

TRUE NORTHLAND: CREATING A MORE SUSTAINABLE AND JUST FUTURE

WHO WE ARE

Founded in 1892 and located on the south shore of Lake Superior, Northland College was the first institution of higher learning in the country to fully integrate an environmental focus with its liberal arts curriculum. Based on the premise that addressing complex environmental and social challenges requires critical thinking, creativity, and inclusion of diverse perspectives, our curriculum explores interconnections between nature, place, and people. We emphasize dynamic educational experiences that empower students to act with integrity and courage to create a more sustainable and just future.

WHAT WE DO

At Northland College, environmental resilience and justice sit at the nexus of four key pillars: enhancing scientific and other forms of knowledge about the natural world and ecosystem change; building sustainable food systems; strengthening rural communities; and upholding Indigenous sovereignty and cultures. These are the core of our curriculum and the research and programming work of our affiliated centers—The Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute, Mary Griggs Burke Center for Freshwater Innovation, Center for Rural Communities, Indigenous Cultures Center, and Hulings Rice Food Center.

OUR CURRENT CHALLENGE

We now find ourselves on a financial precipice. Our Board of Trustees has suggested that without a significant infusion of funds, we must close. Taking this challenge as an opportunity to transform, we seek support from donors who share our passion about the most important issues of our time and our vision for Northland's future: bringing all operations in line with our mission, streamlining to cut costs, and creating new, dynamic, and unprecedented avenues for revenue generation. Deepening our commitment to our mission starts with building trust, transparency, and effective decision-making through new governance and leadership structures. This is our vision for a True Northland.

OUR PLAN TO MEET THE MOMENT

True Northland will continue to provide an exceptional liberal arts education but at a tightened scale of 350 students. We will strategically utilize our campus by tailoring it for three distinct, complementary, and mission-centric uses: the College and its affiliated research centers, community workforce and elder housing, and an ideas hub that invites regional, mission-aligned organizations to rent office, lab, and studio spaces on our campus. These new partnerships will create opportunities for our students and broader community to build skills that are increasingly needed on a changing planet.

WHAT MAKES TRUE NORTHLAND EXTRAORDINARY

True Northland initiatives will foster mutually beneficial interactions between students, faculty, and external partners; enhance cross-sector and intergenerational relationships; enrich the student experience, and uplift our local communities. This model will create financial stability, extend our reach, and enable us to become an ideas incubator for climate resilience and justice. Stakeholders will find a profound sense of belonging, purpose, and joy as we work together toward futures of hope and possibility.

OUR UNIQUE POSITIONING

While all of higher education is facing the challenge of a shrinking student population, no other college has Northland's critically important mission, debt-free infrastructure, invaluable location, and abiding commitment to our community and region.

True Northland Team: Elizabeth Andre, Dani O'Brien, Angela Stroud, Brian Tochtermann, Dave Ullman

www.truenorthland.org