



Transforming the University of Minnesota

The University of Minnesota is on a journey to become one of the top three public research universities in the world within a decade.

In September 2005, 34 task forces—made up of more than 300 faculty, staff, students and friends of the University—began meeting to develop recommendations for how the University can attain that goal.

Each task force was charged with developing recommendations across a wide range of key University objectives: improving students' writing skills, educational experience and success rates; attracting and supporting outstanding faculty members; creating world-class colleges of education and design, among others; optimizing research, and making administrative services more effective and efficient. An equivalent standard of excellence is applied to our coordinate campuses, statewide research centers, and extension service offices. Recommendations will be issued throughout the 2005–06 academic year.

Making a good university great

The initiative to transform the University has been described as the most far-reaching and comprehensive in the University's storied 154-year history—and perhaps in the history of any university. It has won widespread support within the greater community, and as the task forces work to craft their recommendations, there's a buzz on campus that this very good university is on its way to becoming great.

Why a top-three "research university?"

- Because faculty who are engaged in cutting-edge research are in the best position to teach our next generation of leaders, scholars, and innovators.
- Because the University is Minnesota's only public research university. The U receives more than 98 percent of all research funding going to higher education institutions in the state.
- Because research—in science, technology, the arts and social sciences—is one of the best ways to advance the public good and has tangible benefits for all Minnesotans.

A magnet for talent and enterprise

Each of the task forces has been asked to consider how their recommendations can help recruit talented, promising and highly qualified students from diverse backgrounds; attract and retain energetic and creative faculty and staff; and promote a culture that is committed to excellence, the effective use of resources and engaging the public for the common good.

Engage in the process

Throughout 2005, there have been numerous public forums, consultations, questionnaires and other efforts to seek advice and counsel from a broad range of people from the University and greater communities.

Preliminary recommendations from 11 task forces are available on the Transforming the U Web site (www.umn.edu/transforming_the_u). Recommendations from the 23 remaining task forces will be posted to the site as they become available throughout the first half of 2006. The U encourages people to review the recommendations and share their thoughts and concerns via the Web site during the public comment periods. The task forces will review these comments before issuing final recommendations to their respective team leaders. From there, the recommendations will go to the U's executive team for review and next steps.

The journey ahead

University President Robert Bruininks describes this new course as "the first steps of a long journey." Already, the plan has received widespread support.

"A strategic plan for the University of Minnesota that makes it a world-class competitive research university, and measures the value of all programs against this vision, is exactly what all Minnesotans need," concluded a Citizens League Task Force on Higher Education.

Each year of the coming decade will hold its own opportunities and challenges. Throughout this process, the University is committed to elevating its education, research and outreach endeavors to even higher levels.