Minnesota State Mankato’s faculty have developed innovative learning environments that attract top students from across the country.
Those of us who spend the bulk of our time on the campus of Minnesota State University, Mankato have tremendous respect for the scholarly research that takes place here. I am always pleased to hear about another paper being published or another fascinating project taking place. And I’m particularly pleased when one of those papers or projects has a direct impact on the community of which we are part.

Sharing our expertise with the public is an important part of our academic process. Faculty members in many of our departments have made such interaction a priority, as you’ll read about in the “Reaching Out” feature in this issue of TOMORROW. From the WALTER Weather Lab’s radon detection program to the many clinics offered by the Speech, Hearing, and Rehabilitation Services department, the outreach of our faculty, staff and students truly does make a difference for the people of southern Minnesota and beyond.

Sometimes our faculty and staff expertise helps bring talented people here as well. We are proud to have several well-respected programs run by exceptional faculty members who help attract top students in a number of disciplines. Find out why Paul Hustoles’ theatre program is one of those, and why it ranks highly with both current and former students in our “Stimulating Scholarship” feature.

If you need further proof of the academic accomplishments at Minnesota State Mankato, be sure to attend the 2006 Douglas R. Moore Lecture on April 10. Russell Palma, a professor in the Department of Physics and Astronomy, will speak on “Exploring the Sun and Early Solar System: The Genesis and Stardust Missions.” Read about the history of the Lecture and its importance to the community in this issue as well.

Minnesota State Mankato is committed to research that makes a difference in both the world at large and in the community we call home. Reading this issue of TOMORROW will make that obvious to you as well.

Sincerely,

Richard Davenport
ricard.davenport@mnsu.edu
4 Reaching Out
How faculty research at Minnesota State Mankato has a direct impact on the people of southern Minnesota and beyond.
BY RACHAEL HANEL ’97, ’04

6 Stimulating Scholarship
Top-notch faculty help create top-notch programs that in turn attract top-notch students to the University.
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For more than thirty years, the Douglas R. Moore Lecture has shared some of the finest research at Minnesota State Mankato with the community that supports it.
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ABOUT THE COVER
A scene from “Galileo,” a 2005 Production of Minnesota State University, Mankato Theatre. Photo courtesy of the Department of Theatre and Dance.
The research that takes place at Minnesota State Mankato often benefits those beyond the University’s walls.

By Rachael Hanel ’97, ’04

Type the word “stuttering” into an Internet search engine and you’ll find a site created by Judy Kuster, a Minnesota State University, Mankato professor in Speech, Hearing, and Rehabilitation Services.

Besides maintaining the site, which includes information about research, therapy and support organizations, Kuster has also coordinated an on-line conference that connects consumers with professionals in the field for the past eight years. People from 116 countries have participated in the conference.

Kuster is part of a larger department that provides a vast array of hearing and language services to both adults and children in the community. That department, in turn, is part of the larger campus community committed to using the University’s resources and research to better the lives of people in the region. Faculty, staff and students are dedicated to detecting harmful levels of radon, advising politicians and citizens on the importance of keeping our waterways clean, providing rehabilitation for cardiac patients and dozens of other projects.

SO FAR, ALMOST 1,200 HOMES IN THE REGION HAVE BEEN TESTED FOR RADON AT NO COST TO THE HOMEOWNERS.

WEATHER RELATED
At the WALTER Weather Lab, for example, students and faculty are busy applying their research outside of the classroom. Two dozen state-of-the-art computers work with weather analysis software to provide real-time weather reports and forecast modeling. The reds, greens and blues of the monitors flicker brightly in the dark lab in the basement of Armstrong Hall. Even while away from the monitors, student assistants keep an eye tuned to the Weather Channel.

Like a brewing hurricane, data and research gleaned from the WALTER Weather Lab gains momentum when applied to the outside world. Students learn and engage in storm-chasing techniques that allow them to learn more about the nature of storms and help the rest of us become better prepared for severe weather. The WALTER storm-chasing vehicle is fully funded by sponsors and equipped with sensors, monitors and virtual maps that pinpoint exact locations. Students have traveled all across the Midwest scoping out storms, trying to learn more about weather’s volatile nature.

Students in the WALTER lab also are working on a radon detection project, funded by the Minnesota Department of Health. Radon is a colorless, odorless, naturally occurring radioactive gas that forms from the breakdown of uranium, common in Minnesota soils. At high levels, radon exposure can pose a health risk. So far, almost 1,200 homes in the region have been tested for radon at no cost to the homeowners. The team helps any homeowners at dangerous levels get more information about radon mitigation to reduce the health risk.

Not only does WALTER’s research benefit the public, it also benefits the students who work there. While still undergraduates, they have access to equipment and technology sometimes not even found in the professional world. Many students who work in the WALTER lab were drawn to Minnesota State Mankato because of the...
Spr i n g  2 0 0 6

high-tech lab. “There’s not another one to beat us in the Midwest,” says Cecil Keen, director of WALTER.

SPEAKING OUT

One floor up from the WALTER lab in Armstrong Hall, faculty in Speech, Hearing, and Rehabilitation Services provide clinics, support groups and outreach to a variety of communities in southern Minnesota and the Twin Cities metro region.

Consider Bonnie Lund and Patricia Hargrove, who are working as consultants to the University of Minnesota and regional public schools to help special needs children communicate a problem before it gets out of control. Their work helps a child verbalize the fact that he or she needs a break or doesn’t want to play anymore without lashing out or becoming aggressive.

In the metro area, Cindy Busch works with people who suffer from aphasia, a speech problem that can occur after a stroke or other brain injury. Four groups of six or seven stroke survivors, along with their families and care providers, meet regularly and as a result, climb out of isolation and increase activity. Carol Myhre also directs an aphasia support group. For years, stroke survivors received inpatient care and then outpatient care for a time, but that was all. This new model helps them improve their communication skills while exposing Minnesota State Mankato students to a new and emerging treatment approach.

The campus’ audiology clinic conducts hearing tests for children, with University students often doing the checks. The clinic also has done testing at places such as the Women’s Expo in Mankato. Anyone who needs further testing is referred to the on-campus clinic — a hidden jewel, according to Clinic Director Renee Shellum. “A lot of people say, ‘I didn’t know you were here,’” she says.

Those clinics have benefited significantly from community support as well. For the past two decades, the Key City Sertoma Club, a Mankato-based service club, has contributed more than $100,000, which has helped pay for testing equipment and materials used in the community and the clinic.

Besides working with students and teachers in the region, Hargrove also works with the Development and Behavior Clinic, which is run by the Minnesota Department of Health to help diagnose a gamut of problems in young children. At this clinic, pediatricians, occupational therapists, psychologists, special education teachers and Hargrove come together to work with select students throughout a day. Department Chair Bruce Poburka works closely with the voice disorders clinic. He often gets referrals from other clinics, which see the Minnesota State Mankato clinic as a professional peer. Many times, someone at another clinic will call and say, “Can you take a listen to this?”

Like many research and outreach projects on campus, the Speech, Hearing, and Rehabilitation Services department is making big differences in the quality of people’s lives. Poburka remembers a nun who had lost her voice. “The day that a nun calls you a miracle worker, that’s really quite the day.”

Freelance writer Rachael Hanel is a regular contributor to both TOMORROW and TODAY, the magazine for Minnesota State Mankato alumni and friends.
The Department of Theatre and Dance staged “Wizard of Oz” in the fall of 2005. Photo courtesy of the Department of Theatre And Dance.
A LOOK AT SEVERAL WELL-REGARDED MINNESOTA STATE MANKATO PROGRAMS AND THE INNOVATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS THEY CREATE FOR BOTH STUDENTS AND FACULTY.

In some circles, it’s called baptism by fire. In others, it’s called project-based learning. In several of Minnesota State University, Mankato’s programs, it’s called business as usual. And dividends of that business include national reputations, exhilarated students and grateful alumni.

The expertise and experience of the faculty at Minnesota State Mankato have resulted in several “signature” programs that not only attract top students but also keep them engaged and active during their academic careers. The innovative learning environments that such faculty create help stimulate creativity and encourage scholarly success. They also encourage even undergraduate students to develop a taste for research and the rewards it can bring.

CENTER STAGE
Things took a dramatic turn for Minnesota State Mankato’s theatre program in the 1960s, when Ted Paul — the plain-spoken, lanky director reminiscent of John Huston — steered the program away from esoteric productions and into more diverse offerings. It was a philosophy that stuck, and one that current department chair Paul Hustoles says is dedicated to preparing students for the real world of theatre — a world in which they need to be ready for both dark, intense drama and the ol’ razzle dazzle.

“I want our students to be able to get work at the Guthrie and the Chanhassen Dinner Theater,” says Hustoles, now in his 20th year as chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance. Before arriving in Mankato, Hustoles, who received his Ph.D. from Texas Tech, was already hiring grads whose resumes included work in Minnesota State Mankato’s Highland Summer Theatre. He had become familiar with HST and its quality work from its actors — he just wasn’t aware it was associated with the University.

“I had hired people from Mankato without knowing there was a Mankato,” Hustoles says.

With six mainstage productions per year, plus the four seasonal Highland Summer Theatre productions, Minnesota State Mankato’s theatrical offerings surpass in tone and quantity any other college programming in the region. What starts as basic training for young actors can produce, beginning next year, three-year Master’s of Fine Arts graduates.

Actress and writer Greta Grosh moved to New York City after graduating in 1989. There, she met actors who were schooled at elite conservatories but who did not step on stage until their third year. “From my freshman year on, I was in shows,” says Grosh, a stage actress now living and working in St. Paul. “By the time I graduated I had an impressive resume.”

Grosh says she received such a well-rounded education from Hustoles and other faculty that she probably hasn’t even utilized all of the skills she learned. “Hustoles teaches the craft of theatre,” she says. “You have this huge bag of tools that gets you ready. If you want to get into the business of theatre, it is a business and you have to be prepared.”

Second-year theatre grad student Randy Wyatt enjoyed a number of firsts in 2005. His play, “Synonymy,” was the first original play of a student’s to be performed in the Andreas Black Box Theatre and the first at Minnesota State Mankato in more than ten years. His stage debut also took place as the lead, no less, in “Galileo.”

Wyatt visited Minnesota State Mankato for one show and “was blown away,” he says. “I checked it out and thought, ‘Oh my gosh, this program is tailor-made for me,’” says Wyatt, who will earn his master’s degree in directing in 2006. “My resume has doubled while I have been here.”

“When our kids get through the system,” Hustoles says as he snaps his fingers, “they’re all-American.”

GOOD COUNSEL
For Minnesota State Mankato’s Counseling and Student Personnel program, the key to success has been a faculty that not only keeps up with innovations in counseling but helps set the pace nationally as well. The University’s counseling program received accreditation in 1986, making it the first nationally accredited program in the five-state region.

Students come from as far away as California and New York, even though the primary recruiting tool remains word of mouth. “We don’t do much recruiting,” says Professor and Chair Anne Blackhurst. “The alumni are out there doing it for us.”

Active faculty help bring increased visibility to the program. The Los Angeles School District recently ordered 1,000 copies of Walter Roberts’ book Bullying From Both Sides. Several other CSP faculty are conducting innovative research on the uses of on-line videoconferencing in the supervision of counselors-in-training.

Even if the students aren’t initially aware of its reputation, they’re convinced shortly after arriving in Mankato. “Once the students get here, they begin to understand what it’s like to take classes from nationally recognized professionals,” Blackhurst says. “Their degree

— ANNE BLACKHURST
“EVERYTHING WE DO GETS THE STUDENTS OUT IN THE COMMUNITY.”

— ANTHONY FILIPOVITCH

is really going to mean something when they’re out there.”

It meant plenty to Lisa Mueller, who graduated in 1999 and is now the assistant director of Multicultural Services at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul. “The counseling courses and the emphasis on multiculturalism and diversity were probably what I found to be the most beneficial in my career,” Mueller says. “The counseling emphasis provided a solid foundation on which to address the ever-changing and diverse needs of students.”

In each of the department’s three areas — Professional School Counseling, Professional Community Counseling or College Student Affairs — staying ahead of the game in research and theory is an important priority. “[Research] ought to inform your teaching,” Blackhurst says. “It means you can’t just stay complacent.”

Mueller was drawn to the program’s emphasis on practice and the enthusiasm of both faculty and students. She was attracted to what she saw as a challenging curriculum with an excellent reputation. “It was a tough program,” she adds, “but when I entered my first full-time position I realized just how well the curriculum and practical experiences prepared me.”

INTENSE CASUAL

Two of Minnesota State Mankato’s signature programs have a decidedly casual look to their central offices, evidence of a camaraderie among students and faculty. “That really did hit me when I came to visit, the interaction between students and instructors,” says first-year Industrial/Organizational Psychology student Janette Donovan. “The faculty’s doors were open and students were hanging in the lobby. I caught a glimpse of the daily activities, which I think is really cool.”

The success of the I/O program has as much to do with those student-teacher relationships as it does with an insistence that the students become immersed in the real business world by working as consultants to local and regional businesses through the Organizational Effectiveness Research Group, a consulting group housed within the I/O Psychology program.

“Lots of people can be practitioners,” says Dan Sachau, I/O graduate program coordinator. “It’s a different thing, though, than being an academic, and they need different skills in order to do that. We want our graduates to be able to talk to managers rather than just journal editors.”

The applied nature of the Urban and Regional Studies Institute is likewise what makes it work so well. “Everything we do gets the students out in the community,” says Department Chair Anthony Filipovitch. “There are all these balls we have to keep in the air, but there’s one we can’t drop, and that’s the student.”

Every level of coursework in URSI involves some sort of applied work or participation in the field. Seniors in the program work with surrounding governments to develop plans for everything from public relations to traffic studies. “They, in effect, serve as consultants,” Filipovitch says.

Craig Waldron, a 1973 URSI graduate and city administrator in Oakdale, Minn., says the faculty’s insistence on real experience has served him well. “I went into urban studies as opposed to going to law school, and it was the best decision I ever made,” Waldron says. “I love what I do in the public sector, and URSI set me on the road to my career.”

STILL GREEN

In the early 1970s, Jasper Hunt was in one of the first graduating classes of The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Wash., an experimental school where students contract with instructors and pursue projects that incorporate a variety of disciplines. That campus continues to thrive; project-based learning continues to grow among charter schools; and Hunt remains committed to and inspired by that approach as he enters his 23rd year in experiential education at Minnesota State Mankato.

“The magic of this program lies in its structure,” he says. “We basically have a mini Evergreen State College in this school.”

The goal is to turn out graduates who are as different from each other as their studies are from standard academic lines. “If you look at most graduate programs around the country, you emerge at the end of it looking identical to the person sitting next to you,” Hunt says.

Between twenty and thirty new graduate students are drawn to the program each year. Each arrives with a unique quest, such as the history teacher who arranged an internship with Little Bighorn Battlefield National Park and ultimately developed a curriculum on the Battle of the Little Bighorn for his school district.

The role of instructors is to encourage and help mold the experiences into academic credit. “One of the things we’re very careful about is the action/reflection dynamic,” Hunt says. “It would be an abysmal failure from our perspective if people wanted to go out and get credit just for doing stuff.”

Joe Tougas is a freelance writer and editor in Mankato. He is a regular contributor to TOMORROW and TODAY, the magazine for Minnesota State Mankato alumni and friends.
Rarely do the people of the greater Mankato community get a peek into the day-to-day work and research that takes place in the inner sanctum of Minnesota State University, Mankato. But once a year, at the Douglas R. Moore Faculty Research Lecture, the community has an opportunity to witness that work firsthand.

A community invests in its university much the same way a parent invests in a child’s education, says Anthony Filipovitch, a professor of Urban and Regional Studies who presented a faculty research lecture in 1983. The Moore lecture demonstrates some of the rewards of that investment.

“We owe it to [the public] to share it,” Filipovitch says. “It’s a celebration of what they’ve created.”

The lecture — presented since 1975 and named after Moore, a former University president, in 1989 — aims for community-wide appeal. Each year, a committee chooses a faculty member to speak on a topic relevant to most everyone. One of the criterion on which the lectureship is awarded states: “The proposed project presents its insights in a way that will appeal to both the academic community and to the wider public.”

In thirty-two years, topics have ranged from original opera performance, nutrition and cancer, the Ewe people of Ghana, gamma rays, needs of the mentally ill, an account of Minnesota Thanksgivings and building a united Europe.

In 2005, a group of five nursing professors took the podium to talk about how families deal with chronic illness.

Sonja Meiers, one of those nursing professors, says that although all five of them were comfortable presenting at professional conferences and using language their colleagues understood, the Moore lecture required a different approach. Achieving balance,
she says, was a challenge. “You have to use understandable language, but not dumb it down,” Meiers says.

Meiers adds that the Moore lecture places an important emphasis on the idea of teachers as scholars. Taking part in research helped all of the nursing professors become better teachers, she says. It also reaffirms the idea that important research takes place at the University.

“One benefit of the Moore lecture is to prove that not all research is going on at large universities. We have researchers here, but they’re more hidden,” Meiers says.

Filipovitch agrees. The people of the Mankato community don’t have to go to Minneapolis or Chicago to find expertise; it’s right here.

“We invite the community to come to campus so they can see us as experts,” he says.

Jan Eimers, who works in the president’s office and has helped coordinate the Moore lecture since 1990, sees rich examples of that expertise each year as proposals filter in.

“There’s such great research taking place and such talent on campus. It’s like I have a front-row seat to it,” she says.

Eimers works closely with the committee, made up of faculty who have received the Moore lectureship in the past, that selects each year’s presenter. Filipovitch says the hard part of the committee’s decision is finding a lecture that speaks to both what University at a difficult time. The turbulent Vietnam War era caused a rift between the town and the campus, and Moore stepped in to try to heal that gap. Now, the Moore lectures continue to stress the bond between campus and community.

The lecture also serves to inspire faculty, to keep them motivated and to encourage them to bring new ideas to students.

English Professor Suzanne Bunkers attributes her varied contributions to the field of women’s diaries to the validation she received after getting a lectureship. When she applied for the award in 1983, she was a young assistant professor who had just attended a seminar on autobiography. She wanted to pursue more research in that field, but found it hard to find time for it on top of her teaching duties.

“When President Margaret Preska phoned to say that I’d been selected to give the 1984 lecture, I was astounded and grateful. The support shown by Dr. Preska and the selection committee was exactly what I needed to move forward with my research,” Bunkers says.

Bunkers has since published a number of books and essays and delivered several conference papers and lectures. The president’s lecture also planted the seeds for course development in women’s autobiography, memoir and survivors’ stories that hundreds of Minnesota State Mankato students have taken over the years.

For Chuck Lewis, a mass communications professor, giving the lecture in 2004 gave him an “excuse” to pursue research — something for which a department chair often lacks time. “Research is important,” Lewis says. “For professors, it’s not good to go into a coma after you’ve been tenured and promoted.”

Filipovitch knew after seeing the first couple of lectures when he came to campus that it was something he wanted to pursue.

“It made me want to compete for it,” he says. “It was the stimulus to take my academic work and push it further.”

The 2006 lecture will be the 32nd President’s Faculty Research Lectureship to be presented and the 19th named after former president Douglas Moore. This year’s presenter is Russell Palma from the Physics and Astronomy department. Palma’s lecture is titled “Exploring the Sun and Early Solar System: The Genesis and Stardust Missions.” The lecture will take place on April 10.

Rachael Hanel is a Madison Lake-based freelance writer and a regular contributor to both TOMORROW and TODAY, the magazine for alumni and friends of Minnesota State Mankato.
Scholarly Works

The following pages list examples of the scholarly work completed by faculty at Minnesota State University, Mankato during the 2005 calendar year. Although we’ve made every effort to include as many publications and performances as possible, this list is not all-inclusive. The names of Minnesota State Mankato faculty are shown in bold.

COLLEGE OF ALLIED HEALTH & NURSING


COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

PUBLICATIONS


Minnesota State Mankato faculty do not just contribute to knowledge production through their teaching, professional outreach and research or creative activities. The University is “home” to thirteen academic journals, with faculty members serving as editors or section editors. In addition to this, our faculty serve on more than forty academic journals spanning the disciplines represented in the six academic colleges.


**CREATIVE WORKS AND PERFORMANCES**


Frink, Brian. *New Work*, 410 Art Project, Mankato, MN.

Frink, Brian. Solo exhibition, Rochester Community & Technical College, Rochester, MN.

Griffin, Gwen. Siouxland Fiber Arts Invitational Exhibition, Visual Arts Center, Washington Pavilion of Arts and Sciences, Sioux Falls, SD.

Griffin, Gwen. Northern Plains Indian Art Market Juried Art Show [First place, Division XIII-Quilts], Old Courthouse Museum, Sioux Falls, SD.

Laidlaw, Mika Negishi. VII Bienal Internacional de Ceramica, Museu de la Ceramica de Manises, Valencia, Spain.

Laidlaw, Mika Negishi. 3rd World Ceramic Biennale [Honorable Mention], Icheon World Ceramic Center, South Korea.

Laidlaw, Mika Negishi. Craft USA ’05, Silvermine Guild Arts Center, New Canaan, CT.


Laidlaw, Mika Negishi. The Wichita National 2005, Wichita Center for the Arts, Wichita, KS.

Laidlaw, Mika Negishi. Carbondale Clay National II, The Gallery at Carbondale Clay Center, Carbondale, CO.

Laidlaw, Mika Negishi. 18th National Juried Art Exhibition [Founder’s Award and Honorable Mention] Mable HouseArts Center, Mableton, GA.


Miller, Liz. *Systemic Detour*, Franklin Art Works, Minneapolis, MN.

Miller, Liz. *Home-grown Invasion*, Bloomington Art Center, Bloomington, MN.

Shanafelt, Todd & Laidlaw, Mika Negishi. “Mechanics and Sensuality” exhibition, Conkling Gallery, Mankato, MN.

Shanafelt, Todd. International Teapot Exhibition, Xijing Ceramics Museum, Yixing, PR China.

Shanafelt, Todd. 5th Premio Internacional de Ceramica Contemporanea, Centro de Artesania De Aragon, Zaragoza, Spain.

Shanafelt, Todd. “Clay on the Wall” [Honorable Mention], The Galleries of Texas Tech School of Art, Lubbock, TX.

Shanafelt, Todd. 3rd World Ceramic Biennale 2005 Exhibition, Icheon World Ceramic Center, South Korea.

**THEATRE PRODUCTIONS**

Bliese, Tom

Scene Designer


Finocchiaro, Paul

Director


Cheerleader


Hustoles, Paul

Producer of all Minnesota State Mankato Productions

Director


Kerr-Berry, Julie


LeNoir, Nina

Director

McCarl, David
Costume Designer

Smith, Steven
Lighting Designer


Minnesota State Mankato graduate students benefit immensely from their interactions with talented faculty who engage them as co-learners and co-creators. In the last three years, University graduate students have been nationally acclaimed as teachers, scholars and professionals in programs such as Speech Communication, Urban and Regional Planning, Rehabilitation Counseling, Counseling and Student Personnel, and Theatre. These achievements are a reflection of the talented students attracted to Minnesota State Mankato and the possibility of working with nationally renowned faculty.

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**


Minnesota State Mankato is home to many high-quality and innovative graduate programs. For example, the master’s program in Industrial/Organizational Psychology was ranked number one in the country among the 100 schools in the United States offering a terminal master’s degree. The rankings were released during the summer of 2004 and reflect excellence across twenty instructional, research and service criteria. This peer evaluation of an outstanding Minnesota State Mankato graduate program demonstrates the high standard of achievement among our graduate faculty, programs and students. As a result of its ranking, I/O Psychology has deepened and broadened its appeal to potential graduate students, with applicants from twenty-five states and three countries, drawing interest from graduates of top-flight research universities.


**LIBRARY**


Minnesota State University, Mankato faculty have brought in $10 million in grants and contracts during the past three years, including grants from the National Science Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Endowment for the Arts, National Institutes of Health, Department of Education, and Housing and Urban Development.
A Scholarly Infrastructure

How Minnesota State University, Mankato can help create an environment for faculty research and creative activity.

Universities are still seen as sites where knowledge and information reside, most often in the minds of the faculty or in the physical structures of libraries. Many people think of institutions of higher learning as places where that knowledge is transferred from mentor to pupil. And, in some rough sense, many believe that’s what they’re paying for through state appropriations and tuition.

The reality, however, is far more complicated. Yes, the student learning experience should be a deeply rewarding and enlightening sojourn. But the university also confronts the crucial question of how its faculty creates, shapes and shares that knowledge.

That often unseen part of university life is an important consideration that occupies much of our time and demands many resources. On the pages of this magazine, we have endeavored to provide a glimpse into a number of scholarly efforts across the University and the ways in which students, the surrounding community and those living beyond Mankato benefit from the efforts of our talented faculty. The articles reveal only a partial story, leaving uncovered the many additional ways in which the creation and sharing of knowledge extends beyond both the classroom and the confines of the institution.

A former colleague of mine used to exhort graduates to “make us proud, make us better, make a difference.” That mantra is part of the daily experience and worldview of faculty at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Through teaching informed by scholarly and creative engagement, University faculty share knowledge that they produce, integrate students into basic and applied research or scholarship and demonstrate the potential of creative works by reflecting on both the process and the product.

Students who are learning and, in some cases, co-producing new knowledge are better positioned to be innovative thinkers for the next generation. It follows, as well, that the impact of such a learning environment can have repercussions far beyond their short stint at Minnesota State Mankato.

Sustaining the faculty’s ability to create new knowledge requires a commitment by the University to create spaces and provide resources and support for all forms of research, scholarship and creative activity. Minnesota State Mankato is committed to developing first-rate facilities and attracting talented scholars, artists and researchers to move the university forward and to benefit students and community alike. Our desire to continually improve and expand our research capacity is also intimately tied to our movement into doctoral education, a change that we anticipate will occur in 2007.

As we look toward the future, we are assessing our strengths and our challenges and have begun to examine the scholarly infrastructure of the university. While we are rightly proud of our library and our information technology capabilities, there remain areas in which we can improve. The campus is excited about the potential of the renovation and addition to the Trafton Science Center and the expanded capacity in the sciences, engineering and technology. We are also looking into ways to help expand and deepen the support to faculty engaged in research, scholarship and creative activity.

The College of Graduate Studies and Research has worked with faculty and administrators to identify new research centers whose sole purpose would be to support faculty and engage them in external opportunities for applied research. Such a center would assist faculty with new technologies, provide research and/or statistical support and offer advice on research projects on the drawing board. It would be an adjunct to our existing Research and Sponsored Programs Office.

In a similar vein, an externally focused center could bring together interdisciplinary teams of scholars and researchers to do basic or applied research in the service of the community and region. In this vein, Minnesota State Mankato faculty would further reinforce the notion that the boundaries of knowledge and application do extend well beyond the physical borders of the University.

In the end, the pursuit of knowledge and the support dedicated to that purpose is designed to make us proud, make us better and make a difference.

Fernando Delgado is the dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Research.
The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Minnesota State University, Mankato is researching new ways to teach.

In recent years, the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning has become a developing component of academia that encourages and validates educational research conducted by teachers within their own classrooms.

Professors around the country are now encouraged and sometimes even required to reflect on their teaching through a rigorous and systematic approach to developing student learning outcomes, strategies for teaching and course redesign. Faculty are being rewarded for work to improve their teaching and student learning.

There’s a paradigm shift from teaching-centered institutions to learning-centered colleges and universities. At the same time, faculty are realizing that staying the same in an ever-changing environment is regressive by definition. To be a good teacher takes much reflection, discussion and research. At Minnesota State University, Mankato, we have faculty not only interested in good teaching but working hard to be good teachers.

At its foundation, SoTL leads professors to ask questions about their teaching and moves them from worrying only about what they know in terms of content to also considering the process of student learning. Educators must continually reflect on their classroom practices to learn what has worked and what has not. Happily, increasing numbers of higher education faculty are turning these informal reflections into formal educational research projects.

At Minnesota State Mankato, this search for improved teaching and learning was jump-started in 2001 with the development of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. For the first time in the history of the institution, programs were created and organized to allow professors to learn about teaching and learning with colleagues from across campus. Just think of the power of a group of faculty representing all six colleges at Minnesota State Mankato, discussing the attributes of a quality syllabus or ways to enhance diversity in the classroom.

In the past two years, CETL, through $90,000 in strategic funding from the University, has granted awards between $2,000 and $4,000 for faculty to improve teaching through research on the scholarship of teaching. Faculty who might otherwise have spent time doing traditional research in their discipline have instead discovered innovative and improved ways to help students learn. While traditional research continues to be important, it is also crucial for faculty to continually analyze teaching strategies and new teaching technologies.

Two years ago, CETL offered a new program to all University faculty known as the Faculty Teaching Certificate Program. In its first year, nearly sixty faculty members met in small groups once a month to study and discuss topics ranging from active learning and developing portfolios to classroom assessment techniques. Participants also had at least one peer faculty consultation, where a trained observer visited the classroom, took notes, talked to students and shared this information with the professor. Finally, participants prepared a capstone project in which they reflected on something learned in the program, tried a new teaching method or activity, or redesigned their course based on principles learned during the year. At the end of the program, faculty received a certificate from President Davenport that demonstrated to their dean that they not only cared about quality teaching but did something to improve their teaching. In 2005-06, seventy faculty members are participating.

Minnesota State Mankato has become a leader in the scholarship of teaching in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system and beyond. The annual Teaching with Technology conference, co-sponsored by Information Technology Services and CETL, has been well-attended. CETL also sponsors the annual Talking About Teaching and Learning meeting, at which a mix of outside clinicians and our own faculty share ideas on teaching and best practices for the classroom. Next year, the first Faculty Research Symposium will be held on campus. Co-sponsored by the graduate college and CETL, it will allow faculty to present their research ideas to colleagues. Although we expect many traditional research proposals, we know there will also be proposals based on SoTL.

Faculty often arrive with a strong background in traditional research. Many also come from doctoral programs that do little to aid them with teaching ideas and skills. It is time faculty are encouraged to be the best teachers they can be. What could be more important for our University and for our students than a faculty excited and energized by research that includes reflection on student learning? We can be proud of our faculty who are working within a relatively new, broadened definition of academic research. In the reflection on a classroom assignment, the preparation of a test or the development of a different teaching strategy, faculty are doing some powerful and rich research that can improve student learning while adding interest and excitement for the professor.

Stewart Ross is the founding director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at Minnesota State University, Mankato.
On Ice

In early 2005, Minnesota State University, Mankato Professor of Biology Christopher Ruhland traveled to Antarctica to study the effects of global climate changes on plants and soil. He took this picture of Gentoo penguins, usually found further north on the continent, in the shadow of Mt. Williams.