

Q-7: Quality on the Line

A Vision for University Education in the New Century

REPORT OF THE BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION

on

ACCESS AND QUALITY IN THE MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

September 25, 1990

Table of Contents

Foreward	2
Section I: Building for the Future	4
Section II: Building on Quality	5
Section III: The Minnesota State University System Today	6
Section IV: The Commission's Findings	8
Section V: The Commission's Conclusions	12
Section VI: The Commission's Indicators of Quality	13
Section VII: Implications for Other Education Systems in Minnesota	22
Section VIII: The Next Steps	23
Blue Ribbon Commission and Resource Team Members	24

555 Park Street, Suite 230
St. Paul, Minnesota 55103
Telephone (612) 296-6870
Facsimile (612) 296-3214

Bernard Brommer
Co-chair
St. Paul

Tom Triplett
Co-chair
Minneapolis

Kathleen Annette, M.D.
Cass Lake

Linda Rios Brook
Minneapolis

Tom Caron
Marshall

Cy Carpenter
Bloomington

Richard W. Fitzsimons
Moorhead

Robert Fleming
Rochester

Ron James
Minneapolis

Kathryn L. Jensen
Grand Rapids

Curt Johnson
Minneapolis

Connie Levi
Minneapolis

Willard H. McGuire
North St. Paul

Veda F. Ponikvar
Chisholm

Bill Roberts
Eden Prairie

Carol Ann White
Minneapolis

Tim Wierzbicki
Minneapolis

Foreword

The Blue Ribbon Commission on Access and Quality in the Minnesota State University System was created in January of 1990 by the Minnesota State University Board. Our somewhat daunting charge was to speak on behalf of the people of Minnesota to the standards of excellence necessary in higher education for a new century.

In the last three years of the 1980s, we have seen rapid, unexpected and dynamic change become the constant in our lives, setting a pattern for what we believe lies ahead. The demands of change in this century have created an urgent need to develop a vision for higher education, our most important institution to prepare us to meet the challenges of the new century.

The university of the 21st century will be responsible for proposing, evaluating and assimilating new ways of behaving based on new perceptions and ideas about how human beings learn and work in a changed world.

America is struggling with unprecedented debt, with trade deficits, and challenges of productivity, as well as enormous social issues, environmental concerns, an aging population and high levels of unemployment, particularly among growing populations of color.

Teaching people to wrestle with these difficult issues and to solve problems is the responsibility of education. The intensity of public discussion about our nation's educational system is a hopeful sign. The American people know that the future will be shaped in our schools and colleges, as well as by business, government and other social institutions. Whatever the shortcomings of educational systems, those who support them politically and financially are generous people with implicit faith in the capacity of human beings for self-improvement.

We have attempted to recognize in this report the diverse pressures and rapidly changing dynamics which impact a highly regarded educational system in Minnesota. The national reputation for high quality education we have attained in this State did not evolve from complacency, but rather from a strong commitment to improve constantly those institutions which have contributed to our quality of life. Because we believe that an imaginative response to change is called for, the Commission has sought ways to encourage creativity and risk-taking within institutions which are, almost by their nature, conservative and cautious about change.

The period of the 1980s has seen dramatic growth in Minnesota's state universities. Over the decade, the student body at these seven institutions has grown from 41,000 in 1980 to approximately 66,000 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in more than 600 degree programs in the fall of 1990. The range of those programs has also grown, with new degrees in engineering, technology and management added to the staples of the liberal arts, education, health sciences and business. The faculty has also expanded and developed, and the campuses continue to be enhanced and refurbished.

But it has also become clear to us that the pace of change and the pressure of growth have stressed the infrastructure of the Minnesota State University System. Much of this may be attributed to the hard fact that the growth in enrollment and programs has not been proportionately matched by growth in resources. The universities have served more and more people in more and more ways, but these very efforts may have jeopardized their ability to provide the kind of high quality education the System's students need for the challenges of a new century.

At its 1989 summer retreat, the Minnesota State University Board of Directors decided to confront these issues directly. A comprehensive planning process was designed, one that would help the Board better balance its historic commitment to access with the demands of a highly

competitive global marketplace for ever increasing quality. Seeking the broad participation and support by the people of Minnesota in this process, the Board asked for the assistance of the individuals who have worked on this report.

The seventeen members of the Commission brought to the table a wide range of perspectives. Among us are corporate executives, labor leaders, farmers, public school educators, former legislators, civil rights activists, foundation officers and recent graduates of the universities. What bound us together in this difficult assignment was a common conviction that achieving high quality education is the single most important factor in meeting the challenges our state and our nation face.

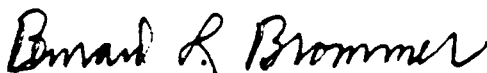
The Commission has sought to keep our thinking and our recommendations "student-centered" and "future-oriented." We have tried specifically to determine what we believe graduates of Minnesota's state universities should know and be able to do, if both these graduates and Minnesota itself are to be successful in the future we see ahead. We have also tried to define for the Board what we believe "quality" means to the people of our state and what we see as the hallmarks or **indicators** of high quality education designed for the future. To the Commission, "quality" means:

- STUDENTS WHO ARE PREPARED FOR COLLEGE
- GRADUATES WHO CAN THINK CRITICALLY AND SOLVE PROBLEMS
- GRADUATES WHO HAVE A GLOBAL VISION
- GRADUATES WHO HAVE A MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVE
- GRADUATES WHO ARE SCIENTIFICALLY LITERATE
- GRADUATES WHO ARE READY TO WORK
- GRADUATES WHO ARE GOOD CITIZENS AND WHO BEHAVE ETHICALLY

These indicators of quality will, we believe, help the Board establish the standards of performance to which the people of the State can hold them accountable.

The Commission has worked for nearly ten months in the development of these recommendations. The commissioners have read volumes of research reports and position papers. We have listened to national experts on quality enhancement as well as many state university faculty members and students concerned about the future of their universities. We have visited each of the campuses and looked at facilities from laboratories to student lounges.

Together with an excellent resource team of faculty and administrators from the seven universities, the seventeen commissioners met many times, including a two-day retreat in late July, to debate these difficult issues. We hope that our analysis of the achievements and challenges of Minnesota's state universities, as well as our recommendations on standards of quality to which we believe the universities should aspire, will be helpful. We are equally hopeful that the Board and the universities will take meaningful action to advance the agenda upon which they have embarked. As Ben Franklin put it many years ago, "well done is better than well said." This report must be seen as just one more step forward in a commitment to continuous improvement for the Minnesota State University System and for Minnesota.



Bernard L. Brommer
Co-chair



Tom Triplett
Co-chair

SECTION I

Building for the Future

The charge to the Blue Ribbon Commission on Access and Quality in the Minnesota State University System was to advise the Minnesota State University Board and the people of Minnesota on the standards of educational quality needed to prepare our students and our state for the challenges of the twenty-first century.

What is that future? What are those challenges?

The central dynamic of the future will be continuing and accelerating change. Managing change is the fundamental challenge.

Americans have come to expect change driven by ever more sophisticated technology. We anticipate continuing revelations of the principles of physics, chemistry, mathematics, and the life sciences. Cold fusion and gene splices are just two examples. We know that each revelation will have technological applications not yet imagined. With 90% of all the scientists and engineers who ever walked the earth alive and working today, how could it be otherwise?

But it is not science alone which engenders change. Who would have predicted even a year ago the staggering changes we have witnessed in the world's political landscape? Who understood a decade ago the transformation of our families, neighborhoods and justice systems by crack cocaine? As President Duly of Bemidji State told us, "We know less now about humankind and its attributes than we did a year ago. There has been a Copernican revolution at work within the world's societies, one that makes so many of our set assumptions not only out-of-date but down-right dangerous!"

What alone seems clear in the political and social realms is that change should be expected, that change may well be the only constant in our lives.

In every aspect of our lives—our families, our communities, our environment, our jobs—we must be prepared to live with and work with transforming change. We think that education in general and higher education in particular bear the responsibility for providing our citizens the skills, knowledge and attitudes America and Minnesota need to be successful in an ever more complex and competitive world.

It is not too much to say that high quality education is the strategic resource necessary for Minnesota's future.

What does "quality" in higher education mean? American industry has learned a great deal about quality in the last decade, as it has attempted to regain its pre-eminence in critical world markets. Minnesota corporations, companies and cooperatives have been leaders in this effort, and they have found powerful allies in Minnesota labor organizations. Together, they have enhanced their positions worldwide by focusing on quality and the principles and practices which lead to improved cooperation and performance.

We believe that some of what industry and labor have learned can also be instructive for the Minnesota State University System. These lessons may also help us in identifying the indicators of quality which the Minnesota State University Board seeks.

The central dynamic of the future will be continuing and accelerating change. Managing change is the fundamental challenge.

Building on Quality

The quality "movement" in America has grown rapidly during the past decade and is the product of the research of both industry and labor experts and scholars. While there are several schools of thought about strategies for achieving increased quality, five fundamental principles developed by the Minnesota Council for Quality are no longer in dispute. The Council has been immensely helpful to the Commission in relating these fundamentals to the aspirations for new levels of quality in the Minnesota State University System.

First, we believe that quality demands commitment and involvement in the effort from the top. The commitment from the Board, the chancellor and the seven university presidents must be real and must be believable. All members of the System, as well as its many constituents around the state, must see examples of genuine leadership aimed at the achievement of higher quality. Energy and resources must be directed toward achieving specific and measurable standards of excellence.

Second, there must be inclusive participation by all employees of the System.

Effective decision-making power should be pushed to the lowest level of the organization possible. Colleges are often viewed as institutions where such decentralization is traditional. We are not convinced, however, that in the "culture" of the Minnesota State University System employees feel effectively "empowered," that innovation is rewarded and that positive contributions are appropriately recognized. Ownership by all employees is central to any successful quality initiative.

Third, achieving quality demands sensitivity to the "customer." Determining just who is the customer for universities is a complex task, but included in anyone's list would surely be current students, parents and employers, as well as persons internal to the educational process—administrators, faculty and staff. Quality demands that we both listen and hear what each of these groups says about their needs—and that the organization responds.

Fourth, we think that the working definition of quality by the System should be "continuous improvement." Everything the organization does should be on the table for review and evaluation. No exceptions! Communication should be improved, organizational obstructions to excellence identified and eliminated. The focus should be on results.

Finally, we know that achieving quality in any organization depends upon the performance of its employees. Continual upgrading of the knowledge, skills and abilities of faculty and staff are prerequisites to achieving high quality education in Minnesota. Such training should not be exclusively related to academic disciplines, but should also include goal-setting, problem-solving, decision-making and team-building. The Commission was frankly distressed to discover that an organization whose business is education has invested so little in the growth of its employees.

The Commission believes that the application of these fundamentals, adapted to the specifics of the higher education enterprise, will go far toward achieving the high quality education Minnesota requires for its students.

The working definition of quality by the System should be "continuous improvement".

SECTION III

The Minnesota State University System Today

Like many public colleges and universities in America, Minnesota's state universities have their roots in the frontier "normal schools," institutions created to train teachers for the new and growing nation. The impulse for this movement was deeply democratic, designed to provide the blessings of education for all Americans. As the schools evolved from state teachers' colleges to state colleges to state universities, their missions became broader and more complex. But the original commitment to democratic principles, to creating opportunities for Minnesotans from all economic and social segments of our state, remains very strong.

The Commission believes that Bemidji State University, Mankato State University, Metropolitan State University, Moorhead State University, St. Cloud State University, Southwest State University and Winona State University play a critical role in our state. They not only represent pathways for individual Minnesotans and their families to economic security and personal fulfillment, but they provide the State with the productive, high quality workforce that has been the strength of Minnesota's economy for many years.

A majority of students coming into our state universities are the first generation of their families to attend college. Nearly 35% are over the age of 25, many of them women whose education has been deferred or interrupted and workers seeking skills to make them more productive in the rapidly changing workplace. About 30% of all students attend on a part-time basis (nearly half of these at Metropolitan State University). Over 85% of MSUS students are Minnesotans, and nearly 70% of MSUS alumni continue to live and work in Minnesota. While the universities have specific regional identities, their student bodies are made up of people whose homes are in all parts of Minnesota and the surrounding states.

Historically, the state universities have not had a strong record of attracting and graduating people of color. This is significant because of the sharp increase in the number of such individuals in our population and their relative youth. In 1988, the Minnesota State University Board launched a "cultural diversity" initiative which is intended to address that issue. Since 1988, enrollment of minority students in the System has grown by 14%, although they make up only about 3% of the total student enrollment. Since the inception of the cultural diversity initiative, the number of faculty of color has grown by more than 100.

In general, the academic programs offered by the state universities prepare our people to be contributing members of our society and our workforce. Most students choose to enroll in programs that are designed to lead to rather specific careers, although the universities seem to do little to match program enrollment with the specific needs of the Minnesota economy.

(The state universities) provide the State with the productive, high quality workforce that has been the strength of Minnesota's economy for many years.

SECTION III

In 1989, 26% of degrees awarded by the state universities were in business, with another 25% granted in education. Science, mathematics and engineering accounted for 12% and the social sciences for 4%. Nineteen percent of graduates were in the traditional fields of the liberal arts (English, fine arts, languages, philosophy, speech) and the remaining 13% in other areas, including criminal justice, nursing and social work. About 90% of these degrees were granted at the conclusion of undergraduate programs, 10% at the graduate level. Alumni of the MSUS are the people who make Minnesota work: its teachers, nurses, accountants, bankers, merchants, engineers, police officers, and social workers.

Minnesota's state universities play other important roles in the economic and cultural life of their regions. They are frequently the chief source of technology transfer and applied research for the people of that region. Their musical and theatrical productions, their art galleries and film series, as well as their athletic programs, enrich the lives of people often isolated from the cultural institutions of the Twin Cities.

It is because the Minnesota State Universities are such significant institutions in the life of our state that we have come to believe every effort should be made to preserve their strengths and build upon their traditions. To do so in a era of intense competition for scarce resources demands, we have concluded, clear direction for their future and a renewed commitment to quality in everything they do.

We have come to believe every effort should be made to preserve (the state universities') strengths and build upon their traditions.

SECTION IV

The Commission's Findings

Many of the Commissioners came to this assignment with limited knowledge of Minnesota's state universities or of their achievements and frustrations. To prepare us for our work, a team of faculty and staff from each of the seven universities prepared background papers on seven key policy areas, including enrollment trends. We found this work immensely useful and want to express our appreciation to both the teams and the individual authors of the chapters.

In April, the System sponsored a major convocation on quality held at the Scanticon Conference Center in Plymouth, attended by approximately 200 administrators, faculty, staff and students from throughout the Minnesota State University System. The convocation brought to Minnesota national researchers and writers on the future and on the world, national and state economies and demography such as Rudiger Dornbusch, Professor of Economic at M.I.T., and Harold Hodgkinson, Director of the Center for Demographic Policy at Washington's Institute for Educational Leadership. National leaders in the quality movement in education, such as Alexander Astin from the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA, and Charles Glassick of the Carnegie Foundation, also joined us, as well as representatives from higher education in Tennessee and Virginia, states which have also wrestled with quality (albeit driven by different agendas). The past president of the National Education Association, Mary Futrell, as well as the out-going chancellor of the City University of New York, Joseph Murphy, joined us to talk about balancing access and quality and to provide inspiration for the tough work ahead. The commissioners found it a most rewarding experience, one that greatly advanced our understanding of the stakes involved.

Following the convocation, members of the Commission traveled to each of the seven universities to meet with administrators, faculty, staff and students. In some cases, we had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the communities in which the universities are located, as well as with alumni. We also worked closely with the "Resource Team," a group of eight faculty members, administrators and students who have supported us throughout this process. What follows are not "findings" in the formal sense, but they do represent the dominant themes we heard from students, faculty, staff and presidents around the System.

While much of what we heard reflected institutional pride and loyalty, we have chosen to focus on those issues which we think relate more directly to the charge of this Commission: enhanced quality and the obstacles which stand in the way of that goal.

Many students do not believe they came to college well prepared for the high expectations of the faculty.

What Students Told Us

At the April convocation and throughout the Commission's campus visits, several themes repeated:

- Many students do not believe they came to college well prepared for the high expectations of the faculty. As younger high school students, they had little idea of what to expect in college, and often did not take the courses that would have helped them.
- Among students, the most pressing and critical issue was their ability to approach and interact with faculty members, particularly outside the classroom setting. They see professors as much more than the lecturer, test giver, and assigner of reading and

writing. They want the faculty to advise them not only on class selection and career paths, but current events and life choices. Students seem to have considerable anxiety about their futures and want faculty members to give them guidance for that future. They want to know that their professors care about them as students and as individuals.

- Students want to experience the university as a community in which everyone—students, faculty, staff and administrators—works together and learns together. As Charles Glassick of the Carnegie Foundation told us, “What we really mean [by community] is the quality of the interrelationships that occur on the campus. Campus is a place of learning, of growth and development, not only in an intellectual sense, but also in an interpersonal sense as well.”
- Students understand that they will be living and working in a world of great complexity, that they will need to know about many different things and about change itself. They are concerned that their education may be too narrow, too vocational, that they are not getting the kind of broad, integrated education which characterizes good private liberal arts colleges.
- Students want to know more about the world of work, about career opportunities and about the preparation required. They would like to see such counseling come both from career planning centers and from faculty members in their major discipline.
- Students acknowledge that part of a quality education is derived from what the individual student is willing to put into the experience. But they argue that this experience needs to be enhanced with the appropriate library resources, equipment, classrooms, study space and laboratory facilities. Most believe that the current level of financial support for their universities has not provided for these “tools.”
- Students expressed consistent concern about the cost of their education. They spoke to the amount of time many must spend working and of the debt many incur by graduation.
- Students do not want Q-7 to be labeled as elitist. Jim Stigman, Chair of the Minnesota State University Student Association (MSUSA), reminded the Commission of the students’ concern that the Minnesota State University System maintain access. Students are also concerned about their ability to graduate in a reasonable number of years. They worry that Q-7 will carry with it requirements which, intended or not, will require students to commit more than four years to get a degree. Q-7 needs to bring enhanced quality to their education, not simply add requirements for graduation.

What the Faculty and Other Professional Staff Told Us . . .

As might be expected, we heard many diverse points of view from faculty members and other professional staff, both at the convocation and from campus to campus as we traveled the State. A position paper, “Traditions of Quality in the Minnesota State University System,” presented by Dr. Mary Hickerson, President of the Inter Faculty Organization, was especially helpful in sorting out these comments. Again, we heard great pride in what had been accomplished by faculty of the universities. We have

The over-riding issue for faculty members . . . is the increased number of students in the System, coupled with decreasing state funding on a per student basis.

SECTION IV

chosen, however, to list what we were told could enhance quality beyond current levels:

- The over-riding issue for faculty members—both teaching and service faculty—is the increased number of students in the System, coupled with decreasing state funding on a per student basis. This translates into an increased workload and decreased availability of the basic tools necessary to the profession: outdated library collections, inadequate and obsolete equipment, insufficient space for classrooms, laboratories and offices. The rapid growth of the universities seems to lie at the center of many of these concerns.
- Some faculty members appear to be experiencing considerable stress, much of it attributed to larger class sizes and schedule overloads needed to accommodate larger enrollments. However, faculty members also describe themselves as pressured to focus on “traditionally defined” research and scholarly activities, to generate new funds through grant writing and to assume responsibility for a variety of administrative tasks.
- A number of faculty members expressed concerns about the current calendar at the universities. A persuasive case can be made that a semester system would provide the time for study and reflection inherent in high quality education.
- Faculty leaders particularly are concerned about what they see as the growth at some universities of a “top-down management style.” This has resulted, they believe, in declining morale and increased alienation among faculty members, and in the absence of consensus about university priorities.

What the Staff Told Us

Staff members have a critical role to play in the creation of a sense of community on the campus.

- Staff members see themselves as an essential part of the universities. They are part of the team, yet they feel that their insights are seldom sought, their views often ignored.
- The rapid growth of enrollment has put great pressure on the physical facilities of the universities, concentrating more and more students in the same space. This has made it much more difficult to keep those facilities clean and well maintained.
- The number of support service personnel has not grown commensurate with the growth in enrollment. In many offices, staff is attempting to serve twice as many students with the same workforce as they had ten years ago, often with the additional burden of increased bureaucratic procedures.
- Staff members have a critical role to play in the creation of a sense of community on the campus. They are frequently the individuals who keep the practical elements of the university functioning and can do much to make the university attractive and efficient. A commitment to enhanced quality on their part can create a much better learning environment for students.

What the Presidents Told Us . . .

At the convocation and on the campuses of the universities, we spoke to each of the seven university presidents and to their vice presidents, deans and library directors.

They told us much about both current reality on the campuses and their visions for the future.

■ The presidents understand the challenges of creating a culture which promotes change and yet honors what the universities have done well. President Roland Dille of Moorhead State University argued that "what a university needs is a faculty assured that its most rigorous scholarship and most effective teaching reflect and enhance the basic purposes of a university. That assurance is gained when a faculty member is welcomed to the task of reshaping the university, to play a part in that process of change which characterizes every good institution."

■ The presidents and other campus administrators want to lead their institutions toward enhanced quality through a better match between resources and enrollment, but are uncertain about whether such efforts would in fact reduce already scarce resources, at least under current state funding policies. As President Darrell Krueger of Winona State University put it, "Fundamental to quality improvement is a rethinking of the basis for funding universities; universities should be funded on the basis of measurable academic accomplishments, and not on the number of 'bodies' processed."

■ Each president is very proud of his/her university's commitment to individual students. That commitment has been sorely tested, however, in the crush of rapidly growing enrollments. As President Tobin Barrozo of Metropolitan State University said, "The challenge for the university is to continue the individualized approach, essential for talent development, while accommodating the degree needs of an increasingly more encompassing and diverse student clientele. The development of an individual's talent is what Metro State does best."

■ The presidents have identified critical programs that will lead to enhanced quality. President Brendan McDonald of St. Cloud State University told us, for example, that international education is a vital part of higher education directed toward the future. In some cases such programs have been implemented, in whole or in part, as international education has been at St. Cloud. But with funds for fundamental activities already short, the presidents have encountered significant resistance to new initiatives and the reallocations necessary to accomplish them.

■ The funding problems the System has experienced recently have "politicized" many decisions on the campuses. Competition between departments and programs for scarce funding has made them defensive and wary of organizational and programmatic change needed to concentrate resources and enhance quality. Resistance to measurement of quality efforts and assessment in general probably stems from the same source.

■ The presidents seem caught between rising expectations in their service regions for more involvement by the universities in economic development efforts and other service assignments; and the recognized need to concentrate energy and resources internally to the core academic programs. President Douglas Treadway of Southwest State University spoke to the importance of linking the university to the public schools and other post-secondary institutions in his rural service region, and about efforts Southwest is making in concert with the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute located on the campus. His challenge is to find ways to spread the limited resources of his relatively small university over the range of needs in southwestern Minnesota, at the same time he seeks to build increased quality in his academic programs.

The presidents understand the challenges of creating a culture which promotes change and yet honors what the universities have done well.

SECTION V

The Commission's Conclusions

At the conclusion of our work, the Blue Ribbon Commission finds itself much impressed by the Minnesota State Universities. We discovered thoughtful and progressive leadership, committed and learned faculty members and other professional staff, dedicated support staff and enthusiastic students. We come away believing that the Minnesota State University System has served our state well.

Taken as a whole, the Minnesota State Universities play a pivotal role in meeting Minnesota's need for knowledge and training. It is the largest of the public and private higher education systems in the State, and its 200,000 alumni live and work in all corners of Minnesota. Over their long histories, Minnesota's state universities have educated our teachers, our nurses, our business persons and many more. We find Minnesotans proud of the state universities, with good reason.

Yet we also come away with a sense that the Minnesota state universities face "clear and present dangers" as they attempt to meet the changing needs of more and more Minnesotans, seeking more and more education, more and more often.

We also come away with a sense that the state universities face "clear and present dangers" as they attempt to meet the changing needs of more and more Minnesotans, seeking more and more education, more and more often.

Change is the omnipresent reality in our lives, yet we fear that the Minnesota State University System continues to follow an old agenda. That agenda is centered around the belief that they should and must serve everyone with nearly every kind of need for education, regardless of whether or not they have the resources to do so. It is clear to us that a well-intentioned attempt to serve ever-growing numbers of students has dissipated the resources of the System.

If the System and its member universities cannot direct their energies over the next decade toward new standards of quality, we fear that Minnesota stands to lose much of what has been achieved and the pride we take in it today. Indeed, we fear that our recommendations may be already too late.

We believe that the Minnesota State University Board should make hard decisions that will provide greater clarity to the System's mission and delineate it further from the other public higher education systems.

At the same time, we believe that the public and its legislature also need to make some difficult decisions, matching resources to this new and clarified mission, assuring that the System does well what it is charged with doing. Both groups should assure that resources are directed toward achieving new and higher standards of quality.

The Commission's Indicators of Quality

The planning effort of which we have been a small part must now turn to developing a working definition of quality. That definition achieved, there must be new commitment to quality at every level of the System, starting with the Board, the chancellor and the presidents, and extending to every employee and student of the System. Everyone must be involved, at every step of the way.

As part of advancing such a quality agenda, the Blue Ribbon Commission has sought to identify what we believe should be the hallmarks, the standards or indicators of high quality education at our universities. In doing so, **we have thought about these indicators as aspirations, as standards which could be achieved by the end of the decade, the beginning of a new millennium, if they were kept clearly in the fore, with resources targeted toward them at every emerging opportunity.** We have tried to see the indicators as "student-centered" and "future-oriented," asking ourselves again and again what students graduating from state universities should know and be able to do, if they are to be prepared to serve themselves, their families, their communities and their world into the next century.

Finally, we should say quickly that we do not presume to suggest that these indicators are the only ones which could be adopted. In various stages of our discussion, we have had more and others on the table. Yet these seem to us to be central to the effort to build new quality in the System. We believe them worthy of your serious consideration.

SECTION VI

1. Prepared for College

Each entering student will have completed a college preparatory course pattern, including courses in writing, advanced mathematics and science, foreign language, the arts, history and geography, and will have met standards of admissions established by the universities.

The Commission believes that success in college starts with adequate educational preparation. Although we believe that the historic commitment to access to state universities should be safeguarded, the universities must make it clear to students and their parents that certain skills and knowledge should be gained prior to admission to a state university.

It is the role of our universities to develop talent, not pick winners, as Alexander Astin has said, but it is also our responsibility to expect of students a level of preparation that will contribute to success.

At present Minnesota has among the lowest high school graduation requirements in the nation, requiring beyond the 9th grade only three credits of English, two credits of social science, nine credits of electives, and one credit of health/physical education for graduation. By comparison, forty-one states require some math and science, five states require foreign language, and eleven require art/music for graduation. It must be clear that a high school diploma alone is not an indication that a student is prepared for college.

Success in college starts with adequate educational preparation. Each entering student will have completed a college preparatory course pattern.

The Commission believes that setting rigorous requirements for college preparation will enhance student success in college; make a broader range of degree programs truly accessible to students; reduce the need for remedial programs which are costly to both institutions and students; and help students reduce the amount of time needed to complete a degree. These requirements will need, however, to be phased in over time so as not to unfairly exclude students who can demonstrate the ability to succeed in college but who have been unable to complete the preparation requirements, often because of economic or geographic disadvantage. **Each university must also maintain the flexibility to provide opportunity to individuals demonstrating unique potential for success, as demonstrated by portfolios, life experience and other significant predictors.**

The Commission acknowledges that success in this area will require close and effective partnerships with elementary and secondary educators, the State Board of Education, students, and parents. Many exciting partnerships between state universities and local school districts are already in place. We support the continuing development of such cooperative efforts and invite the initiation of a new dialogue that can lead to adequate high school graduation standards for all Minnesotans.

2. Higher Order Thinking

Each candidate for graduation will complete a senior thesis or similar integrating project and will defend that work before a jury of faculty members and community practitioners.

The Commission believes that at the center of a college education is advanced training in higher order thinking—the ability to identify, analyze and solve problems, to use the tools of research and to communicate conclusions and solutions. Students must also understand the various modes of inquiry: scientific, historical, aesthetic and philosophical. Faculty members have a unique opportunity and responsibility to challenge and motivate students in thinking creatively, and indeed this sort of challenge is what most of us remember and cherish about our best professors. With change itself the most important lesson in our times, graduates should be competent in thinking, writing and speaking across a variety of disciplines, particularly including philosophy, literature and the arts. In the major area of study, graduates should demonstrate competence at the level of an entering professional.

We believe that a capstone experience is the best outcome measure of this integration of thinking skills. We think it should be a rigorous exercise, one that involves both the student's professors and members of the work community into which the graduate intends to enter.

Students will complete a senior thesis or similar project and defend that work before a jury of faculty members and community practitioners.

3. Global Understanding

Each candidate for graduation will demonstrate acquisition of a global perspective through international study or the study of foreign language and culture, and through the ability to articulate the interrelationships of world economics, environment, geography, history, politics, religion, and the arts.

Students will acquire and demonstrate a global perspective and understanding.

The Commission believes that boundaries between the peoples, cultures, and nations of the world are blurring or disappearing in the face of technological, economic, and social change. Once able to rely on its own rich natural resources, Minnesota must now reach far beyond its borders to keep its economy growing. We in Minnesota are fortunate that what we have to offer in an international economy is in great demand. Keeping Minnesota growing at a pace unknown to any other non-coastal state. But we will only continue to thrive if our citizens gain a better understanding of the diverse cultures of the world. We will need to be able to "buy and sell" in the language of the customer. More broadly, we will need to understand that what we do economically, socially, politically, educationally, and environmentally has a global, as well as a local, regional, and national, impact.

The Commission believes that students can gain such understandings and skills through a combination of learning experiences that might include international travel, foreign language and culture instruction, and courses that integrate global perspectives.

4. Multicultural Perspective

Each candidate for graduation will demonstrate the knowledge, skills and values gained by the study of the cultures of America's diverse racial and ethnic groups, and by working together in diverse learning communities toward shared goals.

The Commission recognizes that the diversity and richness of America's population is growing and changing, posing new opportunities as well as new challenges for us all. The old image of the melting pot, in which waves of European immigrants became invisibly blended into the American population, has given way to the salad bowl, the contents of which remain distinctly different yet complementary. While Minnesota's population (and the populations of its neighboring states) remains far more homogeneous than do those of the coastal states that have long served as initial points of access for America's newest citizens, here too in Minnesota change is accelerating. One has only to visit any elementary school classroom in Minneapolis or St. Paul to see the future.

The Commission commends the Minnesota State University System for the progress made under its cultural diversity initiative. We believe, however, that meaningful reform of the curriculum remains to be accomplished and that more opportunities must be created so that all our students can learn about and interact with diverse peoples and cultures and thereby become more effective as both citizens and workers. Such opportunities must involve formal and informal working and social interactions, both on and off campus, with persons whose heritage, culture, values and orientation are diverse.

Students will demonstrate skills, knowledge, and values gained by studying America's diverse cultures and by working together in diverse learning communities.

5. Scientific and Quantitative Literacy

Each candidate for graduation will demonstrate quantitative and scientific literacy, including an understanding of the transforming role of technology in world society.

Students will demonstrate quantitative and scientific literacy, including the role of technology in world society.

The Commission has received and accepted testimony indicating that present realities and future projections alike call for more scientifically, mathematically, and technologically literate persons. Not only does Minnesota need more scientists and engineers, but it has been estimated that in the United States as a whole, 80% of all new jobs in the year 2000 will require substantially higher levels of technological literacy than we enjoy today. The demand for math-trained workers in the year 2000 will have grown by 36% compared to 1986; by 1995, eight of the ten fastest-growing jobs will be science-based.

Further, what is needed is not more people who have memorized increasing numbers of scientific or mathematical details, but rather a broad range of persons familiar with both the diversity and unity of the natural world; aware of the interdependence of math, science, and technology; capable of thinking in a scientific way; knowledgeable about key concepts and principles of science; aware of the strengths and limits of science, math, and technology as human enterprises; and able to use scientific knowledge and ways of thinking for social and individual purposes.

We believe that skills of quantitative and scientific literacy are essential for all graduates of the Minnesota State Universities and that these skills can and must be clearly demonstrated and objectively assessed.

6. Readiness for Work and Career

Each candidate for graduation will demonstrate readiness for the workplace by completing a supervised field experience.

The Commission believes that in preparing their students for life, the universities must prepare them for work and career. Students build a strong knowledge base in their college courses, but in these same courses may develop few skills to apply this knowledge in a work setting.

The Minnesota State University System has a long history of incorporating field study into the curriculum for students of teacher education, nursing, and social work. The Commission feels that the logic of this part of the curriculum should be extended to the other disciplines offered by the universities.

The opportunities presented by a field experience in the work place are numerous. Most importantly, the student is immersed in an environment where he/she can gain experience in the active application of knowledge acquired in his/her academic career, surrounded by people putting to work these theories, values, and attitudes. Moreover, the student can see the powerful dynamics of change in action, giving concrete context to the lessons of the liberal arts. The workplace, whether it be an elementary education classroom, a health care facility, or a corporate headquarters, exists for the student as a different kind of learning community—a community where active learning is the norm. Conversely, supervisors of such field experiences should provide full opportunity for the student to reflect on the nature of work and on the "fit" between the student's aspirations and values and his/her employment choice.

Students will demonstrate readiness for work and career by completing a supervised field experience.

SECTION VI

7. Responsible Citizenship in a Democracy

Each candidate for graduation will demonstrate successful completion of a community service, citizen participation, or social action project. Each graduate should have developed as well the ability to articulate the standards of ethical behavior he/she will expect of himself/herself and of others in both his/her professional and personal life.

Students will demonstrate successful completion of a community service, citizen participation, or social action project and articulate the standards of ethical behavior.

The Commission believes that the Minnesota State Universities must have the same high standards for a student's civic involvement and personal conduct that it has for the student's academic life. John Kennedy told us that "democracy is a difficult kind of government. It requires the highest qualities of self-discipline, restraint, a willingness to make commitments and sacrifices for the general interest, and also it requires knowledge." Students' college experiences should help them develop these qualities, discover their dependence on others and the interdependence of the larger community.

Few would dispute that the spirit of community has diminished in recent years. We find in our society growing racial and ethnic tensions, an increase in violent crimes, and too frequent examples of unethical practices in business and government. Painfully low voter participation such as we saw in our most recent primary election threatens our democracy itself.

For over two centuries, Americans have affirmed their rights and responsibilities as citizens by becoming involved in the future of their country. But it appears that we can no longer assume that students will develop this sense of responsibility "along the way"—that it is a natural outcome of the educational process. We must instead encourage student development in these areas and support learning beyond the classroom. And we must model the behavior we seek to develop. As Charles Glassick told us, "We teach people what they will be from our intellectual work. We teach them who they will be by the way we behave in their presence and expect them to behave." As President Darrell Krueger put it in his Inaugural Address, "The environment that would deliver such an education should be governed by the principles that it teaches. It should be collegial, fair, and open to free discussion, an environment where mutual respect is practiced and disagreement about issues takes place without respect for the individual being lost."

Implications for Other Education Systems in Minnesota

Were the Minnesota State University Board to adopt these recommendations in their entirety, there would be significant impact on the other education systems in Minnesota. Changes in student preparation standards for state universities, when coupled with recent revisions in admissions policy at the University of Minnesota, will almost inevitably necessitate changes in the curriculum of Minnesota's public schools.

High schools will need to identify these preparation standards early in a student's secondary program and provide the counseling and direction necessary. Moreover, school districts will need to be able to ensure students and parents that an appropriate curriculum is available to university-bound students in that district or to point out alternative strategies to meet admission expectations. Since the advent in Minnesota of the Post-Secondary Enrollment Options Act, high schools and colleges have learned to work more closely together, attempting to create a "seamless fabric" between high school and college. The changes we recommend would require new levels of partnership and collaboration. We believe that building these new bridges between our elementary and secondary schools and the State's colleges and universities could be among the most significant strategies leading to higher quality at the post-secondary level.

A related implication of our recommendations could well be an increased number of students beginning their collegiate career at community and technical colleges. If the state universities are to concentrate their resources on meeting the quality indicators we have recommended, it may be inappropriate for them to offer remedial education, either formally or by reducing the level of content in regular college classes, except in unique circumstances. Minnesota supports more than fifty community and technical colleges located strategically around the state. Many students might be better served by beginning their post-secondary education at these highly accessible institutions. If state universities are to maintain the kind of academic standards we envision, it may well be that they should establish cooperative programs with these institutions, with responsibility for assuring readiness for rigorous university work assigned to community and technical colleges.

These changes would also affect the University of Minnesota, particularly with regards to its mission of providing advanced graduate and professional training. If indicators like ours are adopted by the Minnesota State University System, state university graduates will be far better prepared for graduate school and will increase in turn the quality of the University of Minnesota's graduate programs. We believe that the University of Minnesota could be an effective partner with the Minnesota State University System by creating linkages that would act as incentives to state university students to achieve admission to competitive graduate and professional programs at the University of Minnesota.

Finally, we believe that if increased quality is to be achieved at the state universities, more of the "community" called for by faculty and students must be established. We believe the state universities must be, first and foremost, intellectual communities, places where education is the common ground on which individuals interact. The universities should also build on the traditions of institutional self-governance and leadership development. And they should become more caring communities where differences are valued, where each member is supported and where service is encouraged.

Were the Minnesota State University Board to adopt these recommendations in their entirety, there would be significant impact on the other education systems in Minnesota.

SECTION VII

As a practical matter, students must have time available to contribute to the academic community in these ways. Students need extensive interaction with faculty members, need to engage in undergraduate research projects, need to work in groups and teams, need to study abroad, and need to be a part of volunteer projects in their communities. Each of these important activities requires **time**.

Our plan carries with it, therefore, the need for adequate student assistance and reasonable costs so that financial need is not a distraction and a deterrent from full involvement. When students must spend an excessive amount of time earning wages in service jobs in order to pay for their education and limit their debt, there is little time remaining to engage in community. An infusion of scholarship support coupled with reasonable tuition is required so that cost and community are not in conflict.

The Next Steps

The Commission believes strongly that this report should be regarded not as a conclusion to a process but merely the beginning. Our members look forward to the response of the Minnesota State University Board to our work and to the plan of action taken to implement it.

That plan of action, in our view, should reflect the different aspirations of each of the state universities, the regions of the State they serve, and their unique strengths. We urge as well that planning to meet the challenges we have issued proceed upwards from the department and program level, within guidelines established by the Board. As President Margaret Preska of Mankato State University described their efforts to us, "Q-7 at Mankato State is about creating a process to support the realization of quality initiatives which emerge from individual and group contexts." We agree. What should unify this work across the System is an insistent demand for increased quality in everything the universities and their leadership do.

We hope that this report stimulates vigorous debate and discussion within the universities, at the Higher Education Coordinating Board, in the Governor's office, and in the legislature. There are some fundamental, structural questions regarding the funding of higher education which we believe must be addressed. We find no evidence, for example, that a state funding formula which is driven solely by enrollment promotes quality. Indeed, it may have exactly the opposite effect. It is time to face this difficult policy issue, as it is time to re-think how resources are spread over the several higher education systems and their missions. We believe that these universities have done well by the people of Minnesota and that it time for Minnesotans to recognize and respond to the genuine needs within the state universities for both increased support and better targeted support.

The members of the Commission are pledged to carry the debate to the organizations we represent. We hope that the people of Minnesota themselves enter into the discussion, that they recognize what is at stake here and the urgency of the situation. We hope that the public will hold the Minnesota State University Board accountable for achieving the levels of quality we have urged upon them and that the public—students, parents, employers and more—will continue to ask challenging questions of the state universities, testing them against these quality indicators.

In its editorial of December 18, 1989, the *Star Tribune* called Q-7 "a bold plan for improving state universities" but predicted that "resistance [would] come from within the system, from the public and from lawmakers." They may have been correct. Yet we see the goals here so important to Minnesota's future, the consequences of failing so serious, that we ask all Minnesotan to dedicate themselves to achieving ever enhanced quality in our state universities. "It's a funny thing about life," said the British novelist Somerset Maugham. "If you refuse to accept anything but the very best you will very often get it." It is a lesson Minnesotans should heed.

**The Commission
believes strongly
that this report
should be regarded
not as a conclusion
to a process but
merely the
beginning.**

Members

Blue Ribbon Commission on Access and Quality

Bernard L. Brommer, Co-Chair, St. Paul
Secretary/Treasurer, AFL/CIO

Tom Triplett, Co-Chair, Minneapolis
Executive Director
Minnesota Business Partnership, Inc.

Kathleen Annette, Cass Lake
Physician and Director of Indian
Health Services

Linda Rios Brook, Minneapolis
President and General Manager
KARE TV

Tom Caron, Marshall
Director of Marketing
Schwan's Sales Enterprises

Cy Carpenter, Bloomington
Past President
National Farmers Union

Richard W. Fitzsimmons, Moorhead
Executive Director
Red River Valley Sugar Beet Growers

Robert Fleming, Rochester
Chairman
Dept. of Administration, Mayo Clinic

Ron James, Minneapolis
Chief Executive Officer
US WEST Communications

Kathryn L. Jensen, Grand Rapids
Vice President
Blandin Foundation

Curt Johnson, Minneapolis
Executive Director
Citizens League

Connie Levi, Minneapolis
President
Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce

Willard H. McGuire, No. St. Paul
Past President
National Education Association

Veda F. Ponikvar, Chisholm
Publisher and Editor
Tribune Press/Free Press

Bill Roberts, Eden Prairie
Vice President, Public Affairs
National Computer Systems

Carol Ann White, Minneapolis
Minority Advocate
City of Minneapolis

Tim Wierzbicki, Minneapolis
Minnesota Executive Director
International Alliance for
Sustainable Agriculture

Blue Ribbon Commission Resource Team

Dr. Michael Connaughton, St. Cloud State University
Dean of Fine Arts and Humanities

Dr. Susan Rickey Hatfield, Winona State University
Associate Professor of Communications and Theatre Arts

Dr. Julius Harrington, Moorhead State University
Associate Professor, Social Work and Multicultural Studies

Dr. David Hendel, Mankato State University
Director, Career Development and Placement

Mr. Daniel Kellogg, St. Cloud State University
Student Member

Dr. Bea Knodel, Bemidji State University
Acting Dean, Humanities and Fine Arts

Dr. Michael Kopp, Southwest State University
Assistant Vice President for Freshman College Development

Dr. Thomas O'Connell, Metropolitan State University
Assistant Professor and Coordinator, Labor Studies

The library of reading materials is available in the chancellor's office.