

Greetings,

On behalf of the Central States Water Environment Association (CSWEA) we would like to introduce you to some student opportunities offered through the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Midwest Student Design Competition (MSDC). This year, the competition will be held on Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026 in Madison, Wisconsin at the Monona Terrace Convention Center. Similar to past year's the MSDC will be held simultaneously with the annual CSWEA Education Seminar. This competition is a unique opportunity for students at the college level to demonstrate their ability to evaluate alternatives, develop a comprehensive design, and present a solution that meets the requirements of a socially relevant problem statement in the water and wastewater fields.

This year, there will be three (3) categories for student participation at the Midwest Student Design Competition. The two (2) Water Environment Federation (WEF) Categories are open to students from Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Iowa, Missouri, Indiana, Michigan, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Student teams from Universities who fall outside of the States mentioned above may be granted permission to compete at the MSDC, so long as a design team receives permission from their respective WEF Member Association. The one (1) Global Water Stewardship (GWS) Category is open to all students.

**WEF Categories:** For the MSDC, there are two (2) different Water Environment Federation (WEF) categories student teams can compete in; Wastewater Design Category and Water Environment Design Category (See attached "Competition Guidelines" for category requirements and typical projects). The WEF categories are intended to feed into the international student design competition at the annual WEFTEC conference, which is scheduled for September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Travel and lodging stipends for the winning team(s) to attend the WEFTEC student design competition in New Orleans will vary depending on the student's respective WEF Member Association (MA).

**Global Water Stewardship (GWS) Category:** The GWS category requires student teams to design a centralized wastewater treatment facility and collection system for a Costa Rican community that has been chosen as a partner community by the Global Water Stewardship NGO. This year's problem statement is titled "Global Water Stewardship: San Rafael de Guatuso, Costa Rica". The winning team will receive a stipend of up to \$1,000/student, for up to four students, for travel and lodging expenses to accompany GWS members on a future August fact-finding trip to Costa Rica and to present their project to local community representatives. The winning team may only send up to six (6) students on the GWS service trip to Costa Rica.

CSWEA provides a \$500 stipend per team for lodging and travel expenses to assist student teams from Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota universities to present at the Midwest Student Design Competition in April. Funding is also available to student teams who fall outside of the States listed above. Design projects from any semester/trimester coursework are eligible if it is from the 2025-26 academic calendar year. University faculty are invited to attend the competition to support their student design team(s).

Should you have any questions or if you need additional information on how to participate, we can be contacted via email at [lapastora@nmwrd.org](mailto:lapastora@nmwrd.org) and [eforthaus@msa-ps.com](mailto:eforthaus@msa-ps.com).

Sincerely,

Joe Lapastora and Emma Forthaus

CSWEA Midwest Student Design Competition (MSDC) Co-Chairs