



A STRATEGIC PLAN

**The University of Minnesota Twin Cities  
Will be Preeminent in  
Solving the Grand Challenges  
of a Diverse and Changing World**

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
**Driven to Discover<sup>SM</sup>**



## The University of Minnesota Twin Cities Will be Preeminent in Solving the Grand Challenges of a Diverse and Changing World

*As a Vitaly Engaged 21st-Century  
Land-Grant Research University, We Will:*

### ■ Support Excellence and Reject Complacency

*Transformational vision:*

- We will **build on our strengths** to create an invigorated culture of ambition, challenge, exploration, and innovation

*Strategic action steps:*

- **Better align our time and money** with our strategic priorities
- Implement a **broad campus climate initiative** that simultaneously pursues diversity, accountability, and civility
- **Remove obstacles:** decrease administrative burdens, make a “stop doing” list, and streamline processes
- **Improve communication:** get better at expediting problem resolution by empowering troubleshooters on the ground, and obtain timely and useful information from graduates for curriculum development and advising

### ■ Leverage our Breadth and Depth to take on Grand Challenges in Research, Creative Work, and Curriculum

We will marshal the University of Minnesota’s research and creative capacity—our breadth and depth—to address grand challenges critical to our state, nation, and world

*Transformational vision:*

- We will create a more coherent and **coordinated cross-disciplinary approach** to advance grand-challenges research

*Strategic action steps:*

- **Jump-start institutional transformation:** elevate and broaden areas of interdisciplinary focus around grand challenges where we have robust work:
  - Sustainable, Healthy, Secure Food
  - Advancing Industry while Conserving the Environment and Addressing Climate Change
  - Building Vibrant Communities that Enhance Human Potential and Collective Well-Being in a Diverse and Changing Society
- Provide **bottom-up support** for emerging interdisciplinary (potential grand-challenge) problems
- Review policies to **recognize interdisciplinary efforts** in promotion-and-tenure and regular evaluation
- **Ensure resources are in place** to meet the research challenge goals

We will prepare U of M students to meet 21st-century challenges—new models for engaged, place-based education for tomorrow’s leaders

*Transformational vision:*

- We will **evolve Liberal Education Requirements** to integrate grand challenges (pilot/phased approach)

*Strategic action steps:*

- Develop **grand-challenges curriculum** as well as co-curricular education, research, and engagement opportunities
- Develop a **Grand Challenges Scholars Program**
- Develop more **University seminars** focused on grand-challenge topics
- Develop **undergraduate minors** focused on grand-challenge topics

## ■ Aggressively Recruit, Retain, and Promote Field-Shaping Researchers and Teachers

*Transformational vision:*

- We will create a “**university of transformational opportunity**” in which there is flexibility as well as responsibility and accountability

*Strategic action steps:*

- Invigorate the process for **recruiting the best** researchers and teachers
  - Establish **appropriate financial resources** for recruiting/hiring field-shaping teachers and researchers; permit strategic flexibility in negotiating hiring packages
  - Improve the **diversity** of faculty hires
  - Develop an aggressive approach to **partner hires**
  - Reinvigorate the **faculty campus interview** process
- Improve the University environment and culture so there is **support for transformational scholarship**
  - Commit to program of **excellence for department heads**

Establish appropriate **financial incentives** to retain field-shaping teachers and researchers

Reconsider **internal University faculty awards** and endowed chairs to be more strategic

Aggressively seek **external faculty awards**

Recruit, retain, advise, and mentor **excellent graduate students** and postdoctoral students

Ensure that the University is known as *the* place for doing **interdisciplinary research and teaching**

Conduct regular **reviews of academic initiatives/centers**

Provide incentives/**support for faculty who direct** major multi-investigator, multi-disciplinary research programs

Encourage **innovations in teaching** and recognize and reward innovators

Significantly reduce work activities that do not directly support teaching, research, and outreach

Enhance **faculty retirement incentives**

## ■ Build a Culture of Reciprocal Engagement that Capitalizes on our Unique Location

*Transformational vision:*

- We will build a University **culture of engagement** that strongly supports community-engaged scholarship and dynamic campus-community partnerships

*Strategic action steps:*

- Develop criteria for evaluating engaged scholarship and other campus-community collaborations; **include engagement** in reviews of faculty members’ research and teaching (as distinct from/in addition to outreach and service); develop guidelines for including engagement in promotion-and-tenure statements
- Enhance **training in reciprocal engagement** for faculty, students, and staff; start a summer institute
- Strengthen **reciprocal practices** and strategic focus in current engagement with community partners
- **Convene** community, government, and corporate partners around grand-challenge priorities
- Make engagement opportunities more visible; create “**front doors**” for **community partners** and stakeholders

## ■ Advancing Our Vision:

### Implementation—Next Steps

*To implement our goals, we will:*

- Continue robust conversations with the campus community, the Regents, and external stakeholders about how to realize our shared vision for excellence and impact
- Establish a Strategic Planning Continuity Team (to include representatives of the Research and Curriculum teams) to advise the president and provost on implementation priorities and steps
- Charge a Budget Resource Group with identifying optimal funding strategies
- Incorporate the plan into ongoing academic planning by the provost to:
  - Develop meaningful indicators for excellence in goal areas
  - Integrate into compact planning starting fall 2014
  - Connect the Twin Cities campus plan with plans of academic and administrative units
  - Advance action plans to achieve goals derived from the compact planning
  - Share successes and report outcomes