

Students United Decides its State and Federal Legislative Agendas

Students from across the state gathered at Winona State University to discuss and vote on the organization's legislative agendas

November 27, 2019 – On Saturday, November 23, Students United brought together 100 students from all seven Minnesota State universities to Winona State University to hold its Fall Conference. Students participated in several meetings and covered topics of equity and inclusion, sustainability and the environment, and most importantly, students discussed—and voted on—the organization's state and federal legislative agendas.

The students met as an assembly that has proportional representation based on the enrollment of students at each university – called the Delegates Assembly. The Delegates Assembly voted on state and federal legislative agenda items to recommend to the Students United Board of Directors, which is made up of the seven Minnesota State university student body presidents and the three statewide elected officers: state chair, vice chair, and treasurer.

"I am very pleased that our board of directors approved our federal and state legislative agendas. It was also paramount that the students we represent provide ample feedback on these agendas," said State Chair, Ola Abimbola.

In February, Students United will host its second annual Advocacy Conference. This event is a two-day training for students who are interested in organizing, civic engagement, and/or advocacy of any kind. The conference will provide students with tangible tools and practical tips on how to leverage their power and resources as students and also as active members of society after college. This event will have over a dozen different speakers ranging from experts in federal higher education based out of Washington D.C., to individuals who have years of expertise working for and advocating within our own Minnesota State system.

"These agenda items correspond with the students' concerns and align with the organizational objectives. Students are very vocal and passionate about these issues and I am truly looking forward to advocating on their behalf," said Vice Chair, Sandra Shimba.

Following the Advocacy Conference, the students will advocate to the state and federal legislatures on the following issues:

State Legislative Agenda

1. [2020 Capital Request](#)

Students United supports Minnesota State's request for \$271.2 million in funding for capital improvement projects through state bonding. The \$230.8 million would be paid by their state of Minnesota. The remaining \$40.4 million would come from the colleges and universities within the MinnState system. The funds will be used to repair and renovate existing facilities across the 37 MinnState colleges and universities.

2. [Textbook Affordability](#)

Students United requests that the legislature build upon the textbook affordability legislation that was passed at the state capitol last session by appropriating additional funds for the development of OER programs.

3. [Technology Modernization](#)

Students United requests that the state legislature invest additional funds into the NextGen technology modernization program for all MinnState campuses. This upgrade will improve the experiences of faculty and students across the MinnState system.

4. [Food and Housing Insecurity](#)

Students United is requesting that the state legislature invest in programs that help to assure all students have access to food and housing.

5. [Student Voter Registration](#)

Students United believes that the state legislature should invest in programs that help register university students. The organization asks that the legislature support the ongoing work of the students, faculty, and administrators.

Federal Legislative Agenda

1. [Support Pell Grant Expansion](#)

Students United supports legislation that will increase Pell Grant funding and increase Pell Grant access for current and future university students.

2. [Textbook Affordability Legislation](#)

Students United supports textbook affordability legislation at the federal level.

3. [FAFSA Expansion and Simplification](#)

Students United supports legislation for simplification of the FAFSA process. Future changes to FAFSA eligibility requirements should make it easier for all students to access the financial aid that they need.

4. [Food and Housing Insecurity](#)

Students United supports legislation that would provide additional resources to ensure that all students have access to food and housing.

5. [Environmental Sustainability](#)

Students United supports legislation for sustainability programs to help universities and surrounding communities reach their carbon neutrality goals.

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 campus, state, and federal level for higher education policies that make a positive impact for our students and communities.