



Members of the Board of Trustees,

It has been quite an eventful month for us here at Students United!

In the run-up to this year's midterm elections, Students United was engaged on each of our seven campuses to make sure that students were empowered with the information they needed to cast their ballots.

This month, we also held our annual Advocacy Conference. This year's conference included student leaders from across our system, local elected officials, and sessions devoted to grassroots advocacy and empowering the next generation of leaders. As illustrated by our keynote speaker and Students United alum Lexi Byler, channeling individual voices and stories is needed to create larger, systematic change. And here at Students United, we will continue empowering student voices and centering student engagement, leadership, and inclusion at the core of our work to enact positive and transformative change. We would also like to give special thanks to Trustees Cowles and Erlandson for attending our lunch and opportunity fair. It was an absolute pleasure to meet and converse with you in person.

Additionally, we had our first reading of Students United's Federal and State Legislative Agendas at our recent Board of Directors meeting. This year, our priorities will be particularly focused on policies that increase affordability, enhance resources for basic needs, and empower civic engagement amongst our students. The ABC's of higher education. We are eager to work closely with each of you, and the system office, to advocate on behalf of the policies that accomplish these goals.

As basic needs are a priority, we would like to highlight our current efforts to increase accessibility. As we mentioned in the October meeting, food insecurity continues to be a problem for many students due to inflation and scarcity, and food pantries are an essential resource to help alleviate this issue.

Though we are encouraged by the progress that each campus has made in addressing food insecurity, disparities still exist. Our team at Students United is working to create a food pantry best practices pamphlet and assessment for each university to use as a resource. This will help each campus establish a baseline for their food shelf.



By sharing these best practices, our hope is that we can strive to eliminate stigmas that persist around utilizing food pantries, ensure that each food shelf is tailored to the socioeconomic status of its students and that each campus offers a food shelf with hours of operation that align with student schedules. Of course, reaching and maintaining this baseline requires an investment from the System office, and by extension, the state legislature. To that end, we look forward to collaborating with the system office to ensure adequate resources and funding be provided to campus food shelves appropriate to their needs. Regardless of their campus, Minnesota State University students deserve comparable and equitable access to food in their communities

We would also like to reiterate the importance of providing affordable healthcare for international students. We're grateful that progress has been made in establishing an International Healthcare Advisory Committee, and we hope this will help students by improving communication between students and the system office regarding plan and cost changes. In addition to the advisory committee, we at Students United request international student healthcare to be included in the System's Equity 2030 initiative. Healthcare costs can often exacerbate other basic needs issues, including food security and housing. Advancing equity requires a collective and intersectional approach, and we cannot address the barriers of food insecurity, housing and financial inaccessibility, and other basic needs without addressing unaffordable healthcare for international students. We encourage the System to consider this request, and we are eager to discuss the next tangible steps needed to get this implemented into Equity 2030.

Lastly, Chancellor Maholtra, we would like to once again extend our gratitude to you and your dedication to serving the Minnesota State University students and faculty. Thank you for your continuous support of advancing inclusion and accessibility efforts at each of the seven universities. Your commitment and leadership are certainly inspiring, and you will truly be missed. And we at Students United wish you all the best in your final year as Chancellor and in your retirement following.

Thank you all for your time.