Transforming the University

Recommendations of the PreK-12 Strategy Task Force

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PreK-12 Strategy Task Force
Executive Summary

The mission of the PreK-12 Strategy Task Force is to formulate recommendations regarding how to reaffirm and focus the University's commitment and capacity, system-wide and across all campuses, collegiate units, and support units; create meaningful and effective partnerships with preK-12 education; and provide a framework for the ongoing development of the Consortium for Post-secondary Academic Success and for other system-wide efforts around preK-12 education.

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Summary
In order for the University of Minnesota to move toward its goal of becoming one of the top 3 public research universities in the world, preK-12 engagement needs to remain a high priority, for it is integrally related to strategic positioning initiatives insofar as preK-12 schools provide us with our students. The pool of high school graduates in Minnesota will change both in its demographics and its affluence; more of the graduates will come from groups that traditionally have been less successful in post-secondary education. Unless we receive more students from the under-represented groups, there will not be enough highly qualified students to enrich our scholarship and challenge us to become better in the work that we do. As a result, there may not be enough college graduates to keep the Minnesota economy strong. On the other hand, if quality preK-12 experiences prepare large numbers and proportions of students from all backgrounds for success at the University, the state will thrive.

The University has not been and cannot afford to be passive observers of preK-12 education. Engagement with preK-12 touches all parts of the University. Within Minnesota, the University of Minnesota uniquely possesses the capacity to generate

ongoing and systemic research that will improve the lives of all Minnesotans. This capacity is particularly critical in preK-12 education, where separating what is believed from what is known through research is critical for the success of education. The University has a history of extensive engagement with preK-12 schools, but successes have been limited by the way the engagements have been structured, largely as individual initiatives rather than as an ordered and integrated array of activities. The task force recommendations attempt to frame and organize efforts without limiting faculty in their attempts to create relationships that reflect their research interests.

General Recommendation: The University should reshape its preK-12 agenda systemwide so it addresses the most important issues of education; brings research and theory to conversations of policy and practice; develops a cohesive agenda around preK-12 education; coordinates work that is being done; ensures that University policies facilitate preK-12 engagements; and makes the work visible and accessible to practitioners and policy makers.

Specific Internal Recommendations:
- *PreK-12 needs to be defined as focusing on all aspects of the lives of children, going beyond schools and including out of school time.*
- *Issues of educational access and opportunity need to be an important component of the University's preK-12 strategy.*
- *As the preK-12 agenda develops, projects that are the centerpieces of our work need to focus on systemic change and new, innovative models, rather than on strategies that work on the margins of our educational institutions and systems.*
- *The University should review its concurrent high school-college enrollment programs to assure that they maximize opportunities for students.*

Recommendations on the Role of the University in Minnesota:
- *The University needs to articulate in clear and consistent ways the importance of raising expectations and standards for achievement across the educational continuum from preschool to graduate and professional programs.*
- *The University should play a major role in supporting and emphasizing the importance of early childhood development programs.*
- *The University should play a role in creating high aspirations among all citizens and personal hope about the capability of our educational system to create success for all Minnesotans.*
- *Approaches need to be sensitive to local circumstances and history, aspects best understood by practitioners.*
- *The University needs to develop strong, ongoing partnerships with key groups to address the most critical issues of education.*

Work Outside the Scope of This Task Force
We limited our discussion and recommendations in areas where the Minnesota P16 Education Partnership is already working, and left details for implementation to be worked out by the Consortium for Post-secondary Academic Success.

Introduction

Many [academics] working today in an applied field are keenly aware of the need for close cooperation between [theory] and [practice]. This can be accomplished…if the [academic] does not look toward applied problems with highbrow aversion or with a fear of social problems, and if the [practitioner] realizes that there is nothing as practical as a good theory. (paraphrase of Kurt Lewin, 1951, p. 169)

Lewin's quote above captures the value of research and theory in applied work, and he wrote as well about the importance of practical settings as laboratories for theoretical work. Those elements are key reasons why the University of Minnesota, as a top research university, needs to be positioned for work with preK-12 education, for we are the organization within Minnesota possessing the capacity to blend research, theory, and practice. This task force is charged with helping to shape the University's role into the future, recommending how to create a stronger focus for the preK-12 work of the University, and to organize and implement our work.

Fortunately, there currently are mechanisms in place that should allow the University to work effectively with preK-12 educators and policy makers on preK-12 issues. First is the Minnesota P-16 Education Partnership, which includes all major educational stakeholders coming together to address major issues of education, particularly ones at the interface between preK-12 and post-secondary education. The P-16 group, complemented by our other relationships with preK-12, higher education, and other stakeholders, should provide vehicles for cooperation and engagement outside the University. Second is the newly created Consortium for Post-secondary Academic Success, which is intended to provide a vehicle for successfully engaging shared interests within the University community around issues of importance. That office should be complemented by a third mechanism, our new Office for Public Engagement, which is intended to organize the full array of public engagements of the University.

We intend to sketch an approach that will begin to define some long-term roles of the University of Minnesota in its engagements with preK-12 education. After providing context, specific recommendations address the issues laid out in our charge, primarily relying upon the Consortium and the P-16 Partnership, with more limited involvement of the Office for Public Engagement, as the organizations that would be asked to implement those specific recommendations that are approved.

Importance of preK-12 Education

PreK-12 engagement needs to remain a high priority for the University of Minnesota, for it is integrally related to our strategic positioning initiatives. The students we enroll have already been shaped by thirteen years of educational experiences. If these experiences can prepare large numbers and proportions of students from all backgrounds for success at places like the University of Minnesota, we will be more successful in what we do and the quality of our enterprise will improve. If we receive large numbers of students who

are prepared to thrive and challenge us, it will help us move toward being one of the top three public research universities in the world. Success in our PreK-12 initiatives will contribute directly to the Strategic Positioning Action Strategy – *"Recruit, nurture, challenge, and educate outstanding students who are bright, curious, and highly motivated." (Strategic Positioning Academic Task Force Report, March 2005)*

At the same time, the University's commitment to preK-12 education represents much more than just one important part of our route to excellence. A commitment to preK-12 education is an integral part of our Land Grant mission to help meet the needs of all Minnesotans and improve the future of the state. In addition, preK-12 involvement is an important part of our current efforts to enhance University public engagement. We possess skills that are needed by educators and schools in Minnesota, and we need to apply and share those skills to benefit the state.   Fulfilling our Land Grant mission contributes directly to the Strategic Positioning Action Strategy – *"Promote an effective organizational culture that is committed to excellence and responsive to change."*

In this post-information age, human resources are the primary component of a successful economy. Without a highly trained workforce, Minnesota is likely to suffer economically. Investment in our youth pays rich dividends. Investments should include pre-school and early childhood programs, college readiness programming through elementary and middle school years, college access programming, and challenging college classes offered to high school students. Those investments will pay dividends by expanding the pool of eligible students prepared to succeed in college.

Framing Recommendations
The University alone cannot create a bright future for Minnesota. But by focusing University resources and partnering on critical issues of preK-12 education with policy makers, preK-12 practitioners, and colleagues across post-secondary education, the University can positively impact the state for generations to come. The remainder of this report attempts to provide a framework for our future partnerships with preK-12 education. The structure used presents recommendations, and then follows each of them with a rationale.

General Recommendation: The University should reshape its preK-12 agenda systemwide so it addresses the most important issues of education; brings research and theory to conversations of policy and practice; develops a cohesive agenda around preK-12 education; coordinates work that is being done; ensures that University policies facilitate preK-12 engagements; and makes the work visible and accessible to practitioners and policy makers.

The University is highly engaged in preK-12 work across campuses and colleges. A 1997 survey identified 330 University preK-12 programs; an update currently underway is expected to produce an even longer list. This reflects a deep interest in and concern for public education and child development. At the same time, some practitioners and policy

makers believe the University pays little attention to preK-12 education. *A detailed discussion of why work has not had more impact appears in Appendix A.*

To date, preK-12 efforts can be characterized as having less than optimal *visibility, coordination, cohesion, and relevance.* First, programs have not had the *visibility* internally or externally that they might because they largely have been initiated individually, and there has been no central office tracking and reporting on the efforts. Multiple investigators may work within a single school building without being aware of the other work going on there. Findings have not regularly been provided to practitioners to inform them about new developments and effective practices.

This task force is collecting information on youth and school engagements to develop a database that could be used to organize work in educational settings and link researchers to one another as well as to practitioners. Having an inventory (and a Consortium to use it) should allow work to have better *coordination*, namely, to bring together faculty and staff so that they can work collaboratively to address common issues and engage practitioners more readily. A second aspect is that Central coordination should result in clear articulation of the relative importance of preK-12 work as well as how the University believes preK-12 work should be supported.

Because it is likely that there are many areas of common work, a third factor important to preK-12 work is *cohesion*. The University needs to determine areas where it wants to focus, and to prioritize those areas so they get attention and resources as well as visibility. We want external audiences to be able to identify some finite set of topics and university efforts that at any point in time characterize our preK-12 involvement. Those topics can change over time, but should do so without affecting visibility and impact of our overall preK-12 efforts.

Finally, there need to be central efforts to complement the engagement activities of faculty that assure that University researchers are addressing issues of greatest interest and *relevance* to practitioners and policy makers. Integral among the skills we bring to bear on educational issues is our skill in conducting research and in reviewing and summarizing it. We need to assure that research helps shape important discussions of policy and practice. As one of our stakeholders said, we need to help policy makers and practitioners distinguish what is true from what people believe to be true, for the two often are not the same, and treating them as if they are the same yields ineffectual policies and ineffective practices.

As well as trying to provide a framework for developing the kinds of relationships that we believe would change perceptions of our engagement, we believe that the model for engagement needs to be revisited and changed to one that reflects true *collaboration*. It needs to be one that brings together researchers and practitioners as equal partners for long-term engagement around common problems. Such a perspective is not new. It is articulated in the opening quote by Kurt Lewin (1951), where he spoke about developing

collaborations with practitioners. Lewin talked about practitioners as "experts in practice," and faculty as "experts in theory." Effective blending of theory and practice through respectful collaboration should be an aspiration for our preK-12 work.

Finally, a key component of our preK-12 strategy needs to be effective *communication*. We need to be sure that we are disseminating information not only about what we find, but also about what we are doing. And we also need to be engaging practitioners on a regular basis. Many of the stakeholders with whom we spoke noted that they have not regularly been invited to campus, and that they do not know much about what the University is doing. The strategy is not just about publications and press releases, but about events and relationships.

Deliverables

For some of the deliverable areas, work already is being done by a group in which the University participates, the Minnesota P-16 Education Partnership (areas are noted below). We focus less on those areas in our recommendations.

Deliverable: PreK-12 across the continuum
o   How the U should be engaged with early childhood and elementary school programs.
o   The University's role in driving or assisting middle school and high school reform efforts so all students are prepared for college success.
o   The role the University should play in efforts to increase permeability of boundaries between preK-12 and post-secondary education, with a goal of effectively serving both high achieving students as well as students facing developmental difficulties.

Recommendation 1: Issues of educational access and opportunity need to be an important component of the University's preK-12 strategy.

A look into the future at our changing demographics shows clearly the complexity of the challenges we face. The preK-12 population will decrease, but the decline will occur only in numbers of white students, while numbers of students of color will increase. At a minimum, the percentage of high school graduates who are students of color will double, going from 13% today to 27% by 2018. This projection assumes no changes in high school graduation rates, which are currently quite low for students of color. Statewide four-year high school graduation rates (class of 2001) were less than 50% for African American, American Indian, and Chicano/Latino students, for example[1]. In total, about one-third of all students of color currently are not graduating from high school. Without dramatically improved success with students from those groups, we will not be able to sustain our current work force, let alone prepare for growth in jobs requiring college

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[1] Note that four year graduation rates are imprecise, for they include all students, not just ones who have been in Minnesota high schools four years. Many immigrant students graduate, but not in four years.

graduates. We need to develop ways to tap student potential that differ from those currently in place.

Both the University and the K-12 systems need to provide quality college access programs to insure more students of color and immigrant students successfully enter and complete post-secondary programs. The University also needs to assist K-12 through research and outreach to improve high school graduation rates.

Recommendation 1a: Use the compact process to identify important ongoing and new preK-12 initiatives within each unit, and to have units articulate their plans to support preK-12 programs and engagement initiatives.

Recommendation 2: Because diversity is increasing rapidly and touching all parts of Minnesota, approaches need to be sensitive to local circumstances and history, aspects best understood by practitioners.

One important aspect of the diversity trend is that growth in populations of students of color and low income students used to occur within urban areas and be concentrated in a small number of school districts. But now the numbers of students of color in the large cities is stable, while the increases are largely in suburban and rural areas and smaller cities. The implications for preK-12 education are that issues of diversity will crosscut the state, but may present differently in different locations, depending upon the industries that are attracting diverse populations, the particular populations, and the capacity of the school staff to address issues of diversity. There is an interplay between effective practices and local circumstances that are most apparent to and that rely heavily on the expertise of our practitioner partners to design approaches that will work.

Recommendation 3: The University needs to articulate in clear and consistent ways the importance of raising expectations and standards for achievement all across the educational continuum from preschool to graduate and professional programs.

The University needs to communicate clearly to students, parents, and educators what successful preparation for college requires in the twenty-first century, so everyone understands what is expected and how to get there. We must work collaboratively with preK-12 practitioners to set our sights and goals higher and to strive to attain and exceed the goals we set. *A more detailed discussion of the implications of globalization is provided in Appendix B.*

The mismatch between future educational needs and current outcomes is the dominant theme of a recent Minnesota Citizen's League report, *Trouble on the Horizon: Growing Demands and Competition, Limited Resources, & Changing Demographics in Higher Education* . That report recommends a minimum expectation for all students of high school plus two years of college. Despite the logic of that recommendation and the evidentiary base that recognizes how important attaining that outcome would be, much

work needs to be done to reach consensus about this goal. Many concerned and engaged individuals simply do not believe that all students can be prepared for college.

Recommendation 4: The University has a role to play in creating high aspirations among all citizens and personal hope about the capability of our educational system to create success for all Minnesotans.

One topic that surfaced in our conversations with stakeholders is that one cannot just tell all students that our expectations for them have changed and expect to see results. Although some groups of under-represented students, notably immigrants, are eager to avail themselves of educational opportunities and have family support for educational success, others do not see the opportunities that we do. Stakeholders characterized this issue as one of "hope." *A summary of research on "hope" is provided in Appendix C.* Someone needs to articulate a vision for our low-achieving populations that make them believe that they can succeed, and that success will be rewarding for them and their families. For families with educational experiences characterized more by frustration and failure, or at best achievement levels much lower than those of many of their peers, it is no surprise that telling students that they all will need to succeed and that we expect great things from them will ring hollow. Families and students need hope—the sense that they are able to strive for educational success and that striving will foster success.

The deep division around expectations makes it a good illustration of the importance of policy-relevant research. The University should conduct research addressing whether or not virtually all Minnesota students can successfully prepare for post-secondary education. Research focused on a population of students who are not considered to be "college material" can determine how those students could best be prepared for college success, and provide educators with approaches that allow them to prepare as many of those students for college success as possible.

This role in communicating about the importance and attainability of academic success should include working with middle school audiences to emphasize the need to prepare for high school and beyond, and providing information to low-income families about the affordability of a college education. Students and parents should have easy web access to post-secondary and workforce information.

Recommendation 5: As the preK-12 agenda develops, assure that the projects that are the centerpieces of our work focus on systemic change and new, innovative models, rather than on strategies that work on the margins of our educational institutions and systems.

Another topic that emerged was that programming is not the solution when systemic change is needed. That is, when demographics change at an institution, there is a tendency to develop programs for the students who represent an increasing proportion of the student body rather than developing new models to serve all learners. But developing

programs without working with staff to develop their sensitivity to the needs and skills of their new populations is insufficient, for it leaves work at the margins of institutions. Stakeholders noted that their experience suggests that institutions need to change the perspectives of people in the institution to conform to present realities, and then add programs as they are needed.

Recommendation 6: The University should play a role in supporting and emphasizing the importance of early childhood development programs.

Preparation for academic success begins before students enter the K-12 system. Investment in pre-school and early childhood programs, especially focused on at-risk children, is reported to provide a substantial return (e.g., 16% annually) on investment (Rolnick & Grunewald, 2003). *Greater detail on the importance of early childhood programs appears in Appendix D.* The University is a national leader in early childhood development research and practice through the Center for Early Education and Development and other programs. The University should continue to focus on and facilitate this research, seeking external funding while continuing our institutional commitment to this work. In addition, the University should take an active role in disseminating this work state-wide to educators, early childhood development practitioners, and parents statewide. Moreover, the University should play a role in identifying the critical components of high-quality early childhood development programs, as well as designing new programs and evaluating new and existing programs.

Recommendation 7: The University should review its concurrent high school-college enrollment programs to assure that they maximize opportunities for students.

Minnesota has been recognized as an innovator educationally, and those efforts continue. Efforts are under way in Minnesota to rethink the latter years of high school and first years of college, to see if they can be restructured and made more efficient. Linked to these efforts, we should review our programs that allow high school students to take college classes to assure that programs are accomplishing the goals we have for them. *A more detailed discussion of college attendance options and opportunities is provided in Appendix E.* These efforts are illustrative of our contributing to the Strategic Positioning Action Strategy -- *"Exercise responsible stewardship by setting priorities, and enhancing and effectively utilizing resources and infrastructure."*

<u>***Deliverable: Extracurricular/summer activities***</u>
o   Ways that we could/should be using summer sports and other community programs to create University connections to youth.

Recommendation 8: PreK-12 needs to be defined as focusing on all aspects of the lives of children, going beyond schools and including out of school time.

Although the name of our task force, preK-12 strategy, implies a focus on what happens within schools, attending only to what happens during school time is not sufficient. *Discussion of the critical importance of out-of-school time appears in Appendix F.* The crux of that discussion is that engaging children in educational activities during summer and outside of school time is needed to reduce gaps in achievement between low income students/students of color and their peers. The University's role should include research and dissemination of information about the most beneficial out-of-school activities for children and youth of all ages, building upon work already done by University faculty and staff. The University should also play a leading role in communicating about and advocating for quality out-of-school programs, and may want to expand opportunities for children and their families to visit our campuses..

Recommendation 8a: Consider establishing within the Consortium a community and preK-12 gateway office that schools and community organizations can use as a point of contact.

Deliverable: Coalitions, partnerships, and complementary roles

o How the University and the PreK-12 community might knit together the array of school, family, and community resources to address the range of educational, social, and health issues facing children and their families, and that affect their ability to succeed.
o How to align the work of the University with the Minnesota post-secondary education community, the philanthropic community, businesses, and the preK-12 education community.
o How we can more effectively help provide all children and their families with the information they need to understand college options. This includes immigrant and second language, and first generation populations. *[Being done by MnP16 Education Partnership through their efforts to consolidate all college and career web sites into a single site (e.g., ISeek)]*

Recommendation 9: The University needs to develop strong, ongoing partnerships with key groups to address the most critical issues of education. The University is uniquely positioned to convene educational stakeholders to produce a shared agenda for Minnesota preK-16 education.

9a: Build and strengthen collaborations with practitioners that value the partners' expertise about intricacies in practice and their much greater knowledge of the settings. Collaborations will be helpful in designing research but also for designing training and professional development opportunities, for example, to help teachers meet the educational and cultural needs of all students. Consider opportunities to make cooperative legislative or other requests addressing issues of shared importance;

9b: Build partnerships with educators, policy makers, public and private funding agencies, civic organizations, and others interested in education and the welfare of the state. Each year develop a collaborative agenda for the Consortium, and seek funding to support that agenda. A model for attracting external funding comes from the University of Texas Institute for Public School Initiatives;

9c: Identify areas where we can quickly develop partnership activities and areas where the scope and scale of the impact will be substantial – including building an interdisciplinary educational leadership program that gives principals and other education leaders the skills they need to be successful in today's schools;

9d: Determine the areas in which we need to move forward independently, and those where we need to work collaboratively within broader partnerships including other educational stakeholders;

9e: Use the Consortium on Post-secondary Academic Success to coordinate and facilitate University activities in the preK-12 area;

9f: Develop collaborative work through the P-16 Education Partnership and other partnerships, including: providing information to youth about college options through the Minnesota College Access Network; developing a P-16 identification system that will follow students from preK through college and include information about their extra-curricular program participation; and aligning K-12 curricula with college and work readiness skills;

9g: Develop a communication plan tied to our partnerships and Consortium that provides effective information to policy makers, practitioners, parents, and the public about our preK-12 activities.

Deliverable: Research and evaluation questions

o What can we learn from existing programs that have experienced some success (e.g., Admission Possible, Destination 2010, Learning Works at Blake, the Multicultural Excellence Program, Wallin Scholars, etc.)? *[Being done by MnP16 Education Partnership]*
o What are the commonalities and differences across Minnesota in educational needs and opportunities, and what do they mean for the University?

Many of the recommendations above have included references to the critical research mission of the University in evaluating existing programs and suggesting solutions to inform the work of PreK-12 practitioners. Two areas merit special emphasis: University research should be driven, at least in part, by the expressed needs of the education community, and the results of this research should be shared as broadly as possible with practitioners, education leaders, policy makers, and parents.

Prioritizing Recommendations and Deliverables

One of the challenges that our task force faced was prioritizing efforts without limiting opportunities for the Consortium for Post-secondary Academic Success. Our general recommendation sets up broad parameters for our partnerships. Instilling high expectations and hope are critical, and are done by what we say publicly rather than requiring massive internal efforts, so they could be handled quickly. Most of the other recommendations largely provide a framework as well for campus and system activities. The recommendations on early childhood programs and advanced programs for high school students are areas of investment that have been begun, but that could use additional support and emphasis. Finally, a review and cost/benefit analysis of campus hosting opportunities seems important, for at present we may be missing opportunities to create connections and recruit children and their families.

Concluding Thought

One of the best ways for the University to lead public opinion about preK-12 education is for President Bruininks to speak publicly and clearly about the importance and urgency of setting high standards for all students, the value and importance of education, and the accessibility of public higher education. As noted by Kotter (1996), an important part of driving change is creating the sense of urgency. We have mechanisms for engaging leaders across the state to follow the President's lead in promoting urgency. Stakeholders reminded us that the president of the state's flagship research institution has a "bully pulpit" to shape public opinion, engage others in problem-solving, and advocate for education at every level. We believe that he needs to use that device more regularly on a range of issues, following a trend he has established in talking about the Itasca recommendations and about his Initiative on Children, Youth, and Families. He would be representing perspectives that support and extend historical values of Minnesotans and present findings from research, so the public comes to rely upon him to help inform and guide them about educational issues.

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Appendix A: Why University PreK-12 Engagement Hasn't Been Visible and Hasn't Had Greater Impact

Misunderstanding of and lack of awareness about our substantial amount of preK-12 engagement is due in part to the grass roots nature of that engagement. The work largely reflects the work that faculty do as researchers. Most preK-12 work consists of stand-alone projects initiated by individual faculty and staff, lacking coordination and cohesion. Also, as is true of most faculty work, engagements are based upon specific research interests. Those efforts tend to be episodic rather than continuous. Researchers cannot use the same sample audience over and over, and move from school to school to find new samples unaffected by their previous work. Even if a series of studies is done with the same practitioners, there regularly are gaps between studies due to time spent analyzing and interpreting findings, gaps in funding that supports the research, or other faculty commitments that force them periodically to lessen their engaged time. As a result, despite a number of very successful efforts, perceptions of many practitioners and policy makers are that the University doesn't do much in preK-12 education.

There also are internal factors that inhibit and complicate preK-12 involvement. It is time consuming, for it requires developing relationships with practitioners. Many departments discourage junior faculty from doing too much work that involves building partnerships, for the work takes longer to initiate and conduct than does work in campus settings. If the work took several years to complete, it might not be completed in time to contribute to the faculty member's promotion and tenure decision. In some cases, individuals told us that their departments did not recognize preK-12 as valued or productive use of faculty or staff time, which meant that preK-12 work became lower priority compared to other University duties. Work with preK-12 populations differs from "typical" University activities both because the preK-12 culture is very different from college culture and because minors are involved, which changes markedly issues of consent (involving parents) and participation. In sum, preK-12 work is difficult to do and is not well understood and appreciated, which may result in it not being appropriately supported.

Appendix B: Impacts of Globalization

In a recent book that has captured national attention, Thomas Friedman (*The World Is Flat*) has argued that globalization has connected the world in new ways that allow individuals to gain access to information through software and a "global fiber-optic network" that makes it possible for people almost anywhere in the world to connect in real-time. Regardless of whether or not one believes Friedman when he describes how globalization is threatening our future as well as changing it, it is clear that technology and the internet have reshaped the world and made it a place where far reaches of the globe are brought together. Resources and knowledge are quickly distributed rather than being held locally, giving countries, groups, and individuals around the world access to innovation. In such a world, "staying put" effectively is falling behind. Simply, it is difficult not to envision continued ongoing change in the nature of knowledge and how it is used.

The strategic positioning initiative intends to avoid "staying put," and it needs others joining with us to think strategically. Minnesota needs to anticipate changes and prepare for them, changing our educational system so graduates have the skills needed for tomorrow. New standards need to be developed within Minnesota for all schools, preK through professional and graduate education, those standards need to be aligned and information about what the standards and expectations are needs to be shared so preK-12 teachers know what colleges and universities want their students to know. Of equal importance, there needs to be urgency in efforts to set appropriate standards and to move all students toward them. Students need to be prepared to compete not just against graduates from other Minnesota institutions or other U.S. institutions, but against graduates from colleges and universities across the globe.

Appendix C: Hope

According to Snyder (2005), hope is a reflection of individuals' perceptions of their ability to 1. develop workable goals, 2. develop strategies necessary to reach those goals (which he called *pathways thinking*), and 3. initiate and maintain the motivation for using those strategies (which he called *agency thinking*).

Hope is not just about college access, it also touches academic success. In one study examining individual levels of hope in college students, higher hope scores were related to higher cumulative GPAs, a higher likelihood of becoming a college graduate, and a lower likelihood of being dismissed based on poor grades (Snyder et al., 2002). Results hold even after controlling for intelligence, previous grades, self-esteem, and entrance exam scores. One potential explanation for this finding is that high-hope students set clear goals, have better strategies for achieving them even when they encounter obstacles along the way (pathways), and they are willing to invest the effort needed to use these strategies (agency). Some evidence suggests that low-hope individuals are just as likely to achieve their goals as high-hope individuals; however, since high-hope individuals set higher goals for themselves (as well as more goals overall), high-hope is associated with greater achievements (Snyder et al, 1991).

Snyder (2005) identified what he refers to as his "lessons of hope," which are intended to help teachers foster hope in their students through a positive classroom atmosphere. These lessons include:
•   Spending time on and caring about students
•   Setting goals for students that are clear and cooperative in nature
•   Creating routes for learning that involve interacting with fellow students
•   Helping students to become motivated in joint learning activities
•   Imparting an atmosphere whereby students are concerned about their welfares and the welfares of their classmates

Snyder et al. (2003) articulated specific things teachers and school psychologists can do to help increase the levels of hope in students. These include:
•   HELPING STUDENTS TO SET GOALS: Students must learn to set goals that are appropriate for their age and specific educational level. Beyond the initial goal setting process, teachers need to show students how to set clear markers for their progress towards these goals.
•   HELPING STUDENTS TO DEVELOP PATHWAYS THINKING: Some students must be taught how to break down large goals into smaller sub-goals that can be attained in a consecutive manner. Other students need help discovering alternate ways to achieve a goal when obstacles arise. All students should learn not to take failing at any sub-goal as a sign of personal failure; rather, they must learn to identify the pathway that is ineffective and move on to another possible way to achieve their ultimate goal.

- HELPING STUDENTS TO ENHANCE THEIR AGENCY: In order to be fully motivated, students need to take ownership of their goals, rather than rely on goals given to them by parents, teachers, peers, etc. Teachers also can help students set "stretch goals" which are slightly more difficult than previous accomplishments. Focusing on positive memories of achievement can help students sustain the motivation to work toward new goals as well.

At present, there are notable differences in "hope" related to class and race/ethnicity. In one study of elementary school students' perceptions of the workforce, both higher and lower SES children felt that African Americans were unlikely to perform high-status occupations. Older children from lower SES backgrounds also showed less interest in performing higher status occupations in the future (Bigler, Averhart, & Liben 2003), and African American and Hispanic students were found to be less likely to maintain their educational aspirations through high school (Kao & Tienda, 1998). Students with the highest aspirations experienced the least decline in their goals during the first years of high school.

There are a number of programs that focus on creating hope. One example is the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program, a successful high school untracking program that has been used in public schools, including ones in Minnesota (e.g. Saint Paul Schools). Beyond specific academic changes to improve students' grades, the program involves a change in school culture in order to provide academic support, teacher advocacy, and stronger networks linking high schools and colleges. Teachers organize trips to colleges and help students fill out applications and financial aid forms. African American and Latino students are encouraged to internalize the program's message about the importance of a college education (agency) and are taught to develop strategies for dealing with any discrimination they may encounter along the way (pathways). In the original AVID program, students of color and those from low SES backgrounds exceeded the local and national averages for college enrollment.

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Appendix D: Importance of Early Childhood Programs

The quality of life for a child and the contributions the child makes to society as an adult can be traced back to the first few years of life. From birth until about 5 years old a child undergoes tremendous growth and change. If this period of life includes support for growth in cognition, language, motor skills, adaptive skills and social-emotional functioning, the child is more likely to succeed in school and later contribute to society. However, without support during these early years, a child is more likely to drop out of school, receive welfare benefits and commit crime. A well-managed and well-funded early childhood development program provides such support. Current programs include home visits as well as center-based programs, and most programs involve the child's parents to varying degrees. Some have been initiated on a large scale, such as federally funded Head Start, while other small-scale model programs have been implemented locally, sometimes with relatively high levels of funding per participant.

Most economists agree that a highly educated workforce is a key ingredient to a successful economy. Having said that, however, does not tell policymakers where to invest limited public resources. Policymakers must identify the educational investments that yield the highest public returns. Fortunately, recent research is making that decision clear: Dollars should be invested in early childhood development. There is a large body of research, including much done at this University, demonstrating that high-quality early childhood development programs can yield extraordinary public returns-- especially when such programs engage at- risk children and their parents.

A key question is whether the current funding of early childhood development programs is high enough. It is not, because a plethora of research shows that the benefits achieved from high-quality early childhood programs far exceed their costs. Indeed, the return to such programs far exceeds the return on most projects that are currently funded as economic development.

Appendix E: Post-secondary Level Course Opportunities for High School Students

Minnesota has long been known for its willingness to be innovative in its preK-12 education system. One good illustration comes from programs that allow high school students to take college-level courses. (A recent report by Joe Nathan and his colleagues in the Humphrey Institute on post-secondary enrollment options provides a historical view of how programs have developed as well as current information about their prevalence.)   There is a substantial array of program choices available, perhaps enough even to bewilder parents who have not been educationally successful. These programs are intended to provide high school students with challenging content. In addition, some options have them experience a college atmosphere to give them a "feel" for what college will be like. These programs typically focus on the highest achieving students.

Programs available in Minnesota include the International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advanced Placement (AP) courses, which are offered by high schools across the nation. Teachers follow a prescribed curriculum, and students take a test at the end of the class to document level of proficiency in the subject matter. Colleges may choose to grant credit for performance above certain levels (and most do). There also are tests that can be done independently of course taking, such as the College Level Examination Program (CLEP); these tests currently are being promoted by Governor Pawlenty as part of his Get Ready, Get Credit program.

In addition to programs like AP and IB, colleges and universities within Minnesota have offered two types of college programs for high school students, both part of the same enabling legislation. First is Post-secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO), a program that allows high school students to take classes on college campuses. Second are concurrent enrollment programs where students are dual-enrolled in college and high school, typically in classes offered by high school teachers in the high schools, but that follow college course standards and content. There is a national accrediting board for concurrent enrollment programs. Our University of Minnesota concurrent enrollment program is called "College in the Schools (CIS)."   CIS programs provide professional development to high school teachers so they are prepared to offer the same course that is offered on campus within their high school, and so that they know how to impose the same standards for grading.

Different programs have varying cost structures; the most expensive for high schools are PSEO, with costs of other programs varying depending upon how regularly teachers need to receive professional development and how much any course assessments cost. The other difference is that PSEO students go to college campuses, which is an intentional and important part of the PSEO experience.

Recently, there have been a number of changes proposed for PSEO and CIS, including on-line courses, expanded availability of courses so even lower achieving students can

participate. Such changes need to continue to focus on the intended purpose of the course. For example, if the purpose is to get students on college campuses, then on-line courses seem not to help accomplish the purpose. At the University of Minnesota, there have been ongoing discussions with policy makers to consider expansion of CIS offerings so that students perhaps only in the upper half of their high school classes could qualify. The logic for us is that our admissions review process takes into account a number of factors, and that an important factor that could be available is performance in CIS classes. Students could know that a grade of A or even B in a U of M CIS class could help their case for admission while giving them experience taking college level classes with standards for homework and performance being those of the University of Minnesota. Expanding offerings for students for whom college is not a sure thing would allow them to see first hand about college expectations and standards, and also have an opportunity to perform at a level that might get them accepted into the University of Minnesota if their record of accomplishment is mixed.

Appendix F: The Importance of Out-of-school Time

President Bruininks recently commissioned a report on "out of school" time. The report, *Journeys into Community: Transforming Youth Opportunities for Learning and Development* (http://www.mncost.org/), illustrates why focusing only or even predominantly on formal schooling ignores opportunities to impact the lives of children in much more profound ways. The report notes that schools control only 25% of children's waking time, while 42% is out-of-school time not occupied by school, studies, chores, meals, or personal maintenance. The average amount of time between when children get home from school and when their parents come home is 20-25 hours per week. Consequently, educators and researchers need to attend to what happens outside of school, and even to work with communities to design how that time can be used. Imagine what would happen if students could get 20 hours more per week of engaged educational time! Engaging children in more activities linked to their educational experiences will improve their achievement. The Commission report provides a detailed listing of things that can be done, but also provides recommendations about developing programs that are simple yet profound, for they should guide all our efforts in and out of school. Those recommendations were to: (a) link children with caring adults, (b) provide them with constructive options to occupy their out of school time, and (c) set high expectations for them in all their out-of-school activities.

The findings of the out-of-school time report are critical for another reason. Recent research (Alexander, Entwhistle, & Olson, 2001; Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, & Greathouse, 1996) has found that differences between educational achievement of lower-class children and their peers is attributable largely to what happens during summers rather than to what happens during the school year. These findings point to the importance of creating an array of educationally beneficial experiences outside of as well as within schools. The achievement gap will not be closed without connecting in-school and out-of-school programming for at-risk students

The University's role should include research about the most beneficial out-of-school activities for children and youth of all ages and effective dissemination of information about successful programming, building upon work already done by University faculty and staff in programs such as our summer youth camps, and working with partners like the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, which annually inventories summer programs. The University can also engage community center staff to develop programs for out-of-school time that complement school-based programs and that provide students with constructive ways to use their out-of-school time.

Appendix G: PreK-12 Strategy Task Force Bibliography

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Appendix H: PreK-12 Strategy Task Force Consultation Plan

The PreK-12 Task Force includes members from both inside and outside the University, each of whom interacts regularly with key PreK-12, University, and community groups. Task force members include current and former Minnesota school district superintendents from Twin Cities, suburban, and greater Minnesota cities; the commissioner of education; a legislator and minority education leader; a business leader; the dean of the UMD College of Education and Human Service Professions; University faculty who work with high school teachers and with University students from underrepresented groups; the interim associate vice president for Multicultural and Academic Affairs; and an undergraduate student employed by the General College TRIO program. These members sought input informally from their colleagues on the task force charge and deliverables through one-on-one interviews and conversations, and at meetings of their organizations.

In addition, the task force engaged in the following formal consultation:

1. Held an open forum attended by 28 members of the University community;

2. Discussed Task Force work with 25 school superintendents from urban, suburban, and greater Minnesota school districts;

3. Hosted a listening session with 24 leaders in the PreK-12 community, policy makers, and business leaders.