

January 16, 2023

Senator Omar Fateh, Chair
Senate Higher Education Committee
3219 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Fateh and Senate Higher Education Committee members:

On behalf of the 18 members of the Minnesota Private College Council, I write to express strong support for the confirmation of Commissioner Dennis Olson's re-appointment as Commissioner of the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE).

The Minnesota Private College Council advocates for the interests of students and nonprofit institutions of higher education in Minnesota. The Office of Higher Education advocates for all postsecondary students and supports the strengthening of all institutions of higher education in Minnesota. It also provides consumer protection for students through registration and regulation of non-public institutions of higher education operating in Minnesota. Our member colleges and the Council work closely with OHE to meet the state's standards for institutions of higher education and to serve students and communities throughout Minnesota.

During the past four years, Commissioner Olson has been actively engaged with our member institutions. Engagement with students has been a particular priority for him. We have appreciated his willingness to listen to the concerns of our students and institutions as the agency develops and carries out state law and policy.

The OHE Commissioner must balance his regulatory duties with one of partnership and advocacy and Commissioner Olson does that well. The Council appreciates his advocacy on behalf of all students including those that attend private non-profit colleges. His leadership for the State Grant Program that serves all students and his interest in addressing equity in higher education are two areas of deep dedication for him.

To address the challenges ahead, we must partner together to develop a well-prepared workforce for a healthy and equitable economy. Commissioner Olson's leadership has been critical as we navigate out of the pandemic. We look forward to working with the Commissioner during his second term at OHE.

The Private College Council enthusiastically supports Commissioner Dennis Olson's reappointment for a second term. Thank you for taking our views into consideration as you take up his confirmation for a second term.

Sincerely,



Paul Cerkenik
President

Minnesota Private Colleges | Excellence within reach

Augsburg University
Bethany Lutheran College
Bethel University
Carleton College
College of Saint Benedict
The College of St. Scholastica

Concordia College
Concordia University, St. Paul
Gustavus Adolphus College
Hamline University
Macalester College
Minneapolis College of Art and Design

Saint John's University
Saint Mary's University of Minnesota
St. Catherine University
St. Olaf College
University of Northwestern - St. Paul
University of St. Thomas

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