Civic Engagement Task Force

Final Report

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: RENEWING THE LAND GRANT MISSION

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To Executive Vice President and Provost, Robert Bruininks

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CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: RENEWING THE LAND GRANT MISSION

Executive Summary

Civic Engagement is a contemporary expression of the historic land-grant tradition of which the University of Minnesota is a part. It means an institutional commitment to public purposes and responsibilities intended to strengthen a democratic way of life in the rapidly changing Information Society of the 21st century. Civic Engagement directly affects the core missions of the university: research is conducted as Public Scholarship, which directly or indirectly addresses public concerns; teaching is devoted to Civic Learning, through which students develop the skills of effective citizenship and responsible leadership; and outreach proceeds through Community Partnership, in which the University collaborates with outside groups as respectful partners in mutually beneficial relationships. At present there are many important examples of Civic Engagement on all four campuses, but civic initiatives are not coordinated, institutionally affirmed, or systematically fostered throughout the university. In this respect we are a partially-engaged university; the goal is to become a fully-engaged university.

In order to achieve the goal of a fully-engaged university, five requirements are critical:

- to reconceptualize the core missions of research, teaching and outreach as the civicly engaged work of Public Scholarship, Civic Learning and Community Partnership in order to recognize the far reaching implications of civic engagement as a dimension of all university activities;

- to identify exemplary ongoing instances of effective Public Scholarship, Civic Learning, and Community Partnership as models to build upon in further extending Civic Engagement throughout the university;

- to develop new initiatives in Public Scholarship, Civic Learning, and Community Partnership that will strengthen Civic Engagement in different units across the university;

- to foster a cultural change in the values and expectations that pervade the university, as well as an institutional change in the incentives and rewards that validate professional work in practical terms;

- to maintain sustained support within the university and through connections with the larger community that will assure the continuation of Civic Engagement in the future.
These requirements can be met through several organizational innovations:

- **Council on Civic Engagement:** the Council would bring together representatives of all members of the university community -- students, faculty, staff, and administrators -- to integrate and promote Civic Engagement initiatives throughout the university;

- **Minnesota Civic Partnership and Forum:** the Partnership would connect the university with groups and organizations throughout the state for the shared purpose of furthering Civic Engagement inside and outside the University; the Forum would sponsor seminars, roundtables, and other activities to serve as a catalyst in generating new ideas and developing new networks within the university and in association with individuals, groups, and organizations outside the university in order to further Civic Engagement in the University and elsewhere.

- **Senior Administrator responsible for civic engagement:** a senior administrator would preside over the Council on Civic Engagement and the Minnesota Civic Partnership and Forum and exercise leadership in initiating, implementing, coordinating, monitoring, assessing, and publicizing civic engagement activities throughout the university and in connections with community partners.

These measures will enable the university to achieve more fully the public purposes of a civically engaged institution. They will place the university in the forefront of the national movement toward civic engagement in higher education. They will bring to the people of Minnesota the greater benefits from a fully engaged land grant university. They will attract for the University increased political and public support as its civic as well as economic contributions are recognized and affirmed. To sustain this major initiative it is important to continue its implementation and assessment.
The central theme of this report is INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: WHY to change, WHAT to change, HOW to change.

WHY TO CHANGE:
As the state’s public, land grant, research university, the University of Minnesota makes—and is expected to make—distinctive, vital contributions to the well-being of the people of Minnesota. The University’s contributions to economic growth and prosperity, agricultural and industrial productivity, technological innovation, advances in health care, and other utilitarian outcomes are widely recognized and highly valued both within the University and throughout the state. Last year (spring, 2000) an “Economic Summit” was held to highlight the University’s involvement in an expanding state economy, and official institutional priorities are also directed to these purposes. But the University also makes—and has an historic responsibility to make—another kind of contribution that is just as vital to the people of Minnesota yet is infrequently acknowledged and insufficiently valued either inside the University or outside. This is the University’s contribution to strengthen a democratic way of life and invigorate the intellect and spirit for the people of Minnesota and beyond our borders, which is no less fundamental than its utilitarian contributions. Both economic development and fostering the nonmaterial aspects of public life are important features of civic engagement. In the University’s historic land-grant mission, contributions to economic growth and vocational training were only part of a more comprehensive civic responsibility to the citizens of the state. Yet in recent expressions of central university priorities, the non-economic aspects of civic engagement are neither clearly affirmed nor institutionally supported in ways commensurate with their public importance. The recommendations in this report are intended to address this imbalance and to affirm civic engagement, in all its aspects, as a vital institutional priority.

Civic Engagement and the Land Grant Tradition
The land grant tradition, which has developed over a period of one hundred forty years since its inception with the Morrill Act of 1862 and enriched by subsequent acts of Congress, does not consist of a single continuing public mission but encompasses multiple public purposes that change over time in response to new social conditions and historic circumstances. Several enduring goals lie at the heart of this tradition.
• **Educational Opportunity**: One enduring goal has been to open higher education to excluded people disadvantaged by their class, gender, race, ethnicity or other circumstances. The first beneficiaries were working class white males, but over time land grant missions came to include providing opportunities for higher education to women, blacks and to Native Americans.

• **Social Responsibility**: A second goal has been responsiveness to the actual concerns of people in the community. Some of the most pressing on-going concerns have been economic and vocational, but they also include an interest in liberal education, quality K-12 schooling, training for leadership and effective citizenship, and the performance of governmental and other institutions.

• **Public Scholarship**: A third enduring goal has been the development, dissemination, and application of new knowledge for the practical benefit of people in the community. Basic research, learning, and applications of knowledge are intertwined activities, although the areas of inquiry and fields of application have changed dramatically.

Within the land grant tradition, institutional missions have been diverse and have changed with the times, but since the end of the Cold War there is no agreed sense of what the contemporary land grant mission should be. During almost a century and a half, land grant institutions have responded to urgent widely shared public purposes, from preserving the Union during the Civil War, promoting national economic development, providing educational opportunities for a growing and increasingly diverse population, fighting two World Wars, and coping with the Great Depression. But now land grant institutions have no clear common purpose to give public meaning to their work. The challenge is to articulate a public purpose that addresses contemporary concerns and so to renew the land grant tradition in a new millennium. Civic Engagement is the response to this challenge.

**Civic Engagement: A Contemporary Land Grant Mission**

Robert Putnam, in *Bowling Alone*, has documented and analyzed in detail the erosion of social networks, voluntary associations, community ties and civic participation during the past twenty to twenty five years, and the decline of what he calls “social capital”, that undermine the foundations of a flourishing democracy. He attributes this erosion in large part to the far reaching effects of the Electronic Revolution that is radically transforming how we work, play and live, although other forces are also at work. Putnam finds similar trends in democratic countries around the world. If we take Putnam and other similar analyses seriously—if democracy is now at risk as a result of major trends in contemporary society—then a vital public mission for land grant universities is apparent: to strengthen a democratic way of life in the face of serious threats to its future. These threats are not as flagrant as the crises of war or economic collapse, but they are genuine and destructive.
Civic engagement expresses a resolve, in keeping with the land grant tradition, to address these threats to democracy. A sense of social responsibility—a response to the serious concerns of people in Minnesota, the nation, and around the world—impels the University to confront this creeping crisis of our time through which democracy is diminished. The same goal—to make colleges and universities “agents and architects of a flourishing democracy”—inspires the Declaration on the Civic Responsibilities of Higher Education adopted July 4, 1999 and endorsed by more than 300 presidents, including President Yudof.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT MEANS AN INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC PURPOSES AND RESPONSIBILITIES INTENDED TO STRENGTHEN A DEMOCRATIC WAY OF LIFE IN THE RAPIDLY CHANGING INFORMATION AGE OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Civic engagement is an institutional commitment that is expressed in the full range of university activities. It is not distinct or separate from the regular professional work of research, teaching and outreach. Rather, civic engagement is an integral part of professional work that motivates and pervades all University activities, a distinguishing feature of the University’s institutional identity.

The university does not DO civic engagement; the University IS a civically-engaged institution. The challenge is to spell out how civic engagement makes a difference in our research, teaching, outreach, and other professional work. In practical terms the question boils down to this: how is professional work different in a civically-engaged university compared to other institutions of higher education, and what benefits result from this difference to the University itself and the people of Minnesota.

The public purposes and responsibilities entailed in a commitment to civic engagement are the following:

- **ACCESS TO LEARNING:** to assure the highest quality undergraduate, graduate, and lifelong learning opportunities to students regardless of age, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, income, or disability as part of connected learning experiences that extend from K-12 schooling to collegiate education, professional training and throughout a lifetime;

- **ENHANCED DIVERSITY:** to promote the inclusion and participation throughout the university and in the larger community of people with diverse backgrounds and voices, nourishing a vigorous pluralism in American society;
• **CIVIC LEARNING:** to develop among all our students the civic competence and critical thinking that empower them as effective citizens in their localities, states, nations and in a global environment, and to develop among people from varied backgrounds the capacity for responsible leadership in private, associational, and public organizations and institutions

• **PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP:** to foster new knowledge and creative expression in the arts, sciences, and humanities as vital manifestations of an active life of the mind and spirit, and to encourage faculty research and other professional work concerned with the conditions and problems of public life that affect the future of democratic societies and politics at home and around the world;

• **SOCIAL WELL-BEING:** to contribute through the discovery, dissemination, and application of knowledge to the economic and social well-being of communities locally, regionally, nationally and internationally;

• **TRUSTED VOICE:** to provide citizens and leaders with dependable knowledge and reliable information for reaching responsible public judgments and decisions, and so to serve as a trusted voice in public debates over controversial issues;

• **PUBLIC SPACES:** to provide accessible sites and intellectual leadership for public deliberation about the meaning and importance of civic values and civic participation in the face of increasing globalization, corporatization and civic disengagement;

• **COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP:** to collaborate with diverse groups, organizations, institutions, and communities as mutually helpful partners in furthering shared democratic purposes;

• **SELF-GOVERNANCE:** to maintain the university’s collegial self-governance and autonomy from special interests as necessary for the accomplishment of our public purposes;

• **PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY:** to remain accountable for serving well the people of Minnesota by pursuing actively the full range of the university’s public purposes.
These purposes and responsibilities underlie the institutional activities and professional work of a civically-engaged University. At present, important initiatives and programs to achieve many of these purposes are underway in one form or another in all four coordinate campuses. These initiatives reflect a serious institutional commitment to a civically engaged university, and there is no intention in this report to slight their value. The additional initiatives proposed here explicitly recognize the significance of many ongoing activities as models to build upon for the future; proposals in this report are intended to extend and supplement these activities. Ongoing and proposed programs are viewed here as complementary.

These purposes and responsibilities may also serve as general criteria for assessing how well the University is succeeding as a civically engaged institution. For example, we may ask such questions as the following:

- How successful is the University in attracting and retaining students, staff, faculty and administrators with varied backgrounds and voices, consistent with its purposes of enhanced diversity;
- How many students throughout the University opt for civic learning experiences as part of their undergraduate education, and how many complete their degrees with no such experiences;
- How accessible is the university to individuals, groups and communities seeking connections for common purposes, or in locating public spaces within the institution;
- How effectively does the University participate in community partnerships that are cooperative, mutually beneficial relationships with diverse groups, communities and institutions;
- How autonomous is the University from special interests in order to maintain its role as a trusted voice on controversial public issues.

It is beyond the scope of this Task Force to spell out these criteria in greater detail or apply them as indicators of civic performance. It is clear that a wide range of civic initiatives directed toward public purposes and responsibilities is currently ongoing throughout the University. At the same time, responses from interviews, focus groups, listening posts, special meetings, and other discussions indicate critical perceptions about the university’s public role and civic mission. Although these responses are non-systematic, they do throw light on the questions of why and what to change. The following are brief excerpts from far more extensive expressions of viewpoints that we have gathered.
Legislators (legislators’ dinner, February 11, 2001):

- “There is a big gap between academic culture and the average Joe. The University has a real problem with perceived arrogance. The Civic Engagement Task Force work can be a political asset.” State representative, higher ed finance committee
- “The language of citizenship [in the state] has atrophied. There is the need to get out the idea about citizenship as serious work on tough public problems, across the state. There are very important roles of the university in developing a basic citizenship tool kit, like chairing meetings, or dealing with conflict in a constructive way.” State senator
- “There is an important difference between marketing what the University is already doing and changing the culture so that people at the U of M listen better to the citizenry of the state. Both are important. They should not be confused.” State senator
- “The university needs to be more accessible, transparent, and locally involved in visible ways. The university needs to be involved among the people across the state, interactive, and working with people in partnership.” State senator
- “Students in all parts of the University – like IT -- need experiences with community work and cultural diversity, in order to function effectively in the world they are going to live in.” State senator

Students

- “We as students need to better understand how to get our voices heard. UM would be a good training ground for this, so that when we graduate we can know how to do this in the work world.”
- “Use a student organizing model through MPIRG to get student ideas and also as a training model for helping students have their voice heard.”
- “Opportunities for being involved at the university need to be accessible, rather than students having to hunt them down.”
- “The classroom should have more ways of helping students analyze and research problems of society, so that when they enter into the workplace and community, they know how to be active citizens and why it is important.”
- “There could be training/certificate programs that help students learn skill building on things such as networking, working in teams, and public speaking to become better prepared workers.”
- “UM should find more ways to utilize and honor the talents of the students. The university experience is more than a one-way street of the professors lecturing to students. Students can learn from each other in the classroom experience. Students can bring their own life experiences to add to the learning.”
- “Students need to better understand what is the benefit of civic engagement in their immediate and long-term interests.”

General Public

- “It is not the Twin Cities that scares students away. It is the university itself. The university needs to step up its image through public relations efforts and link those to student recruitment.”
- “The university should be an unbiased source of information. What are the sources of funding, and do they influence research outcomes?”
- “There is a perception that groups need money to work with the university. It seems that when groups bring money to the university, things get done.”
- “The university needs to be more transparent about its budgets, funding sources, and how it operates. It seems to be secretive and mysterious.”
- “The university and its faculty have an image of being elite. This creates a barrier between the university and the people.”
- “Legislative leaders need to know who is knowledgeable and available at the university when they are seeking testimony before legislative committees.”
- “The university should provide more education for people in decision-making positions within local and regional government.”
- “Democratize the university decision-making process. Research funding decisions should be directed by a democratic and public process that prioritizes system issues over crisis management, and is guided by principles supporting the earth's carrying capacity and cooperative values.
- “The university should accept the responsibility to be agents of change. Evaluate and determine what changes are necessary.”
Faculty and Administrators

- “A relatively decentralized institution like the university works well when there is a strong sense of common purpose. But over the last decade, that sense of common vision and direction has greatly weakened.” (Administrator, Morrill Hall)
- “We need a language for talking about what we stand for. Right now, that isn't there.” (Administrator, St. Paul Campus)
- “Our identity as an institution has weakened.” (Faculty, CLA)
- “We have a lot of pride in our work. We're engaged in a lot of collaboration with businesses and other institutions. But it tends to be invisible. We're a little hunkered down in the university.” (Faculty, IT)
- “The idea of 'student as customer' debases the relationship. I had a student come in to see me not long ago. He said, "you changed my life years ago." People who think the faculty-student relationship is about customers completely miss that.” (Faculty, CLA)
- “Marketplace values will destroy the university unless there is a balance.” (Administrator, St. Paul Campus)
- “In health, we need to see every interaction between the provider and the patient as a civic act. There are always values involved. If we let simply the market take over it will be very damaging.” (Administrator, Health Center)
- “Our values are getting inverted, with things that should be central now on the periphery. We need to regain a balance between responding to market pressures and liberal and civic values.” (Faculty, CLA)
- “We have people who do public scholarship, who interact with wide publics on important topics, but it is not regarded as scholarship by current definitions. It creates hard feelings. (Faculty)
- “To date, a good deal of the most creative intellectual work is not well-recognized in the whole promotion and tenure process.” (Faculty)
- “What we define as scholarship is a fight about what you value, a fight for the future. (Faculty)
- We’ve been talking a lot in our department about how to be less cloistered. How can we relate to a broader audience for our scholarship.” (Chair, CLA)
- “We need to deepen the public nature of our work across the board at the university. This should apply even in some of the 'hardest' research areas.” (Administrator, Morrill Hall)
- “Change isn't going to happen unless there is change in the norms and rewards.” (Faculty)
- “The future of public universities depends on renewing their public commitments. Research is better, and teaching far more lively, if faculty are involved in public issues.” (Administrator, Morrill Hall)

Although this evidence is inconclusive as to how well overall the University is or is not performing its civic mission, it would be self-defeating to assume that there is nothing here to fix. Perhaps the best assessment is that the University of Minnesota is at present a partially-engaged university; the challenge for the future is to become a fully-engaged university.
WHAT TO CHANGE

Implications of Civic Engagement
The practical implementation of civic engagement entails changes in core activities, professional work, and institutional practices. It is important to clarify the implications of civic engagement for the central missions of research, teaching and outreach.

RESEARCH: Research is civically engaged insofar as it is conducted as public scholarship. Public Scholarship is research that directly or indirectly addresses public concerns or enlivens public discourse. Public scholarship responds to social needs—including the need for intellectual and ethical growth—although the methodology of “disinterested science”, as practiced by professional peers within a scientific or academic discipline, is essential to credible discovery and progress. The results of public scholarship are expected to be available for public dissemination and practical application, as opposed to research that remains primarily of interest to fellow researchers or is proprietary.

Critics of Public Scholarship allege that responsiveness to public concerns detracts from the rigor of first class research. But the historic record tells a different story: notable achievements in all areas of inquiry within the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities have resulted from attention to express public concerns of which researchers and scholars were keenly aware.

TEACHING: Civically engaged teaching is devoted to Civic Learning, through which students develop the skills of effective citizenship and responsible leadership that empower them in a variety of vocational, institutional, and political settings. Although civic learning includes knowledge acquired in conventional classroom situations, opportunities for civic learning frequently occur outside the classroom through a range of experiential, service-learning, internship, practicum, and community-based experiences. The same civic learning opportunities may not be equally appropriate for all students and academic units or programs. Opportunities for civic learning are typically provided through undergraduate programs, but the importance of civic learning has also been acknowledged in graduate education. Initiatives to explore this aspect of civic learning are underway.

OUTREACH: Civically engaged outreach involves participation in Community Partnerships, in which the university collaborates with groups, communities, organizations, and institutions as respectful partners in mutually beneficial relationships for common purposes. Civically engaged outreach combines the resources from all parts of the university together with communities, industries, and organizations and applies them to real issues in society. In civically engaged outreach, program development is interactive: design and implementation are a joint effort of citizens working with university faculty and staff. Not all outreach is civically engaged; some outreach is modeled on an expert-client relationship. The transformation of outreach into community partnership, under the influence of ideas associated with civic engagement, is one of the important recent developments affecting all university-community connections.
In practice, the conduct of public scholarship, opportunities for civic learning, and the development of community partnerships involve all colleges and professional schools. In a civically engaged university, public scholarship, civic learning, and community partnerships are carried on throughout the institution. Civic engagement is a university commitment that changes how we develop, disseminate and apply knowledge in all parts of the university. CLA is as much involved as the Extension Service: both should engage in all three activities--Public Scholarship, Civic Learning, and Community Partnership--although to a different extent in each of the two units. Understood in this way, the profound consequences of civic engagement for all core university missions become clear.

Numerous and innovative proposals for changes in a wide range of university activities and practices are contained in separate reports from the Task Force Committees on Public Scholarship, Civic Learning, Community Partnership, Institutional Priorities and Institutional Connections, and the Public Scholarship Advisory Panel, which are attached to this Final Report as separate appendices. We will not recapitulate here the full list of these proposed changes, which will require serious attention during the next phase of implementing the civic engagement initiative. But we can note some general types of changes that are proposed in the committee reports.

**ACTIVITES FOR CHANGE**

**Develop More Effective Communication About University Research**
Audiences and communities should be targeted to differentiate appropriate approaches and messages. Prospective audiences include school children (and their parents), casual citizens, interested citizens, legislators, government agencies, university students, and private sector links. Approaching these audiences will require "tools of the trade" to be developed in consultation with professionals in the areas of communications, extension, and faculty development.

**Make the Public and the UMN More Equal, Respectful Partners**
This means, among other things, learning from others, making connections to the private sector, holding joint conferences, providing training for faculty and community. Specific practical measures under each of these headings are spelled out in the appended report from the task force committee on Public Scholarship.

**Broaden the Expectations of Research and Scholarship**
This is a challenging effort that requires rethinking traditional assumptions about the purposes of research and scholarship and the forms of compensation for civically engaged public scholarship. The faculty must address fundamental issues about why and how research is conducted, which should lead to new understandings and justifications of the public purposes of a research university as well as important changes in the university's institutional culture.
Think Outside the Box About Civic Learning
Real innovation for Civic Learning requires setting aside some of the traditional understandings and structures of higher education. Fresh ideas are needed for creating spaces for innovation that will enable faculty, staff, students, and community partners to think beyond our current practices of credit hours, discrete classes, and the fragmented academic calendar. For example, two to three faculty members and 20-30 students could design for themselves a full academic-year program of integrated community-based learning and research. The experience would fulfill the full-time teaching obligations of the faculty members and would result in the students earning 30 credits that meet appropriate graduation requirements, including the senior project. For another example, the university, in partnership with communities, could establish living-learning houses in selected neighborhoods. A group of students would live in the house, take some courses there, and engage in community work in the neighborhood in which they now live. This innovation might be supplemented with a network of "community base learning hubs." Instead of trying to manage from on-campus offices relationships with dozens or hundreds of community organizations where students are doing community work, the university could work in partnership with neighborhoods to create "hubs" which link together organizations in that neighborhood where the students do community work. The Jane Addams School for Democracy in St. Paul's West Side is an example of such a "hub."

Extend Community Partnership
Individuals, centers, and other units at the university are and have been engaged in scores, if not hundreds, of partnerships with groups, organizations, and institutions outside the university. These partnerships are highly varied, and there is no single or few recipes or formulas for success. However, there are probably some "best practices" that enable different types and scales of partnerships to succeed. There are also pitfalls and minefields that might be labeled "worst practices." Neither the best nor worst practices are always intuitively obvious, and faculty and administrators could benefit from learning how to do partnerships well. A critical question is how do we strengthen our existing partnerships and enhance our capacity to enter into new partnerships in the context of a more integrated and civically engaged university? Two elements are required to achieve these goals: cultural change, and organizational change. Both are necessary; neither is sufficient. Recent experience shows that it is possible to change the values and culture in higher education and in the university. But in addition to cultural change, a strong indication of institutional commitment would be the establishment of central administration leadership responsible for civic engagement. There will be very little change at the university unless some person or persons with appropriate authority and adequate resources is charged with and made responsible for making something happen. This will signal to the entire community that the university is serious, and that proper attention will be paid to civic engagement and the many community partnerships already ongoing and waiting to be developed.
Extend Connections
In implementing the changes envisioned in this report, strong potential support is available from internal and external constituencies committed to strengthening civic engagement. Connections between the university and these external constituencies are critical in achieving our goals. What the university is trying to accomplish cannot be isolated from the overall political climate of Minnesota. If the university changes toward civic engagement the state will change, and change at the university is strengthened by other visible examples of civic engagement statewide. Consequently, a strategic network should be developed as a support system for civic projects and civic innovations at the university as well as in the broader environment. The network would also be a learning community, self-consciously aimed at developing practice wisdom about "what works." A number of initiatives can help to catalyze civic engagement within the university and throughout the state.

Develop Expanded Civic Learning Opportunities
Building on the internal and outreach civic learning and education efforts already underway, a concerted, large scale, long term initiative is needed to develop and expand civic learning opportunities at the U and across the state. Faculty, staff, and students need to develop the skills of collaborative work on significant public and community problems with people who are unlike themselves; moreover, these skills and habits need to become widely known and practiced across the state generally. Civic learning opportunities should not only be directed toward individual development but also toward enhancing the capacities of many institutions (K-12 schools, libraries, museums, historical societies, arts councils and others) as civic educators.

Link Research and Teaching Efforts for Successful Partnerships
A University-wide support system should be developed for innovative combined research and teaching efforts, building on existing efforts like Extension's River Valley Partnerships, Family Life 1st, the Phillips Lead Project, the Regional Partnerships, Jane Addams School for Democracy in St. Paul, Public Achievement, Children, Youth and Family Consortium, and graduate school efforts to support students’ community involvements. This system would aim at teaching/research initiatives conceived and carried out in contexts reflecting the “best practices” outlined by Campus Compact for higher ed-community partnerships (including sustainability, multi-dimensionality, and reciprocity). This effort needs to develop methods of assessment that pay attention to the every-day relationship building work involved. It also needs to encourage development of intellectual frameworks and logistical infrastructure for sustained civic engagement partnerships between departments and disciplines and communities and institutions. (See appendix for “Community Partnerships-Why to Change, What to Change, and How to Change”
Develop Public Spaces.
Building on existing efforts to create public spaces, a sustained initiative would help to develop vital, lively public spaces where people are able to interact casually, as well as work and talk civically. The need for public spaces was emphasized in multiple venues—places where people with diverse views can get to know each other, as well as wrestle with tough issues and come to larger judgment. Public spaces should be seen in broad ways, as places for play as well as public work, commerce as well as politics. Project for Public Spaces has documented their economic, civic, social, health and other benefits. Vital public spaces are also a teaching/learning method for civic learning. Renewal of public spaces on a large scale will eventually entail many policy changes, from property taxes to zoning laws.

Connect Civic Disciplines and Professions
The civic scope and potential of the U of M is national and global, as well as local and state-wide. Local issues, from water quality and education to the environment and economic growth, have significant national and international dimensions in our increasingly interconnected world. To develop the trans-local civic dimensions of diverse issues an interdisciplinary action research project on the civic dimensions of professions and disciplines should be organized. In part this effort needs to retrieve the significant, if often forgotten, civic origins and purposes of disciplines. In part it means developing theory and practical strategies for stimulating discipline-wide attention to the public purposes and effects of disciplines. This topic also needs sustained faculty discussion.

Focus on Cultural Change
The most intangible but critical change in implementing civic engagement is a change in the university’s institutional culture—the norms, values, and expectations that pervade the institution and motivate professional work. In recent decades, the culture of leading research universities has become increasingly competitive and materialistic. Faculty and administration strive for more external recognition and research support. Many faculties are more attentive to their national/international professional allegiances than to their local university community. Universities increasingly justify themselves as engines of economic growth rather than through their contributions to learning and discovery. Students view their college education as an individual benefit, preparation for a profitable career, rather than a way to help them contribute to the common good. Each side of these dichotomies has validity; the challenge is to strike a proper balance. In our strongly market driven society, which influences universities and society’s expectation’s from them, just as it does other social institutions, civic values are minimized or dismissed. To institute civic engagement at the center of university priorities requires a re-balancing of institutional culture with the renewal of a land grant mission based on the historic emphasis on access, social responsiveness, and public scholarship. How to accomplish this change in culture and the other changes outlined here is a question for the next section of this report.
HOW TO CHANGE
To implement civic engagement as a continuing institutional priority will require a concerted effort by the entire university community working with groups throughout the state. The following recommendations point to some important means for carrying out such an effort.

Internal Support
Civic engagement will not thrive without the active participation of students, faculty, and staff and the involvement of public and private sector leaders around the state. To assure widespread support for civic engagement within the university we propose establishment of a Council on Civic Engagement. The Council would include the Senior Administrators for Research, Undergraduate Education, and Outreach; chairs of the FCC and appropriate Faculty Senate committees; the Chair of the Council of Deans and their designees; and representatives from the undergraduate, graduate student and staff associations, and representatives from the coordinate campuses. Through this Council important university constituencies would be directly involved in monitoring and furthering civic engagement initiatives.

Community Connection
To maintain connections with groups and organizations interested in civic engagement throughout the state we propose establishment of a Minnesota Civic Partnership and Forum. The Civic Partnership and Forum would be composed of university leaders and representatives from other organizations concerned with civic engagement, such as Campus Compact and HECUA, as well as representatives from public and private sector groups and organizations, including the Alumni Association and the AAUP, with a shared interest in promoting civic engagement both in the university and in other institutions throughout the state.

The Civic Partnership and Forum would sponsor seminars, roundtables, and other activities to serve as a catalyst in generating new ideas and developing new networks within the university and in association with individuals, groups, and organizations outside the university in order to further Civic Engagement in the university and elsewhere.

The Civic Partnership and Forum would itself be an example of community partnership in action and would serve as a means for connecting the university to the larger community through a common public purpose. The Civic Partnership and forum would serve as a communications link and would coordinate civic engagement activities within the university with related activities of other organizations.
Senior Administrator
A Senior Administrator responsible for Civic Engagement would be charged with the following tasks, among others:

- participate in regular Compact and other planning meetings where discussion of developing, expanding and integrating civic engagement initiatives can take place;
- meet regularly with Deans and Directors of appropriate centers to link civic engagement/community partnership activities in those colleges and centers;
- develop a communications plan so that information about civic engagement activities and projects can be shared widely and to appropriate audiences both inside and outside the university;
- preside over the Council on Civic Engagement and the Minnesota Civic Partnership and Forum and coordinate their activities;
- establish a “Clearing House” capability to appropriately connect inquiries to the University from multiple sources and communications within the university. (The Internet will likely be an important tool to assist in this task);
- undertake an analysis of what constitute appropriate partnerships between the university and outside organizations and agencies in terms of expectations, contractual arrangements, obligations, liabilities, and so on;
- monitor units across the university to see how Community Partnerships conform to good practice.

Faculty Participation
Active participation by the faculty is essential to effective civic engagement. This does not mean that every faculty-member will be directly involved in all types of civically-engaged professional work throughout her/his career. It does mean, however, that every faculty-member will at least be cognizant that the university is a civically-engaged institution committed to clear public purposes and responsibilities, and this commitment is shared throughout the university community. Different types of professional work -- from basic scientific research to community partnership through the Extension Service -- express this commitment in distinctive ways, but everyone should acknowledge a connection between the mission of the university and concern with the common good.

A vital aspect of participation in civic engagement are opportunities for faculty to discuss and promote civic engagement through forums, special programs, networking, and other formats both within the university and in association with outside organizations and institutions. To develop and sustain such opportunities becomes an important task for the Council on Civic Engagement, the Minnesota Civic Partnership and Forum, and the Senior Administrator responsible for civic engagement. In the end, active faculty participation is the vital foundation of successful civic engagement.
**Student Involvement**
No group has a greater long-term stake in civic engagement than the students. Civic engagement affects the education they receive, their development as effective citizens and responsible leaders, the extent of political and public support for their university, and the society in which they will live. Moreover, public scholarship, civic learning, and community partnership expect and even require student participation. Active student involvement is a hallmark of civic engagement. To foster such involvement, student representatives should serve on the Council on Civic Engagement and the Civic Partnership and Forum. In addition, the undergraduate and graduate student associations should be encouraged to devote special attention to civic engagement as a priority in their activities, and to work together with faculty in organizing forums and other programs around issues of civic engagement.

Students have been members of this task force and have been consulted independently concerning their views on civic engagement. There is a strong desire among these students to participate in the civic engagement process and to be part of a civically-engaged university. Their idealism and concern about the future inspire a genuine understanding of and commitment to civic engagement as the direction in which the university should move. We should welcome and facilitate their involvement in the civic engagement initiative.

**Institutional Incentives**
Civic engagement will only succeed when it is incorporated into the regular university structure of incentives, rewards, and recognition. At present, the prevailing reward structure -- including criteria for granting tenure and assessing merit -- does not encourage young faculty to devote themselves to civically-engaged professional work. To change this situation -- to institutionalize civic engagement as an acknowledged university priority embedded in the structure of incentives and rewards -- will require a determined effort to modify established practices. Among specific steps toward this end are the following:

- support a dialogue in the university community to define engagement as distinct from service;
- create a best practice document that will provide models of how departments/colleges support, incentivize and nurture civic engagement;
- encourage departments to review the standards in tenure 7-12 documents to include measures of civic engagement;
- create and encourage a culture within the university that supports dialogue of “how to become engaged” in teaching, research and outreach;
- establish awards for outstanding efforts in civic engagement.
Committed Leadership
The changes needed to achieve civic engagement, especially a change in the institutional culture, depend on the committed leadership of senior administrators and faculty. Their words and actions help to articulate and legitimize the norms, values and expectations that pervade the university. Civic engagement has proceeded thanks to active support from the Provost and the Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education, and the encouragement of other senior administrators. But in the end it cannot fully succeed without the involvement of the President of the University. We recommend that President Yudof be enlisted as an active proponent of civic engagement.

Coordination of Initiatives
Proposals in this report parallel and complement recommendations from other task forces currently at work as well as initiatives ongoing or that are being considered in a variety of units and programs, including Vital Aging, Non Profit Management, America’s Promise, Elected Officials, and Distributed Education. Through conversations with representatives from these task forces, units, and programs, we are aware that inter-connections among them will strengthen institutional outcomes for the university. For example, recommendations from the Task Force on Distributed Learning directly support several of the public purposes identified in this report as aspects of civic engagement: Access to Learning, Enhanced Diversity, Civic Learning, Social Well-being, Public Spaces, and Community Partnership. In implementing proposals from this and other task forces it will be necessary to coordinate new and existing initiatives in order to achieve the strongest institutional effect. This is an important reason why both task forces -- on Civic Engagement and on Distributed Education-- join in proposing a Senior Administrator who would be responsible for integrating complementary initiatives in a variety of units across all campuses. Any administrator or committee charged with implementing recommendations from this and related task forces should address explicitly how to coordinate both the new proposals and ongoing programs in order to reduce unnecessary duplication and improve the outcomes.

Continuity: Extension of the Task Force
In the Interim, pending the introduction of appropriate institutional arrangements and in order to assure continuation of the civic engagement initiative, we recommend that the Task Force on Civic Engagement be extended for one additional year to monitor implementation of recommendations, assess results, and make further proposals as needed. Extending the Task Force for an additional year will help to assure that valuable innovations proposed in the appended committee reports are implemented and reviewed.
In addition, the Task Force this year undertook several projects that proved successful and should be continued: issuance of an RFP for strengthening civic engagement across units and campuses; public forums, some with prominent guest speakers, on topics related to civic engagement; meetings with legislators, foundation executives, and other community leaders; creation of a project management web site; [www.umn.edu/civic](http://www.umn.edu/civic) an inventory of civic engagement projects throughout the university. Responses to these Task Force projects have been very positive, and they would be continued for another year if the Task Force is extended. Other complementary programs might be added. At the end of the proposed second year (spring, 2002) the Task Force would submit a report to the Provost reviewing the results of the year’s civic engagement activities.

**RFP:** A specific Task Force activity during this past year was a RFP for projects to strengthen civic engagement across the university. Eighty-nine applications were submitted, of which eighteen were funded. (See web site for details) Some projects began on January 1, and some will begin in September and finalized in December 2001. The success of this project, in terms of both the number and quality of the proposals, indicates widespread interest in such proposals on all four campuses. We therefore recommend extension of the RFP for a second year.

**CONCLUSION**

A successful civic engagement initiative holds the promise of significant benefits both for the university and for the people of Minnesota. Within the university civic engagement will revive a diminished sense of public purpose by renewing the land grant tradition in contemporary terms. It will also provide a basis for increasing political and public support for the university. For the people of Minnesota an institutional commitment to civic engagement will help develop more empowered citizens through enhanced civic learning; assure a more accessible, connected, trustworthy university actively collaborating in community partnerships; and enrich our lives through the discovery, dissemination, and application of public scholarship. In the long term civic engagement will strengthen a democratic way of life for us all.