Welcome Home!

Join us in celebrating our 50th anniversary! Homecoming 2010 is the perfect time to return to the Fergus Falls campus to get reacquainted with YOUR College – the place where you started. Our celebration will recognize alumni like you, along with our retired faculty and staff and the countless ways the college has contributed to the life and vitality of the Fergus Falls area. During our anniversary celebration, you will also have the chance to meet with our current faculty and students and hear how the College intends to maintain its visibility and viability as we move ahead into our next 50 years.

Who is an alum of the College? At M State – Fergus Falls, we define “alum” as any graduate OR former student of the College. When we talk about our Alumni Art Show or Alumni Baseball Game, we welcome ALL former students with those interests to participate. If you know of alums who did not receive this mailing, please notify Carolyn Glesne at carolyn.glesne@minnesota.edu so we can add them to our mailing list.

What is Your Spartan Story?

Our name and the location may have changed, but the Fergus Falls campus has always been focused on serving students and enriching our community. Did you attend Fergus Falls Junior College, Fergus Falls State Junior College, Fergus Falls Community College or Minnesota State Community and Technical College? Were your classes in Washington Junior High School, the college wing of Fergus Falls High School, the Regional Treatment Center or on our current 146-acre campus on College Way? What is your Spartan Story? What were you able to achieve and accomplish because of your start at Fergus Falls?

Renew your memories and connect with your classmates and former instructors during our 50th anniversary celebration. Welcome home!

Homecoming Set for September 24-25

Call your classmates and make plans to be in Fergus Falls on Friday and Saturday, September 24 and 25 for the Spartan Homecoming. The tentative Homecoming weekend schedule is printed in this newsletter, and you can find more details at our 50th anniversary Web site, www.minnesota.edu/fergus50. Check back often, because the site will be updated regularly as our plans are finalized.

Anniversary celebration officially starts September 1

You’re invited to join our staff and students as we recognize the College’s 50th anniversary on Wednesday, Sept. 1. We’ll serve cake and coffee in Legacy Hall from noon to 2 p.m., and Fergus Falls Mayor Hal Leland (former campus Vice President for Student Affairs) will proclaim the official start of our 50th anniversary.
Fergus Falls Junior College opened its doors in September 1960, so our official 50th anniversary year is the 2010-2011 school year. The community’s legendary Committee of 100 worked tirelessly on this project of starting a college – something that had been turned down at least twice by voters in Fergus Falls. The community imagined this college and then made it real.

A half century later, I’ve been a witness to hundreds of examples of how this college has a very deep, very positive relationship with the community.

From the beginning, the mission of the college in Fergus Falls was to teach the first two years of the liberal arts so that students could transfer to a four-year school. That is still our core mission, and the vast majority of our students do just that.

A second mission was to teach vocational skills so that students could enter the world of work. Today, these are our nursing programs, our medical laboratory technician program and our new equine science program.

There was also a commitment to educating the whole student – which meant a rich variety of out-of-the-classroom activities such as varsity sports and theater. Our accomplishments in the arts and athletics are legendary here in Fergus Falls.

Finally, the college mission included community outreach and education so that our buildings would be available for events that served a public purpose and our educational opportunities would enrich the entire community.

Wes Waage was the mastermind of the college during its first few decades. He set into motion a culture that adapted to changes as they came down the road and heeded to a tradition of academic excellence in everything that was attempted.

There were about 90 students enrolled for the freshman classes in the fall of 1960. There were five teachers and a dean. Students used the basement of a nearby church as their lounge. Lunch was 49 cents, and tuition was a flat rate of something like $40 a term.

This spring, M State – Fergus Falls enrolled 781 students on campus, 831 high school students taking our college classes in their home high schools and 792 students in online courses. All that rolls up into 1,608 full-time equivalent students. Our community college now serves multiple communities here on campus, out on the Web and distributed across more than 30 school districts in Minnesota.

The tradition of our campus has been to adapt and survive; that is the story of this college in Fergus Falls. Not only are we tossed by the waves, but I think we’ve been pretty smart about catching them.

In 2010, I’d say:
M State - Fergus Falls Celebrates 50 Years

- We’re a great liberal arts college, and the liberal arts are the best preparation for advanced study, for success in the workplace, for flexibility in career choice and for citizenship.
- We work hand-in-hand with our strong medical community to educate capable, caring nurses and lab technicians so that our health care is high quality.
- We build on our strengths to develop new programs in areas like equine science and sustainable food production.
- Our athletic programs attract students who want to play competitive sports, and our music and visual arts programs are thriving because we have such talented faculty and students.
- We are committed to helping our students understand that they are part of the global economy and that the global economy exists here, not just somewhere on the other side of the Pacific.

What will the future bring? We know that change is constant, the human imagination is infinite, our ingenuity is limitless and education really is the key to the whole puzzle. Thankfully, the Committee of 100 had that vision, Wes Waage and his pioneering faculty had the will to turn those ideas into a terrific college, and the current generation of faculty, staff and students are very capable of catching the waves that come our way and carry us into the future.

Did you Know?
For those of you who have not heard from us in a while, our most recent name, M State – Fergus Falls, is a shortened version of our official name, Minnesota State Community and Technical College. On July 1, 2003, the Fergus Falls campus merged with the Detroit Lakes, Moorhead and Wadena campuses of the former Northwest Technical College to become M State. Dr. Ann Valentine serves as president of M State, and Dr. Anna Wasescha leads the Fergus Falls campus as its provost. Together, M State serves more than 8,000 students each year and offers more than 80 career programs in addition to the transfer Associate Degrees in the Arts (AA), Fine Arts (AFA), and Science (AS).

Get Reconnected . . .
It has been a while since we have heard from some of you. Please take advantage of this opportunity to get reconnected with your college. We are anxious to know where you are and what you have been doing. You can complete and return the enclosed form, or go to www.minnesota.edu/fergus50 and click on “Update my Information.” Be sure to include your “Spartan Story,” a special memory of an instructor or campus event. We will post these stories on the Web page.

By updating your information, we can stay in touch with you and keep you posted on campus happenings.

With increases in postage and paper costs and the College’s commitment to responsible use of resources, we plan to use electronic communications as much as possible to keep in touch with our alumni. Thanks for responding and helping us get our Fergus Falls campus family reconnected.
Be Our Guest

You are invited back to campus – for free! Please use the enclosed “Welcome Home” voucher to enjoy a play, a musical concert or an athletic event at the College during the coming school year. Bring the voucher to an athletic event for free admission for you and a guest. For an arts event, call 218-736-1600 for reservations and mention that you want to use your alumni voucher. We look forward to seeing you on campus!

Upcoming Arts Events at M State

Visit www.minnesota.edu/news and click on Fergus Falls for more detailed information.

Fine Arts & Entertainment
April 10 and 11, 15-18
The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)
April 15
Empty Bowls Project
April 23
M State Spring Band Concert
April 29
M State Spring Choral Concert
April 30
Lisabeth Hughes, Sophomore Flute Recital
May 4
Sophomore Recital – Dylan Olmsted, Peter Hough and Samantha Bottko

In the Waage Gallery
May 2010
M State Student Art Exhibit

In the Charles Beck Gallery
April 5 – May 14
Sandra Barnhouse Art Exhibit
May – August
Jim Fletcher Art Exhibit
September – December
50th Anniversary Alumni Art Exhibit

Pictorial History Book

A hardcover book chronicling the College’s history is currently in production. This 100-page pictorial history of our first 50 years is a keepsake that former Fergus Falls students and staff will treasure. The book will be available for purchase at all 50th anniversary events during the coming year. Ordering information will also be on the Web site.

Bigwood Lecture

Fergus Area College Foundation proudly presents the 18th annual Bigwood Lecture with guest speaker Sen. George McGovern at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 20, in Legacy Hall. Sen. McGovern’s long and respected career in public service and advocacy has earned him a 2010 Nobel Peace Prize nomination. Join us as he addresses “Ending Hunger in our Time.” A book signing will follow the lecture. His most recent work, “Abraham Lincoln,” will be available, as well as several of his other publications. The lecture is open to the public free of charge.

Alumni Art Show

The Fergus Falls Alumni Art Show, featuring the work of our alums and current and retired faculty, will be on display in the Charles Beck Gallery from mid-September through December 2010. We are in the process of contacting our alums for this show. If you or someone you know were enrolled in art classes in Fergus Falls and have continued with your art work, please contact Carolyn Glesne at 218-736-1514 for registration information. All artwork should be delivered to the campus by August 15.

Fergus Falls Memorabilia

If you have treasures from your Fergus Falls days - photos, scrapbooks, apparel with the college name - consider sharing them with us for display during the anniversary year. You can drop off your items at the main reception desk in Legacy Hall or call Teresa Thompson at 218-736-1552 to make arrangements.