



March 15, 2022

President Joan Gabel
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100 Church Street S.E.
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Athletics Director Mark Coyle
516 15th Ave. S.E.
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455

University of Minnesota Board of Regents
600 McNamara Alumni Center
200 Oak Street S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455

via electronic delivery

Dear President Gabel, Director Coyle, and University of Minnesota Regents,

Following the hearing on the cuts made to certain sports programs at the University of Minnesota, in the Senate Higher Education Committee, we find ourselves with many questions and concerns on the operational transparency and good faith behavior on the part of the University, its governing body and leadership staff.

Serious concerns around the justification of the cuts as it pertains to budgetary balance have arisen, along with inconsistent claims about Title IX compliance, and the lack of transparency and expeditious manner of the targeted cuts have given us pause.

It is important to acknowledge that the legislature does not oversee the University's operational policy or internal budgeting matters. But when concerned students and stakeholders have worked all internal processes in good faith, up to and including soliciting private donations for ongoing funding, and the University shuts them out of communication and continually moves the goalposts and expectations, we find that problematic.

As a solution moving forward on this matter, and in hopes of getting ahead of future problems, we would suggest establishing a special commission. In conjunction with the Minnesota Athletics Alliance (MMA), this new body would provide a comprehensive assessment of intercollegiate athletic schools and draw from the past and present situations to help navigate this issue moving forward.

The Commission would:

- 1.) Present an opportunity to investigate the enduring impact that participation in intercollegiate athletics has had on athletes and our communities in order to provide evidence-based proposals to guide decisions affecting the future of athletics within the University system
- 2.) Examine the history of athletics in the U of M system and the evolution of varsity sports sponsorship.
- 3.) Assess the current situation within intercollegiate athletics in the state university system and make recommendations to sustain its long-term vitality
- 4.) Explore all reasonable financing models for non-revenue sports, which would include budget reductions per sport, rethinking scholarships, and additional funding sources.
- 5.) Propose ideas for repositioning non-revenue sports so that they are aligned with the educational mission of the U of M. Importantly, that sports teams are viewed as educational programs and not viewed as revenue generators for the U of M.

The MAA recommends that the format of the Commission be conducted as open meetings over a period (several months) and invite public comment throughout the process. The MAA also hopes that the Commission could fully engage the resources across a range of fields including education, health, corporations, amateur and professional athletic associations, academia and of course key stakeholders.

We, the undersigned legislators, would ask that the Board of Regents establish this Commission to look at the athletic department's future at the University. As stated by John Rothlisberger in the committee hearing, Minnesota can be the leader in the nation by looking at how to grow opportunities for student-athletes rather than reduce them. We ask that you engage with the supporters of the three canceled programs and advocate for the women's programs that had roster cuts and potential new programs that could be added. We talk a lot about being leaders. Let's not miss this opportunity now.

Sincerely,



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District 18



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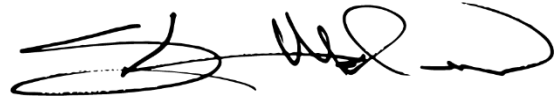
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District 06



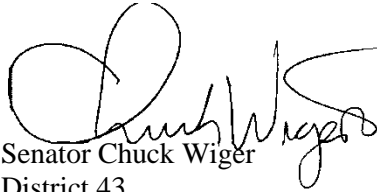
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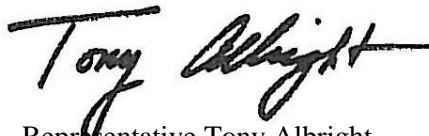
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cc: Kendall J. Powell, University of Minnesota Board of Regents
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