Mission Fulfillment Committee

October 2026

October 8, 2026

10:00 a.m.

Boardroom, McNamara Alumni Center

1. 2026–27 Committee Work Plan
Docket Item Summary - 3
2026–27 Committee Work Plan - 5

2. Update on AI Hub
Docket Item Summary - 7
Presentation Materials - 9

3. The First-Year Experience
Docket Item Summary - 22
Background Materials - 24
Presentation Materials - 35

4. Consent Report - Review/Action
Docket Item Summary - 48
Academic Program Changes - 50

5. Information Items
Docket Item Summary - 52
Annual Report on Academic Program Changes - 54
Report to the State of Minnesota: Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Technical Assistance Center Annual Report - 69
University, Student, Faculty, and Staff Activities and Awards - 78

BOARD OF REGENTS
DOCKET ITEM SUMMARY

Mission Fulfillment **October 8, 2026**

AGENDA ITEM: 2026–27 Committee Work Plan

☐ **Review** ☐ **Review + Action** ☐ **Action** ☒ **Discussion**

☐ *This is a report required by Board policy.*

PRESENTERS: Regent Tadd M. Johnson
Gretchen Ritter, Executive Vice President and Provost

PURPOSE & KEY POINTS

The purpose of this item is to review and discuss the 2026–27 committee work plan.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Board of Regents Policy: *Board Operations and Agenda Guidelines* describes the role of the Mission Fulfillment Committee as follows:

> The Mission Fulfillment Committee oversees and makes recommendations to the Board related to the University's mission, as articulated in Board of Regents Policy: *Mission Statement* and carried out on five campuses and across the state, the nation, and the world. The committee oversees and advises the administration on academic priorities, activities, programs, and initiatives central to the threefold mission of research and discovery, teaching and learning, and outreach and public service.
>
> Specifically, this committee approves on behalf of the Board:
>
> - academic matters reserved to the Board as defined by Board of Regents Policy: *Reservation and Delegation of Authority* Article I, Section V.
>
> This committee provides oversight of:
>
> - academic program reviews and strategic plans of academic units;
> - admissions practices, demographic trends, and enrollment planning;
> - curricular and co-curricular educational, research, and engagement opportunities;
> - diversity and campus climate;
> - faculty development, recruitment, and retention;
> - faculty promotion and tenure;
> - international partnerships, research, and educational programs;

- issues related to the University's academic profile such as accreditation, reputation, and academic ranking;
- online learning;
- public engagement and community partnerships that fulfill the University’s land-grant mission;
- scholarship, artistic activity, and commercialization of technology and intellectual property;
- sponsored projects and research support infrastructures;
- student affairs, student wellness, and the student experience;
- student experience and academic performance of student-athletes;
- undergraduate, graduate, and professional education.

Mission Fulfillment Committee
2026–27 Work Plan

Date	Topics
2026	
October 8–9	• **2026–27 Committee Work Plan** • **Update on AI Hub** The committee will hear an update on the AI Hub. The presentation will include early successes, next steps, and long-term plans. • **The First-Year Experience** This item will engage the committee in a discussion of the University's commitment to the undergraduate first-year experience, highlight first-year experience initiatives and goals, and describe their impact. • **Consent Report** • **Information Items** ○ Annual Report on Academic Program Changes ○ Completed Comprehensive Review of Board Policy ○ Report to the State of Minnesota
December 10–11	• **Annual Report on the State of the University Research Enterprise** The committee will receive the annual report on the status of the University's research and technology commercialization enterprise. The presentation will focus on the top initiatives being advanced this academic year. • **Potential Elevate Extraordinary 2030 Implementation Topic*** This discussion will examine an implementation area of the Elevate Extraordinary 2030 University Strategic Plan being advanced this academic year. The specific area will be identified closer to the meeting date. • **Consent Report** • **Information Items**
2027	
February 11–12	• **Collaboration with Minnesota State** This item will expand the committee's understanding of the partnerships and collaborations between the University and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. The discussion will focus on programs and initiatives that are creating alignment and cooperation between Minnesota's two higher education systems. • **The University's Mission: Securing Public Trust** The committee will explore how the University, through its mission and land-grant charge, serves the people of Minnesota. The discussion will explore how the University is working to advance Minnesota's future through transformative education, groundbreaking research, and deep community engagement. • **Consent Report** • **Information Items** ○ [Reports to the State of Minnesota]

April 8–9	• **University Enrollment Plan: Update** The committee will receive an update on progress to operationalize the University Enrollment Plan, approved by the committee at the June 2026 meeting. • **Consent Report** • **Information Items**
June 10–11	• **Potential Elevate Extraordinary 2030 Implementation Topic*** • **Consent Report** • **Information Items**

*Potential topics related to the implementation of the Elevate Extraordinary 2030 University Strategic Plan that may be added to a committee agenda this year include:

- **Growing Minnesota's Workforce:** This item will highlight the University's efforts to drive economic development and address the state's workforce needs, including partnerships with Minnesota employers to expand and upskill the talent pool.
- **Online Learning Hub Update:** The committee will receive an update on progress to develop and implement a comprehensive University-wide online hub.
- **Spatial Research, Teaching, and Outreach Across the University:** The committee will learn about how the University is leading as the nation's first "spatial university" and innovating in the field of spatial science.

Other potential topics that could be added to a committee agenda include the following:

- **One University, Five Campuses:** This item will highlight coordination between the University's five campuses, while acknowledging their distinctiveness and unique contributions. Committee members will hear about ongoing efforts to remove barriers, create opportunities, and drive success in recruiting, admissions, and enrollment.
- **Student Digital Lifecycle Modernization:** In alignment with the 2026–27 Board priorities, this item will provide the committee with a primer on the early stages of efforts to modernize the student digital systems and improve student and alumni experience.
- **Student Experience Across the University:** The committee will discuss ways that the University positions its students for success from application through graduation, as well as opportunities for improvement and increased collaboration.
- **International Student Enrollment and Impact:** This item will provide the committee with an overview of the current state of international enrollment and the impact of international students on the University's tripartite mission.

BOARD OF REGENTS
DOCKET ITEM SUMMARY

Mission Fulfillment **October 8, 2026**

AGENDA ITEM: Update on AI Hub

☐ **Review** ☐ **Review + Action** ☐ **Action** ☒ **Discussion**

☐ *This is a report required by Board policy.*

PRESENTERS: Galin Jones, Interim Vice Provost for Artificial Intelligence

PURPOSE & KEY POINTS

The purpose of this item is to provide an update on the launch, early progress, and future strategy of the University of Minnesota AI Hub. The presentation outlines the AI Hub's strategic leadership, guiding principles, core focus areas, and roadmap for institutional integration.

Key points include:

- **Vision and Leadership**: Positioning the University at the forefront of human-centered AI by serving as the central hub for local AI research, translation, and workforce training.
- **Guiding Principles**: Implementation anchored in ethical and responsible use; transparency and explainability; equity, inclusion, and fairness; data privacy and security; and literacy, sustainability, and adaptability.
- **Three Strategic Pillars**:
    - Teaching and Learning: Advancing AI literacy through student and instructor training (known as GenAI+U), unit-specific blueprints for teaching and curricular strategy, and hands-on experiences such as the AI Makerspace and AI Quests.
    - Research and Infrastructure: Providing secure access to institutional AI tools (AI Gateway, ChatGPT EDU), launching a centralized guidance portal (ai.umn.edu), and offering training for faculty and staff.
    - Engagement: Driving ecosystem partner integration, workforce upskilling, and community outreach.
- **Future Roadmap**: Priorities for the next six months include microcredentials, junior faculty workshops, governance workgroups, and expanded regional National Science Foundation (NSF) initiatives.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Elevate Extraordinary 2030 University Strategic Plan identifies AI as a critical tool for evolution and innovation across the following strategic imperatives and focus areas:

- **Strategic Imperative #2:** Innovate to transform the future of learning.

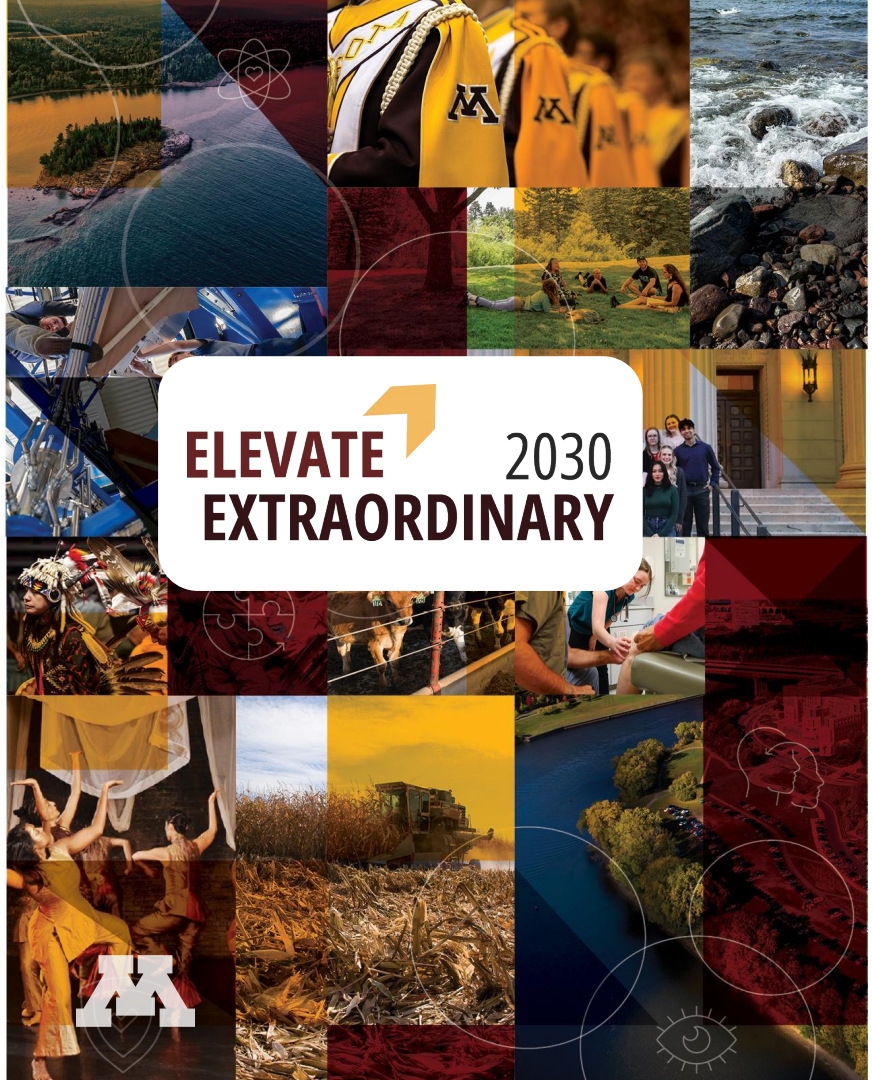
    - **Focus Area**: Lead AI innovation in teaching and learning through development of a comprehensive AI educational strategy for all learners, and create new opportunities for professional development in AI for the University of Minnesota's teaching workforce.

- **Strategic Imperative #4:** Advance our excellence to lead in the discovery and application of sustainable solutions, improving environmental, human, plant, and animal health.
    - **Focus Area**: Invest in field-defining research to advance the frontiers of AI.

- **Strategic Imperative #5:** Secure our future as a world-class university by strategically investing in our talented workforce, operations, and facilities.
    - **Focus Area**: Invest in the University of Minnesota's workforce to recruit and retain talented faculty and staff and support them with cutting-edge technology and other tools that contribute to the university's mission.

The committee previously discussed this topic at the following meeting:

- February 2026: *Advancing the University's Mission with AI*, Mission Fulfillment Committee



Update on the AI Hub

Board of Regents
Mission Fulfillment Committee
October 8, 2026

Galin Jones, PhD
Interim Vice Provost for Artificial Intelligence and Lynn Y. S. Lin Professor of Statistics

AI is embedded into Elevate Extraordinary 2030



01

Prepare students to be fully engaged and active in our state, nation and world



02

Innovate to transform the future of learning



03

Serve communities through knowledge creation and exchange in the arts, health, healthcare, and the economy



04

Advance our excellence to lead in the discovery and application of sustainable solutions, improving environmental, human, plant and animal health



05

Secure our future as a world-class university by strategically investing in our talented workforce, operations and facilities

Launch of the AI Hub, April 22

Convening

- **Launch Catalyst:** Establishes the UMN AI Hub as the strategic leader and coordinator for local AI research, translation, teaching and learning, and workforce training.
- **Strategic Leadership Lunch:** Co-hosted with Plug and Play. Bringing industry, government, and and academia together to map common goals.

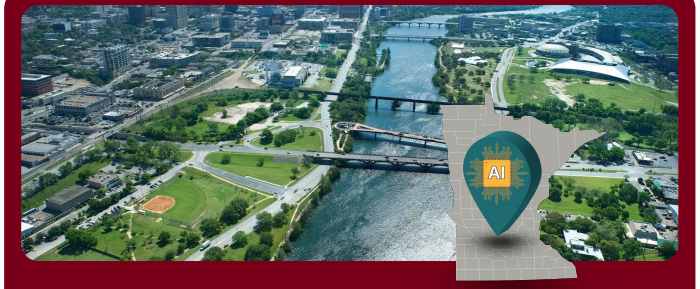


About the University of Minnesota AI Hub

The University of Minnesota AI Hub connects, coordinates, and amplifies AI across **research, teaching and learning, and community engagement** to drive real-world impact — while advancing responsible, human-centered innovation for Minnesota and beyond.

Vision

To position the University of Minnesota at the forefront of human-centered AI, empowering every learner, accelerating discovery, and driving ethical innovation for the benefit of Minnesota and the world.



Prepare the University and the state for an AI-augmented future.

Guiding Principles for AI Implementation

Implementation of AI at the University of Minnesota must be guided by principles that ensure accountability, equity, and transparency while safeguarding academic integrity, critical thinking, and data privacy.



01

Ethical & Responsible Use

AI should support learning, truth, academic integrity, and human autonomy while aligning with university values.



02

Transparency & Explainability

AI systems should be documented, accountable, and subject to human oversight, especially for high-impact decisions.



03

Equity, Inclusion & Fairness

AI should promote inclusion, undergo equity reviews, and follow universal design standards to reduce bias.



04

Data Privacy & Security

AI tools and vendor contracts should protect personal data, privacy, and security.



05

Literacy & Adaptability

The university should build AI literacy and shared governance through flexible, discipline-specific policies.


Which AI tools should you use?
UMN provides licenses for a growing set of AI tools, each reviewed for how it handles university data.
Browse the Tools Directory →
Approved
Google Gemini
Google
Summarize information, answer questions, provide writing feedback, create images, and more.
Pricing Model: Free
Admin
Faculty & Instructors
Researchers
Students
Access Tool
Data Rules
Approved
Microsoft Copilot
Microsoft
Generate content, code, draft emails, and summarize information.
Pricing Model: Free
Admin
Faculty & Instructors
Researchers
Students
Access Tool
Data Rules
Approved
ChatGPT EDU
OpenAI
Conversational chat interface to brainstorm ideas, analyze data, draft and review code, and more. Available to: Faculty, staff, and graduate students with an EFS chartstring
Pricing Model: Subscription cost
Admin
Faculty & Instructors
Researchers
Students
Access Tool
Data Rules
University of Minnesota Twin Cities
One Stop
MyU
Search UMN
NEWS & STORIES
ABOUT THE AI HUB
CONTACT & SUPPORT
The AI Hub
Policies & Guidance →
Training & Events →
AI Tool Directory
YOUR CENTRAL AI RESOURCE
The front door to AI at the U
Whatever your role at the University of Minnesota, the AI Hub connects you with the tools, training, and policies you need to use AI effectively.
Search tools, policy guidance, upcoming workshops, and more...
Search
GenAI+U
INSTRUCTOR AI LITERACY RESOURCE
GenAI+U
STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE

The first 6 months

Teaching & Learning

Advancing AI literacy across the University, developing a comprehensive strategy, and providing practical, hands-on experience

Research & Infrastructure

Providing comprehensive access to essential AI tools, training opportunities, and ai.umn.edu as a front door for activities and resources.

Engagement

Driving broad community outreach, working with ecosystem partners, and providing industry-aligned training to support professional development.

Teaching & Learning

Advancing AI literacy across the University through structured training, practical blueprints, and interactive experiences.

Literacy Training

GenAI+U Student and GenAI+U Instructor Literacy Training

AI Blueprints

Unit-specific AI pedagogical and curricular strategy

Makerspace & Quests

Expanding access to the AI Makerspace; student AI Quests working on real world problems



Research & Infrastructure

Providing centralized access to core AI tools, guidance resources, and training across the institution.

Access to Tools

Secure access to institutional tools including AI Gateway and ChatGPT EDU.

Guidance Portal

Centralized front door for institutional guidance, policies, and resources at ai.umn.edu.

Training & Growth

Ongoing training opportunities, workshops, and skill-building initiatives for faculty and staff.



Engagement

NSF AI Ready TechAccess

Ecosystem partner integration & workforce development

Community Outreach

Broad public engagement and local educational initiatives

Workforce Upskilling

Industry-aligned training & professional development



The next 6 months

Teaching & Learning

- Guides
- Teaching Fellows
- Microcredentials

Research & Infrastructure

- Junior Faculty Workshops
- Distinguished AI Fellows
- HITRUST Certification
- Governance/HRPP Workgroup
- NAIRR Workshop

Engagement

- NSF Regional Infrastructure Hub
- Future of Work Workshop with DEED
- AirLab

Collaboration

- Communications
- AIDE
- Intake and AI Case Studies

Community

- AI Forum
- Jubilee Video
- Analog day
- WiADS
- K-12 Program Expansion

Workforce Impact

Workforce Training

Providing training to adult learners in the workforce with funding from DEED

Strategic Planning

Partnering with MMB and DEED on the Future of Work

Opportunity@Work on AI workforce pathways

Statewide Infrastructure

Working with Higher Ed, Industry, and Government to develop infrastructure and training

Moonshots

Precision Agriculture & Water Stewardship

Advancing innovation to decouple agricultural growth from environmental destruction by using AI to synchronize our farming *with* nature.

Learning Health Systems

Catalyze innovation with clinical care and scientific evaluation forming a continuous, real-time learning and feedback loop.

Statewide Industrial Co-Innovation

Transform Minnesota’s diverse, high-performing corporate landscapes by acting as a central AI utility hub to connect our state's technology and industrial base

BOARD OF REGENTS
DOCKET ITEM SUMMARY

Mission Fulfillment **October 8, 2026**

AGENDA ITEM: The First-Year Experience

☐ **Review** ☐ **Review + Action** ☐ **Action** ☒ **Discussion**

☐ *This is a report required by Board policy.*

PRESENTERS: Alex Anderson, Assistant Professor of English and Director of the First-Year Seminar, Crookston campus
Julie Grossman, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programs, College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, Twin Cities campus
Wendy Reed, Dean, Swenson College of Science and Engineering, Duluth campus

PURPOSE & KEY POINTS

The purpose of this item is to engage the committee in a discussion of the University's commitment to the undergraduate first-year experience, highlight first-year experience initiatives and goals, and describe their impact. The committee will discuss approaches that help with student retention and graduation rates, such as having students live in University housing.

The presentation will highlight specific campus efforts, initiatives, and courses for first-year students including:

- Crookston campus: Integrates foundational transition courses (UMC 1200 and UMC 1202) alongside the "Doing MORE on Campus" assignment to prompt ownership of the University experience through campus event participation.
- Twin Cities campus (College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences): Features small, faculty-taught courses (less than 25 students) incorporating experiential learning, field trips, and career exploration to foster community and connect students with faculty.
- Duluth campus (Swenson College of Science and Engineering): Utilizes philanthropically supported Swenson Active and Innovative Learning (SAIL) programming to embed research directly into first-year engineering, science, and math curricula, boosting first-year retention and professional STEM identity.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Elevate Extraordinary 2030 University Strategic Plan identifies student success and retention as a critical element of the University's academic mission, and is included across the following strategic imperatives and focus areas:

- **Strategic Imperative #1:** Prepare students to be fully engaged and active in our state, nation, and world.
    - **Focus Area**: Bring to life "One University on Five Campuses" to ensure student access to resources and opportunities regardless of home campus.

- **Strategic Imperative #2:** Innovate to transform the future of learning.
    - **Focus Area**: Design new models of learning that meet students/learners where they are and address emerging realities and opportunities in higher education.

SCSE Swenson Active and Innovative Learning (SAIL): Year 3 Updates

The SCSE SAIL program began with the Imagination Phase, asking faculty to imagine a different kind of classroom that provided hands-on, work-ready experiences for all SCSE students. From there, we've moved into the Pilot Phase, with faculty from all ten SCSE departments reimagining their courses and embedding CUREs into courses at all academic levels. Students have presented their work at the SAIL Showcase, and we conducted a large research study to evaluate the impacts of SAIL on student success. As we move into the full Implementation Phase, we provide a brief update below about some of our successes.

Faculty Imagination and Innovations

In spring 2023, we announced a call for proposals for our imagination phase. We had an excellent response, including:

- 20 total projects from eight SCSE departments
- 39 SCSE faculty participants
- $170,476.94 in project funding was disseminated:
  - $77,800 in summer faculty stipends
  - $14,000 professional development funds
  - $68.176.94 supplies
  - $10,500 to undergraduate student assistant salaries

Projects include groups of faculty working together to develop exciting research and design projects for first year students to complete to individual faculty working on exciting vertical integration projects in upper division courses that will build on the skills our future first year students will develop. Several projects were piloted in academic year 2023-24, and the others have plans for piloting in fall 2024. In November 2023, participating faculty created posters describing their projects and shared their creativity with colleagues during a poster session and faculty social. Summaries of all the projects can be found in the addendum.

Student participation in CUREs and SAIL Showcase

Beginning in spring 2025, we have held a SAIL Showcase highlighting the research completed in SCSE courses. Students from across SCSE departments participate, many presenting their first ever scientific research poster. Participation in the SAIL Showcase has continuously increased, as has the overall number of student participants in SCSE courses with embedded CUREs.

Term	Number of Posters at SAIL showcase	Number of Student Participants in SAIL Showcase	Total Student Participants in CURE experiences
Spring 2025	113	728	1253
Fall 2025	87	780	1505
Spring 2026	175	817	1325

CURE Initiative Research on Student Outcomes

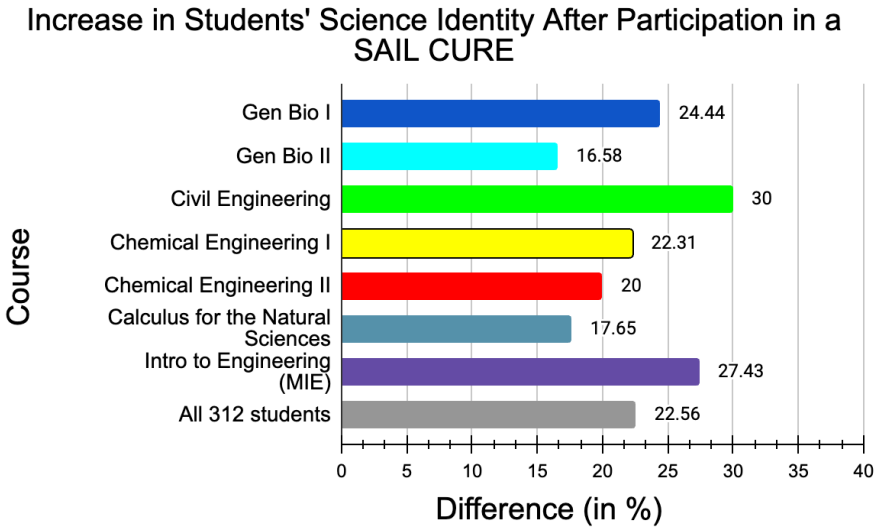
The purpose of our CURE initiative is to increase student outcomes in multiple areas that lead to increased student success, retention, and persistence towards degree completion. Published studies of CUREs have resulted in positive student outcomes in four major areas[1]:

1. Cognitive gains such as collaboration, communication, and experimental design skills
2. Psychosocial gains such as increased confidence, self-efficacy, and scientific identity
3. Behavioral gains such as staying in a science major
4. Affective and other "non-cognitive" gains such as enjoying coursework more

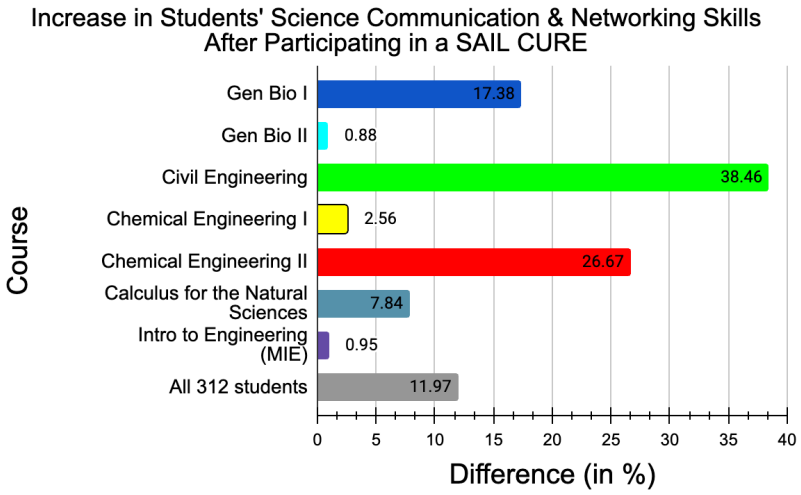
We conducted a large study of seven courses across five departments that incorporated a Course-based Undergraduate Research Experience (CURE) into an existing course. 721 students participated in these CUREs (some students participated in more than one CURE course), and 312 students completed both a pre- and post-course survey allowing us to compare their results before and after participation (a 43% participation rate.) Students were asked to self report their ratings of their Science Identity, their Self-Efficacy skills, and their Communication and Networking Skills. We compared the differences in these self reported ratings after participation in the CURE compared to before participating and found significant gains in several areas.

Science Identity

Students in all courses participating in the CUREs initiative demonstrated large gains in their own Science Identity. Several publications have reported that "science identity" is a relevant identity choice for engineering students in the early years of their training. Future studies will examine if increased science identity leads to increased retention in STEM majors.



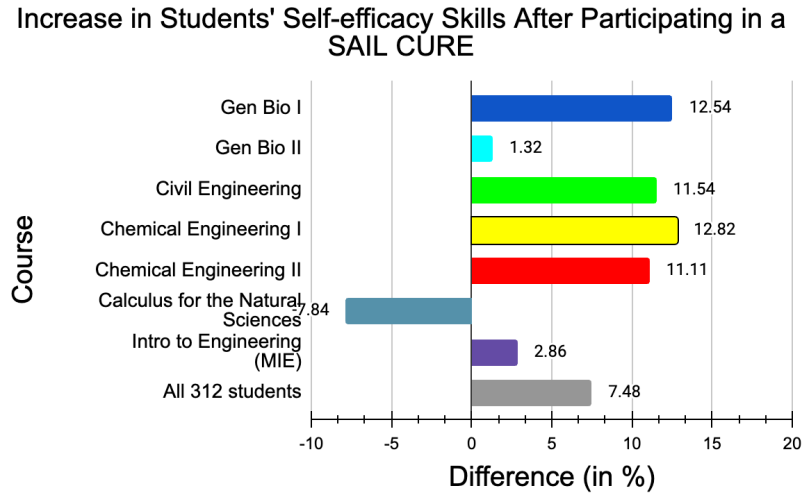
Communication/networking



Each course had a unique implementation of a CURE in their course. Several courses had a specific emphasis on communication and networking in their CURE, and this has resulted in a strong gain in these skills post CURE participation. For example, the Civil Engineering project paired a Design Team with a Build Team and mid semester specific design instructions had to be passed between teams to build a concrete bridge or water purification system. Faculty provided instructional scaffolding that helped students learn this skill with particular importance to the civil engineering industry - a skill that will help them be workforce read post graduation.

Self efficacy

Self efficacy can be described as one's belief in their ability to achieve in STEM, often supported by completing difficult tasks or by being supported by peers in accomplishing their work. Different implementations of CUREs again lead to different outcomes in this area. As an example, the Chemical Engineering department didn't just transform one course; they transformed a sequence of eight courses at different levels of the undergraduate curriculum to interact with a sophisticated piece of chemical engineering equipment called a distillation column. Students across courses partnered on data collection, analysis, and interpretation, with senior level students mentoring juniors, juniors mentoring sophomores, and sophomores mentoring first year students. This intentional vertical mentoring ladder helped



students complete complex data tasks while being supported by their peers leading to big gains in self efficacy.

Summary

The 2026 Spring SAIL report demonstrates that the Swenson Active and Innovative Learning initiative has successfully moved from pilot to scaled implementation, embedding course-based undergraduate research experiences across the College of Science and Engineering. With broad faculty participation and more than 1,000 students engaged annually, SAIL delivers measurable gains in student confidence, science identity, collaboration, and applied problem-solving skills. The model emphasizes hands-on, team-based learning with vertical integration across class years, creating a more engaging and career-relevant academic experience.

Conclusion

SAIL represents a proven, scalable model for transforming undergraduate STEM education, with strong early indicators that it will improve student retention, strengthen workforce readiness, and differentiate student experience. With demonstrated faculty buy-in, measurable student outcomes, and the ability to reach large numbers of students, SAIL is well-positioned for further investment and expansion, offering a compelling opportunity to drive long-term institutional impact.

University of Minnesota
Rochester

Rochester Campus First-Year Experience

Evidence-Based Practices to Promote Belonging, Well-being and First-to-Second Year Retention

- **New Raptor Ready Week**: Experiential Learning Orientation
- **Residential Requirement** in the First-Year Residence Hall (Student Life Center)
- **Just Talk Civil Dialogue Experience**
- **Living Learning Communities** for ***all*** first-year students [Big City, Big Future; Catalyst; Arts & Creativity; Changemakers; Elevate; First Gen; Gamers; Global Threads; Leadership; Medtech; Momentum; Trailblazers; Well-Being & Healthy Living; WISH]



LLCs have a sophomore peer mentor, an assigned Resident Assistant, a connected faculty member, a core curriculum advanced through regular gatherings in the residence hall and topic-specific experiences designed to build community and belonging.

- **Success Coaching** - individualized health career exploration guidance, life coaching and academic advising.
- **Required Health Career Exploration Course** (1 credit, taught by a Success Coach)
- **Personalized Care Team** - confidential sharing of student concerns by faculty, staff, residence life assistants, and community mentors for professional Care Team review to discern and ensure timely individualized intervention or support.
- **Community Engagement** - fall Community Day of Service and course options for community-engaged learning.
- **First-Year Experience Course** - This health-themed course supports student academic success with curated content including effective academic skills, metacognition based on learning research and team-based learning.

Nature of Life

COLLEGE OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Our Program Mission

The Nature of Life (NOL) Program helps CBS undergraduates **build community**, **create connections**, and develop the **skills, self-awareness, and habits of mind** that research shows contributes to success in college and beyond. Our mission is to help students discover and become the best version of themselves.

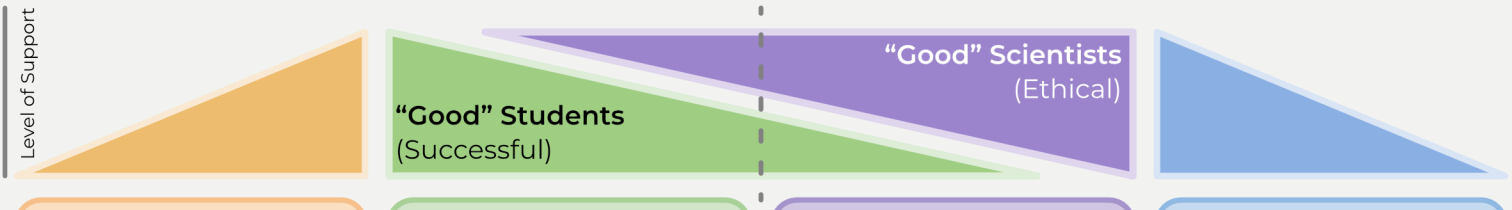
Our Core Principles

Foster community between students, staff, and faculty within CBS and UMN

Build metacognition and promote critical reflection as a practice for growth

Leverage evidence-based teaching strategies to continually improve our program

Nature of Life Course Series & Timeline





NOL Summer Experience

Incoming Summer

- Two immersive biology modules with CBS faculty and postdoc educators
- First connections with CBS peers, staff, and faculty
- Learn CBS and UMN traditions and culture, like the Rouser and Alma Mater
- Most students attend **NOL@Itasca**; some students attend **NOL@Cedar Creek**

Itasca Expo

Students present what they learned in academic modules in a conference-style poster presentation to the NOL@Itasca community; students are evaluated on creativity and communication.



BIOL 1805

First Semester

- Weekly in-person class in small groups of ~9-11, led by student leaders and CBS faculty/staff
- Topics include learning strategies, integrity, mental wellbeing and resilience, getting involved on campus and in research, etc.
- Emphasis on building skills for success; becoming **'good'/ successful students**

Persona Project

Students create a **'CBS Persona'** and explore campus to collect CBS and UMN resources.

They apply those resources to help their CBS Persona overcome challenges common to first-semester CBS students.



BIOL 1806

Second Semester

- Weekly in-person class in small groups, with more direction by student leaders and CBS faculty
- More advanced topics like diversity and integrity in the biological sciences, engaging in scientific literature and figures, bioethics, etc.
- More emphasis on being a positive force in the world; becoming **'good'/ ethical scientists**

Biology Saves the World

Students conduct an informational interview of a **'Focus Scientist'**, a UMN researcher in the biological sciences, learning about their professional and personal journey through science. They present on their Focus Scientist at an Expo-style poster session.



BIOL 1807

Third Semester

- Online, self-directed, semi-asynchronous course; guided by upper-division student leaders
- Students define and refine goals and take meaningful steps toward their academic and professional future
- Tackles the **'Sophomore Slump'** phenomenon by encouraging students to strategically utilize UMN and CBS resources

Progress Project

Students define an academic or professional area to make progress towards and document their efforts in a **'Progress Portfolio'**. Students with similar areas of interest work together in small groups (3-4) for support and accountability.

Nature of Life

COLLEGE OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Nature of Life Team & Student Leadership

NOL is run by dedicated full-time CBS staff who design, implement, and deliver every part of the program. Student leaders play an essential role in the experience, providing **near-peer mentorship** at critical timepoints in students' academic and professional development.



Brittany Eich
Program Director



Andy Fillmore
Associate Director



Alexander Kulacki
Associate Director

Peer Mentors (PMs)

Guide incoming students through NOL@Itasca and NOL@Cedar Creek and welcome them to the CBS community; drawn from all class years and majors in CBS

Sophomore Guild Leaders (SGLs)

Lead small groups in BIOL 1805/1806 to facilitate in-class discussions, give individualized feedback to students, and support student growth all throughout the first year

Junior Guild Leaders (JGLs)

Support leadership development of the SGLs through weekly trainings; give feedback on the first year course; design, implement, and assess course activities

Graders

Give individualized feedback to BIOL 1807 students; promote UMN /CBS resources that advance students' personal / career goals; give feedback on the second-year course activities

Senior Peer Mentors (SPMs)

Train and support the Peer Mentor team during NOL@Itasca and NOL@Cedar Creek; help develop and administer the program from planning to delivery

Senior Program Assistants (SPAs)

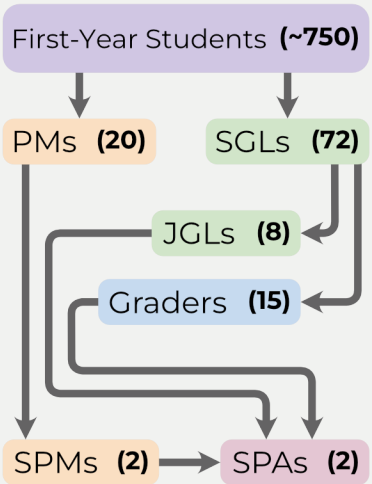
Train and support the Peer Mentor team during NOL@Itasca and NOL@Cedar Creek; help develop and administer the program from planning to delivery

NOL By the Numbers

~1,500 students taught in summer, first-year, and second year classes

~120 student leaders employed each year

Student Leadership Pipeline



NOL Summer Experiences

The Nature of Life Summer Experiences are a unique element of CBS's first-year support. They are key to building students' excitement and setting expectations for their time in CBS.









NOL@Itasca

- 4-day/3-night program between June to July at Itasca Biological Station & Laboratories (IBSL); students stay in cabins and eat all meals on-station
- Two academic modules spanning the breadth of the biological sciences; two 'mini-modules' focusing on scientific support skills and connecting with faculty
- UMN Traditions evening program where students engage with university history and culture, including the Rouser/Alma Mater
- Free time opportunities to visit the Mississippi headwaters, boat on Lake Itasca, play sports and games with new friends

Nature of Research

- Students who transfer into CBS from other colleges or from outside UMN take **BIOL 3001: Nature of Science and Research**
- 1-semester course built to meet the specific needs of transfer students with near-peer mentors like those in NOL
- Integrates transfer students into CBS and connects them with campus opportunities and resources suited to those with more college or life experience





NOL@Cedar Creek

- 1-day program in August & September at CCESR
- Accommodates students unable to attend NOL@Itasca (e.g., international, medical concerns)

FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE

University of Minnesota | CFANS College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences

Our First Year Experience (CFAN 1480) is a 2-credit course offered to first-year students in fall semester designed to help you feel at home at the University of Minnesota, build meaningful connections with your professors and peers, and dive into the big, real-world challenges CFANS students tackle every day, like climate change, food security, and sustainability. Through fun off-campus learning adventures, engaging class topics, and time to reflect on your own values and goals, you'll start shaping your academic and career path with confidence. Plus, you'll get to know all the awesome resources available to you, from career support to study abroad to wellness and research. **Talk with your advisor when you register during orientation if you are interested!**



The class formed a sense of community, because the class was smaller, we were able to learn everyone's names and learn more about them as people.



My first-year experience really helped me feel at home in CFANS... It didn't feel like a huge, scary college anymore. Instead, it made CFANS feel like a community where I belonged.



Benefits:

- **Engage in our college hallmark: hands-on learning** focused on topics related to positive global change, such as participating in a wild rice harvest in a native community, or collaborating with the Minnesota Zoo on animal health
- **Connect with a supportive network of professors and fellow students** who share your academic interests through lecture, discussion, and experiential education
- **Develop a better sense of your values** and how to use these to explore career paths during college
- **Gain exposure to resources and strategies** to guide and support you in navigating and excelling in college life from day one
- **Explore your academic passions** as you are immerse in relevant topics that span across CFANS disciplines
- **Build community, attend informative panels, and develop your leadership skills** at the FYE Kickoff (Tuesday 9/22 5:30-7:30 p.m.) and FYE Banquet (Tuesday 12/2 5:30-7:30 p.m.)

Section 001 - Exploring Fungi, from Forest to Farm to Fork
Megan McCaghey, Becca Hall, Robert Blanchette
Thursdays, 1:30-2:45 p.m.
Saturday 9/19-Sunday 9/20 Cloquet Forestry Center Overnight
Whether hiding beneath the forest duff, churning away in dough, or absorbing within the cells of crop plants, fungi can be found all around us. They fulfill important roles in ecosystems and cuisines and both limit and support crop production. This course features the diversity and biology of fungi within three systems: forests, food production, and Minnesota crops. You will learn about the spectra of fungal relationships with the surrounding environment and other living things, ranging from friend to foe. We will forage for fungi during an overnight trip to the UMN Cloquet Forestry Center, explore UMN research facilities studying plant pathogens, and visit a Twin Cities fungal-food production site. Through hands-on lab activities, you will grow mushrooms and isolate fungal pathogens from diseased plants. We will feature a broad array of courses and careers to further explore fungi in plant pathology, food science, and forestry (among other related areas).

Section 002 - Research to Farm to Table: How Plants Inform Food Systems
Katy Guthrie & Candy Hirsch
Tuesdays, 10-11:15 a.m.
Friday 10/16 Southern MN Farm Harvest Tour, Tuesday 11/17 WinField United Tour
Ever wondered how our food system works—and how research is used to make decisions at every step? In this First-Year Experience course, you'll explore the science behind plant breeding and how crops move from research fields to farms and beyond. Through visits to local breeding programs, farms, and agricultural organizations, you'll see firsthand how decisions are made across the food system. Along the way, you'll build foundational skills in data collection, handling and interpretation—tools that are essential across plant science, agriculture, and many career paths. This course is designed to connect classroom learning to real-world challenges while setting you up for success in your degree and future career.

Section 003 - Ways of Knowing Science
Craig Hassel
Thursdays, 3–4:15 p.m.
Friday 9/11-Sunday 9/13 Itasca Biological Station Wild Rice Overnight
All cultures are embedded within their own system of knowledge. Each culture offers unique approaches to identifying problems, surfacing or producing knowledge and developing solutions to those problems. In this class, field trip experiences will offer you glimpses into culturally different ways of knowing. The class will go to Lake Itasca and the White Earth Indian Reservation where we experience a traditional wild ricing camp hosted by the Anishinaabe community. You will be guided by White Earth Elders as you canoe to participate in the wild rice lake harvesting of rice, make traditional crafts, jam from berries, medicine salves from plants, and listen to traditional storytelling from Elders around a campfire as they share their relationship with wild rice and teach how they gain and maintain knowledge through ceremony, song and dance. We will also visit one or two cultural communities within the Twin Cities to hear about their approaches to creating health and addressing the contemporary challenges.

Section 004 - Behind the Scenes at the Minnesota Zoo
Melissa Palmer
Mondays, 3–4:15 p.m.
Saturday 10/24 & Saturday 11/14 Minnesota Zoo
Are you interested in zoos and exotic animals and wish to gain a deeper understanding of their biology, health, and welfare? Join me at the Minnesota Zoo to further your knowledge of these remarkable creatures. Engage in an in-depth look at topics related to their physiology, nutritional requirements, behavioral characteristics, and veterinary care. This course offers a rare opportunity to gain behind-the-scenes access and interact with professionals, including nutritionists, animal behaviorists, and vet techs who manage the daily care of these extraordinary wild animals. You will participate in behavioral research studies, create enrichment activities, and observe meal preparation for various animals at the zoo. Additionally, you will tour the veterinary facilities to learn more about preventative and emergency care for various exotic species.

Section 005 - Cultivating Minnesota: Food, Farming, & Community in the Land of 10,000 Lakes
Amy Smith & Mary Rogers
Fridays, 1:30–2:45 p.m.
Overnight TBD
Friday 9/25-Sunday 9/27 or Friday 10/9-Sunday 10/11
Hungry to learn where your food comes from—and how it's connected to the land, people, and environment around you? This high-energy, hands-on course connects to every corner of CFANS and helps you find your people, purpose, and place in the food system. Through field experiences and class discussions, you'll examine Minnesota agriculture and food systems across traditional, small-scale, diversified, alternative, Indigenous, urban, and research-based production systems, while considering pressing environmental, social, cultural, and economic challenges in ag, food, and natural resources. Kick off the semester with a behind-the-scenes adventure at the Minnesota State Fair, then meet weekly to dive deeper into sustainability, food systems, and your role as a consumer, advocate, and professional. A required weekend immersion trip will deepen both your understanding of agriculture and your connections with classmates and communities across Minnesota.

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Gopher Gateway: Global Experiences for First-Year Students

Gopher Gateway launched in August 2026 as a new opportunity for incoming UMTC first-year students to study abroad before fall semester begins.

How Does It Work?

Go abroad
in late August

Participate in Welcome Week
on campus

Continue class fall semester
with cohort and professor

2026 Program Options

Programs are coordinated by the Learning Abroad Center (LAC), with curriculum and instructors provided by the partnering colleges.



Food Cultures
of Southern France



Physical Activity
in Southern France



Innovation & Discovery
in London



Shakespeare
in London

Coming in 2027:

- The United Kingdom and France programs will be joined by two new programs based in Toledo, Spain: *Cross-Cultural Healthcare in Spain* (Pre-Health Student Resource Center) and *The Designed Environment in Spain* (College of Design).
- Participating students will have the opportunity to live in the new Gopher Gateway House Living Learning Community. Students not living in the house will be included in events to continue to build community.

Campus Partners

- 2026 colleges: College of Liberal Arts; College of Biological Sciences; College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences; and College of Education and Human Development
- Office of Admissions
- Housing and Residential Life
- Office for Student Finance
- Office of Undergraduate Education
- Orientation and Transition Experiences

LEARNING ABROAD CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Student Outcomes

Gopher Gateway participants start their UMN journey with a passport stamp and a community. They get a head start on studying abroad and navigating the University and their college journey.

“My biggest concern about going into college was meeting and getting to know people, and this study abroad experience allowed me to do that in a way that I wouldn’t have gotten in a classroom.”



“Having to adjust [abroad] has made it easier for me to adjust to being on campus! Going to the UK was an experience that has really helped me transition into this new chapter of my life, and I’m so excited to see how [it] will help me even more in the future.”

“Learning abroad caused me to have a lot of self accountability. I didn’t expect to gain this new skill initially, however, now reflecting on the [program] I realized this was my biggest change after going abroad. I now know how to hold myself accountable for my actions and my feelings.”



“This experience has really shown the importance to … understand where everyone is coming from. I have really appreciated this skill and believe it will hold value for my future relationships and career.”

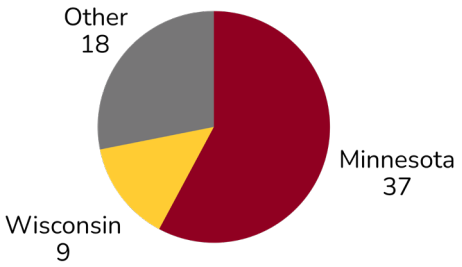
Ensuring Access

Student access has been centered in the development of these programs, providing a range of scholarships and fee reductions from the LAC and colleges with support from the Office of Student Finance. Nearly half of the students were eligible for subsidized loans and received additional support.

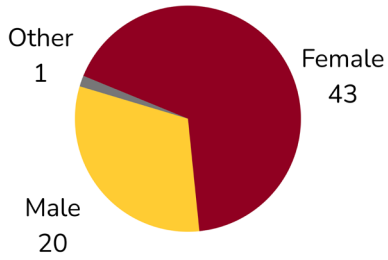
Broad Participation

A total of 64 students participated in 2026, across the four programs.

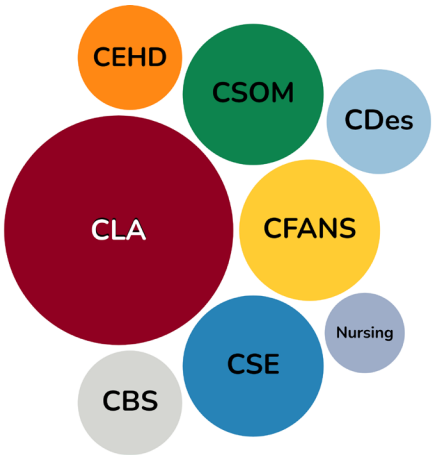
Home State

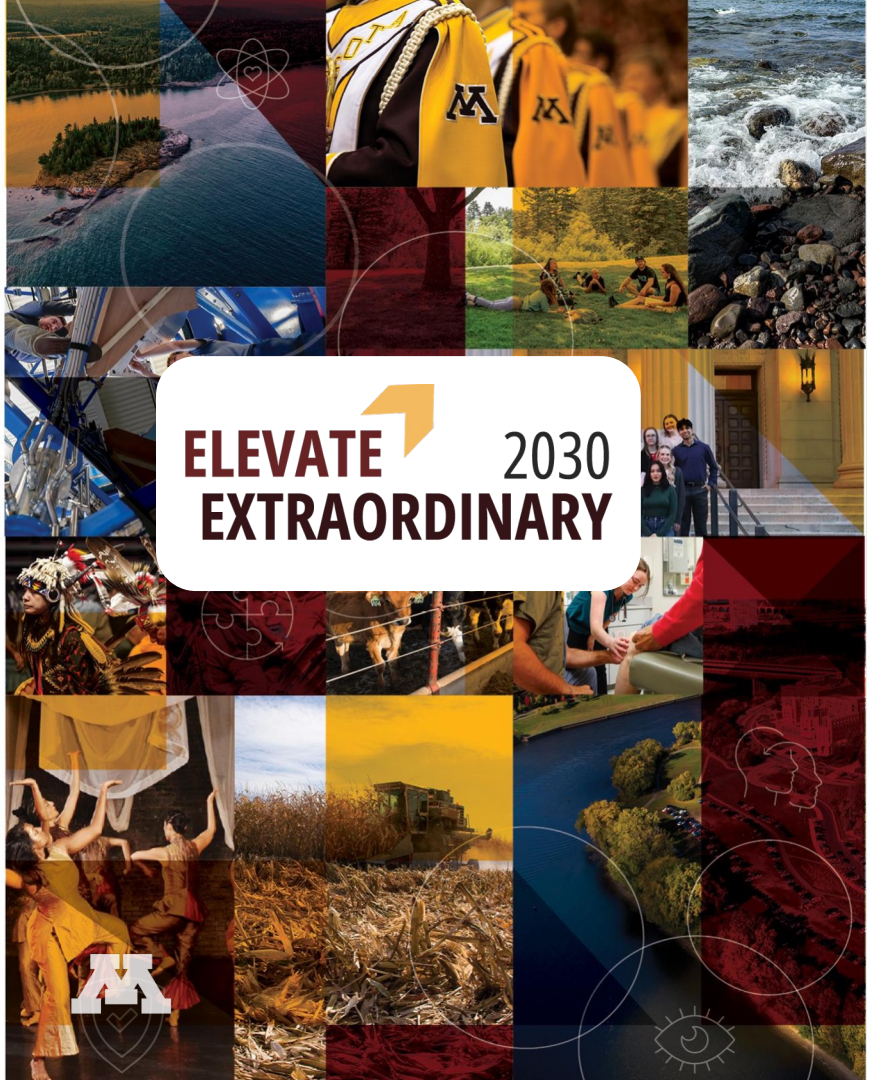


Gender



College





The First-Year Experience

Board of Regents
Mission Fulfillment Committee
October 8, 2026

Alex Anderson
Assistant Professor of English & Director of the First-Year Seminar, Crookston campus

Julie Grossman
Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programs, College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, Twin Cities campus

Wendy Reed
Dean, Swenson College of Science and Engineering, Duluth campus



First-Year Experience @ UMN Crookston

- UMC 1200: Introduction to University Life (Fall)
    - On-campus students begin transition to UMN Crookston by learning about resources and activities and developing durable skills.
- UMC 1202: Topics in Problem Solving (Spring)
    - Students apply problem-solving techniques to current issues through high-impact learning experiences.



Doing MORE on Campus

- Throughout the semester, students attend **M**ulticultural, **O**ccupational, **R**ecreational, & **E**ducational events.

- This assignment prompts students to take ownership of their UMN Crookston experience by attending campus events and getting to know community members.

FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE

University of Minnesota | CFANS College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences











CFANS First-Year Experience (FYE)

Small size (<25 students), faculty taught; require 50% experiential learning and career exploration out of the classroom



1. Foster a sense of belonging within the CFANS community by building relationships with peers and faculty from across majors.
2. Enhance awareness of global challenges and the role of CFANS in addressing them through participation in classroom content and high impact experiential learning activities.
3. Cultivate future leaders by understanding personal values, strengths, and areas for growth, while exploring CFANS majors and career opportunities.
4. Become familiar with CFANS international, leadership, and research opportunities; libraries; career/major exploration support; and wellness programs.

CFANS First-Year Experience Courses Fall 2026

Elevate Extraordinary alignment: ***Make career preparation and experiential and immersive learning an expansive and defining strength of the University of Minnesota experience for all students; Create problem-based, solution generating academic programs and classes by expanding interdisciplinary learning, thinking and teaching.***

01 **Exploring Fungi, from Forest to Farm to Fork**
Overnight Cloquet Forestry Center Research and Outreach Center (ROC) for forest fungi exploration
Overnight Field Trip *

02 **Research to Farm to Table: How Plants Inform Food Systems**
Southern MN Farm Harvest Tour and interactions with industry leaders

03 **Ways of Knowing Science**
Overnight wild-ricing camp at Itasca Biological Station led by White Earth community
Overnight Field Trip *

04 **Behind the Scenes at the Minnesota Zoo**
Behind-the-scenes access and interaction with zoo professionals

05 **Cultivating Minnesota: Food, Farming, & Community in the Land of 10,000 Lakes**
Overnight at Itasca Biological Station for food production and farm tours
Overnight Field Trip *


JACK-O-LANTERN SPECTACULAR







First-Year Experience classes promote student belonging

Elevate Extraordinary alignment: ***Enable the highest quality of life by supporting students' mental health and food security so they can focus on thriving, not simply surviving.***

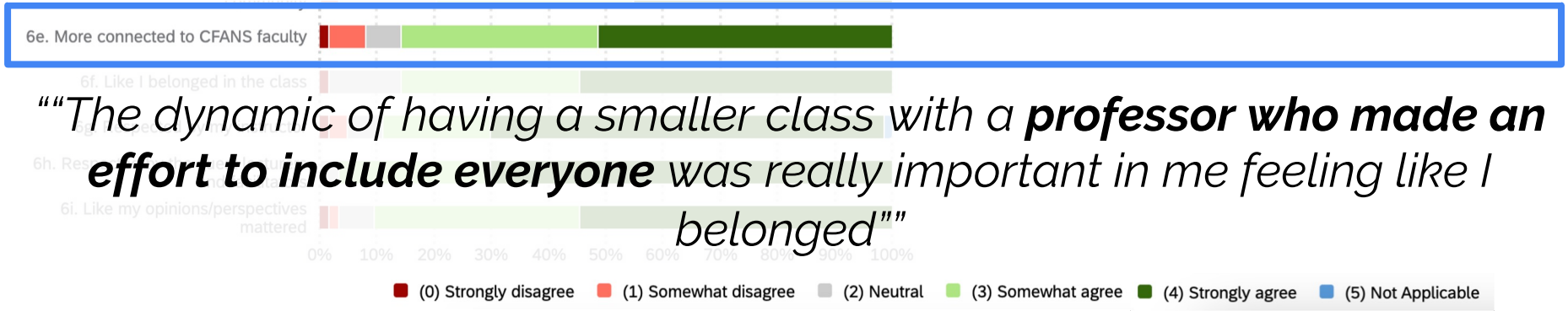
I feel like a part of the CFANS community



"My first-year experience ***really helped me feel at home in CFANS****... It didn't feel like a huge, scary college anymore.* ***Instead, it made CFANS feel like a community where I belonged****."*

First-Year Experience helps students connect to faculty

I feel more connected to CFANS faculty



*""The dynamic of having a smaller class with a **professor who made an effort to include everyone** was really important in me feeling like I belonged""*

First-Year Experience @ UMN Duluth

- SCSE mission is to inspire the next generation of STEM professionals to solve complex problems.
- Our mission and UMD's identity as a Student-Centered Research University informed our approach to our first-year experience.
- SAIL -Swenson Active and Innovative Learning - programming is supported by generous philanthropic support.
- Research-embedded curriculum provides access to research for all students.

Intro to Engineering

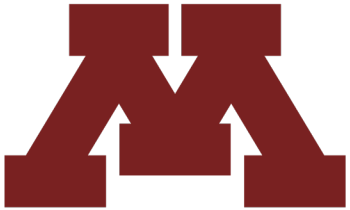


- Civil & Environmental Engineering students use paired design and build teams.
- Mechanical & Industrial Engineering students build environmental sensors and deploy them in the community.
- Increases in first-year retention, communication and networking skills.

Intro to Sciences



- General Chemistry and General Biology students use biochar to test hypotheses about cleaning heavy metals from water and improving plant growth.
- Calculus courses collect data on the RV Blue Heron.
- Increases in students' identity as a STEM professional.



Thank you

BOARD OF REGENTS
DOCKET ITEM SUMMARY

Mission Fulfillment **October 8, 2026**

AGENDA ITEM: Consent Report

☐ **Review** ☒ **Review + Action** ☐ **Action** ☐ **Discussion**

☐ *This is a report required by Board policy.*

PRESENTERS: Gretchen Ritter, Executive Vice President and Provost

PURPOSE & KEY POINTS

Approval of Changed Academic Programs

The purpose of this item is to seek approval for changes to the following academic programs:

- College of Continuing and Professional Studies, Twin Cities campus—requests approval to add a subplan to the Bachelor of Applied Science in Information Technology Infrastructure, effective fall 2027.
- College of Continuing and Professional Studies, Twin Cities campus—requests approval to change a subplan name in the Information Technology Infrastructure undergraduate minor and undergraduate certificate, effective fall 2027.
- College of Education and Human Development, Twin Cities campus—requests approval to change the program modality options in the Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development, effective fall 2027.
- College of Education and Human Development, Twin Cities campus—requests approval to change the program modality options in both the postbaccalaureate certificate and graduate minor in Program Evaluation, effective fall 2027.
- College of Liberal Arts, Twin Cities campus—requests approval to add four new subplans in the Bachelor of Arts in Economics, effective fall 2027.
- College of Liberal Arts, Twin Cities campus—requests approval to add five new subplans in the Bachelor of Arts in Economics-Business Economics, effective fall 2027.
- College of Liberal Arts, Twin Cities campus—requests approval to change the name of the Bachelor of Arts and undergraduate minor in Chicano-Latino Studies, effective fall 2027.
- Humphrey School of Public Affairs, Twin Cities campus—requests approval to add a new integrated degree program (IDP) subplan in the Master of Public Policy, effective fall 2027.

Approval of Discontinued Academic Programs

The purpose of this item is to seek approval to discontinue the following academic programs:

- College of Continuing and Professional Studies, Twin Cities campus—requests approval to discontinue the Environmental Health and Safety undergraduate certificate, effective fall 2027.
- College of Design, Twin Cities campus—requests approval to discontinue the Public Interest Design undergraduate minor, effective fall 2027.

Approval of New Academic Programs

- Medical School, Twin Cities campus—requests approval to create the University of Minnesota/CentraCare Rural Family Medicine Advanced Obstetrics Fellowship, effective summer 2027.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Approvals are sought in compliance with Board of Regents Policy: *Reservation and Delegation of Authority* as follows:

- Academic program changes: Article I, Section V, Subd. 2.

PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

The President recommends approval of the Consent Report.

University of Minnesota Board of Regents
Mission Fulfillment Committee
October 8, 2026
Consent Report: Academic Program Changes

I. Approval of Changed Academic Programs

College of Continuing and Professional Studies, Twin Cities campus—requests approval to add a subplan to the Bachelor of Applied Science in Information Technology Infrastructure, effective fall 2027. The new "Web Application Programming" subplan follows a curriculum restructure approved in October 2025 and effective fall 2026. This is the remaining element of that restructure.

College of Continuing and Professional Studies, Twin Cities campus—requests approval to change a subplan name in the Information Technology Infrastructure undergraduate minor and undergraduate certificate, effective fall 2027. In October 2025, the Information Technology Infrastructure undergraduate major changed a subplan name from "Networking" to "Networking and Cloud Infrastructure," to combine networking and cloud focus. The department is updating the undergraduate minor and undergraduate certificate subplan names to be consistent with the major.

College of Education and Human Development, Twin Cities campus—requests approval to change the program modality options in the Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development, effective fall 2027. The degree program would add a completely online delivery modality option to the existing in-person/classroom option.

College of Education and Human Development, Twin Cities campus—requests approval to change the program modality options in both the postbaccalaureate certificate and graduate minor in Program Evaluation, effective fall 2027. Each of these programs would add a completely online delivery modality option to the existing in-person/classroom option.

College of Liberal Arts, Twin Cities campus—requests approval to add four new subplans in the Bachelor of Arts in Economics, effective fall 2027. The department of Economics proposes to add the General Economics, Law and Economics, Economic Policy, and Integrated B.A. Economics/Master of Public Policy subplans. The objective is to provide clear, transcript-visible pathways that align the economics major with well-documented student interests, particularly in law, public policy, and accelerated graduate study in public affairs while preserving the intellectual integrity and structure of the economics core.

College of Liberal Arts, Twin Cities campus—requests approval to add five new subplans in the Bachelor of Arts in Economics-Business Economics, effective fall 2027. The degree will shift from the current eleven focus areas to five subplans: General Business, Accounting, Finance,

Marketing, and Supply Chain. The objective is to provide clear, transcript-visible career readiness areas, combined with improved administrative tracking to enhance student support.

College of Liberal Arts, Twin Cities campus—requests approval to change the name of the Bachelor of Arts and undergraduate minor in Chicano-Latino Studies, effective fall 2027. The programs will remove the hyphen in the name and replace it with the word "and," to be known as "Chicano and Latino Studies." The hyphen leads to confusion for students using the catalog search function. This change will be clearer for both current and prospective students.

Humphrey School of Public Affairs, Twin Cities campus—requests approval to add a new integrated degree program (IDP) subplan in the Master of Public Policy, effective fall 2027. This new IDP subplan establishes a formal undergraduate-to-graduate pathway in partnership with the Economics department, allowing qualified students to begin counting designated policy coursework toward the Master of Public Policy.

II. Approval of Discontinued Academic Programs

College of Continuing and Professional Studies, Twin Cities campus—requests approval to discontinue the Environmental Health and Safety undergraduate certificate, effective fall 2027. This certificate is being discontinued due to continued low enrollment. Program admission has been on hold since fall 2024 due to low interest. There are currently no enrolled students so no transition plan is needed.

College of Design, Twin Cities campus—requests approval to discontinue the Public Interest Design undergraduate minor, effective fall 2027. This minor is being discontinued due to continued low enrollment and instructional constraints. There are currently seven students in the minor. The program will continue to work with these students to complete the minor.

III. Approval of New Academic Programs

Medical School, Twin Cities campus—requests approval to create the University of Minnesota/CentraCare Rural Family Medicine Advanced Obstetrics Fellowship, effective summer 2027. The Medical School's department of Family Medicine & Community Health and department of Obstetrics, Gynecology, & Women's Health request approval to establish a one-year fellowship offered to physicians who have completed Family Medicine Residency. It will focus on management of high-risk pregnancy care and surgical obstetric deliveries. It will graduate Family Medicine physicians who are uniquely qualified to meet care needs for pregnancy, delivery and the postpartum timeframe within rural communities. The partnership between the University of Minnesota and CentraCare combines the academic resources of a leading public medical school with the clinical expertise and community-centered focus of a regional health system serving rural Minnesota. This program will have a direct source of financial support via CentraCare. Should full funding not be available from CentraCare in the future, the parties agree to sunset the program.

BOARD OF REGENTS
DOCKET ITEM SUMMARY

Mission Fulfillment **October 8, 2026**

AGENDA ITEM: Information Items

☐ **Review** ☐ **Review + Action** ☐ **Action** ☒ **Discussion**

☒ *This is a report required by Board policy.*

PRESENTERS: Gretchen Ritter, Executive Vice President and Provost

PURPOSE & KEY POINTS

A. Annual Report on Academic Program Changes
B. Completed Comprehensive Review of Board Policy
C. Report to the State of Minnesota: Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Technical Assistance Center Annual Report
D. University, Student, Faculty, and Staff Activities and Awards

A. Annual Report on Academic Program Changes

This report highlights the approved academic program changes from the 2025–26 academic year and is submitted annually in conformance with Board of Regents Policy: *Board Operations and Agenda Guidelines*. Also included is a summary of the process used to propose and approve academic program changes.

B. Completed Comprehensive Review of Board Policy

The purpose of this item is to inform the committee that the comprehensive review of the following Board policies has been completed and the policy implementers have recommended that no changes be made at this time:

- Board of Regents Policy: *Disability Resources*
- Board of Regents Policy: *Reserve Officers Training Corps*
- Board of Regents Policy: *Tuition and Fees*

The policies can be accessed through the above hyperlinks.

If there are items that the committee would like addressed, those will be recorded and referred back to the policy implementer. If the committee raises no additional items, the comprehensive review process will be complete and the date of last comprehensive review will be noted within each policy. The president and policy implementers have the ability to recommend changes outside

of the comprehensive review process as needed (e.g., amendments resulting from changes to federal law).

C. Report to the State of Minnesota: Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Technical Assistance Center Annual Report

This report is prepared by the Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Consortium, a division of the Institute on Community Integration, regarding the progress of expanding Minnesota inclusive higher education options for students with intellectual disabilities, including statutory and budget recommendations. It was submitted to the state legislature as mandated by 2024 Minnesota Laws, Chapter 127, Article 35, Section 7, Subd. 5.

D. University, Student, Faculty, and Staff Activities and Awards

A report of select University, faculty, staff, and student activities and achievements at the local, regional, national, and global level is included in the docket materials.

University of Minnesota Board of Regents
Mission Fulfillment Committee
October 8, 2026

Annual Report on Academic Program Approval

Introduction

As part of its ongoing agenda, the Mission Fulfillment Committee reviews the new academic program approval and academic program changes recommended by the Executive Vice President and Provost. These recommendations are presented to the Committee on the consent agenda at each meeting. This report provides a summary of the process for approving new, changed, and discontinued academic programs, and an account of the new, changed, and discontinued programs approved by the Board in 2025–2026.

Part I. The Academic Program Approval Process

The University of Minnesota's set of academic programs is among the most comprehensive of any institution in the world. The University offers over 300 undergraduate majors on its five campuses; more than 200 master's degree programs; and over 100 doctoral degree programs. The University is one of only four campuses in the U.S. with agricultural programs, a law school, and academic health science programs including dentistry, pharmacy, nursing, veterinary medicine, and a major medical school. This section describes the program proposal approval process, the principles that guide approval, the criteria used to assess proposals for new and changed programs, and the process's intersection with delegation of authority policies.

Program Approval Process

The process for establishing new academic programs or making changes to current programs offered by any college or campus of the University of Minnesota, involves a series of steps designed to provide careful review and oversight. The process originates at the program and departmental level, progresses through the colleges to the Office of the Provost and, if necessary, the Board of Regents.



The stages of development and approval are additive, with various points of emphasis at each stage in the process. Early consultation within the college, among other colleges, with institutional units, and across campus is a key component of the process, as each unit focuses on different aspects of the proposal. For example, the Office of Undergraduate Education and the Graduate School focus their reviews on admission and degree requirements, University policy compliance, and other factors specifically related to the academic success of students. Review by the Office of the Provost focuses on things like need and demand, efficiency and effectiveness, support and resources, mission, collaboration, and program duplication. New undergraduate major degree program proposals on the Twin Cities campus are also reviewed by the Campus Curriculum Committee.

The public review period, which occurs in the weeks leading up to the Board of Regents meeting, encourages open communication across colleges and campuses concerning the creation, discontinuation, and change of academic programs; fosters collaboration and productive exchanges across and between departments and disciplines; and prevents inadvertent encroachment upon and duplication of academic programs.

Principles
The principles that guide academic plan approval include the following:

- **Mission, Priorities, and Interrelatedness**

  Academic programs should be aligned with the missions, strategic plans, and compacts of their home units and with the University's broad institutional goals and strategic directions.

- **Common Criteria**

  Proposals for academic programs should reflect consideration of common criteria: quality, productivity, and impact; centrality; uniqueness and comparative advantage; need and demand (including accreditation or competitive requirements as well as Minnesota workforce needs); efficiency and effectiveness; and development and leveraging of resources. (See "Criteria for New Program Proposals" section below.)

- **Communication and Consultation**

  Decisions to offer, change, or drop academic programs, when they have the potential to affect or involve other units within the University, require consultation early in the program development stage.

- **Timely Review**

  The process ensures thorough and timely review and consideration of proposals for approval at the appropriate level: Board of Regents, Executive Vice President and Provost, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, or collegiate dean.

Approval of academic program proposals should be carried out by the Board of Regents as guided by University Policy or by an appropriate-level administrator with the delegated authority from the Board. Formal approval by the Board of Regents or its designee is required before new and changed programs may be publicized or initiated.

Approval-Level Requirements
The type of requested action determines the required approval level. Changes requiring Board of Regents and Executive Vice President and Provost review and approval include the following:

- Adding a new degree, minor, or program track (subplan)
- Adding a new integrated degree program (e.g., 4+1 Bachelor to Master's program)
- Significant changes to a degree or minor, including: adding a subplan, changing a plan or subplan name, changing a degree designation (e.g., B.S. to B.A., M.S. to M.A.), changing

the academic home of a plan, merging two or more degrees or minors

• Discontinuing a degree, plan, or subplan

• Offering distance delivery of all or substantially all coursework for an existing plan, adding or changing the delivery of a degree program.

Criteria for New Program Proposals

The University uses a standard set of criteria to review proposals for new or changed academic programs. These criteria parallel ones used in the University's periodic review of collegiate and departmental academic and administrative units.

Mission, Priorities, and Interrelatedness

▪ In what ways is the proposed program consistent with the University's and the unit's mission?

▪ How does the program support the unit's strategic direction and compact?

▪ How will the program contribute to the priorities of the University (SWSP), the campus, and the unit?

▪ How does the program relate to other University academic programs?

▪ What are the implications for other units, colleges, or campuses, including the impact on other units of prerequisites and related courses?

Demand, Development, and Leveraging of Resources

▪ What is the need and demand for the program? Proposals for programs that reach very small numbers of students are discouraged. The following type of evidence is provided, as appropriate:
  – Evidence that the program meets societal needs and expectations
  – Evidence of consultation with employers or professional organizations, if appropriate
  – Employment data, if appropriate (e.g., current and projected availability of jobs for graduates)
  – Enrollment data for similar programs
  – Data indicating student interest or demand, both short- and long-term
  – Projected number of applicants for the program
  – Projected number of degrees to be conferred per year at full operation

▪ What is the intended geographic service area and what is the prospective student market? ▪ How will students benefit from the program?

Uniqueness and Comparative Advantage

▪ What are the characteristics of the program that make it particularly appropriate for the University of Minnesota?

▪ Are there comparable academic programs in Minnesota or elsewhere? ▪

What planning and development expertise shaped the proposal?

Efficiency and Effectiveness

- Have resources been reallocated within the unit to support the proposed program? If so, how?
- If additional resources are needed, how will the program leverage existing resources to attract new resources?
- What steps will be taken to ensure the program is operated economically and effectively?

Quality, Productivity, and Impact

- What are the learning outcomes for the program? How will the outcomes be measured? How often?
- How, when, and by whom will program quality be measured?
- How will the college, the department, and program instructors continue to improve the teaching and learning in this program?
- Is the program subject to review by a specialized accreditation agency? If yes, what agency and what is the review cycle?
- How, if at all, will the program address the University's diversity goals, e.g., student and faculty recruitment, curriculum, etc.?

Part II. Summary of 2025–2026 Programs

NEW, CHANGED and DISCONTINUED PROGRAMS 2025–2026

CROOKSTON CAMPUS

Change the name of the undergraduate certificate in Health Services Executive	Apr 2026
Discontinue the Bachelor of Science in Health Services Executive	Apr 2026

DULUTH CAMPUS

College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

Discontinue all subplans in the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Art	Dec 2025
Discontinue the Bachelor of Arts in Cultural Entrepreneurship	Dec 2025
Discontinue the Bachelor of Arts in International Studies	Feb 2026
Discontinue the Bachelor of Arts in Writing Studies	Feb 2026
Discontinue the Bachelor of Science in Linguistics	Feb 2026
Discontinue the undergraduate minor in Arts in Media	Feb 2026
Discontinue the undergraduate minor in Digital Writing, Literature, and Design	Feb 2026
Discontinue the undergraduate minor in Film Studies	Feb 2026
Discontinue the undergraduate minor in International Studies	Feb 2026
Discontinue the undergraduate minor in Linguistics	Feb 2026
Discontinue the undergraduate minor in Professional Writing	Feb 2026

College of Education and Human Service Professions

Discontinue the undergraduate minor in Physical Education-Outdoor Education	Dec 2025
Discontinue the undergraduate minor in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages and Multilingual Education	Dec 2025

Discontinue the undergraduate certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language	Dec 2025
Discontinue one subplan in the Bachelor of Applied Arts in Teaching Social Studies	Dec 2025
Change program modality options in the Master of Social Work	June 2026

Labovitz School of Business and Economics

Discontinue the undergraduate minor in Financial Markets	Dec 2025
Discontinue the undergraduate minor in International Business	Dec 2025
Create three new subplans in the Bachelor of Arts in Economics	Feb 2026

Swenson College of Science and Engineering

Change the names of: ● Bachelor of Arts in Earth and Environmental Science ● Bachelor of Science in Earth and Environmental Science	Feb 2026
Change the name of a subplan in the Bachelor of Science	Feb 2026
Discontinue the undergraduate minor in Geology	Feb 2026
Discontinue the undergraduate minor in Physics	Feb 2026
Create a post-baccalaureate certificate in Engineering Project Management	June 2026
Create a post-baccalaureate certificate in Sustainable and Resilient Engineering	June 2026
Change the academic-degree-granting college for the Master of Science and the PhD in Water Resources Science	June 2026

MORRIS CAMPUS

Create a new subplan in the Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Science	June 2026
Discontinue the Bachelor of Arts in Sociology	June 2026
Discontinue the Bachelor of Arts in Geology	June 2026

Discontinue the Bachelor of Arts in German Studies	June 2026
Discontinue the Bachelor of Arts in Latin American Studies	June 2026
Discontinue the undergraduate minor in Geology	June 2026
Discontinue the undergraduate minor in German Studies	June 2026

ROCHESTER CAMPUS

Create four new subplans in the Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences	Apr 2026

TWIN CITIES CAMPUS

Carlson School of Management

Create an undergraduate minor in Social Impact in Business	Apr 2026
Change the name of one subplan and discontinue two subplans in the Master of Business Administration	Apr 2026
Change the program modality options in the Master of Business Taxation	Apr 2026
Discontinue the Bachelor of Science in Business in Public and Nonprofit Management	Apr 2026
Discontinue a subplan in the Master of Science in Business Analytics	June 2026
Discontinue a subplan in the Master of Human Resources and Industrial Relations	June 2026
Change program modality options in the post-baccalaureate certificates in: ● Business Analytics ● Closely-Held Business Taxation ● High Net-Worth Individual Taxation ● International Taxation ● Taxation ● Tax Executive	June 2026

College of Biological Sciences

Change the academic-degree-granting college for the graduate minor, the Master of Science, and the PhD in Biochemistry, Molecular Biology and Biophysics	Feb 2026
Discontinue the undergraduate minor in Health and Genomics	June 2026

College of Continuing and Professional Studies

Change program modality options in: ● Master of Professional Studies in Addictions Counseling ● Master of Professional Studies in Integrated Behavioral Health	Oct 2025
Discontinue one subplan and change the name of five subplans in the Bachelor of Applied Science in Information Technology Infrastructure	Oct 2025
Discontinue all subplans in the undergraduate minor in Construction Management	Oct 2025
Create the Master of Professional Studies in Sex Therapy	Dec 2025
Create a post-baccalaureate certificate in Trauma Informed Care	Dec 2025
Create an undergraduate minor in Advanced English Language Communication	Feb 2026
Create an undergraduate certificate in Advanced English Language Communication	Feb 2026
Discontinue one subplan and change the names of five subplans in the: ● Information Technology Infrastructure undergraduate minor ● Information Technology Infrastructure undergraduate certificate	Feb 2026

College of Design

Discontinue the undergraduate minor in Lighting Design	Feb 2026
Discontinue the graduate minor in Lighting Design	Feb 2026

College of Education and Human Development

Change the name of a subplan in the Education, Curriculum, and Instruction MA and PhD programs	Oct 2025
Create a new subplan in the Additional Licensure Teaching program	Oct 2025
Create the Bachelor of Science in Educational Psychology	Feb 2026
Change the name of the Master of Education in Physical Activity and Health	Feb 2026
Change program modality options in the Master of Social Work	Feb 2026
Change program modality options in the: ● Special Education graduate minor ● Special Education undergraduate minor	Feb 2026

Reactivate a subplan in the Additional Licensure Teaching program	Feb 2026
Discontinue a subplan in the Master of Arts in Applied Child and Adolescent Development	Feb 2026
Discontinue a subplan in the Master of Arts in Education, Curriculum, and Instruction	Feb 2026
Discontinue a subplan in the Master of Arts in Family Social Science	Feb 2026
Discontinue three subplans in the Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction	Feb 2026
Discontinue three subplans in the Master of Education in Special Education	Feb 2026
Discontinue three subplans in the Master of Education in Special Education Initial License	Feb 2026
Discontinue two subplan in the Master of Education in Teaching	Feb 2026
Discontinue the Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development	Feb 2026
Discontinue the Master of Arts in Sport Management	Feb 2026
Discontinue the Master of Education in Adult Education	Feb 2026
Discontinue the Master of Education in Work and Human Resource Education	Feb 2026
Discontinue the Master of Education in Youth Development Leadership	Feb 2026
Discontinue the post-baccalaureate certificate in Advanced Practices in Second Language Teaching	Feb 2026
Discontinue the post-baccalaureate certificate in Dual Language and Immersion Education	Feb 2026
Discontinue the post-baccalaureate certificate in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health	Feb 2026
Discontinue the post-baccalaureate certificate in K–12 Technology Integration	Feb 2026
Discontinue the post-baccalaureate certificate in Multimedia Design and Development	Feb 2026
Discontinue the post-baccalaureate certificate in Parent Education	Feb 2026
Discontinue the post-baccalaureate certificate in Professional Development	Feb 2026
Discontinue the post-baccalaureate certificate in Talent Development and Gifted Education	Feb 2026

Create a new subplan and change the name of an existing subplan in the Master of Education in Teaching	June 2026

College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences

Create a graduate minor in Science Communication and Outreach	Feb 2026
Create a new subplan in the Master of Science in Applied Economics	Feb 2026
Discontinue five subplans in the Bachelor of Science in Agricultural and Food Business Management	Feb 2026

College of Liberal Arts

Create a Bachelor of Arts in Arts Education	Oct 2025
Create an undergraduate minor in Sports Media and Promotion	Oct 2025
Discontinue the undergraduate minor in Biblical Studies	Oct 2025
Discontinue a subplan in the Classical and Near Eastern Religions and Cultures PhD	Oct 2025
Create an undergraduate minor in Social Science Genetics	Dec 2025
Discontinue the undergraduate certificate in Career Readiness	Dec 2025
Create a Master of Arts in American Indian and Indigenous Studies	Feb 2026
Change the names of: ● Bachelor of Arts in Economics–Quantitative Emphasis ● Bachelor of Arts in Economics–Business Economics Emphasis	Feb 2026

College of Pharmacy

Create an undergraduate minor in Pharmacotherapy and Health Systems	Dec 2025
Create a Master of Occupational Therapy	Feb 2026
Create an undergraduate minor in Pharmaceutical Science	Apr 2026

College of Science and Engineering

Create a post-baccalaureate certificate in Cybersecurity Leadership	Oct 2025
Change program modality options in the post-baccalaureate certificate in Technology Leadership	Oct 2025
Discontinue the undergraduate minor in Information Technology	Dec 2025
Create a post-baccalaureate certificate in Data Science for Chemical and Materials Engineering	Feb 2026
Create a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Computing	Feb 2026
Create an integrated degree program subplan in the Bachelor of Aerospace Engineering and Mechanics and Master of Science in Aerospace Engineering and Mechanics (AEM)	Feb 2026
Discontinue the Master of Computer Science	June 2025
Create a post-baccalaureate certificate in Microelectronics	June 2026
Create an undergraduate minor in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning	June 2026
Create an undergraduate minor in Chemical Engineering	June 2026
Create an undergraduate minor in Materials Science and Engineering	June 2026
Create a new integrated degree program (IDP) subplan option in the Bachelor of Science in Physics and Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering	June 2026

College of Veterinary Medicine

Discontinue the post-baccalaureate certificate in Foreign Grad. Train.	June 2026

Law School

Change program modality options in: ● Master of Science Patent Law ● Patent Law Master of Laws (LLM)	Dec 2025

Medical School/Graduate Medical Education (GME)

Create a Pulmonary Hypertension Fellowship	Oct 2025
Discontinue the Adult Reconstruction/Trauma Fellowship	June 2026

Discontinue the Orthopedic Trauma Fellowship	June 2026
Discontinue the Addiction Psychiatry Fellowship	June 2026
Discontinue the Geriatric Psychiatry Fellowship	June 2026

School of Dentistry

Discontinue the post-baccalaureate certificate in General Practice Residency	Dec 2025
Create the Hospital and Special Care Dental Fellowship	June 2026

School of Public Health

Discontinue the graduate minor in Gerontology	Oct 2025
Discontinue the Master of Science in Clinical Research	Feb 2026
Discontinue the post-baccalaureate certificate in American Indian Public Health and Wellness	Feb 2026
Discontinue the post-baccalaureate certificate in Clinical Research	Feb 2026
Discontinue the post-baccalaureate certificate in Global Health	Feb 2026
Discontinue the post-baccalaureate certificate in Healthcare Management	Feb 2026
Discontinue the post-baccalaureate certificate in Public Health Food Protection	Feb 2026
Discontinue the post-baccalaureate certificate in Public Health Preparedness, Response, and Recovery	Feb 2026
Change the program modality options in the graduate minor in Sexual Health	Apr 2026

PROGRAM APPROVAL PROCESS OUTLINE

PROCESS STEP	RESPONSIBLE UNIT(S)
Phase 1: Collegiate-level academic program planning, development, consultation, review, and approval Phase 1 is the collegiate-level review and approval process, which varies by college, but includes proposal submission in Coursedog and approval at the departmental and college levels. Early cross-college and cross-campus consultation is an important component of this phase.	
1) Program concept generation and early planning.	Program Faculty, Departmental Leaders
2) Intra-college consultation, vetting, planning and program development.	Program Faculty, Departmental Leaders, Deans
3) Early communication of proposal and consultation across colleges and institutional administrative units (i.e. Office of Undergraduate Education, Graduate School, Office of the Provost).	Program Faculty, Departmental Leaders, Deans
4) Collegiate approval to submit proposal in Coursedog.	Deans, Collegiate approval bodies
5) Entry of proposal into Coursedog.	Collegiate Coursedog administrative lead
6) Advancement (approval) of proposal through departmental, collegiate, campus levels of Coursedog to the Provost queue.	Identified Coursedog approvers at each level

Phase 2: Office of the Provost academic program review and approval Provostal review and approval begins once the proposal has been forwarded to the Provost queue of Coursedog, indicating all departmental and collegiate approvals have been completed and the proposal is in final form for review.	
7) Review of proposal in Provost queue of Coursedog and review of final corresponding items related to the proposal (i.e. evidence of consultation, other supporting documentation requested). Early cross-college and institutional communication and consultation in Phase 1 is strongly advised prior to this point and will impact the time it takes for a proposal to move through the approval process.	Office of the Provost in partnership with the Office of Undergraduate Education or Graduate School
8) *Campus Curriculum Committee (CCC) Review *For new undergraduate majors on Twin Cities campus or significant academic changes with potential for cross-collegiate impact only. Please contact the Office of Undergraduate Education to determine if proposal requires CCC review.	Campus Curriculum Committee (CCC)
9) Provost approval for public review and inclusion of proposal on Consent Report to Board of Regents.	Executive Vice President and Provost, Office of the Provost staff
10) Public Review Period Final opportunity for sharing proposed new or changed programs prior to Board of Regents review.	Office of the Provost

Phase 3: Board of Regents review and approval Phase 3 begins once the Provost has reviewed and approved the proposal and determines its readiness for inclusion in the Board of Regents Consent Report.	
11) Board of Regents review and approval of Consent Report.	Board of Regents Mission Fulfillment Committee
12) Communication of Board of Regents approval. Memo from the Office of the Provost notifying appropriate leaders, staff and institutional contacts of proposal approval.	Office of the Provost
13) Advancement of proposal to the Office of the Registrar Coursedog queue.	Office of the Provost
Phase 4: Submission of notification to the Higher Learning Commission of a new or substantially revised program (this includes credit-bearing Certificates). Phase 4 begins once the Board of Regents has approved the new or changed program and a CIP* code is assigned by the Office of the Registrar. The Provost Office will submit new or revised programs to HLC.	
15) CIP* Code Assignment of new program	Office of the Registrar
16) Submission of Screening form to HLC If further information/approval is required by HLC following submission of notification, the Provost's Office will communicate with the program contact to submit for approval.	Office of the Provost

*CIP codes are six-digit codes from the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) developed by the U.S. Department of Education to provide a standard way to categorize and report academic and vocational programs in higher education. The codes are hierarchical, with the first two digits representing a broad subject area, the next two digits a more specific program within that area, and the final two digits identifying the most detailed program of study.

Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Technical Assistance Center

Annual Report • October 1, 2026

INSTITUTE *on* COMMUNITY INTEGRATION | UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

MINNESOTA INCLUSIVE HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM



Scott, a first-year student at Lake Superior College, wants to become a truck driver and is exploring a career in auto mechanics.

The Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Technical Assistance Center (MIHEC), hereafter referred to as the Center, is part of the Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. The Center provides advisory services and technical assistance to all Minnesota higher education institutions exploring, planning, or offering inclusive higher education initiatives. Additionally, the Center monitors federal and state legislation related to inclusive higher education and communicates legal changes that may impact these initiatives.

Additionally, the Center informs students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), their families, and local education agencies across Minnesota about inclusive higher education options, training, resources, professional development, and mentoring opportunities.

The primary goal of the Center is to expand access to high-quality, inclusive postsecondary education for individuals with IDD. The Center wants all Minnesotans to have college choice, earn meaningful postsecondary credentials, work in competitive integrated employment, earn higher wages, and lead self-determined lives.

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This report is legislatively mandated. As requested by Minnesota Statutes, section 3.197, this report cost approximately $1,610 to prepare, including staff time.

Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Technical Assistance Center
Institute on Community Integration
2025 East River Parkway
Minneapolis, MN 55414
Email: MIHEC@umn.edu

MN Statutory Requirements

Section 135A.161

Subd. 5. Reporting

The director must evaluate the development and implementation of the Minnesota inclusive higher education initiatives receiving a grant under section 135A.162. The director must submit an annual report by October 1 to the commissioner and the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over higher education policy and finance on the progress toward expanding Minnesota's inclusive higher education options for students with intellectual disability. The report must include statutory and budget recommendations.

Inclusive Higher Education Landscape

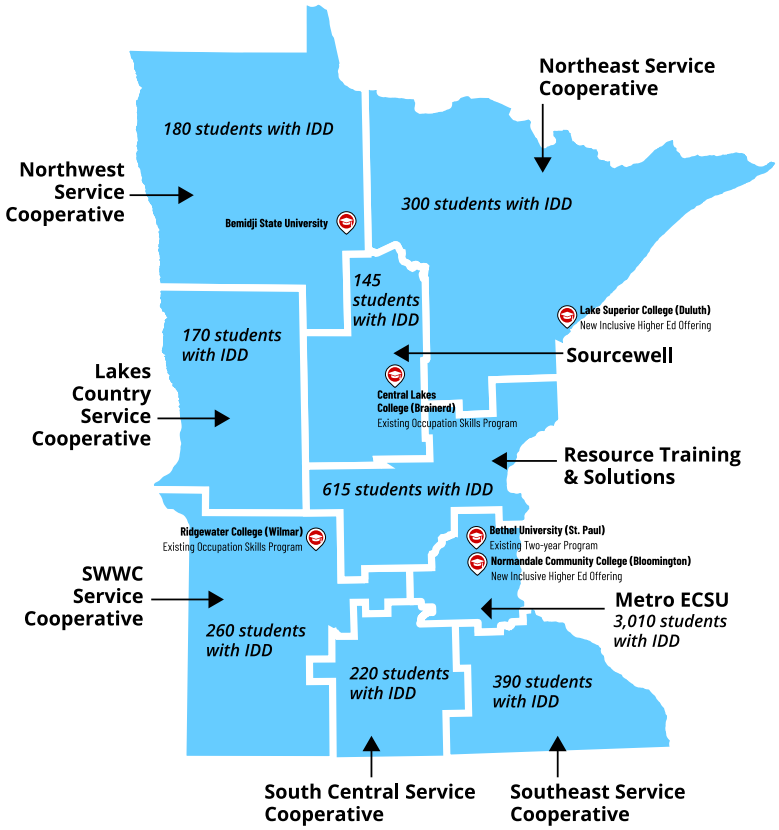
Current Enrollment Options

Minnesota currently has three colleges and universities—Bethel University, Central Lakes College, and Ridgewater College—that enroll students with IDD and hold a Comprehensive and Transition Postsecondary (CTP) designation. This designation allows enrolled students with IDD to apply for, and be considered for, federal and state financial aid. Together, these three institutions can enroll 82 students with IDD.

In 2026, Lake Superior College and Normandale Community College, grantees in a start-up phase, enrolled 10 students with IDD in the fall semester. Normandale applied for the CTP designation in August 2026. Lake Superior College staff intends to apply for and obtain the CTP designation as soon as possible. Once colleges have the CTP designation, students with IDD pursuing the inclusive higher education credential will be eligible to apply for and be considered for federal and state financial aid.

Prospective College Students with IDD

Each year, approximately 1,000 Minnesota students with IDD complete 12th grade. Currently, an estimated 5,000 college-age Minnesotans (18-22 years old) with IDD could pursue postsecondary education. The number of potential college-age Minnesotans with IDD is based on the Minnesota Department of Education Child Count Totals report as of December 1, 2025. Additionally, many older Minnesotans with IDD are also seeking educational opportunities. Limited postsecondary education options within the state create barriers. Many students with IDD are not continuing in postsecondary education. Other Minnesota students with IDD leave the state to pursue postsecondary education.



Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Landscape: Prospective College Students with IDD and Inclusive Higher Education Offerings

Building Capacity: New Initiatives' Competitive Grants

In April 2026, the third round of competitive grant Request for Proposals (RFP) was released, and three colleges applied for funding. In June, the review committee recommended grants for Lake Superior College (LSC), Normandale Community College, and Bemidji State University (BSU). LSC is completing its third year of grant funding and enrolled a cohort of students with IDD in the 2026 fall semester. LSC has already received 5 student inquiries for the 2027 academic year. Normandale was awarded a second year of grant funding and is in the initiative's start-up phase. Normandale enrolled the first cohort of three students with IDD for the 2026 fall semester. Normandale has experienced strong interest for the 2027 academic year. To date, 7 prospective students have asked about the application process, and 3 have already visited Normandale for a campus tour.

Bemidji State University anticipates enrolling a pilot cohort of students with IDD in the 2027 spring semester. Within the first week of the grant award announcement, BSU faculty received 15 inquiries from families and students with IDD who are interested in continuing their education through college. Community businesses and organizations have also offered robust support to UBelong@BemidjiState.

The new inclusive higher education initiative also fills a geographic gap. The nearest Minnesota two-year college with an inclusive higher education option is a two-hour drive,



Grace Ferdinandt, Megan Fitzgibbon, Jacquelyn Mol Sletten and Mary Hauff at the Dual Training Pipeline All-Industry Forum in June.

and four-year institutions are even farther away. The closest four-year Minnesota university that accepts students with IDD is 3.5 hours from Bemidji.

Over the next few years, the enrollment capacity of the three grantee colleges and university will increase from 10 students with IDD in the 2027 fall semester to 100 students with IDD once each institution reaches full enrollment capacity. As additional Minnesota colleges and universities expand enrollment to include students with IDD, the state's enrollment capacity will increase.

The three new initiatives will more than double the Minnesota inclusive postsecondary education enrollment opportunities for students with IDD. The increased enrollment capacity translates into greater access to postsecondary education for Minnesota students with IDD, increasing enrollment of college students with IDD from 82 to 182. This is good progress; however, there is more work to do. To put the increased access and opportunity into perspective, Minnesota has a postsecondary education attainment goal: 70% of Minnesotans aged 25 to 44 will obtain a postsecondary credential. This is important because Minnesota has the second-highest percentage of jobs that require a postsecondary education credential. In addition, the Georgetown University Center on Education and Workforce projects that by 2031, 72% of jobs will require a postsecondary education credential. Increasing access to postsecondary education for Minnesotans with IDD will address the gap between the current enrollment capacity and the attainment goal.

In addition, more inclusive higher education initiatives in Minnesota will give more Minnesota students with IDD access to postsecondary education and help them remain in the state. With the geographic diversity of campus locations, access to college increases for students with IDD across Minnesota.

The fourth round of the competitive grant RFP is anticipated in spring 2027. In addition to existing grantees, several staff members from Minnesota institutions of higher education have expressed interest in applying for the grant funding. These grants provide initial funding for institutions to establish or expand inclusive higher education initiatives.

The Center collaborates with the Minnesota Office of Higher Education to streamline the grant application process, identify priorities, and improve document clarity. The Center offers community-of-practice gatherings, webinars, one-on-one consultations, and open office hours to support faculty and staff who are leading or interested in planning an inclusive higher education initiative.

High-Quality Initiatives

The expansion of inclusive higher education across the state is steady and intentional work. The focus is on establishing and sustaining high-quality initiatives that follow best practices. As part of the Center's responsibilities, an annual independent evaluation is completed with each grantee. The independent evaluations are conducted to assess the grantee's early implementation, alignment with the Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Framework, and readiness for future national accreditation. The evaluation also identifies areas for continued development as programs mature, including formalizing institutional processes, strengthening employment and internship infrastructure, documenting student outcomes, and planning for long-term staffing and financial sustainability. Findings will establish a baseline for future evaluation cycles and support ongoing continuous quality improvement, implementation fidelity, sustainability, and accreditation readiness.

Initial findings from the independent evaluations of Lake Superior College and Normandale Community College demonstrate meaningful progress in establishing the core infrastructure needed to support inclusive higher education, including institutional partnerships, person-centered planning, academic and student supports, peer supports, and efforts to integrate programming into existing campus systems.

Student Spotlight



Matthew is a first year student at the University of Iowa and sees college as the next step toward the life he imagines.



Betsy wants to study physical education in college and become a gym teacher and coach

Outreach and Awareness

A key component of the Center's work is outreach and awareness. The outreach efforts target two key stakeholder groups: (1) students, families, and educators, and (2) university faculty and staff. This year, the Center released the Needs Assessment Survey Report for students, families, and educators. The survey report summarizes the results and recommendations. Four key takeaways from the report include:

1. Continue to expand access to high-quality, inclusive postsecondary education options across geographic regions.
2. Continue outreach and awareness efforts to inform students with IDD, families, and educators that college is an option. A key to the outreach is increased engagement to better understand needs and concerns.
3. Strengthen educator and school staff awareness and provide actionable tools and resources in support of students with IDD to prepare for and pursue a postsecondary education. This is recommended through professional development offerings on inclusive postsecondary education pathways. Presentations include resources and tools for educators and staff to use to support students with IDD.
4. Offer tools and resources to students with IDD and parents to guide their preparation and pursuit of postsecondary education.

The Center staff immediately incorporated the survey findings and recommendations into their work. They continue to build relationships and connections to raise awareness of inclusive higher education options and provide actionable resources for college preparation and the college search.

The Center staff offers a variety of resources as part of its outreach and awareness.

- **Communication Tools and Resources**

  Between July 2025 and June 2026, the Center's website received 4,972 visits and 10,316 pageviews. The Momentum newsletter was published quarterly. The newsletter distribution list remains strong, with 1,157 contacts, a 99% delivery rate, and a 45% open rate. The newsletter engagement metrics surpass industry averages.

- **Professional Development and Training**

  The Center developed and offered three public webinars. The webinar topics were selected with the primary audience of students, parents, and educators. Additionally, the TA Center organized and facilitated Community of Practice gatherings for faculty and staff. The gatherings were offered five times over the past year and include informal networking opportunities and specific topic presentations. The TA Center also shared information about the State of the Art conference, the national inclusive higher education conference, and webinar and capacity-building offerings through Think College, Inclusive Higher Education Regional Alliances, and State Technical Assistance Centers.

- **Community Presentations**

  The Center staff presented at 14 community events, including engagements with Normandale Community College and Bemidji State University, the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Summit, and the Minnesota Self-advocacy Conference. Staff

also presented at the Minnesota Social Services Association Conference, the Minnesota Special Olympics Inclusive Career Fair, the Minnesota Down Syndrome Association Conference, the Charting the C's Conference, and the Minnesota Developmental Adapted Physical Education (DAPE) Conference. The Northern Lights Interagency Council invited the TA Center to present at their Gathering of Great Minds, Transition Summit, School Counselor workshop, and the Principal's Academy events. In addition, Mary Hauff made a guest appearance on the Heartbeats of Adapted PE podcast on April 3rd. Hauff joined host Jen Heebink and BSU faculty member Sherry Holloway.

Center staff held introductory meetings with each of the nine Minnesota Service Cooperatives and shared updates with staff and educators through several of them. The Center is exploring opportunities to collaborate with Service Cooperative staff. The Center staff are also connecting and participating in Community Transition Interagency Committee (CTIC) meetings and events.

In 2026, the Center staff began connecting with Minnesota businesses and community organizations, such as the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce and DisabilityIN, to foster relationships. Minnesota businesses are key stakeholders and benefit directly when Minnesota students with IDD earn meaningful credentials and enter the workforce.

- **Annual Conference**

  On September 29, 2026, the Center hosted its third annual conference, with 100 attendees registered. The conference was an in-person event co-hosted by Metro State University. The conference theme was Workforce Ready. Prospective students, families, educators, college students, faculty and staff members, business representatives, state agency staff, and representatives from disability advocacy organizations attended the conference.

Technical Assistance

The Center provides technical assistance to students, families, educators, faculty, staff, and other interested community members seeking information on inclusive higher education, preparing for college, conducting a college search, application processes, and financial aid. Close collaboration with the Office of Higher Education staff, who administer the competitive grant program and grants for students with IDD occurs.

The Center's services include supporting faculty and staff as they explore expanding enrollment to include students with IDD, prepare to apply for competitive grant funding, or become grantees. Part of the resource offerings is the Community of Practice for faculty and staff. The gatherings are safe spaces to learn from one another and practitioners from across the country. The gatherings are an opportunity to network and collaborate. The Center also provides follow-along support for grantees and facilitates the independent evaluation required of them.

An extensive network of colleagues from across the country who are leading experts and practitioners in inclusive higher education is engaged with Center staff. MIHEC leverages its network of colleagues to connect Minnesota faculty and staff with those who have gone before them and are following best practices. This creates a pathway that shortens the learning curve for faculty and staff as they plan and establish the inclusive higher education initiative on their campus.

National Resources

Think College - National Coordinating Center

The National Coordinating Center (NCC) provides technical assistance, resource development, and training related to postsecondary education for students with intellectual disability. It offers support, coordination, and evaluation services for Transition and Postsecondary Education Program (TPSID) grantees. The NCC shares resources through several dissemination channels, including its website (www.thinkcollege.net), social media, and a newsletter. This past year, there has been limited consulting available to faculty and staff, and statewide technical assistance centers, unless they are TPSID grantees. Think College is transitioning to a fee-for-service model to access consulting services and online professional development resources.

Think College - Inclusive Higher Education Network

The Inclusive Higher Education Network, funded through the *Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability – National Technical Assistance & Dissemination (PPSID-NTAD)* grant, was discontinued by the U.S. Department of Education. The funding ended September 30, 2025, but there was a no-cost extension through September 30, 2026. The Network's aim was to build awareness, translate research into practice, develop strategic partnerships, and increase regional capacity. The network activities and focus areas are being incorporated into the Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) Association.

Inclusive Postsecondary Education Association

Practitioners from across the country have established the Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) Association—an organization of dues-paying professionals and advocates committed to including people with intellectual disability in postsecondary education. The association's purpose is to increase access to quality, inclusive postsecondary education for people with intellectual disability by building community, advancing knowledge, supporting advocacy, and developing leaders. The association, which is still in its start-up phase, is continuing the work previously done by the Think College Network.

State of the Art Conference

The State of the Art Conference (SOTA) provides opportunities for colleges, universities, researchers, program staff, parents, and self-advocates to learn about the current state of research and practice in inclusive higher education and to network with each other. The 2025 conference was attended by over 500 faculty and staff, parents, self-advocates, and other experts, who shared effective practices.



Staff from various Minnesota colleges attended the 2025 State of the Art Conference to learn best practices in inclusive higher education.

Recommendations

Minnesota Statutory and Budget Recommendations

The Center has identified and recommended amendments to the state statutes for the 2027 legislative session to make the statutes current, incorporate lessons learned from the first three rounds of competitive grants, and eliminate barriers and open opportunities for students with IDD.

Inclusive Higher Education

- Update the **Grants for Students with Intellectual Disabilities** Statute 136A.1215 to include a maximum family income limit as an additional criterion for students with IDD eligibility.

Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Act - Technical Assistance Center, Statute 136A.921

a. Update the statute language to reflect the establishment of the Inclusive Higher Education Accreditation (IHEA) Council for the National Accreditation Standards and Application Process.

b. Adjust the state appropriation allocation between the Center and competitive grants to reflect the Center's increasing workload and align with the increased number of grantees. The proposed new allocations for each fiscal year are $400,000 ($800,000 per biennium) to the Center and $600,000 (1,200,000 per biennium) to the Competitive Grants Special Revenue Account.

Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Act - Competitive Grants Statute 136A.922

a. Update the statute language to reflect the establishment of the Inclusive Higher Education Accreditation (IHEA) Council for the National Accreditation Standards and Application Process.

b. Change the competitive grant funding period from one-year grants to two-year grants. This will ease the administrative burden on the Office of Higher Education and the institutions applying for funding, and recognize that the initiatives are long-term projects.

c. Reduce each grantee's eligibility period for competitive grant funding from 10 years to 6 years. This aligns with the time required for peer institutions to achieve self-sustainability across several states (e.g., Colorado, New York, Oklahoma).

d. Amend the competitive grant award amounts to more accurately align with the funding amount grantees have needed over the first three years of grant funding.

e. Adjust the state appropriation allocation between the Center and competitive grants to reflect the Center's increasing workload and align with the increased number of grantees. The proposed new allocations for each fiscal year are $400,000 ($800,000 per biennium) to the Center and $600,000 (1,200,000 per biennium) to the Competitive Grants Special Revenue Account.

Higher Education

- 135A.012 Subd. 5: Include disability-type disaggregation in reporting on higher education attainment goals.
- 136A.096: Report on Free Application for Federal Student Aid filing rates for students with disabilities by disability type, ensuring disaggregated disability-type data.

K-12 Education

- 120B.125 & 120B.307: Amend the statutes to ensure that students with disabilities with individualized education programs (IEPs) can access initiatives connecting K-12 schools, higher education institutions, and workforce partnerships, including career and college readiness. Statute 120B.125 excludes students with IEPs. The definition of students who are college- and career-ready is too narrow under statute 120B.307. The definition should be expanded to include students with IDD who are eligible for college through inclusive higher education initiatives and are not required to take remedial courses.
- 124D.09: Review and amend the Postsecondary Enrollment Options statute to eliminate barriers for students with disabilities.

The Center director works with the University of Minnesota Government Relations staff members who focus on state public policy. In addition, the director serves on The Arc Minnesota's public policy committee and receives public policy updates from the Minnesota Council on Disability to stay informed about state public policy that may impact students with IDD and inclusive higher education.

Federal Legislation, Actions, and Court Rulings

The Center director monitors Congressional activity, budget proposals, and policy changes. The following federal actions, with implications for inclusive postsecondary education, are currently being monitored.

U.S. Department of Education

The U.S. Department of Education still accepts and processes institutions' applications for the Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Education (CTP) program designation for federal financial aid eligibility. This is good news for Minnesota's inclusive higher education grantees and the students with IDD planning to pursue postsecondary education at these institutions.

Reforms and changes may affect inclusive postsecondary education initiatives. The U.S. Department of Education is reforming the higher education accreditation framework. The reforms are still unfolding, and the full impact is not yet known.

The organizational changes at the U.S. Department of Education are being monitored, and impacts on students with IDD and inclusive higher education initiatives will be communicated as additional information becomes available.

Pell Grants

There is a significant projected shortfall in Pell Grant funding. This is due to the rising number of eligible students and the larger Pell Grant awards. Congress has not passed legislation to address the projected shortfall. In addition, the U.S. Department of Education is updating the Pell Grant, and the changes may affect institutions' overall Title IV eligibility standards. The changes are still in process, and the full impact on institutions and students is not yet known.

Workforce Pell Grants

Beginning July 1, 2026, the Workforce Pell Grant expanded eligibility for the federal Pell Grant. The Workforce Pell Grant allows eligible students to receive need-based financial aid for programs lasting between eight and 15 weeks and totaling 150 to 599 clock hours.

Congress paired expanded eligibility with an extensive set of accountability measures intended to ensure federal dollars support programs that produce strong employment outcomes.

Programs must lead to stackable, portable credentials; prepare students for high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupations; and articulate into additional certificates or degrees. Programs must also demonstrate strong outcomes, including at least a 70% completion rate and a 70% job placement rate before qualifying for aid.

The published Rules and Regulations in the Federal Register include the comments and adjustments made to reflect Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Programs

(CTP) for students with intellectual disability. There is an exemption from the earnings premium measure. That said, many of the inclusive postsecondary education programs and credentials will not meet the Workforce Pell grant criteria because the programs are longer than 15 weeks. However, although earning a postsecondary education credential improves employment outcomes for individuals with intellectual disability, the types of employment are not likely to be high-skill, high-wage occupations.

It is possible that colleges and universities will amend current credentials or offer new credentials that meet the eligibility and accountability criteria. In addition, students with intellectual disability may be able to enroll in a program offered by the colleges and universities that does meet the Workforce Pell grant eligibility and is approved by the Governor and the Secretary.

At this time, the Workforce Pell grants are just rolling out and there are no approved Workforce Pell eligible programs offered in Minnesota yet. This is a developing area to continue monitoring and reviewing opportunities for students with intellectual disability.

Workforce

The *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Reauthorization* has not passed in 2026, and federal workforce programs continue to operate under current law.

The *Transformation to Competitive Integrated Employment Act (TCIEA)* legislation was reintroduced (S.2438/ H.R.4771) to phase out subminimum-wage payments and provide technical assistance to service providers to transition away from such payments. The legislation has been referred to committee and is awaiting legislative action.



Mary Hauff was hosted by Jennifer Bertram at the Minnesota Social Service Association conference in March 2026, presenting on expanding inclusive higher education.

Medicaid

Medicaid changes are being implemented under federal legislation passed in the summer of 2025. For students with IDD who have waiver funding, may have more difficultly getting approval to use their waiver funds to pay for college-related expenses.

University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

The U.S. House and Senate **Health and Human Services fiscal year 2027 appropriation bills** include level funding for the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities. This is the base funding for the Institute on Community Integration, which is the Center's home.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

On June 18, 2026, the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel issued a memorandum reinterpreting the scope of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the U.S. Supreme Court's 1999 decision in *Olmstead v. L.C.* The memo concludes that neither the ADA nor Section 504 requires states to provide services in the "most integrated setting appropriate" or creates a broad legal obligation to offer home- and community-based services. Instead, it argues that *Olmstead* held only that states may not unnecessarily institutionalize individuals with disabilities without adequate justification, and that the decision did not establish a general "integration mandate." This guidance memo may shape federal agency action and federal enforcement priorities.

On August 31, 2026, the Justice Department and five states requested

the federal court to strike down multiple longstanding provisions of the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Section 504 regulations relating to the integration mandate. The joint motion was filed in the *Texas, et al. v. Kennedy* case.

The Center director serves on the Association of University Centers on Disabilities' Policy Committee and the National Down Syndrome Congress' National Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition. Both organizations provide current information on proposed federal legislation, including policy and funding. The director attends the regular meetings and receives the organization's newsletters and action alert communications. The director is included in communications with the staff members who monitor federal public policy for the University of Minnesota's Government Relations office.

The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer. This document is available in alternate formats upon request.

The University of Minnesota stands on Miní Sóta Makhóčhe, the rightful homelands of the Dakhóta Oyáte. We recognize the U.S. did not uphold its end of these land treaties. It is the current and continued displacement of the Dakhóta Oyáte that allows the University to remain today.

University of Minnesota Board of Regents
Mission Fulfillment Committee
October 8, 2026

Information Report: Report of University, Faculty, Staff, and Student Activities and Awards

University Highlights

The University of Minnesota Rochester received the 2026 Top Colleges for Innovation Award from *Insight Into Academia* magazine, the nation's longest-running publication advancing best practices in higher education.

The University of Minnesota College of Pharmacy is proud to celebrate L'Aurelle Johnson, PhD, associate dean for Community, Advocacy, Resilience and Empowerment and associate professor in the Department of Experimental and Clinical Pharmacology, on being named a 2026 Bush Fellow.

For the 2026–27 academic year, the Morris, Rochester, and Twin Cities campuses have been named Colleges of Distinction for their successful implementation of high-impact educational practices and hands-on learning.

The University has been selected from a competitive pool of applicants for Campus Compact's 2026 Campus Action Planning Innovation Cohort. CAP is a strategic planning framework that helps colleges and universities advance civic and community engagement across all institutional functions, complementing and aligning with existing institutional processes.

A University of Minnesota Medical School research team has been awarded a 4-year, $2.2 million grant from the National Eye Institute to better understand the underlying causes of retinal diseases, such as age-related macular degeneration, and develop new treatments that could benefit patients.

Dr. Branden Moriarity and Dr. Beau Webber's collaboration has earned them the 2026 Randy Shaver Cancer Research and Community Fund's High Impact Research Award as well as the Angel Award. This double recognition highlights their groundbreaking work developing CRISPR-engineered Tumor Infiltrating Lymphocyte therapy.

The University of Minnesota Crookston has been awarded a $165,000 Dual Training Grant from the Minnesota Office of Higher Education to bolster workforce development in early childhood education and sustainable agriculture.

A University of Minnesota Medical School research team received a 5-year, $10 million grant from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases to discover new ways that animals fight virus infections. This has the potential to be translated into novel therapies against emerging viruses in humans.

The University of Minnesota Morris is one of 275 four-year colleges and universities that have been named to the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society 2026 Transfer Honor Roll. This distinction recognizes institutions that have demonstrated exceptional success in creating pathways that help community college transfer students earn bachelor's degrees. This is the third consecutive year that the Morris campus has been included in the Honor Roll.

Dr. Darrius Stanley, associate professor in the College of Education and Human Development, is a principal investigator for the project *A Stepping-Stone or Stumbling Block? Pathways to Principalship for Black and Latinx Assistant Principals*, which has received $250,000 from The Spencer Foundation

Researchers in the College of Science and Engineering have had three projects selected for the U.S. Department of Energy's inaugural Genesis Mission program, underscoring the University's leadership in applying AI and advanced computing to address critical scientific and engineering challenges in energy, technology and national security.

The Minnesota Legislature approved more than $23.3 million for 34 University of Minnesota-led projects through the state's Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources. Supporting work across University campuses and communities statewide, these investments advance the University's land-grant mission.

Four College of Science and Engineering researchers have received National Science Foundation Faculty Early Career Development Awards to pursue innovative research and educate the next generation of scientists and engineers.

A new School of Public Health study led by Assistant Professor Ivan Wu has received a seed grant to investigate whether considering a patient's own biological rhythms could provide a more meaningful way to understand why certain treatments might be more effective than others.

The National Science Foundation has awarded Carlye Lauff, associate professor of Product Design, an Early-Concept Grant for Exploratory Research to characterize how prototype testing sessions generate actionable design knowledge during early-stage product innovation.

Faculty and Staff Awards and Activities

Jennifer Eccles, PhD, RN, FAADN, received the Exceptional Leader Contribution State Representative Subscriber Award from the National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers.

Susan Culican, MD, PhD, senior associate dean of graduate medical education in the Medical School, has been named a 2026–2027 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health Policy Fellow by the National Academy of Medicine — a prestigious honor that places her among the nation's top health leaders.

Melissa Ertl was named a 2026 Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women's Health Scholar recipient by the University's Office of Women's Health Research, which administers this National Institutes of Health training program focused on positioning junior investigators who research women's health and/or sex differences for competitive NIH awards.

Associate Professor Cynthia Bradley, PhD, RN, CNE, CHSE, ANEF, and Jennifer Eccles, PhD, RN, FAADN, Center for Nursing Equity and Excellence executive director, were named to the class of 2026 American Academy of Nursing Fellows. The achievement is considered one of the highest honors in the nursing profession. The Academy represents nursing's most accomplished leaders in policy, research, administration, practice, and academia.

Gretchen Saunders, research assistant professor in the Department of Psychology, has been awarded the 2026 Early Career Award from the Behavior Genetics Association for her outstanding contributions to the field of behavior genetics.

Professor Siobhan McMahon, PhD, MPH, GNP-BC, FGSA, School of Nursing Foundation Research Professor, was named a fellow of the Gerontological Society of America. Fellow status is one of the highest honors in the field of aging research and education. It is awarded in acknowledgment of outstanding and continuing work in the field of gerontology.

Meghan Swanson, PhD, has been awarded a groundbreaking $34.7M grant to fund Project MAPLE, or Mapping Autism with Precision in Language and Expression. This ambitious

longitudinal study will use advanced brain imaging to map communication patterns in children with autism.

A team of researchers, including UMD's Jill Doerfler, received $98,000 to create a digital edition of a 19th-century Ojibwe manuscript literary magazine.

Dr. Lou Clark, Executive Director of M Simulation and Associate Professor in the Division of Hospital Medicine, has received the 2026 Outstanding SP Educator Award.