Minnesota State University Moorhead Presents

15th Annual Student Academic Conference

Since 1999
Greetings:

Our annual Student Academic Conference is a Spring Semester highlight. Since 1999, it has provided an outlet for student research and creative work. Over the years thousands have shared their knowledge in an environment that encourages inquiring minds and faculty mentoring. It’s an activity that underscores our mission statement:

‘Minnesota State University Moorhead is a caring community promising all students the opportunity to discover their passions, the rigor to develop intellectually, and the versatility to shape a changing world.’

The conference offers a stage for new ideas from the next generation of researchers and leaders. It advances intellectual development and challenges students to effectively communicate their knowledge. Defending research in a supportive community of student and faculty scholars is a great way to experience personal and professional growth.

Congratulations to the student participants, faculty mentors, and the Student Academic Conference planners.

A very good idea has become a wonderful tradition!

Edna Mora Szymanski

President
Minnesota State University Moorhead
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**Student Academic Conference Reception**

The Department of Art & Design welcomes the campus community to view the Annual Juried Student Exhibition in the Roland Dille Center for the Arts 151. Michael Byzewski, ’98 Art & Design alumnus and co-owner of Aesthetic Apparatus, is our esteemed juror.

Following the Student Academic Conference, the Department of Art & Design will host a reception honoring all MSUM students participating in the conference. Please join us for light refreshments at 4 p.m. in the Gallery Foyer.

**Publication credits:** Mass Communications Professor Deneen Gilmour and the MC 310 Copy Editing class; MSUM Marketing interns Meghan Feir (project coordinator), Amanda Schlosser (designer), April Knutson, Meredith Wathne; student photographers Ande Sailer and JaNae Boswell
15th Annual
Student Academic Conference

Tuesday, April 16, 2013

7:30 a.m. Poster Set-Up – Registration/Information Table
CMU Main Lounge

9:30 a.m. Presentation Session 1 and Poster Session 1
Various CMU Rooms and Poster Display Area

10:50 a.m. Break

11:00 a.m. Seating for the Luncheon
CMU Ballroom

11:15 a.m. Luncheon Starts (Welcome and Introductions)
CMU Ballroom

12:00 p.m. Keynote Speaker – Ryan Sylvester, LT, JAGC, USN
CMU Ballroom

12:25 p.m. Student Panelists
CMU Ballroom

1:00 p.m. Presentation Session 2 and Poster Session 2
Various CMU Rooms and Poster Display Area

2:20 p.m. Break

2:30 p.m. Presentation Session 3 and Poster Session 3
Various CMU Rooms and Poster Display Area
Conference Participants and Attendees:

If you’re like me, previewing the Student Academic Conference program has renewed your optimism about our future and our prospects for solving the serious challenges facing our planet. A cursory review of the conference program reveals that our students are tackling problems such as cancer, diabetes, global warming, sustainability, racial and gender inequality, and child welfare. In short, the Student Academic Conference provides ample evidence that Minnesota State University Moorhead is a place where faculty and students work together to address some of the most important problems we face. And, frankly, I feel better knowing that our future is in your hands.

The conference and the research it showcases also have important implications for the future of the students who participate. If you mentored a student who is participating in the Student Academic Conference, you have contributed to that student’s academic and personal development in ways that will have important, long-term effects. If you are a student who is presenting the results of a research project, your research experience has increased the likelihood that you will succeed at MSU Moorhead and beyond. You have also contributed to the spirit of discovery, creativity, and innovation at the University—a spirit that enriches us all and just might change our world.

Congratulations, and thank you.

Anne Blackhurst
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
At its inception, one of the guiding ideals of the Student Academic Conference (SAC) was to provide a forum where student presenters and attendees of all stripes (e.g., students, faculty, staff, alumni, community members, etc.) would be exposed to the academic and artistic work from all of the disciplines at Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM). This ideal is embodied in the tagline of the first conference in 1999, “Bridging the Disciplines.” As a conference organizer, I remember reading the evaluations submitted by participants following the conference about the awkwardness that results from students from the highly technical research of a biology student presenting in the same room and time slot as the English major discussing poetry.

This particular ideal of the conference at that time was rooted in the concept of interdisciplinarity, an approach employed by educators, researchers, and practitioners in order to, *inter alia*, answer, or, at least, better analyze complex questions, issues, or problems.

This approach is especially relevant when the question, issue, or problem is beyond the scope of any one discipline. The interdisciplinary approach has been around in various forms and was employed with varying degrees of intensity throughout time, but at the start of the SAC was particularly in vogue based on calls from pedagogical theorists and enhanced by research grant funding prioritizing this approach.

One hope, at least from my perspective, was that the awkwardness, as noted above, might inspire formal interdisciplinary research or collaborative endeavors among students who otherwise might not have connected with each other. I viewed the conference as an opportunity for cross-pollination of ideas and inspiration among students of varying academic disciplines. Aside from formal collaboration, I believed then, and still do today, that there is value in simply being exposed to the ideas and concepts from other disciplines that can shape our understanding of our own areas of interest, and at the same time enhance our ability to understand the world and humanity more.

Ryan Sylvester

*From Bridging Disciplines to Bridging Continents*

> By LT Ryan Sylvester, JAGC, USN (Mass Communications 1998; Educational Leadership 2002)
’Brien then, and still do today, that there is value in simply being exposed to the ideas and concepts from other disciplines that can shape our understanding of our own areas of interest, and at the same time enhance our ability to understand the world and humanity more generally.”

– Ryan Sylvester
STUDENT PANELISTS

Lynsee Langsdon
MSUM Senior
Major: Anthropology

Lynsee Langsdon is a senior anthropology major (archaeology emphasis) and geoscience minor from McLeod, N.D. Last year Langsdon’s SAC poster was an analysis of a collection of ceramic artifacts from an archaeological site along the Maple River of North Dakota. Last fall she received a grant from the College of Social and Natural Sciences to conduct similar research on collections from the Sheyenne River of North Dakota. She will present those findings at this year’s conference. She finds this type of research fascinating and hopes to work on similar projects during and after graduate school. She enjoys traveling and experiencing different cultures.

Conor Holt
MSUM Senior
Major: Film Studies

Conor Holt took his first film class at Roseville (Minn.) Area High School. Now he’s a senior film studies major with a double emphasis in film production, and film history and criticism. His presentation, “Film d’Science: Science-Fiction Meets Art Cinema in a Senior Film Project,” screens his senior film project and discusses its production and creative genesis. For the presentation “FILM 472: Community Video Projects from Fall 2012,” he and fellow film students Chance Cole and Jordan Stark will screen their group projects from last semester’s documentary film class. Outside of filmmaking he attends local theater, including the fantastic MSUM productions, and serves as president of the Cinethusiasts Club. He will move to Los Angeles this summer to pursue film industry internships as well as consider graduate school or full-time employment.
Jennifer Kusler  
**MSUM Junior**  
**Major: Elementary Inclusive Education**

Breckenridge, Minn., native Jennifer Kusler is majoring in elementary inclusive education with an ABS (academic behavior strategist) licensure. Kusler is an officer for the Student Council for Exceptional Children and an advocate for students of all abilities. She’s a student leader for Chi Alpha Christian Fellowship and volunteers for a Bible club for children with special needs. Other interests include crafting, playing guitar, piano, singing and reading. Kusler’s SAC presentation is a descriptive research project on the events leading up to the 1970 Minneapolis Teachers’ Strike and the context in which the strike occurred. The climate of education, including the purpose and practices in the field, were dramatically different 50 years ago compared with today. Her research demonstrates how the past shapes and contributes to the present.

Chu Yi  
**MSUM Senior**  
**Major: Business Administration and Marketing**

A native of Hualien, Taiwan, Chu Yi is a senior international business and marketing major and a Microsoft Windows U Crew intern representative on campus. He is learning new marketing, communication and organizational skills while interacting with and updating students on new Microsoft products. Post-graduation plans include employment and eventually master’s degrees in information technology and business administration. Last year, Yi presented a diversity endorsement program feasibility study at the Student Academic Conference. This year he will present the program proposal with his graduate research partner, Katrina Brekke. A second presentation focuses on experiential marketing and his internship, featuring his experience creating a Windows Phone 8 interactive activity utilizing multimedia, photo/video sharing and social media posts.
When it comes to independent film making, inspiration must coexist with dedication. Nowhere is that more apparent than with filmmaker Conor Holt. The Roseville, Minn., native is a senior majoring in film studies with a double emphasis in film production, and film history and criticism, along with a minor in English.

Putting his love of filmmaking to work, he was awarded a $1,500 grant by the Minnesota Film and TV Board in Minneapolis, which he used to cover the cost of making his short film, “A Better Life,” a science-fiction drama about a woman who cares for her comatose husband using a remote control.

When asked what the most difficult part about writing “A Better Life” was, Holt said, “Forcing myself to go back and back again. I’m usually the guy who writes one or two drafts and then I’m done, but this – I wanted it to be perfect. I wanted to make sure to refine the dialogue before I started filming.”

Holt and his crew worked eight to 12 hours for four days, filming and setting up each scene. Creativity cannot be bought, but it can be inspired. Holt’s favorite author, Philip K. Dick, “focuses on characters, the internal struggle throughout the story,” Holt said. “I want to reflect that with my writing.”

Taking in the lessons he learned from reading various works by Dick, Holt had a goal in mind when he was writing “A Better Life.”

“With this film, I sought to balance the genre conventions of science-fiction with the narrative and temporal style of art cinema,” Holt said. “The film features futuristic technology, while moving back and forth between the past and present.”

Using money left over from making his short film, Holt will send “A Better Life” to other film festivals such as Sundance, Fantastic Festival and Short Fest. He hopes to get an internship, and after graduating, wants to be an independent filmmaker and writer.
Kristin Wittman

Population Control of Urban Canada Geese in Moorhead, Minnesota

Kristin Wittman, a 2012 biology graduate with an emphasis in ecology and evolutionary biology, is returning to present at the 15th annual Student Academic Conference. Though out of school, Wittman took an interest in an ongoing study at MSUM.

Wittman and eight others will present their study, “Population Control of Urban Canada Geese in Moorhead, Minnesota.”

Although Wittman has only been involved with the study for about a year, it started four years ago when the Crystal Sugar company outside of Moorhead contacted the MSUM biology department asking them to help control the geese population that had settled on their property.

“They were worried about an E. coli breakout in their water systems,” Wittman said. “It’s a good habitat for the geese because it’s fenced in, but it’s really unhealthy for the birds, so they needed to lower the population and called us for the project.

“I’ve always known that I was more outdoorsy and liked more natural things, so it’s a cool way to see wildlife management in the field.”

Controlling the population of geese is an ongoing struggle. A few group members go to Crystal Sugar fields and look for geese nests to keep track of and limit the number of eggs.

“We only let a certain number of eggs live,” Wittman said. “But it doesn’t traumatize the mother because we leave some. We aren’t killing the whole population.”

The purpose of the project is to lower the population and then move it to a different location that is healthier for the geese. Some people don’t understand what they are doing.

“Some of the workers at Crystal Sugar think we are destroying the geese population, but they should know it’s unhealthy for the geese to all be in that area,” Wittman said.

She hopes their presentation will inform others about the natural world.

“Farming is great,” Wittman said, “But at the same time, it kills off native grasses and natural populations, like geese, so they have to hang out in unhealthy locations, like Crystal Sugar fields.”

The study seems to be doing some good. The population has declined, there hasn’t been an E. coli breakout and they’ve seen more geese nests outside of the Crystal Sugar property.

“I’ve always known that I was more outdoorsy and liked more natural things, so it’s a cool way to see wildlife management in the field.”

– Kristin Wittman
Growing up on the island of Taiwan in the South Pacific, Chu Yi had encountered homesickness and cultural shock firsthand upon his arrival at MSUM four years ago. This is one reason Yi, along with his fellow presenter, Katrina Brekke, is so interested in adding diversity to MSUM through researching and developing a diversity program. This program, developed by Yi and Brekke, will be interdisciplinary and will include academic and non-academic fields.

Working with co-author Yi, Brekke, a graduate area director at MSUM, is involved with researching and developing this diversity program. The program will be presented to the Provost and may make a major difference in the lives of MSUM students if approved.

Attendees to the presentation may be surprised by some of the findings. Yi said the audience “will be shocked to realize that statements of diversity and inclusion can be found within most job descriptions, but students don’t have any proof to show they value diversity.”

“Through the diversity learning program, students can be exposed to academic disciplines of diversity as well as field experience,” Yi said, “which increases their cultural competence that’s becoming more important in a diverse society and job market.”

Brekke said this diversity program aims to bring people together through awareness and tolerance. She believes it is needed, specifically in the Fargo-Moorhead area and the Midwest in general, where many natives do not encounter much diversity in their small towns.

Yi and Brekke plan on stressing the importance of diversity and hope their presentation will spur audience members to learn more about what their program is meant to accomplish. Yi said they would like to use the academic conference, “to reach out to students and faculty and ask for their input.”

“The audience will be shocked to realize that statements of diversity and inclusion can be found within most job descriptions, but students don’t have any proof to show they value diversity.”

– Chu Yi

By Narjes Al-Bakshy and Meghan Feir
Kathryn Kottenbrock

Invisible Women and the Flood of 2009

“Nobody wants to be forgotten. I hope people will stop and realize that we all need to take the time to make sure these people are remembered, especially in a time of crisis.”

– Kathryn Kottenbrock

Casselton, N.D., native Kathryn Kottenbrock is an advocate for homeless women in the Fargo-Moorhead area.

Kottenbrock, a women’s and gender studies major, was inspired to learn about the invisible women who were negatively affected by the Red River Valley flood of 2009 through her internship with the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless. She engaged in advocacy work for people who were homeless and was asked if she wanted to be involved in a research project about how the flood of 2009 affected women.

Kottenbrock was surprised by the lack of previous research on marginalized populations. There is a lot of literature that focuses on the plight of middle-class people. Her research provides insight on work that needs to be done to protect vulnerable populations in the Red River Valley. “Nobody wants to be forgotten,” Kottenbrock said. “I hope people will stop and realize that we all need to take the time to make sure these people are remembered, especially in a time of crisis.”

Kottenbrock, who is still researching the flood and homeless women, will demonstrate the need for advocacy and promote some ideas for change. She hopes to discover benefits for those who are affected the most by natural disasters in the Fargo-Moorhead area.

One of Kottenbrock’s goals is to educate others on small steps that can be taken to help everyone in our community. She also hopes to identify other unmet needs and explore new policies.
I imagine a world where the average age for a woman to be married is 15, and the average number of children she has is seven. This reality exists in various nations, and MSUM freshman Jordan Pinneke will address the issues in her talk on population control and the impact of women’s education on the future of sustainability.

Pinneke, a sustainability major, grew interested in the environment while in high school at the School of Environmental Studies in Apple Valley, Minn.

She participated in the annual Human Population Conference, from which her research project was inspired. Pinneke had the opportunity to ask a question via Skype to Paul R. Ehrlich, the Bing Professor of Population Studies in the Department of Biological Sciences at Stanford (Calif.) University.

“I asked him a question and that inspired me to think about population and its impact on the world,” Pinneke said.

Pinneke’s research will demonstrate the groundwork for the problems caused by a large population, signify the importance of women’s education on population control, and highlight short- and long-term solutions to population growth.

“As soon as women are educated, their life path completely turns around and they’re able to get jobs,” Pinneke said. “Some people are simply unaware of methods of birth control, let alone how to use them. Getting any kind of education will give women a chance to get a job rather than relying on a man.”

Pinneke hopes her research presentation will inspire the audience to think about population control on a global level and take initiative to brainstorm their own solutions. Too often ethnocentrism drives our culture to stray away from expanding ideas beyond our own backyard, Pinneke said. In this way, her research blends sustainability with cultural anthropology.

Pinneke is active in the Green Dragons, which promote sustainable practices on campus and in the community. She aspires to join the Peace Corps and operate a nonprofit organization.

“As soon as women are educated, their life path completely turns around and they’re able to get jobs.”
– Jordan Pinneke
Jessica Hillesheim

Does Marriage Promote Inequality?

“We should get rid of the state institutionalized version of marriage, and instead focus on the true meaning of being married.”
— Jessica Hillesheim

By Darla Hedstrom

Jessica Hillesheim will be presenting at her third Student Academic Conference, and as a junior majoring in philosophy and minoring in sociology, she’s even more excited about the topic she is presenting this year.

“I’m excited to get people’s feedback because my topic is more controversial than I’ve done in the past,” she said.

Coming to this topic was not hard for her. Hillesheim is taking a feminist theory class this semester. Her assignment for the class was to write a 10-page paper, and out of the topics given, she chose the topic of marriage inequality. She believes people should not have to get married if they do not desire to, and single parents should be able to receive the same benefits as married couples.

“I always remember my family members, aunts and uncles, or even my parents saying, ‘When you get married,’ and I remember just looking at them and saying, “What if I don’t.”

“I don’t see myself getting married because it’s not beneficial to my life. Maybe only for tax breaks,” she said. “We should get rid of the state institutionalized version of marriage and instead focus on the true meaning of being married.”

When Hillesheim isn’t studying or writing papers, she enjoys anime, comic books and graphic design. She would like to participate in the National Student Exchange and travel to Seattle, Texas or Hawaii. After graduate school, she would like to teach at the college level.
Garbage bag dresses, pirate apparel and industrial-wear are only a few pieces that illustrate fashion icon Vivienne Westwood’s collections. Senior art major Linnea Fitterer plans to highlight Westwood’s influence on Great Britain’s punk movement of the 1980s and the accessibility of her fashion at this year’s Student Academic Conference.

“I will explore how she made way for that kind of style to be seen alongside other fashion designs – to be appreciated – to be considered a style,” Fitterer said. “I’m going through the evolution of her career and focusing on the ‘80s.”

Surrounded primarily by male designers, Westwood paved the way for women in the industry, and placed Great Britain on the fashion map. Fitterer is inspired by her designs “because they’re so different than everything else, but they’re not crazy, Lady Gaga-different. They’re very regal,” Fitterer said. “She made way for this bizarre movement in Great Britain – as a woman collaborating with male designers to get her point across and to get her collections on the fashion runway. It’s really inspiring.”

Fitterer will also address the accessibility of Westwood’s designs. “The variety of directions she took really surprised me. I was only familiar with her Sex Pistols, punk, kind of rock ‘n’ roll collection.”

Fitterer doesn’t consider herself a full-out feminist, but she is drawn to feminist movements and their relation to art and design. “It’s interesting to see the development of women in art history and how nobody paid attention to women, especially in the Renaissance period. Men took credit for women,” Fitterer said. “It’s not like they weren’t producing art, but they’ve been erased or covered up. I want people to remove the idea of feminism as a bunch of man-hating, bra-burners, but people who are revolutionizing industries.”

Fitterer will also emphasize the empowerment that Westwood’s fashions brought to working-class men and women. “The brilliance of her is that she didn’t just keep making ripped up T-shirts or pirate costumes. She moved with the times, and she always stayed one step ahead. She was a real trend-setter.”

“I want people to remove the idea of feminism as a bunch of man-hating, bra-burners, but people who are revolutionizing industries.”

– Linnea Fitterer
Young children grow to understand the world around them through trial and error. They fail forward to success. Freshman Meghan McLaughlin believes that as we age, the development of our creative mind decreases. McLaughlin will discuss this issue in her presentation, “Stepping Away from Creativity.”

Double majoring in studio arts, with an emphasis in sculpture, and theater arts, with an emphasis in theater technology and design, McLaughlin clearly has a passion for creativity. She likes people to see different perspectives in both art and life. Her presentation is inspired by TED talks, a series of documentaries based in the U.K., and by the late philosopher Alan Watts, from whom McLaughlin has studied ideas on creativity in life.

Throughout life, we learn with our senses, we reach goals, and once we have reached a goal, we move on to the next. Life progresses and we work less with our creative minds and more with the fear of failure, McLaughlin said.

McLaughlin hopes she inspires people to take away a new idea, or an old idea with a new person saying it. “I want them to have the understanding that we need to change something in school. It is okay to feel fear, but face it.”

McLaughlin will discuss the reasons our minds slowly lose the creativity we had as children, and plans to include information and quotes from well-known inventors and philosophers, such as Albert Einstein and Thomas Edison.

McLaughlin hopes others will share her desire to change how we learn things as we age. “Some people might feel it’s important, and that’s what I hope for.”
The deep amber color, the twisted tight strings and the soothing sounds that resonate after a legato bow stroke. It’s hard not to be romantic about the violin. Music education and music performance major Tara Cherry found romance and has been in a serious relationship with the violin since she was eight years old.

“I love everything about the violin,” Cherry said. “I pushed my parents to take lessons; it wasn’t the other way around.”

The Missoula, Mont., native will present on Samuel Barber’s violin concerto and Edward Elgar’s violin sonata because she will perform them at her senior recital in the fall. The research she’s conducted on these pieces will ensure she knows them top to bottom and front to back.

Barber and Elgar are both composers from a similar time period with different styles, but, “They have a lot of similarities in the two pieces, which is really surprising,” Cherry said.

Cherry’s presentation will touch on three main points in her presentation, the similarities and differences between the styles and harmonic elements-tonal and atonal, the differences between the composers and the history of the pieces. Cherry hopes to inform her audience about the two composers and build a connection to the styles and different parts of the pieces themselves.

“They are two pieces that people do not really know about if they are not in the music world,” Cherry said.

During the conference she will present a variety of musical selections available to help showcase the style and history she studied. However, instead of having an audio file of the track, Cherry will play them on her violin, creating a more personal connection.

Cherry aspires to take her passion for the craft and share it with others by teaching.

“I love everything about the violin. I pushed my parents to take lessons; it wasn’t the other way around.”

– Tara Cherry
Brittney Hanson

Health Status of the United States: After Healthcare Reform

Brittney Hanson works to inform her peers about affordable health care. Since January, Hanson has researched various systems of health care and their effects on communities. She is completing this project through her sociology of health and medicine class.

Hanson first became interested in this subject from reading about the Affordable Care Act first introduced in 2009. Hanson’s research revealed surprising facts about the health of U.S. citizens.

“We have a low life expectancy compared to other countries and we spend the most on healthcare per person compared to other countries,” Hanson said.

Hanson then looked at neighboring countries’ health care systems.

“I wanted to find out for myself (about health care) by looking into the Canadian universal health care system,” Hanson said.

Since 1971, citizens of Canada have full access to basic health care, whether it’s provided in a hospital, home or clinic, regardless of employment or income. This is unlike the United States’ systems that run off of privately owned sectors, which limit the access of coverage to those who cannot afford insurance.

On March 23, 2010, President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act, allowing citizens to have access to health care, similar to the universal health care system already in place in Canada.

The Affordable Care Act’s primary goal is to reduce overall costs of health care. It provides a number of mechanisms, including mandates, subsidies and tax credits to employers and individuals in order to increase the coverage rate.

Through her presentation, Hanson hopes people will be thoroughly informed about the newly enacted health care act. By reviewing current issues in health care, Hanson will predict effects of the universal coverage on the United States.

Hanson, a first-time participant in the Student Academic Conference, is excited about showing her research.

“The conference allows the faculty and community to see the talents of the students on campus, and it gives them an opportunity to learn something new.”

“[We have a low life expectancy compared to other countries and we spend the most on health care per person compared to other countries.]”

– Brittney Hanson
Notes.