

# ***Transforming the University***

## **Systemwide Academic Task Force on Forging an International University**

**Submitted on behalf of the Task Force by:**

**Allen Isaacman, Regents Professor of History and Director, ICGC  
Ruth Okediji, William L. Prosser Professor of Law  
Co-Chairs of the Task Force**

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## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### ***Mission***

- (1) To formulate recommendations regarding how to develop a strategy, plan, and structure to most effectively leverage, stimulate, and coordinate cutting edge international research and globally informed teaching and public engagement programs with selected partners in other countries
- (2) To address strategies for building strategic international partnerships with universities and institutions, expansion of study abroad and international scholarly exchanges, and internationalization of the curriculum.

### ***Deliverables***

- An accounting of the University of Minnesota's relative advantages - its current strengths- that could position it to become a major global university.
- Recommendations regarding success in recruiting and educating students from around the globe to achieve the University's full potential as a global university.
- Recommendations regarding how to overcome current academic and institutional divisions to create a new synergism among scholars and students at this University who are exploring significant international issues, including how to create more globally competent faculty, staff, and graduates.
- Recommendations regarding how to position the University to become a node of excellence in the emerging global network of knowledge production and circulation and connect more effectively with transnational research institutions.
- Recommendations regarding how to effectively integrate the international experience of undergraduate, graduate and professional degree students with international students and scholars on campus, with the relevant work that faculty are doing, and to connect them with the larger community beyond the University.
- Recommendations regarding what organizational structure would best support the above mission and deliverables.

### ***Task Force Members***

Co-Chairs: Allen Isaacman (Regents Professor of History and Director, ICGC) and Ruth Okediji (William L. Prosser Professor of Law). Task Force Members: Gene Allen (Associate Vice President, Office of International Programs), Ron Aminzade (Professor, Department of Sociology), Michael Barnett (Harold Stassen Chair of International Relations, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs), Jack Bowman (Dean, School of Fine Arts, University of Minnesota Duluth), Evelyn Davidheiser (Director, Institute for Global Studies), Ian Greaves (Associate Professor, Environmental Health Sciences, School of Public Health), Peter Hudleston (Associate Dean of Student Affairs, Institute of Technology), Olivia LeDee (Graduate Student Fellow, Conservation Biology), James Perry (Professor, Department of Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology), Karen Brown Thompson (Associate Director, ICGC), Char Voight (Staff)

### ***Recommendations***

To become one of the top three public research universities in the world, the University of Minnesota must become a global university. This demands that internationalization, diversity, and academic excellence be inextricable intertwined and central to the University's core mission. Two critical trends make the internationalization of the university a necessity. We live in an increasingly internationalized world. As the world is becoming internationalized, so too is the production of knowledge to understand that world. These twin trends have major implications for the University's identity and mission – it must develop a global orientation and realize its place in a developing global network of engagement and scholarship. The University must be situated to provide expertise for practical action in fostering global social and economic change.

To forge a truly international university, three immediate and indispensable steps are required:

- An explicit stamp of approval by the President, through a Presidential Initiative, affirming the centrality of international concerns to the University's stated goal.
- Appointment of an internationally renowned scholar with demonstrated leadership abilities as Vice President and Dean for International Programs with responsibilities to direct, oversee, and sustain the internationalization of the university.
- An initial three-year, \$6 million budget that would transform teaching, research, and public engagement programs. We anticipate that this \$6 million would generate significant external support. The first tranche of this budget would be used to create high priority, high impact programs such as developing international partnerships, cross-disciplinary and cross-collegiate collaborations on global issues, and cluster hires on international themes.

These immediate commitments would be used in the following broad categories of activities and would require recurring funds that should grow over time:

- Student support (e.g., targeted non-resident tuition scholarships to support international exchange, scholarships for undergraduate study abroad; graduate fellowships for international students working in priority interdisciplinary areas; grants for international internships/research opportunities for undergraduate and graduate and professional students, and on-campus internationalization programs for those not directly participating in learning abroad experiences).
- Faculty support (e.g., cross-disciplinary, cross-collegiate faculty research circles; international symposia; intercollegiate competitive research grants).
- Curricular development (e.g., OIP faculty travel grant supplement for curriculum integration; small grant programs for individuals and departments to develop and implement international course content and programming).
- International network development (e.g., travel and expenses for planning meetings, development of collaborative seminar series, visiting post-doctoral fellowships).
- Technology and infrastructure (e.g., development of an international database of students, faculty, alumni; appropriate staff support to sustain this infrastructure).