



Minnesota
Education Equity
Partnership

Advancing **Race Equity** & Excellence

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Senator Omar Fateh, Chair
Minnesota Senate Higher Education Committee
75 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard
St Paul, MN 55101

March 28, 2023

Dear Chair Fateh and Members of the Minnesota Senate Higher Education Committee,

On behalf of the Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP), we would like to thank you for your work during the legislative session to advance and elevate the importance of higher education in Minnesota. Investing in higher education in racially, socially, and economically equitable ways is a moral imperative for the state and one that can no longer be relegated to secondary status during any legislative session. As such, MnEEP will continue to maintain and advocate for the following:

- Advancing race equity and excellence in higher education must drive the committee's work throughout the legislative session;
- Striking a compromise and balancing the legitimate needs of systems while also keeping a close eye on meeting the needs of POCI students at all institutions, must also continue to be a goal;
- Any compromise made, fiscal or otherwise, must center on gaining more racially equitable outcomes for POCI students, specific to college completion with a degree and/or a credential; and
- It is imperative that the MN Legislature pass on Pell Grant increases to students by increasing State Grant Aid, as this bill proposes, by continuing to invest in and expand the State Grant.

POCI students attending an institution of higher education must be provided space to self-determine how they want to achieve their hopes and dreams for college and career. MnEEP acknowledges that this bill represents a positive, initial step in that direction. Additional work, however, will need to be done to gain more racially equitable outcomes in college completion for students by leveraging bills that support POCI self-determination. It is our hope that we may continue to work together in partnership and grow the work of advancing race equity in higher education as evidenced by the attainment of a degree and/or credential for POCI students and all students. Thank you for your time, your work, and your leadership.

Sincerely,

Carlos Mariani, Executive Director, Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP)

Leiataua Dr. Robert Jon Peterson, Long-Term Consultant, MnEEP

Ikram Mohamud, College Race Equity Initiative Coordinator, MnEEP