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## News Release

For Immediate Release

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## Two Join Initiative Foundation Board of Trustees

St. Cloud State President Robbyn Wacker and CentraCare Health's Santo Cruz Join Board

LITTLE FALLS, Minn. -- Matt Varilek, president of the Initiative Foundation, announced that St. Cloud State President Robbyn Wacker and CentraCare Health's Santo Cruz have been appointed to the foundation's Board of Trustees.

"St. Cloud State University is a long-time partner of the Initiative Foundation, reflecting the many goals and values we have in common," Varilek said. "We are thrilled to have President Wacker join our board, and I want to personally welcome her to the region."

Santo Cruz recently returned to his Central Minnesota roots after being named executive director for government and community relations at CentraCare Health. "We're fortunate that Santo is putting his exceptional talents to work here in the region where he grew up," Varilek said. "He brings vast business and legal experience that will be a great asset on our board."

A cornerstone in Central Minnesota for more than three decades, the Initiative Foundation provides business financing and technical assistance, awards nonprofit grants, hosts

Partner Funds and leads a variety of leadership programs that enable citizens to build stronger communities. Learn more at [ifound.org](http://ifound.org).

As incoming president at St. Cloud State University, Robbyn Wacker said she believes in the Initiative Foundation's "holistic approach to strengthening communities by focusing on economy, community and philanthropy."

Wacker hopes to contribute to the board by working with partners to surface workforce opportunities and drive economic development in the region.

Wacker has spent much of her professional life at the University of Northern Colorado as a professor and administrator, and has enjoyed her time as a new resident of Central Minnesota. "It is beautiful in Central Minnesota with all of its lakes, woodlands and wildlife," she said. "We enjoy the friendly, laid-back lifestyle and diverse cultures."



Robbyn  
Wacker

As executive director of government and community relations at CentraCare Health, Santo Cruz sees the need to continue to address regional child care and workforce shortages. He also sees the need to prepare as our population ages. "We have to build the community capacity to care for our seniors, while at the same time maintain seniors' social involvement in their communities."

As a Stearns county native, Cruz has a vested interest in seeing this region prosper.

"I owe Central Minnesota more than I'll ever be able to give back to it," said Cruz, who grew up in rural Sauk Centre. "I can honestly say that, from a very young age, I felt like my entire community was rooting for my success. What I want to give back is my time and energy to preserve that way of life for generations to come. "



Santo Cruz-  
Photo Credit  
University of  
St. Thomas

Cruz recently moved from St. Paul to rural Wright County with his wife and four kids. He loves doing new activities with his children, from watching airplanes at the airport to hiking and fishing in northern Minnesota.

### Resources

Follow the links for a photo of **Robbyn Wacker** and **Santo Cruz**. (Please credit use of Cruz's photo to the University of St. Thomas).

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The Initiative Foundation exists to improve the quality of life and to build stronger communities within its 14-county region of Central Minnesota by offering leadership training, business loans, nonprofit grants and donor services. Since 1986, the Initiative Foundation has invested multiple millions in the region through targeted grants and business financing investments.

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