Minnesota State Awards Grants for Educational Innovation

ST. PAUL, Minn., Sept. 10, 2018 – Twenty-three projects at the colleges and universities of Minnesota State have been awarded grants that total $314,659 to fund educational innovations that show great potential for improving teaching, learning, and access for students.

“Providing a vibrant and robust learning experience for our students requires that our colleges and universities be masters of innovation,” said Devinder Malhotra, chancellor of Minnesota State. “The projects that these grants are funding are outstanding examples of the creative power of our faculty, staff, and students, and their commitment to improving the success of our students and our contribution to the economic vitality of Minnesota.”

The projects were funded through Minnesota State Educational Innovations which identifies, seeds, and supports innovative technologies and talent to drive high-quality experiences for the students of Minnesota State. The innovations address obstacles to student success by using existing technologies, resources, or practices in innovative ways. Proposals were considered for either innovation grants up to $25,000 or small innovation/sustainability grants that could, for example, fund a pilot project, enhance an existing innovation program, or contribute to the sustainability of a previously funded project. New this year are “Pay it Forward” grants that help campuses implement innovations that were developed by other campuses and have proven to be successful.

The projects that were funded include:

Innovation Grants (up to $25,000):

Minnesota State REFLECT................................................., Anoka-Ramsey Community College
Sharing research on effective teaching strategies with other Minnesota State colleges.

Developing Virtual Activity Based Learning Approaches.......................... Century College
Creating interactive and fully online laboratory-based courses in anatomy and physiology.

Experiential and Cross-Cultural Learning........................................ Century College
Partnering with faculty in Colombia to help students in both countries gain business experience.

An Open Invitation to Biological Anthropology............. Inver Hills Community College
Collaborating with faculty from leading universities to author a first-of-its-kind open textbook.

Building Entrepreneurial Mindset Competency.............. Metropolitan State University
Encouraging students and employees to display resilience and think creatively.

Student Learner Hub...................................................... Minnesota State College Southeast
Creating a school-work training program in advanced manufacturing for students age 16 - 17.

An Open Source Podcast for First-Year Students. Minnesota State University, Mankato
Improving the retention and success of first-year students by overcoming potential barriers.

Small Innovation/Sustainability Grants (up to $10,000):

Performance Enhanced Biology................................................... Bemidji State University
Bringing science and theater together to enhance the teaching and learning of genetics.

Open Educational Resources Accelerator: Z Degree....................... Central Lakes College
Offering faculty different on ramps for engaging OERs based on their past experience.

Professional Fluency in Online Courses................................. Lake Superior College
Creating an online system to help students learn professional skills in their academic programs.

Burn Box 2.0.................................................................................... Lake Superior College
Repurposing shipping containers for fire training to give students skills in high-risk situations.

Towards a Complete Open Educational Resources AA Degree...... Mesabi Range College
Creating workshops to help faculty identify and review open textbook alternatives.

Helping Students Declare an Accurate Major.............................. Minneapolis College
Using a multi-assessment approach to help students identify a right-fit career path.

A Novel Program for Manufacturing Competencies. Minnesota State College Southeast
Building a collaborative project for students in CAD, CNC, machining, welding, and fabrication.

Addressing Mental Health Needs in the Classroom............... Minnesota State University, Mankato
Launching a pilot to help students grappling with significant mental health challenges.

New Rivers PodLab................................................................. Minnesota State University Moorhead
Creating literature-themed podcasts to connect students with readers and market their work.

Open Educational Resources Growth...... Northland Community and Technical College
Providing in-depth training to faculty to help them implement open textbooks in their courses.

Cross-Curricular Online Graphic Organizers.............................. Ridgewater College
Helping faculty teach all students to be better readers through the use of graphic organizers.

Orientacion, Janeera, or Orientation..................... St. Cloud Technical and Community College
Translating an eOrientation program into Spanish and Somali to better serve diverse students.
Removing Hurdles for Open Educational Resources.............................. Saint Paul College

*Creating open source assignments in general biology and anatomy and physiology courses.*

Pay it Forward Grants (Up to $10,000):

M State’s FlexPace.......................... Minnesota State Community and Technical College

*Launching a vibrant, mastery-based learning pilot based on Riverland’s FlexPace program.*

A Mindful Path to Equity at RCTC.......... Rochester Community and Technical College

*Training and events on mindfulness in equity practices pioneered by Minneapolis College.*

Unleashing Credit for Prior Learning............................. St. Cloud State University

*Training for “CPL Champions” on the groundbreaking work by South Central College.*

This is the third year that Minnesota State has awarded educational innovation grants. Previous projects that were funded have achieved such notable accomplishments as reducing the time and cost required to complete an associate degree in business and reducing the cost of providing classrooms with wireless technology by 80% – 90%.

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*Minnesota State includes 30 community and technical colleges and seven state universities serving approximately 375,000 students. It is the fourth-largest system of two-year colleges and four-year universities in the United States.*