



A Member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System

News Release

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Ridgewater AA graduates among those guaranteed admission to MN State universities

Willmar, MN – Students earning community college Associate of Arts degrees like those awarded each year at Ridgewater College will now enjoy the peace of mind that goes with knowing their degree is guaranteed to transfer to any of Minnesota State’s seven public universities, provided the minimum GPA guideline is met.

Minnesota State, formerly known as Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, announced a new, stronger, collaborative program this week for students who complete the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum and earn a minimum 2.0 GPA* in an Associate of Arts (AA) degree from any Minnesota State college. Students will be guaranteed admission and a seamless and reliable transfer with junior year status from any of the 26 state community colleges to any of the seven Minnesota State public universities.

Ridgewater College President, Dr. Douglas Allen is excited about the change. “While Ridgewater College has historically had a great relationship with our four-year university partners in the system, this guarantee encourages students to complete their two-year degree and it assures a seamless pathway to a bachelor’s degree if they do so. This means our students not only benefit from the affordability of our tuition rate, but they’ll be able to complete a bachelor’s degree in the most affordable way possible. This cost savings will enable students to graduate with less debt and thus be better positioned to provide for their families and contribute to their community and to the state’s economy. It’s a win-win for our students and the state of Minnesota.”

To put the cost savings into perspective, tuition and fees at Minnesota State colleges are significantly lower – between one-half and one-tenth of the cost -- of other higher education options within the state.

“This will take the guesswork out of students trying to figure out which courses they should be taking at our community and technical colleges, including major-specific coursework,” said Alan Stage, Ridgewater dean of liberal arts. “Under the old system, major-specific courses were accepted on an individual basis by the universities. This will guarantee students will be able to graduate by completing 60 credits at the university level after receiving their associate degree. These pathways are currently being designed for over 30 different majors, so this will have a positive impact for a majority of our students looking to complete a bachelor’s degree at a Minnesota State university.”

According to Anne Blackhurst, president of Minnesota State University Moorhead, “In addition to our overall quality and affordability, it sets our state colleges and universities apart from other higher education options in

Minnesota – both public and private. Only we can make this guarantee because we are a collaborative system focused on serving the needs of students and the state of Minnesota.”

While participating graduates are guaranteed admission and full credit transfer to Minnesota State universities, students should note that six of the universities have a 2.0 minimum degree GPA while *Winona State University has a 2.4 GPA minimum.

In addition, because academic requirements for majors at state universities vary, students considering credit transfer for a specific major should discuss their academic goals with an advisor.

The seven Minnesota State universities that guarantee admittance from the Minnesota State public community colleges include:

Bemidji State University
Metropolitan State University
Minnesota State University, Mankato
Minnesota State University, Moorhead
Southwest Minnesota State University
St. Cloud State University
Winona State University*

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Minnesota State includes 30 community and technical colleges and seven state universities serving approximately 400,000 students. Ridgewater College is a community and technical college with campuses in Hutchinson and Willmar serving approximately 5,000 credit-based students.