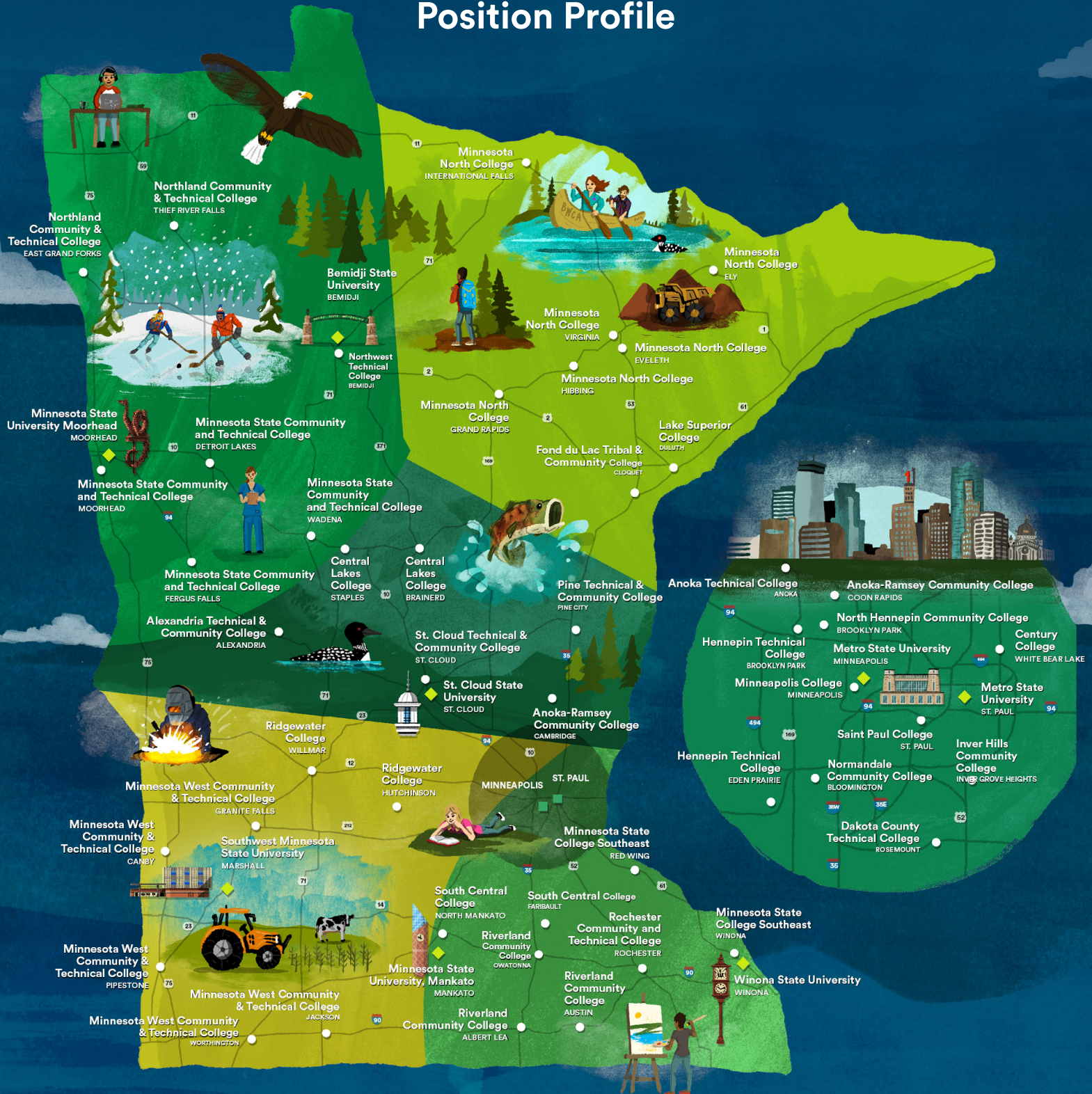




MINNESOTA STATE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Position Profile





MINNESOTA STATE

Extraordinary Education.
Exceptional Value.

26 state colleges · **7** state universities · **54** campuses · **47** communities



Minnesota State has an enduring commitment to enhancing Minnesota's quality of life by developing and fostering understanding and appreciation of a free and diverse society and providing equal opportunity for all its students and employees. To help effectuate these goals, Minnesota State is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and nondiscrimination in employment and education.

Opportunity Overview

Minnesota State invites applications and nominations for the position of Executive Director for Government Relations.

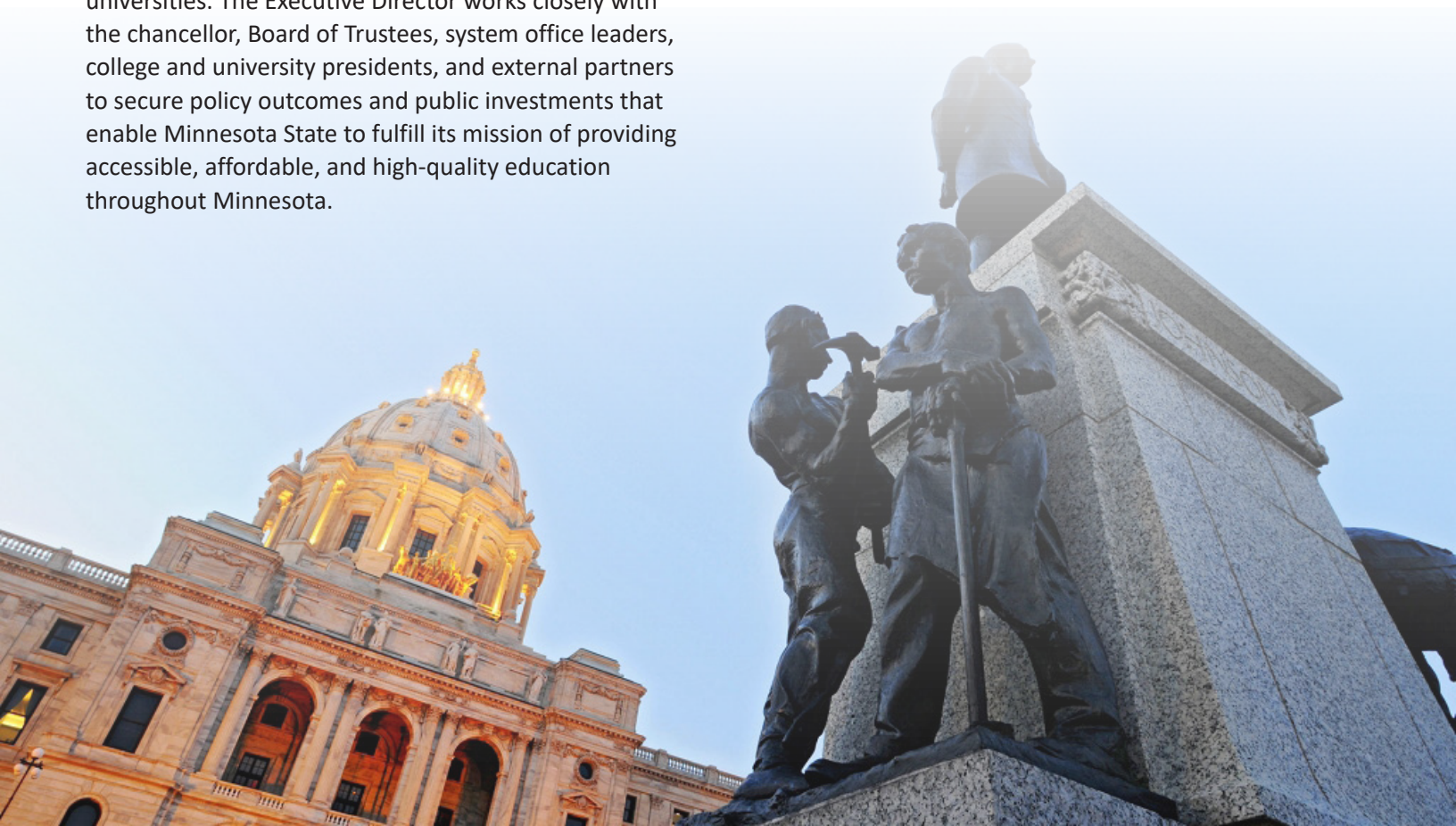
The Executive Director of Government Relations serves as the chief governmental affairs officer for Minnesota State and advises the chancellor on legislative, political, budgetary, and public policy matters. The position leads the development and execution of the system's state and federal advocacy strategy, advances budget and capital investment priorities, and builds productive relationships with elected officials, government agencies, business leaders, and higher education stakeholders while effectively communicating the value and impact of Minnesota State colleges and universities on students, employers, communities, and Minnesota's economy.

Reporting directly to the chancellor and serving as a member of the chancellor's cabinet, the Executive Director provides strategic leadership in advancing public policy priorities that support student success, workforce development, economic vitality, and the long-term sustainability of Minnesota State colleges and universities. The Executive Director works closely with the chancellor, Board of Trustees, system office leaders, college and university presidents, and external partners to secure policy outcomes and public investments that enable Minnesota State to fulfill its mission of providing accessible, affordable, and high-quality education throughout Minnesota.

The Executive Director serves as the system's primary liaison to the Minnesota Legislature, Governor's Office, state agencies, Minnesota's congressional delegation, and national higher education organizations. The position develops and coordinates legislative strategy, monitors emerging policy issues, analyzes potential impacts on colleges and universities, and provides timely counsel to executive leadership regarding opportunities, risks, and recommended courses of action.

The Executive Director for Government Relations supervises two staff: the Director of Communications for Government Relations and the Director of Federal Government Relations and Advocacy.

The position also provides leadership and coordination for the Grassroots Campus Network, partnering with designated representatives at colleges and universities across the system to strengthen advocacy efforts, build stakeholder engagement, and mobilize support for legislative and policy priorities.



26 State Colleges, 7 State Universities, 54 Campuses

ONE MINNESOTA STATE

At Minnesota State, we provide opportunities for all Minnesotans to build a better future for themselves, their families, and their communities. With 26 community and technical colleges and seven state universities on 54 campuses in 47 communities, Minnesota State is the nation's third largest system of colleges and universities and serves nearly two-thirds of Minnesota's undergraduate students.

Each year, Minnesota State colleges and universities serve approximately 270,000 students through credit and non-credit education. About 64 percent of all Minnesota residents pursuing an undergraduate credential attend a Minnesota State college or university. Together, the colleges and universities offer 4,000 academic programs and award more than 34,000 degrees, certificates, and diplomas annually, preparing the majority of Minnesota's essential workforce.

Minnesota State is committed to equitable outcomes for all students. In 2019, the system launched Equity 2030, an enterprise-wide commitment to eliminate educational equity gaps at every Minnesota State college and university by 2030. Achieving Equity 2030 is both a moral and economic imperative and is advanced through data-informed strategies, student-centered programs, and partnerships with communities, employers, and the state legislature. Minnesota State serves more Black and Indigenous students, and students of color, than all other higher education providers in Minnesota combined.

EMPLOYEES AND LABOR REPRESENTATION

Minnesota State employs 14,560 faculty and staff across its colleges, universities, and system office. Most employees are represented by one of several bargaining units and personnel plans, including:

- » Inter Faculty Organization
- » Minnesota State College Faculty
- » Minnesota State University Association of Administrative and Service Faculty

- » American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
- » Minnesota Association of Professional Employees
- » Minnesota Government Engineers Council
- » Middle Management Association
- » Minnesota Nurses Association

WORKFORCE AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Minnesota State faculty and staff account for over a third of all State of Minnesota employees and partner with businesses and industries to deliver more than 12,000 customized training, occupational, and professional classes each year.

GOVERNANCE

Minnesota State is governed by a 15-member Board of Trustees appointed by the Governor of Minnesota. The board holds policy responsibility for system planning, academic programs, fiscal management, personnel, admissions requirements, tuition and fees, and systemwide rules and regulations.

Learn more on the Board of Trustees page at MinnState.edu/board.

CHANCELLOR

Under the direction of the Board of Trustees, the chancellor serves as the system's chief executive officer and provides leadership to the 33 colleges and universities of Minnesota State, ensuring effective and efficient operations and meeting the current and long-term educational and workforce development needs of Minnesotans statewide.

Learn more on the Chancellor's Office page at MinnState.edu/system/chancellor.

Extraordinary Impact

Minnesota State is making a difference.

From the students we serve, to our business partners, to those we employ, chances are good you or someone you know has benefited from the work of Minnesota State colleges and universities.



third largest

system of colleges and universities in the United States

26
STATE COLLEGES

7
STATE UNIVERSITIES



54
convenient campuses across Minnesota



270,000
students

attend our colleges and universities each year



34,650+
degrees, certificates, and diplomas awarded each year



3,968
academic programs to choose from



12,000
customized training, occupational, and professional classes



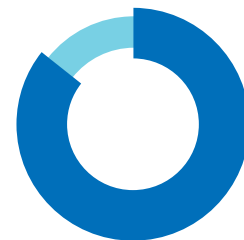
6,579
veterans and service members attend a Minnesota State college or university each year

We serve more

Black and Indigenous students, as well as students of color, than all other higher education providers in Minnesota combined

40–74%

of Minnesota State students graduate with no debt at all, depending on the academic award received



86% job placement
in a related field of study



64%
of Minnesota resident students who are pursuing an undergraduate credential are doing so at a Minnesota State college or university

Core Duties and Responsibilities

LEGISLATIVE STRATEGY AND ADVOCACY

- » Develop and implement Minnesota State's legislative and governmental relations strategy
- » Working in partnership with the chancellor and senior leaders, develop and advance the system's operating budget and capital investment requests and strategy
- » Monitor state and federal legislation, regulations, and public policy issues affecting higher education and work with staff on potential impact
- » Advise the Chancellor and executive leadership on legislative and political developments
- » Lead legislative testimony, hearings, briefings, and stakeholder engagement efforts

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

- » Serves as the primary liaison to the Minnesota Legislature, Governor's Office, state agencies, congressional delegation, and local government officials
- » Build and maintain bipartisan relationships with elected officials, legislative staff, and key stakeholders
- » Represent Minnesota State before legislative committees, state agencies, and public organizations
- » Work with statewide bargaining units and student associations
- » Foster partnerships with business, labor, education, and community organizations

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

- » Serve as a member of the chancellor's cabinet
- » Serves as the government relations lead with presidents, campus and system leaders, statewide bargaining units and student associations
- » Provide strategic counsel on public policy, governmental affairs, and external relations
- » Lead government relations staff and manage external consultants and contract lobbyists as appropriate
- » Coordinate and support advocacy efforts across Minnesota State colleges and universities in collaboration with the Grassroots Campus Network

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

- » Collaborate with communications and executive leadership to ensure consistent messaging on legislative priorities
- » Prepare briefing materials, policy analyses, speeches, and presentations for the chancellor and Board of Trustees
- » Support crisis-response efforts involving legislative, governmental, or regulatory matters
- » Provide advice and counsel on issues that may result in reputational impact with internal or external stakeholders

Qualifications

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- » Bachelor's degree in public policy, public administration, political science, communications, law, or a related field
- » Seven or more years of progressively responsible experience in government relations, public affairs, legislative affairs, public policy, or related leadership roles
- » Demonstrated knowledge of Minnesota government, legislative processes, and state budgeting
- » Demonstrated knowledge of federal government, policies, and processes
- » Experience building effective relationships with elected officials and diverse stakeholder groups
- » Excellent written, verbal, and presentation skills

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

- » Master's degree, J.D., or other advanced degree
- » Experience in higher education, workforce development, or public-sector leadership
- » Experience working with state appropriations, capital investment, or public finance issues
- » Demonstrated success advancing complex legislative initiatives
- » Familiarity with collective bargaining environments and labor relations

DESIRED COMPETENCIES

- » Strategic thinking and political acumen
- » Leadership and team development
- » Relationship building and coalition management
- » Policy analysis and problem solving
- » Negotiation and consensus building
- » Commitment to public higher education and student success





Nomination and Application Process

Kris Hnastchenko, president of Heinze & Associates Executive Search, is supporting Minnesota State in this search. Screening of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. The preferred date to receive application materials for maximum consideration is **August 21, 2026**. The search will be conducted with a commitment of confidentiality for candidates until finalists are selected.

Applications must include:

- » Letter of interest stating how the candidate's experiences and qualifications connect with the strategic priorities expressed in the position prospectus
- » Resume
- » Names, addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses of five references for future contact, including the candidate's professional relationship with each reference listed. References will only be contacted with permission of the candidates

Confidential inquiries, nominations, and application materials should be directed to:

Kris Hnastchenko, President

Heinze & Associates Executive Search

kris.heinzeandassociates@gmail.com

763-242-9926

The target start date for the new Executive Director for Government Relations is mid-late October 2026.



MINNESOTA STATE

UNIVERSITIES

Bemidji State University
BEMIDJI
218-755-2040
bemidjistate.edu

Metro State University
MINNEAPOLIS
ST. PAUL
651-793-1302
metrostate.edu

Minnesota State University,
Mankato
MANKATO
507-389-1822
mnsu.edu

Minnesota State University
Moorhead
MOORHEAD
218-477-2161
mnstate.edu

Southwest Minnesota State
University
MARSHALL
507-537-6286
smsu.edu

St. Cloud State University
ST. CLOUD
320-308-2244
stcloudstate.edu

Winona State University
WINONA
507-457-5100
winona.edu

COLLEGES

Alexandria
Technical & Community
College
ALEXANDRIA
320-762-0221
alextech.edu

Anoka Technical College
ANOKA
763-576-4850
anokatech.edu

Anoka-Ramsey Community
College
CAMBRIDGE
COON RAPIDS
763-433-1300
anokaramsey.edu

Central Lakes College
BRAINERD
STAPLES
218-855-8031
clcmn.edu

Century College
WHITE BEAR LAKE
651-779-3300
century.edu

Dakota County Technical
College
ROSEMOUNT
651-423-8000
dctc.edu

Fond du Lac Tribal &
Community College
CLOQUET
218-879-0800
fdltcc.edu

Hennepin
Technical College
BROOKLYN PARK
EDEN PRAIRIE
952-995-1300
hennepintech.edu

Inver Hills Community
College
INVER GROVE HEIGHTS
651-450-3000
inverhills.edu

Lake Superior College
DULUTH
218-733-7601
lsc.edu

Minneapolis College
MINNEAPOLIS
612-659-6200
minneapolis.edu

Minnesota State College
Southeast
RED WING
WINONA
877-853-8324
southeastmn.edu

Minnesota State Community
and Technical College
DETROIT LAKES
FERGUS FALLS
MOORHEAD
WADENA
877-450-3322
minnesota.edu

Minnesota
North College
HIBBING
ITASCA
MESABI RANGE
RAINY RIVER
VERMILION
888-223-8068
minnesotanorth.edu

Minnesota West Community &
Technical College
CANBY
GRANITE FALLS
JACKSON
PIESTONE
WORTHINGTON
800-658-2330
mnwest.edu

Normandale Community
College
BLOOMINGTON
952-358-8201
normandale.edu

North Hennepin Community
College
BROOKLYN PARK
763-424-0724
nhcc.edu

Northland Community &
Technical College
EAST GRAND FORKS
THIEF RIVER FALLS
218-683-8800
northlandcollege.edu

Northwest
Technical College
BEMIDJI
218-333-6600
ntcmn.edu

Pine Technical & Community
College
PINE CITY
320-629-5100
pine.edu

Ridgewater College
HUTCHINSON
WILLMAR
320-222-5200
ridgewater.edu

Riverland Community College
ALBERT LEA
AUSTIN
OWATONNA
507-433-0600
riverland.edu

Rochester Community and
Technical College
ROCHESTER
507-258-7210
rctc.edu

Saint Paul College
ST. PAUL
651-846-1600
saintpaul.edu

South Central College
FARIBAULT
NORTH MANKATO
507-389-7220
southcentral.edu

St. Cloud Technical &
Community College
ST. CLOUD
320-308-5000
sctcc.edu



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Exceptional Value.

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MinnState.edu

Individuals with hearing or speech disabilities may contact us via their preferred Telecommunications Relay Service. Minnesota State is an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer and educator. Candidates with hearing or speech disabilities may contact us at 651-201-1664 via preferred Telecommunications Relay Service.