Inaugural Conference of the Maverick Center for Financial Success
The Annual Conference on Financial Success
Minnesota State University, Mankato
April 11, 2025

Final Program

Maverick Innovation Gateway

9:30 am	Ribbon Cutting

CSU 253/4/5

10:30 am	**Check-In**
11 am	**Welcome and Opening Remarks** Ishuan Li Simonson, Co-Director, Maverick Center for Financial Success Seung Bach, Dean, College of Business, Minnesota State University, Mankato Daniel Hiebert, Co-Director, Maverick Center for Financial Success Sherri Trombley, Director, Advisor Services Business Consulting & Education, Schwab Foundation **Keynote Speaker** Robert H. Kaitz, President and CEO, BestPrep "Money - It's Personal"
12:00 pm	**Lunch**

Concurrent Sessions

CSU 253/4/5

1 pm – 2:30 pm

Agribusiness Panel Session---From Field to Finance: How the rural economy, agribusiness and developing state policy is shaping Minnesota's economic landscape.

This session explores the interplay between agricultural production, rural development initiatives, and evolving policy frameworks driving Minnesota's economy. This panel examines how traditional farming communities, innovative agribusiness enterprises, and state-level economic policies are collectively transforming Minnesota's financial landscape. Attendees will gain insights into the substantial economic contributions of the agricultural sector, the challenges and opportunities facing rural economies, and how targeted policies are working to bridge urban-rural divides to create a more resilient state economy.

Panel Organizer: Shane Bowyer, Minnesota State University, Mankato

Introduction: DeQuindre Spencer, Minnesota State University, Mankato
Panel Moderator: Tina LaBrun, Southern Agricultural Center of Excellence
Panelists:
Julie Tesch, Center for Rural Policy and Development
Chris Fitzloff, Compeer Financial
Kevin Paap, Minnesota County Commissioner District 4
Brett Feldman, United Prairie Bank

2:45 pm – 4:15 pm **Small Business Succession Strategies Panel Session**

This session focuses on business succession planning, ensuring a sustainable business and a successful exit for owners and leaders. Experts from diverse backgrounds will provide practical advice on ownership and leadership transitions, including developing "middle portion", identifying and nurturing potential leaders for a smooth transition, efficiently transferring business wealth, and addressing the personal and financial goals of business owners post-transfer.

Panel Leader: Daniel Hiebert, Minnesota State University, Mankato
Panelists:
Sarah Harstad, 112 Advising
Jared Holt, Ascent Advisors
Matt Lessard, SBDC-Mankato
Matt Bouts, Journey Well Financial Partners
Steve Lear, Affiance Financial

CSU 202 Cooper Room

1 pm – 2:30 pm **Research on Financial Literacy**

Explore the latest research in financial literacy, financial wellbeing, and financial education.

Session Presenters:
Jae Min Lee, Minnesota State University, Mankato
"Time Preference, Financial Knowledge, and Financial Well-Being"
Nguyen Nguyen, Minnesota State University, Mankato
"Technology and Happiness: the Association Between Online Budget Planner and Financial Satisfaction"
Jennifer Schultz, Minnesota State University, Mankato
"Publishing Finance Teaching Ideas---The Mary Poppins Project"
Xinyan Shi, University of North Carolina, Pembroke

"Socioeconomic Determinants of Financial Literacy: Evidence from Robeson County, North Carolina"

2:45 pm – 4:15 pm **Personal Finance Curriculum in Minnesota: from 9th to 12th Grades and Beyond**

Join this panel to explore the current Minnesota state curriculum standards for personal finance and ongoing discussions about updates to the Minnesota State General Education Goals. The discussion will address best practices, varied approaches to teaching personal finance, and resources and expectations for instructors to support students in achieving financial literacy.

Panel Leaders: Gwenn Wolters, South Central Service Cooperative, and Ishuan Li Simonson, Minnesota State University, Mankato
Panelists:
Andrew Scott, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse
James Blahnik, Mankato East
Curtis Doell, Mankato West
Jared Kegler, Faribault
Jackie Doering, Maple River
Kari Bluth, South Central College
Haley Geinnotta, Junior Achievement North

CSU 203

1 pm – 2:30 pm **Financial Planning Panel Session**

Join us to learn how the CFP designation can help people, investors, and your future career path

Panel Leader: Steve Blume, Charles Schwab-Advisor Services
Panelists:
Matt Cosgriff, SageView Advisory Group
Spencer Davies, BGM
Colby McIntire, Grit Family Office
Aidan Ryan, Fortress Financial Group
Ryan Spaude, Sequoia Financial Group

2:30 pm – 4:15 pm **Financial Planning Networking Event**

Students meet and greet with financial planning industry leaders!

Session Organizers: Reese Prellwitz, Brooke Nelson, and Daniel Hiebert Minnesota State University, Mankato

Appetizers and refreshments will be provided. Join us anytime to network with industry leaders.

CSU 204 Nichols Room

1 pm – 2:30 pm **Financial Aid and Loan Repayment: Workshop**

Do you know how you are covering the costs of college? What does student loan repayment look like after graduation? In this interactive session, we will discuss the different ways to reduce loan indebtedness during college and cover strategies for financial success after graduation.

Presenter:
Rachel Sherlock, Minnesota State University, Mankato

2:45 pm – 4:15 pm **Salary Negotiation Session: The Art & Science of Starting Strong in Your First Job**

Join us in this session to learn essential strategies for negotiating your salary in your first full-time job: understand how to research and evaluate compensation packages; gain confidence in communicating your value during salary discussions; explore tips for handling counteroffers and knowing when to negotiate; and receive practical advice on starting your career on a strong financial footing.

Presenters:
Danielle Duffey, Minnesota State University, Mankato
Melissa Giersdorf, Federated Insurance
Nick Wilson, Federated Insurance

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Creative Planning

Department of Family Consumer Science

Financial Planning Club

Region Nine

Northern Companions

South Central Small Business Development Center

Women's Leadership Alliance

Conference Steering Committee Members

Shane Bowyer

Dana Brigson

Samantha Campa

Danielle Duffey

Daniel Hiebert

Maria Kalyvaki

Jae Min Lee

Pakou Lee

Ishuan Li Simonson

Brooke Nelson

Ashley Niss

Reese Prellwitz

Rachel Sherlock

Biography of Program Panelists and Presenters

Opening Session

Robert H. Kaitz

As Minnesota's longest tenured nonprofit CEO, Bob Kaitz has dedicated his life's work to preparing students to be career focused and financially capable. After completing his B.A. in Social Work and B.S. in Business at the University of Minnesota in 1971 and receiving his M.A.T in Secondary Education at the University of St. Thomas in 1973, Bob was hired by Breck School in Minneapolis to conduct a three-year pilot project to develop 'best practices" for teaching economic and business education. The results of the pilot project created the framework for BestPrep. Bob left Breck School in 1976 to become the organization's President & CEO and has directed the nonprofit for nearly five decades.

During the past 49 years, the organization has gone from serving four schools and 275 students to serving 700 schools and 35,000 students and teachers on an annual basis. The original budget has grown from $37,000 to more than $2.8 million.

Under Bob's supervision, BestPrep has created a variety of successful programs, which today include Classroom Plus, Financial Matters, Minnesota Business Venture, The Stock Market Games, eMentors, and most recently Cloud Coach, a program to help improve the graduation rates of Minneapolis and St. Paul public school students. In addition, Bob has developed fundraising events that host more than 1,000-1,500 guests.

Annually, BestPrep mobilizes 5,000+ volunteers across its programs. Fifty companies are represented on the board of directors providing financial and volunteer resources to help BestPrep accomplish its mission of preparing students with business, career, and financial literacy skills.

Sherri Trombley

Sherri Trombley is a Director of Business Consulting & Education for Schwab Advisor Services. She oversees the strategic direction for advocacy of the RIA industry with colleges and universities across the country. Sherri manages Schwab's University Grant and RIA Talent Advantage Student Scholarship Programs – building partnerships with universities to cultivate the next generation of talent. Under her leadership, the University Grant Program has given over $29M in grants to universities and institutions with the Scholarship program receiving the industry award for Outstanding Achievement in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion from WealthManagement.com. Sherri also serves as a business liaison for the Schwab SIE University Partnership Program representing Schwab Advisor Services.

Since joining Schwab in 1999, Sherri has held leadership roles in service, advisor transitions, and program management. She has built relationships with universities and institutions across the country and is passionate about building partnerships with organizations while advocating about the tremendous opportunities in the RIA industry to the next generation. Sherri also provides additional time as a thought partner to several college/university and other 501©3 organizations.

Agribusiness Panel Session

Brett Feldman

Brett is originally from Renville, MN and attended Minnesota State University, Mankato, graduating with a finance degree in 2015. While in college, Brett was a participant in the Integrated Business Experience (IBE) program, which led to an internship as a Credit Analyst at United Prairie Bank and he has been in various credit analyst roles with United Prairie Bank ever since. Brett is currently Vice President / Relationship Manager. United Prairie Bank is one of the largest community bank lenders in the nation.

Chris Fitzloff

Chris has always had a passion for agriculture and its connection to everyday life. As a relationship manager and VP at Compeer he has had the opportunity to develop ways to champion the impact agriculture has in our region. Chris Fitzloff is Vice President Core Markets at Compeer Financial. He serves on the organization's Groundbreaker Committee. Chris graduated from Minnesota State University, Mankato with a Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing and a minor in Business Administration. Chris joined Farm Credit in 2006. For 14 years he managed a lending portfolio in the Mankato area. Chris currently is VP managing the Mankato/Lakeville sales team consisting of 13 counties in southern Minnesota.

Chris is a board member of the Brown County Corn Growers Association, the Brown County Soybean Association, St. Joseph the Worker finance committee, IRRA External Advisory Board, Minnesota State Mankato, and an Eagle Scout Alumni. Chris was born and raised on a small farm in southern Minnesota and has been involved in agriculture for his entire business career. Growing up he was involved in various sports, Boy Scouts and 4-H. Chris and his wife Megan live in the Mankato area and have three children Taylor, Riley, and Jack. Chris is an avid sports and outdoor fan. He enjoys spending time being involved and coaching his kids' activities.

Tina LaBrun

Tina LaBrun is the Executive Director of the Minnesota State system Center of Excellence, which includes seven member colleges and universities. Tina has more than 15 years of experience working with faculty, staff and students in higher education and has been a South Central College Farm Business Management instructor since January 2009. She is also past president for the National Farm and Ranch Business Management Educator Association. She holds a bachelor's in agriculture economics and animal science from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and a master's in education from the University of Minnesota. Tina was born and raised on a dairy/crop farm in south-central Minnesota; she and her husband are active producers and live on a cattle farm in Lafayette.

Kevin Paap

Kevin Paap is County Commissioner for District 4 of Minnesota. Kevin served as the president of Minnesota Farm Bureau, the state's largest farm organization for 16 years. As a passionate advocate for agriculture and my community Kevin served on American Farm Bureau Board of Directors, Agriculture Research, Education, Extension, and Technology Transfer Advisory Panel, The Center for Rural Policy and Development Board of Directors, FBL Financial Group Board of Directors, Farm Bureau Life Insurance, and Property and Casualty Insurance Company Boards, Governor's Council on Biofuels, Minnesota FFA Foundation Board of Trustees, and State of Minnesota Biodiesel Task Force. His past leadership roles include National Children's Center for Rural Health and Safety, Steering Committee Member, Farm Safety for Just Kids, Minnesota AgriGrowth Council Board of Directors, and Minnesota Soybean Growers Association State President.

Julie Tesch

After 25-years of living in urban areas, Julie decided it was time to return to her roots in rural Minnesota. Julie became the President & CEO in 2018 after working in Washington, DC as the executive director of the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture. She has been involved in non-profit management and supporting the rural lifestyle her entire career through her work with the National FFA Alumni Association and the Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council (MAELC). She is a proud graduate of the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities where she received her bachelor's degree in applied economics and her Master of Education in agricultural education.

At the Center, Julie is the chief relationship builder, manages a board of 19-members, oversees the overall management of the center, and is the pied piper of living in rural Minnesota.

Outside of work she enjoys volunteering for 4-H & FFA activities, discovering her family history through genealogy, traveling the world and discovering craft breweries and wineries across Minnesota.

Small Business Succession Strategies Session

Matt Bouts

As the leader of Journey Well Financial Partners, Matt has been a financial planner for 16 years. He is passionate about developing authentic relationships with clients, staff, and collaborative professional partners. He is a Certified Financial Planner™ and a Certified Exit Planning Advisor. In 2023 he was recognized as a Forbes Best-in-State Next-Generation Advisor and in 2025 his team was recognized as a Forbes Best-in-State Wealth Management Team. Using collaboration with professionals in diverse disciplines, his team provides complex advice strategies and a broad range of solutions to business owners, high net worth individuals, and their families. He grew up in Fairbanks, Alaska before moving to Minnesota and enjoys the outdoors, all winter and summer long. The most important titles he holds are Dad and Husband to his three kids and wife, Emily. With over 17 years of experience, Matt and his team work closely with business owners to develop comprehensive financial plans that align with their business goals, ensuring successful transitions. This often involves collaborating with the owner's team of accounting, legal, and business professionals.

Outside of work, Matt and family enjoy cruising the lake in their pontoon and traveling across the country and the world, immersing in the different cultures.

Sarah Harstad

Sarah Harstad is the owner of 112 Advising, a strategic planning and leadership development organization. In this role, she brings over 20 years of experience working in privately held businesses and teaching at the university level to organizations across the Midwest. Dr. Harstad partners with business owners, executives, and leaders as coach and consultant, focused on leader development, strategic planning, family business, and succession or exit preparation. Her recent research has focused on two areas. The first is the leader development in succession and knowledge transfer processes in family-owned businesses and the second is barriers and opportunities in business succession and exit in Minnesota. Dr. Harstad holds a PhD in Organizational

Leadership, an MBA (from Minnesota State University, Mankato), and a bachelor's degree in business administration. Dr. Harstad is also a Certified Exit Planning Advisor (CEPA).

Daniel Hiebert

Dan Hiebert, PhD, CFP® is a nationally recognized family business succession planning leader. With over twenty-five years' experience as a financial planning practitioner and researcher, Dan is an associate finance professor and Financial Planning Program Director for Minnesota State University-Mankato, as well as the co-director of the Maverick Center for Financial Success at Minnesota State University. In addition, Dan has taught business succession strategy and business Valuation courses at The American College. His co-authored paper was awarded the national 2023 Montgomery-Warschauer Award from the Journal of Financial Planning. This prestigious award recognizes the most outstanding contribution to the betterment of the profession.

Jared Holt

Jared Holt is CEO at Ascent Advisors. As co-founder and Managing Director of Ascent Financial, Jared is focused on developing an organization that provides family businesses with transition planning and consulting services, with an emphasis on agriculture and family farms in general. Jared's background is rooted in financial planning and helping others. Since 2012, Jared has been providing transition planning services to family businesses across the country. After co-founding Ascent in 2015, he quickly started to develop a team with time tested processes and philosophies that have worked for thousands of families. Outside of work, Jared enjoys spending time with *his* family, and coaching his kids in the various sports they participate in.

Steve Lear

Steve Lear, ChFC, CLU, BFA™ at Affiance Financial, is a visionary, a philanthropist, a community activist and a noted financial advisor based in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota.

In addition to his financial planning firm, Steve has founded or co-founded several small businesses and philanthropic organizations.

Steve devotes much of his time and energy to his community. He's an active volunteer – speaking, participating in workshops and sitting on the boards of local organizations. In recognition of his community service, Steve received BestPrep's Bunzel Volunteer of the Year Award in 2010, and Sabes JCC's Community Innovator of the Year Award in 2015.

His latest project is collaborating with the Minnesota Council of Economic Education (MCEE) to implement new legislation requiring high school students to take a personal financial literacy class before graduation. The goal is to prepare all students to make good financial decisions as they enter college or the workforce.

Matt Lessard

Matt is advisor, board member, founder, and consultant at SBDC-Mankato. Matt is an accomplished executive leader and entrepreneur with more than two decades of experience in business management, financial analysis and oversight, business development, private equity, and international business. He specializes in business valuations and strategic business succession planning, helping organizations navigate complex transitions with confidence and foresight.

Financial Literacy Research Session

Jae Min Lee

Jae Min Lee is an Associate Professor of Consumer Studies in the Department of Family Consumer Science at Minnesota State University, Mankato. She received her Ph.D. in consumer sciences from The Ohio State University. Her research area includes financial vulnerability and inclusion, financial literacy, financial stress, and financial well-being. She is currently an associate editor of *Family & Consumer Sciences Research Journal* and an editorial board member of *Journal of Financial Counseling and Planning*.

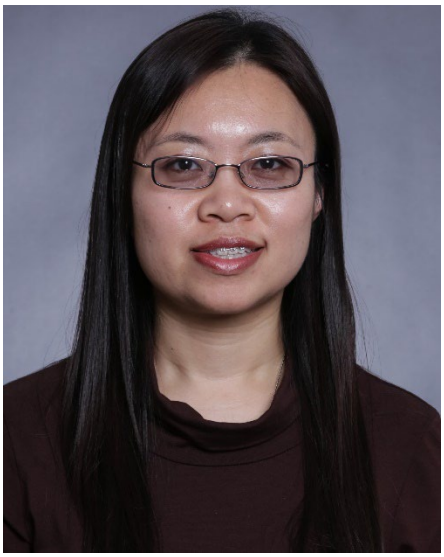
Nguyen Nguyen

Nguyen Nguyen is an Assistant Professor of Finance at Minnesota State University, Mankato (MNSU). She joined MNSU in the Fall of 2021 after earning her Ph.D. in Finance from Auburn University. Nguyen has several years of experience as a banking regulator at the Deposit Insurance of Vietnam and as a lecturer at the Foreign Trade University. Her research interests include financial literacy, financial inclusion, fintech, and banking.

Jennifer Schultz

Jennifer L. Schultz is M.B.A. Director and Associate Professor in Management and Entrepreneurship at Minnesota State University, Mankato. She earned her Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and has 20+ years of experience in management, business, collegiate teaching, and higher education administration. Her research agenda focuses on formal workplace social networks, student attitudes and perceptions of pedagogy, and human resource management topics and has been published in the Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, Journal of Management Education, and Journal of Human Resources Education. She serves on the editorial boards of the Journal of College Teaching & Learning and Organization Management journals and is an Ombudsperson for the Academy of Management's Ethics Committee.

Xinyan Shi



Xinyan Shi is a Professor and Chair in the Department of Economics, Marketing, Entrepreneurship, and Analytics at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. She earned her Ph.D. in Economics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and has been a faculty member at UNC Pembroke since 2008. Her research expertise spans game theory, financial literacy, economic education, behavioral economics, and public economics. She has led multi-institutional, interdisciplinary projects focused on health disparities, economic resilience, and financial empowerment for underserved populations, particularly Native American communities. Since 2019, she has secured over $3 million in external funding as a Principal Investigator (PI) or Co-PI, with support from agencies such as Instructional Connections, the National Institutes of Health, the North Carolina Collaboratory, and the Environmental Protection Agency. Her research has been published in economic journals, including the Journal of Housing Economics, International Journal of Economic Theory, Economics Bulletin, Behavioral Public Policy, and Studies in Microeconomics. Currently, she serves as an Associate Editor for The American Economist, the official publication of Omicron Delta Epsilon, the International Honor Society in Economics.

Personal Finance Curriculum Session

Andrew Scott

Andrew Scott is an Associate Teaching Professor of Finance at the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse (UWL), where he also serves as the Director of the Trust Point Personal Financial Planning Program. He has an MBA in Finance from Southern Illinois University and is currently a PhD candidate in Personal Financial Planning at Kansas State University. His research is focused on behavioral biases in financial decision-making, the effectiveness of financial education, and the financial behavior of young adults. Andrew instructs a variety of undergraduate and graduate finance classes, including personal finance within the UWL general education program and advanced professional financial planning classes within the UWL CFP® board registered program. Andrew is a board member of the Financial Planning Association (FPA) Wisconsin Chapter, works as a Peer Review Team Chair for the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), and serves as the Treasurer of the Outdoor Recreation Alliance (ORA) in La Crosse.

James Blahnik

James Blahnik is an experienced business education professional for the past 9 years. James is a Secondary Business Education Teacher, Department Chairperson, and DECA Advisor. During his tenure with Mankato Area Public Schools, the courses he regularly teaches include Personal Finance, Entrepreneurship, Business Law, Sales & Marketing, and Career Planning. Prior to his career in education, James spent 23 years developing an extensive and accomplished leadership background in corporate and small business.

James graduated from Minnesota State University-Mankato with a Master of Arts Degree in Teaching. He obtained his Secondary Business Education licensure with an emphasis in 5-12 Business Education from Winona State University. James possesses a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business with an emphasis on Management and Leadership from Capella University.

Outside the classroom, James enjoys spending time with his wife and son. He enjoys hobbies that include baseball, flea markets, sports card collecting, biking and cooking. Community involvement is also of great importance to James as he and his wife are active members of the service organization Optimists of MN Valley.

Kari Bluth

Kari Bluth is an instructor in the Office Administration and Technology program at South Central College and has been teaching business education courses since 2007. Before Kari became an educator, she worked in the business world within the insurance and marketing industries as a customer service representative, insurance agent, marketing/technology coordinator, and product manager. She then earned her Master of Arts in Teaching with a Business Education concentration, where she taught Business Education at an area high school for 13 years before transitioning to post-secondary education. Kari earned her Bachelor of Science in Management with a Marketing and Business Administration minor and a Master of Arts in Teaching with a Business Education concentration from Minnesota State University, Mankato

Curtis Doell

Curtis M. Doell is a dedicated business education professional with extensive experience in teaching, coaching, and business management. Currently a Business Education Teacher at Mankato West High School, Curtis has a strong background in leadership, sales, communication, and team management. With past roles as a business owner, college funding consultant, and securities representative, he brings a wealth of knowledge in financial planning, entrepreneurship, and operations. Curtis holds a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science and an MBA. His passion for education, mentoring, and business strategy drives his commitment to student and community success.

Jackie Doering

Jackie Doering is a high school business and personal finance educator at Maple River High School, where she has been teaching for six years. Before teaching she worked at Compeer Financial and received her MBA from the University of Northwestern, bringing real-world experience into the classroom. A Golden Apple recipient and CTE PLC lead, Jackie is passionate about equipping students with essential financial literacy skills. She also creates personal finance resources on Teachers Pay Teachers and works as a marketing consultant for small businesses.

Haley Geinnotta

Haley Geinnotta is the Program Coordinator – Southern MN High School Specialist for Junior Achievement North. Coming into this role after many years in education, she brings a deep understanding of how to support teachers and students in meaningful ways. Haley is passionate about the impact JA has on students, providing hands-on learning experiences that build financial literacy, career readiness, and entrepreneurial thinking. She is dedicated to connecting schools with engaging programs that empower young people with the skills and confidence to thrive in their futures.

Jared Kegler

Jared Kegler is an award-winning business teacher at Faribault High School with a vast array of experience and knowledge in teaching personal finance. He serves as the Head DECA Advisor and has coached multiple sports throughout his career. Jared is passionate about students learning personal finance and holds the W!SE certification and is a Dave Ramsey certified Master Financial Coach. His teams are a regular state finalist at the Minnesota Personal Finance Championships, where they have finished as state runner-up twice. He testified to the Minnesota Senate Education Policy Committee in March of 2023 to make Personal Finance a required semester course for high school

graduation. He was honored by the Minnesota Council on Economic Education as their 2021-2022 high school teacher of the year. Jared attended MSU, Mankato for his B.S. and Ed.S. in Business Education, has an M.Ed. in Business and Industry Education from the University of Minnesota, and is currently finishing his MBA at MSU, Moorhead.

Ishuan Li Simonson

Ishuan Li Simonson is a Professor of Finance at Minnesota State University, Mankato, and co-director of the Maverick Center for Financial Success. She previously directed the Business Analytics Certificate Program. Her leadership roles include President, Vice President, and Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees for Omicron Delta Epsilon, the International Honor Society for Economics (2014–2024), as well as Councilor for the Council on Undergraduate Research, Associate Editor for *The American Economist*, and board member for the Minnesota Academy of Sciences. She has also served as a Peer Reviewer for the Higher Learning Commission. Professor Li Simonson's publications cover topics such as the Marketplace Fairness Act, overeducation and employment mismatch, assessment of college economics programs, and Minnesota's Conservation Reserve Programs. She holds a PhD in Applied Economics from Clemson University.

Gwenn Wolters

Gwenn Wolters serves as the Career & Technical Education Coordinator at the South Central Service Cooperative in North Mankato. In this capacity, she administers the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) grant for the South Central Perkins Consortium. Gwenn brings valuable experience from higher education as a former Director of Admissions, along with diverse leadership experience in the non-profit sector and management of a local small business.

Financial Planning Session

Steve Blume

Steve Blume is a longtime industry leader in the wealth management and investment advisory space. Over his 25 yr career, he has held both client- facing and corporate leadership roles at RBC Wealth Management, Wealth Enhancement, US Bank Wealth Management and Charles Schwab Advisor Services. In his current role at Schwab, he consults and partners with independent Registered Investment Advisors (RIAs) daily on a broad range of topics – from best practices on business development, talent acquisition and technology, to transitioning their practices to the next generation of leaders. Steve lives with his wife and family in the Minneapolis area.

Matt Cosgriff

Matt Cosgriff, CFP® and CPFA, is a seasoned wealth management leader focused on building high-performing advisory teams and delivering exceptional client outcomes. As SVP, Head of Wealth Advisory Services at SageView, he leads a national team of advisors, shaping the firm's approach to comprehensive wealth management.

With experience spanning both wealth and retirement plan advisory, Matt helps bridge strategic growth with advisor development. Prior to SageView, he led the wealth management division at BerganKDV, growing assets from $1B to $2.5B and earning recognition as an InvestmentNews Top RIA to Work for three consecutive years. The firm's success ultimately led to its acquisition by Creative Planning, one of the largest RIAs in the country.

Named to InvestmentNews 40 Under 40, Matt is also a frequent contributor to industry thought leadership, writing for Kitces.com and appearing on various wealth management podcasts and publications. A proud Minnesota State CFP® program and St. Olaf College alumnus, he is passionate about the evolving role of advisors and driving innovation in financial advice.

Spencer Davies

Spencer Davie CFP® works as a financial advisor at BGM, a fee-only Registered Investment Advisor (RIA) in Bloomington, MN, offering a full suite of professional services tailored to high-net-worth families and individuals. Growing up in the area, Spencer attended Minnesota State University, Mankato, earning his bachelor's degree in finance along with a financial planning certificate. Spencer is passionate about strategic planning, empowering households to live their best lives today.

Colby McIntire

Colby McIntire graduated from Minnesota State University – Mankato in 2019 with a degree in Financial Planning. Colby started his career within a small RIA for a year. Then he moved to Iowa and began working at GRIT Family Office and have been there since. Colby is a manager at GRIT Family Office serving ultra-high-net-worth clients in eastern Iowa.

Aidan Ryan

Aidan Ryan is a Financial Advisor at Fortress Financial Group, helping pre-retirees and retirees navigate their financial futures with confidence. He graduated from Minnesota State University, Mankato in 2024 with a degree in financial planning and takes a practical, education-focused approach to guiding clients through important financial decisions.

Ryan Spaude

Ryan Spaude CFP® brings nearly three decades of wealth management experience and a successful track record of helping his clients achieve their financial goals with lasting confidence. As a Certified Financial Planner, he specializes in creating comprehensive wealth management strategies tailored to each person or family's unique aspirations. Ryan is well versed on these wealth strategies and makes complex financial concepts accessible to clients. He aims to both educate and empower clients to make well-informed decisions through an informative process that balances open dialogue with analytical insights and other tailored considerations. Based in Mankato, Minnesota, Ryan and his wife Jennifer have two children. When not serving clients, he can be found exploring Minnesota's outdoors—hunting, fishing, hiking and golfing. He serves on the Minnesota State University-Mankato College of Business Advisory Board and was a former adjunct Professor at the University.

Financial Planning Networking Event

Reese Prellwitz

Reese is a student financial coach, and member of the Student Executive team. He also serves as the Vice President of the Financial Planning Club.

Brooke Nelson

Brooke Nelson is a senior at Minnesota State University, Mankato, pursuing a degree in Financial Planning. She serves as a student coach at the Maverick Center for Financial Success, where she works one-on-one with peers to provide financial guidance and support. In addition to her role as a student coach, Brooke is the president of the Financial Planning Club, where she invites professionals from the industry to talk about their company to fellow students.

Financial Aid and Loan Repayment Workshop

Rachel Sherlock

Rachel Sherlock is the Associate Director of Financial Aid for Minnesota State University, Mankato, where she has been working for almost 10 years. In her current role, Rachel oversees financial aid advising and outreach and presents to students, families, and education professionals about money management and how to pay for college. Rachel earned her doctoral degree from St. Cloud State University, where she completed her dissertation research on college emergency grants and retention rates by differing demographic categories. Rachel currently serves as her sector representative for the Minnesota Association for Financial Aid Administrators (MAFAA). Rachel has previously served as both local and state secretary for the Administrative Service Faculty Union (ASF). Outside of work, Rachel lives with her spouse and two dogs, and enjoys volunteering with Vine, teaching fitness classes, and going on lots of travel adventures.

Salary Negotiation Panel Session

Danielle Duffey

Danielle Duffey currently serves as the Assistant Director and Campus Career Liaison for the College of Business and the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology at the Career Development Center. A proud Minnesota State graduate, Danielle earned her Bachelor of Science in Marketing in 2008 and is now pursuing her Master's in College Student Affairs. Before stepping into her current role, she spent two years as the Associate Director of Alumni Relations, working to strengthen connections between alumni and their alma mater. With a natural talent for building relationships, Danielle is deeply committed to supporting student career success and fostering meaningful professional development opportunities.

Melissa Giersdorf

Melissa Giersdorf has been with Federated Insurance since 2003 and currently serves as a Senior Recruiter in Human Resources. She specializes in recruiting top talent for Federated's IT and Risk Management departments. Additionally, Melissa serves as the dedicated HR recruiter for Minnesota State University, Mankato, fostering a valuable partnership between Federated Insurance and the university. Her commitment to identifying and developing talent ensures Federated remains a leader in its industry.

Nick Wilson

Nick Wilson is a Senior Business Technology Manager at Federated Insurance. He began his career in 2008 after graduating from Minnesota State University, Mankato with a Management Information Systems degree. Nick has held multiple positions at Federated including Systems Analyst, Quality Assurance Manager, and Program Manager. In 2023, Nick helped achieve a significant milestone by planting the first IT team at Federated's Mankato office. He currently leads the technology teams supporting the Underwriting and Policy Processing business functions, driving innovation and efficiency. Nick is also deeply committed to fostering future talent. As the Primary College Relationship Manager for Federated's Information Services department with MSU-Mankato, he creates strong connections with students and faculty. Through the Project Federated program, Nick actively recruits top talent and provides valuable paid internship opportunities on campus.

Research on Financial Literacy
Abstracts

Jae Min Lee
Title: Time preference, financial knowledge, and financial well-being

This study examines the association between financial knowledge, time preference, and financial well-being. Results with a nationally representative secondary dataset show that myopia is negatively associated with financial well-being, while financial knowledge is positively associated with financial well-being. Furthermore, this study also tests the moderating effect of financial knowledge and finds it to play a significant role in moderating the relationship between time preference and financial well-being. This study provides implications to help consumers improve their financial well-being.

T.D. Le, Nguyen Nguyen, and Q. Nguyen
Title: Technology and happiness: the association between online budget planner and financial satisfaction

This study examines the impact of online budget planning platforms (e.g. Goodbudget, Mint) on households' financial satisfaction. Furthermore, the authors identify the channels, and the cross-sectional heterogeneity of this impact based on households' income, financial literacy and minority groups. This study utilizes data from the National Financial Capability Study (NFCS) for 2018 and 2021, which encompasses over 50,000 households. The authors apply logit and ordered logit regression techniques to examine the research questions and use propensity score matching and entropy balancing to address potential sample selection bias. The authors find a substantial correlation between the adoption of financial budgeting tools and a notable improvement in households' financial satisfaction, driven by the promotion of healthy financial behaviors and enhanced financial self-efficacy. The empirical findings underscore that the positive effects of online budget planners are more pronounced among low-income, financially illiterate and Black households. This study is the first to examine the impact of online budget planners on household financial satisfaction. It contributes to the literature by offering valuable insights into how these tools influence financial satisfaction within households.

Quinn Nguyen, Jennifer L. Schultz, Nguyen Nguuyen, and Kara Nystrom
Title: Publishing finance teaching ideas---The Mary Poppins Project

Publishing finance teaching and learning activities improves educational methodologies, shares innovative learning approaches, and contributes to the broader communities of practice in finance education. Finance focused teaching publications provide educators with opportunities to put their ideas into the public domain while also maintaining their scholarly status. This multi-university presentation will offer an overview of financial education publishing opportunities, provide teaching article best practices guidelines, and conclude with a recently published finance teaching idea sample based on Mary Poppins.

Xinyan Shi and Ishuan Li Simonson
Title: Socioeconomic Determinants of Financial Literacy: Evidence from Robeson County, North Carolina

This study examines financial literacy, financial well-being, and financial skills among low-income households in Robeson County, North Carolina, with a focus on Native American

communities. Utilizing a unique dataset collected in 2023, we find that traditional racial disparities in financial literacy measures appear to be mitigated by socioeconomic status. Our results suggest that economic background, rather than racial identity alone, plays a more substantial role in shaping financial outcomes. These findings contribute to the broader discussion on financial education and economic mobility, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions that address financial capability across socioeconomically disadvantaged groups.