

Chair Cowles, Trustees, Chancellor Malhotra,

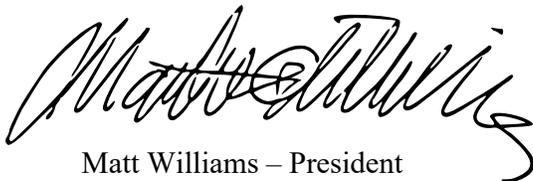
We believe everyone has the right to participate in shaping our future; to be heard in the conversations around what tomorrow will look like for all of us. We believe public higher education is an essential component in helping every person realize the potential of their own voice and to find a place of dignity and respect in this world.

Unfortunately for all of us, the powerful and the elite decided to pull the ladder up after themselves. In legislatures around the country—including here in Minnesota—decisions were made that directed funding away from public education. These deliberate choices have had predictable results. Tuition replaced public funding, and the level of education debt in this country now stands at over 1.7 trillion dollars; a truly obscene amount. Instead of supporting faculty and staff in their work with students, institutions facing scarcity have turned to outsourcing, privatizing, and increasing workloads. All too often this is done under the guise of educational innovation, but rarely do these reforms actually help students, staff, or faculty. It is no coincidence that all of this is occurring while wealth continues to flow into an increasingly small group of individuals.

As we turn the corner in this pandemic, I believe we will find ourselves at a crossroads. Many of the educational disparities that became impossible to look away from during this past year were already present before we knew the term “COVID-19.” Consider, for example, that in 2018, Minnesota ranked worst in the country for net price of community college as a share of household income for black families. The status quo of divestment, education debt, outsourcing, and privatizing our public institutions is how we got here; it will not be how we get out of this situation.

I choose to see crossroads as opportunities. We have now seen disparities and injustices that can no longer be dismissed. As we exit our long pandemic year and look ahead to a better future, we have the chance to make different decisions about how we work to support our public institutions so that every student, regardless of who they are or where they come from, is given every shot at educational success with every barrier removed. Public education of this caliber benefits all of us. There is much work ahead to realize this vision, and MSCF is committed to this work and to be in partnership with others who share this vision.

Thank you,



Matt Williams – President

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*MSCF is an affiliate of Education Minnesota, the American Federation of Teachers,
the National Education Association and AFL-CIO.*

