



# News Release

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## **Ridgewater College Proposes Changes to Farm Business Management (FBM) Program**

Ridgewater College is engaged in discussions to explore the viability of transferring their Farm Business Management (FBM) program to Central Lakes College and Minnesota West Community and Technical College. The proposal, if enacted, would result in the transfer of Ridgewater's current FBM faculty to the two partner institutions next year. As the proposal now stands, two Ridgewater faculty who serve the Belgrade and Melrose regions would transfer to Central Lakes College, while six faculty who serve the Olivia, Barrett, Hutchinson, Willmar, Hutchinson/Litchfield and Lac qui Parle regions would transfer to Minnesota West Community and Technical College.

Ridgewater College FBM students would continue to receive their FBM education in the same format and structure they are now experiencing, but through a different host institution. The change is intended to preserve FBM services for the agriculture sector in the Ridgewater service region while retaining the positions and function of the current Ridgewater College FBM instructors, but as employees of Central Lakes College and Minnesota West Community and Technical College.

"The Agriculture sector is a vital part of the Ridgewater College mission," said Ridgewater President Craig Johnson. "This proposal is intended to preserve and enhance the critical support services that the FBM program provides to farmers in our region via a different and better model for everyone involved."

Under the new structure, Ridgewater College would work collaboratively with Central Lakes College and Minnesota West Technical and Community College to ensure a smooth transfer of the faculty and students. Ridgewater would continue to provide support to the FBM program by housing some of the FBM faculty on the Willmar and Hutchinson campuses, ensuring local access for FBM students in the immediate area.

The proposed change is also intended to create a more universal FBM education delivery model and a more streamlined education process for the Agriculture community. It is also projected to provide improved long-term fiscal outcomes for the colleges and the Minnesota State system.

By reducing the scope of its agricultural-related offerings through the proposed transfer of the FBM program, Ridgewater also expects to have more resources to expand and strengthen its highly acclaimed post-secondary

Agriculture programs that serve the agriculture production and business sectors through multiple agriculture degrees and certificates.

For additional information about this proposal, interested individuals can contact Mike Kutzke, Vice President of Student Success at Ridgewater College, at 320.222.5203.

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Ridgewater College is a community and technical college with campuses in the central Minnesota communities of Willmar and Hutchinson. The college serves more than 5,000 students through its nearly 100 academic programs and more than 68,000 training hours for individuals and businesses through customized training and continuing education. The college is a member of Minnesota State and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

*Minnesota State includes 30 community and technical colleges and 7 state universities serving approximately 340,000 students. It is the third largest system of two-year colleges and four-year universities in the United States.*

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