

Staying

CONNECTED



A NEWSLETTER FOR THE ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF MINNESOTA WEST COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE

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The Minnesota West Foundation is a private non-profit, 501 (c) 3 tax exempt organization.

The Minnesota West Foundation believes in affordable and accessible educational opportunities for students. Because of this belief and commitment to education, the Minnesota West Foundation provides funding for scholarships and development opportunities for the student attending Minnesota West Community and Technical College.



SPRING 2017 GRADUATION

The campuses of Minnesota West graduated more than 650 students this past spring! Throughout the 2016-17 academic year, Minnesota West also provided instruction for over 10,000 individuals across 37 states and 11 countries. We are grateful to be your choice for higher education!



#1



Best Community College in Minnesota!

Minnesota West Community & Technical College has been named a 2017 Best Community College by bestcolleges.com and was named the #1 Community College in Minnesota.

BestColleges.com focuses on assisting prospective students in their college searches. The organization annually ranks the best colleges in Minnesota, including the top four-year and two-year schools.

BestColleges.com also named Minnesota West the #3 Best Online Community College nationally.

From the **PRESIDENT**

A new academic year is upon us. This time of year is always full of excitement and energy!

Last year was a remarkable year across a number of student-focused initiatives. We've completed a new strategic plan, we are able to add new programs with the assistance of industry, community, and school district leaders, and our enrollment and retention numbers are strong. We continue to focus our energies and limited resources on our recently revised mission and vision:

Mission: Minnesota West prepares learners for a lifetime of success.

Vision: Minnesota West is the regional college of choice.

We know that Minnesota West is doing great things. Our graduation rate is 17% higher than our peers. Our persistence rate (the percentage of students who return to college after their first year) of full-time students is 12% higher than our peers, and the persistence rate of our part-time students is 24% higher than our peers. These facts reflect the dedication our faculty, staff, and administration have to student success.

We hope that you continue to find our newsletter valuable in keeping you updated about your college. And, of course, we hope you will consider giving back. Our scholarship funding request is a very realistic goal, which is made easier by many individuals giving. As you consider where to direct your donation, consider a gift toward the "area of greatest impact," which allows us to tailor our scholarships and resources to those students who need it the most.

Enjoy the newsletter!

Sincerely, your president



Terry Gaalswyk, Ph.D



Meet the **FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS**



KEVIN PAULSEN

Board Chair

President of First Bank and Trust, Pipestone, MN



RICK DALRYMPLE

Board Vice-Chair

Retired, Former Mathematics/Physics Professor at Minnesota West



LINDA DEGRISSELLES

Retired

Former Dean at Minnesota West, Granite Falls, MN



NICOLE PAULSEN

Board Treasurer

Senior Director of Human Resources, Pipestone Holdings, Pipestone, MN



SALLY VOGT

Retired

Former Clinic Director at Sanford, Canby, MN



CLIFF VRIEZE

Retired

Former Farm Business Management Instructor at Minnesota West



HARRY DAVIS

Direct Support Professional

Minnesota West graduate and Former Audio Visual Technician for the United States Army

Correction: In our previous newsletter, we stated that the Pipestone Campus opened in 1976. The Pipestone Campus has actually been open since 1967, and is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

Scholarship Campaign Kickoff

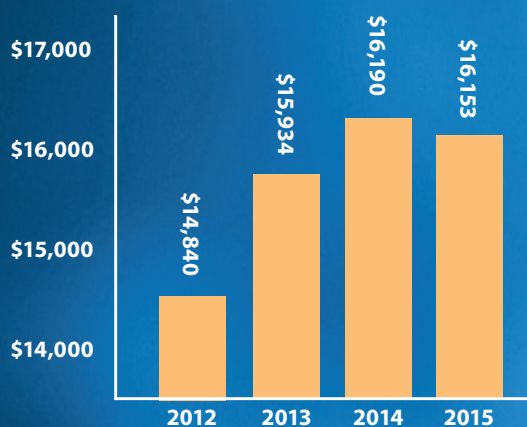
Each year, The Minnesota West Foundation provides approximately \$100,000 in scholarships to nearly 100 students across our 5 campuses and two centers. That sounds like a lot of money, and for those students who receive scholarships, it is welcome financial help. But we can do better.

From 2008 – 2013, state financial support for higher education in Minnesota dropped by 30% (1), which shifted the cost of college to students and their families. And although the price of tuition has remained relatively flat over the past three years and state financial support has leveled out somewhat, almost three-fourths of our students still look to federal student loans and grants to help pay for college.

2017 Minnesota West graduate and scholarship recipient, Brenna Kramer, expressed it this way:

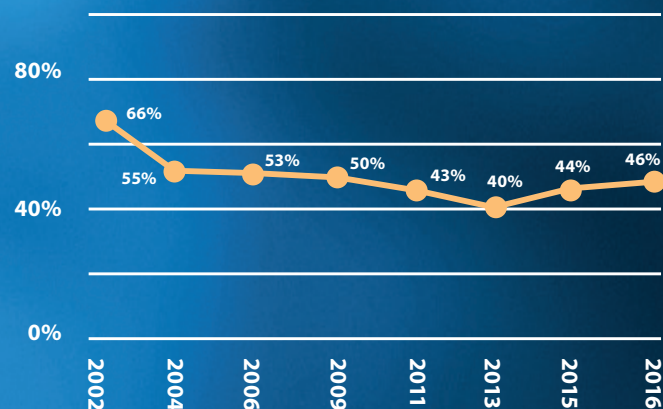
“By awarding me [this scholarship], you lightened my financial burden, which allowed me to focus on the most important aspect of school – learning. Thank you for the generous contribution which has made this scholarship possible.”

MEDIAN DEBT AT MN STATE COLLEGES



Source: Minnesota Office of Higher Education, 2015 Cumulative Debt Survey

STATE APPROPRIATION AS A PERCENTAGE OF TUITION



Source: Minnesota State Colleges & Universities Finance Committee, 06/17/15

Help us achieve our goal of \$100,000 in NEW scholarship dollars during this calendar year to provide financial relief for students across the region as they train for the critical jobs of the present and future. With over 15,000 alumni spread out across the country, even a small contribution can quickly add up.

Complete the enclosed donation envelope with a contribution toward the Minnesota West Foundation Scholarship Fund. You can also donate online at: www.razoo.com/organization/Minnesotawestfoundation

For a list of scholarships currently available at Minnesota West, go to www.mnwest.edu/foundation/giving

1. Oliff, P. Palacios V., Johnson I., & Leachman M. (2013). Recent Deep State Higher Education Cuts May Harm Students and the Economy for Years to Come Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Retrieved from <https://www.cbpp.org/research/recent-deep-state-higher-education-cuts-may-harm-students-and-the-economy-for-years-to-come>

PROGRAM Updates

Carpentry Returns to the Pipestone Campus

In the spring of 2014, the Carpentry program on the Pipestone campus of Minnesota West was suspended due to low enrollment numbers. Since then, however, the demand for carpentry jobs has continued to grow, creating an opportunity for new education solutions. Consequently, Carpentry returned to the college in the fall of 2017.



The updated program has been designed in collaboration with the Pipestone Economic Development Authority and Pipestone High School. High school students take courses at the Pipestone campus, while the Pipestone Economic Development Authority identifies and establishes local housing projects for hands-on learning experiences.

Solomon Derby, an alumnus of the Minnesota West Carpentry program who has been working in the carpentry industry, is the new Carpentry instructor. Not only does Derby have an Associate's degree in Carpentry from Minnesota West, but he also a B.S. in Sociology & Interdisciplinary Studies from South Dakota State University.

Minnesota West Pipestone Dean Jackie Otkin remarked, "We are excited to bring back the Carpentry program to the Pipestone campus. This is an excellent example of a community utilizing its resources to promote the betterment of the community and region of Southwest Minnesota."

Blue to Brown

Minnesota West Community & Technical College and Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall, MN, have created a new educational model for students, known as the Blue to Brown Connection.

The two institutions have partnered to create a program designed to provide students the opportunity to begin with Minnesota West courses and ultimately complete their bachelor's degree with SMSU, all the while living on the SMSU campus.

Students can directly enroll at Minnesota West to earn an eventual bachelor's degree awarded by SMSU. Students will transfer from Minnesota West to SMSU after successful completion of 24 Minnesota Transfer Curriculum credits in 2-3 semesters.



SMSU President Connie J. Gores commented, "SMSU is delighted to partner with Minnesota West on this exciting program that will give students a jump-start on their educational goals and provide a residential living experience in a student-focused environment. It's a benefit to students and our entire region."

HIT Accreditation

One of Minnesota West's newest programs is one step closer to national accreditation. The Health Information Technology program has achieved candidacy status from the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM). This means current and future Health Information Technology (HIT) students are able to apply for the Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT) exam upon final Accreditation of the school and after the student graduates from the HIT program at Minnesota West. Minnesota West instructor Elaina Nichols notes, "The need for Health Information Professionals

has not slowed down, and we want to be giving our students the edge they need to have more possibilities for their future."

Health Information Technicians are responsible for compiling, processing, and maintaining medical records of hospital and clinic patients in a manner consistent with medical, administrative, ethical, legal and regulatory requirements of the health care industry. Other duties may include processing, maintaining, compiling and reporting patient information for health requirements and standards using the medical coding system.

Comings & Goings



This past year, the Minnesota West family said goodbye to a number of longstanding employees, who retired after many years of dedicated service.



LAINE RIEGER
Child Development
Instructor – 16 years



JERRY DEUSCHLE
Electrical and Art
Instructor – 17 years



SHARON JANSEN
Bookstore Associate –
21 years



LYLE KRUSE
Diesel Instructor –
23 years



KAREN FURY
Bookstore Manager –
23 years



LORI VOSS
VP of Administration –
29 years



MIKE CASKEY
Lamb & Wool
Instructor – 42 years



DENNIS HAMPEL
Jackson Campus
Dean – 48 years

We have also welcomed a number of new employees who attended Minnesota West as students. Welcome back, alumni!

- Mike DeVries – Diesel Technology Instructor (Diesel Technician, 1989)
- LeRoy Sik – Maintenance (Electrician, 1989)
- Tricia Bueltel – HR Generalist (Administrative Assistant, 1993)
- Ray Louwagie – Precision Machining Instructor (Machine Tooling, 1994)
- Solomon Derby – Carpentry Instructor (Carpentry, 1999)
- Bryan Cowdin – Wrestling Coach (Liberal Arts, 2002)
- Nicole Zempel – Enrollment Specialist (Liberal Arts, 2014)
- Ty Bowen – Mechatronics Instructor (Fluid Power, 2014)
- Melissa Gehl – Bookstore Manager (Liberal Arts, 2015)

POLARIS Donates Motorcycles

Polaris Industries has generously donated five motorcycles, valued at \$75,000, to Minnesota West's Power Sports program, along with an additional \$55,000 in state-of-the-art motors and transmissions to use for technical, industry endorsed training for tomorrow's aspiring technicians.

In addition, Polaris will provide Minnesota West students with access to Polaris factory online training courses, which are used by the company's highly-skilled technicians. These trainings, which lead to gold standard certified technicians, provide a distinct, competitive

employment edge for students of the Minnesota West Power Sports program. Students' technical skills are aligned, endorsed, and certified to a proven industry-leader's professional standards.



Brandon Lee, Global Service Development Manager at Polaris comments, "Polaris believes in helping to create strong and vibrant communities, which includes supporting students and the future workforce. Through this donation to Minnesota West, we strive to help students grow their technical skills by providing hands-on access to the latest equipment and technology we can offer."

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

'Main Street' Graduates



this newly renovated office space. And today it houses three dentists and 20 employees. But this story isn't about the office expansion, which is exciting in its own right. More intriguing is that of the 23 total employees, six of them, or over ¼ of the entire staff, are graduates of the Minnesota West Dental Assistant program on the Canby campus. And while they have all performed patient care in their roles, they do much more, from working at the front desk to processing insurance claims to managing the office itself. Additionally, each has forged her own career path in getting to where she is today.

First in Minnesota

Brandi Tweeter is a 1997 Minnesota West Dental Assistant graduate and one of the first dental therapists in Minnesota. Brandi worked for 12 years as a dental assistant at Main Street Dental before diving back into college coursework. In 2009, while continuing to work as a dental assistant, she completed her bachelor's degree at Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall, MN. Then, two years later in 2011, she received her master's degree from the University of Minnesota as part of the

The lobby of Main Street Dental is bustling with activity on a Thursday afternoon. Patients and their families wait quietly on the comfy sofas next to the coffee maker; one patient has just emerged from his appointment with a mouthful of gauze; a small boy watches an episode of SpongeBob SquarePants on the lobby TV while playing with the toys provided for young patrons like himself. The dental office, located in Montevideo, MN, is clearly doing well. In 2015, it moved from a few blocks away into

inaugural class of Dental Therapists in the state of Minnesota. "A dental therapist is kind of like a PA (physician's assistant) at a medical clinic," says Brandi. Although she cannot perform root canals or advanced surgeries like dentists can do, she can perform many of the routine



prevention and treatment services that patients require such as filling cavities, placing temporary crowns, and even extracting teeth in certain cases.

12 years of dental assisting experience prior to graduate school made a big difference in Brandi's studies. "Much of the first year of my master's program was review, as I had already done a lot of what was being taught," and she quickly found that her classmates leaned on her during their clinical experiences in the program. While the rest of her graduating class took jobs in public practice, such as public clinics and community health centers, Tweeter became the first dental therapist in the state of Minnesota to work in a private practice. She returned to Main Street Dental, and today is one of three dental therapists in the office who, as part of their licensure requirements, provide dental care to underinsured and underserved populations.

The Value of On the Job Training

Three of the most recent graduates at the dental office landed at Main Street Dental via their externship experience. All students of the Minnesota West Dental Assistant program must undertake two, five-week clinic experiences toward the end of their studies. The externship program requires students to work at a dental office under the supervision of the dentist. Although unpaid, the externship provides invaluable experiences for students, and in many cases job prospects after graduation. Abi Belaen (class of 2014), Shawna Berg (class of 2015), and Ariel Stone (class of 2015) all credit their employment to their externship experience. Each individual came to dental assisting by a different route - Ariel originally planned to pursue Nursing; Abi was originally an Elementary Education major at a four-year school; and Shawna was "always interested" in dental assisting. However, they all agreed that the variety of work and the value of helping others continue to provide them satisfaction in their careers.

Time for a Switch

Not all of the staff have continued to work directly in patient care. Renae Emkes graduated from the Dental Assistant program in 1990, and worked directly as a dental assistant for 20 years. In the past few years, however, she has found enjoyment in the administrative and customer service side of the business. Today, she works with patient scheduling, check-in and check-out procedures, and with insurance coordination. Like her co-workers, Renae cherishes the interactions with patients, albeit in a new and different context than her dental assisting days.

Broadening Her Skill Set

Another Minnesota West graduate, Melissa Coil Jerve completed her Dental Assistant program in 2003. Like many of her co-workers, she was hired shortly after her externship at the dental office. Melissa has continued to perform dental assisting services over the past 14 years, but during that time she also went back to school to complete EMT Training, a bachelor's degree in science, and her Associate's Degree in Nursing from Minnesota West. Today she doubles as both a dental assistant and the office manager. Plus, her degree as a registered nurse allows her to provide the additional services of dental office emergency protocols and monitoring of sedation patients.

The activity of the dental office continues unabated as the afternoon wears on and customers continue to come and go. It is encouraging to see the variety of career possibilities within even a relatively small business. While many employees admittedly continue to augment their skills with continued education, the starting point for each individual was a one-year technical diploma in an industry that needs a skilled labor force. And by all appearances, the industry shows little sign of slowing down. Case in point: Main Street Dental plans to expand again in the not-too-distant future, re-opening its old storefront a few blocks up the street. With two locations, it is likely that more Minnesota West Dental Assistant graduates will be making their way to Main Street Dental, where they are certain to find that they are in good company.

Providing tips and reminders regarding charitable giving

As you consider your own internal motivations for giving back, consider these common donation avenues:

Cash – The easiest way to donate to any cause is cash, whether in the form of actual paper money, a check, or credit card. Plus, many employers will actually match their employee's donation to charity, effectively doubling the value of their gift. Just check with your HR department.

Non-cash – Colleges use a lot of resources to educate their students. Minnesota West is no different. From diesel engines to classroom lab equipment, donations of physical equipment can be very worthwhile and possibly tax deductible.

Estate planning – What will your legacy be? Building charitable giving into one's estate can be one of the most long lasting investments a person can make in a charitable organization. It also can provide some significant tax advantages to the donor. It is important to consult with a professional advisor when planning your long term giving.

Time – Most non-profits are strapped for resources as they try to provide the best bang for their donor's buck. Volunteering one's time can be not only a great help to the organization, but it is one of the most fulfilling activities a person can do.

Alumni Updates

*We would love to hear what you have been up to since you graduated!
Go to www.mnwest.edu/profile-update and let us know!*

1960s

Robert Connor (1967, Fluid Power) – Robert is retired and lives in Hopkins, MN, with his spouse, Gloria. They have three children – Troy, Chris, and Amanda.

John Iverson (1969, Powerline) – Retired line Foreman at Steele-Waseca Co-op Electric, John lives in Medford, MN. "I am very happy we will now have an indoor [powerline] training facility," but a "lineman's job will always be outside in all types of weather! Best wishes to all of you."

1970s

Julie Hogie (1973, Secretarial) – Julie received the Distinguished Hendricks Community Spirit Award for 2017 for "significant civic contributions to the city" over the past 40+ years. Julie and her husband Duane live in Hendricks, MN, where she serves as the city mayor and works for the Hendricks Community Hospital as their Business Office Manager.

Dr. Brad Isberner (1974, Liberal Arts; basketball alumna) – Brad is a Professor Emeritus at St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, MN, retiring in 2015.

Todd Pack (1974, Education; basketball, baseball, and football alumna) – Todd and his wife Debi (Weisbrich) have been married for 42 years. They have two adult children, Chelsea and Taylor, and five grandchildren (Ezekiel, Quincee, Julia, Jillian and June). Todd works for Education Minnesota.

Ken Reko (1978, Marketing) – Ken recently completed 31 years with The Travelers Co., and is currently Vice President of Product Development, overseeing a Group of 15 product developers and a portfolio of 45 specialty insurance products. Ken lives in Andover, MN.

Pamela (Gragoe) Miller (1978, Optometric Assistant) – Pamela works for the American Heart Association and lives with her husband Douglas in Brookings, SD. She would love to connect with other members from her class and program. Email her at miller10.pam@gmail.com

Alumni Updates (continued)

1980s

Jim Volz (1982, Diesel) – Jim works for Rabe International and lives in Elmore, MN, with his wife Shelley. Their children include Travis (31) and Mike (25, deceased).

Dave Beadell (1987, Fluid Power) – Dave is currently employed by UPM Blandin and is living in Cohasset, MN.

Roman Johnson (1988, Electronics Technology) – Roman works as the North America IT Manager for Avery Weigh-Tronix. He lives in Fairmont, MN.

John Moore (1989, Fluid Power) – John works for the Hope Group LLC. He and his wife Patricia live in Plainville, MA.

1990s

Eston Herfindahl (1997, Fluid Power) – Eston works for HYDAC as a Pulp and Paper Manager. He is currently living in Florence, AL.

David Esping (1998, Computer Support Technician) – David was named Chief Technology Officer in 2015 at Ozarks Technical Community College in Springfield, MO. After completing his AA Degree from Minnesota West in 1998, David completed his B.S. and M.S. from Bemidji State University.

Pam Kalvig (1998, Computer Support) – Pam works for the State of Minnesota at the St. Peter Regional Treatment Center, where she repairs computers. She is a proud grandma to four grandkids and lives in Morgan, MN, with her husband, Michael.

Lisa Carter (1998, Computer Support) – Lisa is a Business Analyst for Minnesota State. She and her husband have three children and live in Granite Falls, MN.

2000s

Barbara Cloyd (2001, Fluid Power) – Barbara retired from Hydraulic Supply Company in Sunrise, FL in 2014, where she lives today. “My training at MN West was top notch in the Fluid Power Tech program.”

Joseph Larson (2009, Law Enforcement) – Joseph works for the police department in Sioux Falls, SD, where he lives with his wife, Andrea.

2010s

Christian Robinson (2013, Law Enforcement) – After graduating from the Law Enforcement program, Christian was hired as a Deputy Sheriff for Nobles County. After completing his Bachelor’s Degree in Business through Buena Vista University, he decided to switch careers and is now employed by Prairie Holdings Group in Worthington, MN. “Serving my community will always remain a staple of who I am.”

Amber Linda Blanchette (2015, Cosmetology) – Amber recently opened “What a Tease” Hair and Nail Salon in Pipestone, MN.

Steve Torkelson (2016, Computer Support) – Steve is working as a Network Administrator for Jackpot Junction Casino in Morton, MN, a position he acquired while working on his degree at Minnesota West. He currently lives in Redwood Falls, MN.

Joel Fixen (2016, Business Management) – Joel is currently working for The Schwan Food Company and lives in Minnesota, MN.

1011 First Street West • Canby, MN 56220

