

News Release

Trading in Golden State for the Golden Eagles

By Elizabeth Tollefson on Wednesday, January 13, 2016

Written by Senior Rikki Roscoe, communications assistant in University Relations

Nathan Cole, a senior marketing major from Aliso Viejo, Calif., knew he would be leaving his comfort zone when he committed to playing football at the University of Minnesota Crookston. However, writing his signature on the National Letter of Intent meant a whole lot more than accepting a scholarship.

Cole's signature was also a commitment to leaving behind everything he knew in attempt to create a life in a world unlike what he was used to. "I knew it was going to be a unique experience," Cole reflects. "I was forced to submerge myself into the Crookston community without having the crutch of going home very often."



The Orange County native had never spent time in Minnesota prior to his recruitment but held the preconceived ideas about the Minnesotan accent and the bitter cold. To his amusement, he found both of these ideas to be true. "I can deal with the cold for four years, but I'm not used to having to spend so much time inside." He misses his favorite outdoor activities such as golfing and going to the beach, but they are all things that he can live without. "What I really miss from back home is my family," Cole admits. "My whole family, including my extended relatives, live within an hour of my house and missing out on family events can be hard."

Luckily, Cole has been able to create a family of his own in Crookston, Minn. When he first arrived on campus, it was upperclassman, Jeff Pryor, who embraced him. Pryor, a 2014 graduate, wanted to make Cole and the other out-of-state freshman feel at home and went out of his way to invite them to activities. "He gave us no choice but to get involved and bond with the upperclassman on the football team," says Cole. "Jeff had a lot of connections and it meant a lot to become such great friends with someone who could make us feel like we belonged with the community." The family that Cole was able to create in Crookston has made a world of difference in his college experience. "I may have come to the University of Minnesota Crookston for the scholarship and for the opportunity to play quarterback, but I stayed because of the relationships I created."

Cole will be spending his first summer in Minnesota completing an internship with PRATT Industries, Inc., in Minneapolis. Pratt is America's 5th largest corrugated packaging company and is the world's largest, privately-held 100% recycled paper and packaging company. Cole will be learning about the company and how the sales staff operates. The internship is a training position that could turn into a job opportunity.



Cole aspires to work in the sales field in the future, following in his father's footsteps who is a very successful sales representative for Viskase, Inc., a meat packaging company. "Being around my dad's lifestyle is what cultivated my interest in sales," Cole says. "I would love to have the opportunity to travel around and meet people rather than sit behind a desk."

After looking back over the past three years, Cole reflects that the enormous decision to trade in the Golden State for the land of 10,000 lakes turned out to be the best decision he could have made. "I would encourage anyone to leave their comfort zone when picking a college because it forces you to mature and grow into an adult."

The University of Minnesota Crookston now delivers 34 bachelor's degree programs, 22 minors, and 39 areas of emphasis on campus as well as 14 degree programs entirely online. These degrees are offered in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of 1,800 undergraduates from more than 20 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.

In the photos, at top, right, Nathan Cole plays quarterback for the University of Minnesota Golden Eagles.

In photo, bottom, left, Rachel Lundbohm, left, with Nathan Cole. Lundbohm is Cole's advisor in the Business Department.

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