



Strategic Communications Plan Legislative Affairs 2021 December 2020 – June 2021

Goals/Objectives:

- Inform key audiences about the importance of state legislative support for Minneapolis College to continue serving the community.
- Enhance and localize Minnesota State Colleges & Universities' advocacy efforts.

Audiences:

- Internal (advocacy partners)
 - Students, Student Senate
 - Staff and faculty
 - Bargaining unit leaders
 - Workforce and industry partners, Chamber of Commerce
 - Alumni
 - Advisory Board members
 - Community leaders, Minneapolis Public Schools
- External
 - [Legislators representing Minneapolis College and its students](#)
 - Other Influential Legislators:
 - Senate District 9 (Nisswa) Paul Gazelka (R) **Senate Majority Leader**
 - Senate District 6 (Chisholm) David Tomassoni (I) **Higher Education Finance & Policy Committee Chair**
 - Senate District 28 (Winona) Jeremy Miller (R) **President**
 - Senate District 3 (Cook) Tom Bakk (Independent, former member of DFL) **Capital Investment Committee Chair**
 - Senate District 53 (Woodbury) Susan Kent (DFL) **Minority Leader**

- Senate District 23 (Vernon Center) Julie Rosen (R) **Finance Committee Chair**
- House District 36B (Brooklyn Park) Melissa Hortman (DFL) **Speaker of the House**
- House District 31A (Crown) Kurt Daudt (R) **Minority Leader**
- House District 65A (St. Paul) – Rena Moran (DFL) **Ways and Means Committee Chair**
- House District 41A (New Brighton) – Connie Bernardy (DFL) **Higher Education Finance and Policy Chair**
- Governor Tim Walz (DFL)
- Lt. Governor Penny Flanagan (DFL)
- Media contacts
 - Josh Verges, Pioneer Press, letters@pioneerpress.com or mburbach@pioneerpress.com
 - Mila Koumpilova, opinion@startribune.com, [submit letter](#), Star Tribune
 - Erin Hinrichs/Walker Orenstein, MinnPost
 - Peter Cox, Minnesota Public Radio, newsroom@mpr.org
 - Capitol Press Corps
 - Insight News
 - Spokesman Reporter
 - North News
 - Southside Pride
 - The Circle
 - Minnesota El Hoy
 - Asian News
 - Lavender
 - Womens Press
 - Sahan Journal <https://sahanjournal.com/>

Background/Situation Analysis:

The Minnesota State Board of Trustees approved its biennial budget request of \$120 million and capital budget request of \$188.2 million on November 17, 2020. The November State Economic Forecast was released December 1, 2020 projecting a \$1.27 billion budget deficit for the 2022-2023 biennium. For the remainder of the current biennium (which runs through June 2021), MMB is reporting a \$641 million surplus, which is driven by higher-than-expected consumer spending and federal pandemic relief.

The 2021 Legislative session begins January 5 and ends May 17. The legislators will need to adopt a 2022-2023 biennial budget as in all odd-numbered years and may consider passing a bonding bill. A \$98 million bonding bill was passed during last year's session. Following the 2020 election, the DFL has the majority (70/64 split) in the House and the Republicans have the majority (34/31 split with 2 Independents) in the Senate.

The Governor will provide a State of the State Address in January and his budget recommendation is due January 26, 2021. The February/March budget forecast will provide essential guidance for legislators' decision-making regarding the budget as well as the revenue and expenditure

projections that the Legislature will use in adopting a biennial budget. The Legislature is expected to approve a biennial budget before May 17. Then, the Governor will either sign it into law, veto it, line-item veto it or take no action (pocket veto).

Committee deadlines are in March through early April. House Higher Education Finance & Policy Committee hearings are held TBD. Senate Higher Education Finance & Policy Committee hearings are held Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1 until 2:30 pm. House Capital Investment Committee hearings are held TBD. Senate Capital Investment Committee hearings are held on an on-call basis.

Minneapolis College leadership needs to establish relationships with newly elected officials and renew relationships with incumbents.

The Legislature will be in recess for the Easter/Passover holidays beginning the end of the day on Friday, March 26, 2021 through Monday, April 5, 2021.

The Minnesota State Board of Trustees will meet at the close of the session to determine how legislative decisions will be acted upon.

Current Challenges/Considerations:

The colleges and universities across the Minnesota State system rely on legislative action to provide operating and capital funds. Significant technology upgrades are needed. The relationship between Minnesota State tuition and state appropriation has changed significantly over the past 15 years. Minnesota's funding for higher education significantly trails the U.S. average.

Every two years, the Minnesota Legislature approves biennial operating budgets for all state agencies including the Minnesota State System of Colleges and Universities. This session, the Legislature will determine the Minnesota State budget for Fiscal Year 2022 and 2023. Minneapolis College receives additional allocations throughout the fiscal year including leveraged equipment and debt service.

The continued pandemic is expected to drive most legislative activities to online formats. It also requires the Legislature and Governor to consider allocating funding for additional stimulus and relief packages alongside decisions being made at the federal level.

Spring break will be from March 27 through April 5.

Below are the deadlines for committees to complete their business this session:

March 12: Committees must act favorably on bills in the house of origin

March 19: Committees must act favorably on bills, or companions of bills, that met the first deadline in the other body

April 9: Committees must act favorably on major appropriation and finance bills

These deadlines do not apply to the House committees on Capital Investment, Ways and Means, Finance, Taxes, or Rules and Legislative Administration, nor to the Senate committees on Capital Investment, Finance, Taxes, or Rules and Administration.

AFSCME Day at the Capitol March 9. MAPE Summit with Governor Walz March 10.

Key Messages:

- Minnesota State key messages are available in [Minnesota State A Closer Look](#) budget snapshot highlighting Minnesota State's size and scope, history of funding requests, appropriation received and corresponding tuition rates since 1996.
- The Minnesota State 2022-2023 biennial budget request is for \$120 million.
 - \$75 million of this request is for campus responsiveness and stabilization:
 - Supporting Minnesota State is critical for the state of Minnesota's economic recovery
 - Campuses require on-going revenue in order to maintain a core level of programs and services
 - Funding of inflationary costs and increased campus expenses due to the pandemic
 - \$45 million of the request, for equity and affordability, directly supports our students' critical basic needs:
 - Emergency financial support
 - Mental health needs
 - Additional campus support services
 - Career and technical education
 - Support for textbook affordability through open educational resources
 - New scholarship programs
- [Minneapolis College Budget Request](#)
- Minnesota State ensures access to affordable and exceptional postsecondary education for all Minnesotans so they can become the talent Minnesota needs.
- The budget request consists of two main priorities that align with Minneapolis College's mission: campus stability, equity and affordability.
- If approved, Minneapolis College's portion of the Minnesota State allocation will allow us to maintain existing levels of staffing and student services. Without this funding, the college will need to evaluate significant cost-cutting measures, limiting operating hours and will not be able to perform regularly scheduled maintenance on infrastructure or continue updating its technology investments to accommodate students and employees.
- The [Minnesota State 2020 Capital Request](#) contains relevant messaging for the 2021 session as well.
- Supporting Minneapolis College and other Minnesota State colleges and universities helps Minnesota's college students achieve their higher education goals affordably.
- Supporting quality, affordable education helps the community as a whole.
- Businesses are experiencing a critical talent shortage in Minnesota; and Minnesota State has a key role to play in meeting this shortage.
- Our colleges/universities drive Minnesota's economy by providing the talent employers need.
- The budget request is an important investment in the success of our students and Minnesota's future workforce. Appropriation + tuition = 90 percent of revenue. Therefore, state appropriation needs to increase for us to hold tuition. Our expenses are going up faster than our revenue. Requested funds will help address this growing gap.
- Minnesota Statutes 135A.01, the higher education funding policy that reads: *It is the policy of the legislature to provide stable funding for public postsecondary institutions and that the state and students share the cost of public postsecondary education. The legislature intends to provide at least 67 percent of the combined revenue from tuition, the university fee at the University of Minnesota, and state general fund appropriations to public postsecondary institutions. It is also the policy of the legislature that the budgetary process serves to support high quality public postsecondary education.*

- A vote for education is a vote for workforce development, bridging the skills gap, countywide economic development, and recruiting and retaining business and industry.
- Minneapolis College provides an affordable path for community members to elevate their socio-economic status and break the cycle of poverty through higher education. It serves as an anchor in the community at a time when extensive rebuilding of socio-economic systems is desperately needed.
- We are hopeful that the legislature and the governor will show their commitment to higher education this legislative session.
- Minneapolis College leverages private donations to match state-funded workforce development scholarships.

Internally (for Minneapolis College's advocate partners):

- Everyone on campus is encouraged to participate in the legislative process. Show support for the Minnesota State funding request by sharing key messages with legislators. Employees may contact legislators using work or personal emails. [Link](#) to find representatives.

Externally (for Minneapolis College's legislators):

- Minneapolis College is a notable contributor to the statewide economy.
- By serving under-represented students (first generation, those with multiple risk factors, etc.), Minneapolis College helps advance Minnesota's economy and workforce.
- Minneapolis residents can attend colleges in Border States that offer competitive tuition. Minneapolis College must maintain its affordability to prevent the region's future workforce from relocating.

Communication Channels: (*Indicates internal, **Indicates external, ***Indicates both)

- Hand-written notes***
- Emails***
- Stakeholder Meetings/Events to facilitate discussions to refine or announce plans and/or give project updates for each phase (All College Meetings*, Supervisory Team Meetings*, others TBD**)
- President's Blog*
- SharePoint Connect (Collaboration Sites, Announcements*)
- Website***
- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, LinkedIn, YouTube)**
 - Throughout session, Minnesota State will tweet in support of our legislative/biennial budget/bonding requests (See [SO Social Media Guide](#) with calendar).
 - Posts will highlight facts/stats/economic impact, student/grad stories, employer/partnership videos and Equity 2030.
 - Include infographics/photos/videos.
 - Link to [MinnState.edu/legislative](https://www.minnstate.edu/legislative) or [MinnState.edu/stories](https://www.minnstate.edu/stories).
 - Use campaign hashtags #FundMinnesotaState #MinnStateEquity2030 #mnleg. #FundMinnesotaState and #MplsCollege
 - For Virtual Day(s) at the Capitol also use hashtags #MinnStateDayAtTheCapitol and #MplsCollegeDayAtTheCapitol.
 - Tweet/tag specific legislators from <https://twitter.com/mpscollege> using @MinnStateEdu and applicable hashtags.

- Share campus virtual tour, data points, impact, etc. Include photos of legislators and/or groups participating in activities or discussions.
- Retweet earned media stories on students, campuses and partnership using @MinnStateEdu.
- Collateral material (posters, flyers, table tents, brochures, infographics)***
- TV monitors***
- Video***
- Media Relations (news releases, media advisories, pitched stories)**
- Virtual Tour***
- Leadership speeches/talking points/PowerPoint presentations***

Team:

- Minnesota State Government Relations Staff:
 - Bernie Omann, Special Assistant to the Chancellor/Government Relations
 - Melissa Fahning, Government Relations
 - Sarah Berns, Federal
- Metro Area Grassroots Members
- Minneapolis College Staff:
 - Sharon Pierce, President – spokesperson
 - Deanna Sheely, Chief of Staff – strategy & deliverables
 - Chris Rau, Chief Finance Officer – subject matter expert
 - Pashell Johnson, Alumni Constituent Relations Coordinator – outreach and engagement with alumni and friends
 - Kathy Rumpza, Director of Marketing and Communications – deliverables
- Advocacy Partners (invite to attend legislative events/meetings, send correspondence to legislators, post social media messages, etc. on behalf of the funding request specifically supporting Minneapolis College):
 - Thomas Eland, Local MSCF Legislative Liaison, thomas.eland@minneapolis.edu
 - Jim Brennan, Minneapolis College MAPE Liaison, jim.brennan@minneapolis.edu, 612-659-6603
 - Cheryl Folz, Minneapolis College AFSCME Liaison, cheryl.folz@minneapolis.edu
 - Meg Geisen, Minneapolis College MMA Liaison, meg.giesen@minneapolis.edu, 612-659-6892
 - Lena Jones, Political Science Faculty, 612.501.3840, lena.jones@minneapolis.edu
 - Katrina Edenfeld, College Lab Assistant Academic Success Center, katrina.edenfeld@minneapolis.edu, 612.659.6331
 - Elena Williams, Student Senate President, elena.williams@go.minneapolis.edu
 - Ibtisam Mohamoud, Student Senate Advocacy Director ibtisam.mohamoud@go.minneapolis.edu
 - Tonny Yang, Student Senate Advisor tonny.yang@minneapolis.edu
 - [LeadMN](#); Elena Williams is also LeadMN's President's Group Vice Chair
 - Shawnee Hunt shawneehunt@gmail.com, American Indian Advisory Board, Principal Planner at Department of Human Services, uncle of a Minneapolis College Student
 - Jamez Staples, workforce development partner, jstaples@renewablenrgpartners.com

Strategies:

- Leverage the Minnesota State social media campaign and hashtags to reinforce the System-wide messages and demonstrate the broad impact of Minnesota State Colleges & Universities
- Minnesota State Day at the Capitol (virtual)
 - Highlight each campus with a dedicated day from January 11 to March 17, Monday through Thursday each week
 - Chancellor Malhotra will tweet a student story, Minnesota State will retweet, and we ask campuses and presidents to retweet too and tag your legislators (twitter handles provided)
 - On each dedicated day, campuses tweet multiple times in support of the biennial budget request/bonding request with a focus on equity. Some themes could include:
 - Legislative welcome
 - Economic impact stats
 - Workforce development or community partnership stories
 - Short video interviews with students, alumni, faculty, staff, community
 - Programs unique to your campus
 - Virtual tours of campus
- Share the Minneapolis College virtual campus tour with legislators through social media, emails, etc.
- Share facts about economic impact and financial need with legislators and advocate partners.
- Share student success stories with legislators to demonstrate the value Minneapolis College provides the community.
- When meeting with legislators, leave materials to provide them with background and talking points as well as branded campus items.
- Send hand-written cards to legislators thanking them for their actions.
- Research legislators' campaign platforms and past voting records to develop specific key messages that align with issues they're most committed to.
- Share key points with advocate partners and invite them to reach out to legislators and participate in Minnesota State and Minneapolis College legislative events and campaigns. Collaborate with Student Senate and all the bargaining units on campus in advocacy efforts.
- Invite advocacy partners to become part of the Campus Legislative Liaison Team. Meet to discuss and become familiar with the legislative request and the outreach opportunities to be involved with such as
- Invite students, their parents, employers, alumni and other advocate partners to participate in capital visits to speak to legislators (online only).
- Develop a social media calendar for students to take turns posting on their sites and tagging legislators and college.
- Leverage Political Science faculty expertise and access to students and/or to identify a work-study student in a related academic program who can provide support for this plan throughout spring semester or integrate course curriculum with these efforts.
- Promote awareness about [online legislative information hosted by Minnesota State](#).
- Monitor [LegiScan](#) for status on bills.
- Support the Minnesota State social media campaign.
- Consider hosting an Advocacy Bootcamp (benchmark Century College) in mid-March for students, alumni, employees.

Resources:

- [Minneapolis College Legislators 2021](#) (contact information)
- Minneapolis College [House/Senate](#) District Reports reflect legislative representation of students according to their permanent addresses (for credit enrollment only, it does not include non-credit students). Share with legislators to demonstrate where Minneapolis College students live and with advocacy partners to equip them with information.
- Minnesota Legislature <https://www.leg.mn.gov/>
- Minnesota State Legislative Information www.minnstate.edu/legislative/index.html
- Combined Legislative Meeting Calendar <https://www.leg.mn.gov/cal>
- www.minnstate.edu/IMPACT
- [November 2020 Budget and Economic Forecast Executive Summary](#)
- [November 2020 Budget and Economic Forecast Presentation](#)
- <https://www.kirklandreporter.com/opinion/time-for-the-state-to-invest-in-higher-education-guest-editorial/>

Budget

No funds have been allocated specifically for supporting this plan. Deliverables will be funded through the Communications Cost Center.

Measurements of effectiveness:

- Participation in advocacy efforts
- Results of legislative session