



Chair Cowles, Minnesota State Board of Trustees Minnesota State System Office  
30 7th Street East, Suite 350,  
St. Paul, MN 55101-7804

June 28, 2021

Chair Cowles, Chancellor Malhotra, and members of the Board of Trustees,

The 3.5% tuition increases proposed in the FY22 and FY23 budget will be the largest tuition increase at Minnesota community and technical colleges since 2013, and the Board of Trustees should ensure that consultation, according to Board policy and procedure, is done with campus student associations on these increases. System procedure 2.3.1 requires that consultation be conducted and letters submitted on changes in tuition.

It has been nearly three weeks since the chair's agreement for the omnibus higher education bill was made public, which included the 3.5% tuition increase, and yet the consultation letters provided in the Board packet show that only one college administration conducted consultation on a 3.5% increase after the chair's agreement was released. Every other two-year college consultation letter in the Board packet is dated prior to the release of the chair's agreement, with nearly all being dated in April or May, and over a dozen referencing consultation on only a 3% tuition increase. It is clear that a 3.5% tuition increase was not a part of the consultation provided by colleges when these letters were submitted.

In their letter regarding the LeadMN 2.0 proposal, college presidents said that "LeadMN should provide clear evidence of consultation with the local Senates and with college leadership as part of a proposal of this type." Where is the clear evidence that consultation on a 3.5% tuition increase, as required by Board policy and procedure, was conducted? Did consultation on tuition end after letters were submitted in April and May? As shown when the Board requested letters on LeadMN 2.0, colleges were still able to engage with their campus student associations after the semester had ended, so that should not have been a barrier in requesting additional consultation letters on a 3.5% tuition increase.

If the Board is going to request that consultation letters be conducted when a statewide student association raises its fee, why are you not requesting that consultation letters be done on the change to a 3.5% tuition increase, something which Board policy and procedure requires? Until evidence of consultation on a 3.5% tuition increase can be provided to the Board, we believe that any increases in tuition to that level should be postponed.

Sincerely,

Priscilla Mayowa  
President  
LeadMN – College Students Connecting for Change