



MINNESOTA STATE

Reflecting on the Success of Happy Procurement Month

Minnesota State celebrated the month of March as National Procurement Month. During this time, a volunteer procurement month recognition team was formed with representatives from the system office finance division to highlight the critical role procurement professionals play in supporting the Minnesota State mission.

As March ends, we want to take a moment to share our appreciation for each of you. National Procurement Month has been a time to recognize the critical role you play in ensuring the success of Minnesota State, but your impact extends far beyond just one month.

Procurement is extremely dynamic. Whether it is working with new suppliers, creating strategies, or keeping up with the changing needs of education, you are the backbone of operations, working behind the scenes to ensure everything runs smoothly. Your dedication, expertise, and commitment to procurement drive efficiency, innovation, and value throughout the year. Your efforts not only support the goals of Minnesota State but also contribute to the broader success of our communities. I hope you not only felt appreciated this month but continue to feel valued in the months ahead. Your work has a lasting impact, and we are grateful for all you do. Continue building on this momentum and celebrating our collective success throughout the year!

Thank you for all the nomination submissions for the 2025 Procurement Month Awards and for your participation and engagement throughout the month. The 2025-2026 fiscal year has been largely marked by our transition to Workday. Many of the nominations reflect the innovation, adaptability, and hard work demonstrated during this significant change. Despite the challenges, your commitment to ensuring a smooth and successful transition has been truly commendable.

We are excited to acknowledge and celebrate the outstanding contributions of several individuals who have gone above and beyond.

The Process Improvement Award

The Process Improvement Award was created to acknowledge the monumental efforts that helped Minnesota State streamline processes and demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement.

The Procurement Recognition Committee recognizes **Gina Walkup** from Bemidji State University as the recipient of the **Process Improvement Award** for her custom automations, documentation, and inter-agency processes. Gina was nominated by Marie Bock, Interim CIO.

Gina has worked on improving invoice processing using Microsoft Power Automate, which is saving staff time and effort. She has offered training and published knowledge base documentation in TDX to better serve Minnesota State users. She also strives to collaborate with other campuses, departments, and vendors to iterate on processes that will optimize the workflow for each party.

We offer this award for Gina's ability to pioneer new processes and for her commitment to continuous improvement. Congratulations, Gina!

The Systemness Award

The Systemness Award recognizes an individual who shows a strong commitment and advances Minnesota State 'systemness' through actions, work, and or words.

The Procurement Recognition Committee recognizes **Katie Nelson** from Metro State University as the recipient of the **Systemness Award** for her outstanding contributions to collaboration, efficiency, and process improvement across the system. Katie was nominated by Steve Reed, VP of Finance & Operations and Elis Hanson, Office Operations Coordinator.

Katie's leadership in bringing together Office Managers and purchasing professionals through bi-weekly Financial Management drop-in meetings has transformed the way colleagues share knowledge and navigate procurement processes. Through her expertise in Workday and Marketplace, she has enhanced operational efficiencies, expanded the pool of trained individuals, and fostered a culture of peer support that strengthens the entire system.

A key achievement in Katie's work is her leadership in implementing the University's Service Management platform, a critical initiative that streamlined service requests, improved knowledge sharing, and resulted in measurable efficiencies and cost savings. Her efforts have increased transparency, accountability, and trust, while making essential financial processes more accessible and effective for faculty, staff, and students.

Katie's commitment to collaboration and process improvement, her ability to implement meaningful change, and her dedication to supporting colleagues across Minnesota State embody the true spirit of systemness. **Congratulations, Katie!**

The Expanding Supplier Relationship Award

The Expanding Supplier Relationships Award recognizes an individual who has gone above and beyond in their collaboration and engagement with suppliers in service to Minnesota State.

We are thrilled to recognize **Wayne Wolden** for his exceptional work in **supplier outreach**. Wayne serves as the Director of Business Services at Minnesota State Community and Technical College. Whether it's lending a hand at events like the procurement fair in Mahanomen, MN, or supporting vendors in creating strong connections, Wayne has gone above and beyond to make a real difference on campus and in the community.

Wayne's enthusiasm, professionalism, and proactive attitude have helped build stronger partnerships and open doors to new opportunities. His contributions are a testament to what can be achieved with dedication and a collaborative spirit. **Thank you, Wayne**, for all you've done to support and empower suppliers.

The Innovation Award

The innovation award recognizes an individual for any new and innovative practices, strategy or solution that has implemented a creative, forward-thinking solution that enhances procurement efficiency, effectiveness, or sustainability.

Several people were nominated for **innovative** practices from **MSU, Mankato**. These individuals were involved in meeting regularly throughout 2024 to develop a new process to link requisitions with contracts in Workday. The nomination also called out specific work to define a new process that ensured encumbrances were confirmed prior to executing contracts, which is not how the original processes were set up.

The Procurement Recognition Committee wishes to acknowledge the following individuals with an innovation award: Diane Huettl, Contract Coordinator; Teresa Cox, Contract Coordinator; Jake Flo, Contracts Assistant; Jill Rollings, Facilities Purchasing Coordinator; Julie Haskins, Purchasing Coordinator; Cheryl Miller, Accounts Payable; Ranae Hiniker, Office Coordinator; Steve Smith, AVP for Budget and Business Services and Anne Gillespie, VP for Finance & Facilities.

Acknowledging the Procurement Month Recognition Team

A special thank you to the Procurement Month Recognition Team, a dedicated group of volunteers from the System Office Finance Division who played a key role in making this celebration a success. Your time, effort, and commitment to recognizing the hard work of procurement professionals are truly appreciated.

Procurement Month Recognition Team:

- **Celena Monn**, Procurement
- **Daniel Ibarra**, Procurement
- **Justine Pliska**, Facilities
- **Mo Yusuf**, Procurement

Your contributions have helped make this month meaningful, and we are grateful for your leadership and support!

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