System publications style guide

In writing news releases and publications intended for external audiences, the Public Affairs Division of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system generally follows the Associated Press Stylebook. Our preferred authority on spelling is the Webster’s New World Dictionary. Copies of both are available at bookstores, and reference copies are available in our office.

This reference page contains style guidelines specific to Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and addresses some frequently asked style questions. For advice on issues not covered in this guide, consult the AP stylebook or call the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Public Affairs Division.

Acronyms and abbreviations

Avoid the use of the abbreviation "MnSCU" in publications. Instead, spell out Minnesota State Colleges and Universities in the first reference, and use "Minnesota State," "the Minnesota State system" or "the system" in subsequent references. Do not capitalize the word "system" in the organization's name.

In general, minimize the use of acronyms as much as possible. If you use them, use them properly. Here is what the Associated Press stylebook says about acronyms: "Do not follow an organization's full name with an abbreviation or acronym in parentheses or set off by dashes. If an abbreviation or acronym would not be clear on second reference without this arrangement, do not use it."

Incorrect: Professional development by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) has a significant impact on education in all regions of the state. Consequently, the impact of CTL's contributions to higher education in Minnesota goes well beyond the CTL's direct influence.

Correct: Professional development by the Center for Teaching and Learning has a significant impact on education in all regions of the state. Consequently, the impact of CTL's contributions to higher education in Minnesota goes well beyond the center's direct influence.

Address at Wells Fargo Place

Use the following address for the Office of the Chancellor on all publications and Web sites:

Minnesota State Colleges & Universities
Wells Fargo Place
30 7th St. E., Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101-7804

American Disabilities Act requirements

ADA requirements The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System publications intended for the public must include this phrase:

"Upon request, this publication is available in alternative formats by calling one of the following:

"General number: (651) 296-8012
Toll-free: (888) 667-2848
TTY: (651) 282-2660"

Affirmative Actions/Equal Opportunity language

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities publications intended for the public must include this phrase:

"The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system is an Equal Opportunity employer and educator."
Ampersand (&) in institution names
The ampersand may be used in titles and labels and on charts and other graphics. In text, spell out "and."

Boilerplate language
All system publications intended for public distribution must include the following language:

"Upon request, this publication is available in alternative formats by calling one of the following:

"General number: (651) 296-8012
Toll-free: (888) 667-2848
TTY: (651) 282-2660"

"The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system is an Equal Opportunity employer and educator."

Campuses
See entry under number of campuses.

Campuswide
No hyphen.

Data
A plural noun, it normally takes plural verbs and pronouns (these data, the data show). However, collective nouns are those that denote a unit, and they take singular verbs and pronouns. In some usage, data can fall into this category and would take singular verbs and pronouns (the data shows, the data is).

Database
One word, referring to the collection of all data used and produced by a computer program.

e-
When used in connection with an educational program, use an "e" followed by a hyphen and the program; do not capitalize the "e" and do not capitalize the first letter of the next word.

Examples: e-business, e-learning, e-commerce, e-mail.

e-mail
Short for electronic mail. The AP Stylebook calls for a hyphen. Also, see e- entry above.

English-as-a-Second-Language
Hyphenated and capitalized as shown when used as an adjective (example: The English-as-a-Second-Language program has a long waiting list) but do not hyphenate if it stands alone (example: The state has a shortage of teachers of English as a Second Language). ESL is acceptable on second reference.

Equal Opportunity language
See entry for Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity language.

Information technology or information technology services
Do not use IT or ITS as an acronym; spell out the words.

Interactive television
Do not use ITV as an acronym; spell out the words.

Internet, intranet
Capitalize Internet but do not capitalize intranet.

Institution names
The following list includes the names of system institutions in alphabetical order, along with campus locations. Please note the proper use of hyphens and commas in institution names; it's Minnesota State University, Mankato (with a comma), Minnesota State University Moorhead (no punctuation) and Minnesota State College - Southeast Technical (with a hyphen). Some comprehensive colleges have the phrase "A Community and Technical College" as part of the official name; in practice, however, the usage is rarely used. This list is effective December 11, 2005.

Alexandria Technical College (Alexandria)
Anoka-Ramsey Community College (Cambridge, Coon Rapids)
Anoka Technical College (Anoka)
Bemidji State University (Bemidji)
Central Lakes College (Brainerd, Staples)
Century College (White Bear Lake)
Dakota County Technical College (Rosemount)
Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (Cloquet)
Hennepin Technical College (Eden Prairie, Brooklyn Park)
Hibbing Community College* (Hibbing)
Inver Hills Community College (Inver Grove Heights)
Itasca Community College* (Grand Rapids)
Lake Superior College (Duluth)
Mesabi Range Community and Technical College* (Eveleth, Virginia)
Metropolitan State University (St. Paul)
Minneapolis Community and Technical College (Minneapolis)
Minnesota State College - Southeast Technical (Red Wing, Winona)
Minnesota State Community and Technical College (Detroit Lakes, Fergus Falls, Moorhead, Wadena)
Minnesota State University, Mankato (Mankato)
Minnesota State University Moorhead (Moorhead)
Minnesota West Community and Technical College (Canby, Granite Falls, Jackson, Pipestone, Worthington)
Normandale Community College (Bloomington)
North Hennepin Community College (Brooklyn Park)
Northland Community and Technical College (East Grand Forks, Thief River Falls)
Northwest Technical College** (Bemidji)
Pine Technical College (Pine City)
Rainy River Community College* (International Falls)
Ridgewater College (Hutchinson, Willmar)
Riverland Community College (Albert Lea, Austin, Owatonna)
Rochester Community and Technical College (Rochester)
St. Cloud State University (St. Cloud)
St. Cloud Technical College (St. Cloud)
Saint Paul College (St. Paul)
South Central College (Faribault, North Mankato)
Southwest Minnesota State University (Marshall)
Vermilion Community College* (Ely)
Winona State University (Winona)

* Hibbing, Itasca, Mesabi Range, Rainy River and Vermilion make up the Northeast Higher Education District, a consortium of five state colleges.
** Northwest Technical College is aligned with Bemidji State University.

**Institutions**
See entry under number of institutions.

**IT/ITS**
Do not use as an acronym for information technology or information technology services; spell out the words.

**ITV**
Do not use as an acronym for interactive television; spell out the words.

**Legislative requirements**
A number of laws and requirements apply to publications by state agencies (such as Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and its member institutions). Here is a summary:

- **Filing procedures**: For all reports and publications, whether they are required by the Legislature or not, one copy should be filed with the secretary of the Senate, once copy with the chief clerk of the House of Representatives and six copies with the Legislative Reference Library. (Minnesota Statutes section 3.195a)

- **Blanket distribution prohibited**: Do not send copies of reports or publications to legislators unless they have requested them. It's the law. According to Minnesota Statutes section 3.195b, a public entity "shall not distribute a report or publication to a member or employee of the Legislature unless the entity has determined that the member or employee wants the reports or publications or the member or employee has requested the report or publication. This prohibition applies to both mandatory and voluntary reports and publications." Summaries of reports, however, may be distributed to all legislators: "A report or publication may be summarized in an executive summary and distributed as the entity chooses." Also, "distribution of a report to legislative committee or commission members during a committee or commission hearing is not prohibited by this section."

- **Duplicate delivery prohibited**: "A report or publication produced by a public entity may not be sent to both the home address and office address of a representative or senator unless mailing to both addresses is requested by the representative or senator." (Minnesota Statutes section 3.195c)

- **Photographs prohibited**: Pictures of elected and administrative officials, and "any other pictorial device calculated to or tending to attribute the publication to an individual instead of the department of state government from which it emanates" should not be included in annual reports or other publications. (Minnesota Statutes 16B.52)

- **Attribution**: A report or publication paid for by public funds must carry the imprimatur of the agency under whose authority it is issued, but it may not carry the name of an official in any way that might imply attributing the publication to any person, except where certification of the officer is required for authenticity of the document. Also, no report or publication may contain any notice that it is sent with "the compliments" of an administrative or executive officer and may not carry letters of personal greeting from an official. (Minnesota Statutes 16B.52)

- **Printing and paper requirements**: Whenever "practicable," a public entity shall: purchase uncoated office paper and printing paper, purchase recycled content paper with at least 10 percent postconsumer material by weight; purchase paper which has not been dyed with colors, excluding pastel colors; purchase recycled content paper that is manufactured using little or no chlorine bleach or chlorine derivatives; use no more than two colored inks, standard or processed, except in formats where they are necessary to convey meaning; use reusable binding materials or staples and bind documents by methods that do not use glue; use soy-based inks, and produce reports, publications and periodicals that are readily recyclable within the state resource recovery program. Also, "a public entity shall print documents on both sides of the paper where commonly accepted publishing practices allow." (Minnesota Statutes 16B.122)

- **Reports required by the Legislature**: "A report to the legislature must contain, at the beginning of the report, the cost of preparing the report, including any costs incurred by another agency or another
level of government." (Minnesota Statutes 3.197)

This provision applies only to reports mandated by the Legislature. The author’s intention was to
discourage legislators from requesting reports by requiring that the cost of preparing the report be
disclosed. The Legislature never has specifically defined what costs must be included. Some agencies
only report the cost to print the report. Others report the cost of printing, mailing and staff time to
prepare the report itself, but not necessarily the staff time to do the work that is being reported on.
Bottom line: what you include is a judgment call, but do include a statement about the cost if you are
preparing a report that is required by the Legislature. Example of a statement that would comply: "The
cost of preparing this report was approximately $4,500, including printing and mailing."

**Logo**

If you use the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities logo, you must follow the system's **Graphic
Identity Standards Manual**, available on the this Web site. System logo downloads also are available in
the logos/identity standards area of this Web site.

**Minnesota State Colleges and Universities**

Spell out the entire name on first reference (and do NOT follow it with MnSCU in parentheses - see acronym
entry.) In subsequent references, do not use the MnSCU abbreviation. Instead, use "Minnesota State," "the
Minnesota State system" or "the system." In text, do not use the ampersand. The ampersand may only be
used in titles, labels and on charts or other graphics (see following entry). When using the word "system"
next to the name of the organization, do not capitalize it.

**Minnesota State Colleges & Universities**

The ampersand construction is in the logo and it may be used in titles and labels and on charts and other
graphics. In text, however, use Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.

**Names**

See entry under institution names.

**Non**

Do not hyphenate words beginning with the prefix non unless the word would normally be capitalized.
Examples: noncredit, nonbasic, nontraditional, nonbreakable, nonjudgmental, but non-American,
non-Congressional, non-Shakespearean.

**Northeast Higher Education District**

The Northeast Higher Education District is a single institution with five colleges: Hibbing, Itasca, Mesabi
Range, Rainy River and Vermilion. In publications intended for student recruitment or marketing, the names
of the colleges within the district are listed separately, with an asterisk to indicate their membership in the
district; the district itself is not listed as an institution (since students cannot enroll in the district). For other
uses, such as legislative or board publications, the district is listed as the institution with the member colleges
indicated in text or footnote.

**Number of campuses**

The System has 53 campuses. This number includes only campuses owned by the system, not off-site
centers. See also entry for number of system institutions.

**Number of institutions**

The system comprises 32 institutions. The Northeast Higher Education District (Itasca Community College,
Hibbing Community College, Mesabi Range Community and Technical College, Vermilion Community College
and Rainy River Community College) counts as one institution because it has a single president. Likewise,
Northwest Technical College and Bemidji State University count as one institution because they are now
aligned together with a single president. As of December 2005, the system has six community colleges,
seven technical colleges, 12 combined community and technical colleges and seven state universities.

**Office of the Chancellor**

Do not abbreviate.

**online**

One word, no hyphen.

**Photographs**

In general, photographs taken of people in a public place may be used in publications without the consent of
the people who are photographed. However, for photos intended for publication in advertising or promotional
material, it is advisable to have recognizable photo subjects sign a consent form agreeing to allow their
images to be used in these materials.
(NOTE: See also legislative requirements entry)

If a photograph is electronically altered in any way, it should be labeled "photo illustration."

**View sample photo consent form**

**statewide**
One word, no hyphen.

**systemwide**
One word, no hyphen.

**tuckpointing**
One word, no hyphen.

**underrepresented**
No hyphen.

**webmaster**
Do not capitalize.

**Web site, Web, Web-based**
Capitalize Web when referring to the World Wide Web.

**-wide**
No hyphen (despite what your spellcheck will indicate): systemwide, campuswide, statewide.

**workforce**
One word, no hyphen.