



Student Association of Michigan

Students of Michigan,

My name is Eli Karttunen and I'm a junior at Michigan Technological University studying Economics and Mathematics. Recently, I was elected to serve as chair for the University Affairs Committee of the Student Association of Michigan. In this role, it is my mission to do whatever possible to improve the student experience at Michigan's 15 Public Universities.

It is quite evident that the current and future status of higher education in Michigan is uncertain, as the State Legislature has consistently made significant cuts to Higher Education funding in recent years with no end in sight. This has resulted in the elimination of many programs and services along with increased tuition rates for students. These changes have come at the direct expense of the students of Michigan's institutions of Higher Education, and while it is easy to blame the legislature for doing so, we also must take a comprehensive look at how universities have coped with reduced state appropriations. Under my direction, the University Affairs Committee will make a concerted effort to examine university finances to identify and advocate against frivolous costs being passed to students that do not enhance their experience.

Over the coming year, it will also be my goal to take the University Affairs Committee to the next level by shifting from primarily issue identification and education based to a more proactive approach in order to noticeably improve the experience of the students of Michigan by actively pursuing University decision making bodies to ensure that students are their first priority. The collaborative framework set forth by the UAC will facilitate idea sharing to provide universities with the resources to see how other universities have dealt with similar issues in order to resolve them in the most efficient manner possible in order to benefit students. To accomplish this, the committee will work with individual Student Government Associations across the state to compile issue reports to facilitate advocating on behalf of students on a statewide level.

While a lot of things may differ across the vast geography the state of Michigan has to offer, the interests of its students remain the same. Students deserve an affordable and high-quality university experience in order to prepare them with the skills they need to compete and succeed in the global job market. This is something the Student Association of Michigan's University Affairs Committee is ready to fight for, and I hope you are too. It is time to stand up for what we believe in and make a change.

Thank you,

Eli Karttunen
University Affairs Committee Chair
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