



FULLFILLING OUR

# PROMISE

TO MINNESOTA COLLEGE STUDENTS

2019

State Legislative Agenda

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# MINNESOTA COLLEGE PROMISE



Minnesota has been a great place to live, work, and raise a family because we have one of the most highly educated workforces in the country. Our future is being threatened because it is too expensive for Minnesotans to pursue an education after high school. With the 8th highest community and technical college tuition and fees in the nation, students are being burdened by high amounts of student loan debt. This is impacting Minnesotans ability to enroll in college, complete their degree, purchase houses, purchase vehicles, invest in retirement, open small businesses, and participate in the state and local economies.

**15 STATES**  
HAVE STATEWIDE  
PROMISE PROGRAMS,  
AND AT LEAST 17  
HAVE PROPOSED A  
STATEWIDE PROGRAM<sup>1</sup>

A College Promise program would boost enrollments and graduations at Minnesota's community and technical colleges, increasing the number of students completing degrees and entering the workforce. With an ever-growing workforce shortage, Minnesota cannot continue with business as usual

in higher education. Businesses across the state need educated employees now, and a college promise would help to quickly improve the number of available graduates.

**This is why LeadMN supports the creation of a Minnesota Promise Grant that would cover the cost of tuition, fees, and textbooks for two years for any family making under \$125,000, after federal, state, and local grants and scholarships have been applied.**

Because simply eliminating college tuition costs will not improve student success alone, LeadMN supports the creation of an Accelerated Study in Associates Program (ASAP) program at community and technical colleges.

Based on the highly successful CUNY ASAP model, this program pairs improvements in college affordability with increased academic and career advising to ensure students have the support they need to be successful in school and as they enter the workforce.

MINNESOTA  
CURRENTLY HAS  
**\$27 BILLION**  
IN STUDENT LOAN DEBT<sup>2</sup>

MINNESOTA'S  
HIGHER EDUCATION  
FUNDING PER FTE  
IS FAR BEHIND THE  
NATIONAL AVERAGE <sup>3</sup>

MINNESOTA  
**\$6,775** 2017

NATIONAL  
AVERAGE  
**\$7,642** 2017

# HUNGER FREE CAMPUSES



Recent national dialogue and research on campus hunger has shed light on the issue of food insecurity on college campuses across the country. A 2018 survey of 48,000 college students by the Hope Lab found that 48% of college students are food insecure.<sup>4</sup>

**53%**  
OF FOOD INSECURE  
STUDENTS MISSED  
THEIR COURSES, AND

**25%**  
DROPPED COURSES DUE  
TO IMPACTS OF HUNGER<sup>5</sup>

Students who are food insecure do not know where their next meal will come from, and do not have access to healthy or affordable food. Recent research has shown that this can lead to students missing class, not purchasing textbooks, dropping courses, and other negative impacts on academic success. This is especially problematic considering

students of color and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to be food insecure.

Many students who have worked to create food pantries on campus have run into roadblocks from campus administrators, lack of resources, inadequate funding, or insufficient available space.

**LeadMN believes that no student should have to face the challenge of food insecurity. This is why we have worked to introduce, the Hunger Free Campus Act.**

This legislation creates a Hunger Free Campus designation for two year colleges that meet the following criteria:

1. Have an established food pantry or food distribution system
2. Create a campus hunger task force
3. Participate or hold one hunger awareness event per year
4. Provide information to students on SNAP, MFIP, and other programs that reduce food insecurity
5. Have an established emergency assistance grant for students

Under the Hunger Free Campus Act, grants will be provided to help campuses address food insecurity and meet the requirements of the Hunger Free Campus designation.

**55%**  
OF STUDENTS WHO  
EXPERIENCED FOOD  
INSECURITY DID NOT  
HAVE SUFFICIENT  
FUNDS TO PURCHASE  
REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS<sup>5</sup>

# OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

After tuition and fees, textbooks are one of the greatest post secondary costs to students, with Minnesota community and technical college students paying on average \$1200 a year for textbooks. Over the past decade a movement toward Open educational resources (OER) has occurred across the country. OER are freely accessible, openly licensed text, media, and other digital assets that are useful for teaching, learning, and assessing as well as for research purposes.



**65%** OF STUDENTS  
IN A 2014 SURVEY DID NOT  
PURCHASE A TEXTBOOK  
BECAUSE OF THE COST<sup>6</sup>

After receiving funding from the legislature to promote and help faculty switch to OER, Minnesota State has already helped students save hundreds of thousands

of dollars. While progress has been made in this area, there is more that can be done to reduce the burden of textbook costs on students. In 2018 Central Lakes College went a step further and launched the first Z-Degree program in the state. Z-Degrees are academic programs that can be completed with no textbook cost through the utilization of OER.

**+9%** INCREASE  
IN COURSE COMPLETION  
RATE OVER NON-OER COURSES  
AT NORTHERN VIRGINIA  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE<sup>7</sup>

Not only do Z-Degrees and OER save students money, but they are also proven to have a positive impact on academic success. Courses utilizing OER allow students to have day 1 access to course materials, eliminating the issue of students waiting to purchase expensive textbooks and falling behind. In a 2018 study, 60 percent of students reported an improved learning experience in OER courses over non-OER courses.<sup>1</sup>

**Because of the benefits to academic success and affordability, LeadMN supports legislation that would require every college to offer a Z-Degree to students and increase the use of OER.**

**+13%**  
COURSE  
COMPLETION  
RATE FOR  
SCIENCE CLASSES  
THAT SWITCHED  
TO OER AT GEORGIA  
HIGHLANDS COLLEGES<sup>9</sup>

# TRANSFER

When Minnesota State was created in the mid 1990's one of the top reasons for its inception was improving transfer between institutions. While transfer has come a long way since the system was created, there is still work to be done. For many students transfer can still be a complicated and messy process where they lose credits, have to retake remedial education courses, and ultimately have their graduation delayed, all while student loans and expending grants and scholarships.



**22%**  
AVERAGE TRANSFER RATE OF  
MINNESOTA COMMUNITY AND  
TECHNICAL COLLEGE STUDENTS<sup>10</sup>

We believe that regardless of what college or university a student wishes to transfer to, the process should be simple, maximize credits awarded, prevent retaking remedial education, and support student's educational goals.

**This is why LeadMN supports continuing to improve and expand the transfer pathway options available to community and technical college students.** Opportunities exist to expand the current pathways to other colleges, create new program pathways, and find ways to create pathways to the University of Minnesota.

**7,326** STUDENTS  
TRANSFERRED FROM A COMMUNITY  
OR TECHNICAL COLLEGE TO  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
FROM FALL 2014 TO FALL 2018

## SOURCES

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## A PROMISE TO OUR MINNESOTA STUDENTS

LeadMN is a statewide association for students at 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.

Follow us on Social Media @iLeadMN



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