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———— LEADERSHIP LETTER ————

From the Chancellor

Imagine flying for 30 plus hours, arriving tired and jet-lagged in your new “home.” Being in a place where you don’t understand what people are saying very well, food tastes different, money is funny shaped, smells are unfamiliar, and even basic things like manipulating how to get a drink of water is something you have to figure out; let alone how to flush the toilet or where and how to do

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going on in the class. Many of our international students have had such an experience but our international team Sok Leng Tan, Rae French, and you help make our student's transition as smooth as possible.

While some students "find," us, many have come to us through the years with relationships we've developed with universities. Sok Leng Tan (bio below) has worked extensively since arriving to develop and hone these partnerships. We currently have Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and various agreements and/or articulation agreements in place. Many of these relationships have been developed within the past year, so we will slowly begin to see students arrive on campus, attend summer camps, etc.

- Bangladesh: United International University
- China: Lanzhou Jiaotong University, Xi'an Peihua University, Xinquan High School
- Jordan: Applied Science Private University
- Korea: Dankook University
- Ukraine: Wisconsin International University in Ukraine
- Viet Nam: University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology, Nguyen Tat Thanh University

Sok Leng and Rae French (bio below) work closely with Admissions to develop the admission criteria and identify target areas for recruitment, both locally and internationally. Sok Leng reaches out to high schools in the region and Canada that enroll international students and works with agents to recruit high school students. In addition, she works with overseas universities to develop credit and non-credit programs to bring students to our campus and maintain existing relations. Rae works in tandem with the Admissions processing team. She is the critical first point of contact for all potential international students and utilizes her institutional knowledge and vast experience working with international students to assess their fit to our campus, connects them to faculty where appropriate, guides them through the admissions process, and gives them the necessary information for immigration paperwork. Both Sok Leng and Rae provide advising to meet immigration policies and work with graduating students interested in staying in the U.S. for internships. They have a student team who help to acclimatize new international students and plan bi-weekly thematic activities for all international students. This has been an important support structure for our on-campus students during the pandemic.

Rae French summed up the relationship with our students best when she said, "Some people may wonder why families would want to send their children halfway across the world to this small school in northwest Minnesota. Well the answer is simple, we are a small school rich in resources and experience for international students. UMN Crookston is a safe haven for students whose families are worried about their wellbeing. This is a small campus with so much to offer from the time they get here until they leave. We guide them, celebrate with them, and most importantly, give them a robust education filled with opportunity. Students who come here from a distance come because they have heard about our small class sizes, the personal attention, and that they are getting a University of Minnesota degree. In many cases, students come because their family members came and loved their experience. The Office of International Programs helps cultivate these opportunities for international students from the time they visit until they graduate. Sok Leng is currently working with several schools throughout the world to tell them about this hidden gem. She has

So Who are Sok Leng and Rae?

Sok Leng Tan joined UMN Crookston in March 2020 as the Director of Global Programs and International Students Services. Prior to her appointment in Minnesota, she set up the first IELTS testing center in Wisconsin at the University of Wisconsin Madison in 2013 that served numerous college-bound international students in the state. She also served as Program Manager for Global Programs at Iowa State University where she managed several dual degree programs and non-credit programs in agriculture and training workshops for international government officials and university faculty. At Utah State University, she started as an Instructional Designer in 2003 assisting faculty to develop online courses and then transitioned to international education. She oversaw a robust transnational degree program delivered in three countries. Sok Leng received a bachelor of arts degree in English and fine arts in printmaking from the University of Calgary (she named her first born after a hockey player), a master of second language teaching and a master of science in instructional design from Utah State University. She and her husband, Eddie Loo, live in Crookston and have three adult children.

Rae French is not a stranger to most of you. She has been working at UMN Crookston for more than 25 years with international students and students who participate in learning abroad programs. Her love for exploration and helping others started from her gap year spent in Europe when she joined a group called Up With People along with 106 other volunteers. Her creativity, energy, and enthusiasm is evident in the numerous programs she plans for our international students. Even during COVID, Rae is never stumped for ideas and continues to host safe events for students on campus. Rae holds a bachelor of arts in communication and theater from Minnesota State University Moorhead, and received her master's degree in education from UMN Duluth.

How Important are International Students to our Campus?

Very. Our international students provide diversity of thought, ideas, enrollment, and culture to our campus. They are enriching our experience. Anyone who has attended the International Dinners or who has had the experience of learning from our international students can attest to the gifts our global students bring. While COVID-19 has provided numerous challenges for all of us, it has had a profound impact on students wishing to come to the U.S. to study. *

- In 2020, the United States saw an enrollment decline of 43% in international students.
- The number of international students has declined four years in a row
- Overall in the U.S., international students still represent 5.5 percent of all students in the U.S.
- International students DO NOT receive any federal or state aid
- International students contributed \$44 billion to the U.S. economy in 2019.

Source: "International Student Enrollment Decline," p.5 Trusteeship, Jan-Feb 2021.

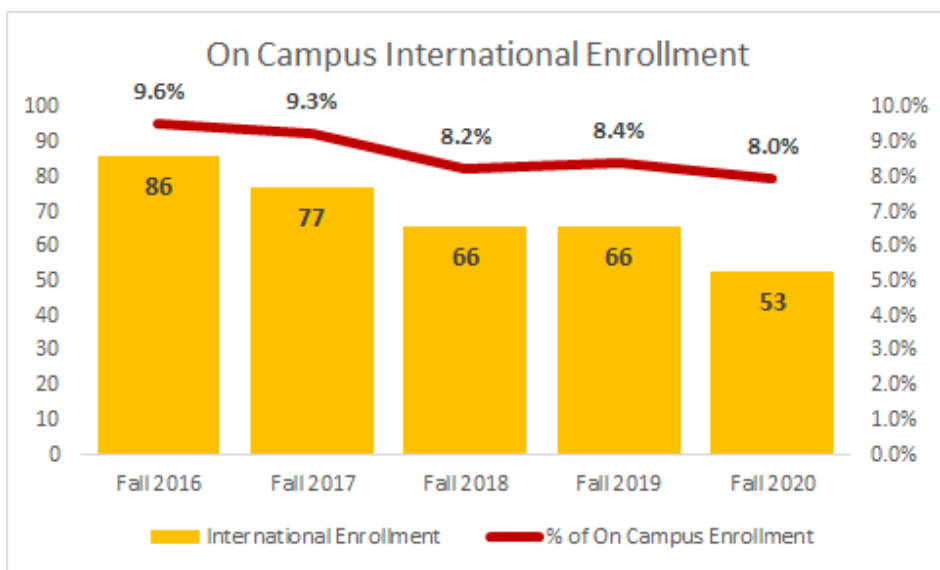
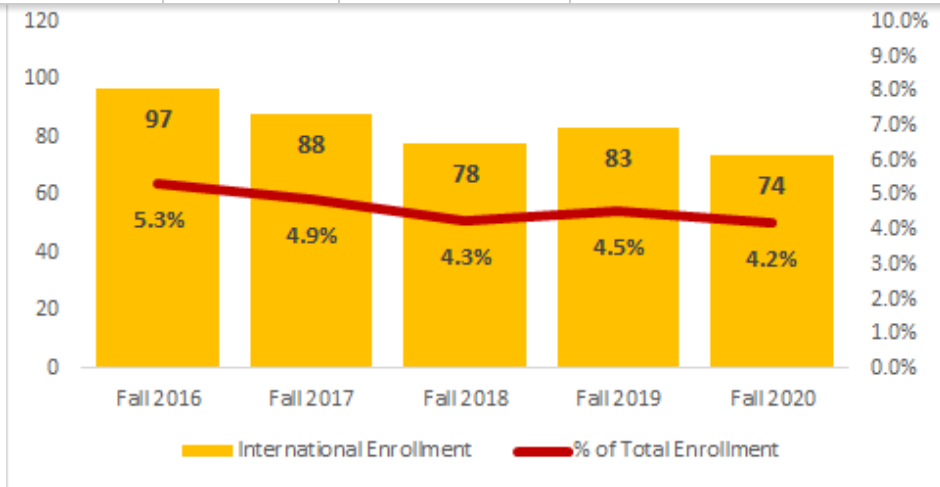
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International Point of Pride:

Approximately 7.8% of on-campus undergrads at UMTC are international students; for us, it is 8.0%, so we edged them out to be #1 in the UMN system.

Collaborations with Morris:

Together, UMN Morris Chancellor Michelle Behr and I have identified opportunities for collaboration within both System campuses. These efforts will preserve faculty and staff expertise while leveraging skills, continue to highlight the distinctiveness of each campus, and focus on human capital, students, faculty, and staff. I am pleased to announce our first joint hire is in the Registrar's Office. Beth Zaske has taken the shared Morris/Crookston Academic Records Specialist position. Other exciting partnerships are highlighted [here](#).

Best, Chancellor Mary



[Subscribe](#)[Share ▼](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)[R](#)**Western Minnesota Regional Science Fair**

Faculty, staff, and students, consider being a judge for this virtual event. Judging will occur in two formats, judging of video presentations and live interviews with students. Judging of videos will occur the week of February 15 and can be done at your leisure (must finish by February 19). Sign up to judge here: <https://forms.gle/zzEiGrQFky7ACLv69>

University of Minnesota Virtual Job and Internship Fair

Explore unique job and internship opportunities in a variety of industries by connecting with 300+ employers. Hosted on GoldPASS powered by Handshake

Friday, February 26 from 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. <https://jobfair.umn.edu/>

Multicultural Education Presents: Conversations about Race over Coffee

Dismantling Racism-Where do we go from here, and how can we work together as allies for a better future? Wednesday, February 17, from 12-1 p.m. Zoom ID: 910 2803 9693 Passcode: QhyG49

Zoom link: <https://umn.edu.us/j/91028039693?pwd+ck9iL0VLUzJaUVZ6QQnhvR1hHY3dPQTT09>

**Save the Date! Support the U Day is March 4**

Join U of M supporters around the state as we (virtually) raise our voices to support the University of Minnesota. Please mark your calendars for the University of Minnesota's first virtual Support the U Day event on March 4. Support the U Day is an opportunity for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and others around Minnesota to engage with their elected state officials and advance the University's state legislative request. Although we can't be together this year under the state capitol dome, that doesn't mean we can't still make our voices heard.

Look for more information in the coming weeks about the March 4 event, and be sure to invite your friends, family members, and others to [sign up as a UMN Advocate](#).

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[CAMPUS UPDATES](#)

Financial Aid

Specialty Scholarship deadline, May 1

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RETURNING STUDENT SPECIALTY SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION



What are Specialty Scholarships?

The University of Minnesota Crookston is grateful to the many alumni and donors who contribute and make scholarships available to our enrolled students. "Specialty Scholarships" are awarded to students based on a specific set of criteria that may include only one or several of the following: academic achievement, extracurricular activities, community involvement, leadership, service, financial need and legacy.

Recipients are selected by various scholarship committees and students are notified via email or letter in advance of the academic year start.

Why should I apply?

There's over 200 scholarships awarded!

**Apply by
May 1st, 2021**

<https://z.umn.edu/specialtyscholarships>

Technology Support Services

Zoom frequently updates their client for a variety of reasons. It is important to check for updates before joining/starting meetings as may be new features available. Here are easy instructions to follow: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362233-Upgrade-update-to-the-latest-version>

If you have questions, contact the UMC Computer Help Desk, umchelp@crk.umn.edu or (218) 281-8000.

Athletics Update

UMN Crookston softball picked up their first win of the season Saturday, February 13 with a commanding 11-0 win over Viterbo University. The Golden Eagles were led by Katie Humhej, who threw the first perfect game in school history. Humhej had eight strikeouts in the shutout win. Cassie Query led the team with four RBIs, while Hailey Hatfield had a home run. UMN Crookston is currently 1-5 after their first week of play. The Golden Eagles play Northern State University and Bemidji State University at the Minot Dome Invitational Saturday, February 20.

The Golden Eagle western equestrian team competed in their first meet of the season, as they traveled to University of Tennessee at Martin for an NCEA match. UMN Crookston was led by Alyssa Evavold, who won her point in horsemanship. The Golden Eagles will host a home show at UTOC Saturday, February 20 at 1 p.m., and Sunday, February 21 at 10:30 a.m.

Minnesota Crookston men's basketball made a late comeback on Friday against St. Cloud State University, cutting the lead to two before falling 74-70. Leonard Dixon tallied 21 points, while Ibu Jassej-Demba notched 14 points. The Golden Eagles led 38-33 over the Huskies Saturday, but fell 78-59. Josh Dilling led UMN Crookston with 18 points. Jassej-Demba played his final home games at Gary Senske Court at Lysaker Gymnasium Friday and Saturday. UMN Crookston men's basketball wraps up the 2020-21 season on the road at Bemidji State University Friday, February 19 at 6 p.m., and Saturday, February 20 at 3:30 p.m.

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16 points from Kylie Post. Minnesota Crookston wraps up the 2020-21 season Friday, February 19 and Saturday, February 20 at home against Bemidji State University at 5:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. respectively. The games will be the final home games in the careers of Abby Guidinger, Ashley Freund, and Jennifer Lax.

The UMN Crookston hockey team fell 7-3 and 7-3 in games Friday and Saturday at Williston State College in Williston, N.D. The Golden Eagles were tied 3-3 Friday before the Tetons scored four goals in the third period. Minnesota Crookston had goals from Josh Nelson, Tyler Zahradka, and Zach Larson Friday. On Saturday, UMN Crookston picked up goals from Cam Olstad, Zahradka, and Nelson. The Golden Eagles return home this weekend to compete against North Dakota State University Friday, February 19 at 4 p.m., and Saturday February 20 at 3 p.m.

The Golden Eagle tennis team went to Virginia, Minn., for two matches. UMN Crookston fell 7-0 to Minnesota State University Moorhead on Sunday, and 7-0 to University of Mary on Saturday. The Golden Eagles were able to pick up wins in games over both the Dragons and Marauders and continue to show improvement. UMN Crookston will host Southwest Minnesota State University and Minnesota State University-Mankato Sunday, February 21 at Choice Health and Fitness in Grand Forks, N.D.

You can follow Minnesota Crookston men's and women's basketball, hockey, and equestrian this weekend on the NSIC Network at <https://nsicnetwork.com/goldeneaglesports/>

— FACULTY & STAFF UPDATES —

Amanda Arndt, Sodexo General Manager

Amanda Arndt (Amy) is joining UMN Crookston from the University of Minnesota Morris where she spent the last six years with Sodexo as a Food Operations Manager. Amy has held management positions in the food service industry for the past nine years and is excited to bring her catering, retail, and dining experience to the Crookston Dining Services team. A former resident of East Grand Forks, Amy is excited to be moving back home with her husband and two young boys. You may reach Amy at #8538

Beth Zaske, Academic Records Specialist

Beth Zaske begins her new shared role serving the Office of the Registrar (OTR) between Morris and Crookston campuses. Beth will be physically located in Morris, but her workload is split 50/50 for each campus. Beth's primary duties will be working on daily incoming requests of the OTR, registration, course substitutions, Registrar questions, transcripts, etc. Beth has served Morris in many ways, most recently the last 18 months in the Office of the Registrar. She lives north of Morris with her husband and two daughters. You may reach Beth ezaske@morris.umn.edu or 320-589-6027.

Accolades and Recognition

Nan Thurston, Online Student Service Professional, Office of Admissions

"I'm older now and had so many schools calling me and so many options that it was overwhelming. My decision came down to you (Nan Thurston). You made the difference. I liked Crookston but there were others I liked as well, for some reason though I couldn't get our great conversation out of my mind and I truly believed you were true to your University and felt how much you loved your school. I want that same feeling for my next journey and work with good folks just like yourself.

Thank you for staying in there with me." - John Black, Fall 2021 admit online

Rutherford Cd. Johnson, Ph.D., ALM, Lecturer, Business, recently contributed to an article regarding international business trends for new graduates. <https://www.zippia.com/project-manager-jobs/trends/>

Zippia is a site whose data-based approach to connecting job seekers and companies has been featured in USA Today, Forbes, Fortune, CNBC, the New York Times, and more.

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— HIGHLIGHTS —

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career path, Proulx said.” Rob Proulx, Ph.D, University of Minnesota Crookston, agronomy lecturer, started his undergraduate studies as a business major and transferred to UMN Crookston earning his bachelor’s degree in agronomy and later a master’s degree from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus. “A couple years later I began pursuing a Ph.D. in earth systems science and policy.”

So he has come full circle. He said it really began when he accepted a summer job right out of high school at the Northwest Research and Outreach Center (NWROC). “It opened my eyes to a broader view of agriculture and agronomy. I didn’t see myself farming, but there are so many opportunities out there even if you don’t think you want to be in ag.”

In the most basic sense, he said agronomy is plant production, harnessing and making food from those plants. In a more philosophical sense, he continued, “it’s the harnessing of the sun, the soil, air, and water through the beauty of plants, helping farmers and producers harness the resources they have to produce food, fiber, fuel, and crops as efficiently, profitable, and environmentally sound as they can.”

UMN Crookston has deep roots in agriculture and agricultural degrees serving the region and state. One example to help illustrate that are the graduates who remain in northwest Minnesota. “The impact of UMN Crookston’s agronomy program has enabled graduates to go anywhere. Our agronomy graduates have embedded themselves in companies located in this region. Over the course of the past six months, I have noticed American Crystal Sugar Company, a company that is a strong contributor to our economy, like a third of their agriculturist staff are graduates from UMN Crookston.”

Proulx championed UMN Crookston’s student to faculty connection. “It is special; the opportunity for students to connect with faculty and the emphasis on teaching and advising that is done at UMN Crookston.” He said he teaches courses at all grade levels, so seeing the student along the way as they advance through the program to graduation is special. Crookston’s commitment to hands-on, experiential learning, utilizing campus greenhouses, laboratories, and field trips as part of the student experience really creates a broad base and overview of agronomy. Proulx went on to say UMN Crookston’s agronomy program is more than a crop science program; it covers the whole array of agronomy careers. He said the difference is the seed and grain industries, “students really get a broad based overview of agronomy, that is a unique aspect at the Crookston campus.”

One thing that was particularly impactful in shaping Proulx’s career was his time as a student and working with his advisor at the time, Associate Professor of Agronomy Chuck Habstritt. “I never really considered graduate school, something I had no concept of with my background.” He said as he neared graduation, Habstritt put an idea in his mind “you know you should consider going to graduate school.” Proulx said without that conversation and input he wouldn’t be at UMN Crookston today. “Without his intervention, without that same guidance, I wouldn’t be teaching here today. I wouldn’t have the necessary qualifications to teach undergraduate courses. I wouldn’t be on the same career path I am on right now.” Proulx said it was that formative moment for him which allowed him to understand and clearly embrace that connection with a faculty member, “they get to know you, they can give you advice you couldn’t get if they didn’t know you real well”. He said, “UMN Crookston makes that experience happen.”

Proulx has taught at the Crookston campus for 12 years during that time he was awarded the Distinguished Teaching award at the end of 2018. “This award came from my peers, a very nice award to be recognized and having that recognition has fueled me to keep pushing forward in improving my craft as an instructor.”

Proulx said his favorite thing about teaching agronomy is trying to improve his understanding of pedagogies, effective teaching, and learning strategies to integrate those into the classes he teaches. He strives to be better, to understand how to best serve students, organize courses, run a classroom, and provide each student with the best learning opportunity and classroom environment. “I can see there will always be room to tweak and improve and keep things fresh with this mindset. Relationships between faculty and students are so important.”

Chuck Habstritt was in Proulx’s role when he was a student. He’d like to give a shout out to Chuck; as he is enjoying his retired (2009) life splitting time between Arizona And Minnesota. “He has done a lot to help set me on this path.” Proulx said he would keep the tradition going at the University of Minnesota Crookston, there are many to which Habstritt and now Proulx continue to make an impact. Habstritt, as he retired, stated he counts the successes of the UMN Crookston Crops Team and its alumni as one of the proudest accomplishments of his teaching career. It is clear Habstritt left the agronomy program in good hands.

You can view more on YouTube an interview with Rob Proulx and “all things agronomy” [found here](#).

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