



Minnesota
STATE COLLEGES
& UNIVERSITIES

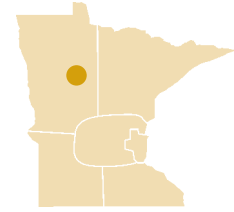
INSTITUTION	PROJECT/REQUEST	LOCATION
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Bemidji State University

Bemidji

Central Asian Institute

\$985,000



Project at a Glance

- Implement systemwide partnership programs with higher education institutions in Turkey to provide for improved education delivery, address economic development issues and provide institutional strengthening initiatives
- Identify neighboring Central Asian countries that are interested in partnerships to improve higher education and begin building relationships with the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities for mutual program opportunities
- Increase the cultural competency of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to address Central Asian economic and culture issues in curriculum and to welcome students from Central Asia



Bemidji State University and Turkish higher education officials are working together to increase opportunities for educational partnership projects in Turkey and other Central Asian countries in a project coordinated by David Kingsbury, at right, executive director of the University Center for Research and Innovation.

Project Description

The emerging Central Asian Institute has been successful in building a solid, mutually beneficial relationship between Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and the Ankara University System of 13 vocational and technical schools. Over the past four years, Bemidji State University and Turkish higher education officials have explored methods to address their intense need for increased higher education options. The Turkish higher education system can accommodate no more

than 10 percent of eligible applicants each year.

Four Bemidji State University administrators traveled to Turkey in fall 2004 and the university hosted a delegation of 10 Turkish higher education administrators in Minnesota in June 2005. The university hosted a conference for interested Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to build relationships and map out future statewide partnership opportunities with Ankara and other Central Asian higher education institutions.

The next phase of development for the Central Asian Institute is threefold:

- Support the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities cooperative projects with Turkish higher education officials that were identified in the first phase of the project
- Work with Turkey and leverage its diplomatic relationships to identify neighboring Central Asian countries with interest in expanding their higher education partnerships with American institutions

- Develop implementation plans for program partnerships between Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and new Central Asian higher education partners

Examples of Projects with Ankara:

- South Central Technical College - Agriculture business and production programs
- St. Cloud State University - Articulation and English as a Second Language

- Metropolitan State University - Degree programs
- Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College - Indigenous program development
- Bemidji State University - Office of Central Asian Institute coordination
- “We advocate more general cooperation as well: joint ventures between American universities in the U.S. and universities in the Arab and Muslim world with collaboration in curricula, teaching methods, and testing. Partnerships between American universities and regional universities can help both sides and promote shared values...promote critical thinking on key issues and broader economic, social, and political opportunities for the region...” (p. 34)

U.S. Policy in Central Asia

In 2003, the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations commissioned a report of the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World entitled “Changing Minds Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for the U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab & Muslim world.” Within this report are a number of recommendations that promote building strong partnerships with Muslim countries to address U.S. foreign policy goals and to strengthen the capacities of those countries to pursue the values of democracy.

Recommendations include:

- “...American policy toward the Arab and Muslim world...(must include) free, open, representative, and tolerant political systems...education systems that prepare students to participate constructively in civil society and the global marketplace...” (p.23)
- “...the best way to get our message across is often directly to the people - rather than through formal diplomatic channels.” (p. 15)

Lead Institution:

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