



Academic Affairs Update December 15, 2025

College of Arts and Sciences

Student Accomplishments and Activities

- Alex Eckman (Cannabis Chemistry) was awarded an EISOHly Award presented by the Cannabis Chemistry Subdivision of the American Chemical Society, which recognizes outstanding contributions to advancing the field of cannabis and cannabinoid science. His work titled “Evidence of Pre-Use Polymer Leaching in Hemp-Derived Vaporizers” presented critical findings on material stability and safety in hemp vaporizer hardware, identifying pre-use polymer leaching and emphasizing the need for enhanced quality control in product manufacturing.

Publications and Creative Works

- The LSSU production of Jen Silverman’s *Witch* marked a significant milestone for the Theatre Program. It was the first formal faculty collaboration between Director of the Arts Center and Assistant Professor, Noah Lucé, and Assistant Professor Adam St. John on campus. This model fostered a unique educational dynamic, allowing students to engage with faculty not only as instructors but as creative partners working beside them in real time. The production united students, alumni, community members, and faculty, and incorporated the talents of three guest designers from across the United States.



*Professor Adam St. John and Brooklyn Patchin (Career Services) engage in a powerful moment during the production of *Witch*.*

- Dr. Jason Garvon had an [op-ed](#) published in the Detroit News as part of his role as Chair of the Michigan Wildlife Council.
- Dr. Jason Garvon’s piping plover research was covered in Audubon Great Lakes. [The Comeback Continues: A Fourth Record-Breaking Year for Great Lakes Piping Plovers](#)

- Seal Analytical recently featured a collaboration with Professor Ben Southwell. [Lake Superior State University Accelerates TKN and Nutrient Testing with SEAL Analytical](#)



Recruitment and Outreach

- On November 21, Professor Adam St. John went to Bay City Academy to lead a workshop on acting with 30 students and attended their performance of "Once Upon a Mattress."
- The School of Chemistry, Environmental, and Geosciences completed articulation agreements with Bay de Noc Community College (Biochemistry, Environmental Science, Geology) and North Central Michigan College (Biochemistry, Cannabis Chemistry, Chemistry, Environmental Science, Geology).
- On November 4, Dr. Martha Hutchens traveled to Grand Traverse Academy and led three classes (55-60 students) through a bacterial transformation activity, genetically engineering *E. coli* to produce blue colonies.
- On Friday, November 21, Casey Snyder, Music Director, led the Shore Party Jazz Band on a tour of the eastern UP, visiting Mackinaw City Public Schools, St. Ignace LaSalle High School and Sault High School and Career Center. This was followed by the Jazz Band Concert and the Winter Concert at the Arts Center over the weekend.



- Dr. Steven Johnson hosted 29 Sault High School students for chemistry laboratory activities on November 11 and 24. Shown to the left, Sault High students identify cations in solutions.



College of Business, Engineering, Computer Science, and Mathematics

Student Accomplishments and Activities

- Two student teams (Dylan Bollone, Chris Burie, Ben Davis, Parker Ellinger, Michael Featherstone, Bradley Wigger) participated in the Association for Computing Machinery's International Collegiate Programming Contest at Michigan Technological University on November 8, the highest placing LSSU team (Ballone, Burie, and Davis) finished 26th out of 86 teams in the North Central Region. The region included teams from schools such as the University of Wisconsin, the University of Minnesota, and the University of Iowa.

Community Engagement

- Dr. Christopher Smith attended the EUP Planning meeting with ANRA Technologies, a leading provider of airspace management and mission management solutions for Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS). The interactive tabletop exercise brought together subject matter experts to prepare stakeholders for Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) drone operations in the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan, supporting live drone demonstrations in 2026.
- Dr. Christopher Smith attended the Michigan Space Community of Interest Quarterly Meeting held at CCEDC in Kinross. LSSU was one of three universities represented at the meeting.
- Dr. Christopher Smith attended a meeting with local stakeholders, Connected Nation and Michigan High-Speed Internet Office (MIHI) on a potential Neutral Internet Exchange Point in Kinross.
- The School of Engineering and Technology hosted the FIRST LEGO League competition on Saturday, November 22. Three teams of students from the region in grades 3-5 participated in the event. Over 90 guests and 27 volunteers were in attendance. Dr. Kimberly Muller was the guest speaker for the opening ceremonies.



College of Great Lakes Ecology and Education

Student Accomplishments and Activities

- LSSU's Fisheries and Wildlife club hosted their annual Whitefish Dinner fundraiser on November 8. This year's event saw nearly double the attendance as the previous year, with 125 people attending. Profits from this year's event more than doubled last year, totaling approximately \$7,600. These funds will support students attending professional conferences next year.

- The Center for Freshwater Research and Education (CFRE) Fish Hatchery hosted 20 students and ten additional CTE students throughout their annual Atlantic salmon egg collection events. Egg collection week consisted of four days, lots of smiles, and brought in 460,000 fertilized Atlantic salmon eggs to the hatchery. LSSU students who participate in egg collection can actively see the impact they have on their fishery resource. Students get to work closely with MDNR staff (pictured below left, Daniel Operhall of Platte River State Fish Hatchery). Volunteers asked questions, practiced technical hatchery skills, and are the source of Michigan's Atlantic Salmon program. LSSU will keep approximately 60,000 fertilized salmon eggs, while Platte River and Harrietta State Fish Hatcheries will split and receive the remaining 400,000. This project is a highlight to the students each year and would not be possible without the continued partnership and shared space with Cloverland Electric Cooperative and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. (Pictures shown below.)



- Kelsie Kemerling, Jordyn Reed, and Kevin Fischer, seniors in the School of Natural Resources accompanied Dr. Jill Witt, and the University of Michigan Biological Station to participate in a 36-year biannual 3-day small mammal trapping census to assess the impacts of climate change on small mammal populations in northern Michigan. Students collected data on deer mouse: age, sex, reproductive condition, health, and changes in habitat following the Spring 2025 ice storm.
- Dr. Jill Witt's Forestry class had the opportunity to learn about the U.S. Forest Service's process of forest management on a trip to an active logging operation in the Hiawatha National Forest. Steven Bates, USFS Timber Sales Administrator and LSSU Alumnus, talked students through the process of timber sales and contract administration. (Pictures shown below.)



- Four Fisheries and Wildlife Management students, Abby Aldea, Liz McClean, Noel Black, and Xavier Gonzalez, were selected to join the Delta Waterfowl University Mentored Hunt (shown below). Students started out on October 31 at the Alpena Sportsmen's Club, where they honed their skills in gun safety and enjoyed some clay pigeon shooting. The excitement continued the

next morning as they ventured to Fletcher Floodwaters for this thrilling hunt. Thank you, Dr. Dustin Brewer for mentoring. It was an incredible experience filled with learning and adventure.



Publications and Creative Works

- Brewer, D. E., Webb, E. B., Mini, A.E., & McKnight, S. K. (2025). Predicting secretive species distribution using Bayesian networks with and without expert collaboration: A case study incorporating double-blind peer review. *Ecological Solutions and Evidence*, 6, e70140. <https://doi.org/10.1002/2688-8319.70140>

Conference Presentations

- Dr. Toni Stith and her honor students, Brianna Petersen and Delaney Stec, presented at the Place-based Learning Conference in Ypsilanti, MI on November 13. Their session, “Cultivating Local Connections Online: Place-Based Learning for Asynchronous Elementary Science,” engaged teachers and school leaders and received excellent feedback.
- Dr. Yong Zeng and three Teacher Education students, including two Talent Together students and a student teacher, presented at the Place-based Conference at Eastern Michigan University. The students presented the place-based interdisciplinary unit they designed based on Sault Ste. Marie's elementary classrooms. After the presentation, elementary school teachers and research groups from multiple locations in Michigan expressed their interest in implementing this unit in their classrooms as pilot studies. The students have submitted this unit as an Undergraduate Research project and will develop it into a qualitative research project about developing place-based curricula for small towns and rural areas.
- Dr. Seth McCall presented a paper at the Place-Based Education Conference on place-based education in blended learning contexts (hybrid, online, hyflex, etc.). He argued that blended learning is not the opposite of place-based education. When approached intentionally, blended learning can open new avenues for students to engage with place, community, and partnership—especially when they are geographically dispersed.

Honors and Awards

- Alana Schofield, Fisheries and Wildlife Management senior, was selected as one of three inaugural recipients of the \$5,000 Kurt Grinnell Scholarship in aquaculture for Tribes and First Nations. Alana's experience at the CFRE Fish Hatchery helped solidify her interest in aquaculture.

Academic Program Successes

- The School of Education was notified this month that they were officially re-accredited by their accrediting body, CAEP, for all currently offered programs. A special thank you and congratulations to all faculty who contributed to the success of the reaccreditation process and to Dr. Jennifer Fager, Associate Dean, for her leadership in the endeavor.
- The School of Education, represented by Professor Becky Davis and Dr. Jennifer Fager, recently collaborated with colleagues at Bay Mills Community College to develop a 3+1 transfer program in Early Childhood Education (BK grade band). This innovative program will allow students to earn the majority of their coursework through BMCC's program but then finish their final year with LSSU to earn certification in teaching and then reverse transfer credits so that they would also complete their degree with BMCC. This mutually beneficial opportunity will allow BMCC students to earn licensure in Michigan, an option not currently available to students completing their bachelor's degree at BMCC.

Recruitment and Outreach

- The CFRE Fish Hatchery and Barch building hosted 6 prospective student tours as well as two high school groups bringing in over 35 prospective students.
- CTE students visited the mammalogy lab in Crawford hall to practice wildlife identification and review key adaptations of different species. This gave them a taste of what it's like to be in LSSU's wildlife program.
- Hope College's TRIO Upward Bound group visited CFRE, bringing 8 high school students to tour the building and the hatchery.
- Malcolm High School brought 29 high school juniors and seniors as part of their LSSU tour. Students toured the hatchery, explored the Discovery Center, and tried out some fish & wildlife identification.
- CFRE hosted the EUP MiSTEM Region data science community of practice for 12 high school science teachers, where CFRE research technicians provided them with an overview of ongoing scientific research at CFRE as well as a facilities tour. CFRE educational staff also shared information about educational opportunities at CFRE and LSSU.
- On November 11-12, four LSSU School of Education students participated in an immersive field experience at two LSSU charter schools—American International Academy and Advanced Technology Academy in the Dearborn area. During these visits, the students observed in nearly two dozen classrooms and facilitated hands-on STEM learning activities with more than 80 students. This experience highlights the School of Education's commitment to broadening future educators' understanding of diverse student populations through urban school experiences.
- Dr. Jonathan Doubek met with approximately 50 sophomore, junior, and senior high school students at Bay City Academy in Bay City, MI on November 13 to talk about LSSU and CoGLEE. They talked about the programs, had discussions on LSSU-related questions, and played a Kahoot quiz on trivia from the Great Lakes region.

- Dr. Becky Davis and Dr. Jennifer Fager attended a recruiting event at Brimley High School and showcased Teacher Education programs.

Community Engagement

- CFRE hosted the Board of Trustees reception in November honoring Trustees Tim Lukenda and Dick Barch.
- CFRE hosted the School of Natural Resources Senior Poster Symposium, which was open to the public and had 100 visitors, including regional high school teachers, as part of a regional STEM initiative.
- Dr. Jonathan Doubek, Dr. Kevin Kapuscinski, Ms. Katelynn Coon, Mr. Torin Miller, and undergraduate Max Vedrody joined Provost Muller and Ms. Lauren Pierce to represent LSSU at the Chamber of Commerce Fall Economic Luncheon.
- This month, the Dr. Constance Baker Great Lakes Discovery Center (GLDC) was open two Saturdays and engaged nearly 40 visitors. On November 1st, students from Dr. Jill Witt's *NRES 101 Developing a Sense of Place in the Great Lakes Region* class led story & craft sessions focused on fall animal activity and salmon life cycles, and on November 15th, visitors tried out activities modeling what's going on in the hatchery during this season. Activities included broodstock collection as well as egg take, enumeration, and picking.



Kids visiting the GLDC this month participated in mock hatchery activities. Orbeez look and feel just like salmon eggs.

Operations and Infrastructure Projects

- CFRE Innovation Hub update: We successfully hosted our first Innovators on the Rise event in Considine Hall. The event featured guest speaker Joe Thiel, who presented on innovations in the outdoor recreation field. Additionally, we have developed a tentative framework for how the innovation hub will function, as well as future collaborators that we plan to work with, including Innovate Marquette. We have also identified multiple potential commercialization pathways for the MiWaterNet sensor network. We hope to make a decision on which path is best to pursue by the end of December.
- *Thank you to the Physical Plant team for their quick attention and expertise!* This month CFRE had a malfunction of the main hatchery water heater, which released a large amount of steam and required a fire department response. The LSSU Physical Plant team prevented any damage beyond the unit itself, rebuilding the plumbing, installing a relief valve, and testing the temperature shutoff, which successfully restored the system for the current rearing cycle. The

heater will still need replacement in the near future, but their swift work ensured uninterrupted operations.

Appointments to Boards and Professional Organizations

- Dr. Ashley Moerke was invited to partner in the Rural Youth Research Collective, an initiative led by Dr. Chloe Kannon that will create opportunities for youth in the community to participate in action research around community needs, build leadership, and introduce students to college pathways. Other partners include the University of Michigan, University of Pennsylvania, and Sault Schools. The first cohort will include 15 students from Sault Schools and will kick off this December.

Scholarship Activity

- As part of the MPRI MONDE research project, CFRE research technicians Drew Heckman and Connor Arnold have been partnering with LimnoTech, Bay Mills Indian Community, and Algoma University to install oil sensors in the St. Marys River as part of an initiative led by Dr. Ashley Moerke to test the use of low-cost oil sensors for early detection of oil spills. So far, sensors have been installed in the Waiska River in Brimley, George Kemp Marina near the Valley Camp, and downstream of the Rock Cut near Neebish Island. These oil in water sensors are providing us with real time data to help monitor for oil spills along the river. Additional sensors will be installed throughout the river and in the Straits of Mackinac before ice forms in order to determine the capability of oil sensors under the ice.
- CFRE staff and students successfully wrapped up the second and final mesocosm experiment for 2025 under the MPRI funded Biological Impacts of Oil in Our Waters of the North project (BIO-OWN) on November 5. The experiment, which is a collaboration with Algoma University and University of Windsor, ran from October 1 until November 5 and investigated the biological impacts of crude oil additions to simulated wetlands. Dr. Kevin Kapuscinski and Dr. Cecilia Heuvel (post-doctoral research associate) led this project.

College of Health and Emergency Responders

Student Accomplishments and Activities

- Kinesiology student Skylar Miklusicak-Whitney is currently recruiting participants for a research study titled “Effects of Ballroom Dance on Chronic Pain and PTSD in Veterans and Service Members.” The project has received HSIRB approval and aims to enroll a diverse sample beyond the LSSU student population. With adequate participant recruitment, the study holds strong potential for publication. Recruitment will continue through the end of the semester, with the six-week ballroom dance intervention scheduled to begin in January.
- Dr. Eric Statt is currently guiding two student research teams on projects within the Exercise Science and Sports Performance domains. One group—comprised of Brook Rivers, Joseph Kasprzek, and Vanessa Swerdon—is conducting a study titled “Descriptions of On-Ice Fitness Parameters through On-Ice Skills Assessment in Club-Level, Collegiate Hockey Players.” The second project, led by Grace Kreps, focuses on “Analysis of Sprint Velocity Trends in NCAA Division II Middle-Distance Runners Using Secondary Data from the LSSU Track and Field

Program.” These projects provide students with valuable hands-on research experience and contribute to ongoing performance analysis efforts within LSSU athletics.

Gifts

- Undersheriff Ryan Hering and Captain Justin Fruchey, both alumni of the LSSU MCOLES program, along with Professor and MCOLES Director Herbert Henderson announced the donation of a 2019 Dodge Charger patrol vehicle to the program by the Chippewa County Sheriff's Office. The vehicle will support advanced training for future law enforcement officers enrolled in the LSSU MCOLES licensing program. This is the second vehicle the Sheriff's Office has donated to the program since 2014, demonstrating its sustained commitment to law enforcement education and regional partnership.



Publications and Creative Works

- Searight, H.R. (2025). The Ethical Dilemma of Therapeutic Lying and Deception. In Thakkar, V. J., Pantescio, E., Besing, R., & Naufel, K. Z. (Eds.). Beyond the code: Integrating ethics into the undergraduate psychology curriculum. *The Society for the Teaching of Psychology*.

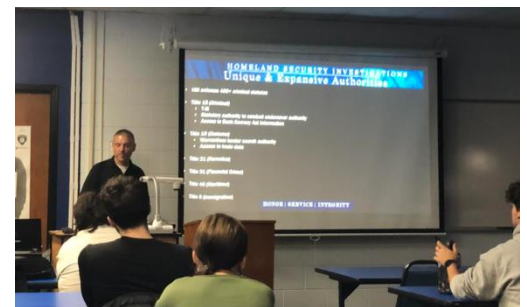
Honors and Awards

- As part of their role as faculty advisors for the Psychology Psi Chi chapter at LSSU, Dr. Kris Olson-Pupek and Professor Stephanie Bowlby recently held an induction of four new members: Jenna Wilkins, Katelyn Watson, Kara Mosher, and Keeli Kennedy. They joined the current officers and have already begun collaborating to participate in chapter activities and initiatives.



Community Engagement

- Special Agent Todd Wilton served as a guest speaker for the *CJUS 203 Cybercrimes/Cyberterrorism* course, presenting during the unit on human trafficking and child exploitation. His insights provided students with real-world perspective on investigative challenges, offender behaviors, and the digital strategies used to combat these crimes.



Scholarship

- On November 19, Professor Bradley Clegg delivered a presentation titled “Tough Issues with Sgt. Bradley Clegg” to more than 50 Lake Superior State University School of Education students. His session addressed the complex challenges new educators may encounter related to active-violence scenarios and situational awareness. Professor Clegg provided practical

guidance on readiness, emphasizing strategies to ensure future teachers are equipped to respond effectively and maintain safe learning environments.

Library and Academic Services

Presentations

- Scholar Series: Koral Brady presented “Come Play Mythbusters Food Edition” on November 19.
- Library Art Gallery hosted a display by Chloe Carrick entitled “Doodles and Whims.” Chloe is a dual-enrolled high school student.
- Along with the Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning (CETAL) the Library and Academic Services staff hosted Wheel of Fortune on November 14th to bring faculty, students, and staff together in a fun and casual environment.
- Implemented the Laker Punch Card in which students can earn a chance at winning gift certificates at the end of the semester by receiving punches on the card. Punches are earned by attending campus events throughout the semester.
- CETAL hosted a Lunch & Learn that was a round table discussion on an AI article written by alum Todd Zakrajsek.
- CETAL hosted a Lunch & Learn on Interprofessional Education featuring LSSU faculty Judy Hering, Kelli Verdecchia, and Bryan Fuller.
- CETAL hosted a Lunch & Learn with Adam St. John who gave a talk about encouraging students to engage in a podcasting class.

Community Engagement

- Testing Services hosted a boot and winter-wear drive in coordination with the Arts Center to solicit donations for Seamore’s Closet.
- A Basic Home Electrical Continuing Education course was held with Cory Parker in the library.
- The library hosted a continuing education course, Watercolor Christmas Card Painting with Kevin Kennan (2 part series).
- A continuing education course on Documentary Photography with Scott Laursen was hosted in the library.
- The Native American Center hosted Baagaadowewin – Lacrosse on November 12 to introduce this Native game to the campus community.
- The Native American Center hosted “Bead Your Own Hoops” on November 19 led by Brynn Jannetta (President of SASO).