

September 14, 2005

To: <insert name>, Collaborative Research Task Force Co-Chairs and Members

From: R. Timothy Mulcahy, Vice President for Research

Subject: Task Force Charge Letter

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Thank you for agreeing to serve on the Collaborative Research task force. This task force is assisting with the implementation of the University's 2005 strategic positioning recommendations entitled, "Transforming the University of Minnesota," endorsed by the Board of Regents on June 10, 2005. Frances Lawrenz and Mark Paller have agreed to serve as task force co-chairs.

### **Task Force Charge**

The Collaborative Research task force is charged with developing recommendations that will enhance the conduct of interdisciplinary, interprofessional, inter-institutional and team-oriented research at the University of Minnesota. A specific set of tasks intended to serve as a guide for the task force in fulfillment of this charge is appended to this letter. The recommendations should be designed to help position the University as one of the top three public research universities in the world within ten years and should support the following five strategic action areas identified in the strategic positioning report:

1. Recruit, nurture, challenge and educate outstanding students who are bright, curious, and highly motivated.
2. Recruit, mentor, reward, and retain world-class faculty and staff who are innovative, energetic, and dedicated to the highest standards of excellence.
3. Promote an effective organizational culture that is committed to excellence and responsive to change.
4. Exercise responsible stewardship by setting priorities, and enhancing and effectively utilizing resource and infrastructure.
5. Communicate clearly and credibly with all of our constituencies and practice public engagement responsive to the public good.

For all areas, the President has asked that each task force assess critical and relevant trends. Your task force will not be responsible for on-the-ground operational and implementation decisions. Rather, it is expected that your team will function at a high level of visioning and strategic thinking, focusing on the long-term viability and future success of the University of Minnesota.

During the development of the University's strategic positioning plan, certain common themes have been identified that informed the goal to become one of the top three public research institutions in the world. These themes are important to keep in mind as we begin our work. The themes are:

- Strong academic programs and leadership.
- Improved access to success for students demonstrating that a better education leads directly to better results.
- Excellence in research.
- Lowered economic costs through improved services and strengthened core investments.
- Greater alignment across all programs and services.

Broad consultation with stakeholders is crucial to the strategic positioning effort. The task force is encouraged to consult widely with all segments of the University community during its analysis and development of recommendations. Consultation should include faculty, staff, students, deans, administrators, internal and external stakeholders, alumni, internal or external "experts" and any others the team deems appropriate.

### **Task Force Retreat**

One of your first assignments as task force co-chairs and members is to attend the strategic positioning task force retreat and work day scheduled for Friday, September 16<sup>th</sup>. The retreat and work day will be held at the North Star Ballroom in the St. Paul Student Center. Task force co-chairs are expected to attend from 8:30 am-5:00 pm. Task force members are expected to attend from 1:00 pm-5:00 pm. An agenda and more detailed information will be forth coming.

### **Reporting Deadlines**

The expected date for completion of your final report is **May 1, 2006**. The task force will also be expected to submit to me by **December 10, 2005**, a progress report summarizing the progress to date. I will also want you to establish regular and open communication with me throughout this process and would like to meet with you at 4-6 week intervals to review progress and to determine what, if any, resources the task force might need to satisfy its charge.

### **Resources Available to the Task Force**

As you begin your work, I want to alert you to the resources and support available to your team. These include 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 areas of cross-functional alignment, change management, and

subject matter expertise as needed. Two additional sources of support are the Steering Committee for our area and the Executive Strategic Positioning Team.

Win Ann Schumi will serve as Task Force coordinator representing the Office of the Vice President for Research and will work directly with the task force co-chairs to help manage and coordinate the activities of the group. In addition, Peggy Sundermeyer and Amy Nordlander will staff the task force and will be responsible for recording of minutes, maintenance of data and records used by the task force, scheduling of meetings and collation and preparation of report drafts.

### **Managing Change**

The University has entered an era of transformational change. Organizational change of this magnitude requires effective management, and the task forces being charged to bring the vision forward play a crucial role in change management. Open and timely consultation with the key stakeholders in your area is essential in this process. This includes recognition of potential barriers to change and thought toward overcoming areas of resistance. Attention to announced timelines for work completion and effective communication of progress toward goals are also vital to managing change at this level. There are resources available throughout the University community that can provide you with support in the area of change management. As task force coordinator, Win Ann Schumi is assigned this responsibility and will provide you with assistance in accessing that support as needed.

Thank you again for your willingness to assume this important role on behalf of the University community. Your participation is vital to the successful implementation of the 2005 strategic plan and to achieving the goal of becoming one of the top three public research universities in the world. Please feel free to contact me with questions, for clarifications or to request any other assistance you might need, now or during the course of the task force's work.

Your leadership and enthusiasm for this process are greatly appreciated.

### **Attachments**

Cc: Frank Cerra, Senior Vice President of Health Sciences  
E. Thomas Sullivan, Provost  
Win Ann Schumi, Assistant Vice President for Research  
Peggy Sundermeyer, Director, OVRP

## **Collaborative Research**

**Progress Report due: December 10, 2005**

**Final Report due: May 1, 2006**

### *Mission:*

To create a plan to identify and promote interdisciplinary, interprofessional, interscholastic, and inter-institutional partnerships/programs/activities, consistent with the University's goal to become one of the top three public research universities in the world.

### *Deliverables:*

- Recommendations regarding the role of interdisciplinary, interprofessional, interscholastic, and inter-institutional partnerships/programs/activities in achieving the University's goal of becoming one of the three public research universities in the world.
- Identification of the research areas (current and emerging) that will require or benefit most from interdisciplinary or team-oriented approaches, including the following:
  - How should future opportunities be identified, evaluated, and prioritized?
  - For which of the anticipated opportunities does the University currently enjoy a comparative advantage?
  - Which areas should be considered a priority for development?
  - What promising large-scale research areas require special attention and investment?
- Recommendations regarding how the University can optimally encourage increased interactions and collaborations among researchers across departmental, disciplinary, and collegiate boundaries, including identification of current impediments (cultural, administrative, structural, infrastructure) to such collaborations and recommendations for overcoming these impediments.
- Recommendations regarding the financial resources that will be necessary to support interdisciplinary or collaborative research, and how such resources should be identified and allocated.
- Recommendations regarding "best practices" from other institutions that should be considered for implementation at the University of Minnesota, including a comparison of the University's current practices with the recommendations of the National Academies with respect to facilitating interdisciplinary research.