

[View this email in your browser](#)



— LEADERSHIP LETTER —

From the Chancellor

I hope this finds you well during this fabulous March weather.

Every several years, we ask employees to complete the Employee Engagement (E2) Survey providing feedback regarding your employment experience at UMN Crookston – what is working well and what needs to be improved. We take what you tell us to heart and try to determine ways to improve the work environment. You are the key to the success of our students and our university.

While the COVID pandemic has disrupted some of our responses and plans, I believe we have made progress in several key areas. As we look ahead to Campus Assembly on March 18, I want to share some highlights and invite you to think about how we can continue to improve, especially related to five themes that emerged from the 2019 E2 survey.

Communication

You may have noticed this e-update comes out weekly. When I arrived in 2017, it was sent once a month and we relied heavily on daily email exchange to communicate. Many of you shared that receiving upward of 100 emails a day was beyond manageable. Quite frankly, I think it was disrespectful of your time to have to glean through all of that. With the Campus Weekly e-update we are trying to provide information, and at times have some fun in our circumstances, especially during COVID. While we continue to evolve our communications, we hope you will begin to see it as the primary way we share with each other about what is going on. This transition has been rough. We've had personnel changes of people producing it and it is an evolution of what it "should be," and "not be." It certainly is not a final product but like all we do – a work in progress with the goal of getting better. Suggestions are always welcomed. Michelle Christopherson is leading this effort, so please reach out to her if you have ideas, thoughts, or ways to which this communication can be improved. For up-to-date details about what is going on daily, be sure to check out the [Today Page](#) or the [Events Page](#).

Our various leadership teams meet regularly and communicate to your supervisors what is going on. Like all good communications, it is a two-way street—we share—you share.

Additionally, when planning events or decisions that affect others, we encourage you to always remember the impact on your colleagues. Many of you have heard me say, "who else needs to be in the room to make this decision or needs to know about it." None of us like decisions that affect us and we don't know about in a timely manner.

Now more than ever, communication is critical. Zoom meetings, phone calls, and Google Hangouts continue to be important. I have maintained virtual meetings with faculty and staff to provide a way to hear what is on your mind, to provide an avenue of effective communication, and a chance to listen and hear you. I welcome your thoughts and comments; let me know if you wish to schedule some time to chat.

Efficiency

The 2019 E2 Survey indicated there was a desire for greater efficiency in the workplace. One of the most recent ways we are trying to be more effective and efficient is our work in Admissions. The work we've begun with UMN Morris is just one instance of our efficiency efforts.

For faculty, we are streamlining A&P forms and the review processes to allow probationary faculty to use their P&T materials to avoid duplicating work. Faculty on the curriculum committee have taken a number of steps to streamline the curriculum review process over the past year. While we will need to make adjustments, we continue to implement these changes as they allow us to make curricular changes more quickly and with less paperwork.

Professional Development

Training and development opportunities for employees was another aspect of the E2 survey we are addressing. Over the last several years, we've made a lot of improvements (in my opinion) on ensuring people have the skills they need to do their job. For instance, online training for faculty and specialized training on how various groups need to deal with COVID-19 were developed and adapted to try to meet your needs. The professional development days were restructured with the help of committees and individuals to provide assistance in aiding you to be successful in fulfilling your role. You've probably noticed we've changed the Professional Development Day format to be more specific to different groups of employees and instituted Leadership Academies for those of you who want to receive additional support in your personal journey.

Resources and Work-Life Balance

Two final themes included the need for more resources and support in attaining better work-life balance. While resources are terribly tight, we have navigated COVID without extensive layoffs. Other universities and colleges across the U.S. have not been so fortunate. I recently read an article about gratitude. The author said many people he supervised were complaining about working from home. In the article, the author asked his team to reflect on their statement and then softly said, "you have work and you have a home." Gratitude not for what we don't have—but do have.

We've had a few significant philanthropic gifts lately from our beloved alumni and friends. From all accounts at this time, it looks like the state budget is in better shape than anticipated. While we don't know the outcome, it is a good beginning.

Our proactive and comprehensive human resources planning has enabled us to replace more positions following recent retirements than many of our peers around the system. Many of you have had to step up to assume new duties in areas where we have not replaced positions following departures. I thank you for your extreme effort and dedication.

We are currently as lean as I think we can be with the number of students we have. We've laid a great foundation for intentional growth and making sure what we add moving forward aligns with the needs of new generations of Golden Eagles.

While this isn't an exhaustive list, these are a few things which we've implemented, based on what you've told us. While there is much more work to be done, all of us working together can have a better workplace.

Until next week,



International Dinner Series - virtual

Mark your calendars for March 15, 22, and 29 and join the virtual 2021 International Dinner Series reimagined. This will be a free but engaging experience featuring meals from Ukraine, France, and China. [Register today](#) to receive weekly recipes to pick up supplies at the grocery store and make these wonderful meals in your home. Each Monday, the [2021 Dinner Series](#) will begin at 6 p.m. via Zoom.

Conversations About Women Over Coffee

What is intersectionality and why should we care? Celebrate Women's History Month with us by having conversations about women over coffee on March 16 from 12:30-1:30 p.m. Join virtually with your university login information: <https://umn.zoom.us/j/9705250715> or visit the [Events Calendar](#) for more information.



Virtual Career Fair

Career Force Virtual Job Fair

Tuesday, March 23, from 10-11 a.m. CST, featuring top area employers in Northwest Minnesota. This is a live event (in Microsoft Teams) in which employers will provide information on local job openings and their hiring process. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions on the spot as employers will provide the option to meet virtually (in breakout rooms) immediately following the event. For more information see the [Events Page](#), March 23.

Chauvin Trial—Community Resources

On Monday, many Minnesotans and others across the country will turn their attention to downtown Minneapolis, where jury selection will begin in the trial of former Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin. We know the coming weeks may be deeply challenging, and we recognize the impacts and stress for many across our community, particularly for Black, Indigenous, and people of color. We have support available, including the following mental health resources for all students, faculty, and staff:

- UMN [Crookston Counseling Services](#)
- [Mental health resources](#) for faculty and staff systemwide

CLICK FOR ALL EVENTS

CAMPUS UPDATES

Student Affairs and Community Engagement

Dean of Student Engagement, Savala DeVoge, Ph.D.

Nearly a year ago, I stepped foot in Minnesota for the first time. I was here to interview and my partner was with me so he could watch the NAIA national basketball championships (my previous institution was playing and it was their year to win it). Enter COVID and that changed the national landscape - and cancelled the NAIA championship along with NCAA events, classes, and life in general. We've asked a lot of you this year - and you've delivered and done well. As we go into the last couple of months of spring, please remember to wear your face covering indoors and when you can't physically distance outdoors. Keep that six-foot wingspan from others and wash your hands. St. Patrick's Day and other fun holidays are coming up and I urge you to continue to Protect the Nest by keeping yourself and those around you healthy. Hope springs eternal - and this spring hope is showing up in the form of vaccines becoming more available. My hope is we can all finish strong and come back to a healthy campus in the fall.

Veden Center for Rural Economic Development

James Leiman, director, Veden Center for Rural Economic Development has accepted North Dakota Governor Burgum's offer to serve as North Dakota's next Commerce Commissioner. Leiman will continue to serve the Veden Center in a part-time capacity through June and will phase to one-third time or less.

Search Committee Updates

- Business, Arts, and Education Division Head - interviewing semi-finalists
- Healthcare Management - hired, to be announced
- Equine Science (tenure-track) - finalists interviewed
- Marketing (tenure-track) - interviewing semi-finalists
- Math (P&A lecturer) - finalists invited for interviews
- Director of Student Success - screening applicants
- Disability Resources Center Director - accepting applications
- Career Services Coordinator - accepting applications
- Res Life Area Coordinator/Multicultural Education Specialist - working to get this posted (Savala, you could update the title)
- HR Director –screening applications
- Senior Maintenance Electrician - awaiting Central HR approval to move forward
- Senior Operating Engineer, Heating Plant - awaiting Central HR approval to move forward
- Building and Grounds Worker (2) 9-month

Farewell

Moussa (Papou) Maiga, Office of Admissions - March 12

Welcome

Grant Tuseth, food service worker, Sodexo
Jeanie Olson, from 9 month to 12 month, Building & Grounds

Enrollment Management

Admissions and animal science faculty and students will be hosting a group of prospective students for Animal Science Exploration Day on Friday March 12. This event provides prospective students the chance to get an in depth look at what it is like to be an animal science student at UMN Crookston through hands-on labs, meetings with faculty, and hearing our current students' stories.

Career Counseling

Let's Talk is an informal virtual drop-in consultation for UMN Crookston students. Speak with an advanced peer health educator who can listen to specific problems, provide support, help explore solutions, and share information about resources. For more information see the [Events Page](#) or [Let's Talk](#).

Student Success Center

Midterm grades are now available for all 1000 and 2000 level courses. If you are unsatisfied with any of your midterm grades, please reach out for help. In addition to improving your own study habits, visit with your instructors during office hours and create informal study groups.

Tutoring

Tutoring is available for almost every 1000 and 2000 level class along with the [Writing Center](#) to help with writing assignments or projects. There is also science/math drop-in tutoring with Kelsey Torgerson held M-F 3:30-4:30 p.m. CT (M&F via Zoom, TuWTh in-person or via Zoom). Students in Intro Chem, Intro Physics, or Chem Principles II can email Kelsey (kwatkins@crk.umn.edu) ahead of time for the Zoom link.

Extending the Classroom weekly study groups are available Sunday through Wednesday. Take a look at the [Events Page](#) for more information.

Accolades

The equine arena in the University Teaching and Outreach Center (UTOC) will be named the Charles H. Casey Equine Arena in honor of University of Minnesota Regent and Chancellor Emeritus Charles H. Casey. The All-University Honors Committee met and concluded in favor of the nomination by UMN President Emeritus Robert Bruininks, UMN Crookston Chancellor Emeritus Donald Sargeant, Chancellor Mary Holz-Clause, retired Assistant to the Chancellor Judith Neppel, retired University of Minnesota Extension, NW Minnesota Regional Director, Deb Zak and UMN Crookston Athletic Director Stephanie Helgeson. This recommendation was approved by the UMN Board of Regents last month.

A celebration in Chancellor Emeritus Casey's honor will be held later this summer on the Crookston campus. Read more about Casey's nomination and recognition [here](#).

Graeme Cherry, 2019 graduate, golf turf and former baseball pitcher, will start his work on his master's degree from Texas A & M in May. Cherry will be in the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences and his graduate degree will be in plant and environmental soil science with an emphasis in turfgrass science.

Athletics

The University of Minnesota Crookston baseball team started out their 2021 season with a 2-0 record with a 23-6 win over Bemidji State University and a 10-9 victory over St. Cloud State University. The 2-0 start is the first for the Golden Eagles since the 2012 season. UMN Crookston's 23 runs on Saturday is the most the program has scored since tallying 25 runs against Clearwater Christian College in 2015.

The Golden Eagles were led by three home runs on the weekend from Brock Reller (R-Jr., OF, Grand Forks, N.D.). Bobby Chu (R-Sr., C, Redwood City, Calif.) leads the Golden Eagles with a .750 batting average, while Landyn Swenson (R-Sr., OF, Devils Lake, N.D.) is hitting .444 with one home run and five RBIs. In addition, T.J. Hokanson (R-Jr., 3B, Chanhassen, Minn.) and Trey Larimer (R-Fr., C/OF, Thompson, N.D.) hit their first career home runs.

On the mound, the Golden Eagles are led by Jake Dykhoff (Jr., RHP, Wadena, Minn.), who went six innings and allowed no runs with nine strikeouts and two walks. Jayden Grover (R-Sr., RHP, Cooperstown, N.D.) had a quality start Saturday, tossing 4.2 innings with two earned runs allowed and six strikeouts.

UMN Crookston has two more games in Fort Scott, Kan., before returning north to open NSIC play March 20 at Winona State University.

The University of Minnesota Crookston hunt seat equestrian team opened up the 2021 season with two impressive showings at North Dakota State University Saturday, March 6 and Sunday, March 7. The Golden Eagles brought home high point team honors in both shows. The Golden Eagles were led by Rachel Johnson (Sr., Stillwater, Minn.) earning High Point Rider honors Saturday, followed by her teammate Kendra Putzke (Fr., Esko, Minn.) taking home Reserve High Point Rider accolades. Sunday, Minnesota Crookston looked to Katie Buttolph (Jr., Yankton, S.D.) with High Point Rider honors.

Minnesota Crookston hosts a pair of home shows Friday, April 9 and Saturday, April 10 at the newly named Charles H. Casey Equine Arena at the University Teaching and Outreach Center.

The UMN Crookston hockey team wraps up their first season back on the ice Friday, March 12 at 7 p.m. and Saturday, March 13 at 3 p.m. against the University of Jamestown. The Golden Eagles are 4-7 under Head Coach Steve Johnson. They are led by Casey Kallock (Jr., East Grand Forks, Minn.) with six goals and 10 assists. Cam Olstad (So., Grand Forks, N.D.) comes into the weekend with 10 goals and four assists. In net, Jake Sumner (Fr., Alta Loma, Calif.) has a 4.72 goals against average with 319 saves on the season.

The Golden Eagles are currently ranked No. 20 in the ACHA Division II poll in the latest rankings released March 4. UMN Crookston played Jamestown, ranked 10th nationally, to open the season January 9 and 10. The Golden Eagles split with the Jimmies, including a 5-3 win to open their 2021 slate.

The UMN Crookston softball team played exhibitions Sunday, March 7 at Concordia Moorhead. Minnesota Crookston won 4-2 in the first game and fell 1-0 in the second game. Katie Humhej picked up the exhibition win, while Kamryn Frisk went 2-of-2 with one RBI and a run scored. The Golden Eagles return to regular-season action as they open NSIC play March 17 with a doubleheader at Minnesota State University Moorhead.

HIGHLIGHTS

Alumni

Alison Pokrzywinski

Small class sizes, personal professors, great technology, updated facilities, specialized clubs to join for whatever you are interested in, etc., all in a great community perfectly located in Northwest Minnesota.

"I wanted to be a name and not a number. I chose UMC because it was a small school with a good agricultural program," says 2006 alum Alison (Stone) Pokrzywinski. Alison is employed by Nuseed Americas as the North American product manager for sunflowers and canola. UMN Crookston was far enough away from home that she didn't want to go home every weekend but close enough she could drive home if needed.

Majoring in ag business with a minor in agronomy was the right path for Pokrzywinski. Immediately after graduation, she took a job as a sales agronomist with CHS Northern Plains in Eureka, S.D. After helping growers with their corn, soybeans, and wheat recommendations for five years, she realized she had a passion for working with sunflowers and wanted to help provide solutions for that crop specifically. It was then she took a graduate research assistantship position with the USDA-ARS Sunflower Unit in Fargo,

N.D., and received her master's degree in plant breeding at North Dakota State University (NDSU).

Being a part of the University of Minnesota system was an important part of her decision making process to attend UMN Crookston. "It was a small school that had all the resources of a large University campus," she says.

It's hard to speculate, but I'd like to credit my (campus) participation to Dr. Lyle Westrom," says Pokrzywinski. She was involved in study abroad, NACTA, the Agronomy Club, Zeta of Clovia sorority, Ag Industries Club, Student Orientation Staff, and of course, a valuable internship. Pokrzywinski interned at CHS in rural Wisconsin as a certified energy specialist (CES) and worked in the energy division of a multi-location cooperative selling propane, fuel, and lubricates to rural customers and farmers. She worked with current customers and did a fair amount of cold calling to generate new business. "The sales experience that I gathered from this position and the connections I made helped prepare me for my first job with CHS," Pokrzywinski said.

Pokrzywinski met her husband, Jared, at UMN Crookston. The couple reside in Devils Lake, N.D., and have two children.

Additional feature:

https://targetwalleye.com/shout-out-to-fishing-moms-walleye-hornets-are-real-what-tony-roach-is-throwing/?fbclid=IwAR0FCgUioEoNhl5e4nkfYJ_1Kso6QdFvPepXJ6azJcfGOLzx496QjjJQCM

