



**Students United Student Platform
2020-2021**

Contents

STUDENT CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION	3
Academic Affairs	3
Diversity	4
Student Services Objectives.....	7
State Legislation	8
Federal Legislation	11
PLATFORM GUIDELINES (for Delegate Assembly)	12

STUDENT CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION

Students United urges and supports student involvement in decision making through consultation and representation in all aspects at the campus, system, state and federal levels regarding issues that impact students.

Section A: University

1. Promoting student representation in faculty hiring, evaluation and promotion processes
2. Encouraging student consultation on faculty curriculum committees
3. Encouraging student representation on university committees and task forces
4. Encouraging student consultation during the planning and implementation process of any notable changes to the amount or structure of the tuition or fee system of each university

Section B: Minnesota State

1. Promoting student representation at all system committees
2. Ensuring student knowledge of rights and responsibilities through student representation on relevant committees
3. To ensure campus and systems student consultation when considering outside vendors or service providers in regards to financial disbursement and student services

Academic Affairs

The mission of Students United academic affairs is to enhance the academic quality provided by the Minnesota State universities and to increase scholastic opportunities for the students attending these institutions. To ensure academic programs are the focus at these institutions, Students United supports:

Section A: Scholarship and Internship

1. Increasing scholarship, internship, assistantship and fellowship opportunities
2. Support a forum for students that provides access to information of internship opportunities
3. Allow international students to access campus scholarship opportunities

Section B: Advising

1. Providing quality advising by faculty and professional advisors to ensure students are given the tools to graduate in an efficient time period
2. Ensuring academic advisors are provided quality advising resources and training
3. Support the adoption and expansion of intensive advising and student support services for retention of students in need of additional tutoring, counseling and remedial instruction.
4. Students should be notified if their advisor goes on sabbatical and they should be appointed a temporary substitute advisor for the duration of their advisor's sabbatical.

Section C: Technology

1. Developing and maintaining innovative and efficient learning technologies

Section D: University policy, including admission and transfer

1. Supporting admission policies and programs which offer access to the greatest possible student profile while striving to maintain a system wide commitment to high academic standards

2. Encouraging a uniform and efficient credit transfer policy to be used by all colleges and universities within the Minnesota State System that would maintain individual institutional integrity
3. Encouraging, promoting and enhancing diverse programs and curriculum at Minnesota state universities
4. Supporting fair policies in regards to drop/withdrawal of courses as well as the charging of class/consumable fees
5. Supporting campus level decision making without unnecessary interference from state or federal government

Section E: Textbooks and Intellectual Property

1. Ensuring that textbooks and academic course resources, including online homework access codes, are affordable and accessible for students and encouraging alternative means of providing course materials
2. Advocating for policies that ensure the protections of students' academic rights, including but not limited to intellectual property, appeals, academic standing and grading
3. Add deadline enforcement to MN state statute 136F.58 to when textbooks must be turned into the bookstore. Push to have the deadline moved to when registration opens

Section F: Quality of Education

1. Encourage and promote learning environments and curriculum that foster critical thinking and leadership skills within a student's chosen field, and not tailor curriculum to standardized testing

Diversity

Students United defines “diversity” as the respect and recognition of all underrepresented groups and issues including, but not limited to, cultural groups, ethnic groups, members of the L (lesbian) G (gay) B (bisexual) T (transgender) Q (queer) I (intersex) A (asexual/aromantic) and 2S (two-spirit) communities, gender issues, international students, veterans, religious preference, age issues, creed, income and ability. Students United's primary mission in relation to diversity is to promote issues of diversity in higher education and empower all students within our association and communities to ensure diversity is a focus on each campus Students United supports:

Section A: Non-discrimination

1. Non-discriminatory and equal opportunity policies in all aspects of collegiate life
2. During all orientations or campus tours, university officials should fully describe, explain and locate those resources
3. Support Minnesota State providing restroom and residential hall facilities that include gender-neutral and accessible options
4. Minnesota State permit students to use a preferred name throughout their academic experience on campus, regardless of if their official documents indicate different names or sexes
5. Support Minnesota State requiring anti-bias and equity education and trainings to incoming students during orientations and their first year experience and core curriculum.
6. Closed Captioning should be available on all system and campus audiovisual media
7. Oppose any policy or legislation that prohibits or hinders access to higher education on the basis of documentation or citizenship status

8. Encouraging ongoing diversity education and training for all members of the university's community
9. Institutions should actively work to remove language as a barrier for students and work against the assumption that all students speak and read English as a first or primary language.
10. Any form, application, or document that asks a student's gender or pronouns should offer inclusive pronouns to accurately reflect a student's identity including an option not to identify.

Section B: Access, sustainability and representation

1. Improving recruitment and retention of students, faculty, staff, and administrators of underserved and underrepresented populations
2. Striving to ensure that all campus facilities meet or exceed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards
3. Support affordability initiatives that assist students of all backgrounds and economic needs, including students of all nationalities, documentation statuses, and socioeconomic backgrounds as well as students experiencing food and housing insecurity or formerly incarcerated students.
4. Support the creation and proper funding of resource centers and directors to support survivors of gender-based violence, sexual misconduct, LGBTQIA2S+ students, veterans, students needing accessibility accommodations, and students of diverse races, ethnicities, genders, sexualities, religions, and abilities.

Section C: Veterans

1. Priority registration for veterans
2. Improve the services offered by each institution to better serve veterans, in regards to their professional development.
3. Consideration of the needs of veterans and other diversity groups on campuses when instituting new policies, procedures or practice

Section D: Safe Space

1. Supporting universities creating safe learning environments by establishing standards, procedures, policies, and spaces free from the threat of discrimination or violence
2. Implementation of safe space training on campuses
3. The creation of an appropriate bias response system that any Minnesota State campus community member can report an incident of bias and be given appropriate channels for response
4. Creation of, and proper support for, spaces, resources, and opportunities for students who are sober, recovering, or otherwise alcohol and drug free.

Section E: International students

1. Encouraging international experiences for all students through student recruitment and retention, study abroad experiences as well as cultural opportunities
2. Support fair access for International students, and students of all nationalities and documentation statuses, to financial aid, scholarships, and other existing financial assistance opportunities including access to in-state tuition waivers and healthcare
3. Support the international LGBTQIA2S+ community regarding an increase in discreteness to avoid jeopardizing the livelihood and safety of international LGBTQIA2S+ students and to ensure that support systems are in place for international LGBTQIA2S+ students facing issues relating to their LGBTQIA2S+ identity.

Section F: Metrics to set standards for accountability

1. Proactive and preventative approach to the new norm and how it directly affects diversity, compiling data from demographics, financial needs of the diverse groups, and the nontraditional student influx to meet those changes today and be better prepared as an organization for tomorrow
2. Advocating as a governing body to hold Students United campuses accountable for developing and implementing an inclusive diversity plan which follows the MINNESOTA STATE diversity plan guidelines and to hold the universities accountable to the plans which currently exist on campus
3. Annual assessment surveys of cultural climates on each campus, within Students United and Minnesota State, with full student consultation

Section G: Minnesota State

1. Support a systemwide Equity Council with full representation from Students United and priorities that reflect the equity expectations of students
2. Create partnerships and relationships with equitable companies and organizations
3. Support a systemwide procedure for protecting student immigration data and information
4. Support Chief Diversity Officers or equivalent roles in serve in the cabinet of their university Presidents.

Section H: Religious Consideration

1. Campus food preparation should incorporate and honor religious and other dietary restrictions
2. Creation or allocation of spaces within each institution for the practice of any religious, spiritual, or irreligious belief
3. Creation of policies and procedures that allow for religious, spiritual, and cultural observances not recognized by the University to be considered an excused absence

Section I: Sexual Misconduct

1. Include bystander intervention training, LGBTQIA2S+ resources, affirmative consent education, and other prevention and response opportunities in mandatory sexual assault first-year trainings and modules
2. Implement the PACT training model from Winona State across the universities
3. Support medical amnesty law for people reporting a sexual misconduct to the police
4. Minnesota State schools should be alerted when a Minnesota State students transfers into their institution with conduct code violations, including sexual misconduct.
5. Include nonconsensual porn distribution of private, sexually explicit image, known as revenge porn, as a form of sexual misconduct
6. Support the use of trigger and content warnings in various Students United, campus, and system media
7. Name and public contact information about individuals that make disciplinary decisions across campuses be available to the campus community
8. Oppose the use of the campus' sexual misconduct module, that all individuals already undergo, as a form of discipline for those found responsible for sexual misconduct
9. All individuals serving on disciplinary hearing board, or otherwise make decisions on student discipline, undergo trauma-informed, victim-centered, restorative justice training

With each of these goals and objectives, Students United supports an expansion of diversity beyond the Minnesota State definitions. Rather than limiting to certain groups of people, Students United supports a definition of diversity, which recognizes that every person is both a distinct individual and identifies with various groups' cultures

Student Services Objectives

The mission of Students United in regards to Student Services is to ensure students always play an integral role in the higher education community. In addition, Students United strives to promote the highest quality of life that will enhance the college experience of all students outside the classroom. In an effort to achieve this goal, Students United supports:

Section A: Healthcare and Childcare

1. Affordable and accessible childcare provided by certified facilities on-campus
2. Advocating for policies and funding that would assist single parents while attending a Minnesota state university
3. Ensuring that all students have access to affordable healthcare and healthcare facilities as well as fair and reasonable healthcare options for international students
4. Ensuring access to affordable contraceptives and menstrual hygiene products
5. Providing affordable mental health services and support systems in the campus community
6. Meeting national best practices of providing one full-time mental health service provider for every 1,000-1,5000 students on each campus
7. Ensuring that all students have access and are consulted in regards to affordable health care and facilities as well as fair and reasonable health care options. For international students, not limiting them to the universities

Section B: Legal and Campus Safety

1. Safe campus community for all students
2. Opposing all forms of hazing and encourage civility
3. Free legal consultation.
4. The protection of first amendment rights for all students and student organizations on campus
5. University support for sexual violence victims including but not limited to, health care, legal consultation, and counseling
6. The dissemination of university rules and regulations, while maintaining a fair and legal judicial due process
7. Minnesota State create an anonymous bias reporting system to be implemented on all campuses
8. Support a separate amnesty policy for victims of sexual assault that were not hospitalized; and students be allowed to request the policy as many times as needed.
9. Expanding the Minnesota State system interactive bystander intervention education program taught in person to supplement the sexual assault awareness module.
10. Support all university first year experience and orientation courses that provide curriculum in sexual violence awareness and prevention.

Section C: Campus Policy and Issues

1. Competitive bid for all student service contracts at all levels
2. University policies and city ordinances that promote fair prices and renting practices for on and off campus student housing and opposes those practices not congruent with this point
3. Existence of long-term plans and planning processes for revenue fund buildings and structures
4. Student services should be provided in a fiscally responsible manner while ensuring student needs are met
5. Requiring instructors and professors to include safety protocols for fire, weather, active shooter emergency situations to their syllabi for their specific building.

6. Develop student review procedures in regards to the labor practices and contracts of Minnesota State, Students United, any Minnesota State University, or any firm in contract with any of the aforementioned institutions

Section D: Technology

1. Working to ensure that campuses and Minnesota State provide efficient, effective and student friendly technology services
2. All email security advisory reports of any type containing sexual misconduct and university affiliated property will utilize on the subject line: (Trigger Warning) Sexual Misconduct.

Section E: Financial literacy

1. Promotion of financial literacy and education, including student loan repayment options
2. Support a course on each campus on financial literacy that fulfills a goal area
3. Campus policies regarding on-campus sales and fundraising to ensure protections to students from third-party predatory multi-level marketing scheme

Section F: Sexual Assault Training

1. Advocate for Minnesota State to train their decision makers using victim-first advocacy techniques of their choosing, and/or allow victim advocates to be part of the decision making process.

Section G: Food Inequality

1. Advocate for implementation of a way to address food inequity

Section H: Sustainability

1. Promote environmental awareness
2. Encouraging campus administrations to improve sustainability on each campus
3. Educate students on environmental issues through Students United initiatives and the Minnesota State system
4. Advocate for policies and funding for sustainable efforts on Minnesota State University campuses to ensure a more sustainable future
5. Continual efforts to maintain the most environmentally sustainable campus practices possible
6. Create new composting solutions and improve existing solutions
7. Support institutions' tracking of carbon emissions and implementing measures to reduce carbon emissions
8. Encourage the dining services to find a sustainable way to reduce food waste.
9. Ban the use of insecticides containing Neurotoxins and Neonicotinoids on MN State campuses and universities
10. Take necessary action to limit urban runoff
11. Make one building on each university campus run off of majority renewable energy by 2030
12. All universities should draft a timely green plan for environmental sustainability and growth
13. Have a natural space without fertilizers in the unused areas of campuses.

State Legislation

The mission of Students United regarding State Legislation is to assist policy makers at the university, Minnesota State, OHE and state legislature by providing information in regards to legislation and

rulemaking affecting state universities and to disseminate all pertinent information regarding issues concerning higher education to students and all other interested parties. It is an objective of Students United to set legislative priorities on all levels of decision making, to make strides to influence the areas outlined and to support and represent all students of the Minnesota State system, regardless of ethnicity, nationality, citizenship status, age, race, sex and gender identity, creed, sexual orientation, ability and/or religious beliefs on the campus and at the state government level.

Students United has selected the following state legislative priorities to support:

Section A: Tuition

1. Recognition of lower tuition as the best source of financial aid to all students at public higher education institutions
2. Advocating that the Minnesota State Legislature honor their appropriation commitments made in chapter 135A.01 of the Minnesota State Code to fund 67% of the cost of public postsecondary education instruction

Section B: Financial Aid

1. SELF loans and other state financial aid programs
2. The reduction of student dependence on loan programs by increasing grant and other aid
3. A financial aid system that is based on the student's financial need, not the cost of the institution
4. The opposition of any proposal which includes university revenues or tuition being used to fund the State Grant Program
5. The PELL Pass Through, which would allow any further increases in the PELL grant to "pass through" the state grant formula without penalizing the students grant award
6. Increased funding for the Living and Miscellaneous Expense (LME) allowance
7. Priority given to public institution students over private institution students in the State Grant formula
8. All fees to be included in the calculations of the Minnesota State Grant formula
9. Expand the period of eligibility for the State Grant

Section C: Bonding

1. Bonding for academic buildings, prioritizing significant health and safety risks
2. Full funding for state university academic programs, university libraries, and academic buildings
3. The elimination of university responsibility for debt service on all bonding projects

Section D: Taxes and Fees

1. Tax credits and/or deductions benefiting students
2. Approval from the respective student association regarding a change in any student fees
3. The limitation of all cities and municipalities from assessing fees targeted to students or any institution of higher education
4. Advocate for removal of allowing campuses to charge an online course differential fee for online classes

Section E: Civic Engagement

1. Encouragement of access to and participation in all aspects of the political process through educational campaigns and voter registration

2. Advocating for student-friendly voting laws, rules and practices, including maintaining current voter registration laws pertaining to residence hall students and Election Day registration
3. Encouraging the placement of polling locations at on-campus sites or sites convenient and accessible to student populations
4. The Student Advisory Council (SAC) as a permanent advisory group to the Governor, the legislature, and Office of Higher Education
5. Recognition of the role universities play in the surrounding community

Section F: Information privacy

1. The opposition of any legislation that infringes on the privacy of students including parental notification (with the exception of medical emergencies)
2. The opposition of the sale or distribution of a student's personal information by Minnesota State or university campuses to any party not specifically approved by the student

Section G: Textbooks

1. Fair publishing practices regarding the textbook industry
2. Legislation that would prevent instructors from receiving any gifts from publishers
3. Support and advocate for legislation that provides low-cost textbook alternatives to students

Section H: Veterans

1. Increased financial aid for returning service members
2. Legislation that would simplify the application and advising process providing higher education benefits to veterans
3. Legislation that provides veteran benefits to higher education based on cumulative service rather than consecutive service
4. Educational credit awarded for relevant military training and service
5. Expand state GI benefits to pre-9/11/01 veterans

Section I: Student Employment/Work Study

1. Competitive wages for all students working on state university campuses
2. Increased funding and eligibility for the State Work Study program
3. Legislation that would make it easier for international students to gain employment off campus
4. The advancement of internship opportunities

Section J: Childcare

1. Existing and the formation of, low-cost child care programs that are accessible to students on all campuses
2. Raising the award cap on the Minnesota Post-Secondary Child Care Grant to reflect actual childcare costs
3. Priority consideration for students seeking on-campus child care

Section K: Student Debt

1. Avenues for loan forgiveness and repayment programs for all students regardless of employment status
2. Refinancing loans: Expand consolidation options for private and public student loans and simplifying repayment processes
3. Increase early education on loan repayment and debt literacy

4. Student loan forgiveness for all students and alumni

Section L: Campus Safety

1. Legislation surrounding affirmative consent
2. Increased funding and support for safety trainings (alcohol safety, safe space training, anti-racism training, etc.)

Federal Legislation

The mission of Students United regarding Federal Legislation is to assist policy makers at the university, Minnesota State and federal government by providing information on legislation and rulemaking affecting state universities and to disseminate all pertinent information regarding issues concerning higher education to students and all other interested parties. It is an objective of Students United to set legislative priorities on all levels of decision making, to make strides to influence the areas outlined and to support and represent all students of the Minnesota State system, regardless of ethnicity, nationality, citizenship status, age, race, sex and gender identity, creed, sexual orientation, ability and/or religious beliefs on the campus and at the federal government level.

Students United has selected the following federal legislative priorities to support:

Section A: Financial Aid

1. Expanding beneficial need-based federal grant programs (Pell Grant, TRIO, etc.)
2. Low interest financial aid to all students
3. Simplifying the FAFSA
4. Evaluating financial need recognizing that many students pay for higher education without financial assistance from family by changing the EFC to more accurately represent the funds a student has available for college
5. Inclusion of all student fees, including mandatory academic program fees in the calculation of the financial aid formula
6. Federal student aid programs giving preference to students at public institutions.
7. Increasing funding and eligibility for the Federal Work Study program
8. Providing an opportunity for all United States high school graduates to attend a higher education institution at in-state costs regardless of citizenship status
9. The expansion of a student loan income-based repayment program
10. Allow financial aid advisors to give preference to the SELF loan program
11. The availability of subsidized loans for all eligible graduate students
12. Increase transparency on student loan caps

Section B: International Students

1. Legislation that would make it easier for international students to gain employment off-campus
2. Encouraging the federal government to assign Social Security Numbers to international students as soon as they become enrolled within the university
3. Allow international students to be eligible for work-study positions
4. Provide equal opportunity to international students in all majors like STEM majors get to extend the OPT

Section C: Veterans

1. Increased financial aid for service members, which includes promoting a practical and easily accessible system of applying for and receiving benefits
2. Providing veteran benefits to higher education based on cumulative service rather than consecutive service

Section D: Taxes

1. Any measures taken to reduce the tax burden on students
2. Tax credits or savings based on educational expenses such as tuition, computers, textbooks, etc and student loan payments

Section E: Textbooks

1. Fair publishing practices and pricing regarding the textbook industry
2. Legislation that would prevent instructors from receiving any gifts from publishers
3. Support and advocate for legislation that provides low-cost textbook alternatives to students

Section F: Other

1. Efforts in encouraging students to work for public service and non-profit organizations resulting in credit towards repayment of student loans or educational expenses
2. Working in cooperation with all other state and national student, faculty and administrative associations, by proposing positive changes in federal higher education, with student involvement at every level of decision-making
3. Fair and case specific implementation and enforcement for students affected by Title IX

Section G: Student Debt

1. Avenues for loan forgiveness and repayment programs for all students regardless of employment status
2. Refinancing loans: Expand consolidation options for private and public student loans and simplifying repayment processes
3. Increase early education on loan repayment and debt literacy
4. Student loan forgiveness for all students and alumni

PLATFORM GUIDELINES (for Delegate Assembly)

1. All issues should be addressed in a general fashion.
2. Each issue should be identified, briefly described, its effect should be addressed and then the Students United position should be made clear
3. Each issue should be addressed in a single paragraph except for issues that are complex, such as the (entire) Minnesota State Budget.
4. Each platform section should keep within the bounds of the overall issues in its area. For example, Academic Affairs should not address a Student Services issue.
5. No specific direction should be made to spend money, direct an officer or staff member to carry out a duty, or any other action. Platforms are general statements of philosophy and provide general positions.
6. Each issue should be identified before the plank is stated. For example, the issue of Student Debt should be underlined and identified before any text is written.
7. It should be realized that since we do not know what issues are very important to the Legislature for the next session, we should not put the planks in priority order. We can stress

what we think should be a high priority or an ongoing priority, but we must avoid being too specific.

8. The overall platform will be one document. It should flow well and be consistent.
9. It should avoid naming persons by name and only use titles such as the Governor, the Chancellor, the Director of the Office of Higher Education, etc.
10. If necessary, it is acceptable to mention Students United past actions or past positions on an issue.
11. Issues mentioned in the platform should be consistent with Students United's by-laws and policies.
12. All platform sections must be completed by the end of the committee meetings on Friday, and handed in (on Friday) to be typed for consideration on Saturday.
13. The platform will be published as the position of Students United, and will only be adjusted if it becomes outdated or inaccurate.
14. Students United will review the platform every year at the final regularly scheduled Delegate Assembly.
15. Any changes to the platform during the year shall be done by the Board of Directors after careful consideration.