



Minnesota State Board of Trustees
Minnesota State System Office
30 7th Street East, Suite 350,
St. Paul, MN 55101-7804

April 14, 2022

Dear Trustees of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities,

It has been 52 days since the Star Tribune exposed the "culture of fear" at Hennepin Technical College and the system offices inadequate response after multiple complaints and investigations failed to address the behavior. The lack of action by the Chancellor to address the culture with college presidents and on campus is a dereliction of duty. The culture in the system office is one that would rather just sweep problems under the rug than hold people accountable.

The silence from the Chancellor over the last month has sent a chilling message to students and employees that nobody has our back if we are harassed on campus, made fun of those in power because we speak differently or have a disability, and belittled because we dare to question someone in power. The Chancellor's silence is acceptance of this type of behavior.

While the Chancellor's office will try and dismiss our comments as they always do, you can't dismiss the comments coming from legislators. Just last week at a hearing, legislative leaders said this board has been "asleep at the wheel," has "abdicated their responsibility," "presidents have brought terrible trouble to students, to faculty and to staff." While some may say that this is a partisan witch hunt - it is not. Students, staff and faculty are all raising serious concerns. And now a bipartisan group of legislators are listening.

Before they act, this board has an opportunity to exert some accountability by having an independent review of the Hennepin Technical College situation and how the Chancellor's office reviews college and university presidents and their contracts. In fact at the last Board meeting, Trustee Morrillo made just such a recommendation to have an after action report about the situation. We urge board members to consider such a resolution at the April Board meeting.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES BOARD OF TRUSTEES authorizes an independent review of the system offices handling of complaints against college and university presidents. The review should objectively evaluate what the Minnesota State system office did well and did not do well. Second, identify actions and options that may have produced different, or possibly better, outcomes for staff, faculty and students. Provide recommendations to the Workforce and Organizational Effectiveness Committee to assist the board, Chancellor's office and state legislature in providing more effective oversight of the Minnesota State Colleges and University Presidents and include a review of the employment contracts.

In addition, the board should also allocate appropriate resources to ensure that this task can be accomplished by September 15, 2022. A rushed review of the 1B1 policy will not change the culture that exists, we need a thorough independent after action report. Until that happens students, faculty, staff, legislators and the public will not have trust in the Minnesota State system leadership.

Sincerely,

Axel Kylander
President