

Tales from the Future

Experiencing the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities In 2010

The year is 2010. The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities exist in many shapes and forms in today's profoundly networked world. It is a physical place and a collection of faculty, staff, and students, on the college and university campuses that can be visited and experienced face-to-face. MnSCU is also a reputation and image created by printed materials, the campus view book, and by what people say about the institution. At the same time, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities is an experience that can be engaged through the system's Website and portal. MnSCU's image and brand is shaped by all of these things.

But by 2010, the university's Website and portal reach more stakeholders of the colleges and universities, more frequently, than the other modes of experiencing MnSCU. By this time, the Website and portal are **the** manifestation of the college and university's image and brand. They are the gateway through which MnSCU as an integrated system creates a reputation for responsiveness, effectiveness, timeliness, quality of learning and competency development, and value.

The portal is not just an electronic gateway. It is a platform that enables the deconstruction and reinvention of academic and administrative processes to make them more responsive to the needs of learners and other stakeholders.

Consider the following examples of what it's like to experience MnSCU in 2010.

Engaging High School Students through College-Level Studies. As part of a collaborative program with K-12 schools to enhance the senior year for high school students, MnSCU gives seniors and outstanding juniors the opportunity to take online and hybrid courses, for college level credit. Over time, students use these offerings not only to build college credit but to sample and test the offerings and the experiences provided by different institutions, prior to applying for admission.

Jacob Steiner is a senior from Edina who is considering Winona State University, Minnesota State University, Mankato, and Metropolitan State University and several out-of-state institutions. He takes a course from each institution in-state institution in the first semester of his senior year to help him decide between the three universities. He eliminated several institutions because they did not offer an online offering for high school students.

Engaging and Students in Enrichment and Developmental Programs. MnSCU utilizes its portalized learning and knowledge resources to engage high school students in a variety of enrichment programs that prepare students for careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). These programs use repurposed versions of the same learning and simulation resources that are utilized by MnSCU institutions through its MnOnline offerings. High school enrichment and developmental resources are made available to students across the state. Curriculum is further enhanced through a MnSCU partnership with the Science Museum of Minnesota's Teacher Resource Center which provides objects and lessons related to science and math throughout the state.

In addition, portalized enrichment opportunities are used to engage diverse working groups of students across the state. These relationships also enable MnSCU institutions to engage

students and determine who may be likely to require remediation and/or special attention, which can begin before they even arrive on a MnSCU campus. Student achievement and progress are continuously monitored through MnSCU's state-of-the-art online student services systems

Prospective Students Experience the University. Susan Kent is a high school senior from Central Lakes, who is considering applying to Bemidji State. The first time she accessed the Bemidji portal and stated her interest, she was assigned a secure transitional ID (her e-mail address). From that point on, whenever Susan accesses the Bemidji portal, she logs in, is authenticated, and proceeds to her personalized portal site, which arrays the sets of information she selects. Staff in admissions uses these portal connections to engage in personalized "conversations" with potential applicants about Bemidji's programs and services.

Over time, Susan makes her application via the portal, tracks the status of her application (she also receives "push" e-mails when important action dates are approaching – as do her high school counselors). Susan was accepted within 24 hours of the completion of her complete application. After she is accepted, she is progressively given more information options (a single, consolidated university events calendar, personal scheduling, registration, and orientation information) and reshapes and/or personalizes the contents and look of her portal site.

Susan speaks with her roommate, her advisor, and several faculty in the department in which she is interested, prior to coming to campus; the conversations include e-mail, internet telephone and video conference. As an honors student, Susan was able to register for her first year's schedule online (she received a guaranteed schedule contract during the summer). Susan and her parents dealt with arranging housing, fees, technology hookups, and other administrative issues through the portal. Susan's parents were assigned a separate transitional ID (e-mail address of her parents) that enabled them to access their own portal site, with information privileges and configuration appropriate to parents.

Cultivating Potential Students. Phil Tong is an enrollment services specialist at Minnesota State, Moorhead, responsible for cultivating potential undergraduate students. Prospective undergraduate students are carefully identified and contacted by letter and e-mail, with the intent of engaging them through the Moorhead portal, and assigning them transitional IDs. Transfer students are also attracted to create transitional IDs, which opens the door to interactions that enables prospective students to experience the nature of MnSCU programs and services prior to applying/enrolling. The portal contains many self-service functions, which enable students to answer many frequently asked questions, and register and pay for housing, parking, and other student services. Push e-mails remind accepted students of incomplete administrative requirements, outstanding fees, and other requirements.

Mr. Tong also assures that entering students are linked up with the services they require, long before they arrive on campus. Financial aid counseling involves a full portfolio of materials and tutorials on college affordability, cost sharing, financial aid eligibility, debt management, need estimators, and the like. Students requiring remediation and/or special mentoring/attention are directed to programs and other services they need to gain admission and be assured success. As an integral part of admission, students/parents enter financial aid information online. The student can always see the full body of information that exists in her records and the status of administrative processing and/or action on that information or related requests.

Significant Gains in Enrollment, Access, and Success: Universal P-14. The availability of online, seamless learning and support services has enabled MnSCU to significantly increase its enrollments, enhance access by underserved populations, and improve student success. These achievements have occurred despite a continuing shortage in resources from the state. By 2010, headcount enrollments have grown by 20% over 2005 levels, with all of the growth occurring

through online offerings. This growth in online learning has the effect of turning every public and private place into a learning place.

This has enabled MnSCU to create “Universal P-14 Education” for the citizens of Minnesota. Virtually all high school graduates continue their education through some form of postsecondary education. Most of the learning experiences utilize some hybridized combination of learning experiences, combining online learning and learning at a variety of public learning spaces: colleges and university campuses, K-12 schools, health care settings, corporate workplaces, government offices, and other public places.

Jana Helstrom is a second-year nursing student at the Northeast Higher Education District Vermillion Community College in Ely. She participates in the statewide collaborative nursing program which enables her to join an online cohort of nursing students from around the state. She is employed at the local hospital in Ely, which has a learning center for employees; she also visits the NE Vermillion campus, and engages in other learning and simulation experiences from home or other sites.

Seamless Access to Learning Resources and Experiences. Through the enterprise portals, students across MnSCU will have the opportunity to concurrently enroll in courses/sections across the system. This will involve common start dates and access to learning support services online.

Wilfred Benitez is a first-year student at North Hennepin Community College who lives at home. He is taking four courses in his first semester, two of which are taught on-campus at North Hennepin and two of which are online courses that are continuations of online offerings he took for credit while in high school.

Julia Sturgis is a junior in business administration, living in a residence hall at St. Cloud State University. Two of her four courses are hybrid courses, combining classroom instruction at St. Cloud with substantial online work with the students in her learning cohort and her faculty mentor. Her two other courses are fully online, offered by a consortium of MnSCU business schools collaborating on online offerings. Next year, in her senior year, she will be interning at a consulting firm in Chicago, during which time she will take a full course load of online courses through the MnSCU portal. She has already pre-registered for next year’s course schedule.

Prescott Jennings is a deputy controller at Schwann’s and is also participating in an embedded MBA program that has been developed for Schwann’s by a collaborative of MnSCU business schools. The program is a hybridized combination of on-site and on-line learning, with business problems and cases co-developed by MnSCU faculty and Schwann’s leadership.

Marques Dupre is a staff sergeant with the Minnesota National Guard, deployed overseas. He is completing his baccalaureate through Guard Online, offered in collaboration between MnSCU and the Minnesota National Guard.

These examples illustrate the flexibility enabled by the seamless online learning capacity of MnSCU, which builds surplus capacity into the learning grid.

Portalized Access Is Essential to Managing a Student’s Life. Powerful enterprise portal capabilities are available to all MnSCU students, faculty, and staff. For students, they combine five suites of capability:

- On-line student services,
- Teaching and learning,

- Educational and career planning,
- Management decision support, and
- Employee services

Students use their portals to engage in learning, personal development, career and employment planning, and a full range of student support services, as suggested below.

Marcus Cantrell is a senior business administration major, living off-campus in Minneapolis. As he drives onto the Metropolitan State campus, he uses his personal digital assistant to access the portal and check the availability of parking in various student lots, and checks the details of his schedule for today. He has a three-hour class block in the morning and two hours in the afternoon, since he has block scheduled his academic program so that he only comes to campus one day a week. He spends another ten hours a week in online interactivity with other learners and faculty in his courses, and another ten hours in solo work assignments. He also notes that interviewers from Andersen Consulting and Accenture will be on campus next week and requests interviews with them, with copies of his requests being sent to his faculty, as well. Marcus also schedules a 15-minute stop at the student health center to refill his prescription for vitamins and several medications to prevent upper respiratory infections and influenza. He shuts off his PDA going into class because classroom protocols prohibit students from network surfing that is not directly related to the class.

Marcus's PDA uses a free wi-fi network that links a 30-mile radius area into a Twin Cities-based community network. The network serves K-12 schools, MnSCU institutions, health care institutions, and all local services and businesses. Marcus uses the portal tools to manage his academic and personal schedules and to maintain information on his insurance, personal budget, and other personal items.

One-Stop/Self-Service and Personal Problem Solving. The enterprise portal enables more efficient and effective problem solving for students. Over time, students have figured out how to utilize the portal to solve academic, academic support, and administrative problems and how to act preventively to address potential problems before they develop.

Lynn Elias is a rising junior in elementary and secondary education at St Cloud State. Three years ago, she applied to MnSCU through the portal, and since then has used the portal to solve almost all of her student service needs and problems. Obviously, financial aid, registration, perpetual degree audit, and counseling are handled online, and much more rapidly and earlier than was possible under the old systems. Last semester Lynn couldn't figure out how to resolve an issue over some special fees, and had to visit the one-stop service center on campus. She walked in and was finished in five minutes. Candace Peterson, her Process Service Specialist, walked her through a fairly complicated fix and resolved her problem easily, then used that information to correct a glitch in the University's policies that had caused the error in the first place.

Lynn has just received her guaranteed academic schedule for her final two years, including her student teaching assignments. She has also signed a performance contract identifying the competencies required, standards of performance, and timeframes necessary to stay on track for her two-year schedule. She has block-scheduled classes so she comes to campus two days a week. Lynn has been engaged with Career Services in planning her schedule and placements and in preparing for her ultimate employment.

Intensive, Interactive Mentoring/Counseling and Recording of Achievement. The enterprise portal provides authorized access to a robust suite of student services, including degree planning,

monitoring of achievement and success, intrusive advising for students at risk or whose performance requires intervention, and e-portfolio recording of achievement.

Rojean Perry is an academic counselor at Anoka-Ramey Community College who has worked with ICT staff to adapt the portal to create tools that monitor student progress and performance. Students receive continuous feedback through the portal on how they are progressing in comparison with course objects – both when they sign on and through e-mail messages and phone calls when an intervention is necessary. While high-achieving students are given the capacity to block schedule and receive commitments for future schedules, struggling students receive a heavy dose of mentoring and intensive, interactive counseling to increase their level of engagement and performance. Students can work with Ms. Perry or self-help themselves in using portal tools to determine the impact of dropping courses on financial aid, graduation, and other important parameters.

Communities of Practice and Interest. The portal enables students to join existing communities or to find like-minded students and form their own. Student clubs and organizations all have created online communities, with “buddy lists”, “instant messaging,” and access to extensive resources on their organization or area of interest. These items are featured on the portal footprint of participating students.

Also, international students are taken into a special community of practice from their first expression of interest in the university. The portal facilitates their access to placement tests, advising, holding classes for them, securing housing, conducting and making available video interviews, and other special services necessary to facilitate a successful transition to university life. The portal can also provide a trail of communication with and for the international student and with sponsoring organizations overseas.

Course Websites and Communities of Practice. Every course at MnSCU has a Website, which includes a repository of digital reference materials – text, video, graphics, simulations, and interactivity with faculty experts. Students can select from a “buffet” of different versions of a particular course – classroom, online, or blended/hybrid learning.

Many courses have a “community of practice” associated with them, in which all of the faculty, lecturers, adjuncts, advisors, instructional development staff, and knowledge management staff associated with the course collaborate in the development of learning material and experiences and the continuous improvement of the course experience. Students can offer suggestions to the community for improving the course experience.

Personalizing Services and Interactions. Students use the portal to order tickets for events and then to generate maps to the event and identify where their seats are located. Based on past student utilization of campus services and events, students receive e-mails when an upcoming event dovetails with their previously expressed interests (similar to Amazon.com). Staff also uses the portal to facilitate their work and personal activities. Staff in enrollment services has formed a community of practice where they share personal insights and best practices on solving student service issues. Over time, a vast trove of best practices and helpful hints has been assembled and are searchable by staff. Several of the highest performing staff has formal weblogs (blogs) where they daily post their latest insights and observations on effective student service (and self-service).

Scheduling Rooms, Courses and Sections. Bill Williams maintains the official university schedule of academic facilities and courses/sections at Minnesota West Community and Technical College. The portal and automated scheduling tools have made it possible to centrally

schedule general-purpose classrooms and to identify who is responsible for scheduling specialized facilities and what openings are available.

At any point in time, authorized portal users can access facilities availability. This enables substantially greater effectiveness and efficiency in the utilization of campus facilities. The scheduling of courses/sections is also handled through the portal; Mr. Williams manages the inventory of physical (purely classroom-based), blended (combination of classroom and online meeting), and virtual courses/sections. Through the flexible use of blended and virtual courses and arrangements with other distance learning providers to handle overflow demand by learners, the University has been able to commit that every student can get the courses that they need to graduate.

The Residential Experience. Students in the residence halls at Minnesota State University, Mankato are part of a profoundly networked living and learning experience. All of the technologies have converged through the network – TV, phone, radio, and access to text, graphics, simulation, video and other media all occur through the network and the so-called “computing” device. Students in the residence halls manage their lives, both academic and personal, using the capabilities of the enterprise portal and their personal gateway. They participate in clubs, organizations, and other communities of practice using these gateways.

Relationships with Alumni for Life. Sandra Smith-Lee received a baccalaureate from Metropolitan State University two years ago. She continues to maintain her portal services through the University, for which she pays a monthly fee. She uses the portal and its calendaring and scheduling to continue to manage her affairs. She plans to start a master’s degree program in the fall.

And the list goes on. The portal provides a mechanism for fusing and reinventing administrative and academic support processes in virtually all venues.

Possible Stretch Goals for MnSCU Campuses Leveraging Technology to Facilitate Innovation

<u>Activity/Process</u>	<u>Stretch Goal</u>
1. Enable students, faculty, and staff to self-serve problems (portalize access, reinvent processes, simplify and rationalize policies)	In five years, achieve 90-8-2 rule - 90% self-serve - 8% some assistance - 2% substantial assistance
2. On-line application, portalized identity when express interest in MnSCU	In five years, 95% of applications are received online
3. Students take on-line MnSCU courses while still in high school	In five years, 50% of entering freshmen take at least one online MnSCU course while still in high school
4. Advising relationship established while students are still in high school	In five years, 100% of entering MnSCU freshmen receive online advising while still in high school
5. Communicate via e-mail with important people before arriving on campus – roommate, advisor, clubs and activities	In five years, 100% of students engage in online and/or telephone conversations before arriving on campus
6. Enable students to graduate in four years (starting before admission, perpetual degree plans, better access to courses, capacity to pre-commit	In five years, 100% of students follow degree plan and are in good academic standing can graduate in four years
7. Enable students to pre-register for and commit to multi-semester schedules	In five years, students who wish and are in good standing can commit to multiple semester and multiple year schedules
8. Enable students to register for different learning styles/models of courses (physical, virtual, hybrid/blended)	In five years, 100% of all students will be able to select from a palette of course options, made available seamlessly
9. Students will purchase books, supplies and learning materials online	In three years, 100% students will purchase all learning materials online

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| 10. In residence halls, technologies will converge (watch TV, use phone, radio, and computing through the network (Beef up enterprise network and residence halls | In five years, all residence halls will support convergence of technology |
| 11. All versions of each course (physical, virtual, hybrid) will draw on online repositories of text, video, simulation, and interactivity tools. Every course will Have a course Website. | In two years, all courses will use the D2L online platform. In five years, <u>all</u> courses will use online resources and have course Websites. |
| 12. Faculty, staff have access to state-of-the art technology and competencies in its use | In five years, all faculty and staff involved in learning will have appropriate technology and be skilled in its use to the standards of 21st century higher education |
| 13. Communities of practice for each course will engage faculty, lecturers, adjuncts, and instructional developers | In three years, pilot projects will demonstrate community of practice for courses. In five years, 50% of courses will have them. In five years, all disciplines will offer community-of-practice-based learning to students |
| 14. Communities of practice for administrative and academic support staff will enable innovative solutions, professional development, and value enhancement | In two years, pilot projects for communities of practice in enrollment services and financial services. In five years, all administrative and academic support units will use a CoP. |
| 15. Personal websites for faculty will showcase professional interests and work in progress | In two years pilot projects. In five all faculty will have personal Websites |
| 16. Every faculty and staff member will have access to online development in use of technology. | In two years have initial online training through outside vendor. In five years, every faculty and staff will have access to extensive online development experiences. |
| 17. Online learning/CoP approaches will dramatically reduce marginal cost of learning, thus enabling substantial enrollment growth | In five years, unduplicated head-count enrollment of MnSCU will grow from 369,000 in 2005 to 410,000 in 2010. |

18. MnSCU will achieve Universal p-14.

By 2010, virtually all high school graduates in Minnesota will attend some form of postsecondary training/learning.

19. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programs will be enhanced.

By 2010, enrollments in STEM Programs will increase 15% from 2005.