

**University of Minnesota  
Board of Regents  
Educational Planning and Policy Committee  
June 13, 2002**

*Public Engagement/Civic Engagement/ Outreach*

**Background and Context**

In the fall of 2001, the Executive Vice President and Provost appointed two groups to provide recommendations for addressing key issues in public/civic engagement and outreach. Each task force/committee worked independently, but there was some overlap of membership to ensure coordination of effort. These groups were the Administrative Advisory Committee on Public Engagement/Outreach and the Civic Engagement Task Force. At the same time these two groups were meeting, the Board of Regents Ad Hoc Committee on Outreach was also meeting to address issues associated with the University of Minnesota Extension Service and institutional outreach policies. Numerous common themes and recommendations emerged from the final reports of the three groups and are highlighted in this report.

During the past three years, public engagement and outreach programs, activities, and policies have been the focus of much University and national discussion and activity. On campus, for example, the University of Minnesota Extension Service and the College of Continuing Education, two major outreach units, undertook major restructuring. The Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Council, the Non-Profit Task Force, and the Vital Aging Steering Committee, and the University of Promise actively engaged faculty, staff, and community on issues of critical importance. The Outstanding Community Service Award Program, a University wide program coordinated by the Executive Vice President and Provost, annually recognizes and rewards the outstanding engagement work of faculty and staff and their community partner organization.

The University of Minnesota has been recognized as a national leader in the engaged university movement because of its uniquely comprehensive approach and its emphasis on the intellectual, cultural, political and structural dimensions of engagement. University faculty leaders, as well as administrators, have been involved in discussions and programs at the University of Maryland, Cornell, Brandeis, the University of Missouri, and the American Association of Higher Education. In addition, delegations from Tufts, Auburn, Cornell, and Penn State have visited this year to review and support the University's public engagement efforts

## **Summary and Alignment of Common Themes and Recommendations**

The following themes and recommendations grew out of the reports of the various engagement groups this year.

### ***TERMINOLOGY: What Is It?***

Each report uses “engagement” or “engaged university” to replace the terms outreach and public service. The word “engagement” emphasizes the importance of two-way communication. Engagement includes the University efforts to “reach out” as well as “in-reach” from the public, citizenry, and community. To flesh out this broad agreement, an operational definition is necessary.

### ***SCOPE: How Big Is It?***

The magnitude of engagement at the University is immense. Engagement is not compartmentalized as a separate activity distinct from other core missions of the institution; it is integral to the teaching and research missions and is the critical and key focus of several of our colleges. The University of Minnesota will continue to be a leader on the regional and national scenes in its comprehensive approach to an Engaged University.

### ***VALUE: Why Do We Do It?***

Engagement directly benefits both the University and external groups and communities with which the University is connected.

#### *Benefits to the University*

- Engagement enhances the University's core missions by promoting public scholarship and civic learning as engaged forms of research and teaching.
- Engagement involves the University in positive relationships with members of the public, which can contribute to more favorable attitudes toward the University and increased public support.
  - Research builds on teaching and engagement.
  - Teaching is based on research and engagement.
  - Engagement depends on research and teaching.

#### *Benefits to Communities*

- Engagement connects the University to organizations and communities by promoting common purposes and addressing real needs.
- Engagement creates public spaces in which citizens and communities have a voice at the University and where University professionals and citizens can wrestle with pressing, sometimes controversial issues. As engagement with

citizenry increases, the University's capacity to address important societal issues will increase.

***IMPLEMENTATION: Who Does It?***

- **Collegiate/Campus Focus**  
Colleges, campuses, and units need their own customized strategies for integrating engagement into their goals. The compact process may help address and promote this customization and integration. Every discipline has a public dimension.
- **Community Partnerships**  
Every college and campus has partnerships. Identifying “best practices” distinctive to different collegiate units is necessary to assess quality, utility, and effectiveness. A coordinating council could help serve as a clearinghouse to address partnership issues and share these best practices.

***ASSESSMENT: How well do we do it?***

- **Assessment, Evaluation, and Indicators**  
All the reports argue for engagement to be among the performance indicators of institutional accountability. If the proper indicators are identified and consistently heeded, the University will become an increasingly more effective institution. Indicators should be identified that can help evaluate engagement work, and measures should be developed to assess how the University of Minnesota will be different in five years as a result of engagement.
- **Expenditures, Investment, and Budget**  
The University should analyze the resources devoted to engagement in the practice of teaching and research, as well as in explicit engagement activities. Such an analysis might well identify an unexpectedly large current institutional investment in engagement.
- **Incentives and Rewards**  
Engaged activities, programs, and scholarly work should be considered in discipline-appropriate ways in recruitment, merit, promotion, and tenure decisions. Such practices are already in place on a piecemeal basis in some units.

***IMPROVEMENT: How can we improve what we are doing?***

- **Communication**  
The reports agreed that the University should be proactive in communicating with internal and external audiences about engagement. The extent of the University's engagement efforts is not widely understood. Results, as well as activities, should be featured.
- **Distributed Learning/Use of Communication Technologies/Portal**  
Expanding the community of learners and enhancing access to the University's intellectual assets through distributed learning and the University's Portal are noted as key strategies for both outreach and in-reach.
- **Leadership**  
**Senior Administrator(s) Portfolio**  
Each report recommends that engagement be part of (but not the entire) portfolio of one or more senior administrator, who would advocate for it among University priorities and provide coordination of activities.
- **Coordinating Council**  
A Coordinating Council should be created to serve as a key place to prioritize and implement the recommendations presented in these reports. This Council would initiate, facilitate, coordinate, and publicize engagement work. Council membership would include faculty, staff, administration, community representatives, and students. The Executive Vice President and Provost would appoint the members, in consultation with appropriate constituencies, and would identify a chair.

## **Discussion**

- How can the University better align its engagement priorities with its other analysis and reporting systems such as University Plan, Performance and Accountability Report, the compact process, and the faculty performance review process?
- How can the University better communicate and be more visible about engagement, both internally and externally?
- How can the civic engagement aspects of traditional scholarship be better recognized?
- How can civic learning opportunities be supported and expanded at the department and college level?
- How can assessment of public engagement be a continuing scholarly focus?
- What evidence can be developed of the unrecognized economic value of engagement?
- How can the University join with other research universities to develop a critical mass, which helps shape the disciplinary discussions and agenda on scholarship and professional activities regarding engagement?
- How should the University more clearly acknowledge and communicate public engagement as an institutional priority?
- What measures should the University adopt to further strengthen public engagement in appropriate ways across the institution?
- How should the University include public engagement in its regular assessments of institutional performance?
- How can engagement be "captured" as an integrated function with research and teaching?

**Appendix A**  
**Administrative Advisory Committee on Public Engagement/Outreach**  
**Executive Summary of Recommendations 05.13.02**

This document is based on the following core principals: Engagement is part of the core mission of the University of Minnesota that enhances teaching and research and/or serves the public good. Engagement provides good will. Because there is ever increasing accountability, there is a compelling reason to better define public engagement/outreach in order to determine the best means of financing public engagement. The University needs to determine how these expenses are covered, the source of revenue, and the kind of revenue including sponsored, non-sponsored funds and gifts.

**Recommendation: Scope**

The University of Minnesota might use the following definition for public engagement/outreach: An engaged university strengthens and transforms community and economy; applies knowledge to address key social issues in teaching and research; informs its discovery agenda through teaching and outreach, and values the open marketplace of ideas.

**Recommendation: Value**

The people of Minnesota should value public engagement/outreach at the University of Minnesota for the following reasons: The University provides access to new knowledge; speaks with a trusted voice; provides relevant research and teaching; the University's learning environment is enhanced to promote interaction between learners and teachers; and it uses the tools of engagement to foster the public good.

**Recommendations: Priorities/Communication**

**Recommendation 1**

The University should be proactive in communicating with the public regarding outreach. Powerful messages can be framed for the public focusing on the results of outreach rather than the activity of outreach, and emphasizing the powerful synergy between teaching, research, and outreach. Outreach results that are transforming in their impact often take years to come to fruition, and the public needs to be aware of the process and progress being made.

**Recommendation 2**

In its external communication, the University should focus on relationships between collegiate units and their primary constituents as the crucible in which the most meaningful outreach with the most significant public benefit is forged, recognizing also that interdisciplinary relationships often contribute to the results they achieve and the messages they can convey.

### **Recommendation 3**

Because the results of outreach efforts may take years to come to fruition, collegiate units should be evaluated on their ability to establish and manage mutually productive relationships with their primary constituents, and their success in achieving an appropriate level of funding for their outreach, which is a reflection of its value.

### **Recommendation 4**

Recognizing the public's perception that the University is a personal and constituent resource for information, the University should manage expectations about its capacity to provide responses to every constituent.

### **Recommendations: Cost**

The University should define the parameters and determine the expenditures of public engagement using a set of tools made available to colleges, departments, and campuses.

### **Recommendation 1**

Define parameters of public engagement/outreach in order to be clear when asked for the costs and return on investment.

### **Recommendation 2**

Determine the expenditures of public engagement using a set of tools made available to colleges/departments/campuses and following a common template.

Expenditures analysis should be done over a multiple year period establishing a track record for the college, unit, or campus.

Tools may include an external review using standard cost models and an internal Internet template to determine faculty, civil service, and other indirect costs.

Descriptive statistics of public engagement /outreach should be included to provide a narrative of the kinds of engagement that exists.

### **Recommendation 3**

Create guidelines for how much of public engagement/outreach should be covered to sustain existing good will and mission, finding new funding methods, or be eliminated. If engagement is necessary for teaching and research in a particular college, then resources can be allocated accordingly.

There is a need to prioritize what is paid for by fees, grants, sponsored and non-sponsored funds, tuition revenues and where costs can be shifted to make the best and most appropriate use of available resources.

### **Recommendation: Leadership**

Means to coordinate and provide central leadership for public engagement: 1.) Place Public Engagement in the portfolio of one or several people in central administration, 2.) Have each college/coordinate campus appoint a liaison for public engagement, 3.) Establish a Coordinating Council with a chair who reports to the EVPP, 4.) Coordinate with other University-wide efforts with University Relations, alumni, and foundations.

## **Appendix B- Civic Engagement Task Force Report-Appendix B Executive Summary May 3, 2002**

At a time of diminished public support and novel intellectual and practical challenges, the Engaged University holds the promise for a constructive new era in higher education, in which civic responsibilities and public contributions become central institutional priorities affecting research and scholarship, teaching and learning, outreach and partnership. But institutionalizing an Engaged University is a complex process, with four parallel and inter-related dimensions: intellectual, structural, cultural, and political. The effectiveness of an Engaged University depends on focused efforts across all four dimensions. Task Force accomplishments during the past two years indicate the potential benefits that would result from sustaining civic initiatives on a permanent basis. This report and its recommendations should be considered in conjunction with the Report of the Administrative Advisory Committee on Public Engagement/Outreach. Toward this end, the Task Force makes four principal recommendations:

### **I. Establish a Council on Public Engagement (COPE)**

COPE would serve as the linchpin for current and future civic initiatives and activities throughout the university. COPE would initiate, facilitate, connect, monitor, and publicize engaged programs and activities, including community partnerships, on all four campuses. COPE would provide leadership and become the catalyst for embedding public engagement as an institutional priority affecting research and teaching together with connections to the community. Our other recommendations would also be facilitated through the activities of COPE.

### **II. Expand Community Partnerships**

An Engaged University works in partnership with communities, industries, and organizations to address real issues in society. Moreover, the best of these partnerships directly affect faculty research and teaching, so the university has a serious stake in their success on a number of grounds. But the development of successful community partnerships requires ongoing attention. Issues arise with regard to legal responsibilities, the complexities of diversity, and an increasing emphasis on accountability. COPE would provide a useful mechanism for addressing these issues.

### **III. Enhance Institutional Incentives**

A critical requirement for institutionalizing civic engagement is to encourage engaged professional work through the structure of incentives and rewards. Some practical steps to encourage public engagement through the incentive system are already in place in particular units. To introduce such measures more generally throughout the university would require broad agreement and active support among both faculty and administrators, which would not easily be achieved. Leadership in this effort could be assumed by COPE.

#### **IV. Develop Necessary Assessment and Evaluation**

To develop appropriate measures for assessing the impact of public engagement, and for use as indicators in regular reviews of institutional performance, is necessary in order to evaluate carefully the results of civic initiatives. Proposed quantitative measures do not capture the full potential consequences of deepened public engagement, and to devise additional measures for a more comprehensive evaluation would be an important task for COPE in collaboration with committees of faculty governance.

We believe these four recommendations are especially important to further embed civic engagement as an institutional priority. The need for a central body to take leadership in this area is critical. The Council we are recommending would assure the continuation and greater effectiveness of the promising programs that have been launched during the past few years.

## **Appendix C-Regents Ad Hoc Committee on Outreach Summary of Recommendations May 21, 2002**

The Ad Hoc Committee on Outreach was appointed by the Board of Regents in fall 2001 to discuss recommendations related to the broad policy question, “What should the University’s outreach mission be in the twenty-first century?” The Committee’s work plan included the following strategic questions:

- What are the public’s expectations for outreach?
- What are the various options regarding changes in outreach?
- From the standpoint of the University’s mission, what are the pro/cons of pursuing these different outreach options?
- What are the most important outreach activities of the University?
- Which outreach activities are perceived as the most valuable by key stakeholders?
- Which outreach activities align most closely with the University’s academic and educational priorities?
- What should the University’s outreach activities be in the next two decade(s)?
- How will the various activities be funded in the future?

At the request of President Yudof, the Committee initially focused on the Extension Service, which had undertaken a major redevelopment process and was preparing a report to the legislature.

The committee met on November 29, 2001; December 12, 2001; February 6, 2002, and May 8, 2002. It invited presentations on:

- The Extension Service plan for change, and legislative report, by Dean Charles Casey;
- The scope of the University’s outreach activities by Associate Vice President Mary Heltsley;
- New directions in technology to support outreach by Associate Vice President Robert Kvavik, Director Billie Wahlstrom, and Assistant Director Mark McCahill;
- The Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships by Associate Dean Steven Daley Laursen and Mr. Dean Harrington, member of the Southeast Regional Partnership Board); and,
- The strategic context for and future directions of outreach by Vice President Charles Muscoplat.

Through these meetings, presentations, and background reading, the Committee learned of a number of related, important activities that the University had undertaken regarding outreach, including the Civic Engagement Task Force and the Administrative Advisory Committee on Public Engagement/Outreach. The committee acknowledged that these activities, and the Extension Service’s *Plan for Change*, were delving into the same strategic questions posed in its work plan. Therefore, the Committee decided that it

would be more useful to allow the administrative work to go forward, while it narrowed its broad charge. Summarized below are the committee's significant ideas, issues, and recommendations.

### **1. Extension Service.**

The Committee approved a resolution for Board action in December 2001. The resolution supported *Extension 2002-2005: A Plan for Change*. (A summary of issues is attached, below.)

**Recommendation:** The Committee recommends periodic progress reports to the Board of Regents on the plan and on Extension's progress in achieving financial stability. The Committee heard an initial progress report on May 8, 2002.

### **2. Outreach, more broadly.**

Reaffirm the importance of and commitment to outreach.

- The Kellogg Foundation has redefined the mission of land-grant universities to encompass learning, discovery, and engagement, rather than the traditional tripartite mission of teaching, research, and outreach.
- Outreach is complex and interwoven into the daily lives of many Minnesotans.
- Outreach is defined in many ways, including engagement with citizens and functions that reach out to the citizenry.

**Recommendation:** The University should define more clearly the outreach mission of the institution.

Emphasize the breadth and depth of outreach activities across all University of Minnesota colleges and campuses.

- The magnitude of outreach or engagement at the University of Minnesota is immense. University faculty, students, and staff engage in a wealth of activities each year.
- The extent of these efforts is not widely understood.
- Outreach is not compartmentalized; it is connected in important ways to teaching and research activities, and is critical to the survival of some colleges.
- Outreach is not just Extension; the Extension Service's work may be most widely recognized; it comprises approximately 10 to 15 percent of the University's outreach expenditures.

**Recommendation:** The University should emphasize that outreach benefits both the institution and citizens. It is a two-way street, as it benefits the state and also provides a venue for students to learn and faculty to teach.

Bring more focus to outreach by recognizing it and communicating about it.

- More should be done to support, communicate about, and promote the value of the University's outreach activities.

- Work of the Administrative (Deans) Advisory Committee on Public Engagement and Outreach is critical to gain wide University support for and make outreach an integral part of what we do.
- Administration may consider central leadership to help make outreach more continually visible.

Consider how to pay for outreach.

- Outreach faces financial issues, especially in a tuition-based model.
- The University should consider whether to try to quantify cost for and revenues to support outreach, recognizing that it may be complicated to do so.

**Recommendation:** The University should focus on efficient delivery of outreach.

Recognize potential in changing delivery methods.

- Great new ideas and technologies will revolutionize outreach, making it boundariless, improving service, and giving the customer more control.
- Implementation of the University's portal strategy goal is that every citizen in state will have his or her own portal link.
- Portal strategy raises questions of how the institution will use it.
- Related issues include: who should the University serve in this environment; intellectual property; privacy; branding/imaging; advertising vs. pay-per-view; need for a business plan; how portal would be used for distance learning.