



**INTRODUCING**

**NEW BRAND**

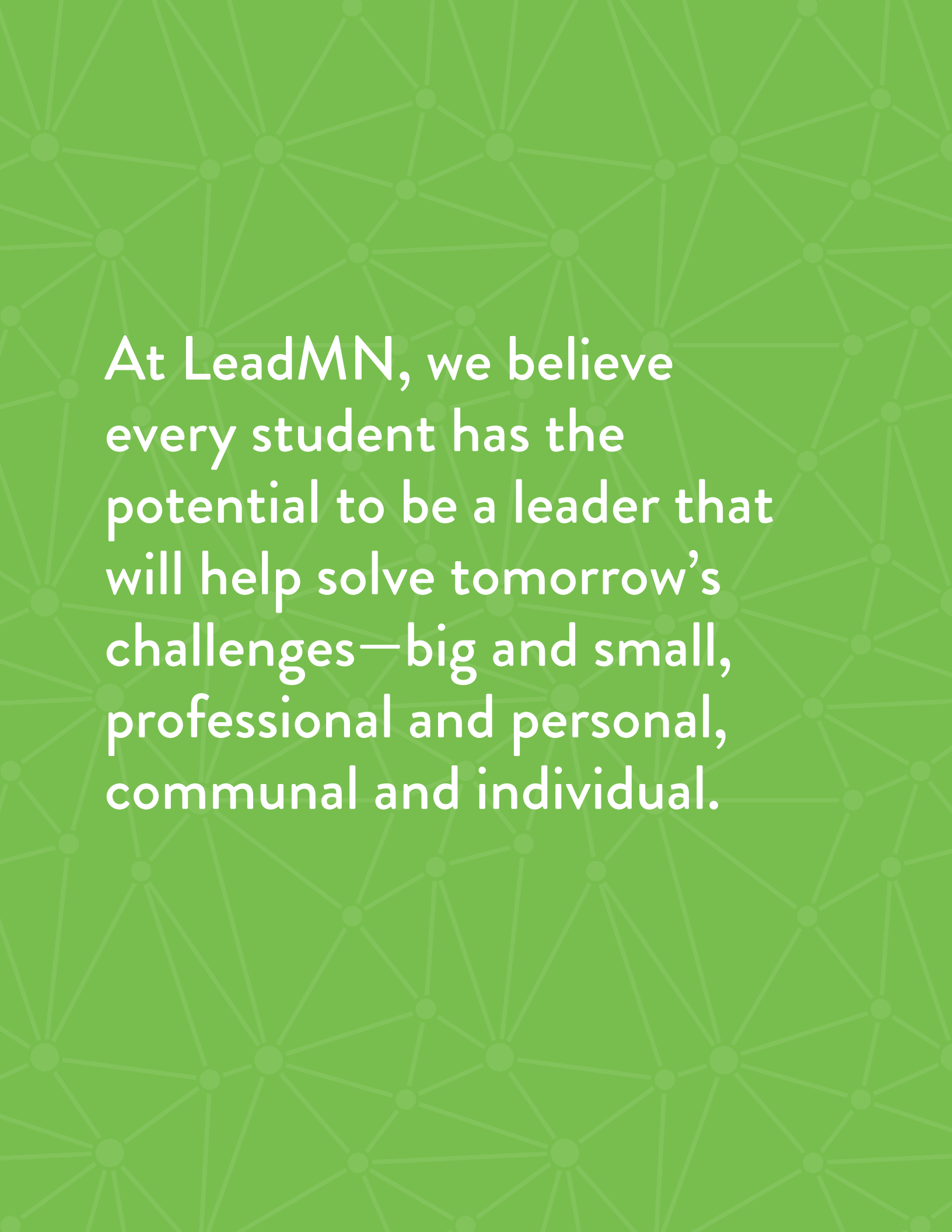
**NEW CENTER**

**SAME CRITICAL MISSION**



**LEAD**MN

COLLEGE STUDENTS  
CONNECTING FOR CHANGE



At LeadMN, we believe every student has the potential to be a leader that will help solve tomorrow's challenges—big and small, professional and personal, communal and individual.

# INTRODUCING LEADMN

## A message from LeadMN's President and Executive Director

After two decades of impacting community and technical college students, the Minnesota State College Student Association begins its next chapter as **LeadMN**, an organization of **College Students Connecting for Change**. Our new name and brand represents a year-long process of conversations with students, alumni, faculty, and staff to help the organization meet the needs of the current students by empowering them to make an impact on their campus, community, and the state of Minnesota.

At LeadMN, we believe that everyone should have the opportunity to achieve their dreams. Our new logo is a constellation within the state of Minnesota to represent that LeadMN provides students with the skills and guidance they need to lead change, just as stars provide navigational guidance. The constellation also represents the network of friendships and relationships that students develop by being a member of LeadMN.

The LeadMN brand was designed to help us better communicate our driving mission as an organization. The *American Dream* has long been a symbol of achieving success. For far too many Minnesotans, the path to this dream is impeded due to systemic barriers. At LeadMN we break down those barriers by empowering two-year college students to become strong leaders, engaged community members, and successful professionals. We are rebuilding a pathway for students to achieve their *American Dream*.

This year we took some important steps down that pathway through conducting our leadership trainings, advocating for a plan to address the opportunity gap in Minnesota State, and fighting for affordable tuition.

Sincerely,



Mike Dean, Executive Director



Isaac Jahraus, President

# OUR BRAND PILLARS

College students transform their lives and their communities through involvement with LeadMN and the pillars that define our programming.



The first pillar is **Leadership Skills**. We offer workshops and trainings at our conferences that teach leadership and interpersonal skills to students. The second pillar is **Empowering Leaders**. We provide real-world leadership experience to students through serving on a LeadMN board or committee.

The first two pillars work together to teach students the important leadership lessons they need to take charge of their own lives and lead others in engaging ways. The third pillar is **Achieving Success**. We provide mentors, resources, and scholarships to students to help them remove the barriers to

their success. The fourth pillar to our program is **Driving Change**. We inspire and prepare students to tackle issues on campus and in their community that directly affect them. We provide support to student-led campaigns and offer students with opportunities to talk with their representatives.

# STUDENT STORIES

## Meet Dave Zelm



Shortly after high school I enlisted in the US Air Force. My first assignment was at The Pentagon. On September 11, 2001, my office was a mere 200 feet from the impact site at The Pentagon. I escaped uninjured, and was recruited to help with rescue and recovery a few days later. The horror I found in recovering the remains of fallen colleagues remains with me to this day. I couldn't stop thinking about how they suffered, and it made me furious. I bothered anyone that would listen until I was placed in a combat position, deploying to Iraq in 2003, and several locations in the Pacific. My last year in the Air Force was spent training linguists and intelligence officers how to survive in a combat environment.

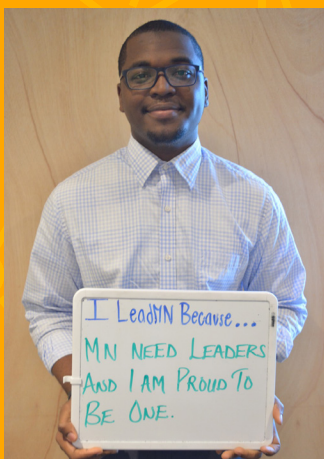
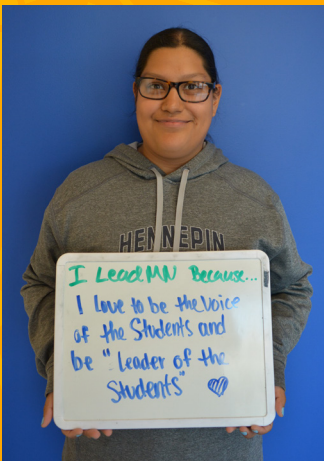
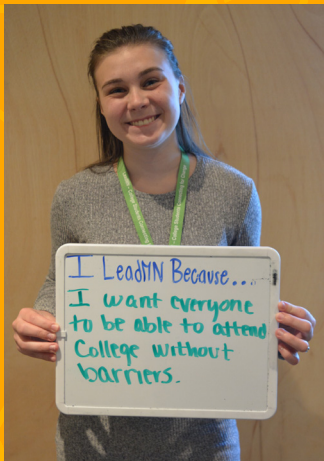
When I left in 2006, I was newly married with a child on the way, with a plan to go to college to be a paramedic. Initially I did very well in school but when my daughter was born my priorities shifted and that, along with a full-time job, made it difficult to concentrate on schoolwork. I began to notice a creeping depression and anger in myself, and much of the time my thoughts were consumed by the war and horrors I had witnessed at The Pentagon. My grades suffered, my marriage crumbled, and I became isolated from my family and friends.

I continued on this path for nearly 5 years. I knew I had to get out of the emotional abyss I found myself in, so I sought counseling. It was very difficult for a long time, but little by little, I began to forgive myself, and believe in my ability to succeed.

Three years later I decided it was time for me to go back to school. In the time the VA took to process my paperwork, I started a small drone services business that is now doing very well. In January 2017, with less than a week to spare, the VA finally was ready to let me attend classes at Inver Hills Community College. This time it felt different. I was far more confident to contribute to classes, and better organized to complete my homework. I still had issues with time management, so I decided that between my business and financial aid, I could afford to quit my job. The sudden increase in available time energized me, and I became highly involved on campus, regularly attending the VALOR (veterans) club, and Student Senate. My contributions to those groups gained traction and support, and by the end of the semester, I had been elected president of both clubs. This had proved it for me.

**I had conquered my fears, and invested in myself, and through this journey, I found that I had immense power over my life, and clawed my way up from rock bottom.**

I realized that fear is an illusion, and failure is never the end. I will never stop fighting, because for me, there will be no limit for what I can achieve. When you decide this to be true for yourself, it becomes your reality.





# MARK M. WELTER CENTER FOR LEARNING

This year we opened the Mark M. Welter Center for Learning within the LeadMN office in West St. Paul. This Center is a state of the art training facility where students learn leadership skills to realize their potential, see beyond what they thought was possible for personal success, and drive community-wide change.

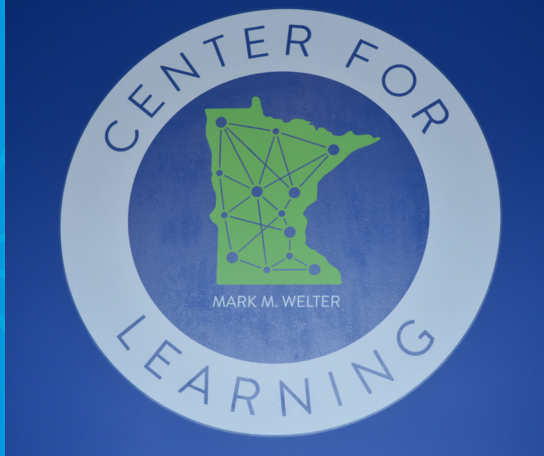
The \$300,000 renovation transformed a large storage area into a 125-person auditorium that is complete with three large screen televisions to view presentations, an interactive screen sharing platform that allows members of the audience to share their screen with other participants for collaboration, and online streaming capabilities that allow us to connect students from all over the state with the programming. The renovation also included the addition of two conference rooms that can fit up to 20 people. The space is already being used to host trainings for student senates and to prepare incoming leaders from across the state through the streaming platform.

## Dr. Welter's Inspiration for the Center

Dr. Welter believes passionately that each civilization borrows ideas and customs from each other and then builds upon that. It is the idea that no country is first, but that we are all depositors and withdrawers to that world bank of knowledge. It is this vision that led

Dr. Welter to want to create the Center for Learning so students could gain the skills that they need to not only be citizens of Minnesota, but also citizens of the world. The center will host programs with interactive trainings and guest lectures from key community speakers that students would not normally be exposed to in their part of the state.





This would not have happened without the generous gift from Mark M. Welter.

Four years ago we partnered with the Minnesota State system and Dr. Welter to create the Mark M. Welter World Citizen Award. Since then, the scholarship has helped over 190 students to have a better understanding of the interconnected world that we live in, while giving them financial support to achieve their dreams.

Chad Conway, a student at Southwest Minnesota State University said, “I appreciated this scholarship opportunity more than any other scholarship for which I have ever applied. Every one of my other scholarship applications required that I write an essay attempting to boast about why I am the best person in the world to be receiving the scholarship funds. In contrast, this scholarship was more like an opportunity. It was an opportunity to learn something that I did not yet understand. Moreover, it even gave me the chance to share my new understanding with those willing to read my essay. LeadMN should offer additional activities of this nature.”

Thanks to a generous bequest from Mark Welter, we will be able to offer the Mark M. Welter World Citizen award for generations to come. This gift will have a lasting legacy in the lives of students, their families, and our entire community.

**PICTURED ABOVE:**

Mark M. Welter in front of the new office sign for the Mark M. Welter Center for Learning located in West St. Paul, Minnesota.

# STRATEGIC PLAN

In the spring of 2016, LeadMN conducted a yearlong process to gather student and community input on the direction that we should go over the next five years. We laid out five strategic priorities that will help strengthen our impact and engage an even larger number of students throughout the entire state.

**GOAL 1** Develop a robust leadership curriculum that empowers our student leaders to collaboratively solve problems, become independent thinkers, and exhibit creative leadership skills.

**PROGRESS** – Partnered with community organizations like Campus Compact and more campus advisors to expose students to content experts that help them develop their leadership skills.

**GOAL 2** Develop and foster a culture of equity and inclusion within LeadMN and the Minnesota State system.

**PROGRESS** – Student leaders participated in the Intercultural Development Inventory to build their cultural intelligence. LeadMN underwent an internal equity assessment resulting in the creation of an organizational equity plan. The plan was developed with student input and works to ensure that equity is at the center of everything we do. In coordination with our goal of diversifying curriculum, the Equity and Inclusion team developed trainings and programs related to inclusion and diversity; including campus diversity plan assessment and safe space ally training. Finally, the organization set a strong foundation for advancing equity at the system level through various actions: testifying at board meetings, participation in the Student Diversity Taskforce, and the proposal of four key priorities that the board must achieve in order to address the opportunity gap.



“ LEADMN TEACHES ME SKILLS THAT I NEVER THOUGHT I’D GET. IT HELPED MY DEVELOPMENT AS A LEADER AND AS A PERSON WITH THINGS LIKE PUBLIC SPEAKING, ANALYTICAL THINKING, AND FUTURE PERSONAL DRIVE.

**GOAL 3** Organize students to advocate for Minnesota’s community and technical colleges to develop a student-centered approach in higher education by increasing the accessibility, affordability, and quality of higher education.

**PROGRESS** – Fully integrated grassroots advocacy trainings help students more effectively advocate for change on their campus and in their community. Students also launched the Groots effort, which is a network of students from across the state that are advocating for the legislative agenda.

**GOAL 4** Improve organizational effectiveness through coordinated stakeholder engagement and outreach.

**PROGRESS** – The rebranding effort gathered student input to help us better define what our student association is. This valuable input helped us gain insight into the needs of students and strengthened our effectiveness in addressing those needs through our programming. The updated brand has helped us develop a story of LeadMN that will inspire and engage more students to be involved with this amazing organization.

**GOAL 5** Ensure that LeadMN has an effective governance model that encourages a collaborative relationship between the LeadMN Board and Executive Director to work toward shared goals.

**PROGRESS** – We have redesigned the onboarding process for student leaders to help them better understand their roles and create accountability measures that will help prepare them for their future careers.

## PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE OF LEADMN

In 2015, longtime MSCSA Executive Director Justin Klander left the organization to work for his alma mater, Bemidji State University. His ten years at the helm of the organization saw major accomplishments with the purchase of the new office building located in West St. Paul. The new building gave students a headquarters to come together to learn and strategize how to effectively advocate for students throughout the state.

One important accomplishment during his tenure was the growth of the MSCSA scholarship fund from \$30,000 to \$350,000. The money raised is having a huge impact on student leaders by making college more affordable for them.

As Executive Director, Justin truly changed the lives of the students that he coached and mentored throughout his years. As a former student leader at Mesabi Range College-Virginia, Justin genuinely cares about college students and understands the challenges that they face in balancing school, work, and the responsibilities of being a student leader. He spent countless hours developing these students to become the state's next leaders.



**PICTURED ABOVE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:** Inaugural Executive Director Brent Glass, current Executive Director Mike Dean, and former Executive Director Justin Klander at the Welcome Minnesota State Chancellor Malhotra event at the LeadMN office.

That torch has been passed onto Mike Dean, who is no stranger to higher education or student advocacy. Mike started out like many of our students by being recruited into student government in the first few months of college. The skills that he learned had a huge impact on developing him to be a leader. Mike sees this role as a way to give back and develop Minnesota's next generation of great leaders.

Previously, Mike worked for the University of Minnesota where he engaged alumni, faculty, staff, and students to support the U of M's legislative request. Mike then went onto to launch his own strategic communications firm that specialized in helping higher education institutions develop grassroots programs to build public support for their legislative requests.

# TUITION FREEZE FOR **6** STRAIGHT YEARS

For community and technical college students, tuition has essentially been frozen for six straight years.



**OVER 5,000 LETTERS** were sent to legislators and the governor

## Excerpt from StarTribune Article - June 21, 2017

Before Wednesday's vote, Minda Nelson, president of the state colleges student association, appealed to the trustees to reject any tuition increase.

"Forty-eight dollars may seem like a low number to you," she said. "To us, \$48 is a week's worth of groceries. ... It's a box of diapers. Even a slight tuition increase will put a substantial strain on our bottom line."



# OVER **12,500** STUDENTS

pledged to vote in the 2016 General Election

We set a new LeadMN record with the most number of students pledging to vote thanks to the 12 student interns and 100 volunteers that reached out to students statewide.



### **CENTURY COLLEGE**

won the voter cup for most number of pledges on campus.

### **MINNESOTA WEST - PIPESTONE**

won the voter cup for the highest percentage of students who pledged.

## OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

# PASSING DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION REFORM



We worked with legislators to mandate that Minnesota State develop a plan to reform the Developmental Education process to reduce the expense and time that it takes for students to complete these classes.



**SETUP 65**  
meetings with legislators

Making the

# OPPORTUNITY GAP A PRIORITY

Student leaders pushed the Minnesota State system to make the opportunity gap a top priority with the incoming Chancellor. President Minda Nelson told the Minnesota State Board of Trustees, "We want to be a partner in addressing these issues, but that requires engagement from the Board and the new Chancellor. Our students will no longer accept silence from this board and will continue to speak out about inaction."



In October 2016, we sent the board four recommendations that they must take to address the opportunity gap and we will continue to advocate for these priorities.

### The recommendations are as follows:

- The creation of a system-wide equity plan
- Doubling the size of the system's Equity and Inclusion Office
- Applying an equity lens to the Board of Trustees
- The creation of benchmarks and timelines to develop more culturally competent curriculum



## LEADERSHIP CURRICULUM

This year we identified four topic areas we wanted to focus on while creating the leadership curriculum. We invited a variety of notable speakers from different organizations to share their expertise on these topics with students. The areas included:



**LEADERSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT**



**EQUITY**



**ADVOCACY**



**PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

John Parker-Der Boghossian, the Equity and Inclusion Education Manager at Rainbow Health Initiative, joined us at the Incoming Leader Training to discuss intercultural competence. Students had the opportunity to take the Intercultural Development Inventory assessment and create action plans on how to develop new leadership skills.

At the September Student Leadership Conference, students spent an entire day dedicated to voter engagement training presented by Wellstone Action. The day included an overview of voter registration, pledge cards, and the Get Out The Vote (GOTV) campaign. Students practiced doing class raps, connecting their story to voter engagement, and discussed GOTV best practices.



“

WITH LEADMN I FOUND MORE SELF-CONFIDENCE AND AWARENESS. I AM LEARNING TO OVERCOME MY ANXIETY AND FEARS SO I CAN SHINE.

We had the pleasure of hearing from three keynote speakers at our Minnesota Student Leadership Summit in October. Each speaker shared valuable leadership lessons. Dr. Jody Janati, a faculty member from the University of Minnesota, taught students about conflict and 101 things to “say and do” during difficult interactions. During this highly engaging keynote, students were able to practice taking part in difficult conversations during an improv session with Dr. Janati. We also offered 35 workshops during our breakout sessions with partnering organizations such as Minnesota Campus Compact, Associated Bank, Minnesota State System Office, Minnesota State Board of Trustees, Rainbow Health Initiative, MoxzClicks, and faculty and staff from the two-year public community and technical colleges. Students gained skills in personal finance, equity and inclusion, conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, networking, team building, and more.

Students were encouraged to ‘find their flow’ at the January Student Leadership Conference. The Institute of Applied Human Excellence teamed up with LeadMN to help students understand the science and practice of their personal leadership journey. Dr. Bruce Jackson, founder of The Institute of Applied Science, and facilitator Steve Robinette, helped students discover the tools they need to be effective in their academic, personal, and professional lives.

Thank you to all our partners that shared their knowledge and expertise with the students. The skills these students gain is invaluable to their success in their personal and professional lives. The year was a success and we look forward to evolving the leadership curriculum during the 2017-2018 academic year.



“

I CAME TO THE UNITED STATES IN 2016 AS AN IMMIGRANT AND HAVE FACED STEREOTYPICAL MISCONCEPTIONS AND FINANCIAL CHALLENGES. HOWEVER, NONE OF THESE CHALLENGES STOP ME FROM CHASING MY DREAMS AND MAKING POSITIVE CHANGES IN THE COMMUNITY. THE LEADERSHIP SKILLS I HAVE GAINED FROM LEADMN ENABLE ME TO WORK TOWARDS MAKING MY DREAMS A REALITY.

- Haroon Hayder

## STUDENT STORIES



### Meet Josh Hansen

My childhood was not much different than a lot of others, there are an unfortunate number of people who could sympathize with dealing with the problems of alcohol addiction in their parents, snowballed with divorce. I grew up in a strict house with a stepfather who essentially forced me into the world of literature as a form of escape from the oppression of real life. My school life was in turmoil in the beginning; I wasn't all that used to being around other children. But when I realized that rewards come with academic excellence, I began to forge a path.

The problems began during high school. I still had the grades but I didn't have the determination to be in school, this coupled with a disease I contracted caused my attendance to slip and my graduation to be threatened. I quit.

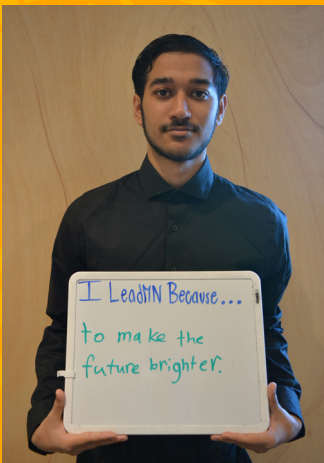
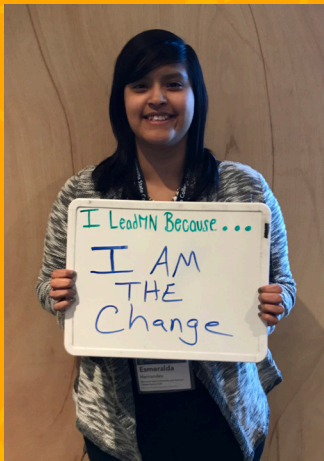
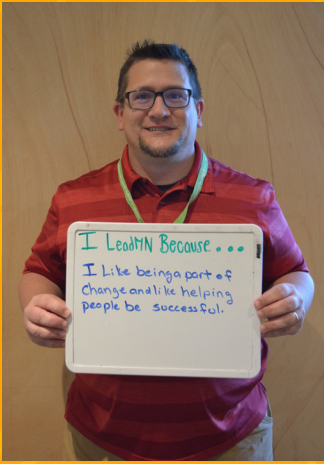
The next near-decade, I spent my life making excuses about why I left high school and blaming everything and everyone besides myself. I became a different person. I developed an unhealthy addiction to marijuana and painkillers. I was in a bad place with no desire to get out. And then came the fateful day, the day before Thanksgiving 2015. My whole life shattered in an instant when I lost my brother, someone whom I could always talk to, someone who always believed in my potential.

A blood clot, a tiny insignificant thing, took one of the brightest lights in my life. I could have turned to more drugs. I could have questioned everything. I could have recalled my old methods of blaming others. But would Billy be proud of me if I didn't make the same effort he did to better his own life? I knew the answer was no.

I cleaned up my act (drug-free for over two years now) and realized I was tired of not making a difference.

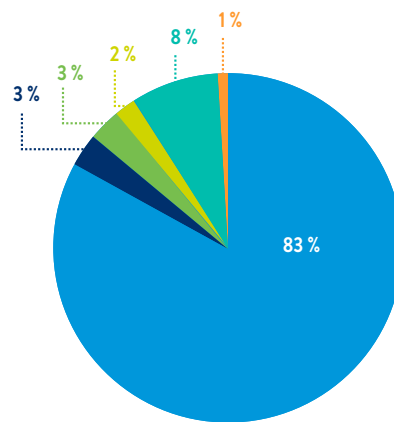
**In a four-month period, I gained my GED at the highest levels and registered for M-State Moorhead. My acceptance brought out my love for education at all levels.**

My second semester I decided my next step to stop being tired of not making a difference, was getting involved in student senate. That year I got my first position on the executive board. By the end of the semester, I knew that I could do more and I was desperate to do so. I ran for President of student government and won. I got involved with LeadMN and found out that they advocate not only for affordable college education but also for the rights of students with all different types of struggles. I have never been busier in my life but my fatigue over these things makes such a difference. I have never been more proud to be a member of an organization.



## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

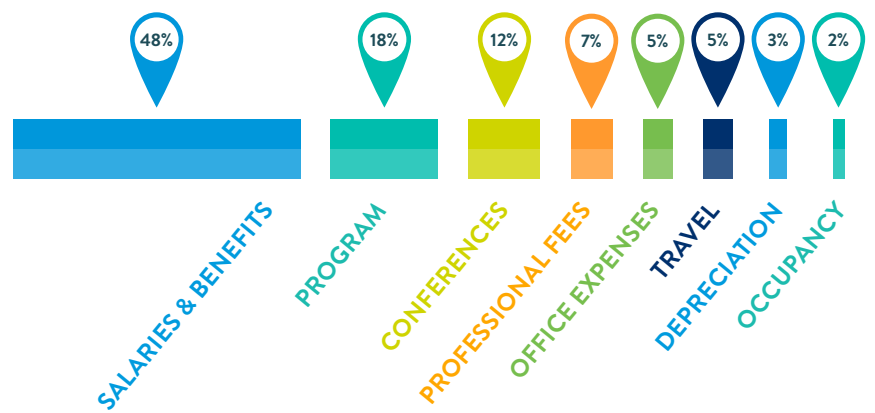
LeadMN is in a strong financial position and this past year we had the highest operating revenue ever for the organization because of increased support from foundations. LeadMN is exploring additional ways to raise revenue by renting out the space in our new Center and providing direct services to our students through customized trainings.



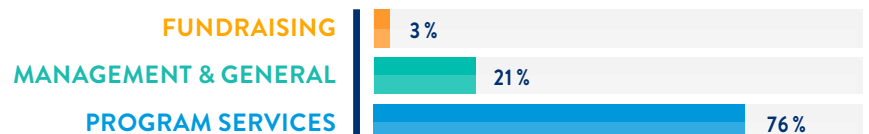
**INCOME: \$1,004,762**

STUDENT FEE INCOME	83%
INVESTMENT INCOME	3%
SPECIAL EVENTS, NET	3%
CONTRIBUTIONS	2%
GRANT INCOME	8%
REIMBURSEMENTS	1%

**EXPENSES: \$989,240**



## FUNCTIONAL ALLOCATION OF EXPENSES

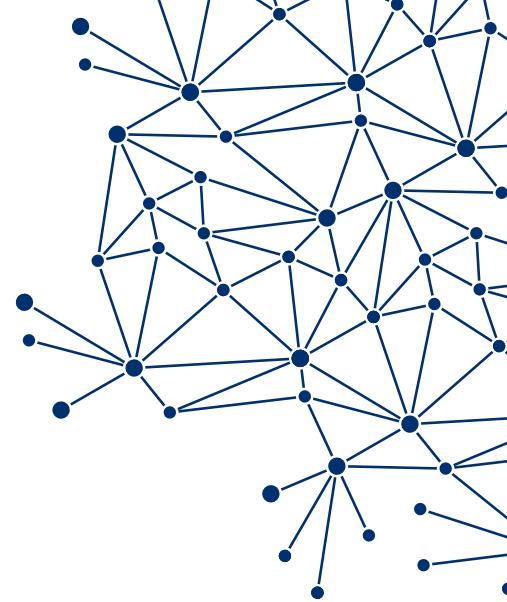




**LEADMN**

COLLEGE STUDENTS  
CONNECTING FOR CHANGE

1515 ROBERT ST. S., WEST ST. PAUL, MN 55118



“ LEADMN HELPED ME THE MOST BY TEACHING PROFESSIONALISM. THE ORGANIZATION SHOWED ME WHAT BUSINESS LOOKS LIKE AND THE APPROPRIATE WAYS TO DEAL WITH A VARIETY OF COMPLEX SITUATIONS.

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## THANK YOU DONORS

Thank you to all our financial donors who contribute to the success of our amazing organization! Your generosity is building our state's next generation of great leaders.

### \$20,000-\$39,999

The Saint Paul Foundation  
Mark M. Welter

### \$5,000-\$9,999

C. Charles Jackson Foundation

### \$1,000-\$4,999

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John O'Brien  
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