First, I thank the MSA for taking the time to discuss the Regent election process and compile the questions below. Second, not having been a Regent before and not having access to much of the information I would like to have in answering these questions, my answers will not be as detailed as they may be after being a Regent for a period of time. With that in mind, I look forward to discussing issues like those below with students, faculty, administrators, and other stakeholders if elected as the 6th Congressional District Regent.

1. 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 look forward to learning more about how University funds are currently invested. I am also interested to hear (1) more about how the MSA classifies and identifies fossil companies and (2) proposals as to where funds could be reinvested that would continue to generate funding to support the University.*

2. 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?

*Access to affordable student housing across all of the University campuses is important to supporting a vibrant University community. I am looking forward to learning more about the access to affordable student housing at each of the five campuses and understanding what options are practicable to ensure that such housing is available to students.*

3. 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?

*I would want to understand the financial impacts of this decision on the overall University budget (including potential implementation on all five campuses). Additionally, I would need to better understand the financial consequences of this proposal and where the funding for the proposal would originate before I can provide further thoughts on this question.*
4. 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?

I am interested to learn more about the number of students on each campus that rely on public transportation to attend the University. Additionally, I would need to better understand the financial consequences of this proposal and where the funding for the proposal would originate before I can provide further thoughts on this question.

5. 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.

I have previously stated that I believe we all have a unique opportunity to redefine our communities as a result of the events of 2020 and into 2021. While I hope that COVID-19 will be a temporary challenge, we must decide what the future will look like for us all. We have discovered, through this process, that flexibility and adaptability are important to success. If elected as Regent, I will encourage my fellow Regents and the administration to put more emphasis on what the future could look like for the University versus just returning to the old way of doing this as expeditiously as possible.

6. 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 believe it is important that the University, across all campuses, evaluate the environment and culture that it has created and will foster in the future. It is important that the University be welcoming to all persons and be willing to critically evaluate its process for retaining naming of historic buildings or other honors. I look forward to discussing these issues with interested stakeholders if I am elected as Regent.

7. 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?

The University community, on all campuses, must feel safe when visiting, working, or studying. I would want to learn more about what is currently in place on each of the five campuses with respect to on-campus safety, including what challenges may need to be addressed but also what lessons learned on other campuses may be useful on others.
8. 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?

I am interested to learn more about what aspects of the current relationship with Aramark the MSA is seeking to change. Additionally, I would like to learn more about what other options for food service would be available on campus if such agreement were terminated and the financial impact of these alternatives to the University and, potentially, the overall cost of attendance.

9. 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?

I am interested in learning more about the specifics of these lands and the mechanics of various proposals that could be considered. In understanding this further, it will be critical to seek input from many stakeholders.

10. 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?

The University of Minnesota was established for the benefit of all Minnesotans. Therefore, it is important that the University, through oversight and transparency, ensure that its expenditures align with the mission of the University to provide world-class education, groundbreaking research, and meaningful community outreach.

11. 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?

It is critically important that the University be a place that can address sexual misconduct disciplinary proceedings in a prompt and complete manner. Additionally, victims of sexual misconduct should not be further traumatized by the process. While I hope that the new administration will address these Title IX changes at the federal level, the University can work in cooperation with other institutes of higher education on developing programs that meet the needs of the University community while also adhering to the law.
12. 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?

Addressing the concerns raised in this question will require a multi-faceted approach. At the administration and Regent level, we must understand why these particular populations are not attending the University (also understanding that there are many personal decisions made in selecting a higher education institution and being very careful of not defining any one group as a monolith). We must also identify barriers to enrollment and consider whether the historic way of doing things (standardized testing, as one example) are the way things should be done going forward or if other administration evaluations should be developed.

13. 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?

There are, unfortunately, many food desert locations across Minnesota. Solutions, as it relates to the University community, will likely require multiple approaches and various implementation strategies including access, options, and pricing. I would like to hear more about the individual student experience on this issue across the University campuses to better evaluate what the University could do to reduce food insecurity concerns.

14. 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?

Given that every person has unique mental health needs at a given point in time, I consider a “holistic” approach one that ensures a system is available that is accessible to all persons (students, faculty, staff, administrators, and others in the University community) and capable of providing services to meet the diversity of the University community, or having referral resources as necessary where the system does not have the expertise to address those specific mental health needs. These resources may include formal mental health programs, support programs, residential housing communities, and many others.
15. 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 am interested in learning more about the benefits and challenges with grading options at the University. This particular question raises concerns of what various stakeholders expect from the University as it relates to evaluation of student learning, including students, faculty, and future employers. I look forward to conversations with all these stakeholders to understand more about the various perspectives and models that could be implemented should those issues be presented to the Board.

16. 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?

When I was enrolled at the University of Minnesota Duluth, I had a negative experience with an administrator; I appreciate the MSA raising this concern. A large aspect of working in cooperation requires understanding what the other party or parties are experiencing or thinking. I look forward to interacting with both students and administrators, as well as other stakeholders, to understand these relationships and attempt to work collaboratively with both, when practicable.

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

The University’s campuses are served by different electric utilities. Each electric service provider fulfills customer needs with a different mix of fuels or purchased energy (coal, hydro, natural gas, nuclear, wind, or solar) and efforts are underway to transition to carbon free resources. For example, Minnesota Power and Xcel Energy have both announced that they will deliver 100% carbon free energy by 2050 – and Minnesota Power currently delivers 50% renewable energy to its customers. The University campuses should continue dialogue with all of its energy providers about the cost and practicability of increased renewable resources on the electric grid. Additionally, where feasible, the University could consider self-installations of renewable resources, so long as such installations were an economically efficient use of University resources.
18. 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?

I look forward to being a part of bringing gender and age diversity to the Board of Regents. I bring experience on governing bodies that implemented critical and difficult change to the operations of the organizations with an eye toward the future. I greatly value my degree from the University of Minnesota Duluth and want to be a part of ensuring that the University of Minnesota remains accessible to and successful for all Minnesotans. I look forward to meeting with the MSA after I am elected as Regent to hear from student leaders the issues current students across the state are experiencing, but also to celebrate the successes of students, programs, and campuses to learn and improve the higher education experience for the entire University Community.