

# Advancing the Public Good

A plan for ensuring the  
University of Minnesota's leadership in  
education, research, and public service  
in the 21st century

GOAL: To become one of the top three public research universities in the world within the next decade. ➤



# Higher education is at a crossroads. So is the University of Minnesota. ➤

**We face an array of profound challenges that compel us to renew and transform this great university:**

- **Demographics are changing:** Minnesota's traditional college-age population will begin to decline within the next five years.
- **Competition is increasing:** National and international competition for talented students, faculty, and staff is growing stronger.
- **Funding resources are tightening:** Minnesota ranks 29th in the nation when it comes to financial support for higher education from state funding and local taxes; 25 years ago it was in 6th place.
- **Expectations are different:** American society increasingly views higher education as a private benefit rather than a public good, while expecting research universities to deliver breakthrough solutions in health and science.
- **The old ways of doing business are fading:** Research dollars are shifting to multidisciplinary, multi-institutional grants and contracts.

These challenges give us an unprecedented chance to bring the University to a new level of distinction. With support and encouragement from faculty, staff, students, alumni, and members of the community, we have decided to meet these challenges by setting a bold direction for the University:

We will become *one of the top three public research universities in the world* within the next decade.

**“To cling to the past or even linger in the present would impair seriously the University’s ability to continue to serve our students, the state of Minnesota, our nation, and the world with distinction...”**

— *E. Thomas Sullivan, senior vice president for academic affairs and provost*

**“This is the right goal. A great institution is never satisfied with the status quo.”**

— *Regent Emeritus Maureen Reed*

# VISION: To improve the human condition through the advancement of knowledge. >

In 1991, the state of Minnesota named the University as the “the primary state supported academic agency for research and extension services” (Statute 135A.052).

With that unique designation comes a unique responsibility that honors our land-grant mission to serve the people of Minnesota.

When we say we will become “one of the top three public research universities in the world within the next decade,” we are talking about pathbreaking research spanning the sciences, social sciences, the arts, humanities, and the professions. If we fail to achieve excellence in those areas, we fail to contribute to the public good.

In this highly competitive world, which needs answers to increasingly complex problems, the University will be able to use its world-class status to improve Minnesota’s quality of life in a host of areas.

## WE HAVE AN EXCELLENT TRACK RECORD:

- **1922**—The University’s work establishes the first rural electrical line in the country, setting a pattern for improving rural living conditions.
- **1940s**—Mechanical engineering professor James Ryan develops the black box flight recorder. By the 1950s, flight recorders are required on all American aircraft.

- **1966**—University surgeons perform the world’s first successful pancreas transplant.
- **1970**—The University develops ERA wheat, a highly successful variety that curbs farmers’ losses and returns \$226 million to the Minnesota economy during the next decade.
- **1987**—Robert Vince, professor of medicinal chemistry, develops a series of compounds that lead to the anti-AIDS drug Zidovudine.
- **1993**—Functional MRI, an imaging technique that shows the brain in action, is developed by the University’s Center for Magnetic Resonance Research.
- **2000**—The world’s first stem cell institute is established at the University.

The University receives more than 98 percent of all sponsored research dollars coming to higher education institutions in Minnesota. Our research makes lives better by improving health, prosperity, and well-being for Minnesotans—and for the world. As the University enhances its international reputation and capabilities, its education and research will continue to strengthen Minnesota’s economy and global competitiveness.

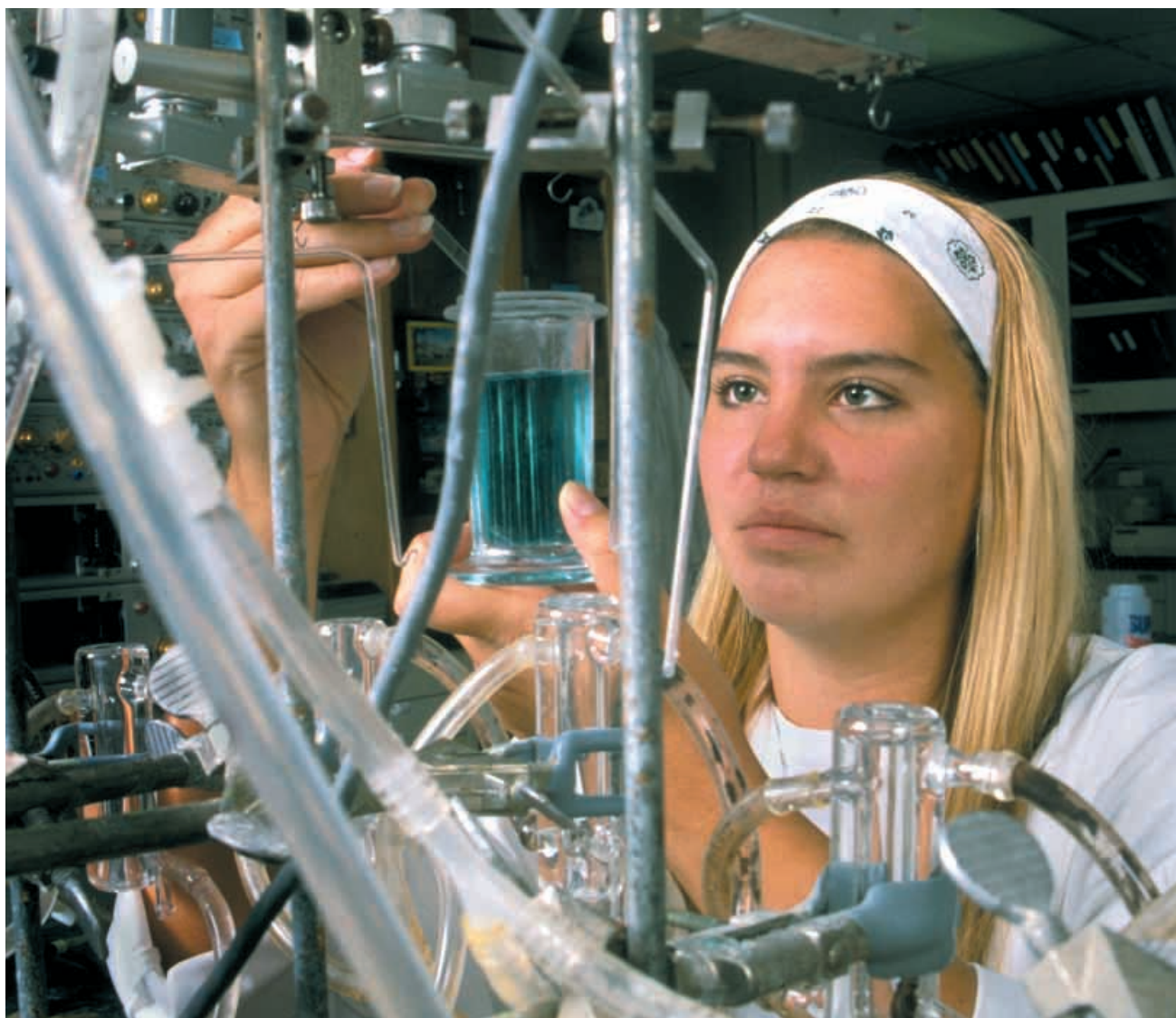


- Ron Phillips, Regents Professor and McKnight Presidential Chair in Genomics, and his students look at the DNA profile of oat plants. “To discover something no one has ever known in the history of the world is a thrill to behold, and to see it through the eyes of one of your students is a thrill unsurpassed,” says Phillips.

For three years in a row, the University has brought in more than \$500 million in sponsored research awards. ➤ U.S. Department of Commerce statistics show that every \$1 million spent on university-based research creates 39 jobs.

In 2005–06, we are on track to receive more than 20,000 applications for 5,300 undergraduate spaces in the Twin Cities, a 10 percent increase over last year's record number of applications. ✨

➤ A student fulfills the Duluth campus mission statement stressing “the intrinsic value of research.”



# To best serve the state of Minnesota, we must strive to excel at everything we do. >

The University is being judged by world-class standards—and if we don't make changes now, we will slip down the ranks of public research universities. To move forward will require difficult choices, new investments, inspirational leadership at all levels and, most importantly, the support and efforts of members of the University community and all Minnesotans.

To excel, we must:

- Recruit and educate talented and qualified students from diverse backgrounds;
- Recruit and retain energetic and creative world-class faculty and staff;
- Promote an organizational culture that is committed to excellence and responsive to change;
- Enhance and effectively use resources and infrastructure;
- Communicate clearly and credibly with all our constituencies and practice public engagement responsive to the common good.

We cannot, as a university, responsibly contribute to the public good in Minnesota and on the world stage if what we do is mediocre or better done by others. We must evaluate programs and services to establish priorities for the future. To make these assessments, we will apply seven criteria:

- Centrality to mission
- Quality, productivity, and impact
- Uniqueness and comparative advantage
- Enhancement of academic synergies
- Demand and resources
- Efficiency and effectiveness
- Development and leveraging of resources

**Our foremost priority must be to advance academic quality and to do so during constrained financial times.**

# Access to education gains value if it is access to an excellent university. ➤

**Competition for talented undergraduate, graduate, and professional students is increasingly intense. The University must provide its students with national- and international-quality teaching and research opportunities.**

As part of our new goal, we do not plan to sacrifice access to the University, and we have no intention of reducing the size of our undergraduate or graduate enrollment.

The cost of higher education can have an impact on access, but we are determined not to let that happen. We are committed to keeping the doors open to students from all walks of life with scholarships and other financial support:

■ **The president's Promise for Tomorrow Scholarship drive** aims to raise \$150 million in private donations, whose earning will be matched by the University for the benefit of students.

■ **The new Founders Opportunity Scholarship** will complement the existing \$12 million Partnership Grant program to make up the gap in funding between aid packages and tuition and fees. When fully phased in, the two programs will serve approximately 8,000 students University-wide.

■ **A large share of royalties** from research discoveries is spent on graduate students through the 21st Century Endowment Fund.

We also pledge, as part of our plan, to work with other higher education systems to ensure a good experience for their students, an experience that may prepare them to transfer in two years to the University—equipped to learn successfully and graduate in a timely fashion.

## **INVESTING IN THE BEST**

Diverse, engaged, top-quality faculty and staff are the most important assets the University has in times of change. To recruit and retain them requires salaries, benefits, classrooms, laboratories, and creative challenges that attract excellent researchers and educators.

About half of the University faculty is likely to retire within the next decade. A wise investment in new faculty is central to the University serving its mission and achieving world-class status.

Excellence attracts excellence. This applies to students, to faculty, and to staff. Without excellence at the University, many of the best and brightest will leave the state. To ensure future prosperity for Minnesota, the University must remain a magnet for talent.





➤ The University pledges to maintain accessibility and prepare students to be engaged global citizens and lifelong learners.

“The Founders Opportunity Scholarship is a commitment to keep the doors to this university and the unique education it offers open to talented students from all walks of life ... We are renewing our commitment to access that is part of our land-grant heritage.”

— President Robert Bruininks

This plan is a system-wide call to action. Recent poll data indicates that some Minnesota residents fail to understand all the University does—and equally important—how well it does it. I challenge each of you to help move a very good University into the ranks of greatness. 🚀

Try to think of ways, large and small, to better communicate what we do and how well we do it. By our words and actions, we will inspire each other. We simply cannot move to the next level of excellence without bold and inspirational leadership.

On all our campuses, we will continue to be responsive to the needs of our state and the country while also recognizing our responsibilities to the world and our commitment to world-class standards. We do not plan to back away from our three-fold public mandate of research, teaching, and outreach, and we expect the state to maintain its commitment to its research university.

Clearly we have many challenges as we reposition and reinvent the University for the 21st century. If we all accept this call to action, we will become one of the top three public universities in the world and we will improve the quality of life for all Minnesotans.

The goal we've set for ourselves applies an equivalent standard of excellence to all our campuses, each of which has its unique mission and strong signature and reputation.

- **Crookston** seeks to become northwestern Minnesota's preferred provider of high-value, polytechnic undergraduate education.
- **Duluth** focuses on the core liberal arts and sciences, maintaining a strong commitment to professional programs in the sciences and engineering, the arts, business, education, and medicine.
- **Morris** provides an undergraduate liberal education of uncompromising rigor; its mission is to become the best public liberal arts college in America.
- **Rochester** is becoming a distinctive University branch known for programming in health sciences and technology.

“This is a commitment to excellence worthy  
of our heritage, worthy of our future.”

— President Robert Bruininks



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