Do you believe that the University of Minnesota should follow the lead of the University of Michigan and completely divest its endowment from fossil companies?

I believe that our investments should reflect the mission of the University. With that in mind, I would definitely support an effort to gather more information on what divesting our endowment from fossil fuels would look like. I’d be supportive of an approach that moves us away from investment in fossil fuel companies while ensuring we are executing a strategy that yields a high return on investment with low risk.

The University of Minnesota Foundation East Gateway Project, overseen jointly by the Foundation and the Board of Regents, calls for the demolition of Argyle House and Dinnaken House. These two properties account for 900 beds of relatively affordable student housing. Do you support additional requirements to require the East Gateway Plan to construct an equal number of new units at a similarly affordable rate?

The Board of Regents must do more to support the creation and preservation of affordable housing options for students. While I am not fully familiar with the current status of the East Gateway Project in terms of what could still be negotiated (given the project is jointly managed), I would support additional asks surrounding development of new affordable housing units due to the displacement of the 900 beds that the current plan calls for.

Do you support paying all student workers a $15/hr minimum wage? Why or why not? If not, what alternative would you support to ensure students are fairly compensated for their work?

Student workers are part of the backbone of the University workforce. In tandem with the least disruptive set of budget implication terms, I would support the establishment of a $15/hr minimum wage for student workers.

Do you believe that the University should work with the Metropolitan Council to provide all Twin Cities students with a universal transit pass, funded by student service fees? If not, what alternative transit proposals would you support?

Yes. A collaboration of this type seems like a no brainer. Regarding the funding stream, if I recall correctly, past MSA surveys indicated the student population was split (or perhaps even slightly more against than for) a universal transit pass fully funded by student service fees. So, I’d look to the student body to discern that question in a fair manner and then as a Regent, in consultation with other
University stakeholders, I would advocate for the preference of students.

What gaps do you believe exist in the University’s current COVID-19 plan? Please consider areas such as public health, academic programs, student financial wellbeing, and disparities for different groups of students.

The University’s response to COVID-19 will undoubtedly be one of the most comprehensive and important plans from a conceptualization and operational standpoint that the University ever executes. With such a comprehensive plan comes unintended and unforeseen consequences. Currently and in hindsight, some areas I believe were/are gaps in the University’s COVID-19 related plans include:

- **Lack of consultation with key stakeholders.** I know students in particular felt frustrated that we weren’t consulted on key components of the Maroon and Gold Sunrise Plan (as one example) as it was being developed. While times of crisis often call for expedited decision making timelines, consultation is a cornerstone of the University’s commitment to shared governance and strategic planning and I think we failed to live up to that commitment.

- **Testing.** Including the expansion of testing location, availability and lack of weekend testing, and requirements for students living in University controlled housing.

- **Student well being.** Students are struggling, especially historically marginalized and disenfranchised student populations. The University could do a better job of assessing student needs and spreading the word about available student support resources through methods such as strategic communication initiatives.

- **Academic delivery.** Many students (especially those that are new to online learning) are frustrated with what can sometimes feel like a workload that’s doubled in intensity due to the change in modality to online courses. Adjustment levers like more flexible grading scales and new accommodations are helpful and I’m hoping to see what lessons we can learn and take with us post-pandemic regarding our institutional approach to academic delivery and support.

Would you support a proposal to rename Coffman Memorial Union, Middlebrook Hall, Nicholson Hall, and Coffey Hall given the racist and antisemitic legacies of the individuals for whom these buildings are named?

I am supportive of first establishing a clear naming/renaming policy developed with widespread input from the University community. As somebody who was intricately involved and active with the Board of Regents during the intense two weeks before the contentious April 2019 Board of Regents meeting, much of the reason things bubbled over at the end was due to a process and governance failure. After a new naming/renaming policy is developed, I would support utilizing the evaluation methods contained in the policy to determine the status or future names of Coffman
Memorial Union, Middlebrook Hall, Nicholson Hall, and Coffey Hall.

Do you support the establishment of a Civilian Police Accountability Council, composed of students, workers, and community members, to provide oversight on the University of Minnesota Police Department? What other measures do you believe should be taken to ensure that all students feel safe on campus?

Increased accountability, transparency, and oversight are generally good principles. In the case of establishing a CPAC, I would like to learn more about what other higher education institutions do and learn from their experiences and discover best practices when developing our own plan.

In terms of other campus safety measures, I’m very encouraged to see the comprehensive set of recommendations put together by Dr. Alexander. His framework and guidance are a fantastic resource to ground us as we work on next steps. Specifically, I’m happy to hear that President Gabel has already directly committed to a series of specific action items, including the implementation of body cameras for every UMPD officer.

Folks from all corners of the University must be involved in an authentic and genuine manner in order to yield a campus safety outcome that has community buy in.

Do you support ending the dining contract with Aramark Corporation and shifting to a self-operated dining system? Why or why not? What is your vision for student dining, student health, and the future of food sustainability on campus and in our community?

Yes! As many in MSA know, this issue has been one of the cores of my agenda as a student advocate. I led a committee of students from across the UMN-TC campus in 2017 that generated a comprehensive report for administration on recommendations for campus dining. Self-operated dining leads to increased student satisfaction and an overall better campus dining experience in both the retail and residential settings. When the University switched to contract dining (Aramark), we retained ownership of all capital equipment and other critical infrastructure to make switching back to self-op dining at any point an easier process. While COVID-19 naturally impeded progress, I’m eager to see the completion of the Future of UMN Dining Task Force’s work to launch an RFP side by side a self-op dining business plan for future consideration and action by the Board of Regents.

In terms of student health and food sustainability, we are in an advantageous position with the St. Paul Campus and our existing wealth of connections in the agricultural arena. There are many different ways we could partner with local sourcing outlets alongside the creation of our own targeted sustainable agriculture/horticulture programs in order to create a more sustainable campus food system.
Do you support returning ownership of the Cloquet Forestry Center to the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians? Why or why not?

In the spirit of full transparency, I am not familiar enough with the nuances of this issue to concretely stake out a position. I know the Cloquet Forestry Center has been an integral part of the fulfillment of the University's land grant and research mission, especially in Greater Minnesota. That said, I do not know the details regarding the ownership of it but I would definitely welcome the opportunity to learn more about the topic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored shortfalls in the University’s yearly budget. As the Board considers how to be good fiscal stewards of University dollars, how will you ensure that programs designed to meet the basic needs of students are prioritized?

Deciding what to do about the budget deficit facing the University as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic will soon be one of the most consequential decisions currently facing the Board of Regents. I would prioritize ensuring that the consequences of the deficit do not fall on the backs of students and other vulnerable stakeholders.

To live up to that approach, I would prioritize continuing to look at administrative cost reduction, decreases in capital expenditures (via reflections of lessons learned from COVID-19), and carefully crafted legislative requests that center strategic investments in expanding access and affordability.

Recent changes to Title IX by the Department of Education have allowed universities to raise the standard of evidence in sexual misconduct disciplinary hearings from a “preponderance of the evidence” to a higher “clear and convincing” standard. Which standard do you believe the University should use in adjudicating sexual misconduct claims against students and faculty? Additionally, do you think students reporting sexual misconduct should be subject to live cross-examination, as provided for in the same Title IX changes?

My understanding is that this issue has already (and recently) been decided by the Board of Regents. I am supportive of the change in the preponderance standard that was recommended by faculty and students and approved by the Board of Regents. We should always ensure we are in full compliance with Title IX.

Our student body does not represent the diversity of our state, with Black students accounting for 4.04% of enrollment, Hispanic/Latino students representing just 3.82% and Indigenous students making up just 0.08%. Additionally, students of color and Indigenous students face stark inequities in terms of academic support and access to basic needs once they are on campus. What can the University do, both in the long-term and the short-term, to eliminate these disparities and ensure higher education is accessible to students of color and Indigenous students?

As an African-American and Latino individual, I take access, opportunity, and eliminating barriers for BIPOC students very seriously. Year after year, students of color have responded to the SERU survey questions about sense of belonging with a
low rating. That speaks to the education inequities and a lack of social, emotional, and academic support coming from the University. That is not acceptable. A few things the University could do in the short and long term to begin addressing these detrimental disparities include:

- Increased targeted marketing and recruitment efforts that are executed in a genuine manner. We need to meet with folks in the community to make the University feel a more welcoming and approachable institution.
- Stop making harmful programmatic decisions such as the elimination of the three non-revenue sports that happened in October. For example, indoor track and field was an incredible gateway into the University for a diverse population. Eliminating opportunities for young adults of color to obtain a degree from the University as a student-athlete (which oftentimes comes with embedded resources that remove financial access barriers) sends a bad message.
- Increased mentoring opportunities for students. Data has shown that in particular, students of color are more successful when given access to comprehensive mentoring programs. This goes beyond traditional academic advising. The University must continue fully funding programs such as the Multicultural Center for Academic Excellence (MCAE) and President’s Emerging Scholars (PES) to ensure sustainability in attainment and recruitment of students of color.

If elected, I will be a persistent voice for access, opportunity, and the elimination of inequities for students of color. While the new strategic plan approved by the Board of Regents will be a great asset to this work, it’s even more impactful to have someone at the table with diverse personal and lived experience to push for accountability and outcomes.

The University of Minnesota - Twin Cities campus is classified by the USDA as a food desert. Do you believe the University should play an active role in ensuring healthy and affordable food options are available to students? Beyond the existing Nutritious U Food Pantry, what could the University do to prevent food insecurity?

Yes. This goes hand in hand with supporting a transition back to self-operated dining for the UMN-TC campus. The University has a responsibility to ensure the basic needs of students are met. As this question eludes to, institutional support for programs such as the Nutritious U Food Pantry must continue but the University also needs to continue to pursue innovative partnerships in the area of providing sustainable food sources to students. Community engagement will be critical in this work.

How do you plan to take a holistic approach to supporting both student and faculty mental health, considering the unique mental health needs of multicultural, LGBTQ+, and students with disabilities?
I am eager to hear a progress update on President Gabel’s mental health initiative. As a member of the University Senate, I have received previous status reports. Reflecting upon this question, I don’t recall hearing a lot of specific analysis of the University’s mental health support mechanisms for student populations with unique needs. That is super important and something I will highlight in board discussions if elected.

Do you feel that the current undergraduate grading system is successful in providing the best possible academic experience for our students? Do you support the expansion of S/N grading options beyond the COVID-19 pandemic? What other long-term changes to university grading policies would you like to see implemented?

I was very active in the push to bring back the expanded S/N grading opinion for the Spring 2021 semester. COVID-19 has magnified educational inequities in unique ways. While reaffirming that the faculty (in consultation with Deans and the Provost) have the ultimate independence in teaching and evaluation modality, utilizing the University’s shared governance structure to look at permanent changes to critical academic affairs areas such as grading policies is something I would wholeheartedly support.

How will you address the perception held by some members of the student body that the relationship between students and administrators is adversarial in nature? How will you navigate the differing timelines for change often held by students and other stakeholders in the University community?

I would be in a unique position to be able to address this dynamic given my extensive experience and perspective as a student advocate. As a Regent, I would work to expand engagement platforms and opportunities between the Board of Regents and the University community. Because I believe that accountability, oversight, and transparency are core functions of a governing board member, I would feel comfortable in strongly encouraging administration to ensure expectations are managed and authentic engagement is done amongst all University stakeholders. I totally understand, in an up close and personal way, that the leadership and governance of the University can seem slow moving and inaccessible. I’m eager to put my uniquely relevant perspective to work, specifically in this area, to improve perceptions and outcomes.

Do you support the transition to source the University’s energy from 100% renewable energy? If so, what should that process look like?

Yes. I believe the University is committed to this process and it will take some time. I don’t know all the process specifics but believe that we should be living up to our mission in everything we do. This includes strategic environmental sustainability.

Beyond what has been mentioned in this questionnaire, what other policies or issues would you hope to prioritize if selected for a position on the Board of Regents?
If elected to serve as a Regent, I would bring a timely perspective to the board during this extremely critical time for the University. As a pandemic student, I would bring a seasoned perspective and set of experiences that no other Regent has. Additionally, due to my knowledge of University governance and operations, I will be able to jump right into the conversations taking place on issues such as the budget deficit, enrollment strategy, and strategic plan evaluation metrics. I will also always be accessible, available, transparent about my thinking, and open to feedback.

Some specific issues I’m interested in:

- Intercollegiate Athletics strategic direction and accountability/oversight mechanisms.
- Increased affordability for Minnesota students looking to attend the University.
- Improving our relationship with MinnState to facilitate access pathways and partnerships for the benefit of non-traditional students.
- Expansion of the University’s outreach strategy to Greater Minnesota, specifically elevating UMN Extension and the many opportunities on the St. Paul Campus that increases a sense of belonging and community for rural students.
- Sustainable long-term tuition modeling for in-state and NRNR students.