

**University of Minnesota**  
**Executive Summary: President's Recommendations for Strategic Positioning**  
**May 6, 2005**

**Introduction**

We are in a transformative era for higher education. We are serving a state undergoing demographic, economic, and social changes, and we are increasingly competing in a global arena for resources and talented faculty and students. If the University of Minnesota does not change, too, it risks falling behind and losing quality—while other institutions in other states reap the rewards of innovation and excellence. The University must strengthen its role as the state's only major research university, as its land grant institution, and as its magnet for students, faculty, professionals, entrepreneurs, and civic and artistic leaders.

In the context of those challenges, the University must take what we do well and make it even better. We must align our academic units to make the most of resources, reduce expenses, create strong leadership, expand academic collaborations, and facilitate interdisciplinary connections. We must anticipate and seek national and international leadership in vital and emerging fields.

In July 2004, the University's Board of Regents established the overarching goal of maintaining and enhancing the University's world-class status as a research, education, and land grant institution. In March 2005, the regents unanimously endorsed the Strategic Positioning Report aimed at making the University one of the top three public research institutions in the world within a decade. This builds on a proud 154-year history of commitment to the highest quality education, research, and service to the people of Minnesota.

Consultation on the strategic positioning plan has been broad and extensive. As part of the process, we have encouraged, and continue to encourage, comments and suggestions from the entire University community. We formed academic and administrative task forces, and after they presented their recommendations to me in March, I engaged in broad consultation with relevant colleges, faculty, students, and employee groups and with policymakers, business and community leaders, and other stakeholders in the community at large.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations, being presented to the Board of Regents for action in June 2005, represent the next steps in the strategic positioning process.

The proposal reduces the total number of colleges on the Twin Cities campus by three and realigns their departments and programs into stronger collegiate wholes. The integrated colleges will offer students and faculty broader, interdisciplinary options for study and research; generate cost savings that can be reinvested in the academic enterprise; and create the potential for global leadership.

## **I. Academic recommendations for Regents action**

### **College of Human Ecology (CHE):**

- We will integrate CHE's **Department of Design, Housing, and Apparel** with the academic departments of the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture to create a new College of Design.
- We will integrate CHE's **Department of Family Social Science** and the **School of Social Work** with the academic units of the current College of Education and Human Development to create a new, expanded college dedicated to education, training, and human development across the lifespan.
- We will integrate CHE's **Department of Food Science and Nutrition** into a new, expanded College of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences, with strengthened relationships with Public Health and/or the Medical School.

### **College of Natural Resources (CNR):**

- We will integrate CNR with the academic units of the current College of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences to create a new, expanded college focused broadly on food systems, environmental science, policy, and renewable resources.

### **General College:**

- We will integrate the academic units of the current General College with the academic units of the current College of Education and Human Development, Department of Family Social Science, and the School of Social Work to create a new, expanded college dedicated to education, training, and human development across the lifespan.

All three colleges will cease to exist as independent collegiate structures on July 1, 2006.

## **II. Future academic actions**

### **Undergraduate enrichment, admission, and support**

- The University will continue to have high expectations for all students as it strengthens undergraduate retention and graduation rates and expands academic support, advisement, and career services.
- The University will work to cultivate a campus climate suitable for all students. It will intensify its efforts to recruit students of color, first-generation college students, students from low-income families, and immigrant students. It will expand scholarships and work with local two-year colleges to increase opportunities for University enrollment. It will establish the new Center for Transfer and International Admissions on the Twin Cities campus.

- The University will play a leadership role in preparing students throughout the state for postsecondary education, including establishing the Consortium for Postsecondary Success.
- The University will establish a Baccalaureate Writing Initiative to provide undergraduate writing instruction and support so every student can demonstrate an effective command of written English upon graduation.
- The University will design, plan, and implement a campus-wide honors program, bringing coherence to the honors student experience in all colleges.

#### **Faculty culture**

- The University must implement a broad range of new strategies to attract, retain, recognize, reward, and develop its faculty.

#### **Future design of the University**

- The University will consider a reconfiguration of the sciences and engineering to encourage collaboration in teaching and research among the College of Biological Sciences; the Institute of Technology; the new, expanded college focused broadly on food systems, environmental science, renewable resources, and policy; and the Medical School.
- The University will ensure that the College of Liberal Arts will become a premier international model for a more competitive liberal arts education.
- The University must reduce or consolidate low-enrollment graduate or professional programs.
- The University must examine opportunities to share or centralize administrative functions among colleges in order to save money.

#### **Forging an international university**

- The University must increase its prominence as an international university by expanding its international student services and learning abroad programs. By drawing on the interdisciplinary and international expertise of our faculty, we will develop a transnational scholarly network.

#### **Academic Health Center (AHC)**

- The University will make sure that it has the technology and the skills to handle the breakthroughs in knowledge expected in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- The University will examine its health professional school enrollment to make sure it meets future workforce needs.
- The University will make sure it is able to compete in the era of Big Science by speeding up interdisciplinary research and supporting inter-institutional research.
- The University will develop the clinical science enterprise of the AHC to support the health professional schools and the University's overall mission.

### **Coordinate campuses**

- Each coordinate campus will establish a financial and academic accountability framework under which it will operate and evaluate its annual progress—within its own context and consistent with its history and mission.

### **III. Administrative recommendations**

- The University will recognize its campuses, colleges, departments, and units as a single enterprise.
- The University will embrace and achieve a culture that is committed to excellence, service, and continuous improvement.
- The University will transform its “centralized vs. decentralized” administrative structure.
- The University will adopt best-practice management tools throughout the University.
- The University will focus administrative support on serving students, faculty, and academic units.
- The University will maximize opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to grow, develop, and contribute.
- The University will optimize the use of its physical, financial, and technological resources.

### **Closing**

The recommendations in this report are initial action steps—springboards for new ideas at all levels of our organizational structure. To be truly successful, the entire University community must actively engage in ongoing efforts to change and to think creatively about the future. Leaders at all levels need to take the time to reflect broadly on the mission and future of their units and encourage faculty and staff to do the same. Then they must put their ideas into action. To that end, if the Board of Regents approves these recommendations, task forces with broad representation will be appointed to plan and implement changes.