

# M State News

THE COLLEGE NEWSLETTER FOR M STATE EMPLOYEES

November 2012

## *M State benefits from diversity and inclusion*

**H**ello again, everyone.

As the fall semester rapidly comes to a close and we reflect upon the recently celebrated Veterans Day and Thanksgiving holidays, I want to be sure to provide a special thank you to our veterans for serving our country and protecting our many freedoms. I am also very thankful for the privilege of serving as the president of M State and for having the opportunity to work with all of our students, faculty and staff to provide *"dynamic learning for working, living and serving,"* which will hopefully lead to *"success for our students and our stakeholders."*



Dr. Peggy Kennedy  
President

As I thought about the wide diversity of our students, faculty and staff at our four campuses, I wondered if everyone has had the opportunity to meet Chesay Colson, our coordinator of diversity and inclusion. Chesay is located on our Moorhead campus, but she serves the entire College to promote equity and cultural understanding among our students, faculty and staff and the surrounding communities we serve.

**The Office of Diversity and Inclusion** is relatively new at M State and, while meeting with Chesay recently, she asked me to write a letter of support for the ODI Web page that will soon be included within the M State website. In the process of writing that letter, I began to think about how diversity in the workplace really looks and how we might build and sustain an inclusive environment in a high-performing environment such as M State.

I looked to the Web with these questions and found some answers from the Ibis Consulting Group. They defined *diversity* as "the collective mixture of differences, similarities and uniqueness that each employee brings to the workplace." They defined *inclusion* as "engaging the uniqueness of the talents, beliefs, backgrounds and capabilities of the different

individuals and groups toward a common endeavor."

They suggested that this could be accomplished through compelling leadership, by developing a common vision, by providing individual diversity skills, by utilizing global thinking, by organizational support and policy alignment for inclusion, and through continuous improvement, learning and adaptation. And we all need to think about how we may best achieve organizational diversity and inclusion without sacrificing those beliefs, systems and structures that led us to become a high-performing organization in the first place.

Diversity and inclusion in the workplace are important higher education and business issues which actually offer a number of benefits to an organization. We know that an inclusive, high-performing organization attracts and retains the best talent, increases employee engagement, encourages creativity and innovation, reduces employee complaints and grievances, and increases market share by reaching out to diverse populations throughout the globe. I look forward to working with Chesay, the Human Resources Department, and all faculty and staff to continue our efforts to be a welcoming and inclusive organization.

Have a wonderful holiday season and happy New Year! I look forward to even greater success for M State and its students, faculty and staff.

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7X7=3

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## DATES TO KNOW

### December

2 Choir Concert, Fergus Falls campus  
7-9 Band Concert, Fergus Falls campus  
17-21 Finals week  
21 End of fall semester  
24-Jan. 11 Semester break

### January

14 Spring semester begins  
18 Last day to drop or add courses  
21 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, College closed



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Minnesota State  
Community and Technical College

# Academics

7 X 7 = 3. No, I really do not need a developmental math course. This phrase describes a new course delivery format which M State will be piloting this winter as it strives to identify additional ways to serve area residents and currently enrolled students who have unique demands on their schedules.

Students will have an opportunity to earn three college credits in classes that are scheduled for seven hours a day on seven days between the fall and spring terms. In putting together such a format, we've taken care to ensure that the rigor is equivalent to that of courses offered in a semester format.

We also recognize that this is not an appropriate format for all courses, thus care was taken in selecting courses for the pilot program. The seven days are also scheduled with a break, when students will be expected to be dedicated to outside class work. Individual courses all may require work such as final projects and papers which may be due several weeks after the course sessions are completed.

There are several different groups of students who may be interested in 7 X 7. That

includes area college students, home for a long holiday break, who could not get all their general education classes scheduled at the institution they attend; students who prefer to attend a class at their local two-year college where the class size may be smaller and they can get more individual attention; and students who want to take advantage of this time when they don't have competing course demands.

All these reasons may bring new individuals to our campuses. Some M State students also may wish to enroll for



Dr. Kathy Brock  
Chief Academic Officer

similar reasons. This format also may be advantageous for the student who finds it more conducive to his or her learning style to concentrate on one subject, compared to dealing with the competing demands of four or five classes at the same time.

7 X 7 classes are not for everyone. Students must be self-disciplined during the two-week span and willing

to dedicate the needed time — both during class hours and outside of class — to the 7 X 7 course. In fact, M state students who are not in good academic standing will not be allowed to enroll in a 7 X 7 course. Because of the demands of such a rigorous schedule, colleges that have offered similar formats have found that it's the best students who register.

M State will be piloting six courses which will meet from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Dec. 26, 27 and 28, and Jan. 2, 3, 4 and 7. Jan. 10 and 11 are built into the schedule as make-up days in case inclement weather requires cancellations. The courses included in the pilot and the campuses where they will be held are:



M State will be piloting 7X7=3 this winter as it strives to identify additional ways to serve area residents and currently enrolled students who have unique demands on their schedules.



Hours Days Credits

Looking for something to do over winter break?

Get ahead with a class from Minnesota State Community and Technical College. Learn more online or call 877-450-3322. Classes held Dec. 26-Jan. 7.

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## Detroit Lakes Campus

- PSYC 1200, General Psychology (Faculty: Milan Christianson)

## Fergus Falls Campus

- ENGL 1101, College Writing 1 (Faculty: Ann Schwabolski)
- PSYC 1200, General Psychology (Faculty: Steve Lindgren)

## Moorhead Campus

- ART 1118, Intro to Watercolor (Faculty: Jo Titus)
- COMM 1120, Intro to Public Speaking (Faculty: Heidi Dyrstad)
- SOC 1111, Intro to Sociology (Faculty: Jeff Bry)



## Academic and Student Affairs

**W**e want students who are academically successful and financially savvy so they can persist to completion and become successful and productive citizens. Where do we even begin to understand persistence (which used to be called retention) with so many different numbers, elements, student characteristics and uncontrollable variables?

The completion arch, released in 2012 by the College Board, suggested community colleges need to move beyond measuring the traditional and limited enrollment and graduate rates. Instead, we need to look at metrics which illustrate what happens to students between their starting and ending points at M State. What type of progress do they make? Did they achieve interim milestones?

The completion arch framework measures enrollment, developmental education placement and success, progress, transfer

success, completion, workforce preparation, and employment outcomes as a holistic solution to measure the work we do every day.

As we create a more comprehensive metric system to measure the true progress of M State students, we will have to operate within the guidelines expected of us by federal and state government reporting agencies. BUT, just for a moment, it can be fun to explore how a comprehensive view of our student metrics might look ...



Carrie Brimhall  
Associate Vice President of  
Academic and Student Affairs

In Fall 2010 **5,657** students were enrolled at M State seeking a degree.

4,298 students returned during Spring 2011.

**313** graduated.

Of the 4,298 students who progressed to Spring 2011, 2,557 returned during Fall 2011,  
and **731** graduated.

Of the **5,657** students,  
**1,991** have graduated as of today (35 percent).

BUT **86** percent of the students (3,862) have been enrolled in at least one semester since they started in Fall 2010. They may not come back the next semester or the following fall (federal definitions of success), but our students do return!

Of the 795 students who did not register for any semester after Fall 2010, we might still consider them a success. A total of 620 (78 percent) of those students earned **18,448** credits while attending M State – averaging 29 earned credits per student.

A student might define success as the paper where he or she finally earned a C or received constructive criticism from an instructor; the math assignment that finally clicked, the engine making a beautiful hummm after the student was told it could never run again, the IV inserted on the first try, or the experiment which defined a future career path. Data can be daunting and amazing at the same time.

The work of each M State employee contributes to the success of our students, even when the metrics cannot measure those increments. Keep changing lives ...

For more information on the completion arch, visit: [http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/advocacy/arch/10b-3074\\_Completion\\_Arch\\_Web\\_120410.pdf](http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/advocacy/arch/10b-3074_Completion_Arch_Web_120410.pdf)

## Student Services

### Rethinking Retention; Promoting Persistence

Earlier this fall term at a meeting of MnSCU faculty, administrators and system office representatives, someone mentioned the word “retention.”

“Retention,” proclaimed a faculty association leader in response, “is the refuge of administrative scoundrels.”

Less than six months ago, I wouldn’t have understood the sentiment behind that reaction to our focus on retention. Over the course of the past half-year, however, I’ve come to some understanding as to the rationale that challenges the value of the ongoing focus on retaining students. After all, aren’t the primary goals of higher education more about knowledge acquisition, skill attainment, critical thinking and attitudinal development? Why should we place so much focus on retaining students when we have much loftier outcomes to assess?

Personally, I would prefer if we in higher education would stop referring to “retention” of students and talk more about “persistence” of students. First, retention focuses on the short-term of term-to-term enrollment, as opposed to the longer goal of academic degree completion. Secondly, the word “retention” implies that we have that measure of control over student behavior,

that we can somehow keep students enrolled. The reality is that the best we can do is to actively promote student persistence, remove as many unnecessary barriers to their progress as possible and allow students to focus their energies on the rigor of learning.

Please don’t misunderstand me. The tracking of retention rates is a good measure of the term-to-term progress students make in persisting toward graduation. Still, isn’t it more appropriate for us to strategically plan from the perspective that students actively persist as opposed to passively being retained?

Of course, I still may be accused of splitting hairs here. Whether we refer to the assessment outcome as retention or as persistence, should we not be more engaged in the assessment of those loftier outcomes of competency in critical thinking, attitude change, etc? Perhaps. But perhaps meaningful measure of the latter is dependent upon accurate measure of the former.

Marymount College Professor of Psychology Joe Cuseo said that concluding that a college is doing an effective job because 50 percent of the entering class



Dr. Peter Wielinski  
Chief Student Services Officer

who completed their degrees displayed positive outcomes is similar to concluding that a research company’s new drug is highly successful because it produced positive outcomes in the 50 percent of the patients who completed the drug regimen, while failing to consider the implications to the 50 percent of the patients who found the side effects and

mortality rate to be a bit of a barrier. In short, it becomes difficult to engage in meaningful assessment of other learning outcomes without first establishing a representative sample through the foundational outcome of persistence being met.

Students entering our college this year have been greeted with and reminded of a simple message of expectation for success that should promote student persistence toward completion: Show up; work hard; finish what you start. We can all join in that promotion by bolstering students’ internal resilience and commitment to persevere in every interaction we have with them. Studies show that students not only need to hear that we expect them to persist, but also that we believe they can and will succeed.

## Information Technology

### StarID Implementation

If you have not already converted to use of StarID for all technology systems, please contact your campus computer help desk and schedule an appointment.

All users **must** transition no later than December 15. If you have not activated your StarID yet, please go to:

<http://starid.mnscu.edu/go/activate/> to complete this activation. If

you have any questions about StarID, please contact your campus computer help desk.



Dave Overby  
Chief Information Officer

### D2L Upgrade Coming Soon!

D2L will be updating to Version 10 on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 28 and 29. The upgrade will begin sometime on Friday. MnSCU will announce a specific start time at a later date.

While the update to Version 10 will noticeably change the look of the interface and location of the features in

D2L, it will not require you do to anything drastically different as you prepare your spring 2013 courses. Please continue to prepare your courses.

For a sneak peak at some of the navigational changes available in Version 10, you may be interested in viewing these videos:

- Navigation Bar and Minibar video: <http://media4.stcloudstate.edu/p45921793>
- Tool Layout Overview video: <http://media4.stcloudstate.edu/p52712472>

If you have questions or concerns about the changes for Version 10, please contact Dan Harrison at [Daniel.Harrison@minnesota.edu](mailto:Daniel.Harrison@minnesota.edu). Videos specific to the M State D2L Version 10 environment will be available in mid-December.

## "Facts and Myths" of Affirmative Action in Higher Education

**M**any of you serve on search committees throughout the course of a year, and within the context of the search committee responsibilities we discuss our responsibility as an equal opportunity employer. With this in mind, I encourage you to read this article, which addresses some of the more pervasive myths and actual relevant facts specific to affirmative action. Here is the link: <http://www.higheredjobs.com/Articles/articleDisplay.cfm?ID=246>



**Dacia Johnson**  
Chief Human Resources Officer

## Depression awareness and screening tools

With the end of fall semester and the holiday season upon us, it is important to remember that depression is a common and treatable medical condition that often causes feelings of sadness, loss of interest, withdrawal from others, and a loss of energy and

confidence. Depression has an enormous impact on a person's ability to pursue happiness and diminishes our drive to succeed and enjoy life.

The State Employee Group Insurance Plan (SEGIP) Health Solutions has partnered

with our health plans and LifeMatters EAP to provide private self-screening tools and information about depression.

Depression is an illness, not a weakness. If you suspect that you or a loved one may be depressed, it's important to address the problem right away. For information and screening tools, go to <http://www.mmb.state.mn.us/oct-dep-learn>.

## STAFF CHANGES AT M STATE

### NEW EMPLOYEES

- Celeste Weber, *Temporary Counselor, Wadena*

### STAFF CHANGES

- Suzanne Rethemeier, *Academic Advisor, Wadena*

### NO LONGER AT M STATE

- Erika Johnson, *BES Incubator Manager, resigned, Detroit Lakes*
- Beth Priddy, *BES Executive Director, resigned, Detroit Lakes*

## GUIDELINES FOR HOLIDAY DECORATIONS AND CELEBRATIONS

During the fall and winter months, a number of cultural and religious days of significance are observed. While it is a time of celebration, it is also a time to be mindful and respectful of the rich and diverse cultures that are ever present in our workplace and the communities we serve. The following recommendations are guidelines consistent with federal and state laws with regards to holiday decorations and celebrations in the government workplace.

### Holiday Decorations:

In accordance with federal guidelines, display of holiday décor is dependent upon whether the space is public or whether it is a shared or private workspace. In all cases, holiday decorations should be respectful and sensitive of employees and the public.

**Public Work Space:** A public work space is any space by which the public has physical or visual access that is not private workspace. For example, lobbies, reception areas, front counters, conference rooms, community centers, or exteriors of buildings.

In a public work space, only secular holiday decorations may be displayed. Secular holiday decorations include things like tinsel or garland, snowmen, candy canes, reindeer, etc. Religious symbols or holiday decorations with religious content may not be displayed.

**Private Work Space:** A workspace that is assigned exclusively to one employee, such as a cubicle, desk or office that may be seen occasionally by coworkers but not by clients, customers, or the general public.

In a private work space, an employee may display holiday decorations with religious content or secular decorations.

**Shared Work Space:** A shared workspace is used or shared by employees, such as copy rooms, conference rooms, shared offices, bathrooms or break areas.

In a shared work space, only secular holiday decorations may be displayed. Holiday decorations with religious content cannot be displayed.

### Holiday Celebrations or Activities:

Holiday activities, such as luncheons, potlucks or gift exchanges should be voluntary. Every employee may not feel comfortable participating in the activities or their religious beliefs may prevent their participation. An employee's decision not to participate should be respected. To create a more inclusive work environment, plan a means to share and learn about different cultural traditions during the holiday season. Supervisors or managers should not be perceived as endorsing or supporting religion generally or one religion over another.

### Safety:

The most important consideration regarding holiday decorations is SAFETY. Unfortunately every year during the holiday season, fires claim lives and destroy property. Many of these fires could have been prevented. Please carefully consider the flammability and potential fire risk of any decorations you may use and follow your agency's guidelines with respect to use of electrical devices or candles.

### Common Questions:

**May my agency display a tree in the lobby or other public area?**

Yes. Trees or wreaths can be displayed in public areas. The Supreme Court determined in *County of Allegheny v. ACLU Greater Pittsburgh Chapter*, 492 U.S. 573 (1989)

that trees and wreaths are secular symbols. Tree and wreath decorations should be secular in nature.

**May an employee display a nativity scene or a menorah in their cubicle?**

It depends. If the employee's cubicle is assigned exclusively to them and is not shared with another employee, nor is the cubicle generally viewable by the public, then yes; the employee may decorate their own cubicle with holiday decorations containing religious content, such as a nativity scene or menorah.

### Guiding Principles for an Inclusive Workplace:

1. Identify a period of time before and after holidays for decorations to be put up and taken down.
2. Designate a common area to share various holidays and cultures, by displaying educational materials on occasions of significance during the winter.
3. Use a multicultural calendar to assist in planning events.
4. Invite staff to participate and share information or items at holiday gatherings that reflect their personal cultural traditions or beliefs.
5. Respect an employee's decision not to participate in a holiday luncheon or other celebration.

### Contact:

If you have questions about these guidelines, please contact Ann Feaman, the State Affirmative Action Officer, by phone at 651-259-3643 or email [ann.feaman@state.mn.us](mailto:ann.feaman@state.mn.us).

## Finance and Facilities

**W**e just completed our Fiscal 2012 annual audit and have prepared the year-end financial statements.

In late October we had our exit conference with our auditors from Baker Tilly Virchow Krause and the system office. Although the final reports are not yet completed, the early indications are that we had another very successful audit.

The auditors informed us that they found no findings or material weaknesses and that no auditor adjustments were needed. They will again be giving us a clean unqualified audit opinion. Clean audits are the result of employees taking great care in entering transactions and following policies and procedures at all levels of the college. The more diligence we all use making our purchases and completing our daily work, the cleaner the reports are at year-end.

I wish to extend a thank you to all employees in the college for this diligence and a special thank you to employees within the finance division for ensuring that we continue

to follow sound financial practices and use care when completing the college's financial transactions.

Although our audit was successful, we do have work to do on our financial indicators. For the first time in many years, there was a drop in our Composite Financial Index, which is a compilation of several ratios that gives us an indication of our financial health. It is also used by The Higher Learning Commission as a measure of financial health, with a benchmark of 3.00 considered as being in sound financial health.

Our CFI for year-end 2012 is 1.99. Although many areas of M State continue to be strong, we need to continue to work on improving our operating margin and our cash reserves. Items such as depreciation and leave balances are used in the operating margin calculation, which is a component of the CFI. Although we have not budgeted for depreciation on equipment and buildings in the past, this is something we will need to begin to do moving forward in order to improve our operating

margin and in turn our CFI. Many MnSCU institutions are finding themselves in the same position and are looking for ways to improve their CFI, while at the same time seeing reduced state allocations and capped tuition.

Although our CFI did decrease, M State remains in a sound operating position. Our cash reserves continue to improve, and our facilities are looking better than ever. As always, we do have work to do, but with everyone's help we will work through this challenge as well. Again, thank you all for your continued "eye on compliance and details" when doing your daily work.



**Pat Nordick**  
Chief Financial Officer

### TIP OF THE MONTH

#### Travel using state-owned vehicles

State-owned vehicles are to be used only by authorized personnel and only for official college business. State-owned vehicles are defined as any fleet vehicles used for traveling off campus, including vehicles that M State owns and any vehicles that we lease from State of Minnesota Travel Management. State-owned vehicles also include any motorized pieces of equipment that are used on the campus for purposes of operation of the campus.

Only authorized drivers are allowed to operate state-owned vehicles. Authorized drivers include:

- Current state employees
- Workstudy students
- Contractors if authorization to drive a state vehicle is specifically listed in the contract
- Students who have received permission to drive from a state employee
- Individuals assisting an employee or student with a disability, if approved by supervisor

All authorized drivers who will be traveling off campus also need to complete the Vehicle Use Agreement and have their driving record checked and returned with an acceptable status.

In addition, only authorized persons are allowed to ride in state-owned vehicles. Authorized riders include:

- Current state employees
- Currently registered students
- Contractors under a current contract
- Individuals assisting an employee or student with a disability, if approved by supervisor

Employee family members or friends are NOT allowed to ride in state-owned vehicles, either on or off campus property.

### TIP OF THE MONTH

#### Student drivers

Students are allowed to drive a college/state vehicle for college-related activities on public roadways provided they meet the following criteria:

1. They are current students enrolled in class for the term that they are using the vehicle, or they are workstudy students.
2. They have completed the Vehicle Use Agreement and have had their driving record checked and approved by the State of Minnesota Risk Management Division.
3. They have received permission from their supervisor or instructor to use the college vehicle.

To get a student approved to drive a college vehicle, complete the Vehicle Use Agreement and submit it to Janice Carpenter in the Perham Service Center. (The form is available on the employee portal/files & forms/human resources/finance & payroll.) Janice will submit the form to the State of Minnesota Risk Management Division, which will check the student's driving record and determine whether the student is eligible to drive a college vehicle. Risk Management will notify M State whether the student is eligible, and we in turn will contact the supervisor or instructor. A student is not allowed to drive college vehicles until the supervisor or instructor receives notice that the student is eligible.

In the case of a student driving a college vehicle, only college employees and other college students are allowed to ride with the student driver. At no time is it allowable for friends or family members who are not enrolled at a MnSCU institution or employed by the State of Minnesota to ride with student drivers.

Students are allowed to drive a college vehicle on college property without going through the verification process. However, they cannot leave college property and/or drive on any public roads.

If a student is planning to drive his or her own vehicle to a college function, no verification is needed unless the driver is transporting other students. In that case, it is the responsibility of the M State employee who is overseeing the activity to ensure that he or she receives a copy of the student's current drivers license and proof of insurance. Please retain these documents in your file until the activity or trip is completed without incident.



# SUCCESS STORIES

## Our Students Shine

### A spike in interest

For the first time since 2004, the Spartans advanced to the national Division III volleyball tournament, played Nov. 9-10 in Rochester. The Spartans — eventual fifth place winners — defeated Jamestown College (N.Y.) in the first round before losing to Brookhaven College of Farmer's Branch, Texas, and Northland Community and Technical College of Thief River Falls.

### Willing donors

Students on the Wadena campus were real life-savers on Oct. 26, far surpassing the donation goal set for the Red Cross campus blood drive. Organizers had a goal of 40 units of blood but collected a total of 52 —and had to turn away numerous donors due to lack of space. An excellent problem to have, observed Student Services Director Christian Brezczinski.

## Check It Out!

### A seller's market

Go ahead, release your inner entrepreneur during the second annual Entrepreneurship Day from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 11, on the Detroit Lakes campus. M State students, faculty and staff are welcome to sign up to sell anything they've made, collected or had made for them. If you're interested, email [tony.parker@minnesota.edu](mailto:tony.parker@minnesota.edu) by noon on Dec. 10. Sponsors for the event are the Business Management/Ownership and Business Entrepreneurship programs. And yes, you get to keep the money you earn.

### A classy event

Dec. 3 is Cinema Day on the Detroit Lakes campus, where the World Cinema class is hosting three free movies for community members: "Wall-E" from 10 to 11:40 a.m., "White Christmas" from noon to 2:05 p.m. and "The Avengers" from 2:30 to 5 p.m. Instructor Laurel Nielson said students are planning and running the event, which is designed to familiarize audiences with different aspects of film. Movies will be shown in the campus conference room, and of course there will be popcorn for sale.

### A chili reception

The Moorhead campus is sponsoring a chili feed and silent auction fundraiser from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 2, in the college's East Commons. It's your chance to watch the Vikings take on the Packers on the big screen TV and support the Dan Sperling "Realize Your Dream" Scholarship Fund. BYO cheesehead.

### Riding high

M State's Equine Science students will show off their Western horsemanship skills during a performance from 9:30-10:30 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 11, at Red Horse Ranch. The riding exhibition is part of the final exam for their program, with each student individually completing a pattern consisting of several gait transitions, turns and lead changes. M State students and the public are invited to come and enjoy the show.

### Making it fit

The Moorhead campus celebrates the opening of its new Fitness Center with a ribbon cutting at 4:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 13. The campus is also showcasing Culinary Arts facility renovations, which were completed along with the wellness center addition. A reception will follow the festivities.

### In tune with the times

The Fergus Falls campus features an array of holiday music, beginning with two Winter Choral Concerts at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 30, and 7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 2. A highlight of both concerts will be selections from Handel's "Messiah" performed by nearly 125 area musicians. Then an M State holiday tradition returns with concerts by the M State Concert Band performing the music of Mannheim Steamroller. Band concerts are set for 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Dec. 7 and 8, and 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 9.

## Did You Know?

### Knot bad!

Teresa Beacom and K.C. Hanson, English instructors on the Moorhead campus, recently attended the Two-Year College English Association Midwest Conference in Lincoln, Neb., where most of the sessions concentrated on the challenges faced by instructors at two-year colleges. Presentations focused on bringing more active learning into the classroom, and Hanson shared his tactic of using fishing knots as a way to develop context for writing directions in technical writing.

## In the News

### Scholars earn dollars

More than 130 students were recognized during Fergus Area College Foundation's annual scholarship reception on Nov. 8. In addition to honoring recipients, the reception gives donors a chance to meet the students who receive their scholarships. Check out the story in the [Daily Journal](#).

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# M|State

Career, Technical and Transfer Education.

## Minnesota State Community and Technical College Academic Quality Improvement Program

### AQIP Points of Interest

- Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) is an alternative process through which an organization can maintain its accredited status with The Higher Learning Commission.
- AQIP's goal is to infuse the principles and benefits of continuous improvement into the culture of colleges and universities in order to assure and advance the quality of higher education.
- **AQIP's Principles of High Performance Organizations** underlie all of AQIP's elements, activities and procedures. They represent the values that participating colleges and universities and AQIP itself strive to embody.
  1. A **mission** and vision that focus on serving needs of students and other stakeholders
  2. Broad-based faculty, staff and administrative **involvement**
  3. Leaders and **leadership** systems that support a quality culture
  4. A **learning**-centered environment
  5. Respect for **people** and willingness to invest in them
  6. **Collaboration** and a shared institutional focus
  7. **Agility**, flexibility and responsiveness to changing needs and conditions
  8. **Planning** for innovation and improvement
  9. Fact-based **information**-gathering and thinking to support analysis and decision making
  10. **Integrity** and responsible institutional citizenship

### 2012-2013 AQIP Cycle Highlight: August Shift

#### Purposeful Inquiry Focused on the M State Strategic Direction

The August Shift inquiry began by addressing some of the key sentiments found in the college regarding last-minute students. Many employees felt serving the last minute-students (through the 1stop2enroll process) was difficult because it required changing the rules, taking away service from our returning students and completing all of the steps to get them financial aid, only to have them leave a few weeks into the semester. M State administrators began the inquiry by surveying staff on the last-minute student behaviors and frustrations of working with the group and then conducting research on the success, persistence and completion rates of the population.

#### Open and Inclusive Process

M State began a 1stop2enroll orientation process more than five years ago. The 1stop2enroll orientation targeted underrepresented students and attempted to address the perception that enrolling in college is cumbersome and time consuming. The events were designed for students to apply, assess, orient and register in a one-day event.

In 2012, M State used internal data such as persistence and success rates as well as external data from the CCSSE and SENSE surveys to enhance the last-minute orientation process. To begin, student services team members openly addressed perceptions, frustrations and opportunities of last-minute students. The dialog created the need to focus on key messages for students. The 1stop2enroll t-shirts worn by staff members re-enforced the message: 3Steps4Success.

1. Show up.
2. Work hard.
3. Finish what you start.

Rather than view last-minute students as a burden, employees welcomed the students with consistency in message and an all-hands-on-deck approach to service. This change in student services philosophy was termed the "August Shift." Staff members began viewing all M State students, regardless of campus location or date of registration, as students who could create a success story by completing college.

In the new model, staff members from each location traveled to assist on all campus locations. The additional staffing allowed a more efficient, welcoming and engaging orientation process. The maximization of human resources also provided opportunities to continue to serve students who were calling on the phone, accessing online resources or dropping in to a campus location for service. A big part of the change was that, rather than projecting to students that they were too late to get through the process this close to the start of classes, we made the process work for them, thereby eliminating the negative message of "you're too late."

1stop2enroll events did not focus on job titles or job responsibilities; every employee, including participating administrators, focused on helping students navigate the enrollment and orientation process. Four hundred and fifty-three students attended a 1stop2enroll event in 2012. In an evaluation of the event, students who attended spoke about "all parts of the day as helpful," "the awesome staff," "one-on-one-contact," and "everything going very smoothly." One student stated "every time I turned around there was someone there to guide me."

M State believes the orientation process should be inclusive of all students and extend beyond a one-day event; every interaction with students is an opportunity to support their educational journey. The 1stop2enroll events are one illustration of this commitment.



# P.O.I.S.E.D

## 4 the Future

**Purposeful, Open,  
Inclusive, Strategic,  
Engaging and  
Data Driven**

The M State P.O.I.S.E.D process aligns with the key foci of academic quality improvement processes and improvements; the M State culture centers decision making on data, decentralizes control, empowers faculty and staff to make the decisions that directly affect their work, embraces system-wide thinking, and begins the improvement process with a key interest in meeting the expectations of stakeholders.

## Upcoming Consultations and Involvement Opportunities in December

AASC Portfolio Review  
Task Force

- Financial Aid Team
- Enrollment Management Team
- Marketing Team
- Shared Governance
- Cabinet and Management Teams

## Questions

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## Strategic

This continuous improvement initiative aligns with the M State goal and strategies listed below:

### Goal:

M State embraces the challenge to excel in teaching, learning and service so all students — career, transfer and life-long learners — are ensured of opportunities for success.

### Strategy:

Focus on holistic solutions for increasing student persistence and completion rates.

## Engaging results and Data collection for M State's Future

The outcomes of the orientation strategy were to change the perception of last-minute students, to improve our service to the students who attend a 1stop2enroll event, to provide messaging to students about how to succeed, to support staff by gathering feedback about the process and continuously improving based on that feedback, and to create an orientation environment focused on long-term persistence rather than the rush of first-time enrollments.

The outcomes were initially measured through a student evaluation of the process. Ninety-six percent of students who attended the orientation event rated the event as a successful experience, and 95 percent of students felt the orientation was informative. In addition, 89 percent of students found the admission process to be smooth with excellent service. Ongoing evaluation of the commitment to improved service and consistent messaging will be monitored through the comparison of students who registered in the month prior to the semester start to students who registered in advance of the semester start (defined as more than one month). The ongoing evaluation will compare the grade point averages, persistence and completion rates, academic success factors and business office procedure compliance of both student groups.

M State is committed to student access to higher education. We are also committed to student persistence and completion, supporting the amazing work of our employees, and excellence in teaching and learning. The 1stop2enroll model helps underrepresented students navigate the complexities of the admission and registration process in higher education. Better yet, it gives them the messaging and tools they need to change their lives through education.

## AQIP Timeline, Opportunities for Input

Friday, Nov. 30, 2012	Identify Areas to Highlight In Overview	Cabinet
Monday, Dec. 31, 2012	Review Draft of Categories 1, 2	Cabinet and other committees tied to the categories
Monday, Dec. 31, 2012	Communicate AQIP Projects, Process, Timeline and Strategies to broad M State audience	Lead - AVP with Cabinet participation
Thursday, Jan. 31, 2013	Review Draft of Categories 3.4	Cabinet and other committees tied to the categories
Thursday, Jan. 31, 2013	Review Outline of Categories 5,6	Chief officers
Thursday, Jan. 31, 2013	Identify Electronic Portfolio Distribution Plan	Lead - AVP with Cabinet participation

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