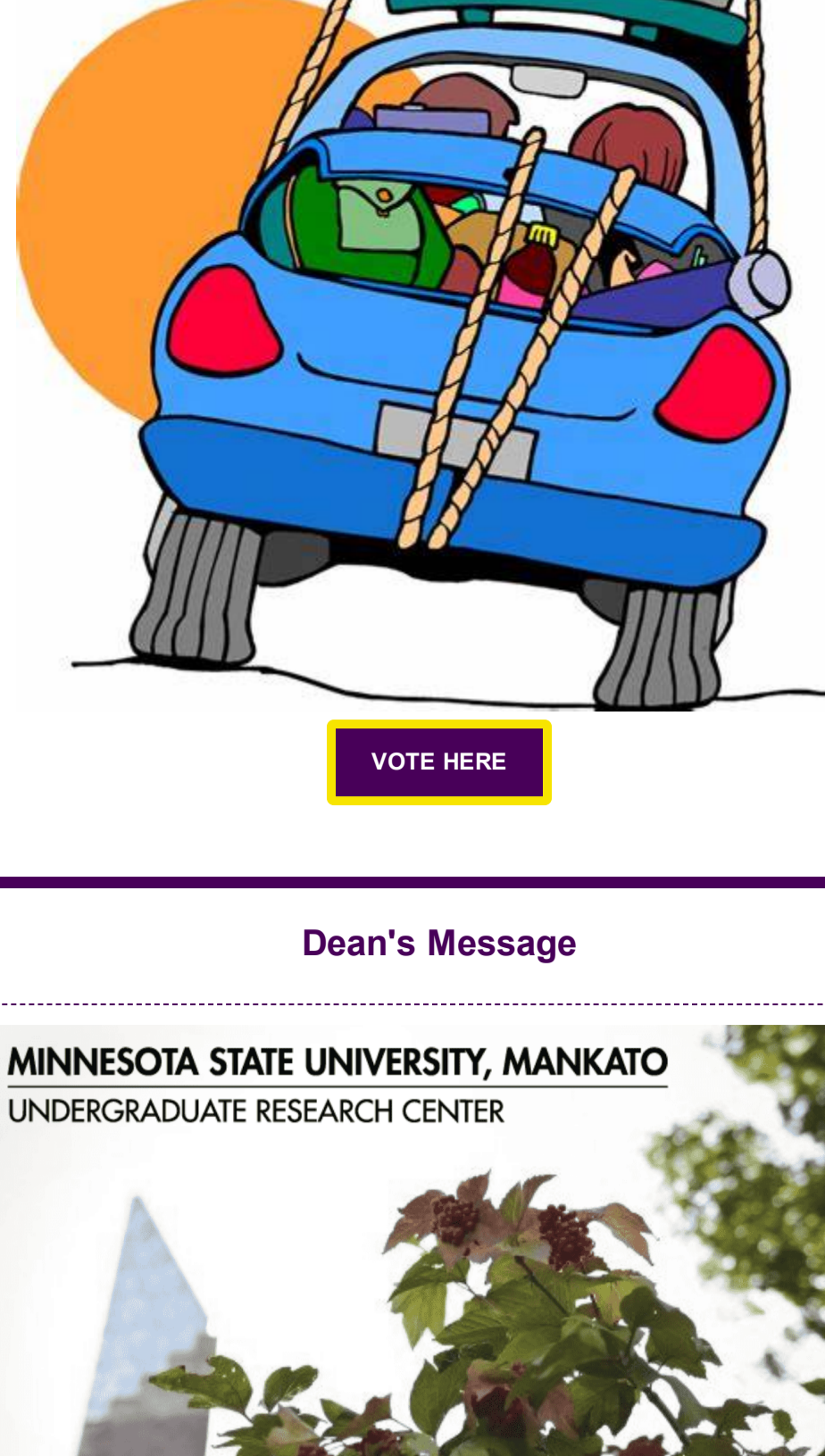


Poll Time

What do you look for when choosing a vacation destination?



Dean's Message

**MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO
UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH CENTER**



Although we are still at the mid-point of the semester, we're on the cusp of celebrating year-long faculty-mentored student research and creative projects. The knowledge, skills, and relationships developed through this experience is for many students the most important academic experience of their lifetimes. Countless hours spent on testing sites, and in studios, libraries, archives, and labs, will give way to a variety of public presentations. For example, over forty of our students will be heading to the National Conference of Undergraduate Research in California, while hundreds of others will be presenting their work in our Undergraduate Research Symposium.

The week before spring break saw Minnesota State Mankato host the annual Posters at St. Paul event, which celebrates the work our students and faculty are conducting across the state system. Nate (see his story below) and I had the opportunity to accompany Dr. Patrick Ibbotson, Director of the Undergraduate Research Center, and several students to the state capital. Student researchers from throughout the Minnesota State system gathered to present their latest research in fields from Sociology, Chemistry, Physics, and the Center for Academic Success, and to do so during normal business hours. The lounge is characterized by dimmable lighting, low distractions, and comfortable amenities such as cozy couches, iPads, board games, and even a foosball table. It's designed to provide students with a tranquil environment for both relaxation and focused study, thereby enhancing their overall study experience.

Librarian Jessica Schomburg, a national expert in accessibility, emphasized that the primary purpose of these sensory spaces is to provide a respite for individuals who may experience sensory overload due to factors such as excessive noise, bright lights, or strong odors. These spaces aim to offer a place where individuals can decompress, refocus, and effectively continue their academic pursuits. As libraries adapt to the changing needs of our communities by embracing different types of activities within their walls, such collaborative initiatives to enhance accessibility reflect librarians' commitment to inclusivity. Beyond the increasingly diverse uses of library spaces, the dynamic nature of such spaces also arises from the diverse needs of library patrons, including those who are neurodivergent, autistic, have ADHD, or suffer from migraines. By creating environments with limited lighting, reduced noise levels, and options to enjoy fragrance and foot covers, libraries seek to accommodate the sensory needs of all its users.

Schomburg highlighted the ongoing efforts to ensure inclusivity and accessibility. Challenges such as sensitivity to electronic noise and the balance between dimming lights while maintaining visibility are carefully considered. Moreover, the library actively seeks feedback from users to continuously refine and improve these spaces, demonstrating a commitment to responsiveness, adaptability, and user-centered design.

Partnerships and collaborations play a crucial role in the development and support of these sensory spaces. Schomburg mentioned ongoing communication with accessibility resources, student organizations like the Neurodiversity Student Group, and involvement with the Disability Advisory Group on campus. These collaborations facilitate the exchange of ideas and insights, contributing to the ongoing evolution of these spaces.

Written by Nathanael Tlilahun

Program Highlight

Accessibility Lounge and Sensory Spaces



Libraries, places traditionally associated with quiet study and research, are evolving to cater to the diverse needs of their users by creating "sensory spaces." A recent example of this is the new accessibility lounge opened in the lower level of Memorial Library. The effort was initiated through a partnership between Student Government and effective collaboration between Accessibility Services, Maverick Success Program, and the Center for Academic Success, and is in operation during normal business hours. The lounge is characterized by dimmable lighting, low distractions, and comfortable amenities such as cozy couches, iPads, board games, and even a foosball table. It's designed to provide students with a tranquil environment for both relaxation and focused study, thereby enhancing their overall study experience.

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Student Success

Grace Tobin, (MS, Mathematics Education '25), Center for Academic Success



Meet Grace Tobin (MS, Mathematics Education '25) a Mankato native who previously earned a BS in Composite Materials Engineering at Winona State University. Grace's passion for teaching and helping others led her to pursue a graduate program in Mathematics Education at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Each day, she hopes for skills as a graduate assistant in the Center for Academic Success while assisting other students.

With a schedule tailored to accommodate her graduate studies, she seamlessly integrates tutoring sessions into her daily routine. The flexibility and support provided by the Center enabled her to strike a harmonious balance between academics and assistantship.

Through one-on-one sessions and group interactions, she leverages her expertise to address diverse learning needs and ensure that each student receives tailored guidance. Her approach to tutoring is rooted in empathy, patience, and a genuine desire to see her students thrive. The dynamic nature of tutoring allows Grace to improve her own teaching skills and deepen her understanding of mathematical concepts.

Grace's dedication to her students goes beyond academic assistance. It encompasses fostering a supportive learning environment where students feel empowered to excel. She recounts joyful moments when students return with glowing feedback about her tutoring sessions, highlighting the positive impact she has resonated deeply with those she assists, reaffirming the significance of personalized academic support.

Grace's approach emphasizes the pivotal role of the Center for Academic Success in fostering a sense of community and support among students. She highlights the importance of peer interaction and collaborative learning, citing instances where group tutoring sessions facilitated knowledge sharing and collaborative problem-solving.

Written by Raby Dieng

Announcements

Library Staff presentation at the Electronic Resources Minnesota (ERMN) online conference

Held Southworth, Evan Rusch, and Nat Gustafson-Sundell recently presented on a new category of collections performance indicators developed from one of our ideas, called [Subject Package measures](#).

These measures provide a strategic overview of how journal packages serve disciplines across the university. The presentation was offered through the Electronic Resources Minnesota (ERMN) online conference and there were over 100 librarians and technicians attending from the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. Over spring break, Nat met with librarians from the University of Massachusetts - Dartmouth and Arizona State University to help them learn how to implement these measures for their libraries.

Held, Evan, and Nat regularly collaborate on the Collections Management Technology (CMT) team, along with Pat Linemann and Jeff Rosamond. Evan and Nat also recently presented this spring at [Library Data Visualization](#), a new approach to data visualization utilizing DataGrip to illustrate proportional quantities. There were over 400 librarians and technicians attending that presentation, which was [recorded](#). To learn more about the team's research and projects, please visit [this](#) [page](#).

2024 Research Madness

In the spirit of March Madness, the URC will once again be hosting a bracket competition for the world's top (or most interesting) researchers!

We need nominations to fill out the initial bracket. We want a diverse pool of researchers from all disciplines, cultures, and identities. Remember that we consider all research, scholarly, and creative activities as "research." Our only restriction is - the person must still be alive (i.e. you can't nominate Einstein). Please send names to us at urc@mnsu.edu.

Nominations and later votes can be submitted by anyone (students, faculty, staff...), This is purely for the URC staff's enjoyment. Although, we will probably post the ongoing research battles on our bulletin board and through social media. The person who nominates the winning researcher will be awarded an MNSU sweatshirt!

The Honors Council's new Engaged Student Award



The Honors Council has launched a new award—the Engaged Student Award—that seeks to recognize students who are engaged in learning both inside and outside the classroom. Library and Learning Staff play a critical role in student engagement and learning and are asked to help recognize these students. Please see information below.

The Minnesota State University, Mankato Honors Program is about much more than earning good grades. The Honors Program challenges students to move outside of their comfort zone and to think critically about the world and their personal contributions to the communities in which they live.

To recognize students who demonstrate the values of the Honors Program, the Honors Council is pleased to announce the launch of the Engaged Student Award, a new award that recognizes students, regardless of their affiliation with the Honors Program, who showcase outstanding commitment to and active involvement beyond the traditional academic framework.

The Engaged Student Award seeks to recognize students who demonstrate a passion for learning, community involvement, and a genuine commitment to making the world a better place.

This could include:

- students who ask the tough questions in class
- students who challenge the status quo
- students who bring energy to the learning environment
- Recognizing a student takes just a few minutes. Note that the student will be notified you recognized them and will receive a certificate. You're welcome to recognize more than one student.

Submissions for the Engaged Student Award are open, and we encourage all members of the university community to participate in acknowledging and celebrating students who are engaged in their learning. Help us celebrate the many students who make Minnesota State University, Mankato a great place to learn and grow.

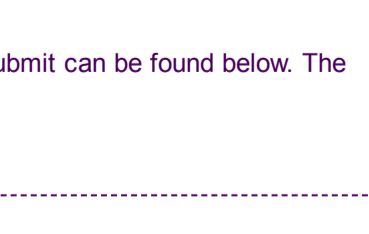
Recognize a student for the Engaged Student Award through our Microsoft Form at <https://bit.ly/engagedstudent>

MavPASS Information Sessions



Want To Be a MavPASS Leader?

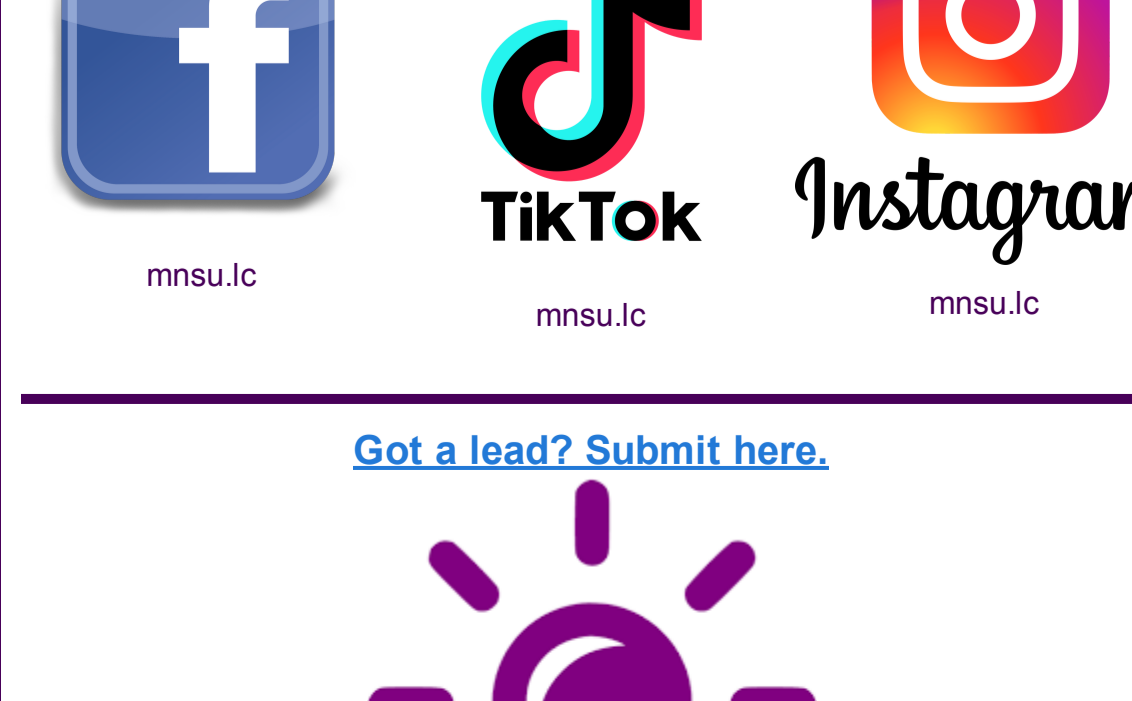
To learn more, come to an information session
Tuesday March 19, 5-6pm
Thursday March 21, 6-7pm



INDIVIDUALS WITH A DISABILITY WHO NEED A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS EVENT, PLEASE CONTACT ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES AT (507) 255-1415. IF YOU ARE VISUALLY IMPAIRED, THIS DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE IN AN ALTERNATIVE FORMAT TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES BY CALLING THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES.

Events

Posters in Saint Paul



The 10th edition of Posters at St Paul took place on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at the Minnesota State Capitol. The event was led by Dr. Patrick Ibbotson, Director of the Undergraduate Research Center of Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Emerging researchers from Minnesota State System schools showcased and promoted their work to their peers. Faculty members and legislators at the beautiful interior of the Capitol Rotunda also had a chance to catch up with several Mankato presenters. Anna Wilcox and Emma Ripper mentioned, "It's great for hands-on experience, also it's really nice getting to level all out and get to present what we're proud of." They presented a study on Gene Expressions of ZYG11A, HSST2, and D22 in Green Anole Lizards. Ellie Moore offered research focusing on Health at Every Size and Gender Affirming Care: A Necessary Conversation. They have been working on the project since October 2023, and when asked about their inspiration, they said, "I was thinking how the ultimate goal [for us] is acceptance." Emma Olson and Ashley Jensen presented, The Biochemical Analysis of Non-Phenolic Cooing Note and its Expression in Early-Chickadee's. They stated that, "The more we put out our research, the better the chance [others] will continue to build upon it."

Before ending the event, the judges evaluated the posters and selected several to highlight. We hope to have equally exciting research projects on display at the Capitol next year.

Written by Nathanael Tlilahun

Honors Student trip to the Minneapolis Institute of Art

On Saturday March 16th, Honors Program staff Dr. Leah White and Kathy Singleton accompanied a group of Honors Program students on to the Minneapolis Institute of Art to see some of the exhibits that link to intercultural engagement competency. They also indulged around a dinner at the Midtown Global Market and tasted food from The Spirit Kitchen at the international Food Lab and The Jamaican Express.

Upcoming Events

Learning Communities Make a Difference Celebration

THE LEARNING COMMUNITY PROGRAM AT MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO ATTEND OUR

Make a Difference Celebration

RECOGNIZING OUR INCREDIBLE STUDENTS WHO HAVE IMPACTED OUR SURROUNDING COMMUNITY THROUGH A VARIETY OF EXPERIENCES DURING THE 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR.

April 18th, 2024
05:11 253/1415
4 pm - 7pm
Come and see what with activities, hors d'oeuvres, and refreshments

PLEASE RSVP ONLINE
WWW.MNSU.EDU/LEARNINGCOMMUNITIES

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO
LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Summer 2023 Cure Fellow Presentation

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO
UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH CENTER

SUMMER 2023 CURE FELLOW PRESENTATION

Learn how CURE Fellows Rachel Cohen and Jeffrey Pribyl integrated course-based undergraduate research experiences (CUREs) into their undergraduate classes!

PRESENTATIONS:
Developing a CURE in BIOL 436: Animal Behavior by Dr. Rachel Cohen
Department of Biological Sciences
Creating a Research Experience for 70 Students in a Non-Science Chemistry Laboratory by Dr. Jeffrey Pribyl
Department of Biochemistry, Chemistry, and Geology

📅 March 27th, 2024
🕒 12:00 - 1:30 PM
📍 Southwest Corner of Memorial Library

Restorative Practices Workshop

This session aims to equip participants with a solid understanding of restorative practices, including its core principles and practical applications within organizations and groups. By the end of the training, participants will possess the skills to establish a secure environment that fosters support and facilitates the process of repair. They will gain the ability to engage in therapeutic processes by conducting self-evaluation, which involves reflecting on their conflict resolution approaches, applying an equity perspective, and addressing implicit biases. Additionally, they will learn how to gather essential information and build strong cases before initiating restorative procedures involving multiple parties. The workshop is open to all library services personnel.

Tuesday, March 26, 2024
1:30-3:30 p.m. on Zoom <https://mnsu.zoom.us/j/9206456510> Meeting ID: 920 6456 5103

Facilitator: Dr. Raj Sathuraju

Honors Colloquium

The final session is on April 8th from 4-6pm in CSU 246 and will host Jennifer Glensk, Data and AI Product Management, Shivers at CSU on the Data and AI Career Development and applications.

URC Symposium

The 20th annual Undergraduate Research Symposium will be held on Thursday, April 11th. Projects involving all disciplines and all forms of research, scholarly, and creative activity are encouraged to participate. There will also be an asynchronous option available for those unable to attend in-person event.

Intent to Present forms for the URC are now open! The link to submit can be found below. The deadline for submissions is March 15th, 2024.

[Intent to present submissions](#)

NCUR 2024

The National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) is dedicated to promoting undergraduate research, scholarship and creative activity in all fields of study by sponsoring an annual conference for students. This year, the conference will be held on April 8-10, 2024, at the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center.

The Undergraduate Research Center (URC) works with the University Foundation, the academic deans, and other offices on campus to provide registration and travel funding for the primary student presenters on all accepted abstracts.

Want to Connect with Learning Communities? Follow us on

Got a lead? Submit here.

