

Chair Cowles, member of the Board of Trustees,

In September 2021, Students United's Board of Directors adopted a set of advocacy priorities for the academic year. With the adoption of the new strategic plan in June 2021, the goal is for annual advocacy priorities to progress us towards our long-term advocacy objectives: affordability, accessibility, and justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. For 2021-2022, [the advocacy priorities](#) are comprehensive and include continuing advocacy from previous years and preparing for advocacy in future years.

**Academic Affairs/Classroom Experience:** In our new normal, there's an important opportunity to fundamentally transfer students' academic experience towards being more inclusive, accessible, and safe for all students and community members.

**Basic Needs:** We will be organizing and supporting local, system, state, and federal efforts to increase housing and food security, support students' physical and mental health, ensure technology/internet access, and more.

**International Students:** Due to the pandemic's impact on the healthcare market, the effort to find a more affordable, stronger coverage healthcare plan for Minnesota State international students was stalled. Now, with the market emerging from the pandemic, as well as a new federal administration imposing less restrictions on international student and scholar visas than in previous years, there are renewed opportunities to advocate for affordability and accessibility for international students.

**Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion + Equity 2030:** The opportunity to transform our university system towards more accessibility, more inclusion, and more equity is in front of us in this historic academic year. Students United and our many friends and partners in this fight, are collectively and independently pushing for key initiatives to ensure critical steps are taken to make our universities more equitable and inclusive for all students.



**Sexual Misconduct:** With a new federal administration that is known for its interest in Title IX, there is an important opportunity to improve national, and Minnesota State system-level, protections for victim-survivors of sexual assault.

**Student Debt Crisis:** As the chorus on student loan forgiveness grows louder and the college affordability crisis collides with the pandemic's impact, the time is now for student debt relief.

**Sustainability:** In addition to supporting important sustainability legislation, organizing campuses to make strong sustainability commitments can best be achieved by understanding each campus's individual needs and abilities and nudging those to align with students' expectations of their universities.

**Voter Registration:** After successfully advocating for a Minnesota State systemwide voter registration policy, Students United aims to observe the implementation of the policy and assess effectiveness so that as many students as possible are registered to vote (and please go vote!)

**Workers/Jobs:** From a nationwide worker shortage increasing the incentives/wages offered by employers, to a reckoning with the treatment of frontline workers, to a global need for financial security, there is an important opportunity to call for new protections, training, benefits, and increased wages for student workers.

As a system that supports a student-centric model to student success, we hope that you all will partner with us and help find ways that the Minnesota State Board of Trustees can help us achieve our priorities.

This month, the officers of Students United will be visiting our seven university campuses to meet with our student leaders, student organizations, and members of the general student body across the state. We are excited for this opportunity to hear their experiences and gain firsthand knowledge of how their campuses are and have been operating during this academic year. Hearing student and faculty's experiences and stories will ensure that we are truly representing every student in our universities.



We will be bringing the stories and knowledge that we gain from these visits directly to you at the November Board to help inform the conversation and decisions being made at the Board of Trustees.

Only by hearing stories from students and the people that you serve who call our campuses their home will we be able to bridge the gap between the campus communities and the system decisions.

Thank you for your time today. As always, if you have any questions, comments, or feedback, feel free to mention them now or reach out to us via email!

Sincerely,

Emma Zellmer, 2021-2022 State Chair

Arnavee Maltare, 2021-2022 Vice Chair

Pierre Young, 2021-2022 Treasurer