

Transforming the University

**Final Recommendations of the Task Force on
Graduate Reform: Discipline Evolution**

Submitted on behalf of the Task Force by:

**Stephen C. Ekker
Shirley Nelson Garner
Co-Chairs of the Task Force**

May 5, 2006

Executive Summary

Mission

The mission of the Graduate Reform: Discipline Evolution Task Force is to create a strategic plan for world-class graduate programs and education with particular emphasis on emerging and evolving disciplines. The University should strive to be a national and international model for the strength, breadth, and especially the interdisciplinary scope of its graduate programs.

Deliverables

The Task Force was charged to develop recommendations in the following areas:

- Recommendations that identify how to overcome barriers, both structural and cultural, to the success of interdisciplinary research, teaching, and study.
- Recommendations regarding how to leverage the strengths and comparative advantages in the University's graduate programs, with an aim of fostering interdisciplinary research and teaching.
- Recommendations as to how the University can best leverage its current and potential academic advantages especially in new and evolving disciplines.
- Recommendations regarding mechanisms to insure the regular and continuing evaluation of disciplines of graduate offerings as academic strengths, interests, and societal needs and demands evolve.
- Recommendations regarding whether and under what circumstances the University should consider offering applied doctorates.

Task Force Members

Shirley Garner, *Co-chair*, Associate Dean, Graduate School and Professor, Department of English, Language/Literature, CLA

Stephen C. Ekker, *Co-chair*, Associate Professor, Department of Cell Biology and Development, Medical School/CBS

Varadarajan Chari, Professor, Department of Economics, CLA (did not participate)

Mary Louise Fellows, Professor, Law School

Ann Forsyth, Director, Metropolitan Design Center, CALA

Karin Kettenring, Graduate Student, Department of Horticultural Science, COAFES

Wendy Pradt Lougee, University Librarian, University Libraries

Jean Montgomery, Associate Professor, Department of Theatre Arts and Dance, CLA

Yvette Perry, Graduate Student, Department of Family Social Science, CHE

Jeff Roberts, Professor, Department of Chemistry, IT

Key Recommendations

The Discipline Evolution Task Force identifies the following five recommendations as having the greatest potential for transforming the University commensurate with its Strategic Positioning goals:

- Establish a named and high-profile institute, modeled after the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard University (<http://www.radcliffe.edu/>), to support interdisciplinary scholarship at the University of Minnesota. (Recommendation 1, p. 2.)
- Create internal faculty exchanges whereby faculty members work in a department or program other than their own for a semester or two, doing research, teaching, and serving as they would in their own departments or programs. (Recommendation 2, p. 2.)
- Establish a program similar to the faculty exchange program for graduate students to enable them to develop interdisciplinary expertise. (Recommendation 3, p. 2.)
- Seed and, when appropriate, provide long-term support to new and transformational research initiatives that bring together teams of highly talented faculty and students. These initiatives should originate in ideas that are proposed by faculty. (Recommendation 17, p. 6.)
- Implement meaningful systems for assessing existing centers, including the expectation that new and existing centers will close after five years unless there is a cogent rationale to continue them. (Recommendation 24, p. 7.)

Broader Themes Outside the Scope of the Inquiry

1. The new budget model: We are concerned that the new budget model will lead to a greater separation of colleges, which would make our recommendations hard to implement. We are also concerned that there will not be sufficient resources for central administration to develop tools and policies to encourage colleges to work together.

2. The importance of undergraduate education in developing interdisciplinary research and education. Disciplinary evolution and interdisciplinary research needs to develop at the undergraduate level as well as the graduate level. Residing solely in colleges, undergraduate education may be more narrowly focused than is desirable.

3. The need to clarify the roles of the Vice President for Research and the Dean of the Graduate School and to establish policies that foster collaboration between the two offices. We feel strongly that these offices should share in implementing our recommendations.

Recommendations for Future Areas of Effort

Implementation of the substantial recommendations that we have made will need to occur over a period of time and, most of them, by steps. The Task Force would like to meet with the Provost at the beginning of spring semester 2007 to learn which of our recommendations have been implemented and which have been planned for future implementation.

DISCIPLINE EVOLUTION TASK FORCE REPORT

Inherent in the goal of becoming a top public research institution is the need for discipline evolution. For top programs, leading change and adapting new approaches is critical to the maintenance of strength in that discipline. For other programs, innovation and change is an opportunity to grow and substantively improve. One common mechanism for such innovation is the cross fertilization of ideas and methods employed by interdisciplinary approaches. One key indicator of the ability of the University of Minnesota to achieve its aspirations will be the level of commitment and inherent capabilities of employing and encouraging discipline innovation and interdisciplinary graduate education throughout the culture and practice of our academic institution.

For years now, many universities and institutions have been praising the value of interdisciplinary work and lamenting the barriers that make it difficult to do. Various reports describe the impediments to scholars undertaking it and urge institutions to remove these barriers. Yet recommendations as to *how* to remove these barriers are lacking, and reports tend to culminate in recommendations to create additional committees to study problems and to monitor particular circumstances. We expect our recommendations to culminate in action rather than in further rumination.

We make several assumptions and observations as we make recommendations regarding the deliverables of the Task Force on Discipline Evolution. First, when we think of discipline evolution, we often think of disciplines newly created in our time, such as women's studies, various ethnic studies, or neuroscience. Yet all disciplines are continually evolving. This evolution often, though not always, bears the imprint of interdisciplinary research, scholarship, and teaching. Second, the best interdisciplinary work derives from strong disciplines and depends upon them. Third, both discipline evolution and interdisciplinarity involve graduate education as well as faculty research; indeed, the two are intimately connected and support each other. Fourth, a scholar's participation in interdisciplinary work does not in itself disadvantage a discipline. On the contrary, it tends to enrich the discipline. Fifth, since curriculum seems to evolve more slowly than research, the tension that most often arises around hiring a person who represents a new area of a discipline is the need to teach necessary courses. When there are enough faculty, this tension is considerably lessened and may be alleviated altogether. Sixth, recognizing that research or a program is "interdisciplinary" does not in itself identify it as desirable or strong; there is both good and bad interdisciplinary work. Seventh, it is essential that none of our recommendations have the consequence of imposing additional burdens on the faculty. Eighth, we intend our recommendations to apply to and engage the coordinate campuses as appropriate.

The University of Minnesota has all the components to be successful in fostering discipline evolution and interdisciplinary work. Its size, its urban location, and its comprehensiveness give it a strong foundation to develop discipline evolution and interdisciplinary innovations. Taking advantage of these possibilities will help to make us one of the major public universities.

Deliverable 1: Recommendations that identify how to overcome barriers, both structural and cultural, to the success of interdisciplinary research, teaching, and study.

One key concept that permeated all of our discussions is the concept of effectively building a Community of Scholars that identifies and explores important problems, regardless of any arbitrary barriers—physical, virtual, or cultural. Basic to engaging in interdisciplinary research, teaching, and study is the requirement that faculty members know what others are doing so that they can find partners with whom to collaborate, that they be given sufficient administrative and financial support to develop interdisciplinary projects (whether in research or curriculum development), that occasions for interdisciplinary engagement be provided, and that faculty be rewarded and even given incentives to develop interdisciplinary potentialities (under no circumstances, should they be *disadvantaged* for interdisciplinary efforts). To these ends we recommend the following:

- **Empower intellectual mobility and rejuvenation over the whole of an academic career.**

Recommendation 1. Establish a named and high-profile institute, modeled after the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard University (<http://www.radcliffe.edu/>), to support interdisciplinary scholarship at the University of Minnesota. The institute should not belong to any one college at the University, and its director should report to the Provost. The institute should provide a “town square” for interdisciplinary scholars from across the University, with meeting and seminar rooms and quiet spaces for contemplation. The institute should insist on the highest standards of scholarship, and faculty membership should be offered only to the University’s most productive researchers and gifted teachers. The institute should also support short- and long-term visits of distinguished scholars to Minnesota, both to bring new ideas into the University community and to provide a way for the University to showcase its interdisciplinary scholars to an important outside constituency. This support should take the form, in part, of temporary housing in a pleasant residential setting that is contiguous with the institute itself.

Recommendation 2. Create system-wide internal faculty exchanges whereby faculty members work in a department or program other than their own for a semester or two, doing research, teaching, and serving as they would in their own departments or programs. A program should be established to award such exchanges on a competitive basis with appropriate incentives to participating parties, including the scholars who are awarded the honor and their home and host departments.

Recommendation 3. A similar program should also be established to enable graduate students to develop interdisciplinary expertise. How students might develop this expertise will vary according to their disciplines and individual research and teaching or professional plans. For some, fully funded semesters to take courses in a department or program outside their major would be desirable; for others, a postdoc fellowship or work with a particular professor might be appropriate.

Recommendation 4. In order to familiarize undergraduate students with interdisciplinary work and to prepare students for graduate study in interdisciplinary areas, provide resources to create a program of seminars for junior and senior undergraduates.

● **Develop technology infrastructure to stimulate and support interdisciplinary endeavor and collaboration.**

A recurring theme in the task force's deliberations is the desire for collaboration and interdisciplinary interaction, but the challenge is identifying faculty and graduate students with affinity of interests. Further, once partnerships are established, it is equally challenging to sustain collaboration in distributed contexts. The University is a large and distributed community, with overlapping programs and resources. Breaking down the barriers of geography and discipline boundaries is a critical task. We propose that the University invest in web-accessible systems and tools that would facilitate interdisciplinary discourse and collaboration.

Recommendation 5. Develop a knowledge database that represents faculty research interests and scholarly activity that can be exploited to identify potential collaborators. Initial strategies might include a searchable archive of scholarly output (publications) or citations of publication mined from databases licensed by the libraries. The approach selected should be low barrier (requiring minimal faculty effort) and designed to allow enhancement over time—e.g., integrating grants information, outreach program description, international interests, etc. A richly populated and well-architected resource could serve myriad purposes from making the University's intellectual capital visible to a wider audience to enabling strategic partnerships for technology transfer. The Office of the Vice President for Research, Office of Information Technology, and University Libraries are potential contributors to this design and support.

Recommendation 6. The investments that the University has made, through the University Libraries, in a growing body of electronic journals and publishing services offer opportunities to create discipline-specific or interdisciplinary table of contents or other current awareness services to which faculty and student might subscribe. Investment in technology support to leverage the rich digital collections could have significant benefit for individual productivity as well as stimulating interdisciplinary work.

Recommendation 7. Collaboration technologies should be developed and implemented to enable distributed groups (research teams or interest groups) to engage in real-time or asynchronous interaction and share work and data. These resources offer promise to stimulate collaboration on campus, between University campuses, and between institutional partners worldwide.

● **Remove disincentives to interdisciplinary work related to awards and to promotion and tenure**

Recommendation 8. In order to achieve our goal of becoming a top-ranked university, all units should examine all of their relevant documents—including their 7.12 statements—related to innovation and interdisciplinary activity. (If these documents and processes require change to accommodate innovation and interdisciplinary work, the result should not present additional burdens for the faculty.)

Recommendation 9. All units and offices that give awards should examine their criteria and rewarding structure to assure that interdisciplinary accomplishments of faculty and graduate students are taken into account.

● **Remove Physical Barriers to Interdisciplinary Scholarship and Education**

In addition to the cultural, financial, and administrative challenges identified in this report, we have noted several (in some cases, literally) concrete barriers to interdisciplinary scholarship. These hurdles can be substantial and are often most apparent as they impact graduate education. In many cases, the graduate students are the central conduit for collaboration, spending time at multiple locations during their career. For interdisciplinary work, this can mean substantive time traversing University of Minnesota campuses. Our goal is to make movement and communication between campuses easy. Some recent examples that have helped this effort include the Campus Connector bus system, connecting Minneapolis and St Paul; the East/West Scholars Walk; and the "coffee shop" meeting space in Walter Library. We propose to expand these concepts for a University-wide infrastructure.

Recommendation 10. In any future campus remodeling or new building planning, exploit possibilities for interconnectivity, such as walkways, bridges and tunnels. Allocate space for informal interaction and dialogue.

Recommendation 11. Further develop mainstream pedestrian walkways across University of Minnesota campuses. In particular, improve connections to allow ready access despite Washington Avenue, such as expanding bridge connections to facilitate critical interactions between the Institute of Technology and the Academic Health Center. Increase connectivity between the Minneapolis and St. Paul campuses.

Recommendation 12. Enhance investment in communication technologies. These tools are especially valuable in enhancing communication between coordinate campuses, but would also be helpful for communication within and between the Minneapolis and St. Paul campuses.

Recommendation 13. Exploit the common spaces in academic buildings and the central physical locations of libraries to facilitate the role of well designed gathering spaces in bringing students and faculty together. Spaces should encourage interaction and

collaboration (e.g., additional coffee shops, seminar spaces, “salon” environments for engagement) and provide contexts for programs of interdisciplinary engagement.

Deliverable 2: Recommendations regarding how to leverage the strengths and comparative advantages in the University’s graduate programs, with an aim of fostering interdisciplinary research and teaching.

Interdisciplinary scholarship will thrive if unnecessary barriers are eliminated to collaboration, teaching, and advising that involve students and faculty from different units within the University. At the same time, students and faculty benefit from the stability provided by departments and graduate programs. Moreover, procedures that currently exist for introducing new graduate majors and minors are generally sound, and they have the beneficial effect of discouraging the unnecessary proliferation of undersubscribed programs. What is needed is a way of seeding and encouraging the formation of vigorous new communities of like-minded scholars, but at a level of organization and institutional support below that of centers, departments, and graduate programs.

Recommendation 14. We recommend that the University create a way for faculty and students to organize themselves around “interest groups” of scholars who have closely aligned but interdisciplinary research interests (e.g., Medieval studies, or the fate of pharmaceuticals in the environment). The interest groups themselves would be fluid and change with time, with some disappearing and others perhaps evolving into regular graduate programs. Scholars could be affiliated with more than one interest group. Each interest group would be given the resources to develop a web site that would be linked to the sites of the relevant departments and graduate programs. The primary purpose of each site would be to communicate with important constituencies within and, especially, outside of the University. An interest group’s web site might solicit applications from potential graduate students, and then pass those applications on to the appropriate graduate programs for consideration. Students would be admitted into a graduate program, but with the knowledge that they would be able to work in the areas of interdisciplinary scholarship that interested them.

Recommendation 15. We recommend that the University make interdisciplinary teaching more accessible for faculty by supporting team teaching, including counting it as part of a faculty member’s teaching responsibility, by requiring appropriate class sizes for team-taught courses (rather than doubling the number of students in a class, for example, if two faculty members are teaching it), and by providing funding for a class that a team teacher normally teaches, if necessary.

Recommendation 16. We recommend that opportunities be provided for graduate students to gain experience in teaching interdisciplinary courses when their major or research is in an interdisciplinary field. We understand that most teaching assistants will need to teach basic courses that may not be interdisciplinary, but graduate students reported that they were disadvantaged on the job market when they had no teaching

experience in their interdisciplinary specialty. The University-- including departments, graduate programs, and the Preparing Future Faculty program--should work together to provide such opportunities.

Deliverable 3: Recommendations as to how the University can best leverage its current and potential academic advantages especially in new and evolving disciplines.

The task force learned about different ways that successful interdisciplinary endeavors evolved. Occasionally, they came from administration, such as President Mark Yudof's Digital Technology initiative; or from a group of faculty members, such as the evolution of Neuroscience from faculty representing different disciplines meeting to discuss their work and develop curriculum; or from the initiative of a single researcher, such as Neal Amundson, who created the modern Department of Chemical Engineering. Often, funding agencies played a large part because of their preferences; for example, the National Science Foundation's current emphasis on interdisciplinary projects. Social or technological developments, such as the women's movement or the development of the internet, have played a part. From what we heard and from what we know, we conclude that interdisciplinary projects have the greatest chance of success when they are initiated and fostered by faculty and supported by central administration. It is essential that the University create structures and an atmosphere in which ideas can percolate and in which some risks can be taken. It must not be afraid to explore whether some apparently eccentric notions might actually be brilliant, and it must not be afraid to fail occasionally.

Recommendation 17. The University should seed and, when appropriate, provide long-term support to new and transformational research initiatives that bring together teams of highly talented faculty and students. These initiatives should originate in ideas that are proposed by faculty. The proposals should be evaluated in a process that is both competitive and transparent. For example, central administration might call for proposals for interdisciplinary projects, which would be considered by a select group of faculty reviewers. Reviewers would recommend those they considered most promising, and then central administration could decide which to support, based on their own sense of the viability of those initiatives recommended and the possibilities for gaining support from funding agencies, the State, or private sources.

Recommendation 18. Substantial interdisciplinary initiatives that require large-scale investment, no matter how generated, must continue to be evaluated by external reviewers, as we understand former President Yudof's have been and President Bruininks' will be. Those that foster the position of the University of Minnesota as a top-ranking public institution should be continued; others should be discontinued. Acting on such evaluations will require will and courage, but should become expected and a matter of habit.

Recommendation 19. Provide support for appointment models, both continuing and temporary, that bridge disciplines, such as joint hires, innovative affiliation models (e.g.,

common in the Law School), and the semester-long appointments in the Institute for Advanced Study.

Recommendation 20. Offer support for faculty development of new courses that will “stretch” the discipline’s boundaries.

Deliverable 4: Recommendations regarding mechanisms to insure the regular and continuing evaluation of disciplines in order to promote the timely development, reconfiguration, and discontinuation of graduate offerings as academic strengths, interests, and societal needs and demands evolve.

Overall the following recommendations aim to undertake a fairly routine review of departments, graduate programs, and centers while flagging and disbanding those that have outlived their usefulness. The reviews are to encourage innovation and would be both evaluative and developmental. The policy to have centers sunset as a default option is to encourage risk taking and highly innovative work.

Recommendation 21. Regular evaluation of disciplines in *departments* should occur every seven years by external reviewers from aspirational departments following the current format of the Graduate School. Such evaluation would occur whether or not the department is reviewed for professional accreditation as professional accreditation does not necessarily focus on research excellence and innovation. Outcomes of such a review might be to continue for another seven years, to recognize promise and reassess after a period shorter than seven years, or in extreme cases to close. Departments that are not performing at a high level, are at risk of decline, or are at promise for high performance, would trigger additional attention.

Recommendation 22. Regular evaluation of *graduate programs* should follow the same process as the evaluation of departments.

Recommendation 23. The University should compile a comprehensive inventory of centers that locates them in terms of their function and missions.

Recommendation 24. Meaningful systems should be put into place for assessing existing centers. The University should discontinue or reorganize centers that are no longer effective or intellectually vibrant. New centers should be approved with the expectation that they will close after five years unless after a petition and external review (to occur in the fifth year), there is a strong argument to continue them. New centers would have an additional internal review after two years.

Recommendation 25. Reviews of centers would be *standardized in format across the university*, although the format would likely differ for Type I, II, III, and IV centers (as defined in the Creating and Evaluating Interdisciplinary Centers Policy 2.2.2) that differ

in size and focus (research, creative work, or outreach). Reviews should reflect the goals and mission of the center set at inception, as well as general, University-wide criteria.

Recommendation 26. For centers with endowments and state funding, the review process would be the same. Even with this status, permanence should not be assured.

Recommendation 27. The University needs to take these reviews seriously and provide sufficient staff support to conduct them. While the Graduate School reviews departments and graduate programs, there is not currently sufficient staff to undertake even all of those reviews, much less the more expanded agenda of reviews we advocate here.

Deliverable 5: Recommendations regarding whether and under what circumstances the University should consider offering applied doctorates.

Recommendation 28. The University should be strategic in initiating applied doctorates and should do so only when the program has the potentiality to be outstanding in the research, education, and outreach it offers. Its aims should be consistent with the research mission of the unit in which it is located. When an applied doctorate is implemented, the University should consider whether it has an opportunity to take the lead in developing professionals who will become the faculty in other institutions and the provider of education outside the University of Minnesota—in greater Minnesota, nationally, or internationally—rather than educating professional practitioners only. The location of the School of Nursing within the Academic Health Center and among a faculty engaged in research makes it the kind of unit suited to offer an applied doctorate in Nursing Practice. Because of its alliance with a variety of units and faculty involved in research, the School of Nursing has a capacity that MnSCU, for instance, does not.

Recommendation 29. The implementation of a new applied doctorate will involve start-up costs, and the program may not become self-supporting. These costs should not be assumed at the expense of other programs. A careful estimate of the costs of implementing an applied doctorate should be made, and new sources of funding should be sought if continuing additional support is anticipated. The implementation of an applied doctorate should not depend on an excessive use of adjunct faculty. Such degrees should adhere to the highest standards and should undergo regular Graduate School external review. The University should only implement an applied doctorate if it is consistent with its aim to become a leading public research institution.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Methods Followed; Consultations and Communications

Methods Followed:

The Task Force met weekly on Thursdays from October 6, 2005, through December 22, and held weekly Friday meetings from January 20 through March 24, 2006. At their initial meetings, Task Force members developed a list of stakeholder groups and individuals with whom they wished to consult. They continued to expand this list as their work progressed. (The stakeholder groups and individuals are identified below.) The co-chairs attended weekly meetings of the Academic Strategic Positioning Steering Group and used this opportunity to discuss work of the Discipline Evolution Task Force. Task Force members relied on each other to identify relevant resources and also used the Strategic Positioning Central Library on the Portal as a source of information. Potential resources were added to a master resource list as they were identified. Critical resources were distributed to Task Force members via e-mail and also handed out at meetings. The Task Force assigned subcommittees to develop sections of its report and to revise the sections, based on discussion by the whole. Individual members were also assigned to read the reports of the Task Forces with a December reporting deadline to determine areas of intersection with work of the Discipline Evolution Task Force.

Consultation and Communication:

Face to face meetings were held with the following groups and individuals.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Group or Individual</u>
October 25	Council of Graduate Students Leadership
October 27	Town Hall with Graduate and Professional Students (St. Paul); joint with Graduate Reform: Student Support Task Force
October 31	College of Liberal Arts Chairs
November 10	Town Hall with Twin Cities Faculty; joint with Graduate Reform: Student Support Task Force
November 10	Town Hall with Graduate and Professional Students (Minneapolis); joint with Graduate Reform: Student Support Task Force
November 11	Associate Medical School Dean Charles Moldow
November 18	College of Liberal Arts Dean Steven Rosenstone
November 29	Town Hall with Duluth Faculty, via interactive television; joint with Graduate Reform: Student Support Task Force
December 1	Hubert H. Humphrey Institute Dean Brian Atwood
December 1	Vice Provost and Graduate School Dean Gail Dubrow
December 6	Graduate fellowship recipients

December 8	Directors of Graduate Studies of interdisciplinary programs
December 8	Associate Vice President Victor Bloomfield
December 9	Institute of Technology Dean Steven Crouch
December 15	Vice President for Research Timothy Mulcahy
December 16	College of Biological Sciences Dean Robert Elde
December 16	School of Nursing Dean Connie Delaney
January 10	Professor Michael O'Connor
January 10	Professor Ann Waltner
January 11	School of Public Health Dean John Finnegan
January 11	Senior Vice President Robert Jones
January 11	College of Education and Human Development Dean Steven Yussen
January 24	Co-Chairs of the Collaborative Research and Research Infrastructure Task Forces: Associate Dean Frances Lawrenz and Professor Marc Jenkins (Assistant Vice President Winifred Schumi and Ms. Peggy Sundermeyer also attended)
February 6	Co-Chairs of the Faculty Culture Task Force: Professors Jeffrey Kahn and Kirt Wilson

Meetings were also scheduled with graduate and professional students at Duluth on November 29 and with UROP students on December 1; however, no students attended either meeting.

One of the Task Force co-chairs met individually with Professor Richard Leppert and the other, with an executive from 3M.

APPENDIX B. Charge Letter

September 15, 2005

TO: Provost's Academic Task Force on Graduate Reform: Discipline Evolution
Shirley Garner, *Co-chair*, Associate Dean, Graduate School and Professor, Department of English, Language/Literature, CLA
Steve Ekker, *Co-chair*, Associate Professor, Department of Cell Biology & Development, Medical School/CBS
Varadarajan Chari, Professor, Department of Economics, CLA
Mary Louise Fellows, Professor, Law School
Ann Forsyth, Director, Metropolitan Design Center, CALA
Karin Kettenring, Graduate Student, Department of Horticultural Science, CBS
Wendy Pradt Lougee, University Librarian, University Libraries
Jean Montgomery, Associate Professor, Department of Theatre Arts & Dance, CLA
Yvette Perry, Graduate Student, Department of Family Social Science, CHE
Jeff Roberts, Professor, Department of Chemistry, IT

FROM: E. Thomas Sullivan, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

RE: Provost's Charge to Task Force on Graduate Reform: Discipline Evolution

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the academic strategic positioning Task Force on Graduate Reform: Discipline Evolution, under the leadership of co-chairs, Shirley Garner and Steve Ekker. The efforts of this task force will be critical to the overall success of the University's transformative strategic positioning effort.

Attached are documents that, taken together, comprise the charge to your task force.

- Attachment A contains an articulation of the University's overall goal and assigns to the task force the responsibility of retaining an "eye on the prize." Each of the issues identified in Attachment A, which is part of the charge of every task force, must be addressed.
- Attachment B contains criteria to be addressed by each task force. These criteria are drawn from the action strategies identified in the strategic positioning report *Advancing the Public Good: Securing the University's Leadership Position in the 21st Century* (February 2005). It is critical that each task force consider how its work can further each of the five broad action strategies.
- Attachment C contains the mission and deliverables specific to your task force, along with the date on which your task force report and recommendations are due.
- Attachment D contains the criteria for decision making, taken directly from the February strategic positioning report. Each task force should use these criteria as a framework for decision making.

- Attachment E contains a diagram of the process to be used by each task force. Note in particular the periods of required consultation with stakeholders.

There are a number of resources available to you as you pursue your charge. These include the professional staff member assigned specifically to assist your task force, the Resource Alignment Team, a toolkit of documents and templates, and the professional staff of University Relations appointed to facilitate internal and external communication of progress through the strategic positioning process. The Resource Alignment Team is a consulting group charged with providing support to all task forces in the areas of cross-functional alignment, change management, and subject matter expertise as needed. Support also is available from the Steering Committee for your strategic area. Finally, Leanne Wirkkula has been appointed to serve as a liaison between the academic task forces and me. Leanne will be able to help task force co-chairs access needed support and assistance. Leanne may be reached at (612) 625-0563, wirkkula@umn.edu.

The success of your task force will depend upon creative, forward-looking thought that maintains constant focus on the broad goals for the institution as a whole rather than the self interest of particular individuals or groups. Your effort will require consultation with all potentially affected stakeholders, from deans to students and everyone in between. It will require dedication and persistence. And together with the work of the other task forces, it will help guide the University on our journey to become one of the top three public research universities in the world.

Thank you for accepting this important challenge. I look forward to meeting with you at the kick-off work session hosted by President Bruininks this Friday, September 16.

Attachments: 5

- c: Gail Dubrow, Graduate School Dean and Vice Provost
Vicki Field, Staff to the Task Force on Graduate Reform: Discipline Evolution
Sharon Reich Paulsen, Assistant Vice President and Chief of Staff
Leanne Wirkkula, Assistant to the Provost

ATTACHMENT C

Graduate Reform: Discipline Evolution Report due on May 1, 2006

Mission:

To create a strategic plan for world-class graduate programs and education with particular emphasis on emerging and evolving disciplines. The University should strive to be a national and international model for the strength, breadth, and especially the interdisciplinary scope of its graduate programs.

Deliverables:

- Recommendations that identify how to overcome barriers, both structural and cultural, to the success of interdisciplinary research, teaching, and study.
- Recommendations regarding how to leverage the strengths and comparative advantages in the University's graduate programs, with an aim of fostering interdisciplinary research and teaching.
- Recommendations as to how the University can best leverage its current and potential academic advantages especially in new and evolving disciplines.
- Recommendations regarding mechanisms to insure the regular and continuing evaluation of disciplines of graduate offerings as academic strengths, interests, and societal needs and demands evolve.
- Recommendations regarding whether and under what circumstances the University should consider offering applied doctorates.

APPENDIX C.

Key Reports Consulted

1. Report of the Commission on Graduate Education, Stanford University, 2005.
<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/president/CGE2005.pdf>
2. “Issues at the Intersection” (report of the Subcommittee on Interdisciplinarity, University of Michigan):
http://www.provost.umich.edu/reports/issues_intersection/interdisciplinarity.html
3. The Responsive Ph.D.: Innovations in U.S. Doctoral Education; The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation. September 2005. (See <http://www.woodrow.org/>.)
4. “Seeding, Supporting, and Sustaining Interdisciplinary Initiatives at the University of Washington: Findings, Recommendations, and Strategies.” Gail Dubrow and Jennifer Harris. 2006. (For the draft report and background, see http://www.grad.washington.edu/Acad/interdisc_network/InterdisNetwork.htm.)
5. “The Iowa Promise: A Strategic Plan for the University of Iowa, 2005-2010”:
http://www.uiowa.edu/president/strat_planning/.

APPENDIX D.

Alignment of Task Force Recommendations with Strategic Action Areas

An ‘x’ denotes where each particular recommendation (listed in the columns) addresses the listed strategic action area (listed in rows).¹ For a description of each of the 29 recommendations, please refer to the report.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
1	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X						X	
2	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X									X	
3	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X			X	X	X			
4	X				X	X	X	X	X					X				X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
5					X	X			X								X	X			X	X		X	X	X	X			

¹ The five strategic action areas are:

1. Recruit, nurture, challenge, and educate outstanding students who are bright, curious, and highly motivated.
2. Recruit, mentor, reward, and retain world-class faculty and staff who are innovative, energetic, and dedicated to the highest standards of excellence.
3. Promote an effective organizational culture that is committed to excellence and responsive to change.
4. Exercise responsible stewardship by setting priorities, and enhancing and effectively utilizing resources and infrastructure.
5. Communicate clearly and credibly with all of our constituencies and practice public engagement responsive to the public good.

APPENDIX E.

Comment from Professor Joseph A. Konstan in response to the preliminary Task Force recommendations regarding faculty mobility:

“In general, an excellent report! I would like to suggest, however, a stronger version of recommendation #2. This is an idea that emerged from the President's 21st Century Interdisciplinary Conference on Information, Technology, and Everyday Life (which I chaired):

“Establish a set of ‘Presidential Professorates’—chairs that free a faculty member to work anywhere within the University (ideally on any campus) to pursue work in new or across disciplines. The idea would be to have a handful of such professors appointed at any time, to free them from any responsibilities in their home unit, and to have their evaluation be the responsibility of the President (or perhaps a delegate such as the Provost or the Dean of the Graduate School). The faculty could pursue any activities in teaching, research, or service at no cost (other than programmatic costs) to the unit(s) where they choose to work. For example, a selected economist might spend time in the School of Public Health working on a project to apply economic models to health education, or a biologist might work in the School of Nursing to develop a new curriculum of biology training for nursing students, or a Law professor might spend time in Crookston creating a program to prepare engineering students for work in patents. Obviously, these are only simply examples of what could be a substantially more creative opportunity.”