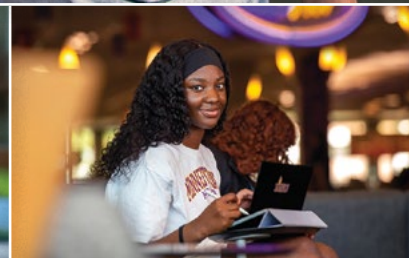




# Foundation



# Impact



Minnesota State University  
MANKATO

Foundation





# Thank You *for Your Generosity*

**\$15,198,646.72**

Because of you, Minnesota State University, Mankato is an inspiring, supportive community that engages and empowers students with high-impact educational experiences and real-world opportunities that lead to success.

In Fiscal Year 2024, your support helped the Minnesota State Mankato Foundation raise more than \$15 million for scholarships, student support, academic and athletic programs, research and more.

Your gifts inspire action at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Thank you for making a difference.



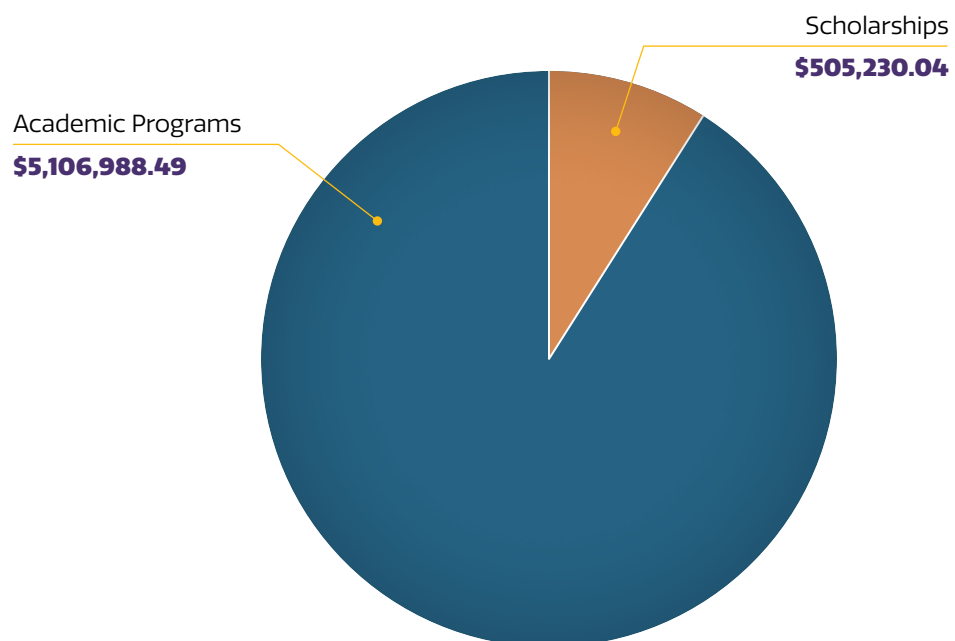
## Highlights

- A \$5 million gift from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota to the Rural Behavioral Health Clinic at Minnesota State University, Mankato will provide learning opportunities to students and access to care for underserved populations in the greater Mankato area.
- The Department of Social Work kicked off its fundraising campaign during the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the accreditation of the BSSW program in April.
- The Peters Family Foundation created multiple annual scholarships for social work, counseling, and both the master's and doctoral Counselor Education programs.
- Dr. William Dobbs established the Endowed Dental Hygiene Study Abroad Scholarship.

# College of Allied Health & Nursing

**\$5,612,218.53**

**TOTAL DOLLARS RAISED DURING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024**



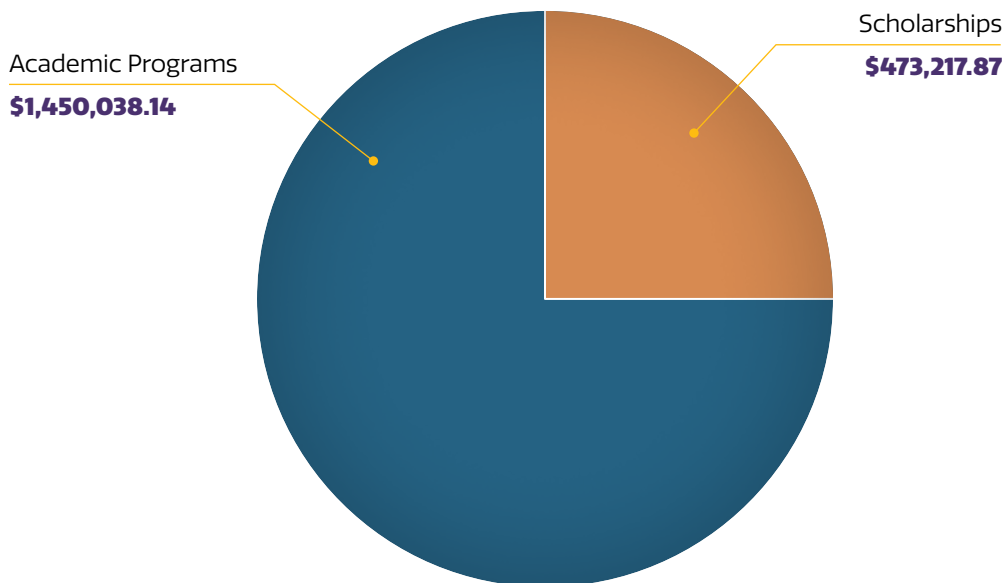




# College of Business

**\$1,923,256.01**

**TOTAL DOLLARS RAISED DURING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024**



## Highlights

- A transformational gift from the [Charles Schwab Foundation](#) will allow the University to open the [Center for Financial Wellness](#).
- Marvin and Cork Zylstra created the Robert Zylstra Endowment in memory of their brother; the endowment will support scholarships to [accounting](#) and [agribusiness](#) students.
- Generous funding from alumni, donors and industry partners has allowed work to start on the [Maverick Innovation Gateway](#), which will open in early 2025. It will be a place where students, faculty and industry professionals can collaborate to develop real-world competencies and be empowered to succeed in a dynamic business world.
- Support for the combined [Beta Alpha Psi](#) and the [Accounting Club](#) allowed the club to waive membership fees for new members.



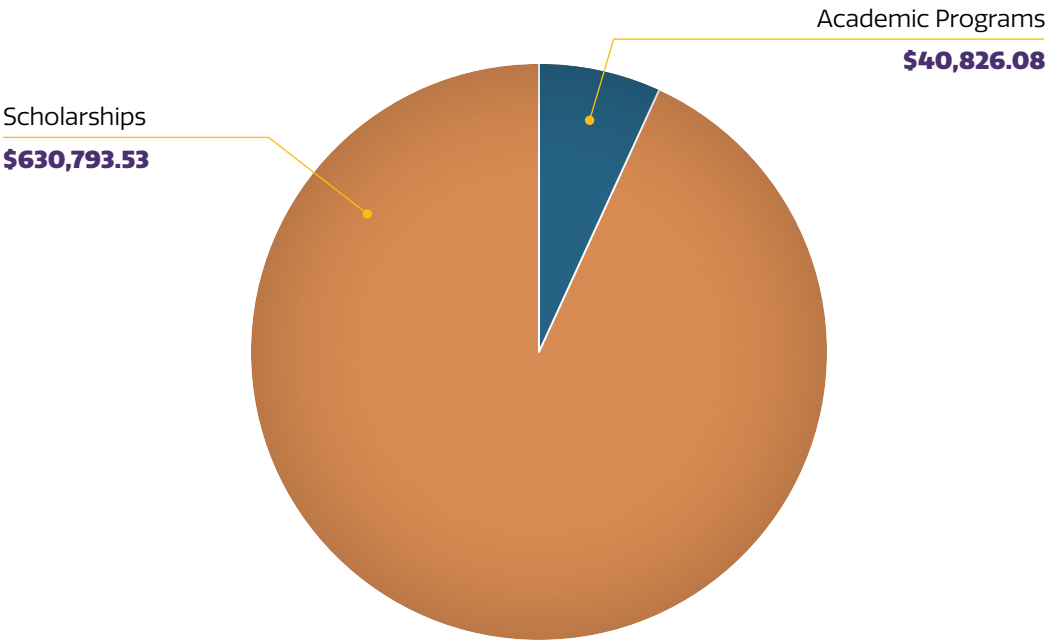
### Highlights

- Support from several donors made it possible for four female student pilots to participate in the Women's Air Race Classic in June. The gifts funded training and travel costs as well as competition fees. The pilots reported that the experience enhanced their confidence in flying and their trust in each other, and that it was an experience they will never forget.
- 29 adult learners were able to continue working while attending online classes and earning their undergraduate degrees in Special Education, thanks to the support of two families and an innovative new pathway program; 99 percent of those graduates are now employed as teachers in their districts.

# College of Education

**\$671,619.61**

**TOTAL DOLLARS RAISED DURING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024**

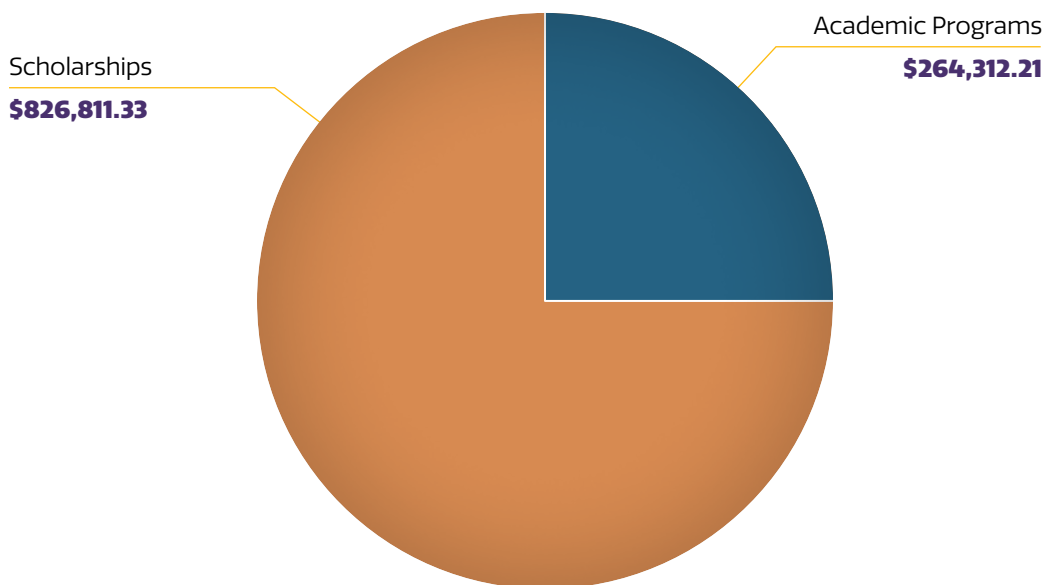




# College of Humanities and Social Sciences

**\$1,091,123.54**

TOTAL DOLLARS RAISED DURING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024



## Highlights

- The May Machine Marching Band participated in the Chicago Thanksgiving Day Parade as well as both the men's and women's basketball teams' national championship runs.
- "Scholars Serving Time" prison education program celebrated 11 graduates at the 2024 Commencement Ceremony, held at the Minnesota Correctional Facility in Shakopee.
- Faculty and students of the EARTH Systems Lab are conducting research focused on soils, climate, erosional processes, natural hazards and resources, specifically as they examine the soil erosion near the Rapidan Dam caused by recent flooding.
- The Department of Performing Arts received support to elevate the choir's performances with new, high-quality robes that present a unified and professional appearance.





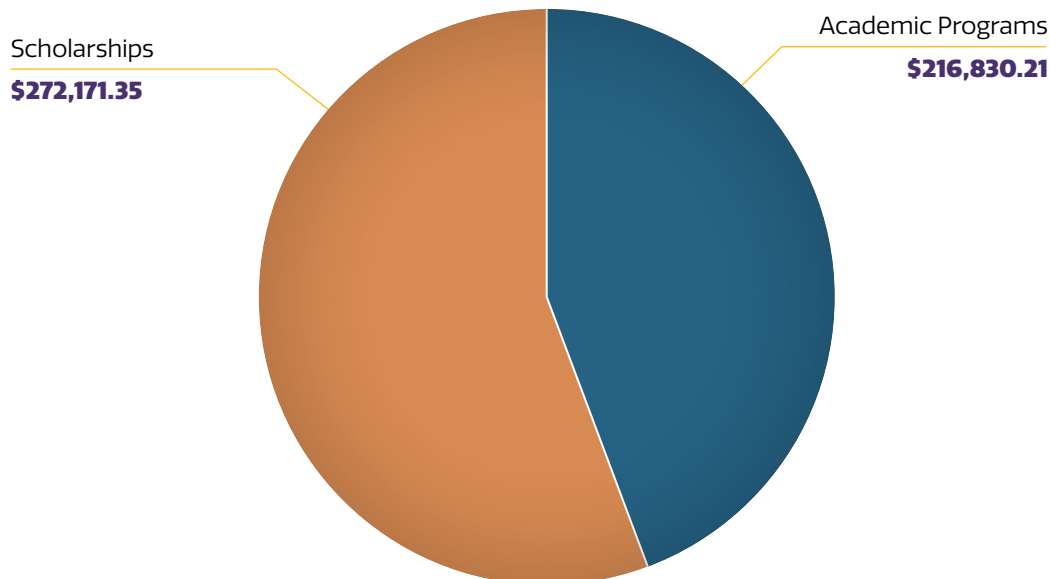
## Highlights

- The Physics Department received a gift that was used to create an endowment for the department that will be available for program use, equipment needs, student support, scholarships and more both now and into the future.
- Construction Management celebrated its 50th Anniversary as a department.
- A crowdfunding campaign supporting astronomy courses allowed the program to purchase new hardware for the Standeford Observatory and three meteorites for students to study; it also helped offset travel costs for the April 2024 total solar eclipse.

# College of Science, Engineering & Technology

## \$489,001.56

TOTAL DOLLARS RAISED DURING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024

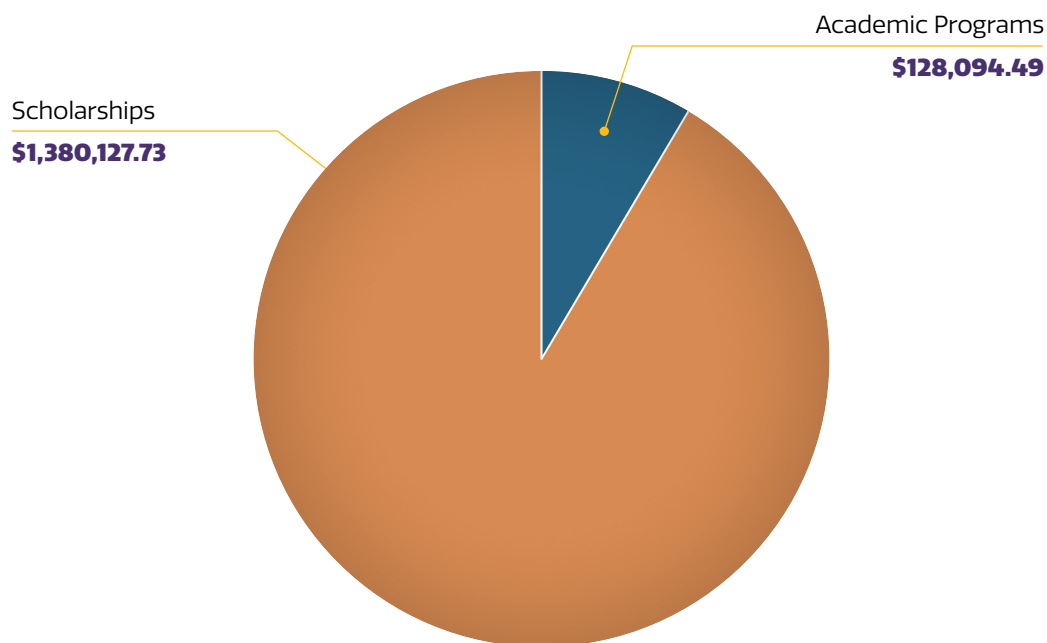




# Division of Student Affairs

**\$1,508,222.22**

**TOTAL DOLLARS RAISED DURING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024**



## Highlights

- A generous gift supporting [Get Out the Vote](#) efforts at the University created opportunities for a team of student workers who encouraged voting in a non-partisan manner.
- A \$1 million planned gift to support continued education for staff of Centennial Student Union.
- Donors like Dennis and Helen Klenz and Timothy Huebsch have increased their scholarship support by adding additional [Presidential Scholarships](#) for Minnesota State University, Mankato students.





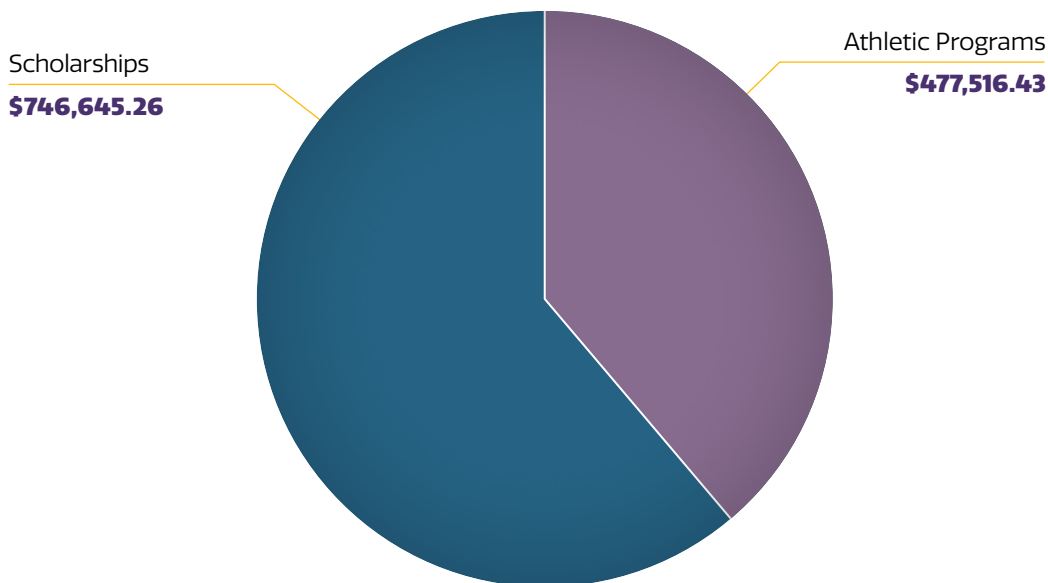
### Highlights

- Both men's and women's basketball teams won the Division II National Championships in 2024—the first DII program to win both since 1984, and only the fourth ever to do so.
- Three track and field student-athletes represented their home countries in the 2024 Summer Olympic Games.
- Denisha Cartwright was named the Honda NCAA Division II women's athlete of the year as well as the Women's Track Athlete of the year.
- The outdoor track was named after longtime coach Mark Schuck after more than \$100,000 was raised in gifts and pledges, including lead gifts from Coach Schuck's family.

# Maverick Intercollegiate Athletics

**\$1,224,161.69**

**TOTAL DOLLARS RAISED DURING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024**

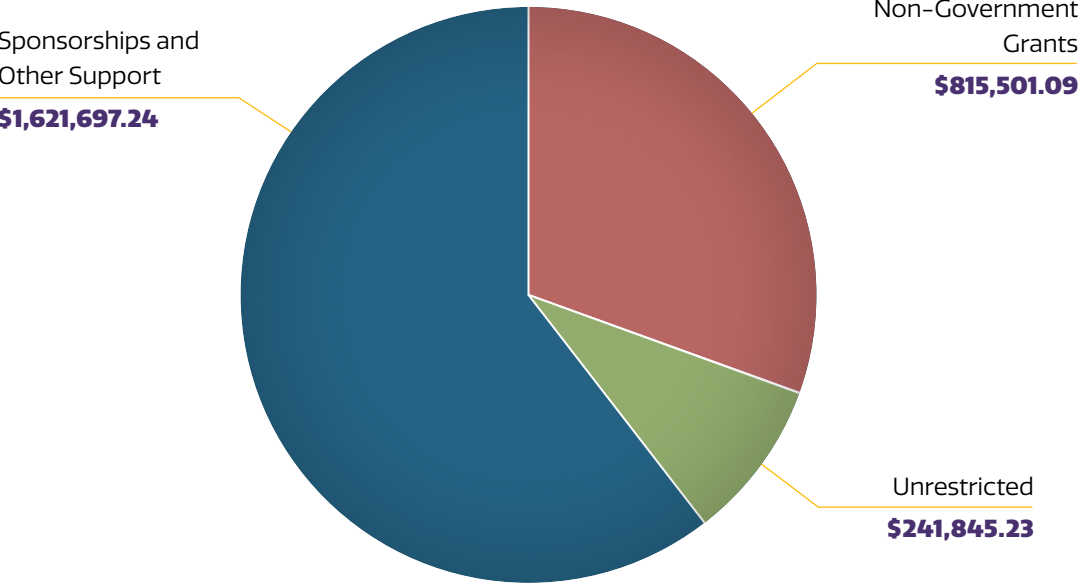




# Unrestricted & Other Contributions

**\$2,679,043.56**

TOTAL DOLLARS RAISED DURING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024



## Highlights

- Unrestricted dollars support the University Achievement Fund, which helps fund scholarships, undergraduate research, emergency grants, food security, improved educational experiences, training and development, and campus recreation.
- An Annual Fund Ambassador was able to participate in undergraduate research, which led to that student winning the 2024 People's Choice award in the Big Ideas Challenge.
- Unrestricted support has helped students be more involved and engaged on campus, to gain confidence and to build lasting relationships.



# Scholarship Finder to the Rescue

By Joe Tougas '86

*Easy access to  
the scholarships  
provided by  
generous donors  
helps students  
reach their  
career goals.*



## The Medical Student

In 2021 Aidan Forberg, a first-year, pre-med Minnesota State Mankato student at the time, was working out at Otto Arena when a sudden pain hit. He thought it might be a torn muscle in his back.

It was painful enough that he asked a friend to drive him to the emergency room in Mankato, where his torn muscle was diagnosed as a collapsed lung. Forberg was admitted and whisked into surgery. During his weeklong recovery, he discovered Scholarship Finder on the university's website.

Scholarship Finder provides access to more than 1,000 scholarships with combined funds of more than \$2.5 million for Minnesota State Mankato students.

With nothing to lose and more than enough time to invest in applying, Forberg filled out an application for the Evelyn Tischer and James Tischer Honors Scholarship, which offers \$30,000 over three years to a student in the honors program, which Forberg had just joined.

Each year, that scholarship is awarded to one first-year Honors student who has faced adversity,

shown outstanding leadership traits and exhibited a drive to succeed while demonstrating financial need.

As for adversity, Forberg said, he felt he had that one locked up. And his financial plan for paying for both his college and medical school had been vague at best. "My plan was to work through college so I could pay some of the undergrad [costs] off," he explained.

Forberg was in shock when he was told that he had received the scholarship to help cover the costs of his remaining three years at the University. But the scholarship provided him with more than financial help.

"A thing I didn't expect so much is the sense of accountability," he said. "It feels like the school has invested in me."

He's also more likely to aim high throughout his life and career.

**"Winning the scholarship has given me confidence," he said. "Looking into the future, I'm more likely to apply to big opportunities, because I've had success."**



## The Mechanical Engineer

In the spring of 2024, Joshua Piechowski was wrapping up his senior year at Minnesota State Mankato with a mechanical engineering job already lined up with North Carolina-based CaptiveAire Systems.

But receiving that job offer before graduation wasn't the only highlight of his senior year. The first was the \$2,000 scholarship he was awarded from the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE.)

In addition to pursuing a degree in mechanical engineering, Piechowski was also a wrestler at the University. The ASHRAE scholarship relieved him of having to find a job that would fit

in with school and wrestling training.

Piechowski also appreciated that the scholarship would ease his parents' financial burden. His younger sister started at Winona State when he was a senior, and while his mom retired after 35 years as a dental hygienist, their dad continues to work in his own business in construction management.

Like Forberg, Piechowski found the scholarship through Scholarship Finder. And like Forberg, getting it did more for him that bring in some extra money.

**"It really gave me a sense of accomplishment," Piechowski said. "I'm graduating this spring with motivation to keep doing what I'm doing. I know I'm doing the right thing."**



# One Fish, Two Fish

By Joe Tougas '86

**Masaki Hara got to Hawaii via the Minnesota lakes. And he got to a Ph.D. program at Central Michigan University via Minnesota State University, Mankato.**



*A graduate student's work counting fish species provides valuable data about water quality and land use.*

Hara, who earned a master's degree in geography in 2024 in addition to a bachelor's in biology in 2022, presented his research on fish populations to the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers in Honolulu, Hawaii. He had also presented to the Minnesota Chapter of the American Fisheries Society's annual meeting in Brainerd, Minn., and the Wisconsin & Minnesota Aquaculture Conference in Bayfield, Wis.

For almost two years, Hara literally got his feet wet in lakes across much of southern and central Minnesota, studying fish populations in two neighboring "eco-regions" of the state. In his research, he found eight unique fish species on one region and 16 in the neighboring one.

His work utilizes data that has been collected by state agencies for decades and further opens the door for research on land use and its effect on waterways.

Biology assistant professor Susan Colvin is, along with geography professor Donald Friend, a co-advisor to Hara. Colvin said water quality is measured by state agencies using an Index of Biotic Integrity or IBI. Fish species are good indicators of what's happening, good or bad, to a lake.

"We literally use their [species] presence or absence to monitor water quality," she said. Water needs to maintain certain characteristics as well, she added, that studies such as Hara's monitor.

"What can happen over time as we have more pollutants and land use changes, is it can basically homogenize our fish communities," Colvin said. A lake in a forest should have different fish species than a lake in a prairie, she explains. Hara's work looks at the cutoff between what is present in the lake systems. "And what we'll continue to ask is how does that change over time," she says. "Sometimes as academics we can help organizations look deeper into these patterns that they might not have time to do."

Hara left Mankato to pursue his doctoral degree in Michigan in June—but before going, he received one final accolade: The Outstanding Collegian Award, presented to him at the 20th Annual Student Leadership Awards. Hara's nomination mentioned his time spent volunteering on campus as well as his emphasis on the environment.

"Masaki is dedicated to keeping our aquatic environments healthy in the face of climate change and increasing urbanization and industrialization," the nomination read. "He is an outstanding scholar, having presented his research at eight professional conferences.



## From the Board Chair

It's an honor to be to be in my first year as the chair of the Minnesota State University, Mankato Foundation Board.

The Foundation exists to enhance the University's ability to fulfill its mission by encouraging and stewarding sustained philanthropic support from alumni, friends, businesses and other organizational partners. I am grateful for your help in reaching that goal. Your generosity makes the work we do even more gratifying. I hope you've been able to see the impact you've had as you've gone through the pages of this report. Once again, because of you, we've had an amazing year.

On behalf of the entire Foundation Board, I want to thank you for your generosity over the past year. You have made a difference.

*Jim Lund*  
*Foundation Board Chair*

### **2024-2025 Foundation Board Members**

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Eric Johnson '96

Angela Justice '95

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Tim Huebsch '02





Minnesota State University

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