

MNSU Student Government 2025-26 Candidate Guide

Table of Contents

MNSU Student Government 2025-26 Candidate Guide	1
Candidate Guide Information	2
Candidates for President & Vice President	3
Presidential Candidate (1)	3
Andrew Colleran - Empowered Mavericks	3
Vice Presidential Candidate (1)	4
Sneha Kafle - Empowered Mavericks	4
Candidates for Academic Colleges	5
Senator, College of Science, Engineering & Technology (3)	5
Macy Anderson – Independent	5
Edward Nguyen – Empowered Mavericks	5
Senator, College of Humanities & Social Sciences (3)	6
Chase Hiber – Independent	6
Melissa Meouchy – Empowered Mavericks	6
Ben Livingston – Empowered Mavericks	7
Yodahe Kebede – Independent	7
Senator, College of Business (2)	8
Emily Dittrich – Empowered Mavericks	8
Ishneet Narula – Empowered Mavericks	8
Senator, College of Graduate Studies (2)	9
Manuel Reyes – Empowered Mavericks	9
Amal Sharafkhodjaeva – Empowered Mavericks	9
Senator, College of Education (1)	9
Ashton Morris – Empowered Mavericks	9
Senator, College of Allied Health & Nursing (4)	10
Zugeey Leon – Independent	10
Candidates for Student Life	11
Senator, Residential Life (5)	11
Trenton Ide – Independent	11
Senator, Off-Campus (8)	12
Tyro Devolites – Independent	12
Charles Hillstead – Independent	12
Emily Hodge – Empowered Mavericks	12
Jack Knauer – Empowered Mavericks	13
Bob Johnson – Empowered Mavericks	13
Fatima Orujova – Empowered Mavericks	14

Rhys Riggle – Independent	14
Matthew Sohn – Independent	15
Chris Stich – Independent.....	15
Senator, At-Large (2).....	15
Megan Cumming – Independent	15
Alexis Smith – Empowered Mavericks	15
Brandon Vega – Independent	16
Candidates for Boards & Committees	16
Board Member, MSU Reporter Newspaper Board (4)	16
Micah Allen – Empowered Mavericks	16
Board Member, Centennial Student Union (CSU) Board (2)	16
Micah Allen – Empowered Mavericks	16
Janat Kazibwe – Independent.....	16
Sai Keertana – Independent	16
Committee Member, Student Health Services Advisory Committee (2)	17
Micah Allen – Empowered Mavericks	17
Committee Member, Athletic Fee Advisory Committee (2)	17
Micah Allen – Empowered Mavericks	17
Committee Member, Student Allocations Committee (4)	17
Trenton Ide – Independent	17
Sai Keertana – Independent	17
Pria Wills – Empowered Mavericks.....	18

Candidate Guide Information

For the following, positions available for election are listed in the same order as they will appear on the ballot, along with the number of seats that can be elected in parenthesis. Candidates are listed in alphabetical order by their last name, with the party they are running under listed after their name. Underneath their name will be any information submitted regarding the platforms they are running under and a headshot. Please note that write-ins are allowed when voting. Voting will be open from Monday, April 7th at 8am to Tuesday, April 8th at 6pm via the University’s Voting Booth Platform.

Candidates for President & Vice President

Presidential Candidate (1)

Andrew Colleran - Empowered Mavericks



Andrew Colleran and Sneha Kafle are running for Student Government President and Vice President to advocate for a campus where every student is heard, supported, and valued. Andrew, an accounting and political science major, brings a strong understanding of policy and financial decision-making to our party, while Sneha, a nursing major, understands the daily struggles of students balancing academics, work, and personal responsibilities. Together, we are committed to advocating for issues important to students, such as fair student wages, financial support, accessible

educational resources, and a stronger, more inclusive campus community. Our leadership is rooted in lived experience, knowing firsthand what it means to push through challenges, work tirelessly, and demand meaningful change. We are not just your candidates; we are dedicated advocates for you and your future at MNSU, and we will make real changes to make your life better, and that is a promise we will fulfill.

Vice Presidential Candidate (1)

Sneha Kafle - Empowered Mavericks



Andrew Colleran and Sneha Kafle are running for Student Government President and Vice President to advocate for a campus where every student is heard, supported, and valued. Andrew, an accounting and political science major, brings a strong understanding of policy and financial decision-making to our party, while Sneha, a nursing major, understands the daily struggles of students balancing academics, work, and personal responsibilities. Together, we are committed to advocating for issues important to students, such as fair student wages,

financial support, accessible educational resources, and a stronger, more inclusive campus community. Our leadership is rooted in lived experience, knowing firsthand what it means to push through challenges, work tirelessly, and demand meaningful change. We are not just your candidates; we are dedicated advocates for you and your future at MNSU, and we will make real changes to make your life better, and that is a promise we will fulfill.

Candidates for Academic Colleges

Senator, College of Science, Engineering & Technology (3)

Macy Anderson – Independent

Edward Nguyen – Empowered Mavericks



My name is Edward Nguyen, and I'm running to be your next CSET Senator in Student Government. As a proud student in the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology, I'm passionate about advocating for the needs, ideas, and goals of our diverse and driven community. CSET students are problem-solvers, innovators, and leaders — and we deserve strong representation that understands our challenges and supports our ambitions. Whether it's improving lab access, increasing internship and research opportunities, or making sure our voices are heard in university decisions, I'm committed to being that representative. I believe in practical solutions, open communication, and working together to create a better experience for all CSET students. With your support, I'll bring our

ideas to the table and work hard to make them a reality. Let's build a stronger CSET together! Thank you for your support.

Senator, College of Humanities & Social Sciences (3)

Chase Hiber – Independent



"Real solutions to real problems". With 2 years of experience in the Minnesota Army National Guard, Chase has been proud to serve his community and plans to take his grounded perspective based off real world experiences to the MNSU senate. As well as his two years in the Army, Chase has also enjoyed his role as a motivational speaker at schools across the state. From this experience, Chase hopes to bring confidence and motivation when speaking about the issues impacting his fellow peers. After a lifetime of passion in politics,

ranging from being the mayor of BizTown in 5th grade to attending boys state as a junior, Chase has learned the hard lessons about representing the common man. One thing remains clear, "A vote for Chase will make Mankato a better place."

Melissa Meouchy – Empowered Mavericks



Hello, my name is Melissa Meouchy, I am an international student from Togo and currently a proud member of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. I am currently majoring in Psychology with a minor in Biology and can see firsthand the lack of student engagement and resources for the college of Humanities and Social Sciences. My goal as a prospective Senator is to be a voice and representation for all students in the often-ignored College of Humanities and Social Sciences. I will be an ear to listen to all ideas, wants, and needs, and a voice to advocate for our college, students, and resources.

Ben Livingston – Empowered Mavericks



My name is Ben Livingston, and I am a freshman majoring in Urban/Regional Studies and Economics, with a minor in Public Policy. I am running to continue serving as a senator, now to represent the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS). As an incumbent senator, I have been deeply involved in Student Government, working to enhance the student experience at MNSU. I am committed to learning more about our university and finding new ways to better your experience and education here in Mankato. Beyond Student Government, I serve as the treasurer of the Politics and Policy Student Organization and am an active member of the Students of the Urban and Regional Studies Institute and College Democrats. I have also contributed as a staff writer for The Reporter. HSS is

consistently under threat from budget cuts, and as your senator, I will fight to ensure our renowned programs remain strong for years to come. I am also dedicated to fostering greater cohesion within the college, encouraging interdepartmental collaboration and engagement. Beyond that, I will work with key stakeholders to address the real, day-to-day challenges students face. This means advocating for campus safety, finding ways to lower costs, ensuring efficient and responsible use of student fees, and streamlining university operations. I humbly ask for your vote— together, we can build a stronger, more united MSU!

Yodahe Kebede – Independent

Senator, College of Business (2)

Emily Dittrich – Empowered Mavericks

Ishneet Narula – Empowered Mavericks



Hi! I'm Ishneet, a freshman majoring in Accounting. I'm originally from Punjab, India. I'm running for College of Business Senator, I want to represent each one of you and I want to make sure your opinions matter. I'm here to advocate for your needs and rights on this campus. I intend to make MSU a much more inclusive, accepting and evolved campus with your cooperation and support. Roll Mavs!

Senator, College of Graduate Studies (2)

Manuel Reyes – Empowered Mavericks



I am Manuel Reyes, a Master's of Fine Arts student in Forensics and Communication. I am seeking reelection for the graduate student senate seat. As a former debater and a current speech and debate coach, I always emphasize the importance of allowing everyone's voice be heard. This is something I live by. Everyone's experience matters, no matter how small the population may be. Graduate students are a small population that makes up the student body, but their concerns still should be discussed. Fair pay for graduate

students along with feasible work hours are among the top of the issues that I want to continue to work on. Additionally, continuing my work to gain attention to the mental health of graduate students and providing resources when possible. I hope to be able to foster a welcoming and inclusive campus for all.

Amal Sharafkhodjaeva – Empowered Mavericks

Senator, College of Education (1)

Ashton Morris – Empowered Mavericks



I plan to work with the student government to propose policies that will enhance our university environment and establish clear initiatives that support the College of Education. While I may not be an education major in the traditional sense, I am committed to understanding and advocating for the needs of education students, ensuring they have the resources and support to succeed wherever I may be able. Additionally, as an aviation student, I will work to promote transparency with the airport and support our aviation student organizations, helping them thrive and grow.

Senator, College of Allied Health & Nursing (4)

Zugeey Leon – Independent



My name is Zugeey Leon, and I am a Pre-occupational therapy major and Health Care minor. I am also an incumbent senator for the College of Allied Health and Nursing. Since joining Student Government, I have gained a deep appreciation for the dedication of our Allied Health and nursing students. I'm committed to advocating for their needs and ensuring their voices are heard so we can build a stronger, more supportive academic community. Furthermore, I aim to work towards expanding valuable programs and identifying readily accessible resources to aid students in their academic journey.

Candidates for Student Life

Senator, Residential Life (5)

Trenton Ide – Independent



Hi! I'm Trenton Ide, applying for Residential Life Student Senator for Y25-26! I'm currently a CA, officer of numerous clubs, and a biochemistry major. I'm working on furthering aid to all students, from financial to basic needs,, and voting for me will further my efforts!

Senator, Off-Campus (8)

Tyro Devolites – Independent

Charles Hillstead – Independent

Emily Hodge – Empowered Mavericks



Hello! My name is Emily (Em) Hodge and I am a Undergraduate Social Work (BSSW) student moving to my Master's of Social Work (MSW) and Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Leadership this upcoming academic 2025-2026 year. I have been interested in policy since being in the Capital Pathways cohort of 2024. Since then, I have been a Community Leadership Fellow through Students United and have advocated for priorities to improve higher education institutions such as the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Initiative, Direct Admissions, and improving Naloxone access at the state legislative level. In Student Government I want to listen to everyone's input and find creative solutions to deal with the various stressors that many students face on a daily basis. Such as high tuition costs, transportation, basic needs

access, and more. Students have needs and as an Off-Campus Senator I commit to understanding the student population's needs and supporting justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racist efforts to continue fostering an open campus community.

Jack Knauer – Empowered Mavericks



Hello Mavericks, my name is Jack Knauer and I'm running to represent the off-campus students of this university! During my time in this seat, I want to prioritize student safety on campus.

Bob Johnson – Empowered Mavericks



I'm Bob Johnson, MFA creative writing student, Writing Center tutor, and off campus senator. I am running again for senator out of a deep commitment to the betterment, safety, self expression, achievement and sense of worth of each student. I am uniquely qualified to represent off campus students as I work a downtown restaurant; am involved in the arts, literary, and music scenes; and enjoy building connections throughout the Mankato community and region. Previous jobs and service as a middle and high school teacher, K-12 spec ed para, community organizer, caregiver, welder, crisis counselor, grant writer, and music festival/block party organizer have provided a wealth of experience and, from that, a sense of responsibility to continue to do this kind of work and serve others. Currently on the Sustainability Committee,

particularly bus transportation throughout Mankato, I strive to make the most of these positions for all students, on and off campus.

Fatima Orujova – Empowered Mavericks



Hi! I'm Fatima, a freshman from Azerbaijan majoring in Accounting. I'm running for an Off-Campus Senate position because I want to make sure off-campus students have better access to the opportunities and resources they deserve. As someone passionate about meaningful discussions and problem-solving, I want to focus on making student life more affordable and transparent. I will make sure to help students better understand where their fees go, and advocate for financial resources and programs that make balancing school, work, and life off-campus easier. I know that living off-campus comes with its own challenges,

and I'm here to make sure those challenges are addressed. Whether it's connecting students to campus events, or helping students access financial guidance and support, I'm committed to making your off-campus experience better!

Rhys Riggle – Independent



My name is Rhys Riggle, a sophomore Software Engineering student, and I am running for an Off-Campus Senator position. I held an Off-Campus Senator position this last school year and I'd love to have the chance to be a member of senate again. Because of the nature of my degree program, I will be moving to the Edina extended campus and most of my classes will be online. This puts me in a unique position as someone who has spent the last two years going to school and working on campus. I want to use my position as an Off-Campus Senator to reach out to other online students who aren't often

represented among our senate body. With my knowledge of both on- and off-campus resources, I want to be the contact point between our on-campus student body and our online/extended-campus student body.

Matthew Sohn – Independent

Chris Stich – Independent



Hello everyone, my name is Chris, I am a sophomore here in Mankato. As an active member of the off campus community I love getting to socialize with everyone and hearing everyone's stories. With this, I would love to solve some of the problems I hear. As your senator I would take all of your suggestions to heart and work to create policy to improve the quality of life of each student living off-campus.

Senator, At-Large (2)

Megan Cumming – Independent

Alexis Smith – Empowered Mavericks



Fellow Mavericks! My name is Alexis Smith (Political Science/Business Law) and I am excited to announce my candidacy for At-Large Senator in the upcoming Spring 2025 Student Government Election, representing the "Empowered Mavs" party. Over the past year, I have had the incredible honor of representing the entire student body as your current At-Large Senator, advocating for student needs and working toward meaningful change. One of my proudest efforts has been leading the Thrift Store Initiative, a project aimed at establishing an

on-campus thrift store that provides students with affordable clothing options, promotes sustainability, and strengthens our sense of community. This initiative is

more than just a store; it's a vital resource that will help students facing financial challenges while also reducing waste. While I've made great progress, there is still work to be done, and I am eager to continue pushing this initiative forward. If re-elected, I will remain dedicated to ensuring that every student—no matter their background—has access to the resources they need to succeed. I would be honored to have your support! -Alexis Smith Empowered Mavs 2025-26

Brandon Vega – Independent

Candidates for Boards & Committees

Board Member, MSU Reporter Newspaper Board (4)

Micah Allen – Empowered Mavericks

Board Member, Centennial Student Union (CSU) Board (2)

Micah Allen – Empowered Mavericks

Janat Kazibwe – Independent

Sai Keertana – Independent



As a junior in Computer Science, I am committed to making strategic decisions that directly benefit students. I am running for the Student Allocation Committee to ensure funding is directed where it benefits students the most—providing better access to resources and reinforcing the value of their education. With more than 2 years of experience working at the Centennial Student Union (CSU), I have a strong understanding of its departments and operations. As a candidate for the CSU Board, I am committed to improving outreach, increasing student awareness of available resources, and making informed

decisions that enhance campus life. I also serve as the President of the Student Association, Secretary of the Cybersecurity Association, and was a member of a successful campus search committee. Additionally, as the Events Coordinator for Mavs in Action, I have organized impactful student events like the Holiday Carnival, Free Farmers Market and more.. With my leadership experience, campus

involvement, and decision-making skills, I am ready to represent and advocate for YOU. Vote for me to ensure responsible allocation, better access to resources, and a stronger student experience!

Committee Member, Student Health Services Advisory Committee (2)

Micah Allen – Empowered Mavericks

Committee Member, Athletic Fee Advisory Committee (2)

Micah Allen – Empowered Mavericks

Committee Member, Student Allocations Committee (4)

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Pria Wills – Empowered Mavericks



My name is Pria, and I am a first generation completing my undergraduate degree in finance at MNSU this upcoming academic year 2025-2026. As a dedicated advocate for student representation, I had the privilege of attending the Midwest Association of College and University Residence Halls (MACURH) business conference on behalf of MNSU, where I was honored with an award for my commitment to equitable legislative changes. My leadership roles in TRIO, Student Activities, Accessibility, and the Residence Hall Association (RHA) have provided me with a well-rounded perspective on the diverse needs of our student body. Through these experiences, I have actively worked to promote justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and financial accessibility, ensuring that

every student has the resources and support they need to thrive. Serving on the Student Allocations Committee would allow me to continue advocating for fair and responsible funding that enhances student opportunities and fosters an open, inclusive campus community.