

# MINNESOTA DAILY

CLOUDY HIGH 51° LOW 30°

U OF M | MINNEAPOLIS | ST PAUL

TUESDAY

MARCH 23, 2010

ONLINE EXCLUSIVES AT [MNDAILY.COM](http://MNDAILY.COM)

## CAMPUS EVENT

# Panelists to discuss solutions to key problems facing state

The University of Minnesota will host the three-part discussion April 6.

BY DANIELLE NORDINE  
dnordine@mndaily.com

Minnesotans and lawmakers are facing issues from the budget to education standards, and the University of Minnesota is offering a venue to discuss solutions.

Three panelists will engage Tuesday in the first of three discussions, called "Minnesota's Future: 3x3," aimed at finding solutions to key problems facing the state: the economy, health and education.

"The goal of these evenings is not to do what we usually do at the University, which is spend hours admiring the problem and presenting academic papers," said Steven Rosenstone, vice president for Scholarly and Cultural Affairs. "We want to focus on solutions and focus our energy on a couple of things that will make a big difference."

Each session will feature three panelists and a convenor, with participants from the University as well as other experts.

The first session will focus on the economic health of the state, featuring input from state demographer Tom Gillaspay, former U.S. Congressman Tim Penny, and Dan Carr, president and

CEO of The Collaborative, a company aimed at helping companies, entrepreneurs, investors and executives find financial success.

Panelists will have about 10 minutes to present solutions and ideas for solving the issue, and the rest of the session will be open for questions and discussion.

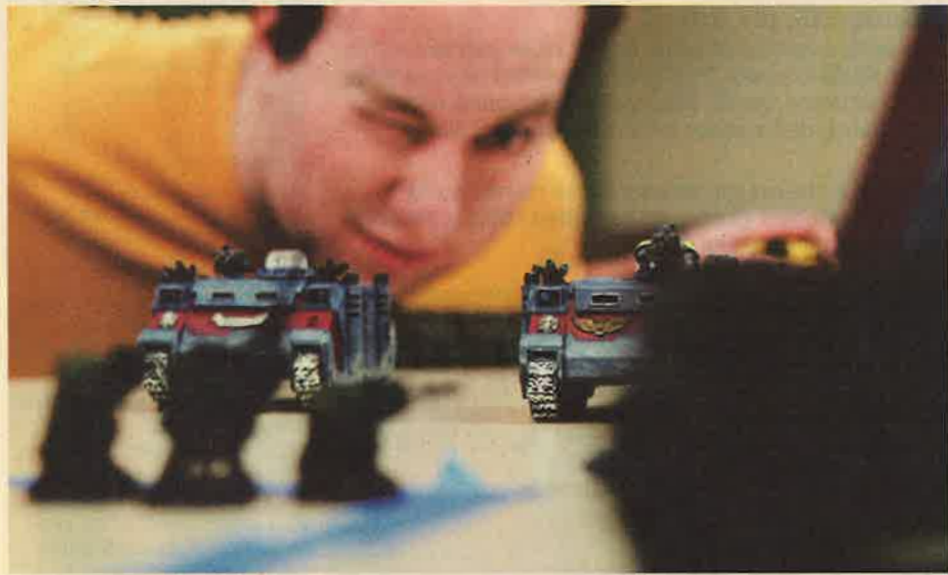
State legislators were sent invitations to the events, Rosenstone said, and he said he hopes officials will use the suggestions in their legislation to "tap the University for what it's really good at."

The second session on March 30 will feature issues

▶ See **PANEL** Page 5  
Sessions will focus on the state's economy, health and education.

## GAMING

# Student group brings wargaming to U campus



MATT MEAD, DAILY

Computer Science senior Stuart Wilson checks his line of fire during a game of Warhammer 40,000 on Friday, March 12 at Coffman Union.

Members meet every weekend to play futuristic science fiction games.

BY MACKENZIE COLLINS  
mcollins@mndaily.com

Unicorns, dragons, orcs and space marines square off in battle every Friday night for four hours in a third-floor room in Coffman Union.

Members of the University of Minnesota Campus Wargamers club spend the beginning of each weekend, 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., sharing their interest and love of gaming.

Gaming basically involves a wide variety of

games," said Stuart Wilson, one of two students who founded the group two years ago. "The ones we play involve building miniature models and then battling them against each other."

The group has about 30 members, with an average turnout each week of about 15 players, Wilson said. Members paint their models and play tabletop games like Risk, But Wilson said they mostly play Warhammer 40,000: Dawn of War and other futuristic science fiction games.

Wilson and fellow senior John Hogue started the group in 2008 to offer a no-pressure environment for fellow players to find other students on campus who share the same passion.

Samuel Howard, a junior, joined the group as a first-year student and has been going every Friday for the past two years.

"With games like these, it's hard to find other people to play," Howard said. "It's not like you just walk and see people playing soccer on the field and ask to join."

Hogue, an economics

▶ See **SCI-FI** Page 5  
The group has a painted panel on the Washington Ave. Bridge.



BY JESSIE VAN BERKEL  
jvanberkel@mndaily.com

## LOOK AT GRADE INFLATION

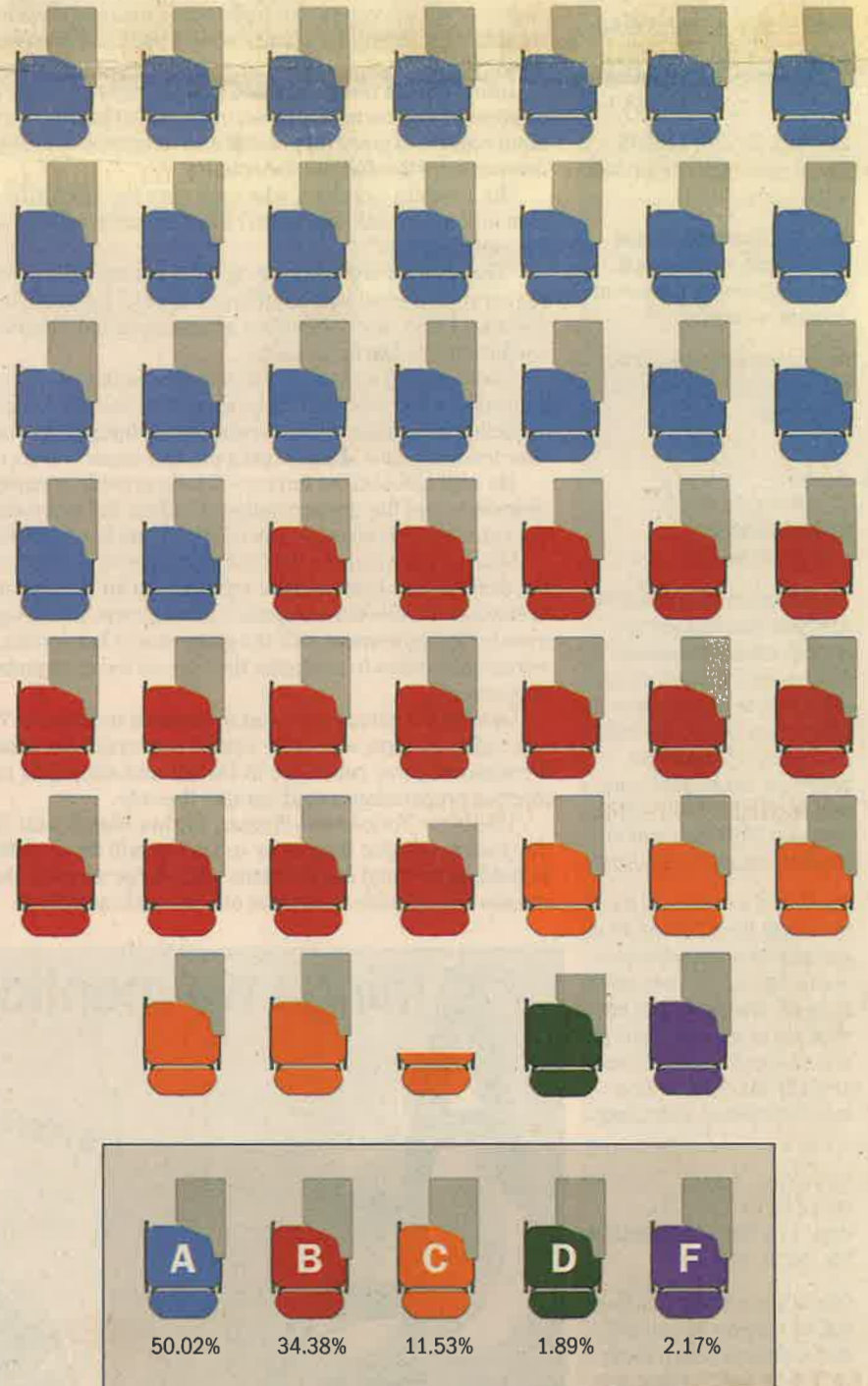
An average grade used to be a C, but now 57 percent of grades given at the U are A's, contributing to a national inflation trend.

One night four years ago, Terry Tranter went home and told his wife his teaching job at the Carlson School of Management was on the line. He was a tough grader, so students avoided his class and gave him bad evaluations. This had meant a salary freeze and a mandatory teaching seminar for Tranter, who refused to give students grades he didn't feel they deserved.

The next year, Carlson implemented a grading policy that saved his job but forced him to change the way he graded students. The new policy required him to give a median of a B+ in his upper-level courses.

Tranter has seen a shift upward from what he considers an average grade, a C, since he began teaching at the University in 1979, part of an inflation trend occurring both at the University and across the nation.

### PERCENTAGES OF A-F GRADES GIVEN OUT FALL SEMESTER 2009



SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA DATA

Ten years ago, the average GPA at the University of Minnesota was 3.0, now it's 3.14.

The national GPA average has increased by between .1 and .15 in the past 10 years and has gone up almost a full letter grade since 1960, according to Stuart Rojstaczer, a former Duke University professor who researches grade inflation and higher education.

Robert McMaster, dean of undergraduate education, said the inflation at the University is negligible and that there has been no institutional action outside Carlson to change grading. But some professors say grade inflation has reached a point where students are losing

motivation and learning less because they feel guaranteed an A or B.

This past semester, grades of B or higher made up 78 percent of A-F grades given, an increase of 7 percent from fall 1999.

Grades have been going up for decades, but why, and whether it's a problem, is still debated. Some say teachers are grading easier, while others say students are smarter or better prepared.

Those at the top of the University say curbing grades is not their responsibility — yet.

For now, it's up to the approximately 6,300 University faculty to decide the distance between an A and a C.

▶ See **GRADES** Page 6