

MnSCU Name Change Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why is the MnSCU name changing?

A: To make our system name easier to remember and make it easier for prospective students to more fully understand our colleges and universities. We aren't changing MnSCU's legal name from Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, as that name is written in state statute. Instead, we are changing what we currently call it – MnSCU – to Minnesota State.

Q: Are all the colleges and universities going to have to change their names?

A: No college and university is being asked to change its name. However, colleges and universities might wish to consider a name change to one that more closely aligns with the new system name, so as to more fully benefit from collaborative marketing efforts.

Q: What does this mean to us at the colleges and universities?

A: Colleges and universities will continue to brand and market themselves autonomously, but will include a system affiliation identifier on college and university materials including signs, publications, etc. This is not a new requirement – board policy already exists that requires that the colleges and universities show their affiliation with the system. This policy has not been uniformly followed in the past, however. It will now will be implemented uniformly.

Q: What evidence supported this decision?

A: The Board of Trustees voted to change the name because of research conducted in 2014 that showed the following:

- The vast majority of prospective students, their parents, and members of the community don't understand the difference between MnSCU's colleges and universities, the U of M, for-profits and the privates, and they also had no knowledge of the word "MnSCU"
- The same research showed respondents believe Minnesota State Colleges and Universities means ALL the above
- The public does not understand Minnesota State Colleges and Universities offer an extraordinary education, and are the most affordable, accessible and highest value options in the state

In addition:

- Each year, Minnesota loses about 21% of its high school graduates who go on to post-secondary education to colleges and universities outside our state
- Each year, about 20,000 Minnesotans choose for-profit schools, risking a lower quality education that may be five times more expensive than the education offered by MnSCU's colleges and universities, and of far-less quality

Q: How will changing what the system calls itself help prospective students know our colleges and universities better?

A: Making the name easy to remember is just a first step. This new name will serve as the foundation for collaborative marketing that tells the shared story of all our colleges and universities: quality, affordability, accessibility and how we generate the talent Minnesota needs to prosper. This effort will help us:

- Increase awareness of our colleges and universities with the intent to grow enrollment
- Improve understanding of our shared attributes of quality, accessibility, affordability, and talent
- Develop opportunities to share how our colleges and universities are working together
- Maximize our collective resources to be more effective and strategic in telling our story

However, the strategy is to put college and university brands at the forefront, with Minnesota State as an “endorser,” and not to conflict or compete with campus brands and logos.

Q: How will this effort work?

A: A similar strategy is the relationship between the NFL and its teams. Individually each team has a strong brand. The NFL does not work to undermine the relationship that fans have with their individual teams; it's an endorsement of the quality of the team – a member of a premier league.

Similarly, the Minnesota State endorsement strategy is designed to help prospective students understand that the colleges and universities of Minnesota State are the ones that offer an extraordinary education that is affordable, accessible and of high value. The strategy will NOT undermine the relationship between the colleges and universities and their students, alumni, and other partners.

Q: Why is the system spending money on changing its name when the money could be used for things like student scholarships or increased pay?

A: Financial challenges are exactly why working to collaboratively market our colleges and universities, and using an endorsement strategy, is so important. Our collective power and resources will be leveraged to increase awareness and understanding of our colleges and universities, what makes them different, the value that they offer, and how they are all affiliated with one another – resulting in increased revenue. In fact, if the effort garners just 58 new students system-wide who enroll for two years, 100% of the investment we made in developing the research and the name/logo development will be recouped. If we garner 200 students, our colleges and universities will gain \$2.1 million in new revenue – and it grows from there.

Q: Isn't calling the system Minnesota State going to cause confusion with the colleges and universities that also have "Minnesota State" in their name – Mankato, Moorhead, M-State?

A: In time, as colleges and universities begin to use the system identifier, it will bring more clarity. Because this is an endorsement strategy, similar to how the NFL endorses the quality and affiliation among its various teams, "Minnesota State" will be a way for each college and university to affiliate themselves with the system. Those who have Minnesota State in their name have a more obvious tie to the system, which will help prospective students further understand how the college or university is affiliated with the wider system and all the transfer opportunities available within it.

Q: Did the Board of Trustees consult with anyone before making this decision?

A: This was an extremely consultative process. A brand steering committee was formed and includes three university presidents, three college presidents, 17 campus-based communications and marketing professionals, representatives from the system's collective bargaining units, AFSCME, MMA, MAPE, MSCF, MSUAASF, and the system's student associations, MSCSA and MSUSA. (The IFO was invited to participate but declined to do so.)

Q: What happens next?

A: No printed materials that have the old MnSCU brand should be thrown out. Rather, they should be used up or replaced when the content becomes dated, just as normally would take place. A brand standards manual is being developed and changes to electronic letterhead, e-mail signatures, and signs at the system office will take place over next few months. At the campuses the key communicators will receive the brand standards manual

when it is complete and they will apply the new brand affiliation identifier within the natural course of campus business.

Here's a timeline of what to expect:

- **Ongoing:** Use up letterhead and other printed collateral with current MnSCU logo
- **July – August, 2016:** Consultation on System Procedure 3.23.1, brand standards manual is finalized, system office identity change
- **September 1, 2016 (or earlier):** Implement System Procedure 3.23.1, revise electronic letterhead, include new name on newly printed mailers and brochures
- **October:** Second reading Board Policy 3.23
- **December 31, 2016 (or earlier):** Colleges and universities change their websites to reflect the new system name, System web site is updated to reflect new brand