



January 24, 2023

The Honorable Omar Fateh, Chair
Senate Higher Education Committee
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3219
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Zach Duckworth, Republican Lead
Senate Higher Education Committee
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 2229
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Fateh, Republican Lead Duckworth, and Members of the Committee:

At Students United, we value the partnerships and coalitions that work to advance the interests of students in higher education. We recognize that creating a higher education system in Minnesota that is affordable, inclusive, and equitable can only be achieved through a collective effort. We believe that the Office of Higher Education (OHE) is a critical partner in this work, and that is why we stand in support of the confirmation of Commissioner Dennis Olson to continue leading the Office of Higher Education.

Commissioner Olson and OHE have been integral partners to Students United, and we appreciate OHE's efforts to regularly convene and listen to the student perspective. As a member of the Student Advisory Council (SAC), we are grateful for the opportunity to share our priorities with Commissioner Olson and OHE and for their thoughtfulness and receptiveness to our concerns.

In particular, we're grateful for OHE's partnership in ending hunger on college campuses. Inadequate access to basic needs is a burden too many students confront. In fact, nearly a [quarter of college students in Minnesota](#) struggle with food insecurity, and rates of food insecurity do not vary by institution type. We know that food-insecure students suffer lower academic standing than their food-secure peers and experience health risks at far greater rates. Under Commissioner Olson's leadership, OHE's Hunger-Free Campus grant has been crucial towards meeting this need.

This is a moment of great challenges, but also great opportunities, for higher education in Minnesota. At Students United, we have appreciated Commissioner Olson's support and partnership in improving the student experience and we offer our full support for his confirmation.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kaileigh Weber".

Kaileigh Weber