Transforming the University

Preliminary Report of the Task Force on College Design: The College of Liberal Arts

Submitted on behalf of the Task Force by:

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Deliverables for College Design: College of Liberal Arts

Mission:

To prepare a strategy to position the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) as one of the premier colleges of liberal arts in the nation, consistent with the University's goal to become one of the top three public research universities in the world.

Deliverables:

- Recommendations regarding the optimal design, structure, and organization of CLA, including whether the University has the appropriate grouping of disciplines under the CLA umbrella or whether a different collegiate structure would better promote the University's goal to become one of the top three public research universities in the world.
- Recommendations regarding a vision for the future of the College of Liberal Arts in a dynamic urban environment.
- Recommendations regarding how CLA can leverage its current strengths and comparative advantages and chart a course for the future, consistent with the University's goal to become one of the top three public research universities in the world.
- Recommendations regarding promotion of interdisciplinary work both across departments within CLA and across collegiate lines.
- Recommendations regarding creation of an environment in which excellence is expected and supported, with special attention to: (1) faculty research and creative work; (2) undergraduate and graduate education; (3) student outcomes, including retention and timely graduation; and (4) public engagement.
- Recommendations regarding: (1) cultivating intellectual and analytical inquiry skills across the liberal arts curriculum; (2) fostering public engagement; and (3) advancing integrative learning.
- Recommendations regarding the strengthening of relationships between CLA and community resources.

Key Recommendations

Four themes are interwoven throughout our recommendations: interdisciplinarity, interconnectedness, effectiveness, and identity. We recommend a substantial infusion of resources to provide scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students; to increase the size of the CLA faculty by 44 positions, and to increase the compensation of faculty and staff. The resources must come from private donors, foundation and other grants as well as from increased state support.

Improve the quality of undergraduate education and retention and graduation rates by the following measures:

- Invest heavily in high-demand entry level courses, to assure that the courses are excellent and adequate numbers of seats are available.
- Increase scholarship funding, with particular attention to transfer students, juniors and seniors.

- Implement a week-long pedagogy workshop for new assistant professors.
- Implement a program of Junior Seminars, some of which would be interdisciplinary and others of which would be departmental courses.
- Increase the number of research opportunities and community engagement opportunities for undergraduates.
- Make closer connections with the two-year institutions which are source-schools for large numbers of transfer students.

Improve the excellence of the graduate program with the following measures:

- Create a Distinguished Teaching Fellows program for outstanding PhD candidates.
- Increase the level of graduate student support.
- Provide more systematic mentoring to graduate students.

Foster faculty excellence using the following measures:

- Increase the size of CLA by 44 faculty members in order increase our research capacities and institute new undergraduate initiatives, including a new program of Junior Seminars.
- Increase the amount of time faculty have available to do research and teach by reducing the amount of time spent in routine administrative tasks through increased efficiency and by increased staff support.
- Assure rigorous promotion and tenure standards and assure that probationary faculty receive systematic mentoring.

Increase the visibility of CLA within the university, the local community, the state, and nationally.

Members of Task Force

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Introduction

The College of Liberal Arts is in the midst of a transformation. In the last eight years, 65 percent of the current faculty was hired, the number of applicants to the freshman class has doubled, and CLA undergraduates won three Rhodes scholarships after a gap of 24 years. But much remains to be done to make CLA the center of excellence it must be if the University of Minnesota is to achieve its goal of becoming one of the top three public research universities.

We are undertaking this examination of the College of Liberal Arts in the context of an extensive national dialogue about liberal arts education, and especially about the role of the liberal arts in large research universities. The University of Washington and Michigan State University have both gone through intensive examinations of the structure and missions of their liberal arts colleges as have many other peer institutions. A variety of national reports (see Appendix G) have addressed the future of liberal education.

We begin by reaffirming unequivocally the central importance of the liberal arts and a liberal education to the University of Minnesota, the state, and the nation. More than ever, the advantages offered by a liberal education are needed to help people understand and cope with a complex world. In response to the often-heard critique that liberal education is not "practical" and does not prepare people for careers, the task force heard this from a CLA alumnus who is a senior executive in a Minneapolis-based Fortune 500 company:

> Why should liberal arts education become a university, and statewide, priority? Because liberal arts education provides people with the tools to speak and write clearly, to listen and develop reasoned positions on issues after thorough analyses, and to respect differences between and among others. Give us that kind of person and he/she will make a difference in the community as well as the workplace.

How can we assure that we sustain and build on the college's momentum, and move the college forward to meet coming challenges? We make a series of recommendations below that are informed by four interwoven themes that should infuse college planning efforts for the next few years. Those themes are:

- **Interconnectedness:** taking advantage of CLA's unique disciplinary specialties and its linkages with the Twin Cities and global communities to foster powerful new avenues for research, teaching, and communication;
- **Interdisciplinarity**: finding new ways to support research, teaching, and learning at the borders of traditional disciplines to address the complex issues facing society and emerging modes of thinking and problem solving;
- **Effectiveness:** developing strategies to increase accountability for learning outcomes and for intelligent leveraging of limited resources;
- **Identity:** assuring that CLA is known regionally and nationally as a center of teaching and research excellence and that it attracts the resources to support this excellence.

The College and the Community

Unlike many other first-rate public institutions, the University of Minnesota is situated in a major urban area that is home to major corporations, arts organizations, and governmental agencies. To become a great college, CLA needs to capitalize on its presence within this city and view the city as a laboratory, a partner, and potentially a much greater source of material support for the college. The existing partnerships between the Guthrie Theatre and the department of Theatre Arts and Dance, between the School of Music and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, between the economics department and the Federal Reserve Bank, as well as community work done by colleagues in theatre arts, sociology, history, and journalism are important examples of how CLA has built connections with the community to strengthen its teaching and research.

As the work of a number of colleagues has shown, attention to the local has enormous potential for enriching the college at all levels and serving the critical goal of campus diversity. Paying stronger attention to the vibrant communities in which we live and work will make us distinctive nationally and internationally, and we can build compelling undergraduate, graduate, and research agendas by making these connections. The fact that Minnesota has the highest number of refugees per capita anywhere in the United States means that world affairs are written on the changing face of our communities. Connections between the global and the local are apparent as one walks through the neighborhoods that surround the campus. Projects that invite collaboration with members of the community will pay enormous dividends for the college in the future.

The deliberations of the task force have discovered the strength and enthusiasm of CLA alumni. The U of M Foundation reports that more than 60 percent of CLA's alumni live in the greater metropolitan area. This is a significant pool of talent and potential resources that could be mobilized to support the college. CLA should build conversations with the community in many ways, including series of lunchtime events downtown. The college should move swiftly to expand its development and outreach activities in an enthusiastic and receptive community.

Undergraduate Education

Just as CLA is the face of "the U" for much of Minnesota, so CLA's undergraduate programs are the main features on that face. The creation of an increasingly compelling undergraduate experience for our current student population, drawn largely from Minnesota and reciprocity states, can lay the groundwork for the next step: giving a CLA undergraduate degree national and international appeal. The college must continue to recruit the best students, support them in their studies, and offer them a rigorous and intellectually engaging education.

Identity and Recruitment. The college and the Admissions Office have done an outstanding job of raising the profile of CLA's incoming freshman classes. The percent of students drawn from the top quartile of their high school classes has gone from 67 percent to 84 percent in a decade; a third of new entering students are from the top 10 percent of their high schools classes, compared with a quarter ten years ago. Next steps include campus-wide changes, such as the implementation of the recommendations of the Honors Task Force and the Student Support Services Task Force, as well as ideas specific to CLA:

- Develop recruitment materials (for prospective students and admitted but undecided students) describing several targeted clusters of courses, programs, and opportunities that cut across departments and align with thematic interests in such areas as the environment, public engagement, business, and the visual arts. Such clusters would help students see opportunities and relationships that might not otherwise be apparent.
- Increase scholarship funding, with particular attention to transfer students, juniors, and seniors. Adding new funding for students later in their careers should have the effect of helping with graduation and retention rates. Continue the college's strategy of helping donors understand the importance of including need as well as merit as a component of all scholarships.
- Continue the increased focus on national recruiting strategies. As CLA develops its identity as a real educational "destination," there should be less justification for merely regional recruiting. Select targeted areas (both curricular and geographical) where the college is most likely to have success, and recruit energetically. In the fall of 2005, only 4.6 percent of CLA's first year students came from non-reciprocity states. We applaud the college's recent hiring of a staff person to work with admissions on CLA recruiting; we anticipate that this will result in even more successful recruiting in the future. Out-of-state students are both a source and a reflection of enhanced national reputation; they also provide diversity of experience to Minnesota students and boost the college's tuition revenue.
- Recruit and fund local high ability students who are in the first generation to go to college or whose first language is not English. The Twin Cities has an extraordinarily diverse community including several large immigrant groups; drawing more heavily from these populations will enrich our educational environment and forge connections with local communities. Recently implemented financial support programs, such as the Founders Opportunity Scholarships, are excellent innovations, but success in this arena will also require innovative engagement with the K-12 programs in the area to assure that students are aware of, and prepared for, the opportunities available to them.
- Capitalize on the renewed national emphasis on language study as critically important for global understanding and for national security. CLA must participate in this initiative by using its expertise in language instruction and language acquisition to help Minnesota's K-12 schools get more students involved in language instruction earlier. It is to the University's benefit to have students coming here for advanced language instruction rather than beginning languages. That can only happen if the schools are doing an adequate job of language preparation, and if parents and students see the advantage of early second language instruction for all students.
- Focus more attention on transfer students and high school students enrolled through the Post-Secondary Enrollment Options programs. Since this is not specific to CLA, a fuller discussion of this recommendation is included in Appendix E.
- Identify spaces that can be used as CLA common spaces**.** A recurrent theme of our discussions with students, faculty and alumni concerned CLA's lack of physical identity and a lack of congenial space for students and faculty, especially on the west bank. Coffman Union, the Nicholson Student Commons, and the lounge of the Institute for Advanced Study in Nolte Center are important common spaces on the east bank. Reconfigurations following the proposed Carlson building's completion should incorporate plans for a common space on the west bank.

- Market the college more aggressively**.** CLA suffers from a lack of identity greater than the mere absence of branded space. The powerful, pervasive influence of a liberal arts degree for both public and private purposes should be explained and repeated. "Star" CLA faculty should be publicly celebrated to a much greater extent than they are. It may be necessary to put more resources in external relations to make this possible.

Retention and Student Success. Low retention and graduation rates have plagued CLA and much of the University for years. The college and the university have made progress, but freshman retention and four-, five-, and six-year graduation rates are still dramatically lower than those of our aspirational peers. For 2003, the Education Trust's "College Reports Online" shows the University of Michigan's six-year graduation rate as 85.1%, and Berkeley's as 85.4%. Minnesota's was 54.4% (http://www.collegeresults.org/). While these rates are coming up dramatically (the University's 6 year graduation rate for 2005 is 61.2%), they are still too low. And within the University, CLA lags behind the Carlson school, CBS, and IT in graduation rates.

Better graduation and retention rates would greatly increase CLA's appeal and rankings. While we strongly support continued investment in improved advising, a larger number of smaller classes, and various kinds of service learning on their own merits, it is not clear that these measures alone will dramatically improve graduation rates. We must identify the largest barriers to degree completion and renew our determination to remove them. This mandates a focus on a few key issues that will specifically help students have excellent experiences and will move them through their degree programs in a timely way:

- Invest heavily in high-demand entry level courses to assure that the courses taken by the majority of students are excellent and adequate numbers of seats are available. Provide appropriate support and incentives for faculty to teach large introductory courses and provide resources so that teachers of these courses can implement creative teaching strategies.
- Identify high-demand courses campus-wide that have high rates of D or F grades and withdrawals, and target those courses for radical improvements to assure better rates of student success.
- Analyze available data (and collect new data where necessary) to identify impediments to student success and then develop focused strategies to remove or ameliorate the impediments. For example, if there are groups of students who delay taking a second language, the college (in close consultation with language departments and advising staff) should consider mandating that students have begun their coursework in a second language before they accumulate 60 credits. The college should also consider requiring that freshman composition be taken in the freshman year. If such rules are implemented, adequate resources need to be deployed to assure that courses are available.
- Implement a program of Junior Seminars, which might be either interdisciplinary or located within a department, but which would have a focus on interconnectedness (linkages to local or global communities, issues, or problems). The precise nature of these courses would be determined by curricular need, but they would share certain characteristics: they would be capped at no more than 25 students; they would fulfill either Liberal Education or departmental major requirements; and they would be taught either by faculty or by highly qualified doctoral candidates who would be part of a Distinguished Teaching Fellows program (described below).

- Increase the number of research opportunities and community engagement opportunities for undergraduates. We endorse recent moves by CLA to increase the number of research opportunities available to honors students, which will supplement the current Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program. We urge the college to further expand those opportunities and make them more widely available, possibly linking them to efforts to strengthen the requirement for a senior paper or project (see next bullet). We also encourage the involvement of undergraduates as partners in faculty research. Undergraduate participation in faculty research provides students with an extraordinary experience available only in the context of a major research university as well as providing concrete assistance to faculty members.
- Strengthen and clarify the senior paper/senior project requirement in CLA. The senior project requirement should be conceptualized as an undergraduate research and creative opportunity. Departments might encourage senior projects that arise from UROP or from civic engagement projects. Most CLA students do not attend graduate school; departments should be attentive to making the senior project experience as meaningful and exciting as possible for all students. See Appendix D for more information on a survey about the senior project in CLA.
- Examine the curriculum to be sure that topics of critical local and state significance are adequately engaged, as a way of capitalizing on the distinctiveness of our urban location. If they are not, the college should provide course development funds.
- Support and extend the efforts by the Council for Enhancing Student Learning to strengthen the University's assessment of learning outcomes. CLA should be a leader in these efforts as a way of demonstrating the effectiveness and quality of liberal education. The college should be able to articulate learning outcomes and to demonstrate where these occur in each major. This analysis may lead to a radical rethinking of some majors to enhance their coherence and the clarity of their outcomes.
- Strengthen CLA advising. The recent restructuring of CLA advising seems to have resulted in substantial improvements. But there need to be more advisers, and advisers need to be better paid.

Graduate Education

A strong graduate program is essential to the strength of the College of Liberal Arts. Many CLA departments recruit nationally and internationally and place graduates nationally and internationally. Graduate students are learning to be both research scholars and excellent teachers. Strong faculty attract strong graduate students and a great graduate program attracts great faculty; together they build the institution's reputation. The key issue limiting our ability to recruit the very best graduate students is the size of the award packages we are able to offer. While competitor institutions have increased or maintained graduate student support in the new millennium, Minnesota support has fallen in absolute amount. At the same time, tuition, health insurance, and the cost of living have increased dramatically. We make the following recommendations about graduate education in CLA:

- We endorse the recommendations of the Task Force on Graduate Reform: Student Support that TA/RA salaries be raised, that programs provide conference travel money to students who are presenting original research, and that student fees and health insurance be built into

all funding packages. Support must fully reflect the cost of living in Twin Cities and provide competitive funding to attract top students to its programs. And for graduate students who have been awarded prestigious national fellowships (NSF, Ford Foundation, others), the University should cover health insurance and student fees.

- Provide graduate students with information that is clear, consistent and accurate. Focus groups with CLA grad students revealed great disparity in graduate programs and advising. Students often must rely on informal networks for both information and support about issues dealing with program demands and outside funding. The college should consider an orientation for its Directors of Graduate Studies to articulate collegiate expectations. A web portal for CLA graduate students would provide continuously updated information on funding opportunities, job opportunities, and other issues that cross departmental line, and would allow enhanced communication among CLA graduate students.
- Establish a competitive program of Distinguished Teaching Fellows for 50 doctoral candidates drawn from our most talented students in all disciplines. Recipients of these prestigious two-year fellowships would each teach for one semester a year in the Junior Seminar Program, and would hold a non-teaching fellowship for the other semester. The program would provide the Fellows with careful mentoring, provided by senior faculty and other teaching professionals (from the Preparing Future Faculty program, the Center for Teaching and Learning Services, and the Center for Writing). This program would have the dual benefit of providing enhanced professional development for our graduate students and more small class experiences for our undergraduates.
- Provide graduate students with more options for sharpening their teaching skills. Develop a flexible teaching workshop (in addition to the more structured and intensive Preparing Future Faculty courses) that could more effectively address new teaching challenges as they arise. It could meet throughout the semester and involve faculty from various departments so that students can gain understanding of pedagogies across disciplines.

We have two further recommendations about graduate programs:

- Develop strategies to "right-size" graduate programs. In recent years, because of financial concerns, the college has urged departments to reduce the number of graduate students (or to keep the number of graduate students constant while the number of faculty increases). In many departments, this is a prudent strategy. In some departments (especially those in the social sciences), this reduction results in a shortage of graduate student participants in research teams. For this reason, the college should work with the provost and development officers to obtain funding so that the size of graduate programs can be maintained at appropriate levels. One criterion for determining correct size is the number of good job opportunities for a department's graduates. That means there is a responsibility to track job placements and create a feedback loop to adjust graduate student cohort sizes. It also means that as departments and rankings improve, departments will be better able to place their graduate students in better positions.
- Consider implementing additional niche MA programs to build local and state support for the college. While the general public and legislature is not usually engaged with doctoral programs, they are often very interested in furthering their education beyond the baccalaureate, both for personal and professional reasons. The college could play a role in enhancing language education in Minnesota schools by implementing MA in Teaching degrees similar to the one offered by the highly ranked department of German, Scandinavian,

and Dutch. Interdisciplinary MA programs on topics such as immigration or applied ethics could have a wide appeal, broaden our connections to the community, and stimulate both students and faculty.

Faculty

CLA faculty quality drives much of the academic reputation of the University of Minnesota. For example, 23 CLA graduate programs comprise almost half of the total of 48 Minnesota programs evaluated by the National Research Council. CLA provides nearly one half of all undergraduate instruction on the Twin Cities campus; it awards 43 percent of the University's undergraduate degrees and 29 percent of all of its degrees.

The key to faculty strength is to hire well, mentor carefully, and tenure using rigorous standards. Faculty who are adequately compensated and provided with the tools they need to be outstanding teachers, researchers, creative artists and professionals (including libraries, new media tools, music and dance studios) will provide the energy and creativity to lead the College of Liberal Arts to a new level of excellence. But on many occasions, the quest for excellence comes up against faculty size. Small departments (or particular areas within large departments) whose faculty are remarkably successful at attracting outside research funding are faced with a dilemma: when faculty devote full time to research as a result of attracting outside research funding or winning prestigious national competitions, who teaches the undergraduate and graduate students? Many CLA departments are, by any measure, understaffed. Journalism, for example, has a faculty of 21 and more than 1000 majors.

Rankings in some key CLA departments have slipped in the past several years. An analysis done by the Leiter Reports using U.S. News and World Report data examines the change in rankings of seven liberal arts departments (economics, English, history, philosophy, political science, psychology, sociology) across a number of research institutions and concludes that from 2001 to 2004, Minnesota experienced the second greatest decline among all universities studied. (See Appendix F for more detail.)

We strongly recommend that funding be provided to the College of Liberal Arts for a net increase of 44 positions over the next five years. A recent comparative analysis of fifteen nationally-comparable departments (see Appendix F) concludes that CLA is short 87 positions in those departments alone. We are asking for faculty positions to make up half of that shortfall. Some of the new positions must be used to restore the excellence of departments that have fallen in the rankings, some to maintain the strongest departments (such as economics, psychology, political science) and some should be devoted to providing the needed margin to move departments on the verge of greatness into the top rank. Some of these new hires will bolster strength within disciplines; some will build bridges between and among disciplines. Some of the new positions should be allocated to the Junior Seminars, as new faculty lines were allocated for Freshman Seminars several years ago.

We also recommend that for some of these incremental positions the college (after appropriate consultation) set a series of college-wide hiring priorities (such as a scholar of Middle Eastern studies or a scholar who works on the Hmong community or the Somali community) and initiate

cross-departmental searches for such scholars. This would provide a mechanism for conceptualizing college-wide hiring priorities, which might not in every case be identical to the hiring priorities of the individual units in the department.

These 44 new faculty would do more than provide research strength and attract the best graduate students. They would also powerfully support CLA's drive to increase excellence in undergraduate education. Without additional faculty in CLA, many of the excellent suggestions in several task force reports for improving undergraduate education will simply not be possible.

In addition to adding new faculty, the University and CLA should provide better compensation packages. The 2004-05 AAUP salary study (http://chronicle.com/stats/aaup/) showed that faculty salaries at the Twin Cities campus as a whole were at the average for doctoral institutions across the country, but well below the salaries offered by the best public institutions. The average salary of a full professor at Minnesota is almost $15,000 less than at Michigan, $7,000 less than at Penn State, and $6,000 less than Illinois.

Structure, Accountability, and Effectiveness

The organizational structure of the College of Liberal Arts is (and probably must be) an imperfect map of the intellectual activities of its faculty and students. Our current academic disciplines are artifacts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; it should not surprise us that they are in a state of constant flux and rearrangement. Some of the most exciting work being done in the academy today marries work at the center of two or three disciplines, or is being done at the margins of disciplines. We need flexible structures that can mediate between departmental structure and the intellectual worlds of our faculty and students.

Interdisciplinary synergies. Interdisciplinary research is fostered by CLA's eighteen interdisciplinary centers, and CLA faculty participate in many other centers located outside of the college. The college must adequately support those centers that it decides are central to its mission. The opportunity for external funding through grants and gifts varies substantially by intellectual area. Some emerging areas are highly important, even visionary, even though difficult to fund externally. The college and University should be prepared to provide necessary funding for worthy efforts, while maintaining reasonable expectations about efforts expended to seek outside support. To the extent that the college expects centers to become self-supporting, it must provide them with more help from development officers, even if this requires increasing staffing levels in the development office. The newly formed Institute for Advanced Study has the potential to be the site of much exciting disciplinary work and to form new kinds of intellectual synergy within the college and beyond it. But there are other steps that need to be taken by both the college and the university:

- Encourage the formation of interdisciplinary faculty interest groups, which would be less formal and less durable than centers. An interest group should be given a small budget or shared staff to cover such expenses as meetings, a website, and so on. Models for such groups include the Research and Creative Collaboratives within the Institute for Advanced Study and the Intellectual Collectives in the Institute for Global Studies. Some interest groups might develop into centers, while others might develop into curricular programs. The

college also needs to be clearer about who in the administration can provide assistance to faculty in facilitating cross-collegiate interdisciplinary collaborations in both research and teaching.

- Develop procedures to facilitate interdisciplinary team teaching at the graduate and undergraduate levels, perhaps by greater use of an accounting system where credit for teaching follows the faculty member rather than the course designator. We cannot allow a financial model to stand in the way of creative ideas. Some departments are currently reluctant to allow faculty to teach in other CLA departments for fear that the college will not "count" those student credit hours. The college should also make funding available to encourage team teaching in instances where faculty can make a case that there are extraordinary pedagogic advantages for the students or research-related advantages for the teachers. Ideas developed while teaching with a colleague can have a substantial impact on a faculty member's research agenda.
- Establish a Center for Film Studies that will draw on and extend the scattered strengths of faculty with expertise in film and media studies scattered in departments throughout the college.
- Explore how the college might invest in a shared research infrastructure for the social sciences, such as an institute for behavioral and social science research that would provide space, staff support, and equipment for shared projects across the social and behavioral sciences. This is an expensive investment but could be repaid in better opportunities for research grants, more attractive faculty hiring opportunities, and extended graduate research opportunities. Some of our peer institutions have such operations (for example, the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan).
- Work with the various CLA departments that deal with communications, literacy and media (Journalism and Mass Communication, Communication Studies, English) and the Department of Rhetoric to assure that the university's offerings in these areas take full advantage of our substantial strengths in these fields.
- Encourage and enhance collaborations with the University of Minnesota Press, which is a premier publisher, especially in the humanities.

<u>Accountability and Efficiency.</u> The faculty of the College of Liberal Arts is accountable to one another, to the university, to their students, and to the people of Minnesota. We believe that the procedures in place for increasing teaching effectiveness and for evaluating faculty are largely effective. But we recommend that the college implement the following changes to enhance accountability:

- Enhance the teaching resources available to new assistant professors by providing a week-long teaching workshop before the fall semester begins. This would both serve as an orientation to the college and the university and begin a long-term conversation about pedagogy among a cohort of new faculty. New faculty orientations should include a serious introduction to the Twin Cities and to greater Minnesota and might focus especially on the unique opportunities that the Twin Cities offer as a resource for both undergraduate and graduate education.
- Assure that departmental tenure and promotion statements reflect a coherent strategy for achieving excellence. . In some cases greater specificity about what is expected of candidates might be appropriate. Some departments might use a statement revision to affirm the value of interdisciplinary work, which various parts of the strategic planning process have

declared to be critical for Minnesota's future success. Departments whose mission includes a strong professional component must articulate how professional activities are to be evaluated.

- Address the situation of associate professors who have been a long period at that rank. Department chairs should meet with associate professors who have been in rank for eight years or longer and jointly produce an individualized plan for action. If course releases or research funds would make it possible for colleagues to produce the body of research that will lead to promotion, the college and the department should work together to provide such funds.
- Make college and university procedures more efficient and transparent, and committee work less onerous. The university and the college have an extraordinarily democratic governance structure. Our conversations with faculty in general showed that faculty appreciate the democratic nature of the college, but they also overwhelmingly thought that business could be conducted more efficiently. In addition, while the College of Liberal Arts is by most measures a very efficient operation, some measures that are touted as signs of efficiency (low ratios of administrative staff, for example) actually decrease faculty efficiency. Some tasks performed by faculty could be as well (or better) performed by well-trained and adequately compensated staff. The college could also provide creative incentives that encourage departments to share resources, leading to greater administrative efficiencies. Departments in the same building or on the same floor of a large building could explore a wide variety of ways to reduce costs and enhance efficiency by sharing expert staff. It should be possible to achieve intellectual synergies and economies of scale without impinging on departmental identity.

Concluding Remarks

In many of our peer institutions, the liberal arts and sciences are housed in one college. Were we devising the University of Minnesota anew, we might well recommend such an organization because of the synergies it would provide. But institutions are formed by history as much as they are formed by logic. A restructuring of the University of Minnesota at this time to include the liberal arts and sciences in one college would be a massive undertaking that would distract from the central tasks at hand: to facilitate faculty research and to improve the quality of the education we provide to undergraduates and graduate students.

The College of Liberal Arts is in a strong position to help lead the University of Minnesota to a new level of excellence. By focusing on interdisciplinarity, interconnectedness, effectiveness, and identity, the college can continue the path of improvement. But if the college is to make remarkable changes, substantial new investments are needed—for scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students, for new faculty that will both enhance our research capabilities and make possible new undergraduate initiatives, for higher faculty and staff salaries, and for more staff positions. Some of these resources should come from increased state support; others must come from private donations. But without new support, we will only tinker at the margins of a good college instead of building a great one.

CLA Task Force Draft Report

Appendices

Appendix A: Charge Letter to Task Force and Deliverables

Appendix B: Consultation Process

1. List of Consulted Individuals and Groups
2. Graduate and Undergraduate Focus Groups Report
3. Notes from CLA Professional and Administrative Board Meeting

Appendix C: Summary of Meeting with Debra Friedman, University of Washington

Appendix D: Senior Project Questionnaire Summary

Appendix E: Additional Recommendations

Appendix F: Data on Rankings and Size of Faculty

Appendix G: Additional Resources

Appendix A: Charge Letter to Task Force and Deliverables

September 15, 2005

TO: *Provost's Academic Task Force on College Design: College of Liberal Arts*
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Valerie Tiberius, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, CLA
Teresa Wallace, Research Associate, Institute on Community Integration, CEHD
Susan Wolf, Professor and Director, Joint Degree Program in Law, Health, and Life Sciences, Law School
FROM: E. Thomas Sullivan, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

RE: Provost's Charge to Task Force on College Design: CLA

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the academic strategic positioning Task Force on College Design: College of Liberal Arts, under the leadership of co-chairs, Robert Kudrle and Ann Waltner. The efforts of this task force will be critical to the overall success of the University's transformative strategic positioning effort.
Attached are documents that, taken together, comprise the charge to your task force.

- Attachment A contains an articulation of the University's overall goal and assigns to the task force the responsibility of retaining an "eye on the prize." Each of the issues identified in Attachment A, which is part of the charge of every task force, must be addressed.
- Attachment B contains criteria to be addressed by each task force. These criteria are drawn from the action strategies identified in the strategic positioning report *Advancing the Public Good: Securing the University's Leadership Position in the 21st Century* (February 2005). It is critical that each task force consider how its work can further each of the five broad action strategies.
- Attachment C contains the mission and deliverables specific to your task force, along with the date on which your task force report and recommendations are due.
- Attachment D contains the criteria for decision making, taken directly from the February strategic positioning report. Each task force should use these criteria as a framework for decision making.
- Attachment E contains a diagram of the process to be used by each task force. Note in particular the periods of required consultation with stakeholders.

There are a number of resources available to you as you pursue your charge. These include the professional staff member assigned specifically to assist your task force, the Resource Alignment Team, a toolkit of documents and templates, and the professional staff of University Relations appointed to facilitate internal and external communication of progress through the strategic positioning process. The Resource Alignment Team is a consulting group charged with providing support to all task forces in the areas of cross-functional alignment, change management, and subject matter expertise as needed. Support also is available from the Steering Committee for your strategic area. Finally, Leanne Wirkkula has been appointed to serve as a liaison between the academic task forces and me. Leanne will be able to help task force co-chairs access needed support and assistance. Leanne may be reached at (612) 625-0563, wirkkula@umn.edu.

The success of your task force will depend upon creative, forward-looking thought that maintains constant focus on the broad goals for the institution as a whole rather than the self interest of particular individuals or groups. Your effort will require consultation with all potentially affected stakeholders, from deans to students and everyone in between. It will require dedication and persistence. And together with the work of the other task forces, it will help guide the University on our journey to become one of the top three public research universities in the world.

Thank you for accepting this important challenge. I look forward to meeting with you at the kick-off work session hosted by President Bruininks this Friday, September 16.
Attachments: 5

c: Craig Swan, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education
Linda Ellinger, Staff to the Task Force on College Design: CLA
Sharon Reich Paulsen, Assistant Vice President and Chief of Staff
Leanne Wirkkula, Assistant to the Provost

College Design: College of Liberal Arts

Mission:
To prepare a strategy to position the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) as one of the premier colleges of liberal arts in the nation, consistent with the University's goal to become one of the top three public research universities in the world.

Deliverables:

- Recommendations regarding the optimal design, structure, and organization of CLA, including whether the University has the appropriate grouping of disciplines under the CLA umbrella or whether a different collegiate structure would better promote the University's goal to become one of the top three public research universities in the world.
- Recommendations regarding a vision for the future of the College of Liberal Arts in a dynamic urban environment.
- Recommendations regarding how CLA can leverage its current strengths and comparative advantages and chart a course for the future, consistent with the University's goal to become one of the top three public research universities in the world.
- Recommendations regarding promotion of interdisciplinary work both across departments within CLA and across collegiate lines.
- Recommendations regarding creation of an environment in which excellence is expected and supported, with special attention to: (1) faculty research and creative work; (2) undergraduate and graduate education; (3) student outcomes, including retention and timely graduation; and (4) public engagement.
- Recommendations regarding: (1) cultivating intellectual and analytical inquiry skills across the liberal arts curriculum; (2) fostering public engagement; and (3) advancing integrative learning.
- Recommendations regarding the strengthening of relationships between CLA and community resources.

Appendix B1: Consultation Process

This is a partial list of consultations held by members of the CLA task force.

Individual/Organization	*Date*	*Consultation Method*
Graduate Student Leaders	11/29/05	Focus group discussion
Graduate Student Leaders	12/2/05	Focus group discussion
CLA Student Board	11/30/05	Focus group discussion
CLA Transfer Student Board	12/1/05	Focus group discussion
CLA Freshman Leaders	12/6/05	Focus group discussion
Geoffrey Hellman, Chair of Philosophy	3/14/06	Conversation w/AW
Earl Scott, Chair of African-American and African Studies	2/28/06	Conversation w/AW
Journalism Department	3/24/06	AW attended meeting
Michael Kac, Professor, Philosophy	3/24/06	Conversation w/AW
Laura Gurak, Rhetoric	3/7/06	Conversation w/co-chairs
Terry McDonald, Dean of LS&A, U. Michigan	10/21/05	Met with AW in Ann Arbor
Terry McDonald, Dean of LS&A, U. Michigan	2/10/06	Conference Call w/Co-Chairs
Debra Friedman, Dean, College of Public Programs, Arizona State U.	2/15/06	Conversation with task force
CLA P/A Board	12/14/05	Met with TF member
CLA Faculty: Senior Faculty	2/22/06	Lunch with TF reps
CLA Faculty: New Assistant Faculty	2/8/06	Lunch with TF reps
CLA Faculty: Advanced Assistants	2/15/06	Lunch with TF reps
CLA Faculty: New Associates	2/15/06	Lunch with TF reps
CLA Alumni	2/23/06	Conversation w/TF over dinner
Mary Hicks, CLA Development	11/9/05	Met with Task Force
James Parente, CLA Associate Dean for Faculty	2/27/06	Met with Co-chairs
Riv-Ellen Prell, Chair of American Studies and Co-chair, Council of CLA Chairs	2/7/06	Met with Task Force
Steven Rosenstone, CLA Dean	9/27/06, 1/12/06	Met with Co-chairs
CLA Advisors	Dec. 2005	Email Survey
CLA Directors of Undergraduate Studies	Dec. 2005	Email Survey
Town Hall with CLA	11/15/05	Met with Task Force
CLA Associate Deans	1/23/06	Met with Co-chairs
Victor Bloomfield, Associate VP for Public Engagement	2/1/06	Met with Task Force
Chris Kearns CLA Asst. Dean	11/2/05	Met with Task Force

Appendix B2: Consultation Process (continued)

Notes from Meeting with CLA P/A Board, Wednesday, December 14, 2005, 12:15-1:15pm

Retention/Graduation

increase credit levels for some courses from 3 to 4 or 5
check to see that actual course credit levels
fit the formula for determining credit levels
if students can earn more credits per course, they could graduate more quickly
so question is, is CLA/U's credit formula different from those at peer institutions?
if so, should we adjust it?
if not, is this something we want to do?

There is a CLA Alumni Association, possibly with staff in Johnston Hall; Board suggested we speak with them on matters of outreach

Suggested that a major obstacle to interdisciplinary research is the new budget model, because it is based so much on college distinctions; hard to know how to allocate funds or incentives for interdisciplinary research

Others noted that specific departments and centers have had difficulty getting CLA admin to support interdisciplinary research and teaching

Change culture of the College (and University): encourage students not to define themselves in terms of career or job,but in terms of being liberally educated. Critical thinking, the importance of ideas, discovery of who one is (one person noted that this ought to fit well with the American culture of narcissism)

Promoting the College: try TV and radio ads; success stories: focus not only on the stellar students doing esoteric research, but on more mundane, ordinary stories

Task Force should hold meetings with:

teachers (both faculty and P/As), advisers (both departmental advisers and those working in advising communities), and CLA administrators group – esp. helpful for thinking about logistics of change

Other concerns expressed: class sizes too large; too many courses taught by grad students rather than faculty

Appendix B3: Consultation Process (Continued)

CLA Task Force Graduate and Undergraduate Focus Group Report
Kai Carlson Wee, Margot Iverson, and Nalo Jackson, January 2005

Table of Contents:

Abstract:

As the Graduate Student and Undergraduate Student members of the CLA Task Force, we determined that it was very important to our Strategic Positioning process to gather input from the students themselves about their experiences. Doing so would help aid us in creating our recommendations for changes within the CLA as well as strengthen trust from CLA students as they would have direct input into the strategic positioning process.

We met with five student groups from November 29 – December 6, 2005. The groups were as follows: two focus groups of graduate student leaders, the CLA Student Board, the CLA Transfer Student Board, and CLA Freshman Leaders. There were very few students of color represented in these groups, so we are considering holding one more focus group with the leaders of the student multicultural groups (including student of color groups, GBLTU groups and Disability groups) as well.

This report highlights the students' responses from each focus group, followed with our recommendation based upon the information gathered through the focus groups.

Summary of Student Recommendations

Graduate:

- Students often have to rely on their informal student social networks for both information and support about issues dealing with their program demands and outside funding. Addressing these concerns should be an institutionalized process: for example, guidelines for departmental directors of graduate students should be established. In addition, a fellowship/grant officer position within CLA to inform students of alternative funding opportunities would aid students in finding outside funding.
- There needs to be more organizational structure for interdisciplinary studies so that students are not left on their own to move between departments in search of interdisciplinary collaborators.
- Funding needs to increase in order to more adequately support students. The U of MN needs to realistically look at cost of living in Twin Cities as well as provide competitive funding to attract top students to its programs.

- Funding packages should include summer funding, conference travel monies and research allowances so that students, on an already tight budget, can most appropriately pursue their work.
- Student fees and complete health insurance coverage should be covered by the U of MN; if these are not covered by the U, students should be able to pay the fees later in the semester (as things stand now, students are expected to pay these fees well before receiving any funding).
- CLA must aggressively argue its importance to the U as a whole in order to gain more respect from other colleges at the U, from the community, and from those looking to donate to the U.
- CLA should sponsor social and intellectual functions for various group interests across disciplines as a way to create community within CLA.
- A more thorough TA orientation, with faculty members from various disciplines acting as mentors and resources about university policies and resources, should be established.
- A more flexible teaching pedagogy workshop (in addition to the more structured and intensive Preparing Future Faculty courses) should be established in order to support student teaching. It could meet throughout the semester and involve faculty from various departments so that students can receive training in pedagogies across disciplines.

Undergraduate:

- There should be more institutional priority given to the need for both professors and TAs to obtain/maintain good teaching skills; communication skills in particular should be targeted as critical, especially for teachers for whom English is a second language.
- Better efforts should be made by CLA to ensure that students have an opportunity to enroll in their courses in a timely manner so that they may complete their degree in a timely manner; (for example, priority for course enrollment should be given to more senior students, including transfer students)
- Course descriptions should come out in a timely manner and present a clearer idea of course topics and requirements and there should be a uniformity of requirements in specifically designated courses such as the Writing Intensive courses, 3000-level courses, etc.
- CLA should improve its Freshman Orientation so that students have a better understanding of the available facilities and resources at the U; suggestions include: smaller group meetings with advisors/mentors, one-on-one advising and registration, smaller campus tour groups, and a walk-through of the U and CLA websites so that students are better able to access resources themselves.
- Transfer Student Orientation should be improved in the same ways as previously mentioned; the process for approval of transfer credits should also take place in a more timely manner.
- CLA should also increase efforts to build community among students, starting at orientation and continuing throughout the freshman year; suggestions include:

holding social and intellectual gatherings for groups of similar interests across disciplines and weekly/monthly informal gatherings of students with a particular graduate student or professor to discuss their work and their field.

- Ideally, all departments should have a common meeting space where undergraduates, graduates and faculty can informally meet to hold social functions as well as formally meet to discuss pertinent issues concerning their field.
- CLA should market itself more aggressively so that it is seen as an essential component to the U, thus instilling more pride into its students.
- CLA should consider restructuring itself by creating subdivisions within the college (such as Sciences, Humanities, etc.) and tailor the core requirements to the particular fields within each subdivision); (this suggestion would particularly address students concerns about the lengthy time it takes to complete the language requirements).
- Transfer credits should more easily transfer to the U.
- Tutorials should be given on how to use the U web because "the CLA website is not helpful, it's too hard to navigate" and it is not helpful to tell students that "it's all online."
- There should be more institutional support for academic groups of similar interests which both aid in student socialization and intellectualism at the U (a good model to follow is the Freshman Interest Group (FIG)).

CLA Task Force: Focus Group Outline

CLA Task Force Mission:

To prepare a strategy to position the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) as one of the premier colleges of liberal arts in the nation, consistent with the University's goal to become one of the top three public research universities in the world.

Focus Group Goals:

The graduate and undergraduate experiences in the CLA are an essential component to achieving the goals of improving the CLA. Input from undergraduate and graduate CLA students will provide us with pertinent information as to what ways students feel the CLA is serving them well, as well as provide suggestions as to how the CLA can serve them better.

You are invited to participate in the CLA Task Force Focus Groups so that you can share your views and experiences with the Task Force. We will use the information gained through the focus groups to help shape our recommendations for improving the CLA.

The focus groups will be facilitated by the graduate student and undergraduate student members of the CLA Task Force. The groups will include about 10 participants and last around 1 hour. The anonymity of focus group participants will be kept, and the

information provided by participants will only be used for the CLA Task Force recommendations.

On behalf of the CLA Task Force, THANK YOU for your participation in our focus groups. The information you provide will greatly aid in the improvement of the CLA!

Focus Group Questions:

Introductions:

- Kai and Nalo introduce themselves
- Explain the goal of the focus groups
- Have participants introduce themselves (first name, year, major/department)

Graduate

1. Think about your decision to attend graduate school. When you were considering where to go to grad school, what made you choose the U of MN?
2. Think about the expectations you had of graduate school. In what ways has the U of MN met your expectations?
3. In what ways has the U of MN not met your expectations?
4. Given what you know, what types of funding have graduate students in your department received?
5. To what extent has this funding met your needs?
6. What needs do you feel are not met by your funding?
7. Given what you know, what types of resources have people in your department received towards furthering their degree (i.e. travel grants, access to lab equipment, book allowances, etc.)?
8. What do you believe is the most critical step concerning academics the U of MN can take to improve its graduate program in the CLA?
    - concerning resources
    - concerning funding
9. Is there anything else you think would be helpful for us to know in order to improve the CLA?

Undergraduate

1. Think about your decision to attend college. When you were considering where to go to college, what made you choose the U of MN?
2. Think about the expectations you had of college. In what ways has the U of MN met your expectations?
3. In what ways has the U of MN not met your expectations?
4. To what extent have you found an intellectual community among students and faculty that are supportive of your education?
5. To what extent do you feel that you are appropriately challenged in your classes?
6. To what extent have you found a social community among students and faculty?

7. What do you think the CLA should do to create a stronger since of community among its students?
8. What do you believe is the most critical step the U of MN can take to improve its undergraduate program in the CLA?
9. Is there anything else you think would be helpful for us to know in order to improve the CLA?

Conclusion:

Review the responses to the questions on the Flip Chart

Thank people for participating and inform them that the Task Force final report will be out in May 2006.

Graduate Student Leaders, November 29, 2005

Four graduate student leaders attended from the departments of music, linguistics, Speech-Hearing (check), and American Studies. All were doctoral students.

Questions:

1. **Think about your decision to attend graduate school. When you were considering where to go to grad school, what factors made you choose the U of MN?**

--Only school to offer me enough funding, not my first choice.
--Ranking of my department and the departmental student-of-color association that addressed these concerns
--To work with a specific teacher. Wasn't initially interested, but visited and was offered funding and teaching opportunities.
--Already working at a lab associated with the University and faculty members that she wanted to work with.

2. **In what ways has the U of MN met your expectations?**

--Felt familiar after already working in a lab here.
--Pleased with social networks among the graduate students (however shouldn't have to rely on other students without the institutional support there as well).
--Lots going on for students interested in interdisciplinary studies (although not necessarily much institutional support—see below).
--In my department doctoral students are happy, but the same cannot be said for the master's students, who need more direction and attention.
--Strong sense of camaraderie among graduate students. Not a "cut-throat hell-hole" like some other graduate schools. Instead there is a real "cooperative spirit".

3. **In what ways has the U of MN not met your expectations?**

--Interdisciplinary studies are a "false promise", little real support and difficult to make connections with scholars in other departments (no central place to find/make your interdisciplinary connections)

--Lack of adequate communication between different departments and between departments and grant-assistance offices (lack of institutional support for interdisciplinary studies, thus students have to do the leg work of making the connections among departments themselves)
--In my department, there are only a limited number of assistantships, and the department does not do enough to help students find positions outside the department.
--Advising is very uneven. There should be some sort of training and uniformity so that all students can be assured of good advising. (as well as uniform guidelines for DGS so that students have reasonable expectations of DGS/department).
--Very little in terms of summer funding. Difficult to get any research done over summer if must take an outside job to support oneself.

4. Given what you know, what types of funding have graduate students in your department received?

--Better for doctoral students than for masters' students.
--In my department, every semester is different. They never guarantee funding, but they've always been able to find something for me, I just never know what that something will be.
--I've been promised funding for as long as I am here, but I am an exception in my department.
--In my department most people [doctoral students] are offered four-year packages of support.
--For most departments, funding was largely provided as TA positions for Ph.D. students, other forms of funding were RA positions or teaching positions; MA students must pay their own way. Students are also constantly applying for grants/fellowships and loans in order to either supplement or replace their TA-ship.

6. What needs do you feel are not met by your funding?

--I was taken by surprise by all the student fees that are assessed at the beginning of the school year—there are a lot of them, and no one warns you about them ahead of time.
--Concerned about the trend towards increasing co-pays and charges for graduate student health insurance.
--No complaints, it's very hard to get by but that's what I expected.
--Lack of funding for summers.
--students are discouraged from taking outside jobs, but need to in order to provide for themselves
--the "living wage" determined by the U of MN doesn't provide a "cushion" for emergency purposes

7. Given what you know, what types of resources have people in your department received towards furthering their degree?

--No book allowances.
--Lab equipment is good, but divided up into different labs in such a way that it can be difficult to access.

--For travel money, can apply to GAPSA or the Community of Scholars Program. (have to use these programs because there is no money available from the department)
--Some departments have a small pot of travel money for graduate students.
--Not a lot of travel money, but has been sufficient.
--overall, there are minimal funds available for students to use for travel or research, thus these expenses must be paid out of pocket by students who are already underfunded)

8. What do you believe is the most critical step concerning academics the University can take to improve its graduate program in the CLA?

--Unionize graduate student workers. This would give us bargaining power with the University and the ability to work together.
--More funding and better allocation of funding that we have. If we are going to be a topnotch university, how can we do this without more money? Departments are already at capacity.
--It comes down to money, money for lots of things like new dance floors, new lab equipment, money for research grants.
--The university has already told the departments to make do with less money. How does this fit with making the University better?
--What does Strategic Positioning really mean? No one seems to know.
--More money. For example, students suffer when the University has to fund new buildings by renting them out. The Ted Mann performance space is only available on a very limited basis for student performances because it has to be rented out so much of the time.
--Raise awareness of the University in the local community. There is still the perception that the U is just a "local school"—we need to establish links with the local community so that we become better known and better respected and they will support us better.

9. Is there anything else you think would be helpful for us to know in order to improve CLA?

--It's important that any changes that are made do not curtail the autonomy and integrity of the individual departments and programs.
--There seems to be a disconnect between the administration and the departments. For example, my department operates a clinic which serves the local community. Administrators outside our department keep threatening to close it because it doesn't bring in enough revenue, but that is not its true purpose—to offer students an essential training opportunity.
--Concerned about changes in funding which reward departments for having fewer professors per graduate student.
--CLA is seen as the school which doesn't bring in much money, not well respected by other colleges within the U. But CLA is the heart of the University, and central to the U's mission of education as a public good.
--CLA faculty are not valued enough. (positions are being cut and courses filled-in with Ph.D. students; visiting professors are paid poorly)

--It's frustrating that graduate students, even those working in medical and technical fields with qualifications that could earn them a lot more if not working student jobs, are paid so poorly by the University.
--Funding is the big issue.

Graduate Student Leaders, December 2, 2005

Eight graduate student leaders attended from the departments of Theater, Art, Speech-Hearing, ESL (English-as-a-Second –Language), Statistics and Philosophy.

Questions:

1. Think about your decision to attend graduate school. When you were considering where to go to grad school, what factors made you choose the U of MN?

--There were several factors for me, including which programs responded to my email inquiries, which programs were willing to take on a student with little background in the discipline, and which programs offered me money. The fact that I had family in the area was also a plus.
--The quality of the department, and the reputation of specific areas within the department. I liked that there were several areas of strength in the department. The location of the University was not very important to me.
--How highly the graduate students are valued here. My department flew out all the accepted graduate students for a recruiting weekend. Also, all of us were offered good funding. The students in my department feel highly valued and happy.
--Location, because my husband goes to school here. But also the quality of the department, and the strong mentoring available within the department.
--I was already living here in Minnesota and knew the department to be a good one.
--I'm from South Dakota, and the tuition reciprocity deal was important to me. Also, I came here because of the Minnesota English Center, which has since closed.
--Heard about Minneapolis (as a place to live) from a friend. This was also the only program where I was accepted—but I've been fortunate, it turns out my program is highly reputable.
--While completing a MFA in Texas I heard about this program. The location was not a plus for me.
--I wasn't planning to attend graduate school. I lived here, and I applied assuming I would be rejected, but instead I was accepted and got a fellowship. My program isn't really "on the map", but its reputation is growing, and the facilities are great, and I'm getting money to make art.

2. In what ways has the U of MN met your expectations?

--Yes. I came here from a Master's program in the UK, where graduate programs are much more unstructured. So I came here for a rigorous academic grounding and that's what I'm getting. But now that I'm here, sometimes I wish there was a little less structure.
--I had no expectations related to CLA. As far as I'm concerned, CLA is a non-existent entity in my life, and I'm invisible within CLA. There seems to be no

cohesive community for CLA; nothing goes on in CLA that makes you feel a part of it.
--There is such a diversity within CLA, it would be hard to find something cohesive. It would be nice if there were something like GAPSA, but just for CLA, some sort of social events.
--Didn't know what to expect. It's not like undergraduate life. Most of my expectations related to my department. I expected to work closely with my advisor, and that expectation has been met, even exceeded. I've had amazing opportunities to co-teach with my advisor and to collaborate on work.

3. In what ways has the U of MN not met your expectations?

--The closure of the Minnesota English Center—that's why I came here.
--There was an overhaul of the classes in my department after I arrived here, so that the classes I wanted to take were no longer being offered.
--What kinds of things are determined by CLA? Does CLA determine how large classes are, for example?
--There should be more resources for TA-ing.(improve TA-orientation)
--Our department has special intensive workshops for teaching assistants.
--Maybe there could be learning/teaching communities, participation in which would be a condition of assistantships.
--It would be helpful to have some introduction to different resources and procedural issues when first a teaching assistant. How to work with students with disabilities, for example, or to deal with students who cheat, or how to find these resources on the U website.
--PFF is great, but the PFF courses are a huge commitment of time. Maybe something that was a bit less time, like a weekly meeting with a CLA faculty member attending to act as mentor. Someone of whom you could ask questions about resources and regulations. The meeting could be open and optional, available on those weeks you needed it.
--It would be useful to meet with teaching assistants in other departments.(to learn of training in pedagogies across disciplines)

4. Given what you know, what types of funding have graduate students in your department received?

--In ESL, we mostly have to fund ourselves. There are some jobs, mostly outside the department. Two incoming students get $3,000 partial fellowships. We have to pay for our tuition. It's very frustrating, especially when it seems like there's a real need for ESL teachers on campus to help international students and faculty. If the University could offer more ESL classes, it might attract more international students.

--There seems to be an obligation felt in our department to fund graduate students, at least Ph.D. students. This semester I'm working two 25% jobs in order to get full tuition benefits. There are no guarantees, but every semester they've found something for me.
--There are a few fellowships available from the University, and a little outside funding you can apply for, but it's frustrating overall.

--In Theater, which only admits 3-4 students Ph.D. a year, you are guaranteed four years of funding through a combination of fellowships and teaching.
--In my field there's lots of external funding, so almost everyone has scholarships.
--The across-the-board raise for teaching assistants in CLA has had a negative effect in my department because no additional monies were provided to fund the raise.
--In Philosophy, we are all offered 5 years guaranteed funding. Our first semester and the semester before our exams we are paid for a 50% position but only have to work a 25% job. There are also a number of one-semester fellowships available from the department.
--when students have to look for jobs outside of the department, it creates a lack of community feeling or a lack of involvement within the department

6. What needs do you feel are not met by your funding?

--No one ever tells you about all the student fees, which all hit you at the beginning of the year.
--Why can't these fees be deducted from our paychecks?
--Lots of Arts students have to take out loans.
--Whether or not my department will offer me support is a semester-by-semester decision. It would be nice if they could at least promise a year at a time.
--There is competition among the graduate students in my department for funding, especially for summer teaching jobs.

7. Given what you know, what types of resources have people in your department received towards furthering their degree?

Summer Funding

--About 25% of students in my department receive some sort of summer funding either teaching or doing research. There's a big range in the extent of this support.
--Philosophy department recruits heavily for outside money.
--90-100% of the students in my program get some summer funding through at least their 5th year. The money comes from GRPPS and from private department fellowships.
--Philosophy department also employs someone (an assistant to the DGS) specifically to find funding opportunities, to get the word out to the department, and to help secure the appropriate paperwork, etc.

Travel Money

--In my department, there's up to $500 for a one-time travel grant to go to a conference.
--Our department only offers $75 of travel support per conference—not sufficient.
--GAPSA is a good resource, if you apply early in the year.

8. What do you believe is the most critical step concerning academics the University can take to improve its graduate program in the CLA?

--CLA needs to get the word out about funding. It's hard to find out about all the available money both within CLA, in terms of money to organize conferences and bring in speakers, and externally. (a separate position should be created within the CLA to do this)

--More departments should follow Philosophy's model of somehow developing privately funded fellowships for graduate students.
--What is CLA? There's a need to make CLA known and facilitate discussion between departments. There's little information about events in other departments. (more social and intellectual events held across departments)
--There's a need for an Intensive English Program—it would attract more international students and faculty, as well as provide a lab for a training ground for several departments.

CLA Student Board, November 30, 2005

We met with roughly 6-8 students, ranging from sophomores to seniors and various majors throughout CLA.

Questions:

1. **Think about your decision to attend college. When you were considering where to go to college, what factors made you choose the U of MN?**

--Large student population
--The U of M has a good reputation, particularly within the state
--Easy to transfer community college credits
--close to home
--reciprocity
--Good balance of academics and athletics
--safe, friendly environment
--CLA provides internships to local businesses and local government

2. **In what ways has the U of MN met your expectations?**

--Passionate, well educated professors
--Advising was helpful, but it had to be sought out

3. **In what ways has the U of MN not met your expectations?**

--some well educated professors do not have very good teaching skills.(good teaching abilities should be required for both professors and TAs)
--some TAs who have heavy accents are difficult to understand
--Complaint about the universities health care being offered for short periods of time and costing more than initially presumed; students are not eligible for the MN state health care
--lack of access to required courses (not enough spaces)
--some students are upset that they are taught by graduate students (who they believe aren't as knowledgeable as professors)
--better efforts at safety on campus need to be made
--U does a very poor job at involving students coming in their freshman year (students shouldn't have to pay for the new student weekend orientation)
--too hard to graduate in four years (better advising should take place pre-college)

4. To what extent have you found an intellectual community among students and faculty that are supportive of you education?

--Difficult for commuter students; b/c this is largely a commuter campus, there's very little social atmosphere on campus

--Student wished there had been a better introduction to the U of M

--most students felt they did not have an intellectual community at the U (and the ones that exist are hard to find and not taken seriously)

--during your first year, you're forced to find a "nitch" in order to establish a community

5. To what extent do you feel that you are appropriately challenged in your classes?

--honors classes are challenging; regular classes are often too easy

--depends on the professor and how much time they want to put into the course

--language classes are challenging

--students enjoy the classes that challenge them the most

7. What do you think the CLA should do to create a stronger sense of community among its students?

--Need to organize events that give students a reason to come together (common interests)

--Events that provided opportunities to meet other students with same major

--Greek community provides a sense of community for some students

--every department needs a common space to build community among its faculty and students

--no online classes b/c they don't add to the college experience

--CLA should provide events/reasons for students/faculty to be associated outside of the classroom

--U of MN clothing is too expensive (and clothing can help build a sense of belonging)

--majors could have regular gatherings with professors

--CLA Student Board sponsors a "Food for Thought" series which brings in various faculty members to meet with students and provides snacks (it's informal and has been taking place for at least 15 years)

8. What do you believe is the most critical step the U of M can take to improve its undergraduate program in the CLA?

--The university needs to give more attention to the CLA; "CLA is last on pecking order for priorities of the U and it feels that ways as students"

--Subdivisions within the CLA that would tailor to particular fields (different sets of core requirements for students studying in sciences, humanities, etc.)

--U needs stronger commitment to diversity among students and faculty

--Cut down the language requirement

--students should be protected from the rising costs of the U

--the Leadership Minor requirements should be core requirements for all CLA students (Karen Zettenberger? Head of this program)

--clearer idea of what courses require in the course bulletin
--there should be uniformity of requirements in specifically designated courses such as the Writing Intensive courses, 3000-level courses, etc.

9. Is there anything else you think would be helpful for us to know in order to improve the CLA?
--Course descriptions should come out sooner
--More credits should be offered for some upper level classes
--too many required classes meet at the same time
--transfer credits should more easily transfer to the U
--CLA too large to have real community, therefore departmental level community building necessary

CLA Transfer Student Board, December 1, 2005

We met with roughly 6-8 students, ranging from sophomores to seniors from various majors throughout the CLA (and one student who transferred into CLA and is now in another college). The CLA Transfer Student Board was created 2 years ago by students in order to improve the experience of transfer students. They provide a social network to help aid with the academic transition, help with advising, provide tours of campus, as well as hold informal social gatherings.

Questions:

1. Think about your decision to attend college. When you were considering where to go to college, what factors made you choose the U of MN?
--In-state tuition
--Good reputation of field (health sciences); good research resources
--U is best public institution in state

2. In what ways has the U of MN met your expectations?
--Professors are more serious here about education than seen at previous institutions
--greater amount of resources and quality of courses themselves
--the availability of professors and research opportunities are good
--opportunity to take higher level classes before graduate school

3. In what ways has the U of MN not met your expectations?
--Grad students teaching classes, not as serious as the professors
--Some TAs had heavy accents which were difficult to understand; particularly a problem in the lower-level courses which are core courses for majors and often big
--Difficulty finding resources for getting oriented; easy to get lost on big campus and you don't know the right people to contact for help
--Advisors were not very clearly designated
--huge problems with transferring credits; some core Major classes don't transfer; it takes too long to get approval of your transfer transcript and syllabi

--Freshman and transfer students with fewer credits are given preference for registering than transfer students with more credits
--professors' ability to communicate with students is key
--the transfer student orientation is very poor; students are not told of adequate resources nor the specifics of the school
--there is no help with housing
--transfer students get the last pick of all classes and there's not a clear system in terms of advising for their major

4. To what extent have you found an intellectual community among students and faculty that are supportive of you education?

--Felt like relationships with professors had to be sought out
--research opportunities help create an intellectual community
--Size of school has been an issue for finding intellectual pockets
--The university feels too focused on research and as a result is not necessarily nurturing to the student's learning process
--most students feel there are little opportunities for an intellectual community outside of the classroom
--helpful to have structured study groups supported by professors and departments

5. To what extent do you feel that you are appropriately challenged in your classes?

--not assigned "busy work" here (as compared to previous institution)
--required to write more papers than previous institution

6. To what extent have you found a social community among students and faculty?

--Socializing with professors is difficult if not a four year student (b/c you have less time to establish relationships with professors)
--Commuting is an issue. Difficult to find social groups if not living in dorms or close to campus
--you have to force yourself to get involved in activities in order to meet people

7. What do you think the CLA should do to create a stronger sense of community among its students?

--Suggested institutional support (organization and funding) focusing on smaller groups within the CLA
--CLA could sponsor socials for people with similar interests (academic clubs, Majors, etc.) and there should be more institutional support for these types of functions

8. What do you believe is the most critical step the U of M can take to improve its undergraduate program in the CLA?

--Orientation process needs to be better, more thorough and personal. Meetings with more students, faculty and advisors
--More funding for groups trying to orient students

--Personal, one-on-one contact with advisors would be much more helpful than what the current orientation system provides
--Language requirement is too excessive. Two semesters should be the requirement.
--institutional support should be provided for the Transfer Student Board
--emails with specific information for transfer student needs (not helpful to say "it's all online")
--tutorials on how to use the U web ("the CLA website is not helpful, it's too hard to navigate")
--Orientation should be spread out to 2 days: more tours, talk to someone one-on-one, smaller group meetings with the advisors, individual meetings with advisors to register for classes

9. Is there anything else you think would be helpful for us to know in order to improve the CLA?
--20 credit language requirement is excessive, two semesters would be appropriate

CLA Freshman Leaders, December 6, 2005

Only five students signed up to attend the lunch and only one student actually attended the meeting with members of the CLA Freshman Board (despite several weeks of work with CLA Student Services to organize and advertise the meeting). According to a representative from CLA Student Services, this very low level of participation is likely do to the time of year (right before finals), and because so many task forces and other University groups have asked for freshman volunteers in recent months.

Questions:

1. Think about your decision to attend college. When you were considering where to go to college, what factors made you choose the U of MN?
--I always knew I wanted to go here. Some of my relatives went here, and I liked the marketing campaign (began receiving mailings as freshman). Upon visiting, I liked the size and the atmosphere. There was also a good program in the major I thought I wanted (elementary education). Most of the students in my high school wanted to go to local Wisconsin colleges like Eau Claire.

2. In what ways has the U of MN met your expectations?
--I enjoy my classes, even the largest one (700 students). I also like the dorm experience; enjoy professors and feel that graduate students are able to understand you better as well.

3. In what ways has the U of MN not met your expectations?
--So far it has met my expectations.

4. Do you feel that you have found an intellectual community in CLA?

--Yes, with my friends from my FIG (Freshman Interest Group). We discuss books and courses outside of class time. I do feel like I can talk to my professors as well.

(FIG operates during their 1st semester. There are 20 students in each group and one group for each CLA major. The group takes 3 courses together, 1 course is about CLA and navigating the U of MN.)

--some friends of hers outside of FIG groups organize their own study groups independently

5. **Do you feel like you are appropriately challenged in your classes?**
   --Honestly, some are too easy, although not all--I did have to drop one (a math course). Freshman composition, for example, is not very demanding. And in my large psychology class, it is not necessary to go to lecture since there are outlines online.

6. **Do you feel that you have found a social community in CLA?**
   --As a freshman it has been easy to make friends. I also feel comfortable with my professors, although not close.

7. **What should CLA do to promote social and intellectual community?**
   --Maybe combine FIG communities sometimes, so we can meet people from other communities. (feels very comfortable walking into the office and getting help from her Major department b/c a part of the FIG group)

--I don't think of myself as a CLA student—it's such a broad category.

--I am aware of "Abfab", which is some sort of weekly meetings when students can discuss different things with the CLA provosts.

A. How has your advising experience been?
   --Good. My advisor (who is from the FIG community) is busy, but seems very knowledgeable about lots of majors. The walk-in advising service is also useful. The office is well organized.

B. How has your registration experience been?
   --It was simple and straightforward. Some of my friends, however, had problems with scheduling (required courses for their major only offered at the same time, and not informed of a hold on their account until day of registration).

C. How has your orientation experience been?

--There was some pressure to register quickly at orientation, because everyone was waiting, but overall it was fine.

Appendix C: Conversation with Debra Friedman

CLA Task Force Conversation with Debra Friedman, February 15, 2006

Friedman talked with the Task Force about her experiences at the University of Washington working to improve retention and graduation rates for undergraduates. In 1994, Friedman became the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education at the University of Washington. In 1999, she became the Associate Provost for Academic Planning. She is currently a dean at Arizona State University. Friedman made some suggestions to the TF on steps to be taken based on her experience at UW to improve the undergraduate experience and to shore up retention and graduation rates. There, these changes led to a 7% change in the graduation rate, from 60%-67% over ten years. Throughout her discussion, Friedman emphasized the need for good data and strategic use of that data.

Part I: Understand where your University is falling short in terms of the undergraduate experience: What parts of their education frustrate undergraduates?

A) Identify Courses taken by over 20% of students, then focus on improving the student experience in these classes.

--Make sure there are enough spaces in these classes.

--Invest in improving the teaching in these classes. This can mean different things in different classes—for some, investing in curriculum development in order to use cutting edge data more effectively—for others, give teaching releases to the top faculty so they are rewarded for teaching these courses. These courses should not be treated like "revolving doors" in which the teaching switches around every year. These changes can significantly affect the level of student satisfaction for a large number of students.

A member of the task force asked how Friedman got departments to cooperate on this project: she responded that sometimes it was only a matter of raising departmental awareness, in other cases more pressure was required. Showing the department data on fail and drop rates can be effective. Also, she would argue to them that she could not talk effectively to the legislature about funding if she could not defend the U's undergraduate education.

B) Implement low-cost efforts to improve teaching effectiveness across the curriculum:
--For all new faculty, have them arrive a week early (paid) for a one-week teaching camp, led by senior faculty (called the "Faculty Fellows" program). This communicates to faculty how important good teaching is, although she noted that UW is very clear that faculty should not be confused—research and scholarly activities are still the criteria for professional advancement. Friedman noted that this "camp" also allows the new faculty to get to know one another, as well as to learn whom to contact in the future about teaching issues. This initiative was so popular that some of the senior faculty asked to participate. Now about 50-60 new faculty and 10-12 continuing faculty participate each year.

C) Transfer Students: Like Minnesota, UW has a high rate of transfer students.
--Used data to try to determine which transfer students were having trouble. For example, analyzed data by major for credits-to-graduation rates for transfers vs. "native" (i.e. non-transfer students) to ask which majors were causing transfer students the most trouble. This measure is called the Graduation Efficiency Index (GEI). Then hired advisors for these majors and placed them in the largest "feeder" community colleges—paid for jointly with the community college. Then these advisors could advise students on the UW requirements so that they are prepared to transfer and graduate in a timely fashion.

D) Blur the line between high school and college: If you can target and retain in-state high-achievers who are frustrated with high school, this will only help graduation rates. At UW, two programs are offered: a very small program for early entrance after 8th grade, and a larger program for students after 10th grade. Led to a discussion of PSEO students at Minnesota—there are a lot of them, but we don't fully welcome them and many of them leave to go to college elsewhere. They cannot go to the gym, for example—problem because of cost structure, state pays their tuition but not equivalent to regular student. Can we improve this situation?

E) Language Requirement: (there is also a one-year requirement at UW) Students get through their requirement faster if they can continue their second language from high school as freshmen. So UW changed their registration priority system and gave freshman students who were continuing in their same language priority. If they want to change language, they do not get this priority. Used data to find the bottlenecks in the language program, made sure enough sections offered.

F) "Responsiveness"—making the university more responsive to student needs.
--Started Peer Advising—all incoming students assigned to a peer advisor (upperclassman) who they can email anytime with anonymous questions and will get a response in 24 hours.
--Started holding a parent orientation in addition to student orientation.

Part II: Focus on "Comparative Advantage" and "Incentive Compatibility"
At UW, they decided to focus on what was unique about their university from the perspective of undergraduates: at UW, undergraduates have a unique chance to participate in faculty research, rather than having to wait until graduate school. In order to make this promise a reality, UW worked aggressively to expand and improve its undergraduate research program. First they had to help faculty figure out how to effectively bring undergraduates into research projects. Ran a paid summer program to help faculty experiment and figure this out. In the first year, 300 undergrads worked 10 or more hours a week on a professor's ongoing research project. Now 3,000 (out of 25,000 total undergrads) are involved annually. There are Undergraduate Research Symposia held every year. Students are paid and/or receive credit. Students who are heavily recruited are even offered a chance to work with a senior faculty member on research in the summer before freshman year. This effort is not just for the sciences, but

also for the humanities and social sciences (although UW is strongest in the sciences, so that is what they have focused on). One common project for faculty outside the sciences is conferences—undergrads can help with these and have a good educational experience. And if there is a conference overseas, UW encourages faculty to consider taking undergraduates doing research with them to these international conferences.

This effort has worked because it is "incentive compatible"—it can help faculty with their other goals. Faculty, once they participated, found it a great experience and useful for them too. Unlike graduate students, undergraduates do not need to produce a "result" of their own.

Part III: Concluding Comments

--Identify your comparative advantage and use data strategically to make targeted changes.

--Listen to your data! Undergraduates do not know how to speak up for themselves—you have to find out from the data why they are not staying and graduating.

--Don't forget to analyze "drops" as well as the failure rate for a course—drops are expensive for universities, and they are revealing about the course experience

--Use the incentive structure to force change—everyone from deans to faculty to students responds to incentives; be clear about how performance is evaluated and what is a priority. Should measure that which you value. If improving grad rates is a priority, make that part of the unit performance review and incentive (reward) structure.

--Don't forget to analyze "drops" as well as the failure rate for a course—drops are expensive for universities, and they are revealing about the course experience

--Use the incentive structure to force change—everyone from deans to faculty to students responds to incentives; be clear about how performance is evaluated and what is a priority. If improving grad rates is a priority, make that part of the performance review and incentive structure.

Appendix D: Senior Project Questionnaire Summary

Senior Project Questionnaire Summary
In December a questionnaire about the senior project requirement was emailed to all CLA Directors of Undergraduate Studies, departmental advisors and CLA advisors. The following is a summary of their responses. Copies of the questionnaire letters are included at the end of this document.

Overall, the respondents believe that students benefit from and value the senior project, although they also find it challenging. The respondents (especially those who are faculty themselves) believe that faculty are more ambivalent about the requirement, primarily because they find the experience frustrating and unrewarding. The requirements for completing the senior project varies considerably from department to department, but the English department repeatedly was cited as an exemplar of how a department could structure the requirement to make it most beneficial and least frustrating.

The respondents had several specific suggestions for how to make the senior project less of a barrier to graduation (although less than a quarter of those queried felt that it was a barrier). The majority of the respondents did not think that any other graduation requirement presented an obstacle to graduation.

The results of this questionnaire indicate that there are several steps that could be taken by departments and/or the College to improve the senior project experience for both students and faculty.

Summary of responses by Directors of Undergraduate Studies and Departmental Advisors (hereafter referred to as DUSs)
Based on 17 responses (out of 31 emailed)

How does your department enable students to fulfill the senior project requirement?
Department strategies vary widely. Most offer some sort of class specifically for senior projects, but not all. Many of these classes are stand-alone structured classes, some are upper-level electives in which students sign contracts to do extra work, and some are directed study classes in which students work independently under a faculty supervisor. Departments also vary in the availability of these courses—some offer them every semester, some every year, and at least one only offers them every other year, and in alternate years seniors have to complete the senior project outside of any class.

2. How does your department ensure that curricular offerings are managed in a way that the senior project is not an obstacle to graduation?
Common responses:
--Listed as one of the requirements
--Remind students to register early for the class (especially important in those departments only offering it once a year)

--Prepare students by requiring them to attend some sort of informational/planning meeting in their junior year
--Offer a number of options to complete requirement, including allowing students to complete the project outside of a specific class

3. Do students in your department value the senior project experience?
Overall Yes (12)—Overall, DUSs believe that students find the senior project ultimately rewarding, although daunting for some too. Students value the chance to work closely with a faculty member and to have the opportunity to work on a more substantial piece of scholarship. In some departments, students value a chance to do service learning or to create projects that will prepare them in their future careers.
Overall No (4)—Students see it as a chore, another requirement, simply a "hoop to jump through".
Yes and No (1)—This DUS and several others suggested that the senior project should be optional and linked to undergraduate honors.

3b. Do faculty in your department value it?
Overall Yes (6)—Faculty enjoy the (rare) opportunity to work closely with undergraduates, and appreciate that it is a valuable experience for students.
No (4)—By far the major criticism was that it was too much work for faculty. As one DUS noted, based on personal experience, supervising a seminar-size group of senior projects is an "absolutely unconscionable amount of grueling and tedious work". Many DUSs also noted that this work was not rewarding—both in terms of the experience and the recognition—because taking on seniors to oversee does not decrease one's teaching load. Several departments get around this problem by having graduate students teach these courses, or by having extra TA support. Frustration with poor student writing skills was also mentioned multiple times as a factor in making the experience unrewarding and time-consuming.
Yes and No (4)—For reasons above. Some DUSs again raised the idea of making it optional.

4. What might your department or the college do to make the senior project experience better for both faculty and students?
Most commonly mentioned:
Workload issues—Teaching senior project seminars and supervising independent senior projects require substantial investments of faculty time. One DUS called this a "hidden workload"—departments do not recognize this work. This was mostly voiced simply as a strongly felt complaint, but some DUSs suggested variations on giving faculty more recognition for this work (i.e. lighter teaching workloads, etc).

Student writing—The experience would be a better one for both faculty and students if students entered the project process with better writing skills. Suggestions ranged from

more training earlier in the major course progression to making the University more selective and not admitting students who do not have adequate writing skills.

Optional—make the senior project optional, by either student by department.

Other suggestions:
--Encourage all departments to hold structured seminars in which students can complete their senior projects.
--Allow students other options (other than a paper)—i.e. let an internship or study abroad experience count as a senior project.
--Organize forums (seminars or poster sessions) in which students can share the results of their senior projects with each other.

5. Please comment on any degree requirements (major or college) that seem to act as obstacles to timely graduation. Are there particular requirements or types of requirements that seem to cause problems for students?
None (4)
Senior Project (1)
Language (3)—Although all mentioned that they thought this was a reasonable and/or meaningful requirement
Number of college requirements (1)—maybe there are too many?
Writing Intensive Courses (3)—Specifically, there are not enough upper-level WI courses for students to take in their major, many students seem unaware of this requirement, and faculty find the process of getting their courses accepted as WI difficult, so many don't bother.

Summary of responses of CLA Advisors
Based on 10 responses (out of 45 emailed)

1. What departments, in your experience, do particularly well with senior projects? What do they do that is different than other departments?
By far, the most oft-cited department was English. English was praised for its highly-structured senior project program, which includes a mandatory information session, senior project seminars, and a requirement that students submit a "balance sheet", provided by their CLA advisor, to the English department before they register for their senior project. CLA advisors noted that while it is extra work for them to prepare these "balance sheets" (which I infer indicate what graduation requirements students have fulfilled and which remain), it keeps the department, the student, and the CLA advisor all in good communication, and it makes the graduation process much smoother for English majors. The English department also awards prizes and has a recognition ceremony for the senior projects. One advisor noted that all the departments could benefit from using the English Department model.

Journalism was cited for incorporating its senior project into its set progression of courses.

Communication Studies was marked as "improved" because the senior project is now listed on the course requirement sheet.

Others mentioned without explanation—Economics, global studies, and the arts majors.

1b. What departments need improvement?
Very few advisors "named names". Political Science was mentioned. For general comments, see questions below.

2. **Do students seem to value the senior project experience? What, in particular, do they value about it?**

   All the advisors felt that students generally valued the experience. In particular, students value:
   --The chance to write a longer paper, and to delve deeper into a particular topic in which they are interested.
   --The chance to prepare something for their professional portfolio (in journalism and the arts)
   --The chance to connect with faculty and receive individualized attention

3. **What could departments and the college do to make the senior project experience better for students?**

--Require (or at least make available) a senior seminar in which students complete their project. Students benefit from the structure, and from learning about research methods.
--If this is not possible, one option would be to offer senior project seminars for clusters of majors in the social sciences, cultural studies, etc.
--"Those departments that allow students to write the senior project independent of a course need to start much earlier helping students identify a topic and a faculty member to supervise, as well as ensuring that students have the necessary bibliographic and research skills before the start of the semester in which the project will be completed."
--Have extensive, very clear written guidelines outlining expectations for project—including expectations for the department and the faculty who oversee the projects
--The departmental faculty needs to be enthusiastic about the senior project
--Have enough faculty available to supervise students and make it a formal arrangement where students register for a generic course number before the beginning of the semester
--Consider incorporating community involvement into the senior project through service learning or other means.

Does the senior project seem to be an obstacle to graduation? If so, why, or in what way(s)?
Difficult to make connection with faculty (1)
Lack of clarity of expectations of senior project—among students and faculty (1)

Paperwork issues (2)–for departments that require a separate document be filed upon completion, students forget, and for departments where faculty are required to submit this paperwork, they forget too.
Inadequate support (2)—some students find the project overwhelming and need more structure and support
Extra-credit attached to class (1)—students find it hard to get the work done on top of rest of classwork.

Not an obstacle (5)—one advisor commented that it used to be an obstacle, but CLA students are stronger students overall, now, and so they have an easier time with the requirement

Please comment on any ways in which either major or college requirements function as obstacles to timely graduation. Are there particular requirements or types of requirements that seem to cause problems for students?

None (3)
Language Requirement (3)—One advisor noted this is more of a problem for transfer students, especially because they frequently can't get started until their second or third semester because their late place in registration. Several advisors thought eliminating the proficiency exam requirement was a huge improvement.
Upper-level-courses-outside-major requirement (1)—again, especially for transfer students
Understaffed advising offices (1)
Too many college requirements (1)

December 13, 2005

TO: CLA Directors of Undergraduate Studies and Departmental Advisors

FROM: Margot Iverson, staff for the CLA Task Force

SUBJECT: Senior Project Questionnaire

I am writing on behalf of the CLA Task Force. We are seeking your help in understanding the experience of CLA students in different departments in fulfilling the senior project and other undergraduate degree requirements. We are writing to all CLA Directors of Undergraduate Studies and departmental advisers asking you to respond to five short questions (below). You can simply hit "reply" and insert your responses, then send as a return email. Responses will only be reported to the task force in the aggregate--comments will not be associated with specific individuals.

Even a brief response would be much appreciated by the Task Force. Thank you in advance for your help!

Questionnaire:

1. How does your department enable students to fulfill the senior project requirement?

__Stand alone course: _____ Course Number:_____

__Other (please explain):_____

2. How does your department ensure that curricular offerings are managed in a way that the senior project is not an obstacle to graduation?

3. Do faculty in your department value the senior project experience? Do students value it?

4. What might your department or the college do to make the senior project experience better for both faculty and students?

5. Please comment on any degree requirements (major or college) that seem to act as obstacles to timely graduation. Are there particular requirements or types of requirements that seem to cause problems for students?

December 16, 2005

TO: CLA Advisors

FROM: Margot Iverson, staff for the CLA Task Force

SUBJECT: Senior Project Questionnaire

I am writing on behalf of the CLA Task Force. We are seeking your help in understanding the experience of CLA students in different departments in fulfilling the senior project and other undergraduate degree requirements. We are writing to all CLA advisers asking you to respond to five short questions (below). You can simply hit "reply" and insert your responses, then send as a return email. Responses will only be reported to the task force in the aggregate--comments will never be associated with specific individuals.

Even a brief response would be much appreciated by the Task Force. Thank you in advance for your help!

Questionnaire:

1. What departments, in your experience, do particularly well with senior projects? What do they do that is different than other departments? What departments need improvement?

2. Do students seem to value the senior project experience? What, in particular, do they value about it?

3. What could departments and the college do to make the senior project experience better for students?

4. Does the senior project seem to be an obstacle to graduation? If so, why, or in what way(s)?

5. Please comment on any ways in which either major or college requirements function as obstacles to timely graduation. Are there particular requirements or types of requirements that seem to cause problems for students?

Appendix E: Additional Recommendations

We heard many good ideas in the course of our deliberations, some of which pertained to the whole university and not just CLA, and some of which were too particular to be included in the body of the task force report. We include those suggestions in this document.

Specific recommendations:

Incentives should be provided to departments to assure that the expert database is kept up to date—if the database were fully functional, it would provide a magnificent resource for faculty to locate other faculty with similar or complementary interests. This would foster interdisciplinary work.

The college procedures that the task force heard the most complaints about were accounting, human resources, and course approval. The college should be sure that in every case procedures are as efficient and transparent as possible.

There are a very few college departments that were formed as a part of previous restructurings and remain structurally problematic. The task force is aware of efforts by the CLA dean's office to resolve those problems, and endorses their efforts.

Some colleagues recommended that the college set up a placement office for undergraduates.

One unique resource that the University possesses is expertise in American Indian Studies and particularly in the Dakota and Ojibwe languages. There may be opportunities to offer a specialized MA that draws on these strengths and attracts students nationally (for example, faculty from tribal colleges).

Recommendations that lie outside the purview of CLA:

For many arts, humanities, and social science faculty, it is no exaggeration to say that the library is the laboratory. The library must be adequately supported.

The University of Minnesota Press has an international reputation as a leader in the publication of humanities scholarship, and must be supported in a way that allows it to continue its innovative practices.

The amount of paperwork required for relatively small amounts of research money (for both faculty and graduate students) must be reduced. The graduate school's increasing the amount of block grants is a step in the right direction. Accountability can be

maintained by requiring brief applications or brief reports as to how the funding was spent.

The first year review of probationary faculty, which takes place only months after their arrival on campus, should be abolished. No useful purpose is served by a review that early in a colleague's career. The university should consider replacing annual reviews with reviews in the second, fourth, and sixth years of a probationary faculty member's career.

Graduate fringe rates need to be rethought. Since graduate tuition in CLA is (by and large) money we charge ourselves and then collect, we need to think of a way of managing it that does not result in disincentives to hire graduate students, which are currently quite serious.

The CLE requirements need to be reviewed and possibly replaced by another system of liberal education requirements.

More procedures should be put on line. For example, the current examination procedure mandated by the graduate school, where faculty need to hand-sign documents (even if they participate in the exam remotely), is absurd. If we trust the security of the x500 system for financial transactions and grades, we should trust it for authentication of signatures on graduate school forms.

Brochures which explain the Founder's Opportunity Scholarships should be circulated in multiple languages (Hmong, Somali, Spanish, and others). Videos in relevant languages which explain scholarship options should be made and aired on public-access cable channels. If the university does not make this a priority, the college should.

The University should focus additional attention and resources on transfer students. A large proportion of the students who graduate from the University of Minnesota are transfer students, but student survey results show that these students are less connected to the university and less satisfied with their experiences here than are students who came as freshmen. Much attention is lavished upon incoming freshmen; we need to recruit high-ability community college students with the same enthusiasm we bring to recruitment of high-ability freshmen. This can be done in part by creating closer connections with the community colleges and other institutions which are source schools for large numbers of transfer students. An enormous benefit of closer coordination with source schools would be the enhancement of our ability to recruit a pool of diverse students. We must assure that transfer students, who register after continuing students and new freshmen, have access to courses, especially courses in their major, and language courses and other courses in sequence.

Post-Secondary Enrollment Options students represent a potential recruitment opportunity which is largely untapped. These are high ability students that the university should be working to recruit. A recent study by the Humphrey Institute shows that the average grade point average for PSEO students is 3.48, while the average grade point

average for freshmen is 3.07. There are currently 948 such students enrolled at the university; 60% of them cite a desire to attend the University of Minnesota as a reason for enrolling here as a PSEO student. The university must assure that their experience at the university is positive so that a higher percentage of them matriculate at the university. The university must work with schools to expand the reach of PSEO so that more first-generation college students and students whose first language is not English enroll. The report may be found at http://www.hhh.umn.edu/img/assets/10160/PSEO2005.pdf

Appendix F: Data on Rankings and Faculty Size

Rankings. The next rankings from the National Research Council are not due until 2008; the last time they ranked programs was more than 10 years ago. By default, then, the U.S. News and World Report rankings have taken on greater significance. These are widely available data, but we cite here an analysis done by the Leiter Reports http://leiterreports.typepad.com/blog/2005/04/changes_in_over.html:

> We calculated three scores for each university: the net gain or loss in rank across the seven disciplines evaluated (English, Economics, History, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology); the average rank of departments at each university in these seven fields; and the median rank. In some cases where rankings did not extend beyond the top 25 or so, it was necessary to estimate a rank, and so the figure of 30th was used (in some cases that is an advantage for the school, in other cases a slight disadvantage). In only one case, did we estimate a gain for a department for which the figure of 30th was assigned: namely, Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania, which has made a series of high profile appointments to boost the standing of the department, which ranked far lower than 30th in the last National Research Council study.
>
> The research universities most improved during this four-year period are: New York University (plus 12); University of California at San Diego (plus 8); and University of Texas at Austin (plus 9). No real surprises there: each of these schools is in economically vibrant areas, attractive places to live, and each of these schools has been aggressive in the market for established faculty talent.
>
> The research universities that lost the most ground during this four-year period are: Johns Hopkins University (minus 13); Northwestern University (minus 25); ***University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (minus 24)*** [emphasis added]; and University of Washington at Seattle (minus 19). The only surprise on that list, for me at least, was Northwestern. I suspect it is simply a fluke of the time period evaluated, or the particular programs in question. Minnesota and Washington, on the other hand, have had well-publicized troubles, mostly financial, and so the results in those cases are less surprising. Johns Hopkins, meanwhile, is fighting a problematic urban location.

Faculty Size. Data on size of faculty are notoriously difficult to compare. Departments are structured differently at different institutions (for example, the University combines German, Scandinavian, and Dutch into one department; elsewhere the latter two components might not exist or might be in a separate unit). Nonetheless, there are persistent indicators that the strongest departments in the arts and sciences also tend to be larger departments. Peter Radcliffe, senior analyst in CLA, undertook a study of departmental size in 15 departments that were most comparable nationally. He looked at the top10 ranked departments in each area (as identified by disciplinary organizations or by the department) and compared department size to Minnesota's. Comparison schools

included both private universities and top-ranked publics. His findings showed that Minnesota's departments were smaller and served more students than the comparison group of highly ranked programs. Shortfalls were dramatic in anthropology, art history, economics, English, journalism, music, and political science.

Comparison of Faculty FTE and Students Served, 2003-04

	Number of Faculty FTEs[a]		Number of Undergraduate Majors per Faculty FTE		Number of Graduate Students per Faculty FTE	
Discipline	Top 10 Depts.	U of M	Top 10 Depts.	U of M	Top 10 Depts.	U of M
Anthropology[b]	32.0	16.0	5.3	10.3	4.1	3.8
Art History	18.0	8.0	3.8	10.9	5.3	4.3
Economics[c]	41.1	27.0	13.7	19.4	3.7	4.6
English	44.1	42.0	6.6	18.8	1.3	2.5
Geography	19.8	21.0	6.7	8.1	3.1	6.7
German	9.8	17.0	2.7	4.7	2.4	1.8
History	45.5	45.0	7.6	13.3	3.4	3.1
Journalism	32.0	24.0	29.1	43.0	4.5	3.8
Music	73.6	43.0	6.5	8.5	4.2	6.3
Philosophy	18.7	19.0	4.0	6.6	2.3	2.5
Political Science	43.5	32.5	20.5	23.0	3.3	2.9
Psychology[c]	46.1	43.5	17.4	28.7	4.6	3.4
Sociology	31.0	29.0	10.2	23.8	4.0	2.8
Spanish and Portuguese	13.0	15.0	6.2	26.3	3.2	4.8
Statistics	20.7	20.0	2.1	1.2	3.5	4.4

[a] University of Minnesota faculty FTEs includes all budgeted positions

[b] 2002-03 data

[c] Calculation for the top-10 departments excludes Minnesota

Appendix G: Additional Resources

The following documents were reviewed by the task force:

"Realizing the Dream," Committee on College Reorganization Final Report on Reorganization of the Liberal Arts, Michigan State University, November 2004. http://realizingthevision.msu.edu/ccr/documents/FINALreport_000.doc

Imagining American Project. http://www.ia.umich.edu/default.asp
In 2001, Imagining America became a consortium of colleges and universities; it now has over 70 consortium members. It is based at the University of Michigan, where it reports to the Office of the Vice President of Research. It is funded from three sources: fees paid by member colleges and universities; support from several offices at the University of Michigan, in the form of both recurring and one-time-only allotments; and external grants. Our report, The End of the Beginning, outlines the first two years of Imagining America's founding and growth.

Measuring up in Higher Education: Minnesota
A report on the state generally. Comparative data also available on website.
http://measuringup.highereducation.org/docs/statereports/MN04.pdf

Improving Our Graduation Rates The Report of the Graduation and Retention Subcommitee of the Council of Undergraduate Deans August 2001.
http://academic.umn.edu/img/assets/16421/gradrate_main.pdf

Greater Expectation: The Commitment to Quality as a Nation Goes to College, AAC&U Initiative. *Greater Expectations* is a multi-year project to update liberal-arts education for the twenty-first century. Two central goals of the project are to better articulate the purpose of a liberal education and to identify the best educational models.
www.greaterexpectations.org

"Revitalizing Humanities: Expanding the Vision of Liberal Education" (Address to American Council of Learned Societies , January 2004, by Pauline Yu, President)
http://www.acls.org/president/AACU%205-04.doc
Yu focuses on three critical 21st century issues and explains how revitalized humanities are critical to addressing them.

"Engaging Today's Students with the Liberal Arts," Associated Colleges of the Midwest
www.acm.edu/faculty/engage/index.html
Project begun around 2002 by ACM and currently ongoing. Its goals are:
1) Understanding our entering students in order to design suitable programs
2) Identifying and sharing best practices for orienting our students to a liberal arts education
3) Creating new program models
4) Disseminating findings to our colleges (and possibly to a broader audience)

A series of conferences focused on different aspects of these goals (like the first year experience, advising, the future of the liberal arts) have been held. This project focuses on small liberal-arts colleges.

Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College
http://liberalarts.wabash.edu/cila/
"The Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts has three major aims: exploring, testing, and promoting liberal arts education." One of their projects is the "Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education, a large-scale, longitudinal study to investigate critical factors that affect the outcomes of liberal arts education"—some of the studies findings to-date are available on the website through their online monthly, *LiberalArtsOnline*, along with other articles from the center.

Science Education as part of the Liberal Arts, Project Kaleidoscope
www.pkal.org
"Project Kaleidoscope (PKAL) is an informal national alliance working to build strong learning environments for undergraduate students in mathematics, engineering, and the various fields of science, with a focus on what works."

Chronicle of Higher Education Review Articles
"Liberal Education on the Ropes" by Stanley Katz (Director, Princeton's Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies, ACLS President emeritus) 4/1/2005. Katz looks at the history of the American quest to offer a liberal education through distribution requirements, core curricula and other means. He warns that for a variety of reasons, especially structural shifts in universities away from a focus on the humanities and undergraduate education, undergraduate liberal education at research institutions "is becoming a project in ruins". Katz calls for a "reimagination of liberal education near the top of our agenda for education in our research universities."

"A Manifesto for the Humanities in a Technological Age" by Cathy Davidson (Vice Provost for Interdisciplinary Studies, Duke) and David Theo Goldberg (Director, University of California Humanities Research Institute), 2/13/2004. Davidson and Goldberg argue that the rapid pace of technological change today is creating an urgent need for more research and education in the humanities.

"Special Report: Higher Education 2015" 11/25/2005
Overview of trends in higher education for the next ten years, with best case and worst case scenarios on a variety of topics (small liberal arts colleges, for-profit institutions, student aid, shrinking populations in the Midwest/East).

"Stretching Minds and Stretching Resources: 20 Years of Post Secondary Enrollment Options in Minnesota" by Joe Nathan, Laura Accomando and Debra Hare Fitzpatrick, Center for Study of School Change, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs
http://www.hhh.umn.edu/img/assets/10160/PSEO2005.pdf

Articles by Steven Rosenstone, CLA Dean:
"The Idea of a University" in *The Public Research University: Serving the Public Good in New Times.* Darrel R. Lewis, John Brandl, and James Hearn (eds.), University Press of America, 2003. Rosenstone examines the reasons why public universities have gotten away from their core values in recent years and have focused more on painting themselves as economic engines for states through the production of applied research and the education of a trained workforce. He argues that this shift in priorities and public perception of the purpose of universities threatens the continued vitality of universities and urges state schools to recommit themselves to the true core values of the academy (the creation of new knowledge through basic research and creative work, liberal education and the transmission of knowledge, and "the dissemination of knowledge through publication and civic education") and to better market these core values as a civic, not just an individual, good.

"Challenges Facing Higher Education in America: Lessons and Opportunities" in *Taking Public Universities Seriously.* Frank Iacobucci and Carolyn Tuohy (eds.), University of Toronto Press, 2005. Identifies five threats to the continued excellence of American universities: (1) State funding cuts, (2) Less access for lower-income students, (3) Growing gap between public and private universities, (4) Barriers to international exchange, (5) Declining resources for basic research.

Final Report of the Committee on College Reorganization, Michigan State University, November 2004. Their conclusion is that it would be preferable to work on improvements rather than structure.
http://realizingthevision.msu.edu/ccr/documents/FINALreport_000.doc

University of Washington planning documents related to the arts and sciences
http://www.artsci.washington.edu/Services/Splanning/ASPlan/Documents/RCEP.pdf
http://www.washington.edu/change/appendixe.pdf
http://www.artsci.washington.edu/rotary.pdf