

# MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGE STUDENT ASSOCIATION



The Minnesota State College Student Association (MSCSA) is a statewide association for students in Minnesota's public two-year community and technical colleges. Our mission is to ensure quality, affordable, and accessible higher education while providing students with representation, leadership development, and communication across the state.

1515 South Robert Street, West Saint Paul, MN 55118

VISIT US ON THE WEB [www.mscca.org](http://www.mscca.org) CALL US AT 877-636-7272

## WE SUPPORT

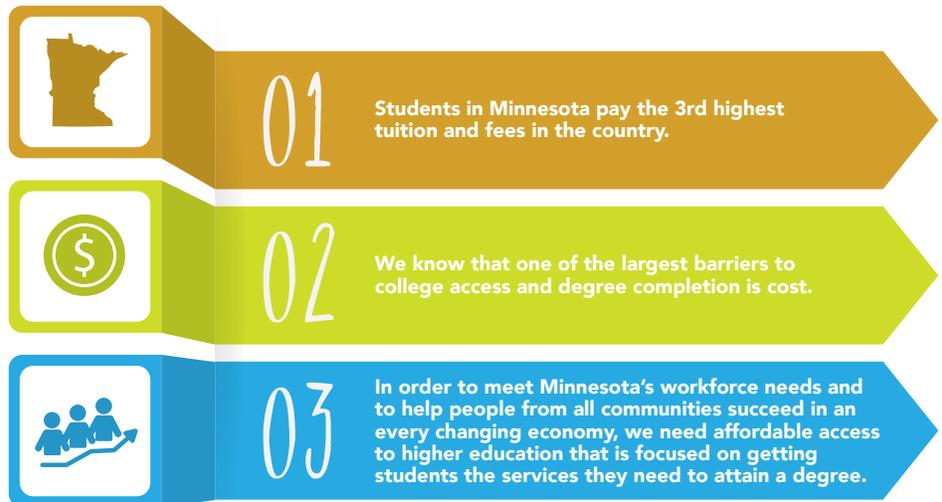
## 2017 Federal Legislative Priorities

### COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

Minnesota's economic growth and vitality depends on the ability of businesses and communities to hire and retain workers. We know we won't be able to fill our economic need without reaching out to students from all communities in our state. Students of color, first generation students, and low income students who don't traditionally attain a higher education degrees, will need to become college graduates in order for our state to flourish.

**In order to assist Minnesota with this goal of training our future workforce, MSCSA supports:**

- » **Federal action to reduce or eliminate tuition for students attending community and technical colleges.** Reduced tuition rates that allow students to move through college to a degree without taking on massive debt or being interrupted in order to work more hours, will benefit the entire state of Minnesota. Businesses in every corner of our state are in need of skilled, well-trained workers and our community and technical colleges are crucial to meeting this skills gap.
- » **Strengthening and expanding federal financial aid programs, specifically the PELL Grant.** It's crucial that students, regardless of immigration status or any other classification, are able to depend on financial aid programs like the PELL as they plan their education. Consistent funding for the PELL, as well as the reinstatement of year-round awards, will help meet students financial needs and would be a significant step in helping with college completion and retention goals. Students more than ever need to take classes year-round to graduate on time and programs like the PELL are crucial in helping students be able to do so.
- » **Maintain increased investment in TRIO programs and Gear Up.** These programs are aimed at assisting students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Low-income, first generation, and students with disabilities often face hardships in college access and completion that other students don't. These programs are aimed at assisting them with staying on a path toward degree completion. In order to meet our societal and workforce needs, it's critical we increase graduation rates from these traditionally under-represented populations.

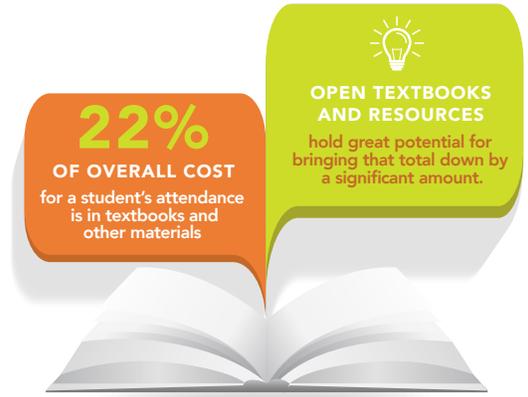


WE SUPPORT

## OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES & ELECTRONIC TEXTBOOKS

**An often under-reported aspect of college costs, especially in technical programs, is the price of textbooks and other materials.** Students often are faced with costs for books and supplies that go well beyond the posted tuition and fees at their institutions. If these costs were reduced by half, it would mean millions in savings and reduced student debt for thousands of students across Minnesota.

While open educational resources or open textbooks are not the answer in every field, we know that increased use of these resources can result in real savings for students. In fact, one faculty member at a Minnesota college saved students in his classes (during one semester) over \$66,000 by switching to an open textbook. Imagine a world where more faculty were aware of the cost savings and academic usefulness of open textbooks. This could lead to academic improvements in the classroom and students saving millions of dollars.



WE SUPPORT

## FAFSA SIMPLIFICATION



Federal Student Aid

**Each year, students leave millions of financial aid dollars on the table that they are already eligible to receive.** One of the main reasons is the process to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), is complicated and cumbersome. This process is a barrier for many students, especially for students of color, first generation students, and others who have family or language barriers.

There are a variety of bi-partisan proposals aimed at simplifying the current 128-question form. **MSCSA supports efforts to make the application process more student-friendly. We believe this will be a great step in ensuring equality in access to higher education.**

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