

Dear Senate members,

My name is Patricia Hernandez. I am the President of the Rochester Student Association, which is the undergraduate student government organization at the University of Minnesota Rochester. Me and my Representative to the Board of Regents, Brandon Yang, are co-writing this letter on behalf of UMR student leaders and the student body to express our endorsement with the proposed changes being made to the Board of Regents and Regent Candidate Advisory Council Reform bill regarding seat assignment.

The University of Minnesota Rochester consists of a diverse population of students ranging from various backgrounds. The Rochester Student Association takes effective steps and actions in support of the needs, well-being, and success of its students. We believe that the reform bill in regard to the Board of Regents and Regent Candidate Advisory Council will better encapsulate the voices of our student body. This representation will further aid the promotion and excellency of our diverse student population in their journey to become healthcare providers.

In particular, we are in support of the American Indian regent requirement because it pays respects to the land that the University is founded on, along with ensuring the representation of native students in places of higher authority within the University. In addition, we believe that as time passes, the needs of the student body is changing which accompanies a change in the members represented at the Board of Regents – this is addressed through the proposal of the limit regarding no member can be reelected twice.

The University of Minnesota Rochester is significantly smaller than the other campuses meaning that the voice of our student body can be unheard or overshadowed. Additionally, we are health-science focused and our specificity may contribute to isolation from other campuses. As such, we are in favor of the changes proposed to the Regent Candidate Advisory Council. The inclusion of one current faculty member from each of the University of Minnesota campuses would allow for better representation across all five campuses. Furthermore, the welcoming of each campuses' student body president on the council would bring forth the voice of their respective student population and be a source of relevant input. In addition, the inclusion of council members from minority or marginalized groups such as the Indian Affairs Council, the Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs, the Council of Minnesotans of African Heritage, the Council of Asian-Pacific Minnesotans, and the Council on Disability would better represent the diversity of the University of Minnesota system schools and would shed a light on these groups that may otherwise be underrepresented.

The contents of this letter reflects the views of students at the university. Faculty, staff, and administration were not consulted in the writing of this. We hope that you find our letter of support to be informational and of assistance. Thank you for reading, and we wish you the best in your decision making process.

Sincerely,

Patricia Hernandez - President of Rochester Student Association

Brandon Yang - Rochester Student Association's Representative to the Board of Regents