LAKE SUPERIOR STATE UNIVERSITY

# Academic Affairs Update
**October 15, 2026**

## College of Arts and Sciences

### Student Accomplishments and Activities

- Virginia Moore (Environmental Science) is participating as an entrepreneur in the National Science Foundation iCorps Regional Workshop, a six-week program with Michigan Tech University. The program provides mentorship to help Virginia market a biofilter she is developing. Dr. Barbara Evans is her mentor for the program.

### Publications and Creative Works

- Dr. Barbara Evans recently coauthored a publication in the *Journal of Extension*.

  Lauren N. Jescovitch-Stigers, Kieran Smith, Barbara I. Evans, Amy J. Schrank, "Aquaculture Extension: Expanding the Audience Beyond Producers" *Journal of Extension*, 2026.

- Dr. Britt Ranson Olson recently had a publication titled "A refined qPCR duplexing method for the molecular sex determination of sturgeon (*Acipenser genus*), providing a validating, endogenous control," published September 3rd in BioTechniques. A team of researchers has refined a genetic testing method that makes the process more reliable, offering a useful tool for fisheries research, conservation, and aquaculture. The research, led by Dr. Ranson Olson, was conducted in collaboration with Assistant Director of Research at the Center for Freshwater Research and Education (CFRE), Dr. Kevin Kapuscinski, and Master's candidate Alana J. Miller-Schofield.

### Conference Presentation

- Ana Robbins (Office of Advancement), presented a talk titled "Application of Spatially Resolved Micro X-ray Fluorescence Imaging to Identification of Potentially Hazardous Pigments in Historic 19th and 20th Century Books" at the Denver X-Ray Conference in Chicago, Illinois. This was the result of a research collaboration between Robbins, Dr. Derek Wright, Professor Ben Southwell, Nicholas Gordon, Arianna DeHoyos (Political Science), and Stephen Kolomyjec (University of Olivet).

### Community Engagement

- The Arts Center kicked off the semester with a dynamic mix of cultural programming. On August 28, the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company performed, combining traditional Asian arts, dance, and martial arts with American modern dance to explore immigration, identity, and cultural connections. Peter Bergin and Ivory & Gold entertained with The American Jamboree, an evening of music, storytelling, and Americana on September 4. The Arts Center also hosted several movies in conjunction with the Soo Film Festival over the week of September 14th.




# College of Great Lakes Ecology and Education

### Student Highlights & Accomplishments

- Twenty-eight student teachers began their internships in September in schools in Michigan and Iowa. These School of Education students will complete their program requirements in December 2026.

- Ninety-two School of Education students began their Apprenticeships in schools in Michigan and Ontario, Canada where they will gain classroom experience even as freshman.

- Ten School of Natural Resources undergraduate students, and five graduate students submitted abstracts to present a poster or an oral presentation at the Midwest Fish & Wildlife conference in February 2027 in Grand Rapids, MI. Undergraduate students include Frankie Albrough, Colton Isenhart, James Laperierre, McKinsley McCardell, Cherrie McSawby, AJ Pirochta, Ryan Quackenbush, Dorothy Sidau, and Trey Studer, all Fisheries and Wildlife majors, and Ethyn Lusardi, a Conservation Biology major. Graduate students include Aiden Cardwell, Kennedi Johnson, Anna Matichuk, Sam Rimatzki, and Alana Miller-Schofield.

- McKinsley McCardell, Fisheries and Wildlife Management, is performing her research on the occurrence and concentration of microplastics in Pink Salmon in the St. Marys River. Her project is in collaboration with Dr. Doubek and Dr. Kapuscinski at LSSU, Jason Smith at Bay Mills Indian Community, and Dr. Joe Langan at NOAA in Ann Arbor. McKinsley successfully collected the Pink Salmon she needs for the project this past month, and soon will start microplastic analysis of the fish. Here are some photos from her sampling.



- Students in Applied Geospatial Technology (GIST 365) course have been experimenting with various methods of aquatic data collection using Unmanned Service Vehicles (USVs), Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs), BlueBoats, and Wave Adapted Modular Vessels (WMVs) in Ashmun Bay as part of their lab work**.** Dr. Hari Kandel (School of Natural Resources) and Dr. Edo Sarda (School of Engineering) are co-instructors of the course and are providing a unique collaborative learning opportunity for our students**.**



**Grants**

- Dr. Ashley Moerke and Dr. Bo Liu were awarded a grant for $247,674 from the US Coast Guard Great Lakes Center of Expertise to evaluate the fate and behavior of heavy oils in experimental freshwater systems. The project will support a graduate student, CFRE staff, and student research assistant.

- Ms. Beth Christiansen and Dr. Ashley Moerke were awarded a $199,610 grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration B-WET program to carry out place-based educational

programming in our region. The project will support field explorations for teachers and their classes, reaching up to 30 teachers and over 300 middle and high school students in northern Michigan.

**Publications**

- Heuvel, C.E., Moerke, A.H., Twiss, M.R., McKay, M.R., Liu, B., Doubek, J.P., Ranson-Olson, B., Dew, W., Madliger, C., Weisener, C.G, Jobin, P., Snider, A. Kapuscinski, K.L. (2026). A decade of oil spills in the Laurentian Great Lakes (2015-2024): A review of incidents, trends, and lessons for environmental protection. *Journal of Great Lakes Research,* In press. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jglr.2026.102946

- Phillips GL, Prow EM, Ackiss AS, Alvarez AC, Bonilla-Gomez JL, Chorba LH, Collier JJ, Dunn SJ, Freeman SDD, Grow RC, Harding IC, Honsey AE, Inoue K, Jonas JL, Kapuscinski KL, Ropp AJ, Skubik KA, Smith JB, Waterhouse CE, Woolnough DA, Doubek JP. 2026. Documentation of giant floater (*Pyganodon grandis*) glochidia attached to larval lake whitefish (*Coregonus clupeaformis*) in the Laurentian Great Lakes. *Journal of Great Lakes Research* 102932. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jglr.2026.102932

- Ranson Olson, B., Miller-Scofield, A.J., and K.L. Kapuscinski. 2026. A refined qPCR duplexing method for the molecular sex determination of sturgeon (*Acipenser* genus), providing a validating, endogenous control. *BioTechniques* https://doi.org/10.1080/07366205.2026.2723752

- Steinman, A., Kapuscinski, K.L., and 12 others. *In press*. Great Lakes Integrated Mesocosm Research (GLIMR). *Journal of Great Lakes Research*

**Community Engagement**

- Dr. Hari Kandel and Dr. Ashley Moerke met with Cloverland Electric Cooperative regarding Cloverland's interest in developing a training manual for hydro operators. Dr. Kandel will work with his spring class to draft a chapter outline that will be used to teach future operators about the hydrology of the St. Marys River.

- CFRE's Dr. Constance Baker Great Lakes Discovery Center hosted four cruise ships and was open every weekend in September, engaging over 350 visitors.

- CFRE hosted Recreation Day for the Sault Chamber of Commerce Leadership Program. Fifteen Leadership participants kayaked around Rotary Park, listened to guest lectures from Yooper Running Co, Soo Pickleball Association, Birds Eye Outfitters, and Dr. Cait Henry.

- Dr. Liu attended Little Traverse Bay Band of Odowa, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Emmet County Oil Spill Response Workshop in Petoskey, MI on September 15 and 16.

- CFRE hosted the MI Sea Grant Advisory Board where board members had an opportunity to learn about CFRE's work and collaborations with MI Sea Grant.

**Scholarship Activity**

- Dr. Kapuscinski presented "Movements of Atlantic Salmon stocked in restored rapids habitat" at the 156th Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society. This presentation was based on Ms. Sarah Gremmer's undergraduate thesis, and in collaboration with coauthors Dr. Ashley Moerke, Dr.

Thomas Binder (Great Lakes Fishery Commission), Jason Smith (Bay Mills Indian Community), and Simon Freeman (Bay Mills Indian Community).

- Dr. Kapuscinski, in collaboration with Drs. Ashley Moerke, and Alejandro Molina Moctezuma (University of Tennessee), presented “Evaluation of habitat restoration at Little Rapids” to the Little Rapids Advisory Committee, whose members include administrators and biologists from tribal, federal, and state agencies.

- Dr. Brewer presented an invited talk at the Mississippi Flyway Meeting (where avian conservation decisions are made) in Cedar Rapids, Iowa entitled: “King Rail Habitat in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley.”

**Publicity/Media**

- LSSU’s first year experience builds connections beyond campus was featured in the the Mining Journal and 9&10 News.

- An article highlighting Dick Barch’s legacy was featured in multiple outlets including the Mining Gazette.

**Boards**

- Dr. Jennifer Fager was elected as a Board Member of the Michigan Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (MACTE).

## College of Professional Studies

**Student Accomplishments and Activities**

- September 22, four senior nursing students volunteered with the Superior Start preschool program, sharing their knowledge with children through lessons on germ safety and healthy habits.

- September 23, Nursing faculty and staff, along with members of the Lake State Student Nurses Association (LSSNA), hosted the annual Jumpstart event to welcome 19 new students into the nursing program. The event included activities and information focused on mentorship, program policies, clinical preparation, academic support, and mental health resources. Professor Kathrine Sylvain coordinated the event.



- The School of Engineering & Technology hosted its 2nd Annual Transfer Student Dinner to help such students build connections, share insights about common struggles, and become more aware of the resources that are available as students navigate a new academic environment and culture. Ten transfer students, two staff members, and four faculty members enjoyed a home-cooked Mediterranean meal and conversation in the student lounge. (See photo to the right.)

- The School of Engineering & Technology hosted a Student Organization Showcase on September 14 to give EGNR101 (Intro to Engineering) students the opportunity to interact with members of several engineering and computer science student clubs. (See photo to the right.)




- The School of Engineering and Technology hosted a Freshman Welcome Dinner on September 28, providing an opportunity for new students to connect with their peers. Twelve first-year students and two student ambassadors attended the event.

- EGNR 101 (Introduction to Engineering) students put their skills to the test during the annual Egg Drop Challenge on September 16. Students designed and constructed protective devices for eggs that were dropped from a Sault Ste. Marie Fire Department ladder truck. (See photo below.)




- Dr. Herb Henderson coordinated opportunities for several criminal justice students to participate in four Mass Casualty Incident training exercises with the Michigan State Police on September 15 and 16. The students gained firsthand experience with mass casualty incident response and scenario-based training while interacting with law enforcement professionals in the field.

- Students in Professor Natasha DeActis' Business Communication class participated in an experiential team-building activity designed to strengthen communication, teamwork, leadership, and trust. Students were assigned specific roles and worked collaboratively to complete a building challenge, requiring them to communicate effectively and rely on one another to achieve a shared goal.



- On September 24, Professor Brad Clegg and members of the First Responders Association (FRA) volunteered their time to clean up the organization's adopted stretch of I-75. The group also celebrated the installation of its new Adopt-A-Highway sign.




**Honors and Awards**

- Dr. Herb Henderson was nominated for the 2027–2028 Michigan Teacher of the Year in recognition of his work teaching Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses at Sault Area High School and Career Center.

**Academic Program Successes**

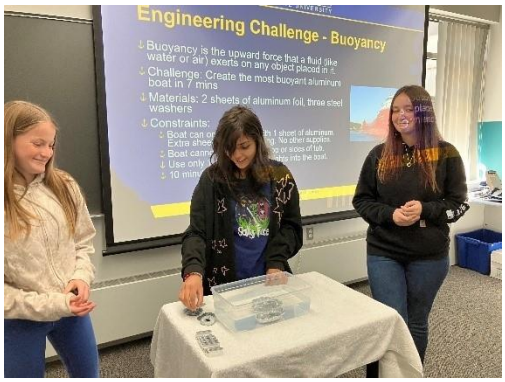
- LSSU is participating in the NURSES Grant, a collaboration between the Michigan Primary Care Association (MPCA) and nine Michigan universities that provides senior nursing students with community-based outpatient clinical experiences. The grant also provides financial support for mileage, lodging, and paid internship opportunities at Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Clinics (RHCs), and helping to address the nursing shortage in rural communities. The grant has been extended through Fall 2026, allowing all nine senior nursing students enrolled in NURS 432 (Nursing of Populations) to participate and receive funding.

**Recruitment and Outreach**

- School of Engineering faculty and staff participated in the following recruitment and outreach activities during September.
    - Hosted an information table at the Grand Rapids Girls Robotics Competition (See picture to the right).



- Hosted hands-on “Intro to Engineering” sessions for area high school sophomores at the Bay College Occupational Open House.




- Hosted specialized Calculus 1 and Calculus 3 sessions at Bay College designed to encourage students to continue their advanced mathematics education.

**Community Engagement**

- Professor Jaimee Gerrie is serving as a committee member for the Katie Robinson Memorial Hockey Showcase. Last year’s event included 23 female hockey teams and brought over 800 people to a LSSU D1 men’s hockey game. This year’s event will take place February 12–14, 2027.

- The LSSU Fire Regional Training Center (RTC) hosted a Bureau of Fire Services Fire Fighter Training Division certification retest for participants from across the Upper Peninsula. Testing was offered for two certifications: Fire Fighter I and II/Hazmat Operations and Fire Fighter I/Hazmat Operations.

- The LSSU Fire Emergency Response Team (ERT) assisted local departments (Sault Ste. Marie Fire Department and LSSU Public Safety) by staffing a two-person crew for first aid, public relations, and crowd monitoring for the 2026 Festival of Races.

- The LSSU Fire Regional Training Center (RTC) hosted the Dafter Fire Department’s monthly training meeting at the LSSU fire training grounds. Firefighters from the City of Sault Ste. Marie, Soo Township, Bay Mills, Superior Township, Bruce Township, and Sugar Island also participated. Representatives from Task Force Tips, Akron, and HEN Nozzles, along with several fire service hose companies, demonstrated equipment and products for attendees. LSSU Fire Science students also attended the event.

**Appointments to Boards and Professional Organizations**

- Professor Jaimee Gerrie is representing the Eastern Upper Peninsula on the UP Health System – Marquette Board of Trustees.

**Scholarship**

- Professor Jaimee Gerrie attended National Virtual Presentations on Ethics in Nurse Business and Elder Abuse and Neglect in Nursing Homes on September 16 & 17.

## Library and Academic Services

- Library and Academic Services hosted seven Student Success Workshops to assist students on their academic journey including Accessibility Awareness, Goal Setting and Note Taking.

- Library Outreach has been going strong with several talks including hosting the Zekelman Holocaust Center's Art as Resistance Display in the Library Art Gallery and Michigan Holocaust Voices in the Arts Center Lobby. The Holocaust exhibits will be on campus through the end of October. Outreach sessions include:

    - Scholar Series Presentation with Ted Walker "Art In The Holocaust"

    - Scholar Series Presentation with the Zekelman Holocaust Center "Understanding the Holocaust"

## Upcoming Events

- Monday, October 19 — Interviewing Best Practices: Perfecting Your Pitch with Soo Co-Op, Career Services Resource Center (LBR231), 12:00 pm (noon) and 5:00 pm

- Monday, October 19 — Student Success Workshop: How to Talk to Your Teacher, Career Services Resource Center (LBR231), 3:00 pm

- Tuesday, October 20 — Student Success Workshop: My Degree Plan, Career Services Resource Center (LBR231), 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm

- Wednesday, October 21 — Battle of The Bands, Arts Center, 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm

- Thursday, October 22 — LSSU Fall Career Fair (hosted by Career Services), Cisler Center, 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm

- Thursday, October 22 — Leadership in Today's Environment: Insights from Bud Denker, Library Learning Commons, 6:00 pm

- Tuesday, October 27 — Student Success Workshop: Professional Communication, Career Services Resource Center (LBR231), 3:00 pm

- Thursday, October 29 — Student Success Workshop: Mid-Semester Reset, Career Services Resource Center (LBR231), 1:00 pm and 5:00 pm

- Saturday, October 31 — Rocky Horror Picture Show, Arts Center, Midnight

- Tuesday, November 11 to Sunday, November 15 — LSSU Fall Production of *Mauritius*, Arts Center, 7:00 pm