

Living
in

Community



Upper Midwest Regional Honors Conference 2025

Minnesota State University
MANKATO

Thursday, March 27

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Conference Registration

CSU 245

Conference registration is located on the second floor of the Centennial Student Union. Walk up the stairs when you enter the doors facing the visitor parking lot and turn left.

---- Sessions Begin ----

Session 1: 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Managing a Chaotic World

CSU 245

Nate Grimm, Allison Koenig and Ashley Wurster – Minnesota State University, Mankato

Life can at times feel like it is spiraling out of our control. This workshop, conducted by representatives from the Counseling Center at Minnesota State University, Mankato, is designed to educate and teach skills on how to manage change and cope with situations and events that feel outside of our control.

Building Community: Campus Audio

CSU 201

Dave Engen, Katie Danhof, Anika Rossow-Strasser, Grace Engen, and Kailey Newton – Minnesota State University, Mankato

Curiosity, a student produced podcast launched in 2023, and MavFM radio, a student-run radio station began broadcasting fall 2024. Join Minnesota State University, Mankato faculty and students for a workshop about how campuses can use audio programming to build community.

---- Sessions End ----

4:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Dinner

Campus Dining Center

Connect with other conference participants over dinner at the Campus Dining Center. All attendees will receive a meal pass at registration.

6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Keynote – Josh Madson
Welcome and Introduction by President Edward Inch

Ostrander

Internationally recognized photographer Josh Madson created the Mankato Community Collage in which he photographed roughly 5000 Mankato residents. His goal was to showcase the diversity and harmony of the Mankato community. The project is a celebration of community art and collaboration.

Friday, March 28

Session 1: 9:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.

Poster Session 1 – Healthcare and the Environment

CSU 245

Featured Faculty Guests: Dr. Cecilia Noecker, Dr. Evan Bibbee and Prof. Wade Davis

Less Gas More Class: Analysis of Asparagopsis taxiformis as a policy for methane reduction
Samir Yusuf, University of South Dakota

A Fight to the Death: How Soil Antagonists Battle Bacillaceae
JaLeigha Kambeitz, South Dakota State University

Exploring the Nutritional Profile of Juneberry Cultivars from Fort Berthold Indian Reservation
Emily Ringgenberg, South Dakota State University

Exploring Plant-Microbe Interactions for Effective Phytoremediation of Mine Soils
Andrew Pick, South Dakota State University

Analysis of V. Rupestris x V. Riparia Growth Data
Hamza Ali, South Dakota State University

Improving the Antioxidant Properties of cellulose-based biodegradable films
Kylie Rosenau, South Dakota State University

Testing Moccasin Creek Using ICP-OES Water Analysis for Heavy Metal Contamination
Morgan Sheldon, Northern State University

Effects of Rhizobium Concentration on Root and Plant Growth of Trifolium repens

Justin Severson, Graceland University

Flame And Flora: Understanding Fire-driven Plant Communities and Succession.

Annie Feden, South Dakota State University

A Scoping Review of Biosensor Use in Healthcare Education: Enhancing Safety, Well-Being, and Learning Through Technology

Olivia Matson, South Dakota State University

A Peer-Evaluated Approach to Nursing Skill Validations: The Perception and Perceived Value from Students

Carley Mullins, South Dakota State University

Impacts of an Undergraduate Suturing Workshop on Wound Closure Competency

Ethan Young, South Dakota State University

Ultra Processed Food's Impact on Health and Agriculture

Caleb Blair, University of South Dakota

Guiding Through Alzheimer's

Megan Nelson, South Dakota State University

Low Energy Availability in Resistance Exercise

Mason Comes, South Dakota State University

Increasing Anti-Microbial Activity in Plasma-Treated Antibiotics

Paris Wills, St. Norbert College

Oral Presentations – Perspectives on Technology

CSU 201

Developing a Controlled Laser System for Atomic Transitions

Joseph C. Sule II, St. Norbert College

Chat-GPT (Generative AI) Is a Tool

Trey Sholes, South Dakota State University

The Potential Impact of a TikTok Ban in the United States on Students' Daily Lives: Social, Educational, and Psychological Dimensions

Nathan Cadet, Graceland University

Film Screening and Discussion: U.S. and the Holocaust

**SW Corner of Memorial
Library**

Join us for a 45-minute screening of Episode 1: "The Golden Door" (Beginnings – 1938) from "The U.S. and the Holocaust" documentary by Ken Burns, Lynn Novick and Sarah Botstein. After the screening, Dr. Rebecca Erbelding, educator and curator/archivist at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, will answer questions from the audience.

Oral Presentations – Psychology and Wellbeing

MH 209

America's Backbone- Mental Health in Agriculture

Erin Thomas, South Dakota State University

Psychology Behind the Criminal Mind

Savannah Lyford, Waldorf University

"Now I have the ability to tell my story and give back and help people": A Case Study of Maxx Crosby's Battle with Alcoholism and Advocacy for Awareness

Earl D'Souza, St. Norbert College

Panel Session – 9:00 a.m. -9:45 a.m. (45 minutes)

MH 211

Honors Alumni Perspectives on Community as a Catalyst

Hanna Holmquist and Noah Roerig, South Dakota State University

This presentation will explore alumni perspectives on the impacts of Honors program engagement with a focus on how being part of an Honors community enhanced their careers and personal growth beyond graduation. We will also discuss ideas for staying connected with Honors alumni and the benefits of those connections.

Session 2: 10:30 a.m. -11:45 a.m.

Poster Session 2 – Interdisciplinary

CSU 245

Featured Faculty Guests: Dr. Pirita See, Dr. Tim Smit, Dr. Christophe Veltsos, Prof. Evan Rusch, and Prof. Wade Davis

Synapse to Soul

Merci Arbach, South Dakota State University

The Dutch Famine of 1944-1945 and Fetal Development

Keileen Boom, University of South Dakota

Rhetorical Shields: The Shaping of Qualified Immunity by the United States Supreme Court

Stella Meier, Northern State University

Qualified Hitters - Forecasting MLB Rookies

Trey Sholes, South Dakota State University

Taliban Afghanistan's 285-km Canal Project: A Timeline Through Satellite Imagery

Enerel Crosslin, University of South Dakota

Underage Gambling Exposure: Changing Societal Outlook on Sports Betting

Triston Leidholdt, Northern State University

Tuning the Magnetic Properties of Mn-deficient Mn₃Ga through Al and Sn doping

Mason Pulse, South Dakota State University

Evaluating the Feasibility of Blockchain Technology for Secure Voting System: A Systematic Mapping
Dijesh Shrestha, Dakota State University

Mobile Malware: A Comprehensive Analysis of SMS Scamming
Gabe Miller, Dakota State University

Natural Language Processing Applications in Medical Data
Sureh San, Dakota State University

Quantifying the Effectiveness of Dynamic Response in Web Application Honeypots
Luke Constantino, Dakota State University

Leveraging Large Language Models for Automated Extraction of Information from Provider Notes
Matthew Halberg, South Dakota State University

Oral Presentations – Enhancing Education

CSU 201

The Game of Cycles on Wheel Graphs
Tyler Blom, St. Norbert College

Math Anxiety: Can Building Thinking Classrooms Improve Student Confidence and Engagement?
Colin Marsh, South Dakota State University

An Update Much Overdue: Reevaluating High School Assigned Readings
Addison Cole, Graceland University

Oral Presentations – Health and our Environment

MH 209

Climate Change and Kidney Health: Impacts, Treatments, and Sustainability
Kylie Rosenau, South Dakota State University

The Effects of Trichoderma, Pseudomonas Aureofaciens, and Chitin, on Dicot Growth.
Akanksha Denduluri, Madison College

Love Our Mother
Kaci Young, Graceland University

Panel Session

MH 210

The Ethos of Honors: Building Community through a Faculty-Led Study Abroad Program to Greece
Noah Roerig, Christine Larson, Claire Koenecke, Aidan Donelan, Alida Skinner and Emily Ringgenberg, South Dakota State University

This presentation will explore the impact of an Honors study abroad program at South Dakota State University. Students and faculty will share how coursework and cultural experiences in Greece fostered community and belonging, while also reflecting on major takeaways and the benefits of global learning in an Honors context.

Lunch: 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Lunch and Three Minute Thesis	BALLROOM
Guest Judges: Dr. Michelle Moosally, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs Dr. Patrick Tebbe, Director of the Undergraduate Research Center Dr. Tim Smit, Associate Director of Honors/ Fellowships Coordinator	
<i>Addressing the Gender Gap in Politics</i> Chantal Oechsle, St Cloud State University	
<i>Cadaveric Analysis of Eagle's Syndrome Styloid Processes with Review of Clinical Implications</i> Joseph Anders, South Dakota State University	
<i>The Denial of "Homegrown Terrorism": Bias, Rhetoric, and the Framing of Domestic Extremism</i> Abiah George, Northern State University	
<i>AI for Accessibility: Empowering People With Disabilities</i> Pemang Sang Sherpa, St. Cloud State University	
<i>Qualified Hitters - Forecasting MLB Rookies</i> Trey Sholes, South Dakota State University	

---- Sessions Resume ----

Session 3: 1:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Oral Presentations - Marketing and Social Media	CSU 201
<i>Sip Success Online</i> Furkan Sindar, Madison College	
<i>Community and Connection: Rebuilding the Honors Program Social Media through a Student-Led Lens</i> Justin Severson, Graceland University	
<i>Accuracy of Labels on Energy Drinks</i> Karissa King, Graceland University	
Table Discussion	CSU 202
<i>Belonging in Honors Courses</i> Christine Larson, South Dakota State University	
This round table discussion will focus on activities faculty and students have experienced to help them develop relationships in their classes, both between students and between students and faculty. Several successful techniques from my calculus class will be shared, and then participants will be encouraged to share their ideas.	

Oral Presentations – Medical Research	MH 209
<p><i>Radial Nerve Impingement and Triceps Brachii variations</i> Isaac Suchor, South Dakota State University</p> <p><i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa Biofilms Potentially Inhibited by Acyl-homoserine Lactone Lactonase</i> Jillian Hough, Graceland University</p> <p><i>A New HOPE: Advancing HIV-Positive Organ Transplantation</i> Bidhi Kasu, South Dakota State University</p> <p><i>Biomechanical Analysis of an Interscalene Muscle Variant with Corresponding Clinical Review of Upper Brachial Plexus Lesions</i> Joseph Anders, South Dakota State University</p>	
Panel Session	MH 210
<p><i>Fostering Engagement and Well-Being: Successful Practices from HCSO</i> Jaritzza Cazares Cruz, Isabella Pankratz, Hamza Ali, and Halle Bortnem, South Dakota State University</p> <p>The presentation will showcase how the Honors College Student Organization (HCSO) promotes community, well-being, and student engagement through events like De-Stress Event and Cubby’s Trivia Night, along with fundraising and service initiatives, emphasizing best practices for Honors student organizations.</p>	
Oral Presentations – Community Partnerships	MH 211
<p><i>Maverick Community Garden: Building Community Through Sustainability and Food Security</i> Liz Steinborn-Gourley and Sai Meghana Lakku, Minnesota State University, Mankato</p> <p><i>Banned Books Mural</i> Lauren Boeckman and Daira Y. Chavez Ayala, Loras College</p> <p><i>Sustainable Solutions: The Case for an On-Campus Thrift Store at Minnesota State University, Mankato</i> Alexis Smith, Minnesota State University, Mankato</p>	

Session 4: 3:15 p.m. -4:30 p.m.

Poster Session 3 – Biological Research	CSU 245
<p>Featured Faculty Guests: Dr. Keenan Hartert, Dr. Cecilia Noecker, Dr. Samantha Katner, and Dr. David Sharlin</p> <p><i>Exhibition of the Rare Deep Abductor-Flexor of Digit #5 with Concurrent Hypothenar Aberrations</i> Trey Heiderscheidt, South Dakota State University</p> <p><i>A Clinical Review of Mucopolysaccharidosis Type I H (Hurler Syndrome) Cases Involving Bone Marrow Transplant Therapy</i> Emma Lusk, South Dakota State University</p>	

Biomechanical Analysis and Clinical Implications of Duplicated Rectus Capitis Posterior Major Muscles: A Cadaveric Case Study

Victoria Vazquez, South Dakota State University

Isogenic Bacteria Have Variable Lag Periods When Grown from a Single Cell Despite Having Identical Growth Conditions

Jacob Spreng, South Dakota State University

Subcellular Localization of ATG2 in WDR45 C52 C>T Mouse Brains Modeling the Neurodevelopmental Disorder Beta-Propeller Protein-Associated Neurodegeneration (BPAN)

Ariana Edwards, University of South Dakota

Empty Sella Syndrome: A Cadaveric Case with Clinical Review

Ryan Prohofsky - South Dakota State University

Cerebral Convexity Arachnoid Cysts: A Focused Systematic Review with Defining Characteristics

Alissa Maurer, South Dakota State University

Sialic Acids in Immune Evasion

Matthew Schell, South Dakota State University

Anatomical Parameters of the First Dorsal Interosseous Muscle and Prevalence of Atypical Morphology

William Wilson, South Dakota State University

Oxytocin, Anxiety, and Issues in Research

Alida Skinner, South Dakota State University

Effects of CD47 Expression on Macrophage-Mediated Phagocytosis of Acute Myeloid Leukemia

Kayla Koenig, St. Norbert College

Understanding Cardiac Multimorbidity: A Comprehensive Anatomical Case Analysis Involving Multiple Cardiac Conditions

Joseph Anders - South Dakota State University

Targeting Multidrug Resistance in Prostate Cancer with Estrone-Triazole Analogs

Kiara Schilling, South Dakota State University

Bioinformatics-Driven Identification and Characterization of Estrone Analogs with Antiproliferative Activity Against Melanoma

Jaritzza Cazares Cruz, South Dakota State University

Pak2, but not Pak1, is a Negative Regulator of Macropinocytosis in Bone Marrow Derived Macrophages

Bidhi Kasu, South Dakota State University

Table Discussion	CSU 203
<p>How to Become Involved in UReCA, the Undergraduate Journal of the NCHC Brian White, Graceland University</p> <p>This table discussion hopes to be informative for both students and staff regarding the opportunities for student editorial work and/or the publication of a student's creative or research work. Learn what opportunities exist to become part of the student editorial team that produces the NCHC journal. Or, learn how to submit your own scholarly or creative work for possible publication.</p>	
Oral Presentations - National Identities	MH 209
<p><i>"Basque Language Restitution in the Post-Dictatorship Basque Country: An Analysis of Historical Memory and Identity Recovery"</i> Maria Victoria Juarez, St. Norbert College</p> <p><i>I Am Not My Country: Untangling the Personal from the Political</i> Liberty Fischer, South Dakota State University</p> <p><i>Analyzing Intelligence Failures: The October 7 Hamas Attack</i> Emily Helgeson - Dakota State University</p>	
Oral Presentations – Faculty Perspectives	MH 211
<p><i>Living in Effective Communities: It's Elemental!</i> Jessica Smestad, Minot State University</p> <p><i>Engaging Honors Students in The Research Consultant Role: The Community Partner Project</i> Pirita See, South Dakota State University</p>	

---- Sessions End ----

4:45 p.m. -6:30 p.m.

Dinner and Keynote – Nadia Mohamed	Ballroom
<p>As a four-year member of the St. Louis Park Multicultural Advisory Committee, Nadia Mohamed participated in strategic planning and implementation efforts to connect various communities within St. Louis Park, MN. In 2024, Mohamed became the first Somali American to be elected as mayor of a U.S. City.</p>	

7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Student Social

CSU Bullpen

Get the chance to meet other Honors Students attending the conference! Head to the CSU Bullpen in the basement for a night of games, including bowling, board games and billiards. Light snacks are provided.

7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Faculty & Staff Social

Weggy's On Campus

Join Honors colleagues for a social gathering in the back room at Weggy's On Campus located in University Square between campus and The AmericInn. Light appetizers are provided.

Saturday, March 29

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Keynote: Vicki Hunter and Jenna Askevold

Ostrander

After being incarcerated, Dr. Vicki Hunter discovered her passion for education. Wanting to encourage other incarcerated people to pursue an education, she brought the Scholars Serving Time Program to MNSU. The SST Program provides the opportunity for incarcerated students to earn associate of arts degrees. Dr. Hunter and Graduate Student Jenna Askevold will discuss the successes and challenges they have encountered administering the program.

---- Sessions Begin ----

Session 1: 10:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Panel and Roundtable

CSU 245

Heartland Review Showcase Celebration
Jillian Hough, Graceland University

This panel/roundtable will give the student editors an opportunity to showcase the first issue of the Heartland Review, the journal of the Upper Midwest Honors Council. Student editors will discuss the editorial process for the first edition of the journal and highlight the published work. A second part of the panel may have smaller roundtable discussions of how to improve the process as work on the second edition gets underway.

Oral Presentation – Beyond the Classroom	CSU 201
<p><i>Building Bridges Between Indigenous Knowledge and Western Science: JR Academy Sets Sail for the Next Generation of Geoscientists</i> Meaghan Dutton, St. Norbert College</p> <p><i>Gibney's Guide: How to be a Student Soldier</i> Blake Gibney - South Dakota State University</p> <p><i>LEADing the Way: Harvard's Path to Empowering Latina Voices</i> Jaritzza Cazares Cruz and Paola Ruiz Ordaz, South Dakota State University</p>	
Panel Session 10:15-11:00 (45 Minutes)	MH 209
<p>Hanna Holmquist and Noah Roerig, South Dakota State University</p> <p>This presentation will explore alumni perspectives on the impacts of Honors program engagement with a focus on how being part of an Honors community enhanced their careers and personal growth beyond graduation. We will also discuss ideas for staying connected with Honors alumni and the benefits of those connections.</p>	

Session 2: 11:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Business Meeting	CSU 245
<p>The conference concludes with a brief Business Meeting.</p>	

---- End of Conference ----

3:00 p.m.

<p>Additional Viewing (Optional): The Untold Story of America's Efforts to Save the Jews of Europe Speaker: Dr. Rebecca Erbelding</p>	Ostrander
<p>For more than a decade, a harsh Congressional immigration policy kept most Jewish refugees out of America, even as Hitler and the Nazis closed in. In 1944, the United States finally acted. In this remarkable work of historical reclamation, Holocaust historian Rebecca Erbelding pieces together years of research and newly uncovered archival materials to tell the dramatic story of America's little-known efforts to save the Jews of Europe.</p>	

Living

in Community



Upper Midwest Regional Honors Conference 2025

Featured Speakers

Josh Madson - Community Collage

Thursday, March 27 | 6:00-7:30 pm | Ostrander Auditorium

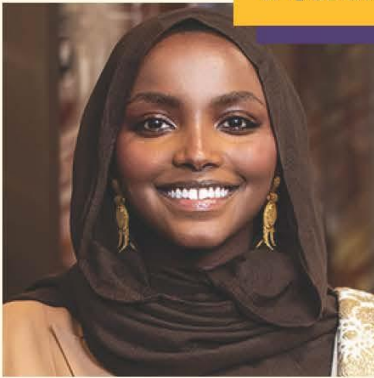
Internationally recognized photographer Josh Madson created the Mankato Community Collage in 2024, in which he photographed roughly 5000 Mankato Residents. His goal was to showcase the diversity and harmony of the Mankato community.



Nadia Mohamed - St. Louis Park Mayor

Friday, March 28 | 5:30-6:30 pm | CSU Ballroom

As a four-year member of the St. Louis Park Multicultural Advisory Committee, Nadia Mohamed participated in strategic planning and implementation efforts to connect various communities within St. Louis Park. In 2024, Mohamed became the first Somali American to be elected as mayor of a U.S. City.



Vicki Hunter - Scholars Serving Time

Saturday, March 29 | 9:00-10:00 am | Ostrander Auditorium

After being incarcerated, Dr. Vicki Hunter discovered her passion for education. Wanting to encourage other incarcerated people to pursue an education, she brought the Scholars Serving Time Program to MNSU in 2021. The SST Program provides the opportunity for incarcerated students to earn associate of arts degrees.



AMERICANS AND THE HOLOCAUST



RESCUE BOARD

THE UNTOLD STORY OF AMERICA'S EFFORTS TO SAVE THE JEWS OF EUROPE

SPEAKER: REBECCA ERBELDING

For more than a decade, a harsh Congressional immigration policy kept most Jewish refugees out of America, even as Hitler and the Nazis closed in. In 1944, the United States finally acted. That year, Franklin D. Roosevelt created the War Refugee Board, and put a young Treasury lawyer named John Pehle in charge.

Over the next twenty months, Pehle pulled together a team of D.C. pencil pushers, international relief workers, smugglers, diplomats, millionaires, and rabble-rousers to run operations across four continents and a dozen countries. Together, they tricked the Nazis, forged identity papers, maneuvered food and medicine into concentration camps, recruited spies, leaked news stories, laundered money, negotiated ransoms, and funneled millions of dollars into Europe. They bought weapons for the French Resistance and sliced red tape to allow Jewish refugees to escape to Palestine. In this remarkable work of historical reclamation, Holocaust historian Rebecca Erbelding pieces together years of research and newly uncovered archival materials to tell the dramatic story of America's little-known efforts to save the Jews of Europe.

SATURDAY MARCH 29

3 PM

Ostrander Auditorium

540 W Rd

Mankato, MN 56001

This exhibition was made possible by the generous support of lead sponsor Jeannie & Jonathan Lavine. Additional major funding was provided by the Bildners—Joan & Allen z"l, Elisa Spungen & Rob, Nancy & Jim, and Jane and Daniel Oeb.

The Museum's exhibitions are also supported by the Lester Robbins and Sheila Johnson Robbins Traveling and Special Exhibitions Fund, established in 1990.

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