

Presidential Search Profile



RIDGEWATER
COLLEGE

A member of Minnesota State



**CREATING OPPORTUNITIES.
CHANGING LIVES.**

HUTCHINSON | WILLMAR | ONLINE | [RIDGEWATER.EDU](https://www.ridgewater.edu)

ABOUT US

Ridgewater College, named to reflect the region's glacial ridge and abundance waterways to symbolize connection and opportunity, is part of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System.

Serving central Minnesota with campuses in Willmar and Hutchinson, Ridgewater offers more than 50 program options, including career and technical degrees and certificates, multiple fully online programs, and robust liberal arts and transfer pathways.

Ridgewater is a future-focused institution committed to creating opportunities and changing lives through innovative education and workforce development. It is accredited by the High Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

OUR COMMUNITIES

Central Minnesota offers the perfect blend of small-town charm and big-city convenience. With scenic lakes, vibrant communities, and a strong sense of connection, it's a region where quality of life truly shines. Residents enjoy affordable living, excellent schools, and Easy access to outdoor recreation year-round—making it an ideal place to live, work, and play.

Willmar is a thriving hub in the heart of Kandiyohi County, known for its beautiful lakes and welcoming atmosphere. The community boasts strong healthcare facilities, a regional airport, and a growing economy supported by manufacturing, healthcare, and education. With family-friendly neighborhoods and a rich mix of cultural events, Willmar offers a dynamic lifestyle in a picturesque setting.

Hutchinson, often called "Minnesota's Hometown," combines small-town warmth with modern amenities. Nestled along the scenic Crow River, it's a paradise for outdoor lovers with miles of biking and hiking trails, golf courses, and nearby lakes. Excellent schools, strong healthcare services, and a robust business community make Hutchinson a great place to work and raise a family—all while enjoying the charm and convenience of a close-knit community.

Guiding Principles

Our guiding principles reflect the values that shape Ridgewater College's culture and drive our commitment to students, employees, and the communities we serve.

- Enterprising
- Empowerment
- Excellence
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Trust and Respect
- Collaboration
- Curiosity and Creativity
- Accountability

Ridgewater is committed to providing welcoming campuses that value and respect the unique experiences, needs and contributions of individuals and to ensure that each student, employee and community member has a genuine opportunity for participation and success.

Mission

Ridgewater empowers diverse learners to reach their full potential and enrich their lives through personalized and relevant education in an accessible, supportive and inclusive environment.

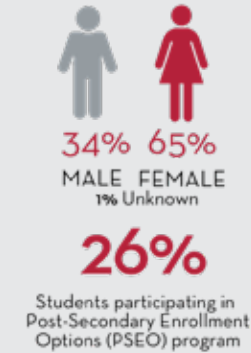
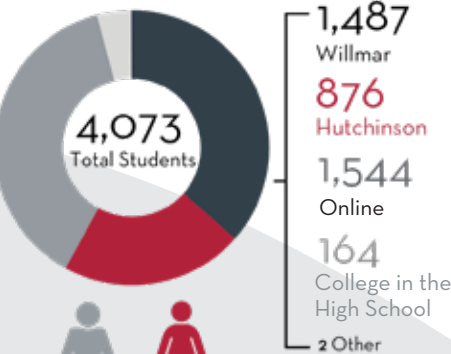
Vision

Ridgewater is a student-centered educational leader focused on innovation, excellence and affordability.

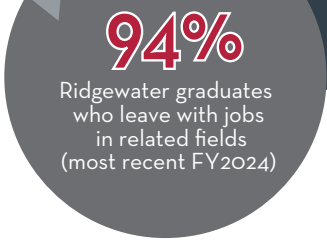
OUR STUDENTS. OUR COMMUNITY.

FAST FACTS FY25 ENROLLMENT

STUDENT BODY



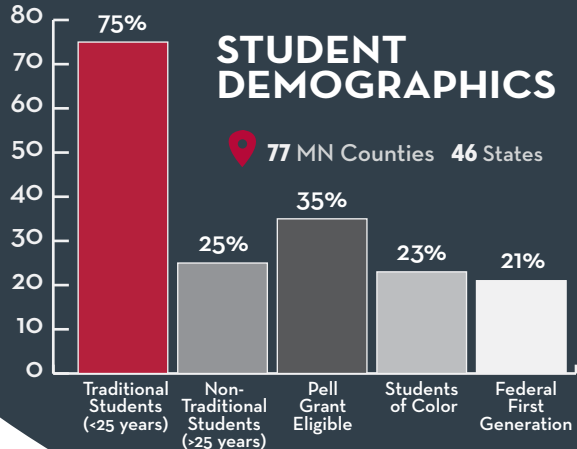
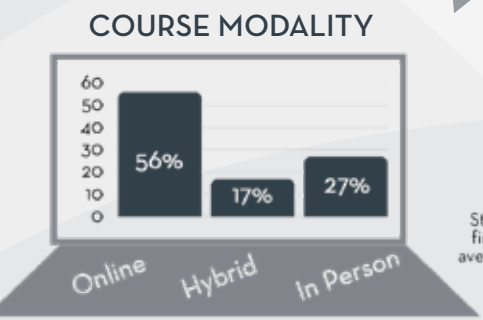
PLACEMENT



ACADEMICS



HOW STUDENTS LEARN



STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

TOP HIGH SCHOOLS: Willmar, Hutchinson, Dassel-Cokato, Glencoe-Silver Lake, New London-Spicer, Litchfield, Atwater-Grove City, and Waconia

TOP MAJORS

- > Liberal Arts & Sciences
- > Nursing
- > Agriculture
- > Electrician
- > Veterinary Technology
- > Cosmetology
- > Welding

FINANCIAL SUPPORT



STUDENT LIFE

Student life is more than just classwork. Student clubs and activities are available to keep students involved and engaged to make sure the college experience is as unique as the individual student.

Both campuses offer active Student Senates, Phi Theta Kappa honor societies, nine-hole disc golf courses, fitness centers, multicultural clubs, and art galleries.



NCAA DIVISION III ATHLETICS RIDGEWATER WARRIORS

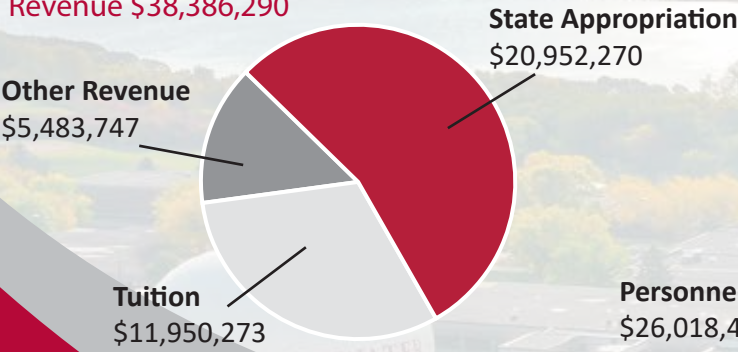


Ridgewater College is a member of the Minnesota College Athletic Conference (MCAC) in the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) and offers varsity sports including volleyball, men's and women's basketball, wrestling, baseball, and softball. Co-rec sports include clay target trap shooting and E-sports.

RIDGEWATER'S FINANCIALS

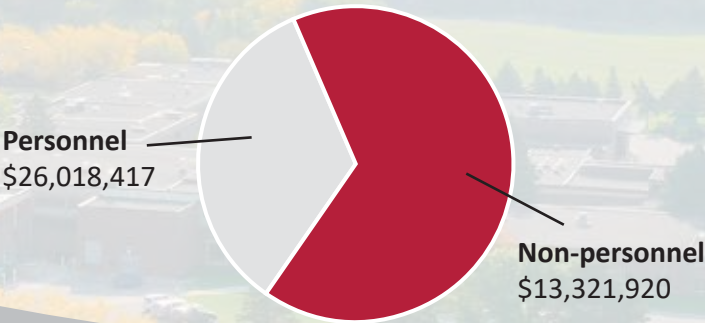
FY24 REVENUE

Total Revenue \$38,386,290



FY24 EXPENSE

Total Revenue \$39,340,337



The Ridgewater College Foundation plays an essential role in strengthening Ridgewater’s mission by inspiring generosity, expanding educational opportunity, and advancing academic excellence.

Through the generous support of our donors, the Foundation raises, manages, and distributes resources that enhance and promote the educational opportunities Ridgewater provides to students across our region.

Together with alumni, employees and community members, the Ridgewater College Foundation empowers the College to provide an exceptional, student-centered educational experience, preparing graduates to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

ANNUAL
REPORT
CARD2025
Ridgewater College Foundation

81



Industry
Partners

Between the Agriculture Program &
Veterinary Technology Program

\$5,831

BOARD GIVING

\$24,768

RAISED THROUGH



EMPLOYEE
CAMPAIGN

77

NEW

DONORS

156 Named
Scholarships and
8 New
Scholarships

Awarded
\$328,673
in Scholarships

389

SCHOLARSHIP
Awards

\$42,040

Raised

Ridgewater
Cares
Unrestricted
Fund

\$101,117

CASH-FUNDED
ENDOWMENT
GROWTH

3,315 GIFTS
367 Donors

4

CUSTOMIZED TRAINING

Your workforce training partner.

Customized Training at Ridgewater College specializes in delivering flexible, industry-driven workforce training opportunities and solutions tailored to the needs of businesses and individuals in Central Minnesota. Our mission is to foster personal and professional growth by providing customized education that supports economic development and career advancement.

Our Customized Training unit has expanded its capacity to design and deliver educational experiences that serve members of the community and employers across the state and beyond. By embedding a skill development lens into program design, we've created environments that are aligned to workforce needs and intentionally structured to support engagement, accessibility, and long-term student success.

Customized Training is helping the college innovate in how it meets workforce demand, expands access, and delivers meaningful, future-focused education that benefits learners, employers, and the communities we serve.

WORKFORCE SNAPSHOT FY25



Enrollments
3,516



**Employers
Served**
199

Specialty Areas

- CDL
- EMR
- EMS
- Nursing Assistant
- CPR/First Aide



**Hours of
Training**
62,792

ECONOMIC IMPACT



As a future-focused institution, Ridgewater College works to develop creative solutions to meet the challenges of a changing workforce and student needs. Ridgewater College also supports students by providing academic advisors and coaches, counselors, tutoring, disability services, a community resource director, and food pantries.

Ridgewater College alumni living and working in Minnesota continue to make a positive economic impact after graduation. These graduates are an integral part of the Minnesota workforce, impacting the economy not only through their spending but also through the extra earning power generated by their Ridgewater College degree.

Over their 40-year career, Ridgewater College alumni will generate \$3.2 billion in the economy. In very real ways, Ridgewater College is intertwined in the communities it serves. As one of the community's largest employers, Ridgewater faculty and staff reach students, alumni, and neighbors through civic and volunteer work.

Ridgewater College Alumni
will generate
\$3.2 BILLION
in Economy Over 40-years



MINNESOTA STATE

Extraordinary Education. Exceptional Value.

Ridgewater College,
A member of Minnesota State

At Minnesota State we provide the opportunity for all Minnesotans to create a better future for themselves, for their families, and for their communities.

With 26 community and technical colleges and seven state universities on 54 campuses, Minnesota State serves nearly two-thirds of the entire state's undergraduate student population, and we serve more Black, Indigenous, and students of color than all higher education providers in the state, combined.

We are committed to equitable outcomes for all our students, and in 2019 committed to eliminating educational equity gaps at every Minnesota State college and university by the year 2030. Achieving this goal, called Equity 2030, is a moral imperative, and an economic imperative for our state as our population continues to grow more diverse, and will ensure Minnesota has the workforce it needs for generations to come. We are working toward meeting our Equity 2030 goal through hard work, robust data analysis, programs to improve outcomes for all students, and partnerships with community organizations, employers, and the state legislature.

Minnesota State employs 14,560, most of whom are represented by one of several bargaining units and personnel plans. The bargaining units include:

- Inter Faculty Organization
- Minnesota State College Faculty
- Minnesota State University Association of Administrative and Service Faculty
- American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
- Minnesota Association of Professional Employees
- Minnesota Government Engineers Council
- Middle Management Association
- Minnesota Nurses Association

GOVERNANCE

The 15-member Board of Trustees of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities is appointed by the Governor and has policy responsibility for system planning, academic programs, fiscal management, personnel, admissions requirements, tuition and fees, and rules and regulations. Learn more on the Board of Trustees page at [***MinnState.edu/board***](https://minnstate.edu/board).

CHANCELLOR

Under the direction of the Board of Trustees, the chancellor is the executive officer of Minnesota State and is responsible for providing educational leadership to the 33 colleges and universities of Minnesota State, ensuring effective and efficient management and operation so that Minnesota State can meet the current and long-term educational and workforce development needs of all Minnesotans. Learn more on the Chancellor's Office page at [***MinnState.edu/system/chancellor***](https://minnstate.edu/system/chancellor).

MINNESOTA STATE

Extraordinary Facts

Minnesota State is making a difference. From the students we serve, to our business partners, to those we employ, chances are good you or someone you know has benefited from the work of your state colleges and universities.

- Minnesota State is the third largest system of state colleges and universities in the United States and the largest in the state with 26 colleges, 7 universities, and 54 campuses
- We serve 270,000 students each year, with more Black and Indigenous students, as well as students of color, attending our colleges and universities than all other higher education providers in Minnesota combined
- We offer the lowest tuition in Minnesota, with 55% of our college students and 59% of our university students receiving financial aid
- We employ more than 14,560 dedicated faculty and staff focused on student success
- We provide 3,968 academic programs, including 1,074 fully online programs
- We have more than 12,000 customized and specialized training, occupational, and professional classes
- We award more than 34,650 degrees, certificates, and diplomas annually
- We have 7,000+ employer partnerships across Minnesota State colleges and universities
- 64% of Minnesota resident students who are pursuing an undergraduate credential are doing so at a Minnesota State college or university
- 86% of Minnesota State students take jobs in a related field of study
- Minnesota State contributes over \$8.4 billion to the state's economy



CORE COMMITMENTS

The core commitments of Minnesota State are to ensure access to an extraordinary education for all Minnesotans, be the partner of choice to meet Minnesota's workforce and community needs, and deliver to students, employers, communities and taxpayers the highest value/most affordable higher education option.

CORE VALUE

It is the core value of the Minnesota State to provide an opportunity for all Minnesotans to create a better future for themselves, for their families, and for their communities.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Ridgewater College seeks a committed, approachable, and enterprising president who places students at the center of the institution's mission, fosters a culture of collaboration and engagement among faculty, staff, and administrators, and strengthens partnerships with business, governmental, and educational communities.

Ridgewater College operates two campuses in Willmar and Hutchinson and offers high quality academic programs in liberal arts, the skills trades, agriculture, and health sciences. The college plays a vital role in the region's economic vitality and workforce development through sustained partnerships with business, government, education, service organizations, and other nonprofit entities.



Ridgewater College is firmly committed to advancing equity, as demonstrated through the ongoing implementation of its Equity 2030 Blueprint. This work reflects the college's commitment to serving and supporting the success of a diverse student population and cultivating an inclusive institutional culture. The successful candidate will be an effective communicator and listener, a values-driven leader who is visible at campus, community and system level, and a proactive change agent deeply committed to student success.



LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Strategic Leadership

The president will continue to lead and advance Ridgewater College's 2025-2028 Strategic Plan. This includes regular assessment of progress, incremental refinement of strategies, and meaningful engagement of faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders to further institutional effectiveness and student success.

A central priority will be sustaining enrollment growth and aligning resources to support that growth. The president will provide fiscal stewardship by aligning financial planning with enrollment trends, program development, instructional innovation, and facility maintenance. Balancing in-person and online learning modalities, enhancing academic offerings, and responding to regional workforce needs will remain essential. The president will continue to strengthen relationships with regional employers and support customized training initiatives, while fostering collaboration, employee engagement and readiness for emerging technologies.



Student-Focused Leadership

Ridgewater College is recognized for meeting students where they are and supporting their academic, professional and personal growth. The president will champion student access to academic, financial, and basic needs resources to help them overcome barriers and achieve their educational goals.

Authentic communication and engagement with students will be essential to understanding their experiences and aspirations. The president will promote student-centered policies and practices that support persistence, completion, transfer, and workforce readiness.

Transparent and Inclusive Leadership

The president will model leadership grounded in transparency, collaboration, accountability, cultural awareness, and innovation. This leader will support faculty and staff in responding to student interests and programmatic needs while fostering a culture of trust, shared responsibility, and continuous improvement.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Community Builder and Partner

Ridgewater College maintains strong partnerships with business, governmental, educational, and residential communities. The president will provide leadership in sustaining and expanding these relationships to advance the college's mission and regional impact.

As a compelling communicator and relationship builder, the president will engage philanthropic support to help students overcome financial and personal barriers to success. The president will engage regional stakeholders as the college evaluates current and future facility needs to ensure the college supports evolving workforce demands, academic programs, and student service needs.

Advocacy

Advocacy for students, employees, and the institution is essential to fulfilling Ridgewater's College's mission. The president will articulate the college's economic, educational, and social impact to diverse stakeholders and advocate effectively at the local, regional, and state levels, including within the Minnesota State system.

Commitment to Equity

Ridgewater College is deeply committed to equity, access, and fairness throughout the student life cycle. The Willmar campus serves a significantly diverse student population, including many students of Somali and Latino heritage, reflecting the college's responsibility to design systems and supports that respond to cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity. Both campuses serve substantial populations of first-generation and nontraditional students who encounter barriers to success, requiring intentional, equity-minded leadership.

The president will ensure all students have access to academic, financial, and personal supports necessary to achieve their goals. Equity and fairness are embedded throughout the institution and are reflected in the work of faculty, staff, and administrators, and the new president will support and advance these efforts.



PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH QUALIFICATIONS

The successful candidate will demonstrate most, if not all, of these qualifications:

- Strong leadership skills necessary to sustain the vision of Ridgewater College
- Progressively responsible experience in higher education administration
- Experience and leadership with shared governance, demonstrating a collegial and collaborative management style, including understanding and appreciation for a collective bargaining environment
- Experience in program and curriculum development, fundraising, governmental relations, and accreditation process
- Demonstrated fundraising ability and building relationships with key stakeholders
- Demonstrated successful fiscal management and working with large and complex budgets
- A record of actions reflecting concern for the success and well-being of students
- A record of building public/private partnerships between education and business and industry, government entities, and philanthropic and community
- Demonstrated ability to lead in an innovative, data-driven environment and encourage out-of-the-box thinking
- Ability to lead the campus in an authentic, collaborative, and transparent manner, with integrity and respect and a proven track record of being a visible, engaged, and accessible presence with students, alumni, community leaders, and friends
- Demonstrated understanding of best practices and experiences in addressing equity in student access and outcomes
- Willingness to work with K-12 systems and other Minnesota State colleges and universities
- Exceptional oral and written communication skills effective with a broad range of audiences
- An earned doctorate is preferred but not required

How to Apply

ACCT Search is assisting Ridgewater College in this search. The search will be conducted with a commitment of confidentiality of candidates until finalists are selected. To ensure full consideration, application materials should be received no later than February 6, 2026. The position will remain open until filled.

To apply, go to www.acctseaches.org and upload the required documents. Candidates will need to have the following information or materials available to complete the application:

1. A letter of application (not to exceed 5 pages) that succinctly demonstrates how the candidate's experience and professional qualifications have prepared them to serve as the President of Ridgewater College.
2. A current resume including an email address and cellular telephone number.
3. A list of 8 references. For example, 2 to 3 supervisors, 2 to 3 direct reports, and 2 to 3 faculty and/or staff members from current and former institutions.

For additional information, nominations, or confidential inquiries, please contact:

**Jack Daniels, Ph.D, Search Consultant, ACCT,
jedaniels30608@gmail.com or (217) 415-1950.**



RIDGEWATER
COLLEGE

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