Introducing M State's new Office of Strategic Engagement

Welcome to the first-ever edition of “Strategic Insights,” a new monthly newsletter sharing the latest events and announcements from M State’s Office of Strategic Engagement, where industry engagement is not just a concept but a crucial mission. We recognize that the future of our workforce hinges on strong collaboration between education and industry, and our office is dedicated to bridging the gap between academia and the professional world. We build sustainable relationships with companies to ensure our students receive real-world experience, cutting-edge knowledge, and the skills necessary to thrive in the world of work. Our commitment to industry engagement is at the core of our mission to empower our students and enrich our communities. Together with our partners, we equip students with the tools they need to succeed in their careers and drive regional economic growth, building a stronger, more resilient workforce for today and tomorrow.

Craig Beytien  
Vice President for Strategic Engagement

Beytien is a proud native of Minnesota and brings to M State a wealth of knowledge and expertise cultivated over a career spanning more than 25 years in higher education. With a diverse background encompassing both the private and public sectors, he has consistently demonstrated his passion for bridging the gap between academia and industry.

Formerly serving as the Executive Director for Corporate Relations at
the University of Wisconsin, Beytien has dedicated his professional life to fostering meaningful connections between businesses and educational institutions. His unwavering commitment to enhancing the educational experience extends to supporting students, faculty and program development, ensuring that both learning and educators thrive in an ever-evolving landscape.

In his role at M State, Beytien continues to be a catalyst for innovation, pushing the boundaries of what higher education can achieve through collaboration and synergy between academia and the corporate world. His dedication to nurturing these vital partnerships underscores his belief in the transformative power of education to shape a brighter future for all.

Dakota Fence Company representatives and employees pause for a picture during a custom skills training program earlier this year at an M State WDS training facility.

'Great training and an awesome facility'

M State’s WDS partners with Dakota Fence on ‘perfect’ skills and leadership training

Fargo-based Dakota Fence Company, one of the largest full-line fence companies and contractors in the nation, recently partnered with M State’s Workforce Development Solutions (WDS) division to offer hands-on electrical and mechanical skills training to its workers, as well as leadership development training.

Dakota Fence and WDS worked together to create custom course material for the trainings, and flexible training schedules. Dakota Fence employees received both classroom and hands-on practical training experiences, with WDS supplying the facility and instructors.

“We were fortunate to be able to work with M State and have access to intelligent and passionate trainers in our area,” says Natalie Feldhake, Employee Development and Engagement Manager at Dakota Fence. “The facilitators have a great wealth of knowledge, and our employees were able to pick their brains and take some of that knowledge back with them to use on a daily basis. The facility was perfect for our needs – the classroom and hands-on portion of the training program.”
Dakota Electric Donates $15K for M State Student Lineworker Emergency Fund

Dakota Electric Association donated $15,000 in September to create the M State Electrical Lineworker Promise Fund, an emergency fund specifically designed for students in the Electrical Lineworker Technology program on M State’s Wadena campus. Dakota Electric is a member-owned, nonprofit electric cooperative and is the second-largest electric cooperative in Minnesota.

Dollars from the M State Electrical Lineworker Promise Fund are available to students at the discretion of M State’s college social workers, using the same process as is already used for the M State Foundation and Alumni Promise Fund, a similar emergency fund available to all students attending M State’s Detroit Lakes, Moorhead and Wadena campuses. Students in need of emergency funding reach out to M State social workers to determine their eligibility. The funds can be used for necessities that are not tuition-related but can impede academic progress, such as childcare, food, transportation, clothing and housing.

Another Round of Free CNA Courses Wrap Up at M State

This fall, M State again hosted free Certified Nursing Assistant courses as part of the Next Generation Nursing Assistant – Train, Test, Work initiative. Classes in Moorhead and Fergus Falls ended October 26, and Detroit Lakes classes are set to wrap on November 16.

The college has hosted the free courses multiple times as a part of the Next Gen initiative, which offers resources and support to Minnesotans pursuing a CNA certification to work in a long-term or senior care facility in the state. The initiative covers costs for tuition, fees and materials.

Nearly 208 students had already completed their CNA classes at M State as part of the initiative before this latest fall round, and the college has been approved by the state to offer more such classes this spring. The classes are coordinated by M State’s Workforce Development Solutions (WDS) division.

Thank You to Our Partners

M State Foundation and Alumni is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that supports the college’s Detroit Lakes, Moorhead and Wadena campuses. The foundation thanks the following businesses, alumni, employees and friends for their donations of funds or in-kind gifts and services during the first quarter of our fiscal year. Donations to the foundation greatly impact the lives of M State students.
Alumni Success Story

“I am writing this letter as a thank you for the opportunities M State Foundation and Alumni have provided me by granting me the Astera Health Scholarship. This award will help lessen the financial burden of achieving my goals. I am grateful to have been chosen as one of the recipients. I plan on pursuing my RN license, and possibly by BSN/MSN degrees in the future. I hope the foundation is able to impact countless academic dreams for years to come.”

-Amanda Joart, M State Wadena ADN Nursing student.