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Students In Service projects taking off in west central Minnesota

Summary: Students In Service encourages college students to enroll as part-time AmeriCorps members.

(March 1, 2011)-West central Minnesota asked for it, and students provided. The [Center for Small Towns](#) (CST) and the [Office of Community Engagement](#) based out of the University of Minnesota, Morris are again participating in the Students In Service (SIS) program and increasing the number of positions available. CST alone increased the number of its SIS positions from four to eleven for spring semester and will have a total of 25 positions by the end of August 2011. SIS is an AmeriCorps program that encourages college students to enroll as part-time AmeriCorps members. The purpose of the program is to meet the needs of the community while working to “foster within students an ethic of civic responsibility.”

Coordinated by Minnesota Campus Compact, an organization that promotes civic engagement on Minnesota college campuses, the program allows interested students to work in a variety of positions to help better their communities. Qualifying activities include academic and co-curricular service learning, internships with nonprofit organizations, certain kinds of practicum hours, federal- or state-funded community service work study, and most kinds of volunteer work. Students commit to 300 hours of service throughout the year.

In fall 2010, CST opened up applications to all local units of government, k–12 schools, and nonprofit organizations within a 60-mile radius of Morris to apply for assistance. Current projects within CST include Bridget Billo '13, Eden Valley, working with the Stevens County Resource Connections group Tara Greiman '11, Dayton, working with the Upper Minnesota River Valley Regional Development Commission on an Appleton research audit Deon Haider '14, Northfield, and Melissa Kloek '11, Stillwater, working with carbon neutrality within Steven's FORWARD! Zac Van Cleve '13, St. Paul, working with the city of Morris manager's office Ayano Jiru '12, Shakopee, working with Pioneer Public Television Rebecca Schaeppi '14, Laporte, working with Extension Technology Ashley Bisek '11, working with Extension Curriculum and Eugene Butler '11, Brookings, South Dakota, working with the city of Hoffman on its website. Upcoming projects include a two-person project with the Clean Up our River Environment organization.

Projects through the Office of Community Engagement include Lynn Bixler '12, Brooklyn Park, and Teague Goodsky '13, Duluth, working with the Pomme de Terre Food Co-op Kali Dale '14, Bemidji, working with the Prairie Renaissance Cultural Alliance Megan Trumper '14, Stillwater, working with the Country Day Co-op and Katia Vantries '12, Morris, working with the West Wind Village.

The Office of Community Engagement engages members of the broader community and University of Minnesota, Morris students, faculty, and staff in meaningful, reciprocal course-based and co-curricular partnerships that meet identified community needs, advance the campus' mission, learning outcomes, and key priorities, and work toward a more vibrant, just, and inclusive community.

The Center for Small Towns is a community outreach program housed at the University of Minnesota, Morris and serves as a point-of-entry to the resources of the University of Minnesota. Small towns, local units of government, k–12

schools, nonprofit organizations, and other University units are able to utilize the center's resources as they work on rural issues or make contributions to rural society. Their mission is to focus the University's attention and marshal its resources toward assisting Minnesota's small towns with locally identified issues by creating applied learning opportunities for faculty and students.

If your organization would be interested in hiring an SIS member in the future, please contact [Jessica Beyer](#) at 320-589-6451.

Photo above: Melissa Kloek '11, Stillwater, one of the University of Minnesota, Morris's Students In Service

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.