



Executive Director, School of Applied Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources

POSITION INFORMATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

Minnesota State University, Mankato, a leading university with a growing international reputation for breakthrough applied research, invites applications and nominations for the position of Executive Director, School of Applied Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources. The University seeks an exceptional individual who will provide innovative, equity-minded and creative leadership to fulfil the vision of the School to be the destination to connect authentic learning to creative minds; provide solutions to the complex and ever-changing needs of our community, industry and humanity; and through collaboration with industry and other partners, produce resilient professionals who have a passion to create, a mind to innovate, and the skill to activate.

Minnesota State Mankato's culture merges big ideas with real-world thinking to nurture innovation and creative thought. Minnesota State Mankato is a thriving institution with highly regarded academic programs, a long history of a strong student-focused culture, and a record of commitment to its community and region. The Associate Provost for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies will be a key leader in helping Minnesota State Mankato sustain and further strengthen programs and services for its students and the wider community as we implement the university's new strategic plan Destination 2030.

EQUITY 2030 AND THE MINNESOTA STATE SYSTEM

Minnesota State Mankato is the largest institution within the Minnesota State System which includes 7 four-year institutions and 26 two-year colleges. The Minnesota State System has established a critical goal, [Equity 2030](#), which aims to eliminate the educational equity gaps across race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and geographic location by the end of the decade at every Minnesota State college and university. The focus of the work of Equity 2030 includes:

- Enhancing access and student success
- Providing Minnesota with the talent it needs
- Anchoring the communities and regions served

BACKGROUND AND CAMPUS OVERVIEW

Since its founding in 1868 as Mankato Normal School, the school has focused on educating tomorrow's leaders to apply big ideas and real-world thinking to solve problems. For more than 150 years, the people of Minnesota State Mankato have been pairing bold aspirations with practical applications that have the power to change the world. The University's environment of big ideas coupled with real-world thinking transforms the typical college experience into one that is more meaningful and more connected to the rest of the world.

Today, more than 14,000 students, including more than 1,300 international students from more than 90 countries, attend Minnesota State Mankato, making it the second largest university in Minnesota. The nearly 1,600 faculty and staff, including more than 700 teaching faculty, are distinguished by their dedication and loyalty to the institution's mission and their students.

The University's academic quality is recognized through its accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission. More than

90 academic programs also hold specialized accreditation, certification and or recognition from 25 different recognized accrediting agencies; six non-academic programs also hold specialized accreditation, certification or recognition.

Minnesota State Mankato has an annual budget of \$240 million and its endowment is over \$70 million. Minnesota State Mankato [generates an annual economic impact](#) of over \$827 million. Alumni and friends in 2022 supported students and the University in significant, record-breaking fashion, allowing the University's Foundation to provide more than \$2.3 million in scholarships and emergency grants, a Foundation record for support and a 43 percent increase from 2018. Faculty and staff are represented by collective bargaining units and all negotiations occur at the state level, either through the Minnesota State System Office or through the Minnesota Management and Budget Employee Relations Division.

We also take the opportunity to recognize that we live, work, and learn in the homeland of the Dakota people, whose language frames our name—Minnesota State University, Mankato.

MISSION, VALUES AND VISION

Mission:

Minnesota State University, Mankato promotes learning through effective undergraduate and graduate teaching, scholarship, and research in service to the state, the region, and the global community.

Vision:

Minnesota State Mankato will be known as a university where people expect to go further than they thought possible by combining knowledge and the passion to achieve great things.

Our foundation for this vision is our heritage of both dedicated teaching and the direct application of knowledge to improve a diverse community and world. We will achieve it by actively nurturing the passion within students, faculty, and staff to push beyond possibility on the way to realizing dreams.

Core Values:

Minnesota State University, Mankato is an innovative, student-centered learning community that values:

- Integrity and respect in the way we conduct ourselves
- Diversity in who we are and what we do
- Access to our programs and services that create opportunities for all to pursue their dreams
- Responsibility to those we serve by providing an education that inspires solutions to society's challenges
- Excellence in our academic and non-academic pursuits

LEADERSHIP

Edward Inch, President

Dr. Edward S. Inch is the 13th President of Minnesota State University, Mankato. He assumed the presidency July 1, 2021, and brought with him strategic leadership and an understanding of the importance of working in a collaborative, transparent and authentic manner to build a shared vision.

President Inch sees the University as playing an instrumental role in the lives of its students and region. Dr. Inch brings to Minnesota State Mankato 36 years of distinguished university leadership experience. Before coming to Mankato, Dr. Inch served as the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at California State University, East Bay. Prior to Cal State East Bay, Dr. Inch served as the Dean of the College of Arts and Letters at California State University, Sacramento; Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio; and Dean of the School of Arts and Communication at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington. Dr. Inch began his academic career as a lecturer at Western Washington University before becoming an assistant professor in the Department of Communication and Theatre at Pacific Lutheran University.

In addition to his cabinet-level and dean work, Dr. Inch was an American Council on Education Fellow hosted by

California State University, Sacramento. While at Pacific Lutheran University, he served as an accreditor for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. He also earned the Washington State Bar Association's certificate in Alternative Dispute Resolution and Norway's Nansen Academy's certificate in International Peacebuilding. He worked with the Academy's international initiatives and programs focused on mediation and conflict management in the Balkans.

Throughout his career, Dr. Inch's top priorities have been improving student outcomes and access, ensuring instructional capacity and proactive learning support services. Providing a strong, student-centered and inclusive learning environment is at the heart of these efforts. Dr. Inch has worked to enhance student/faculty research and creative projects, provide greater access to internships and service-learning projects, develop an innovation and entrepreneurship hub and restructure teaching loads to allow for more and better faculty scholarship.

David S. Hood, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

On July 1, 2022, David Hood began his tenure as Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Dr. Hood was previously the associate provost for undergraduate education and founding dean, University College at Montclair State University, a position he held from August 2018 until June 30, 2022. During his career, Hood has focused on student learning and key performance indicators centered on student success outcomes. At Montclair State, Dr. Hood was successful in opening and launching the University College.

In addition, Dr. Hood oversaw the development of Montclair State's Advising 2025 Strategic Plan and was responsible for creating and implementing policies and initiatives that have contributed to undergraduate students' ability to successfully navigate university study and decrease their time to degree attainment.

Before his position at Montclair State, Hood served at North Carolina Central University, where he provided leadership for five years as associate Dean and nearly three years as Dean of University College. Additionally, Dr. Hood has held administrative and/or faculty appointments at Central Michigan University, Virginia Union University, Elizabeth City State University, Tennessee State University, and J.F. Drake Technical College.

ACADEMICS

Minnesota State University, Mankato offers over 130 undergraduate programs of study, including 13 pre-professional programs, and over 80 graduate programs, including master's, specialist, and doctoral programs. Some programs are also offered online or through various [University Extended Education](#) venues, including the facility at 7700 France in Edina and as well as through completion programs at our 2-year community college partner locations.

Excellence across the curriculum is a Minnesota State Mankato hallmark. Each of the University's academic colleges have achieved distinction, and students access comprehensive academic support services to excel in and out of the classroom. The University is comprised of six Colleges: [Allied Health and Nursing](#), [Business](#), [Education](#), [Humanities and Social Sciences](#), and [Science, Engineering & Technology](#).

A significant portion of Minnesota State Mankato's Academic Affairs also includes comprehensive support services for students, faculty, and staff including the federally funded TRIO Student Support Services program; the Kearney International Center; the Center for Excellence in Scholarship and Research; the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning; and the Strategic Partnerships Center.

GRADUATE STUDIES

Minnesota State Mankato is one of the largest providers of graduate education in the state. Our reasonable tuition, outstanding faculty, and nationally recognized academic programs make Minnesota State Mankato one of the best educational values in the country. Our programs provide students an applied learning environment with emphasis on real-world situations, the opportunity to conduct cutting-edge research in state-of-the-art facilities, and personal attention that is the hallmark of quality graduate education.

THE COMMUNITY – MANKATO, MN

Mankato, Minnesota is located approximately 85 miles southwest of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. The University sits atop 303 acres overlooking the Minnesota River Valley. Mankato's population is over 44,000 and the Greater Mankato area has a population of over 103,500. Minnesota State Mankato adds \$827 million annually to the Mankato economy (2023 Minnesota State system study.)

Mankato is a major regional center designated as a Metropolitan Statistical Area and has earned several livability awards, including: a top 10 spot for "best small college towns" by Schools.com; one of the "best small college towns in America" by College Values Online; and "best small places for businesses and careers" by Forbes. Education is central to the area's quality of life and economy, in that more students choose to pursue higher education in the Mankato area than any other community outside of the Twin Cities. The city of Mankato is renowned for rivers, lakes, ravines, bluffs, natural prairies, and forested areas that offer breathtaking landscapes with more than 50 miles of paved trails for all-season cycling, walking, and hiking.

The city of Mankato keeps its visitors and residents entertained year-round with plenty of exciting events and festivals. Almost all events are focused on celebrating the unique character of the Mankato area—including its history, climate, location and friendly atmosphere., including the International Festival, Mankato River Ramble, Mankato Marathon, History Fest, Mankato Annual Traditional Pow-Wow, MN Senior Games, Kiwanis Holiday Lights, the Speechless Film Festival, Thunder of Drums, City Art Walking Sculpture Tour, more than 20 concerts a year, and the annual Ribfest. To learn more about Mankato, please visit [Greater Mankato Growth](#) and [Visit Great Mankato](#).

THE ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SCHOOL OF APPLIED AGRICULTURE, FOOD, AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Executive Director, School of Applied Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources, will provide innovative, equity-minded and creative leadership to fulfil the vision of the school to be the front door to attracting students and developing regional partnerships to bring big ideas, real-world thinking, and inspired action to growing the agriculture and food industry throughout the State of Minnesota and Upper Midwest. This position directs the work of the School of AAFNR, overseeing engagement and outreach with communities throughout the state; pursues grant programs specifically designed for emerging farmers and meeting regional workforce needs; and collaborates with and serves on boards of various external agriculture and food-related organizations (e.g., the Southern Minnesota Center for Agriculture, Emerging Farmer Working Group, Minnesota Farmers Union, Regenerative Agriculture Foundation, Sustainable Farming Association- Minnesota , and GreenSeam). The Executive Director will supervise all components of the office including budget creation and monitoring, development of program plans, policies, procedures, and strategies to accomplish plans, program evaluation, staff work assignments, performance evaluations, and policy communication. The incumbent will develop and maintain strong relationships with both internal and external customers and be responsive and adapt to input as the office matures. This position provides leadership in line with MSU mission and current strategic plan. The Executive Director serves as the chief administrative and executive officer for the School of Applied Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources and reports directly to the provost and serves on the President's Expanded Cabinet.

Initially, the main focus and outcome of this position will be to successfully launch the school, including the creation of a sustainable framework, strategic plan, and development of strong partnership network. The Executive Director will coordinate with the deans of the applied agriculture, food and natural resource related academic programs and research centers to analyze industry and student need, promote existing programs and work with faculty to develop new interdisciplinary curriculum. This position will work across all divisions of the university to ensure financially viable programming, seek grant and fundraising opportunities, recruit and retain students to programs affiliated with the school, develop and maintain industry and educational partnerships, and provide university services and supports across all locations of program delivery, research collaboration (including facility and land-use), and regional service.

The Executive Director will develop and implement a sustainable structure for the School of Applied Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources that includes programs that are career-focused; contains curriculum that is innovative, inter-

disciplinary, and experiential; committed to elevating underrepresented populations as a core principle in all areas of the school, including research, teaching, and public service; represents a national model for strong and nimble partnerships with industry, colleges and universities to support emerging careers, fields, and student needs; delivers on a commitment to elevating underrepresented populations in AAFNR areas; and enacts change through thought leadership and taking an active role in envisioning future economies, including research, technology, focus on sustainability, climate-smart agriculture, and creation of spaces to share diverse perspectives.

CHARACTERISTIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Lead and provide vision for the School of Applied Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources. Serve as the chief administrator and executive officer for the school and report directly to the provost. Lead in the recruitment, hiring, development and supervision of the school staff, and coordinate with deans on the hiring, development, and evaluation of faculty with appointment in the school. Lead and support diversity and equity initiatives in hiring, professional development, and the assurance of an inclusive environment. Engage in strategic planning in collaboration with stakeholders to develop a new AAFNR Strategic Plan for the university. Serve as the primary contact/outreach to regional stakeholders in AAFNR.
- Serve as the chief administrator for all technology and equipment assigned to, rented, or purchased by the school (includes planning and scheduling, repair and maintenance, renovation). Additionally, this position is responsible for federal and state compliance, professional standards of practice, and relevant policies and procedures.
- Serve as the chief budget officer for the School of Applied Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources, including planning, allocating, and administering grants/accounts, maintaining proper staffing levels aligned with workflow, proper use of indirect funds, and use of innovative models to unit funding.
- Develop and maintain positive internal and external relationships, including partnerships, collaborations, donor relations and grants, current students, alumni, and friend relations. Explore local, state, federal and foundation funding opportunities around AAFNR disciplines. Write/produce grants and engage in fundraising. Serve on University committees and councils/tasks forces; attend functions as a representative of the University; represent the university on external boards; speak on behalf of the School and University.
- Lead the development of high impact practices and engaged pedagogy, co-curricular experiences, field experiences, and fostering of industry projects and experiences in the curriculum. Foster work that promotes diversity and inclusion and closes the equity gaps in program outcomes.
- Perform special projects and activities as assigned by the Provost and President of the University.

Required Qualifications:

Education: Master's degree in Agriculture, Agronomy, Agroecology, Animal Science, Biology, Business Administration, Business Management, Chemistry, Environmental Health/Science, Feed Science, Feed Management, Food Safety, Food Systems, Food Science, or Geology/Soil Science, and three (3) years of Ag-related Experiences.

OR

Master's degree in related and more general fields such as Information Systems, Public Administration, Public Health, or other closely related fields may be accepted with four and a half (4.5) years of Ag-related experience.

Professional Licensure/Certification: N/A

Type and Length of Experience: N/A

Other Required Qualifications:

- Demonstrated commitment to fostering and advancing racial/social justice and equity in curriculum, communities, and engagements.
- Ability to cultivate relationships and to develop public and private partnerships, with a variety of internal and external stakeholders and constituencies, to achieve goals.
- Demonstrated experience managing complex projects including the responsibility to communicate, organize, and manage complex cross-functional operations with others.
- Knowledge of current and emerging student populations and trends in AFNR disciplines, including in curriculum, programming, and visioning new workforce channels and career paths.
- Experience with resource management including people, budgets, facilities, grants, or contracts.
- Demonstrated ability to serve a diverse population and apply an equity lens to this position including social justice and/or anti-racism.

Preferred Qualifications:

Education: Ph.D. or other doctoral degree in a discipline related to Agriculture, Food, or Natural Resources. Successful completion of executive and/or academic leadership development program(s).

Professional Licensure/Certification: N/A

Type and Length of Experience: N/A

Other:

- Demonstrated commitment to fostering a diverse working and learning environment.
- Record of identifying and securing federal, foundation, and other sources of funding to support initiatives supporting emerging farmers, workforce diversity, and/or in fostering and advancing racial/social justice and equity in curriculum, communities, and engagements.
- Knowledge of grant and contracting administration and processes; record of external funding (e.g. federal and state grants, contracts, philanthropic, etc.) and partnerships related to AAFNR.
- Demonstrated ability to expand programs and successfully start new financially sustainable programs to meet the demands of students, industry and community and in collaboration with industry/ community/educational partners and organizations.
- Demonstrated commitment to leading and supporting academic program quality, including experience with high impact learning, as well as program accreditation, at the undergraduate and/or graduate levels.

- Experience overseeing and delivering public services via revenue generating centers, enterprises and institutes. Knowledge of, and ability to connect those services with, resources, programs, and organizations that support regional/community vitality and economic development.
- Demonstrated ability to effectively lead in a collective bargaining and/or shared governance environment.
- Ability to engage in professional leadership and service, as a senior academic administrator, at the state, regional, national, and international levels to advance strategic directions.

All nominations and applications shall be confidential. For best consideration, submit your application at [Executive Director, School of Applied Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources \(AA24196\)](#). The cover letter must contain a section responding to each of the topics found in the Characteristic Duties and Responsibilities Section, including the Required and Preferred Qualifications.

Minnesota State University, Mankato has a long-standing commitment to diversity and is actively seeking to nurture and enrich its underrepresented communities. Women, minorities, and individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply. In accordance with USCIS regulations, successful applicants must be legally able to accept work in the United States.

Requests for reasonable accommodation of a disability during the application and/or interview process should be made to Human Resources, 507-389-2015 (V), 800-267-3529 or 711(MRS/TTY). This announcement is available in alternative format upon request.

Minnesota State University, Mankato is an affirmative action/equal opportunity university and is a member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system.