



## *Every college and university has its own unique terminology. Here are some key terms/phrases commonly used at St. Cloud State:*

### University and System Leadership

- **Minnesota State College and University System:** St. Cloud State University (SCSU) is part of Minnesota State, which is the third largest system of state colleges and universities in the United States and the largest in the state with 30 colleges, 7 universities, and 54 campuses.
- **Board of Trustees:** The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities is governed by a 15-member Board of Trustees appointed by the governor.
- **Chancellor:** The senior administrator of the College and University System.
- **President:** A college president is responsible for overseeing all operations — both academic and administrative — within an educational institution.
- **Vice President:** College Vice Presidents assist the College President. They work closely with academic deans to plan, implement, and coordinate the educational and student development programs of the college.
- **Provost:** The primary administrator who oversees the academic responsibilities at SCSU
- **Academic Dean:** Colleges and universities are divided into major academic units, and a dean is the head of one of those units. SCSU Academic Affairs Leadership Team
- **Dean of Students:** An administrator who provides student support and addresses aspects related to the experience of attending a college or university (student activities, student conduct, etc.)

### Student Leadership Roles

- **Community Advisor:** An upper-class student living on a floor in a residence hall who provides guidance and supervision to residents.
- **Graduate Assistant:** Graduate level student assistants who work in various roles in campus, including serving as program assistants, teaching assistants and lab assistants, among other roles.
- **Research Assistant/Teaching Assistant (TA):** A student who works part time as an assistant to a faculty member.
- **Residence Hall Association (RHA):** The representative body for SCSU's residential communities. RHA is a voice for students who live on campus. RHA offers civic, cultural, social, educational and recreational programming.
- **Student Government:** Student government serves as the voice of students who attend SCSU and works to promote the best possible environment for student learning. Student Government has several committees that serve the variety of student needs across campus. Student Government is comprised of internal, external, and fee committees. Committees meet weekly and meetings are generally open for any student to attend.

### Financial

- **Cost of Attendance:** The estimated cost for attending school for a year. The cost of attendance includes tuition and fees, books, supplies, room and board, transportation, and an estimate of other personal costs.
- **Financial need:** The total amount of money the college or university determines the student requires in financial assistance. That amount is further broken down to reflect scholarships, grants, loans, and student jobs.
- **Family Contribution:** An estimate from the college or university of the amount the family should pay toward a student's cost of attendance.

- **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):** A form distributed by the U.S. Department of Education to collect information used to determine a student's need for federal financial aid.
- **Financial aid/financial aid package:** Financial aid may include grants, loans, scholarships, work study, or a combination of any of these. Schools may "bundle" a student's financial aid into a package to show how much aid they qualify for and how much the student and family will need to contribute.
- **Direct Subsidized Loan:** Loan given by government that pays for interest that is accrued while student is in school.
- **Direct Unsubsidized Loan:** Loan given by government that accrues interest as soon as the money is dispersed.
- **Grant:** Financial aid that does not have to be repaid.
- **PLUS loans:** Federal loans that parents of dependent undergraduate students can use to help pay for their student's college or career school. PLUS loans can help pay for education expenses not covered by other financial aid.
- **Scholarships:** Scholarships are "free" money that students may receive without any obligation to repay. They may be offered by a college or university or may be sponsored by the student's high school, an outside organization, or an employer. In some cases, students will compete for scholarships, and in others they will automatically be considered for certain scholarships.
- **Work study:** Student jobs funded through the U.S. government's Federal Work-Study Program that allow students to work on or near campus in order to help pay their college expenses. Work study is packaged into a student's financial aid award and usually specifies the number of hours a student may work during the semester or the year in a work study position.
- **Student fees:** Funds that students pay in addition to tuition and enrollment costs. Student fees may support student organizations, student activities (including athletics or sports clubs), health services, parking or bus transportation, or to pay for extra course expenses such as laboratory equipment, technology, or travel costs associated with a class.
- **Tuition:** The amount of money charged for courses. Tuition is only one part of the college bill; students will also be billed for fees and those who live on campus will be charged for room and board to cover dormitory and dining costs. Other costs may not show up on the college bill but will still be required, such as books and supplies.

### Academics and Student Support

- **Academic Advisor:** A staff member or member of the faculty who provides academic advice to students and guides them through the requirements for graduation.
- **Academic Learning Center:** A center on campus providing assistance in academics and study skills. It may include tutoring for specific courses, online resources, or workshops on developing specific study skills. Assistance is offered in such areas as reading, writing, math, and sciences, as well as note-taking, studying, time management, and test taking.
- **Adjunct Faculty:** Faculty members who are hired to teach one or more classes; often these are part-time instructors who have full-time jobs in the field they're teaching.
- **Advanced Placement (AP) Courses:** Academically challenging courses taken during high school that prepare students for challenging examinations in the course subjects. If students achieve a specified score on the tests, a college or university may grant college credits for the courses.
- **Associate Degree:** A college degree that requires less than four years of full-time college study; it usually takes two years to earn an associate degree.
- **Auditing:** Registering for a course in order to attend classes without receiving credit or grades.
- **Bachelor's Degree:** Also called a baccalaureate degree, this degree is awarded for the equivalent of four years of college work. Could be abbreviated as B.A. or B.S.
- **Commencement:** Graduation ceremony when students complete their degree.
- **Community Service/Service Learning or Co-Curricular Learning:** Experiences that take students out of the classroom to apply their education in the community. A community service or service learning experience should include active participation along with critical reflection under the guidance of an instructor or supervisor. Co-curricular activities may be less formal and include clubs, organizations, or other activities that put students' learning into practice.
- **Community Standards:** promotes and enforces policies to support integrity, civility, and a safe environment for the purpose of providing a safe community to support every student's education.

- **Convocation:** A campus-wide gathering. The term often applies to a celebration at the beginning of the academic year.
- **Credit or Credit Hour:** College courses are generally described in terms of the number of hours of instruction per week. Students qualify to graduate by earning a specified number of credits; colleges and universities define the required number of overall credits as well as the number of credits in a major or minor and in required areas of study.
- **Curve Grading:** Awarding grades based on the overall performance of students in the class. The student with the most questions answered correctly will receive an A; the student with the fewest right answers will fail. Typically, instructors use a “bell curve,” awarding the majority of students a C grade, with a few students receiving the A’s and F’s on the outer side of the bell-shaped curve.
- **D2L Brightspace:** The online learning management system (LMS) used by all Minnesota State campuses, including SCSU.
- **Dean’s List:** A list of high-achieving students who have earned a specified overall grade-point average during a term. The list is issued by the dean of the college or department.
- **Distance Learning:** College courses can be offered through distance learning by providing instruction via Internet, video, cable television, correspondence, or at off-campus sites via closed circuit or satellite broadcast.
- **Doctorate Degree:** Highest level of academic achievement, often recognized as a medical doctor (M.D.) but doctoral degrees can be achieved in nearly any subject, other common types of terminal degrees include PhD and EdD.
- **Double Major:** Students can elect to fulfill the requirements of two majors simultaneously.
- **Drop:** If a class is dropped during the free drop period, the class will not display on a student’s academic record (transcript) and the student will not be responsible for payment.
- **Education Abroad:** A program where students earn college credit while studying in another country. Programs may be a few weeks, over the summer, a full semester, or an entire year.
- **Elective:** A course that a student may choose to take, but which is not among the courses required for the student’s major.
- **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):** A federal law that protects the privacy of student educational records. At the college level, this law stipulates that responsibility for student records transfers to students. As a result, students must give parents permission to view their records.
- **First-Generation College Student:** Students who are the first in their family to attend college and earn a bachelor’s degree; some schools include students in this ranking if their parents attended college but didn’t graduate or if their parents earned an associate’s degree or a training certificate.
- **General Education:** Most colleges and universities identify a basic foundation of courses or types of courses to prepare students for personal, academic, and career success. These courses are typically completed within the first two years of college.
- **Grade Point Average (GPA):** The numerical average of a student’s grades for the semester or for the entire college record. The GPA is determined by converting the letter grade for each course to a number (A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1, and F = 0); multiplying the numerical grade by the number of credits offered for that course; totaling the scores for all courses, then dividing by the overall number of credit hours earned.
- **Greek Life:** members of fraternities and sororities that usually use Greek letters to designate their name. Most are social or cultural groups, and some are specific to an academic area or profession. Fraternities and sororities are typically national or international organizations with a local chapter, advised by an alumnus from the campus or the community.
- **Homecoming:** An annual campus celebration bringing together former students, current students, and the community for such events as athletic competitions, parades, concerts, picnics and banquets, games, and dances.
- **HuskiesConnect:** The student involvement online platform where the campus community can see what events are happening on campus, a list of all registered student organizations and more!
- **Husky Compact:** These are the essential elements of a Husky Education and our commitment to each student.
- **Imposter Syndrome:** Students may feel that they are not as good as other students or that they don’t belong in college. They fear that they were admitted by mistake, or they were the very last student admitted, and they forget all the accomplishments and successes they have had. Parents help by reminding their student that they have been successful in the past and encouraging persistence.

- **Incomplete:** A grade registered on the student's transcript indicating the student has not met all the requirements of the course. An incomplete is considered a temporary grade; if the class is not completed within a specified time, the grade will become an F.
- **Independent Study:** A course designed under the direction of a faculty member, usually providing more specific investigation of a topic than is offered in a traditional college course.
- **Internship:** A work opportunity allowing students to practice professional skills in a supervised setting. Internships may be offered with or without pay and with or without college credit.
- **Lecture:** Some classes are divided into separate time slots for "lecture," "lab," or "discussion." A lecture is usually a larger and more formal class taught by a professor, and students typically have less opportunity to ask questions and participate in discussions. "Discussion" classes are structured in a way that students can explore more fully some of the topics covered in the lecture, and these are typically taught by a graduate student who specializes in the topic. A lab class is a "hands-on" class with active participation, and it is often taught by a graduate assistant.
- **Major:** An academic area that a student chooses as a primary field of study. A certain number of credits are required to be earned within the major in order to graduate.
- **Master's Degree:** A degree requiring the equivalent of one or two additional years of study after the bachelor's or undergraduate degree. In a master's program, students focus at a higher level on a specific field of study.
- **Mid-Term Exam:** An examination taken about halfway through the term.
- **Minor:** An academic area that a student may choose to take several classes in. It does not require as many credit hours as a major but allows a student to put some emphasis on an area outside the major.
- **Office for Institutional Equity and Access:** Colleges and universities typically offer support to under-represented populations within their campus communities. These offices advocate for and provide services and social opportunities for students and staff who may face barriers to their education based on ethnicity, religion, age, gender identity, disability, or status as a veteran, parent, or other identity.
- **Office Hours:** Times when professors or TAs are in their office to answer questions and talk with students about a class, problem or idea they would like to discuss. Each professor or TA is required to schedule office hours at least once a week. Office hours give students the perfect opportunity to get to know the instructors teaching their classes and to explore ways to succeed in the class.
- **Orientation (Huskies First Four):** An introduction to college life. Orientation programs are common for new students, and many colleges and universities also offer orientation programs for parents, for international students, and for transfer students. The programs generally address academic, social, and emotional aspects of starting college.
- **Pass/Fail:** A system of grading which does not award letter or numerical grades but indicates whether a student has done passing or failing work. Students receive credit for the course, but it doesn't impact their grade point average. Schools that offer pass/fail courses will limit the number of classes a student can take as pass/fail.
- **Portfolio:** A collection of student work that presents examples of papers or projects. It allows students both to present examples of their work and to reflect on their knowledge and abilities.
- **Prerequisite:** A course or a requirement that must be completed before a student is allowed to register for a more advanced course or to qualify for a program or major.
- **Registration:** The process of selecting and enrolling in courses.
- **Resume:** A resume is a summary of a student's work experience, co-curricular activities, and skills. Resumes are typically submitted along with a job application or a letter of application, and employers will use the resume as a first step in determining whether a job applicant is qualified for a position. Students can get help in developing their resume from a campus career adviser.
- **Semester:** The academic calendar is broken into terms of study. SCSU is on a semester system, with three semesters making up a year of study (fall, spring, and summer).
- **Service Learning:** is a credit bearing, educational experience in which students participate in organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflects on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility."

- **Syllabus:** An outline and description of a course, usually handed out on the first day of class. The syllabus provides contact information for the instructor and office hours. It also describes the instructor's expectations for the course and gives an overview of topics that will be covered, required and recommended readings, grading policies, and a schedule of tests and due dates for papers or projects.
- **Transcript:** A list of courses the student has taken, including the grade earned for each course, and the number of credits earned. The transcript is the formal record of a student's education and upon graduation, it will reflect the successful completion of a degree from the institution.
- **Withdrawal:** Withdrawing from a class(es) after the drop deadline will cause a grade of "W" to appear on a students' academic record (transcript) and the student will be held financially responsible for the course(s). The students' grade point average is not affected by a withdrawal(s) but a withdrawal(s) may affect the student's satisfactory academic progress.