

# Minnesota Highlights 2022-2023

## Minnesota's Engagement

- 34-Year Partnership.** Minnesota enacted authorizing legislation in 1990 to join the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC), which was created in 1991.
- About MHEC.** MHEC brings together higher education leaders and policymakers from Minnesota and 11 other Midwestern states to develop and support best practices, collaborative efforts, and cost-saving opportunities. Through these efforts, it works to ensure strong, equitable postsecondary educational opportunities and outcomes for all.
- Minnesota Leadership.** Commissioners, commissioner alternates, and members of advisory program committees provide direction for MHEC programs and services.

## How the Compact Benefits Minnesota

- \$6.19M in Savings.** In 2023, Minnesota colleges, universities, school districts, and state and local governments realized more than \$6.19M in cost savings through MHEC's contracts and programs, while Minnesota citizens saved over \$3.34M through the Midwest Student Exchange Program. Since 1990, Minnesota entities have saved over \$79.74M.
- Return on Minnesota's Investment.** The state of Minnesota received nearly a 54-fold return on its annual compact membership commitment of \$115,000.
  - » **Technology Contracts.** Minnesota institutions saved more than \$2.21M by purchasing over \$24.64M in technology hardware, software, and services through MHEC-negotiated contracts.
  - » **Distance Education.** By participating in the Midwestern-State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (M-SARA), Minnesota saved approximately \$3.97M. Without M-SARA, institutions have to undertake a costly state-by-state, institution-by-institution approach.
  - » **Tuition Reciprocity.** Minnesota students and their families who participated in the Midwest Student Exchange Program saved more than \$3.34M in tuition.
- Credential Transparency.** Minnesota participated in MHEC's initiative to map the state's credential data with a national registry. The registry makes information on credentials leading to careers more transparent, accessible, and consistent. The state's three lead agencies (Office of Higher Education, Department of Employment and Economic Development, and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities) worked together to use data in developing a comprehensive and publicly searchable database for the credentials offered in the state.
- Open Educational Resources.** Minnesota State's Z-degree project, where students can complete an entire degree with no-cost instructional materials, is entering its fifth year. Seven colleges are currently offering Z-degrees and five colleges and universities are in the process of developing Z-degree programs. Minnesota State has also just completed its second year of the Open Textbook Pilot – Teacher Education project, which is supported in part by the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) grant program.

## Commissioners



**Rachel Croson**  
Executive Vice President  
and Provost  
University of Minnesota



**Omar Fateh**  
State Senator; Chair,  
Higher Education Cmte.  
MN State Legislature



**Dennis Olson**  
Commissioner  
Minnesota Office of  
Higher Education



**Scott Olson**  
Chancellor  
Minnesota State



**Gene Pelowski, Jr.**  
State Representative;  
Chair, Higher Ed Finance  
and Policy  
MN State Legislature



**Paul Cerkvenik**  
President  
MN Private College  
Council  
(Alternate)

## Midwestern Higher Education Compact Priorities

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### FOSTERING INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY, & EFFECTIVENESS

*The Compact serves as an incubator, providing a platform to discuss opportunities and pilot potential solutions.*

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- 1. Innovative Best Practices.** MHEC shares effective solutions to challenges identified by policymakers and higher education leaders. Discussion topics have included creating stronger and stable finance systems that help colleges to better meet pressing state interests and needs, rebounding from the pandemic, addressing federal relief, and campus mental health.
- 2. Open Educational Resources.** MHEC coordinates efforts to expand access to openly licensed textbooks and learning materials that are accessible via the Internet at little or no cost to students.
- 3. Credential Transparency.** MHEC brings states together to discuss and recommend initiatives related to the complex and evolving landscape of credentials and learner records.
- 4. Timely Research & Policy.** Member states direct and receive high-priority access to research on pressing topics such as college readiness, affordability and finance, and student success.
- 5. Interactive Dashboard.** MHEC's online tool provides state-by-state data on key performance indicators including preparation, participation, affordability, completion, finance, and workforce.

### DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS TO REGIONAL PROBLEMS

*MHEC takes on projects and issues that are too large or expensive for one state to do alone, working jointly to make the Midwest region stronger and more competitive.*

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- 1. Convenings.** MHEC convenes diverse leaders to discuss and identify critical issues in higher education, bringing together state leaders, policymakers and their staff, and campus experts such as CIOs, risk managers, librarians, health leaders, and compliance officers.
- 2. State Visits.** MHEC leaders visit each state annually during its legislative session to learn more about and address key issues affecting the state's economy and higher education.
- 3. Dual and Concurrent Enrollment.** MHEC helps Midwestern states navigate new accreditation standards for concurrent enrollment set by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) for qualifying high school teachers to teach concurrent enrollment courses. Through consistent communication with HLC and work with a regional advisory group, MHEC brings consistency to instructor qualification practices across the Midwest.
- 4. Tuition Reciprocity.** MHEC provides a Midwest tuition reciprocity program whereby public institutions agree to charge students in participating states no more than 150 percent of their in-state resident tuition and private institutions offer a 10 percent reduction in their tuition rates. This program saves families thousands of dollars and keeps students in the Midwest.
- 5. Distance Education.** MHEC manages a regional approach to authorizing Midwestern states and institutions to regulate, approve, and oversee the delivery of interstate online education. This approach, part of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA), provides a streamlined process that results in cost savings for postsecondary institutions and improved access to online education for students.

### DRIVING COST SAVINGS & BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

*MHEC programs and contracts result in tremendous cost savings for institutions, states, and students. The Compact solves key business problems and protects investment in higher education by collaborating and reducing risk.*

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- 1. Competitive Sourcing.** MHEC leads competitive sourcing for essential goods and services such as insurance and technology. In doing so, MHEC saves time and money for higher education institutions. As a lead public agency, MHEC negotiates flexible, cooperative contracts, and streamlines procurement processes. The negotiated contracts may be tailored to the purchaser's needs.
- 2. Technology Contracts.** MHEC leverages the combined hardware, software, and services volume of campuses and local governments in member states to reach favorable agreements with technology vendors. In FY23, member states saved an estimated \$31.59M with technology purchases of more than \$351.03M.
- 3. Student Health Solutions.** MHEC offers institutions options for fully insured, school-sponsored health plans. MHEC's responsive approach resulted in the recent addition of virtual mental health services for students.