

At Students United, we have been reflecting on the purpose, mission, and vision of our organization as part of our upcoming strategic planning process. Something we want to stress to system and campus leadership is that the reason our organization exists—with staff and with an all-student Board of Directors—is because all students do not have an equal, just, or accessible higher education experience. When that is achieved, we will not need to exist.

We have spent the last few weeks responding to local and international crises and the very direct impacts they have had on our students. Every disparity in the world, and every disparity in higher education, disproportionately impacts students with marginalized identities and experiences. Whether it is the global COVID-19 pandemic or the uprising for Black lives, the experiences of our Black students and all students with marginalized experiences and identities are not equal. We only have to *respond* to these crises because disparities, discrimination, inequity, and injustice have not been eradicated.

About a week ago, we sent a letter to Chancellor Malhotra and the university Presidents relaying just some of what our students, specifically our Black students and other students of color, have already told us and told you for years. We have also previously shared our Pandemic Platform, a list of our stances urgently responding to students' needs during this pandemic. Both of those documents are included and, while some of what we have advocated for has been accomplished, they should never have needed advocacy in the first place.

These are steps that our institutions and state and national leaders should have taken long ago. It should never take the tragedies of a pandemic or an uprising to bring the consequences of these inequities to light for some powerful people. As we are in this moment now, we ask the leaders of our system to consider the great responsibility and moral imperative of operating a public system of higher learning and consider if your leadership honors this need. **Specifically, we are requesting your public response to the ten items laid out in the letter to the Chancellor and Presidents and all stances in our Pandemic Platform.** As the appointed governing body of our institutions, it is critical we know if our students' needs are being committed to. We want to reiterate what we stated in our letter to the Chancellor and the Presidents: Every listening session and forum has been done. All the evidence, data, reports, and resources already exist. All the testimony, stories, and experiences have already been shared. It is past time to do it. **We are here to help.**

On June 30th, Ola Abimbola's term as State Chair of Students United will end. Jonathan McNicholes – a recent graduate of Bemidji State University who will be starting the Masters in Advocacy & Political Leadership program at Metropolitan State this Fall—will start his term as our new Chair. Jonathan is looking forward to continuing this important work of speaking on behalf of tens of thousands of university students and ensuring our institutions exceed the needs of all students.