APRIL 30TH 2025 *"Your Shipment Of Local News!"* U.S.S. NEWS ISSUE #4

THE LAKE FREIGHTER

Board of Regents Limit Institutional Speech

By: Evan Leebens

The governing board of the University of Minnesota system, the Board of Regents, has the responsibility of hiring the University president, making budgetary decisions, and steering the direction of the University system. This past March 18th, the Board of Regents approved a resolution with a 9-3 vote relating to Institutional Statements.

The resolution deems the University president as the primary spokesperson for institutional speech, and establishes the president as the only one authorized to make or allow "institutional statements on matters that have an actual or potential impact on the mission and operations of the University." Otherwise, "Institutional statements addressing matters of public concern or public interest are not permitted at the University unless determined by the President to have an actual or potential impact on the mission and operations of the University." The Board of Regents explicitly states that none of the guiding principles outlined in the resolution are intended to curtail freedom of expression outlined in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, nor prevent individuals from expressing their opinions on matters of public concern or public interest.

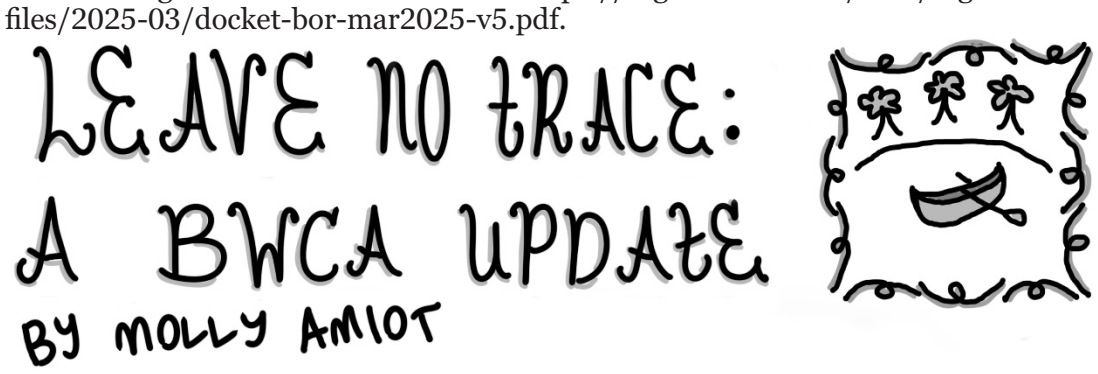
According to the resolution, institutional statements are defined as "statements and communications issued by and in the name of the University of Minnesota or its academic and non-academic units, including but not limited to campuses, colleges, schools, departments, centers, and institutes, and that are disseminated through official University channels, including the University's institutional and unit websites, social media accounts, and letterhead, or using the official University marks."

According to Janie Mayeron, the Chair of the Board of Regents, "The university is not, and should not be, in the business of taking positions on these critical and controversial matters of public concern." The resolution is aligned with this sentiment, as well as other actions the University has taken regarding neutrality towards controversial matters. In October of 2023, the University removed statements posted on six University of Minnesota department websites which showed support for Palestinians and called for "the declaration of an immediate ceasefire, a complete halt to illegal settlements, and an end to the siege."

There are some inconsistencies in the University's non biased position, such as in a recent email from the Office of the President on April 7th, with the subject line "Advancing our commitment to combat harassment, bias." In details of how the University is combating harassment and bias such as Islamophobia and antisemitism, a resource page (https://youru.umn.edu/university-minnesotas-commitment-combating-antisemitism) was included, and within potential campus resources for Jewish students, there is a link for the Students Supporting Israel (SSI) website, offering "avenues for engagement and advocacy." According to the SSI website, it is "a rapidly growing Zionist international campus movement that supports the State of Israel."

Additionally, in 2022, the University Senate Governance prompted administrators to divest The University of Minnesota Endowment's market value associated with Russian investments from ~$236,000 to effectively $0, and The University of Minnesota Foundation Endowment's Russian investments from ~$3.4 million to effectively $0, in order to "demonstrate our [administrator's] support for Ukraine." Still, this year, a statement made by Eric Shwartz, a professor and chair of the Humphrey School's global policy area, in support of Ukraine was removed by the University.

It is unclear where these inconsistencies originate. Potentially, it is the result of top-down funding pressures from the federal government, or the foundation of SSI occurring within the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities campus in 2012, and are very complex topics that exist within larger institutions than the University of Minnesota campus system. For now, The Board of Regent's Resolution says the president is the primary spokesperson and sanctioner for Institutional Speech addressing matters of public concern or public interest. In October 2025, current President Rebecca Cunningham will be required to report to the Board of Regents on the implementation and outcome of this resolution, including statements on public concern or interest, for the purpose of refining guiding principles. The Board of Regents can be contacted through their website, regents.umn.edu, or through their email, uregents@umn.edu. If you'd like to read the resolutions and other statements pertaining to Institutional Free Speech, you can go to page 77 of the Board of Regents March 2025 docket at https://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/2025-03/docket-bor-mar2025-v5.pdf.



"There is no place like these hallowed protected lakes and what they impart to all who travel their waterways and contribute to our local economies." states Brett Cease, former Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA) canoe instructor, and lead organizer of Duluth Earth Day Celebration 2025.The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness is a beloved place visited by over 150,000 people a year. Anyone who has visited the Boundary Waters can attest to the beauty of paddling next to lush forests, hearing the echoing cry of a loon, and enjoying the spacious solitude of the wilderness. During volatile political landscapes such as now, protecting and conserving special areas such as the BWCA is not guaranteed.

On March 20, an executive order was issued by President Trump stating that federal regulation had limited mineral production in the U.S., putting reliance on other countries for crucial minerals. To take measures to increase American mineral production, the order required that within 10 days of its release, the Secretary of the Interior was to provide a list of all federal lands known to hold mineral deposits and reserves, and prioritize mineral production in these areas. The Boundary Waters was one of these areas, later also targeted for logging practices.

One of the crucial minerals mentioned in the executive order is copper. The process of copper mining involves digging up the rock and putting it through a chemical slurry to separate the copper from minerals around it, leaving left over waste rock containing sulfides and sulfates. Sulfides and sulfates can harm surrounding ecosystems if they get into the water, significantly affecting acidity, nutrient cycling, and organisms within these ecosystems. This process is crucial to all copper mining operations, making it one of the most hazardous and unpredictable types of mining.

According to Ben Karlgaard, junior at UMD and Duluth Organizing Fellow of Save the Boundary Waters, "the Boundary Waters are protected as a wilderness, but the watershed that feeds into the Boundary Waters is not protected. So there's a whole bunch of land and lakes south that flow through the Boundary Waters but don't have the same protections."

Birch Lake, located within the watershed of the Boundary Waters, is especially abundant in copper. Pursuing a mining operation in Birch Lake for a 20 year period, the Chilean owned mining company Twin Metals plans to put potential waste rock in a dry stack next to the lake, as a way to keep it out of water systems. However, in such a water rich environment, a spill is even more likely to happen. Karlgaard explained that just this year, the area got 9-12 inches of rain in one event, something that is not an uncommon occurrence. If a large rain event were to occur, the dry stack would absorb the moisture and fall into the lake. This would cause pollution that would spread into areas of the BWCA, as well as connected watersheds such as Lake Vermillion and Voyageurs National Park.

While mining in the area could stimulate economic growth in the area and provide critical minerals, Karlgaard argues that undeveloped wilderness is better for the economy. Mining would support roughly 2,250 jobs while undeveloped wilderness supports around 17,000 jobs, including outfitters, park rangers, resorts, and more.

Four bills concerning the Boundary Waters have been introduced in the past year. Two state level bills, H.F. 309 and S.F. 875, are concerned with upholding the 20 year ban on mining in the watershed currently in place. They aim to protect 225,504 acres of land specifically from copper mining. Senator Tina Smith and Representative Pete Stauber have each introduced bills at the federal level as well. Senator Smith's bill, S.F. 1366, has the same goal as H.F. 309 and S.F. 875 - to prevent mining in the watershed of the Boundary Waters. Representative Stauber's bill, H.R. 978, aims to reinstate mining leases on the watershed area. All four bills are currently being reviewed by committees. If released, they will move to the House and then the Senate.

No matter what your opinion is, it is important for individuals to get involved and speak up for what they care about. If you want to be more informed about the Boundary Waters or other issues that are important to you, look for organizations that are involved and reach out to those organizations. In addition, contact your local representatives and vote in midterms. To find who you are the constituent of, search "who represents me," type in your address, and it will tell you who your representatives and senators are and how to get in touch with them. "Your voice maybe isn't as strong in the federal...but where it is important is in the more local things. People get discouraged about the federal stuff, but you have to start doing the work to realize your voice actually matters and you can make a difference." Karlgaard concludes.

End of the Year Chef's Special

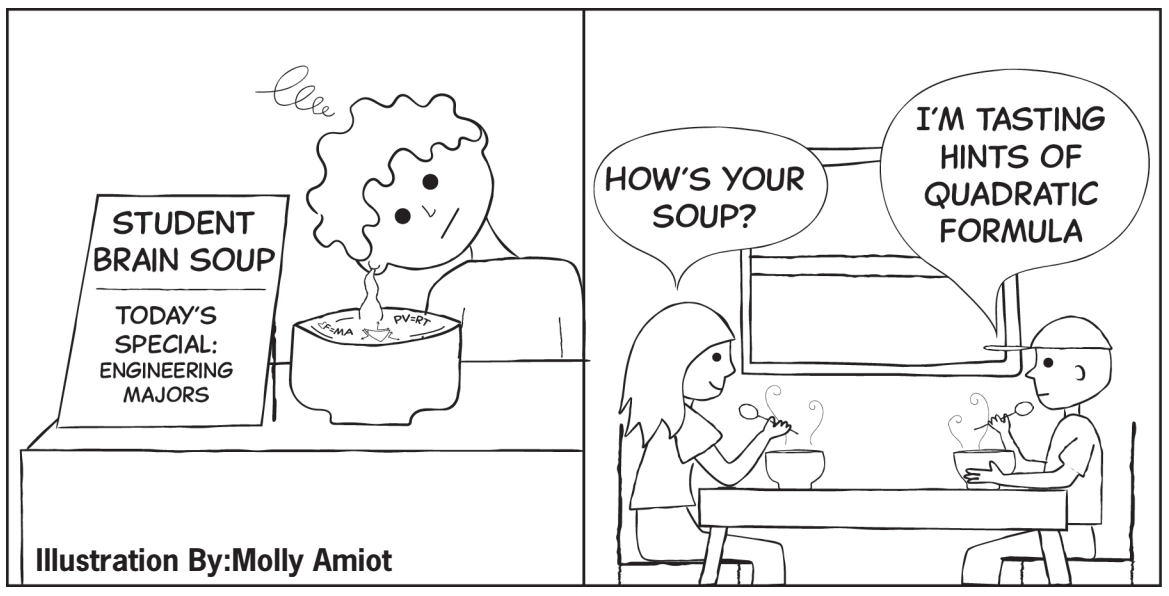


Illustration By:Molly Amiot

Empty Pockets By: Gus Ulm

The University of Minnesota Duluth, in comparison to other University of Minnesota campuses, hasn't historically been thrown a lot of funding bones. The Twin Cities UMN campus has ten times the student body that UMD has, and yet has a total funding that is fourteen times greater than ours. This discrepancy is exasperated by recent funding cuts ubiquitous in public services today.

For campus level cuts, one of the most prominent examples was the removal of the Deaf Studies Minor for incoming UMD students, starting Fall of 2025. While currently enrolled students will still be able to complete their minor, this removal directly limits education on the culture and history of the deaf community. UMD was the only UMN campus to offer the Deaf Studies Minor. In response to the impending cuts, students organized to try and save the program, through the Save Deaf Studies movement. The leaders of Save Deaf Studies held a forum with administrators, however, they left feeling as though the forum was uninformative. They hope to hold another forum to try and further advocate for the Minor and stress its importance. For more information on the effects of this budget cut you can follow the @save.deaf.studies.umd on Instagram.

In an effort to fit its new budget, the University is also looking to cut back on teaching assistants (TA's) for many different classes. TA's typically lead discussion portions of classes, providing a place for students to ask questions or receive extra examples from someone who is more peer than professor. TA cutbacks mean that some classes will have discussion portions completely removed in courses such as General Biology, General Chemistry, and Calculus. The removal of discussion sections means that the credits allotted to courses will drop, or put more pressure on a fewer number of TA's. Teaching assistants in limited departments would have a greater number of students who depend on them for their learning, potentially disrupting the quality of education for undergrad students through quality of feedback and assistance.

Professors and students involved in STEM research are commonly funded through the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA). The NOAA is projected to lose 27% of their total funding; reducing the current $6.1 billion to $4.5 billion. A smaller pot of cash to draw from leads to difficulties in accomplishing academic research. Less campus research then makes it harder for grad students to get into labs, forcing them to look towards TA positions. However, with the reduction of TA positions, it becomes increasingly difficult for grad students to gain experience that may be essential to future careers. Further, the reduction in research decreases the likelihood of future funding, as there is less productive research happening from previous cuts, thus leading to a cycle where professors, undergraduate, and graduate students all get shorted on experience and further education.

Long term effects of funding are unknown, and there are far too many cuts to report on that effect UMD. Priorities and quality of education are more important than ever when students and professors make the decision to attend or be employed at an educational institution.

Freighter Fit

Accompanied by a Marc Jacobs Tote Bag, Green Dunk Lows, and a half-empty can of Monster, freshman Fatoumata Sanneh, majoring in Communications and Public Health, is sure to turn heads and drop jaws with this issue's Freighter Fit.

Image By: Gus Ulm

Did you plan this fit or did you just put it on?
"Nah I just put it on."

What inspires your fits?
"See me personally, I like to give a little mix of feminine and masculine energy, it gives me all my chi. Honestly, I just like to wear what's comfortable and feels nice. And if the fit is fire, it's fire."

Spot the Difference: H.A.G.S. Edition

There are 7 differences between the two images, can you spot them all?

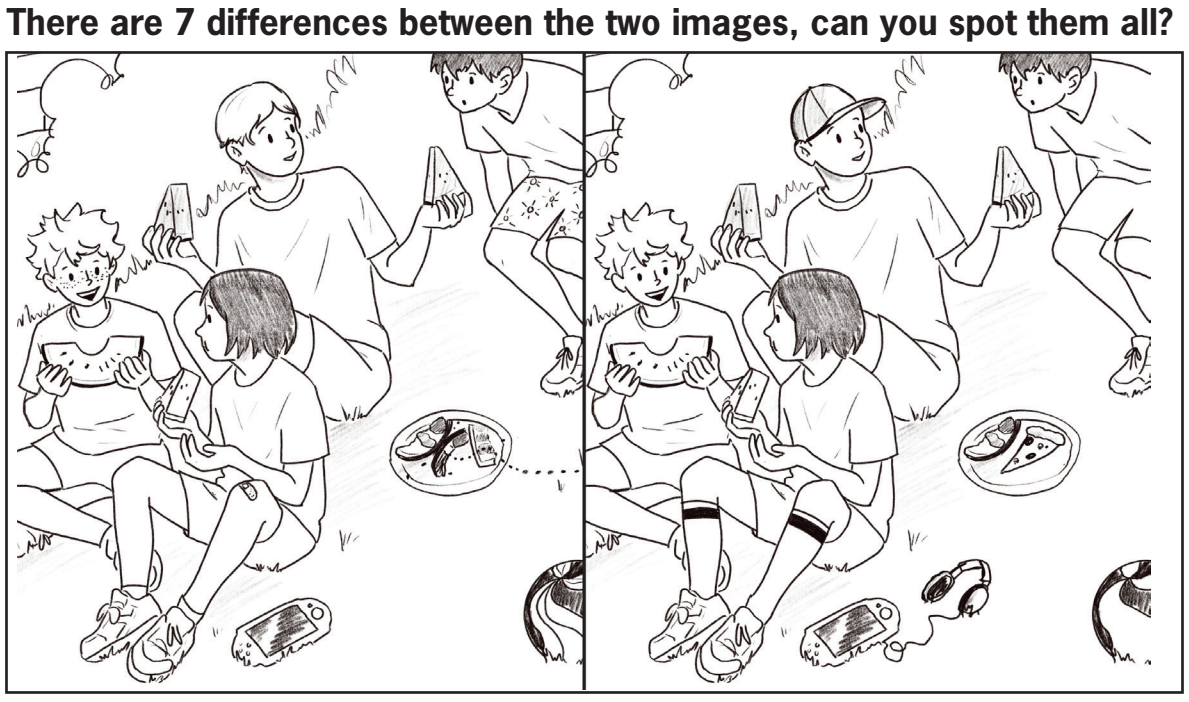


Illustration By: Emma Scholes

Homegrown By: Keenan Anderson

Today is already the halfway point of the 27th annual Homegrown Music Festival. If you haven't seen any shows yet, what are you waiting for?! Homegrown started back in 1998 when founder Scott "Starfire" Lunt gathered a handful of local bands for his 30th birthday bash. Since then, Homegrown has showcased local talent and emerging artists looking to make a name for themselves in a week-long kick-ass party across the city. But if you're a real music lover and a true Duluthian, you already knew that! ...You did right? The festival started last Sunday, with our old friends C U Next Tuesday playing at Pizza Luce, and wraps up this Sunday at Canal Park brewing with Austin Castle, winner of last year's Duluth Dylan Fest's singer-songwriter contest. With 170 musical acts ranging from folk, blues, jazz, funk, metal, punk, (and anything else that would be an insult to try and put a label on), anybody who loves music will have a great time. Wristbands are available to purchase at any venue that requires them, and advance tickets are still available at Zenith Bookstore, and River City Records and Books with $40 getting you an all week pass, and single night passes costing $15 on weekdays and $25 on Friday and Saturday. Some events are free, some are not, so if you want to see the full rundown of who is yet to perform, where they play, and where to get wristbands, Duluth Homegrown lays it out perfectly on their website. So get your schoolwork done, get out there, get your drink on, and listen to some good music!

Freighter Feline

Rocky A. Beauson is an 8 year old kitty that lives in the Kenwood neighborhood with his dad, Reilly Heidelberg. He is originally from Mendota Heights where he lived as an outdoor cat in his youth. His escapades as a young kit started to lose momentum after he was diagnosed with gingivitis and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV), the cat equivalent to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), but that doesn't stop him from living a happy and healthy life. His favorite food is tinned salmon on top of kibble, and his favorite treats are Greenies. He keeps a solid toy rotation, and sleeps in a box whenever possible. His meows are loud and raspy, saying good morning to all of his roommates to welcome every new day. His next vet appointment is in May.

Image By: Keenan Anderson

Mystery Professor Spotted with Wrong Beer and Food Pairing

By: Chip Clipp

DULUTH, Minn- An individual believed to be a professor at UMD was spotted last Thursday at local sandwich eatery and bar, Sir Benedicts Tavern on the Lake.

"Yeah, I was just trying to enjoy my food and listen to the sick Celtic jam, but I couldn't help but notice this guy drinking a stout and, I think it was a tuna sandwich he was eating." said Keegan Andersmith, a local barfly. For those who are unfamiliar with beer and food pairings, dark beers such as stouts and porters do not pair well with lighter foods and seafood such as tuna. What he should have ordered was a lighter, more refreshing drink like a lager, or at the very least a Belgian tripel to cut through the richness of the cheese.

The malefactor's professorship was first speculated based on a book the man was reading at the bar, possibly pointing to employment in an English or literary department. The professor in question has been described as tall, left handed, and having a way with words. "I know who it was," says another patron, who prefers to remain anonymous. "But I can't tell you man, he'll know I said something and I don't want to fail this class ... you got like 20 bucks?"

As I tried to search for more answers, I asked students around campus for their input. "Dude... what?" said a student in the fourth floor library bathroom stall, understandably confused at the combination. Another anonymous student studying in the Kirby student center, visibly upset from the news of this senseless culinary crime, stated, "Leave me alone, I'm not interested and I don't have time for any of this. I have an exam in half an hour." Emotions are running high as this is still a developing story. If you have any additional information or leads, please call 555-867-5309.

Horoscope

ARIES
Get back with your ex, I swear it will work this time.

LIBRA
Trade your bike for a horse.

TAURUS
Refrain from walking in an open field during future thunderstorms.

SCORPIO
You are likely to feel a certain constipation of the bowels during the month of May.

GEMINI
An AI model is named after your sign. Unemployment is in your future.

SAGITTARIUS
You are feeling verrryyy sleepy...

CANCER
Sorry, I don't know. Good luck, I guess.

CAPRICORN
On the next full moon, be wary of hairy transformations. Keep all appetizing babies out of sight.

LEO
In your future is incomprehensible pleasure and pain manifested through the everyday participation in the realization of your livelihood.

AQUARIUS
Your beer/food pairings may be considered questionable. Develop your flavor profile this summer.

VIRGO
Definitely buy that looksmaxxing book, you need it.

PISCES
You are due for an oil change, and your air filter IS filthy. You are not being scammed.

Title and Horoscope illustrations By: Cole Jacobs