

**Academic Affairs Update  
June 15, 2026**

**College of Arts and Sciences**

**Gifts**

- Kyle Marinkovich, founder and CEO of Northern Diversified Solutions, has established the Northern Diversified Solutions Award. This \$1,200 scholarship will support students pursuing majors in cannabis chemistry or cannabis business. Preference will be given to students with ties to the Great Lakes region who demonstrate financial need.

**Publications and Creative Works**

- LSSU students, staff, and faculty, as well as members from the local communities, put on the LSSU Music Department's 2026 Spring Concert. Audience members listened to performances from the LSSU Concert Choir, LSSU Chamber Orchestra, and the Sault City Concert Band. The LSSU Music Department also put on its second annual Evening of Jazz in the Superior Room. This performance continued the jazz club setting established at Evening of Jazz 2025.



*Voices united in song, the choir delivers a powerful performance under the warm glow of the theatre lights.*



*With baton raised and the ensemble in full focus, Casey Snyder leads the performance with energy and precision from center stage.*

- Seven LSSU students traveled to Ann Arbor April 9 – 11 to participate in the Collegiate Band Director's National Association's North Central Division's Intercollegiate Band. Students from the University of Michigan (U of M), Michigan State University, Butler University, Eastern Michigan University, the University of Wisconsin - Madison, Oakland University, and other universities came together to perform four pieces.



*LSSU students in the historic concert hall, Hill Auditorium at U of M.*

## Recruitment and Outreach

- On May 20, Dr. Martha Hutchens led 35 students from Ridge Park Academy in science activities.
- On May 27, Professor Adam St. John hosted students from Bay City Charter School as they performed *The Sound of Music Jr.* in the Arts Center. The event drew 600 attendees between the two performances.
- On June 1, Dr. Barbara Evans hosted 6<sup>th</sup> grade students from Brimley Schools in the Aquaponics Learning Laboratory.

## Community Engagement

- The Arts Center hosted the annual Allure Dance Company recitals during the week of May 9. The seven shows had over 2,000 in attendance and the Arts Center staff received very positive feedback from the community.

## Appointment to Boards and Professional Organizations

- LSSU has been invited to serve as the charter higher education member of a consortium of cannabis industry stakeholders in the State of Michigan. The consortium includes cannabis brands, compliance facilities, and academic institutions. Dr. Steve Johnson, Dean, will serve as LSSU's representative.

## College of Business, Engineering, Computer Science and Mathematics

### Student Accomplishments and Activities

- The Lukenda School of Business inducted two students into the international business honor society, Delta Mu Delta, for spring 2026. Charles Johnson graduated in May with a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance and Economics. He has accepted a position at Central Savings Bank in Sault Ste. Marie, MI as a Controller. Charles is from DePere, WI. Julie Heslip just completed her junior year; she is pursuing a degree in Business Administration-Marketing and is from Linden, MI.

### Publications and Creative Works

- Dr. Rob Kipka and his co-authors recently submitted revisions to their manuscript, *Ritt, Gronwall, and Differentiation with Respect to a Parameter*, in response to reviewer feedback from the *American Mathematical Monthly*. The *Monthly* is a highly regarded, peer-reviewed journal with a broad readership in the mathematical community. The authors are encouraged by the revisions they made and are optimistic that they will address the reviewers' concerns. They are hopeful that the paper will ultimately be accepted for publication in this journal.

### Appointments to Boards and Professional Organizations

- Dean Mindy McCready was appointed to the Board of Directors of Famous Soo Locks Cruises, Inc.

## Honors and Awards

- The Lukenda School of Business hosted its annual Graduation Dinner on May 1. The following student and alumni awards were presented.



- Grant Riley of Rochester, NY received the Sault Area Chamber of Commerce Achievement Award for showing leadership inside and outside of the classroom. Grant graduated summa cum laude with B.S. degrees in Finance and Economics and Business Administration.
- Tayla Brassier of Bathurst, Australia received the Outstanding Baccalaureate Student Award. Tayla graduated summa cum laude with a B.S. degree in Business Administration – Marketing.
- Allyson Lancour of McFarland, MI received the Outstanding Regional Center Graduate Award. Allyson graduated summa cum laude with a B.S. degree in Accounting.
- Joseph Nolan of Sault Ste. Marie, MI received the Outstanding MBA Graduate Award. Joseph received his B.S. degree in Accounting from LSSU in 2017. He is currently the Executive Director of the Chippewa-Luce-Mackinac Community Action Agency.
- Marissa Berlinger was recognized as the LSB Distinguished Alumnus. Marissa graduated from LSSU with a B.S. degree in Business Administration – Management before earning a Juris Doctor from the University of Michigan Law School in 2016. Marissa currently serves as an associate attorney at Morgan, Lewis & Brockius LLP in Seattle, WA.

## Academic Program Successes

- The Lukenda School of Business is proud to celebrate a major milestone this August as the first cohort of students graduate from the newly established professional Master of Business Administration (MBA) Program. This graduating class represents more than the completion of a degree—it marks the successful launch of a forward-looking MBA program designed specifically for working professionals seeking to advance their leadership, strategic thinking, and business expertise while balancing career and personal responsibilities. The success of this inaugural cohort highlights the growing momentum of graduate business education at LSSU. Even as the first cohort



prepares to graduate this summer, the second cohort is already progressing toward graduation in 2027, and recruitment is underway for the third cohort, which will begin in fall 2026.

## Scholarship

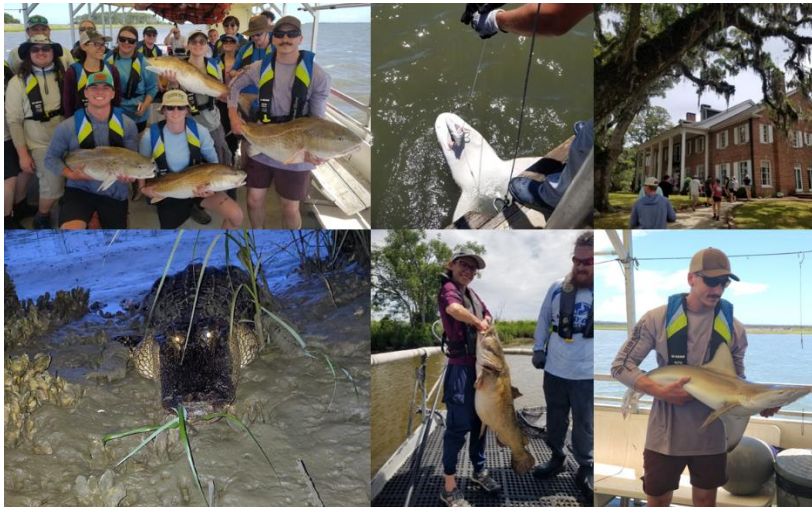
- Dr. Bridgette Russell and Dr. Jennifer Gorman from the School of Computer Science and Mathematics, Kelsey Emmanuel from Library and Academic Services, and Dean Mindy McCready attended the Gateway Course Innovation Summary in Mt. Pleasant, MI on May 14 – 15. This event was part of Michigan College Access Network’s Gateway Course Redesign Faculty Academy, a collaborative initiative that a team from LSSU has participated in over the past year to improve student success in mathematics courses.



## College of Great Lakes Ecology and Education

### Student Accomplishments and Activities

- Dr. Kapuscinski led eight LSSU students on an immersive, 10 day field experience to South Carolina as part of a new course titled *Coastal Fishes of the Southeastern US*. This field component of the course was co-taught with Dr. Derek Crane (Coastal Carolina University), and co-attended by eight of his students. Students sampled 57 different fish species, ranging in size from a ½ inch long Sheepshead to a 12 foot long Tiger Shark. Students also interacted with local wildlife, toured Hobcaw Barony, Bears Bluff National Fish Hatchery, and the South Carolina Aquarium, and experienced SC’s culture, history, and cuisine.



*Students displaying four large Red Drum caught longlining (top left), pulling up a 7' Sandbar Shark that ate a Sharpnose Shark caught on the long line (top center), touring Hobcaw Barony (top right), American Alligator (bottom left), Noel Black hoisting a Flathead Catfish (bottom center), and Brenden Conger getting ready to release a Sandbar Shark (bottom right).*

- Anna Figert (Teacher Education) is interning with CFRE Education and Outreach this summer. Anna is assisting with developing and facilitating preK-12 programs in addition to welcoming visitors to the Dr. Constance Baker Great Lakes Discover Center.

- Nathaniel Kilgore (Fisheries and Wildlife Management; photo to the right), working with Dr. Brewer, helped to capture and attach a transmitter to a state-endangered species, the King Rail as part of a grant-funded research project that Dr. Brewer is leading.
- Three new undergraduate students were added to the Education and Outreach (E&O) summer team: Lilly Betts (Junior, Environmental Science); Mary Miller (Senior, Fisheries and Wildlife); and Melissa Lee (2026 Parks and Recreation graduate). Returning to the E&O team is Evelyn Weber (2026 Sault Area High School graduate).



- Melissa Lee is CFRE's 2026 Environmental Education Intern, which is a donor funded position to support environmental education initiatives each summer at CFRE. Melissa is working on developing an Environmental Education Certification pathway for future LSSU undergraduates.
- Drs. Doubek and Kapuscinski and a crew of CFRE students and research technicians have been working on a research grant with the U.S. Geological Survey in Ann Arbor, MI. The goal of the project is to monitor and quantify lake whitefish and food web dynamics in Lake Michigan. The project is part of a Lake Michigan wide effort, with teams sampling in different locations all over the lake. The CFRE team has been sampling the northern shoreline of Lake Michigan at sites spanning the Straits of Mackinac to Nahma every week since ice-off in mid-April. The team has been sampling for water quality variables, zooplankton, macroinvertebrates, and larval and juvenile lake whitefish in less than 1 meter of water. Photos below.



### Fundraising/Gifts

- Working with the LSSU Office of Advancement, CFRE began a Match Challenge to double our current \$10,000 donation to support another student summer research, hatchery, or education and outreach experience next year.

## Publications

- Dong, G., Zhang, B., He, B., Liu, B., Chen, X., Chen, J., Kang, Q., Cao, Y., Stoyanov, S.R., and Chen, B., 2026. Microreactor-Enhanced Advanced Oxidation for BPS Removal: Process Intensification, Kinetics and Toxicity Evaluation. *Journal of Environmental Chemical Engineering*, p.123127.
- Beth Christiansen wrote an article for the April 2026 Michigan Alliance for Environmental and Outdoor Education Newsletter ([MAEOEgram](#)). The article, *Discover Michigan, your place in the Great Lakes State* highlighted the March is Reading Month program provided to approximately 1700 youths in March 2026.

## Conference Presentations

- Dr. Kandel presented an invited talk (virtually) to the audience of Nepal Society of Engineering Geology on May 27, 2026 on the topic of “Assessing Landslide Hazards in the Mid-Hill Region of Nepal Himalaya using Remote Sensing and GeoAI”.
- Dr. Ashley Moerke, Dr. Bo Liu, Dr. Cecilia Heuvel and research technician Drew Heckman travelled to Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada for the 2026 International Association of Great Lakes Research conference to present invited talks in the special session “Uniting to Advance Freshwater Oil Spill Research, Preparedness and Response”.
- Research collaborators from Memorial University of Newfoundland (HQP Verena Kalter, and Shanan Brun-Dabbagh) and Algoma University (Dr. Michael Twiss) also presented research in the special section that was a product of collaborations with LSSU researchers, LSSU co-authors Kennedi Johnson (undergraduate student), Dr. Liu, Dr. Kevin Kapuscinski, Dr. Heuvel, and Dr. Moerke.

## Honors and Awards

- Students in the School of Natural Resources were awarded the following scholarships:
  - *William and Pamela Bachelor Family* - Ryan Wood, Nathaniel Kilgore, & Peter Greiner
  - *Michigan Charter Boat Association* - Trey Studer
  - *Gilbert Gleason* - Ryan Quackenbush & Ryan Wood
  - *Hiawatha Sportsman's Club* - Zach Lamont
  - *Headwaters Chapter of Trout Unlimited* - Alana Miller-Schofield
  - *Izaak Walton League of America Lock City Chapter* - Sam Tober
  - *Kim and Nancy Straw Fisheries and Wildlife* - Lauren Schagel
  - *Christopher Reinke Memorial Endowment Award* - Walter Anderson
  - *Joseph and Bonnie Halvorson Memorial* - Jessa Davis
  - *Detroit Area Steelheaders Fisheries Scholarship* - Frankie Albrough
  - *Anglers of the Au Sable* - Madelyn Hume
  - *Wendy Sak* - Madelyn Hume

## Academic Program Successes

- Five graduate students in the new M.S. program in Fisheries and Wildlife—Aiden Cardwell, Kennedy Johnson, Alana Schofield-Miller, Sam Rimatzski, and Lauren Schagel—successfully defended their research proposals this month. All graduate students presented their research proposals to a committee of at least three scientists for evaluation, and all proposals were judged to be of high quality and suitable for graduate-level research.
- The CTE class successfully installed three duck boxes on Island #3, with the assistance of CoGLEE graduate student and registered kayak guide Aiden Caldwell (photo right). The boxes increase nesting opportunities for cavity nesting ducks and kicks off a yearly monitoring opportunity for the CTE program. The non-profit managing the island, Friends of Pippin, plans to sign an agreement with the program to allow continued access for conservation and research.



## Recruitment and Outreach

- We officially broke the 3,000 mark for students experiencing CFRE programs this spring.
  - Seventeen kindergarteners from JKL Bahweting visited CFRE on May 11 to explore macroinvertebrates, create and test watersheds, and consider ways to keep watersheds healthy.
  - Sixty students in three 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes from JKL Bahweting visited on May 14 to explore zooplankton, macroinvertebrates, and aquatic food webs.
  - Pickford 2<sup>nd</sup> grade brought thirty-two students on May 18 after their Soo Locks Boat Tour to learn about lake sturgeon and their food webs.
  - Whittemore-Prescot brought 54 5<sup>th</sup> graders for dissections as well as invasive species and food web activities in the Discovery Center.
  - The Education & Outreach (E&O) team, with help from summer research student James Laperriere, met 48 Ridge Park Charter middle schoolers at Pendill's Creek on May 20 for field activities. Students collected macroinvertebrates, did a nature walk, and performed water quality tests.
  - Camden Elementary brought 35 5<sup>th</sup> graders and 35 parents to CFRE on May 21. Groups explored aquatic invertebrates, food webs, and invasive species with hands-on activities.
  - A Malcolm High School chemistry class visited CFRE on May 26 for exploration of live macroinvertebrates and zooplankton, an Atlantic salmon dissection, a visit to the hatchery, GLDC, and CFRE's water quality lab for conversations with LSSU undergraduate Adam Sedgeman. Undergraduate students helping to host these visitors include 3 hatchery students (Anjole, Autumn and Hunter) and 4 E&O students (Lilly, Mary, Melissa and Evelyn).
  - E&O staff members plus summer intern Anna Figert attended the final Sault Elementary Health Fair day on May 27, with ten 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes exploring the impacts of human activities on our water and the consequences for human health with our hands-on

*Who Polluted the St. Marys* activity. We wrapped up by discussing actions each of us can take to keep our waters clean for drinking, swimming, and fishing.

- On May 28, 25 students from Maplewood Baptist Academy and 34 students (plus 8 chaperones) from Tipton Charter visited CFRE for interactive and guided lessons by our team.
- Dr. Dustin Brewer (Natural Resources), and students Anna Matichuk and Eli Herriman participated in the MI Career Quest event and tabled for the Fisheries and Wildlife program. Over 1,200 students attended the event, and 100 students stopped at the School of Natural Resources table and got inspired to look into a career studying and/or protecting our natural resources.
- CoGLEE had a strong showing at the EUP Careers Day in St. Ignace—Beth Christiansen, Riley Waterman, and Michelle Visser (CFRE) hosted tables and interacted with over 250 high school students in the area. Their tables included Atlantic salmon smolts, live macroinvertebrates, skulls, pelts, track casts, and game camera footage to showcase the opportunities in the outdoors.

### **Publicity/Media**

- Dr. Brewer's research on King Rail's, a secretive marsh bird, was featured in an article on the Wildlife Society's website. The Wildlife Society is the lead wildlife management and conservation organization, so this visibility for his research is especially exciting.
- St. Ignace News joined Dr. Doubek, Aiden Cardwell, Eli Herriman, and Silas Dunn at the Straits of Mackinac on May 27 to document their research on lake whitefish and food web dynamics. This research project is through a collaboration with the U.S. Geological Survey in Ann Arbor, part of the Cooperative Science Monitoring Initiative on Lake Michigan in 2026.

### **Community Engagement**

- Over 200 visitors from six cruises visited the Great Lakes Discovery Center (GLDC) between May 1 and May 27, which is the kick-off month for cruises.
- CFRE Education and Outreach is working with Northern Transitions, Inc. to collect boat shrink wrap for the Michigan Recycling Coalition 2026 Recycling run. Seventy-six bags for recycling were donated and provided to 4 Eastern UP marine storage facilities who committed to recover shrink wrap in order to make Sault Ste. Marie the only UP site for recycling plastic boat wrap. Additional boat wrap recycling bags will be available to members of the public through CFRE and Northern Transitions, Inc. This is a great example of supporting sustainability in our community.
- CFRE hosted the Indigenous Youth Education Rural Collective during the month of May. Students had an opportunity to showcase their research from throughout the year.

## Operations and Infrastructure Projects

- The CFRE Robot collaboration is complete. CFRE is now home to a Doosan robot that engages with visitors through interactive activities including selecting a freshwater organism to draw and greeting visitors. The robot was designed by the Lake State Robotic Demos (LSRD) team in the School of Engineering (photo at right) and is a collaboration to elevate the exciting opportunities for students at LSSU. The robot is getting a lot of good attention from our smallest guests.



## Appointments to Boards and Professional Organizations

- Beth Christiansen continues to serve on the EUP Materials Management Committee and the Michigan Alliance for Environmental and Outdoor Education Environmental Educator Certification Committee.

## Scholarship Activity

- Dr. Ashley Moerke traveled with Nikki Storey, CEO of Headwaters North, to Marquette to meet with former Governor Rick Snyder. Storey and Moerke were one of three groups that had the honor of discussing opportunities and challenges related to innovation in the UP.
- Dr. Moerke presented to the IJC Great Lakes Adaptive Management Committee on research evaluating the impacts of compensating gate operations on fishes and macroinvertebrates in the St. Marys River rapids.
- CFRE Research Technicians conducted a 2-day safety training workshop with 18 summer student workers which included vehicle safety, boating, trailering, practical skills, etc.
- Ashley Moerke and Drew Heckman met with Merit Network, MTU, and MI Department of Natural Resources to discuss opportunities to expand MiWaterNet, a water sensor network operated by CFRE.

## Library and Academic Services

### Scholarship

- Five people from the First Year Advising task force (MiLEAP College Success Grant) attended the NACADA (National Academic Advising Association) Regional Conference in San Diego. Those who attended are Dr. Rob Kipka, Prof. Adam St. John, Dean Mindy McCready, Dr. Toni Stith and Dr. Russ Searight.

### Grants

- LSSU was awarded a MiLEAP College Success Grant \$194,600 in November from the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP) through the state's Sixty by Thirty initiative. This funding supports a campus-wide initiative focused on strengthening first-year student success.

LSSU's College Success grant project will implement multiple strategies over the three-year project period with a focus on enhancing freshmen seminar courses and first-year advising. We invited faculty and staff to help lead this work by serving on a First-Year Success Task Force focused on either University Seminar (USEM) or First-Year Advising.

Recent institutional assessments and campus conversations, supported through the MiLEAP Quick Start grant and including nationally normed assessments and collaboration with the Gardner Institute, have highlighted the importance of a strong and coordinated first-year student experience. We all play a central role in that experience, both in the classroom and through advising relationships.

Guided by recommendations from recent assessments, LSSU will use College Success grant funds to strengthen first-year student outcomes in three areas: faculty and staff professional development, freshmen seminar course alignment, and a redesigned first-year advising model. These efforts directly address identified institutional needs and support LSSU's strategic priorities. Cross-functional task force teams will lead each initiative.

### **Conference Presentations**

- Several Lakers attended the UPTLC (Upper Peninsula Teaching and Learning Conference) in Marquette. Laura Moening (Academic Success Center) and Anirudh Gupta (student) presented a session entitled "Extending Access: Bringing Tutoring and Academic Support to Incarcerated Students."

### **Appointments to Boards and Professional Organizations:**

- Marc Boucher (Director, Library & Academic Services) has been elected treasurer of the Michigan Consortium of Higher Education in Prison (MiCHEP).
- Barb Searight (Academic Accessibility Services) attended the 2026 MI-AHEAD conference in Mount Pleasant. She has been elected Secretary of this statewide association that supports accessibility services professionals in higher education.