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Image: Sharyl Samargia-Grivette, an associate professor at UMD, demonstrates the setup of an Electroencephalogram (EEG) system to a group of students studying communication sciences and disorders. Credit: University of Minnesota Duluth

UMD, FDLTCC awarded grant to build biomedical research capacity in the Northland

Partnership between the University of Minnesota Duluth and Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College to create research opportunities for faculty and new pathways for students.

Duluth, MN – A new grant from the National Institute of Health (NIH) will enhance opportunities for faculty and students in northern Minnesota through new partnerships between Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (FDLTCC) and the University of

Minnesota Duluth (UMD). This new partnership will provide opportunities for interdisciplinary biomedical research that spans the two institutions' resources and areas of expertise.

Over the course of five years, this \$3.4 million grant will provide collaborative engagement for research faculty across campuses and disciplines, and engage students in new ways.

This partnership will enhance the biomedical research environment of northern Minnesota by fostering meaningful ties between UMD and FDLTCC. While there have been collaborative research efforts between faculty at the two institutions, efforts supported by this grant will create an even stronger foundation upon which to build long-lasting research ties, create an environment that fosters cross-institutional collaboration and enhance biomedical research, focusing on research experiences for undergraduate and graduate students along with professional development and pilot funding for faculty.

"This work advances our biomedical research in ways that directly address critical health needs in our communities while building the needed health care research workforce," said UMD Chancellor Charles Nies. "It expands hands-on research opportunities for undergraduate scholars working closely with faculty and serves as a strong example of how the partnership with Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College advances students' educational goals."

To accomplish this, both UMD and FDLTCC will increase sponsored project administrative support, enhance research environments by creating shared programs for faculty professional development, research collaboration, and student research training, and develop targeted pilot grants to foster expansion of biomedical research that is aligned with the missions of NIH institutes. These activities are designed to foster robust ties between the two campuses, and outcomes—such as biomedical research growth and implementation of high-impact practices for undergraduate and graduate students studying in biomedical fields—are well-aligned with the strategic plans of both institutions.

“We have enjoyed many years of meaningful partnerships with various collaborators at UMD, and we are eager to expand these efforts further,” said Anita Hanson, president of FDLTCC. “This collaboration will provide FDLTCC students with valuable opportunities to engage with UMD students and faculty, supporting their progress toward completing their educational goals in the biomedical sciences.”

Work will begin over the coming months, with programming for faculty and students expected to begin fall semester 2026.

“Faculty at FDLTCC are excited to be a part of this collaborative effort with our colleagues at UMD,” said Andy Wold, a Biology faculty member at FDLTCC. “We feel students and faculty from both institutions will benefit from the interactions and new relationships this grant will provide.”

Targeted pilot grants will also have funds designated for faculty research projects that will lead to larger grant submissions and include undergraduate research training. Students who have had CUREs (course-based undergraduate research experiences) included in their introductory courses are better prepared for success in subsequent research projects, and this project supports expansion of CUREs in UMD’s [Swenson College of Science and Engineering](#) (SCSE) and [College of Education and Human Services Professions](#) (CESHP), and at FDLTCC.

The proposal that led to this award was developed by an interdisciplinary workgroup from both organizations: Erik Brown (UMD, Academic Affairs), Jessica Hanson (UMD, CEHSP, Public Health), Anne Kruchten (UMD, SCSE Dean's Office), Kathryn Schreiner (UMD, SCSE, Chemistry & Biochemistry), and Andrew Wold (FDLTCC, Math & Science Division, Biology). It was one of only four awards granted nationally by the NIH BRE-SPAD (Biomedical Research Environment and Sponsored Programs Administration Development) Program this year.

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About NIH Support

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About FDLTCC

As the nation's only tribally chartered Tribal college and state community college, Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College has a unique mission in providing educational opportunities to all students, regardless of demographic background, in a comfortable and diverse environment. Founded in 1987, the college offers associate degrees and certificates across more than 30 fields of study to a student body of approximately 1,200. FDLTCC is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and holds specialized accreditation from the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium, reflecting its commitment to Ojibwe-Anishinaabe education and cultural integrity.

About UMD

One of five campuses that comprise the University of Minnesota, the University of Minnesota Duluth integrates liberal education, research, creative activity, and public engagement and prepares students to thrive as lifelong learners and globally engaged citizens. With an enrollment of nearly 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students, the Duluth campus offers 87 undergraduate and post-baccalaureate degrees, and graduate programs in more than 24 different fields. See UMD's [Land Acknowledgement](#) statement. Visit d.umn.edu.

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