MnSCU’s Centers of Excellence promote connectivity between Minnesota industry and the state’s colleges and universities. Center programs help students with career exploration, learn on the latest technologies, and participate in work-based experiences. Working with faculty and partner organizations, the Centers support teaching and learning, curriculum development and help elevate industry’s need for innovation in educational programs. Centers support the development of talented and educated individuals for Minnesota’s leading industries in healthcare, information technology, manufacturing and engineering, agriculture, energy, and transportation.
BACKGROUND

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities’ Centers of Excellence were created in 2005 as an initiative of the Governor and enacted by the legislature per Minnesota Session Law 2005, Chapter 107, Article 2, Section 31, M.S.136F.31 with initial funding of $5 million per year for four years.

Centers of Excellence champion and orchestrate targeted talent development efforts to respond to specific employer needs within strategic industry sectors of the Minnesota economy.

Strategic Objectives

1. Expand career awareness and interest among middle and high school students, with special emphasis on diverse populations
2. Increase enrollment in educational programs that prepare students for targeted careers
3. Enhance alignment of curriculum and programs with workplace expectations and requirements
4. Improve Minnesota employers’ access to future talent

Strategies

1. Build partnerships and alliances with industry employers, associations and like-minded organizations to improve coordination of efforts and leverage resources
2. Facilitate collective action among MnSCU faculty and staff to enhance the scale and effectiveness of addressing workforce and education needs
3. Provide opportunities for students, educators and employers to build relationships with one another to increase communication, understanding and collaboration
4. Serve as an advocate and convener for industry stakeholders to explore new ideas, address concerns and promote innovative programs

Common or typical approaches

Expanding career awareness, interest and readiness

- “Career camps” sponsored in conjunction with industry partners that engage students in active learning, with expert faculty and practicing professionals
Secondary school curricular support to introduce students through active learning strategies to the nature of work in a particular field
Connecting students with employers and faculty through events and activities

MnSCU collaboration and responsiveness

Convene faculty and other stakeholders to create new curricula (courses and programs) that address specific workplace talent needs
Lead collaboration on grants to help fund new programs
Support research and data gathering on trends that address the needs of Minnesotans

The centers and their websites are:

AdvanceIT Minnesota www.advanceitmn.org
AgCentric www.agcentric.org
HealthForce Minnesota www.healthforceminnesota.org
Mn Center for Engineering and Manufacturing http://cset.mnsu.edu/mnceme/
Minnesota Energy Center www.minnesotaenergycareers.com
Minnesota Transportation Center www.minntran.org
Southern Minnesota Center of Agriculture www.centerofagriculture.org
360 Manufacturing and Applied Engineering www.360mn.org
ATE Regional Center of Excellence