

Academic Affairs Update
July 15, 2026

College of Arts and Sciences

Student Accomplishments and Activities

- Gabrielle Woodard (Biology) is conducting her field research this summer by collecting freshwater sponges and water samples at Perch Lake and Carp River. Her senior thesis proposal, *The Relationship between Silica and Freshwater Sponges in the Upper Peninsula (UP) of Michigan*, is being supervised by Dr. Barbara Evans. Silica analysis for the project will be completed with Professor Benjamin Southwell in the [Superior Analytics Lab](#). During the development of her proposal, Gabby also collaborated with Dr. Paul Kelso to identify potential silica bearing bedrock within the UP watersheds. In addition to her research, Gabby is a member of the LSSU swim team and serves as an officer of the LSSU Aquaculture Club.



From the classroom to the creek, science comes alive through discovery.

- Hailey Burd (Forensic Chemistry) is assessing the effects of copper contamination from plumbing on fish tissue. She is working with Dr. Barbara Evans to modify fixative procedures for light microscopy that allows the samples to be viewed using Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM). She is also working with Dr. Derek Wright in LSSU's [MASC Lab](#).



Hands-on research gives students the opportunity to develop real-world scientific skills.

Publications and Creative Works

- Dr. Jun Li published an [article](#) titled "A molecular switch: antitoxin HigA integrates transcriptional activation by XreR and proteolytic clearance by Lon to balance virulence and stress adaptation in the fish pathogen *Edwardsiella piscicida*" in the journal *Marine Life Science & Technology*.

Conference Presentations

- Dr. Kandel made a lightning talk presentation, "Landslides in Mid-hill Slopes of Nepal Himalaya: A GeoAI and Hydro-mechanical Analysis," at the Penrose Conference of Geological Society of America (GSA) held in Nepal from May 17-22. The conference participation was partially funded by a GSA grant.

College of Professional Studies

Academic Program Success

- LSSU's professional online MBA program continues to experience strong outcomes. The University has successfully completed all 12 courses in the program, creating a fully developed, and high-quality curriculum designed for working professionals. With a strong foundation in place, the program is positioned for long-term growth, expanded partnerships, and continued contributions to graduate enrollment, financial sustainability, and the preparation of business leaders for an increasingly global marketplace.
- The 58th cohort of Lake Superior State University's MCOLES Academy successfully completed all academy requirements and celebrated their graduation on June 25 at LSSU. The ceremony recognized the graduates' commitment to rigorous academic and practical training in law enforcement. All members of the cohort have already secured employment with law enforcement agencies across Michigan, including several local departments, reflecting the strong reputation of the Academy and the continued demand for well-prepared public safety professionals.



Recruitment and Outreach

- FANUC America sponsored a booth for LSSU at Automate 2026, the largest robotics and automation event in North America. A team of 6 students and 5 faculty/staff members represented LSSU at this event June 22-25, 2026 in Chicago, IL. LSSU's booth was vibrant with visits from various individuals including high school educators and students, alumni, and industry professionals who were interested in senior projects, placement/internships, and equipment support. The pizza roll demo (team LSRD senior project) and Fitz, our robot dog, were a hit.



- School of Engineering and Technology staff members hosted a table at Soo Locks Engineers Day 2026 on June 26. Over 3,000 people took part in the event and many of them stopped by the table to obtain information on LSSU's engineering programs. Fitz, the robot dog, was very popular at this event as well.



Scholarship

- Dr. Rob Kipka received notification from *The American Mathematical Monthly* that his paper with collaborators Ledyaeu and Sutter, "Ritt, Gronwall, and Differentiation with Respect to a Parameter" was accepted for publication.

Awards and Honors

- Prof. Jim Devaprasad from LSSU's School of Engineering & Technology has been named the 2026 A3 Educator of the Year by the Association for Advancing Automation (A3), sponsored by Siemens.

College of Great Lakes Ecology and Education

Recruitment and Outreach

- Professor Becky Davis represented the School of Education at the St. Ignace Career Day event on April 29 to share program information with Career Technical Education (CTE) students from the surrounding area.
- CFRE hatchery staff began assisting United States Fisheries and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to remove invasive Sea Lamprey from the Soo Locks and powerhouse buildings. CFRE has a contract with the USFWS to support these student experiences.
- Professor Becky Davis and Dr. Jennifer Fager represented the School of Education, and Dr. Dustin Brewer and Dr. Jenna Parker represented the School of Natural Resources at the Large School Group Visit on June 25. Approximately 200 students, parents, and staff from the Clare-Gladwin RESD attended the event at LSSU in the Art Center.
- CFRE hosted nine prospective student tours to the Barch building and the fish hatchery. Students included Fisheries and Wildlife Management majors, along with Geology, Animal Biology, Criminal Justice, and Mechatronics majors.
- The CFRE Education and Outreach (E & O) team wrapped up the preK-12 academic year with 180 students visiting from three LSSU charter schools, a Pellston-area High School, and two EUP schools. The spring and summer undergraduate E & O assistants did an amazing job sharing the message of freshwater stewardship.
 - Maplewood Baptist Academy: 25 students learned about food webs and invasive species during exploration of the Great Lakes Discovery Center and live macroinvertebrates.
 - Tipton Charter Academy: 34 sixth grade students participated in two separate programs guided by CFRE E & O staff—one program at Point Iroquois connected students to their place in the Great Lakes through culture and Superior shoreline geology. At CFRE, students learned about watersheds and water quality with live macroinvertebrates and food chains with an exploration of the Great Lakes Discovery Center.
 - Lake Superior Academy: 32 first and second graders participated in the *Discover Michigan* program with a beach rock hunt and identification to simulate Lake Superior shorelines, a fossil discovery station representing the Tip of the Mitt shoreline, and a simulation game where students “visit” Pigeon River and investigate elk and Kirtland’s warbler habitat management.
 - Pellston High School: 36 high school students learned about food webs and water quality through exploring live macroinvertebrates, an Atlantic salmon dissection, a food-web selfie scavenger hunt in the Great Lakes Discovery Center, and tours of CFRE

hatchery and research initiatives. Admissions also arranged a campus tour and lunch for these visiting students.

- Innocademy Allegan: 22 fifth- through eighth-grade students explored macroinvertebrate life in Pendill's Creek and human-nature interactions in addition to studying the physics of sand by designing and building structures on Pendill's Beach.
- Innocademy Zeeland: 30 fifth grade students reviewed academic year curriculum by exploring water quality and building food webs with live macroinvertebrates, Great Lakes organism models, visiting the Great Lakes Discovery Center and completing an Atlantic salmon dissection.

Publications and Creative Works

- Figary S, and 143 others, including Doubek JP. The Zooplankton International Geospatial (ZIG) dataset: A global repository of spatiotemporal freshwater zooplankton community composition data from lakes and reservoirs to support ecological research. *Limnology and Oceanography Letters*, In Press.

Publicity/Media

- [Great Lakes adventure brings learning to life](#) Article in June 13, 2026, UP NORTH VOICE MAIL
- [40 years of fishy goings on celebrated at Lake State fish hatchery](#) Article appeared in the June 8 Soo Leader highlighting CFRE's celebration of 40 years of stocking Atlantic Salmon.



Pictured above, students from Whittemore-Prescott Elementary school visited Barch CFRE and had a hands-on learning adventure led by CFRE's Education and Outreach team.

Community Engagement

- The CFRE Fish Hatchery celebrated its 40th anniversary with a community open house and ceremony highlighting four decades of partnership among LSSU, Cloverland Electric Cooperative (CEC), and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). The event featured the release of 50,000 Atlantic salmon into the St. Marys River, the naming of the 2026 class as the MDNR-Cloverland Partnership Year Class, hatchery tours, and educational exhibits showcasing fisheries management and freshwater research. This longstanding collaboration continues to strengthen Great Lakes conservation, support local fisheries, expand research and

educational opportunities, and enhance recreational fishing throughout the region.



Photo (left): Aaron Switzer, MDNR Fish Production Manager, LSSU President David Travis and Michael Heise, CEO of Cloverland all release Atlantic Salmon during the event. Credit: Jim Lehocky/SooLeader



- Over two dozen LSSU students and local professionals were able to participate in a Macrophyte ID workshop held at CFRE (photo below). MSU Extension instructors, Dr. Jo Latimore and Dr. Erik Elgin provided an afternoon introduction to aquatic plants for LSSU students that were working in the area at CFRE, the conservation district and Bay Mills Indian Community.



Operations and Infrastructure Projects

- CFRE acquired a wastewater treatment system for the outdoor mesocosm facility on a grant, which will expand the types of research that can be conducted in this facility.

Scholarship Activity

- CFRE is hosting two cadets from the US Coast Guard Academy this summer. The cadets are working closely with CFRE faculty, staff, and students on research projects related to oil spills in the Great Lakes. CFRE has a contract with the USCG to support cadet experiences each summer.
- CFRE kicked off a mesocosm experiment this summer investigating the ecological effects of submerged oil contamination in freshwater coastal wetlands. The study will examine how aquatic invertebrate communities respond to oil exposure and recovery over time, helping to inform environmental monitoring and spill response efforts. Kennedy Johnson, an LSSU graduate student working on the project, is investigating how oil exposure affects the grazing of phytoplankton and epiphyton by zooplankton and gastropods. Summer students at CFRE have also actively been involved in the project preparations, including mesocosm set up, equipment

deployment, baseline environmental sampling and the development of research protocols. Through this work, students are gaining direct experience with ecological field methods, experimental research, and environmental data collection in a large-scale applied research setting.

- CFRE and the Office of Advancement wrapped up a short challenge match fundraiser that brought in a total of \$16,700 to support a summer student experience at CFRE. Thank you to the many donors.

Advisory Board Activity

- The CTE Natural Resources Program, held at CFRE, hosted its semi-annual advisory board meeting last month. Advisory board members include regional employers and LSSU faculty and staff including Dr. Kevin Kapuscinski.

Upcoming Events

- Tuesday, August 18 – Fall Kickoff, Arts Center, 10:00 am (luncheon to follow)
- Thursday, August 20 – Professional Development Day, Library, 8:00 am