not only for yourself but for others).”*

# 2022 Student Leadership Program Entry & Exit Survey Results

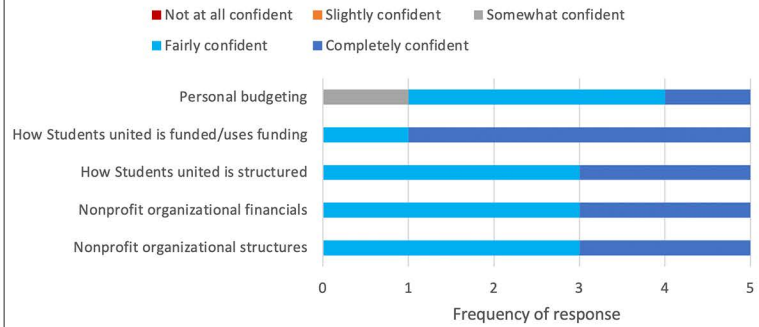
Student Leadership Program outcomes II (May 2022)



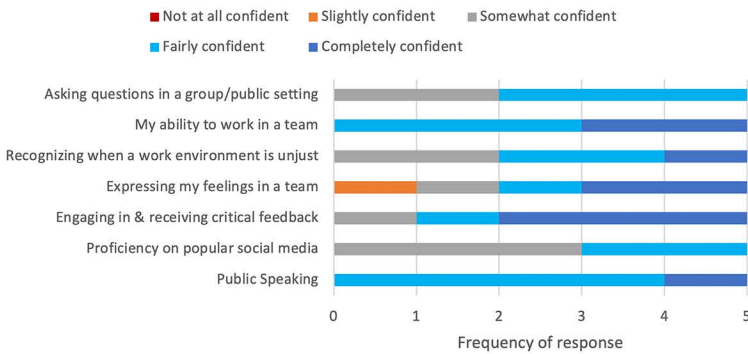
Entry survey nonprofit structure confidence ratings (January 2022)



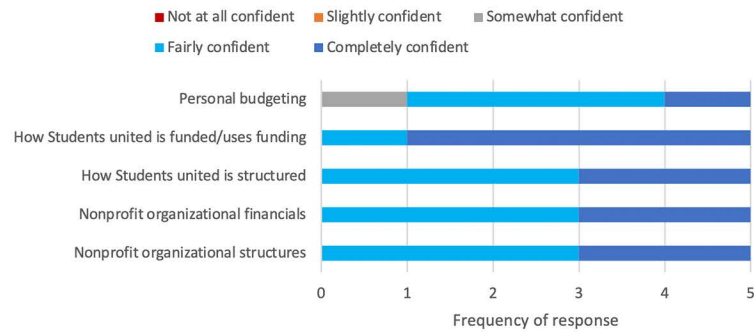
Exit survey nonprofit structure confidence ratings (May 2022)



Entry survey work culture confidence ratings (January 2022)



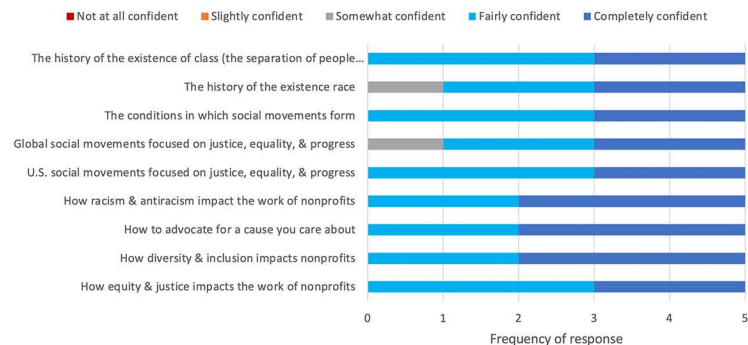
Exit survey nonprofit structure confidence ratings (May 2022)



Entry survey social justice confidence ratings (January 2022)



Exit survey social justice confidence ratings (May 2022)





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# ROOTS

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*Students United Strategic Plan*



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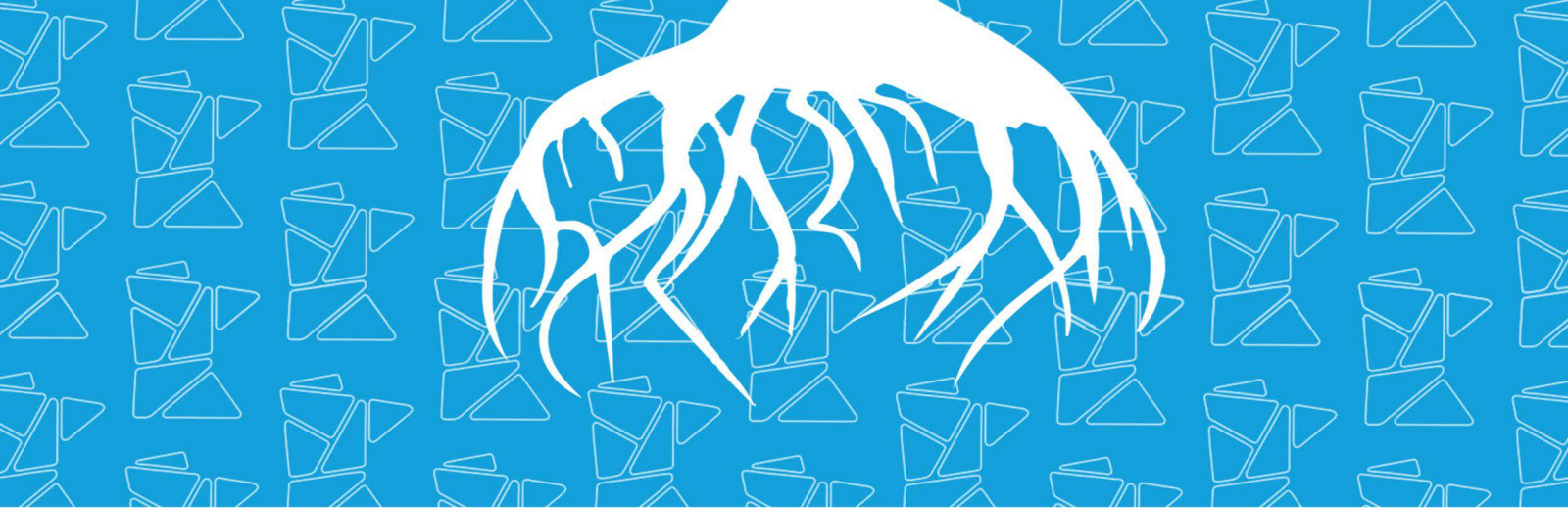


# Introduction

The 2021-2026 Students United Strategic Plan was devised through a series of group and individual meetings with the students, alumni, Board of Directors, and staff members of the organization. While specific elements in our strategic plan may change to adapt to current issues in higher education, our guiding philosophies are cemented in student voice, student leadership and student development. Our strategic advocacy policy platforms for higher education are affordability, accessibility, and addressing JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion) in higher education.

We recognize the critical contexts in which students live and learn. As we continue our work, two key themes will transcend all policy and program areas: (a) the COVID-19 pandemic impact and response, and (b) the requisite introspective and collective work that Black Lives Matter is calling upon citizens and institutions to do to create social transformation.





## our mission

Led by Minnesota State University students, we are the inclusive voice for all future, current, and former students. We actively work to represent and support Minnesota State University students and advocate at a local, system, state, and federal level for higher education policies that make a positive impact for our students and communities.

## our vision

Our vision is to create the model of inclusive higher education policies and leadership. Our goal is to ensure higher education is rooted in student voices and student needs. Student leaders at all decision-making tables strengthen student advocacy, which creates a more robust higher education system and community.

## our values

- Student Voice
- Thought Leaders
- United Leadership
- Diversity
- Equity and Inclusion
- Next Level Thinking
- Tangible Advocacy
- Student Leadership



## HIGHER EDUCATION AFFORDABILITY

The federal government, state government, and the Minnesota State system should invest in Minnesota State universities by funding the majority of the cost of higher education, increasing financial access for all, and reducing the burden of student debt.

## HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESS

We advocate for a holistic approach to students' higher education experience, which includes the right to have all their basic needs met and access to fully funded and resourced student support services.

## JEDI

(Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion) We advocate for a transformative higher education experience that eliminates the opportunity gap, closes disparities in equity and inclusion, and takes meaningful responsibility for repairing legacies of injustice and oppression.

## GUIDING PHILOSOPHIES

1. Student Voice (consultation)
2. Student Leadership (advocacy)
3. Student Development (career readiness and holistic development)

## THEMES

1. Black Lives Matter
2. COVID Pandemic Impact and Response



# SHARED LEARNING ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION

Creating greater continuity across the organization between students, alumni, and staff has been an ongoing challenge from year to year. Students United is building a community of practice where shared learning and growth takes place within and across various stakeholder groups. Annual conferences will provide ongoing professional learning and community engagement opportunities. The staff, board, alumni and student leaders across the organization will focus on these five areas of learning throughout the year. The student leadership program will also provide shared learning across the organization. Below are our areas of focus for shared learning opportunities.



## ANTI-RACISM



## NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP



## JEDI

Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion



## FINANCIAL LITERACY



## PRINCIPLES OF ADVOCACY





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### Thank You to the 2020- 2021 Board Members:

Jonathan McNicholes  
Emma Zellmer  
Victor Ayemobuwa  
Hamisha Alkamooneh  
Andrew Trenne  
Nico Arias  
Gabe Spinks  
Surkhel Yousafzai  
Clara Kuerschner  
Esther Oluborode

### Thank You to the 2020- 2021 Staff Members:

Devin Smith  
Connor Newby  
Christina DeVries  
Kalista Mangahas  
Abeer Syedah  
Thomas Anderson  
Lexi Byler  
Carlee Diggins

### Thank you to the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee:

Vanessa Steele, Facilitator  
Devin Smith  
Kari McMartin  
Jack Wheeler  
Kendra Draeger  
Berne Christiansen  
Cara Luebke  
Reauna Stiff  
Joe Wolf  
Nimotallahi Quadri  
Jessa Mueller  
Madeline Perkins  
Maria Dahn  
Stevie Larson  
Abhishek Adile  
Kai Shelley  
Moshood Agboola  
Sandra Shimba  
Robert Beal  
Clara Kuerschner  
Courtney Colton  
Aly Hagglund





.....O the future is better because of us

*Getting back to our **roots**  
and growing our  
**branches!***



*Follow us!* @students7united



TED





## Students United

# Programs & Budget Section Definitions

### PROGRAMS:

**Student Leadership** includes the cost of development, training, and support of student interns, board members, and officers. The student leadership program provides an intentional curriculum for student leaders to grow in their roles and apply these skills in their future careers. Major cost categories are human capital, intern/officers' wages, board meetings, contractors, trainers, speakers, and events. This program also includes officer and staff visits to each of seven universities campus to organize students, outreach for Students United, and meet with major stakeholders to progress advocacy issues.

- **Officer Travel:** Students United's officers visit each of 7 universities campus to organize students, outreach for Students United, and meet with major stakeholders to progress advocacy issues.

**Student Advocacy** includes advocacy costs at the Minnesota State Colleges and University system, state government, and federal government levels. Major cost categories under each program are human capital, public relations, rent and supplies, technologies, transportation, travel, lodging, and materials.

- **System Advocacy:** System Advocacy mainly consists of participation in Minnesota State System office meetings, committees, workgroups, councils, student testimonies, retreats, and daily groundwork. In FY22, we have advocated for inclusive housing policies, stronger COVID protocols, raising student wages, improving the transfer system, and more.

- **State Advocacy:** State Advocacy mainly consists of State Advocacy Day training and legislative lobby meetings, monitoring and giving testimony in legislative committees, and communicating with higher education stakeholders. In FY22, we took students to the Capitol to advocate for the Minnesota State Capitol Investments Request, the Minnesota State Supplemental Budget Request, and Renter Protections. We gave testimony in multiple committees and rallied with students from across the state in support of higher education funding.



Students United

## Programs & Budget Section Definitions

- **Federal Advocacy:** Federal Advocacy mainly consists of the Washington D.C. Trip where students advocate on higher education issues to members of Congress and their staff and network with other higher education advocacy groups. This also includes the cost of any additional federal-level advocacy work like coalition meetings, letters of support, and ongoing communication with federal staffers in DC and their state offices. In FY22, we advocated for debt cancellation, student debt reform, double funding for the Pell Grants, Open Educational Resources, TRIO Program Funding, and Higher Education Act Reauthorization.

**Student Organizing** includes the Students United Advocacy Conferences and the cost of building our campus presence through campus meetings and outreach. Major cost categories under each program are human capital, rent and supplies, technologies, transportation, meals, lodging, materials, and public relations.

- **Students United Advocacy Conferences:** Students United Advocacy Conferences are held twice a year (once each semester). Speakers conduct trainings, panels, and sessions to provide students opportunities to learn exciting and meaningful skills and information that they cannot just receive in their classrooms.

### **FUNDRAISING:**

Fundraising focuses on funding programs, engaging alumni, and deepening understanding of Students United's work in our communities. Fundraising efforts include seeking grants, meeting with individual donors, fundraising events, and engaging partners/sponsorships.

### **OPERATIONS:**

This is the base level of what it costs to operate the business. Major cost categories are human resources, rent, supplies, technologies, subscription and membership, insurance, bank service charges, and operations contracted services.

### **PUBLIC RELATIONS:**

This is the cost of advertising, merchandise, our website contract, communication services, social media, and more.



Students United

# *True Program Costs*

## **Why do “True Program Costs” matter?**

Long-term planning is essential for nonprofits to maintain financial health and stability. True Program Costs ensure programs match the nonprofit’s mission and stakeholder wants. Understanding the actual costs of programs and their social return on investment helps organizations fundraise appropriately, connect to the mission, and deliver what the stakeholders want. This allows nonprofits to better plan and make wise choices about supporting mission work. Knowing the true costs of our programs will enable us to make more informed decisions that lead to our mission and financial success.

- Students United employs a full-time professional staff. From the nonprofit perspective, 76% of the staff’s work goes directly towards student programming and organizing.
- Technology, rent, and public relations are also a shared expense and split between each category.
- As Students United is a nonprofit with a full-time staff this includes the expenses it takes to run the nonprofit.

You can read more about “True Program Costs” here:

<https://www.propelnonprofits.org/resources/true-program-costs-program-budget-allocation-template-resource/>