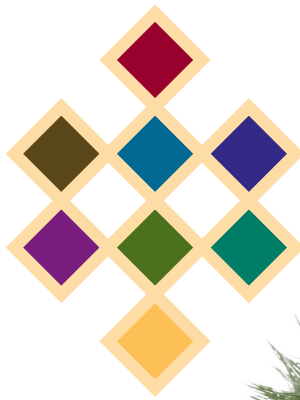# REIMAGINING EQUITY AND DIVERSITY:

A Framework for Transforming the University of Minnesota

Reimagining Equity and Diversity

Executive Summary

As the magnitude and complexity of diversity have grown in Minnesota, belief in the "power of broadened perspectives" has moved the University to rededicate itself to equity and diversity as both a practical and an ethical imperative. With the onset of Strategic Positioning, the University reaffirmed the importance of diversity as a core value and undertook a critical self-examination of its approach to equity and diversity. This process led to the establishment of the Systemwide Task Force on Diversity, and then to the repositioning of the Office for Equity and Diversity.

The findings and recommendations of the Systemwide Task Force on Diversity—in particular, the assertion that diversity is "inextricably" linked to excellence—are supported by comprehensive research that reveals extensive advantages and benefits at educational institutions where equity and diversity are core values.

The dynamic cultural and intellectual transactions that occur at the intersections of diverse perspectives and knowledge systems spur the kind of questioning and innovative thinking that advance and even *define* discovery and scholarly excellence. As Provost Thomas Sullivan said, in a presentation titled "The Importance of a Diverse Faculty," "We cannot achieve the widest and best range of carefully reasoned independent views … without diversity."

Diversity as a Driving Force

In proposing a transformational framework, we are defining diversity as not only a driving force but also a *necessary condition* for excellence. We are saying that excellence is truly achievable *only* in an environment that fully supports engagement with diverse cultures and perspectives. An academy of the highest stature, as measured against ideals of both academic excellence and social justice, is one in which excellence and diversity are inextricably intertwined—not e*ither-or*, but *both-and*.

We envision an institution where equity and diversity are woven into the work and the lives of every student, faculty, and staff member. As core institutional values, equity and diversity will infuse and inform thinking, policies, and practices throughout the University—from mission statements to strategic plans to student admissions to hiring, promotion, and tenure.

Transformed by diversity, our University will be looked to by institutions and organizations around the world for its unequivocal commitment to social justice; its equitable and transparent recruitment, hiring, and promotion policies and practices; its welcoming and respectful climate; its affirmation and support of the multiple identities of faculty, staff, and students; its

Eight Priorities for Implementation

Develop leadership capacity around equity and diversity work across the system.

Improve campus climate for diverse students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

Support and strengthen University-wide pre-collegiate programs and community outreach efforts.

Engage internal and external communities in reimagining strategies for achieving the University's retention and success goals for diverse students.

Engage internal and external communities in reimagining programs that support the recruitment, retention, and success of diverse faculty and staff.

Engage faculty in reimagining curriculum, pedagogy, and research to insure inclusivity and accessibility throughout the academic enterprise.

Support institutional assessment, accountability, and collaboration through the use of innovative metrics, technologies, and communication tools.

Engage University alumni, donors, and other community partners and stakeholders in achieving equity and diversity goals.

innovative, culturally infused curricula and pedagogies; its engagement with diverse communities throughout the state; and its dedication to developing and rewarding the intellectual, creative, professional, and community achievements of its diverse faculty, students, staff, and alumni.

Integrative Vision, Shared Responsibility

To achieve the transformation we aspire to, we must recognize that *all of our access and diversity goals, values, and practices are interconnected and interdependent,* and that we *all* share the responsibility for equity and diversity.

The University of Minnesota is already a leader in this integrative thinking. When the Office for Equity and Diversity was repositioned in 2006, the new model brought together into a single unit several units dedicated to equity and diversity: Disability Services; the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action; Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Ally Programs; the Multicultural Center for Academic Excellence; the Office for University Women; and the Bridge to Academic Excellence Program (new unit added in 2006).

Along with the appointment of Dr. Rusty Barceló as the institution's chief diversity officer at the vice presidential and vice provostial level, this integrative restructuring underscores the University's commitment to equity and diversity both administratively and academically and advances the University's capacity for national leadership.

We are now at a critical juncture. Working together, we must build the kind of institutional infrastructure that will sustain what we've set in motion and take us to the next level. In the same way that the strategic positioning process exhorts us to reimagine everything we think we know about the University of Minnesota, the framework presented here asks that we reimagine everything we think we know about equity and diversity. It asks us to reimagine a University *transformed by diversity*.

Much good equity and diversity work is already underway at the University, but it will be fully realized and sustainable only as part of an integrated and comprehensive effort. The time has come for us to coordinate our efforts and resources; to agree on common paths; to stay focused but flexible, adjusting our strategies when new circumstances require; and to make University transformation a collective enterprise. What follows is a holistic model for that enterprise.

Core Values and a New Model for Change

Seven core values inform and drive our transformational work on equity and diversity. These values are applicable to the work of every campus, college, department, and administrative unit. They underlie and infuse every facet of teaching, research, outreach, and day-to-day life at the University of Minnesota: social justice, excellence, system-wide collaboration, community engagement, accountability, sustainability, and transformation.

Building on these core values, we have identified eight priority areas for initial focus and attention, as well as a number of action items within each priority area. The Office for Equity and Diversity will guide the implementation of these action items. Yet no single office can accomplish this work alone. We must link expertise and resources and align efforts across colleges, departments, and units on all of the University's campuses.

We will call upon the knowledge and expertise of the six units of the Office for Equity and Diversity, as well as of collegiate and administrative units across the system, each with specific knowledge and understanding of its own constituencies. The plan will thus serve both as an institutional framework for action and as a kind of dynamic, evolving organism that can be shaped, adapted, and applied as appropriate within each unit and across all campuses.

Transforming the University: Equity, Diversity, and Strategic Positioning

The University of Minnesota's historic strategic positioning process, known as "Transforming the U," has set in motion a journey toward the uppermost tier of public research universities. New energy around that journey is revitalizing people, projects, and programs across the University system.

Acknowledging that the University's goal—to become one of the world's top three public research universities—is "audacious," the 2007 Strategic Positioning Report to the Board of Regents notes that it also is galvanizing the University community. It "urges us all to live up to our proud heritage of achievement and public responsibility. We aspire to *stature*, not ranking. *We seek a deep and abiding cultural commitment to excellence.*"

With this goal in mind, the University's Office for Equity and Diversity (OED) was repositioned in 2006 as an institutional asset at the highest level. This repositioning recognized and reaffirmed the critical and central role that equity and diversity work have played, and will continue to play, in the University's transformation. It also demonstrated the University's recognition that only by fully embracing the highest ideals of access, equity, and inclusivity will any institution successfully transform itself.

As new technologies change nearly everything we do, as cultural and national borders become increasingly fluid, and as our communities grow ever more diverse, we undertake this transformation because we believe in it, and also because we know we have no choice. Only by making diversity integral to the University's transformation will we ensure that all of our students, alumni, faculty, and staff are prepared to take on the challenges of this global century.

Given the magnitude of projected demographic changes in the years ahead, our project becomes all the more urgent. Minnesota's increasing diversity will have enormous ramifications for the University, especially as more and more students of color (and fewer who self-identify as white) enter the educational pipeline. It is important that we begin planning now for this population shift so that we may address the shared challenges of serving increasingly diverse populations.

Historical Commitment Reaffirmed

Diversity of the growing magnitude and complexity we are experiencing in our communities is relatively new to Minnesota. And yet the University's transformation is grounded in a longstanding institutional commitment to diversity, one that is fully aligned with its public mission and with deeply held principles of academic freedom.

In his 2003 Inaugural Address, President Bruininks identified a number of core values that he believed had preserved, sustained, and enriched the University of Minnesota throughout its history. One of these core values was diversity:

> *"There are few values more important today than our continued commitment to create an academic culture that values access and diversity. If education is the key to success and fulfillment in this society, as I believe it is, we cannot live up to our democratic ideals without ensuring that talented people from every income level, every neighborhood, and every kind of background can find a place at the University…. Diversity will continue to be a central goal for this University, and it will continue to infuse and shape this institution with energy and the power of broadened perspectives."*—University of Minnesota President Robert Bruininks

As Minnesota has grown increasingly diverse, belief in the "power of broadened perspectives" has moved the University to rededicate itself to equity and diversity as both practical and ethical imperatives. With the onset of Strategic Positioning, the University reaffirmed the importance of diversity as a core value and undertook a critical self-examination of its approach to equity and diversity. This process led to creation of the Task Force on Diversity by Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost E. Thomas Sullivan and Senior Vice President for System Administration Robert J. Jones; and to the repositioning of the Office for Equity and Diversity.

In its thoughtful and comprehensive final report, this task force articulated the centrality of diversity to the University's mission and posited a vital link between diversity and excellence at the University of Minnesota. Besides embracing diversity as intrinsically valuable, the report suggested, we must embrace the rich potentialities and synergies of the multiple perspectives and knowledge systems brought to the University by people representing a broad range of cultures, identities, and backgrounds.

To be a leader in education and research, the University of Minnesota must be an open, affirming, and intellectually and culturally vibrant place of learning and discovery where everyone is respected and supported in the pursuit of excellence:

"To achieve the goal of becoming one of the top three public research universities in the world, the University must be prepared to embrace the challenge of transforming itself by making diversity central to its intellectual and social mission. Diversity and academic excellence are inextricably intertwined. The University will be successful only if it can be a global leader in advancing a comprehensive and complex un-derstanding of diverse people and their myriad ways of being, knowing, and learning."
—Report of the Systemwide Task Force on Diversity

What We Mean By Diversity

In this vision paper we offer an overarching framework for the urgent work of developing strategies, programs, and services that advance diversity and address the needs of diverse populations, especially those most affected by institutional and systemic inequity and exclusion.

We believe that we have a special responsibility to serve, support, and partner with people and communities facing social, cultural, economic, physical, and attitudinal barriers to education and jobs, to promotion and advancement, and to the highest levels of achievement and success. And we have a responsibility to address fundamental issues of bias, discrimination, and exclusion.

In declaring that diversity is a core value, we dedicate ourselves to building a culture of excellence that is grounded in principles of equity and social justice and that fundamentally affirms and embraces the multiple identities, values, perspectives, knowledge and belief systems, and cultural practices of diverse individuals and communities.

Diversity is not just numeric representation. Nor is it just an institutional asset or benefit. Far from just enriching or enhancing campus life or the academic enterprise, it is fundamental to everything we do at the University of Minnesota.

It is our responsibility as an institution to serve and support the following individuals and groups at the University of Minnesota:

- People of color, including historically underrepresented groups and new immigrant populations;
- People with both visible and invisible disabilities;
- Women;
- People of various gender and sexual identities and expressions;
- First-generation students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

We also address issues of access and climate for individuals who might encounter barriers based on their religious expression, age, national origin, ethnicity, or veteran status.

We serve primarily University of Minnesota students, staff, and faculty, but also alumni, community members, and guests/visitors as appropriate.

Proven Value of Diversity

The findings and recommendations of the Systemwide Task Force on Diversity—in particular, the assertion that diversity is "inextricably" linked to excellence—are supported by comprehensive research that reveals extensive advantages and benefits at educational institutions where equity and diversity are core values.

An August 2004 study published in the journal *Psychological Science* by researchers Anthony Antonio, Mitchell Chang, Kenji Hakuta, David Kenny, Shana Levin, and Jeffrey Milem, for example, found unequivocal evidence of the positive intellectual impact on students of learning in a diverse environment. This research is part of a growing body of scholarship demonstrating that exposure to diverse people, cultures, and ideas promotes complex thinking. It does that by challenging prevailing assumptions and prejudices, and by pushing people to think in new ways about questions for which they thought they had clear and definitive answers.

The dynamic cultural and intellectual transactions that occur at the intersections of diverse cultures, perspectives, and knowledge systems spur the kind of questioning and innovative thinking that advance and even *define* discovery and scholarly excellence. As Provost Sullivan said, in a 2004 presentation titled "The Importance of a Diverse Faculty," "We cannot achieve the widest and best range of carefully reasoned independent views … without diversity."

A Transformational Vision of Diversity

Our fundamental operating premise is that we cannot transform the University or create a culture of excellence without a deep, comprehensive, strategic, and sustainable commitment to equity and diversity. We understand this commitment to entail full inclusion and affirmation of differences in race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, abilities, and economic status or background.

Over the years, the University has become more diverse by many quantitative measures, with increases in certain student cohorts, for example. But we are looking beyond the numbers, and beyond access. Understanding diversity as a qualitative term, we envision an environment where multiple identities and perspectives, new and unexpected questions, and new ways of knowing, being, and doing routinely intersect and collide to yield the kinds of intellectual surprises and revelations that are at the core of groundbreaking scholarship and discovery. In other words, we envision an environment of *discovery driven by diversity*.

But how do we challenge and inspire ourselves, and everyone in the academy, to recognize and respect the multitude of voices, stories, perspectives, and knowledge systems? How do we bring everyone to the table to reconceptualize existing curricula and pegagogies, the structures of knowledge, the patterns of relationships, and the organizing principles of institutional life? How do we create a culture of excellence where diversity is a driving force in everything we do? These are some of the central questions driving our work.

Diversity as a Driving Force

A dynamic and generative view of diversity as central to the academic enterprise is at the core of our vision of transformation. In proposing a transformational framework, we are defining diversity not only as a driving force but also as a necessary condition for excellence.

We are saying that excellence is truly achievable *only* in an environment that fully supports engagement with diverse cultures, identities, voices, and perspectives. An academy of the highest stature, as measured against ideals of both academic excellence and social justice, is one in which diversity is never an add-on or afterthought, *never* just "another thing to think about," not a problem to be fixed. In a University culture of excellence, diversity is intrinsic; excellence and diversity are inextricably intertwined—not *either-or*, but *both-and*.

In the end, what we envision is an institution where equity and diversity are woven into the work and the lives of every student, faculty, and staff member. As *core institutional values*, equity and diversity will infuse and inform thinking, policies, and practices throughout the University— from mission statements to strategic plans to admissions to hiring, promotion, and tenure.

And the transformation does not stop at the University's doors. As our vision takes shape, our work will also resonate and find expression in diverse communities far beyond the University, and will model to the world how such work can be done successfully, for the benefit of all.

Transformed by diversity, our University will be looked to by institutions and organizations around the world for its unequivocal commitment to social justice; its equitable and transparent recruitment, hiring, and promotion policies and practices; its welcoming and respectful climate; its affirmation and support of the multiple identities of faculty, staff, and students; its innovative, culturally infused curricula and pedagogies; its engagement with diverse communities throughout the state; and its dedication to developing and rewarding the intellectual, creative, professional, and community achievements of its diverse faculty, students, staff, and alumni.

Integrative Vision, Shared Responsibility

To achieve the transformation we aspire to, we must recognize that all of our access and diversity goals, values, and practices are interconnected and interdependent, and that we all share the responsibility for equity and diversity.

Superior research happens only within an institutional environment that is open and respectful; best practices in hiring, recruitment, and operations are equitable and transparent and rooted in ideals of social justice; a pervasive campus climate free of discrimination and bigotry is assured only when people contribute both individually and collectively to that climate; and so on.

The University of Minnesota is already a leader in this integrative thinking. When the Office for Equity and Diversity was repositioned, the new model brought several units together into an integrated office dedicated to equity and diversity: Disability Services; the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action; Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Ally Programs; the Multicultural Center for Academic Excellence; the Office for University Women; and the Bridge to Academic Excellence Program (new unit added in 2006).

Along with the appointment of Dr. Rusty Barceló as the institution's chief diversity officer at the vice presidential and vice provostial level, this integrative restructuring underscores the University's commitment to equity and diversity both administratively and academically and advances the University's capacity for national leadership.

We are now at a critical juncture. Working together, we must build the kind of institutional infrastructure that will sustain what we've set in motion and take us to the next level. In the same way that the strategic positioning process exhorts us to reimagine everything we think we know about the University of Minnesota, the framework presented here asks that we reimagine everything we think we know about equity and diversity. It asks us to reimagine *a University transformed by diversity*.

Institutional Transformation Driven by Diversity

In proposing a model for reimagining and reframing equity and diversity, we aspire to:

◆ **A transformed University whose unrivaled excellence in research is driven by a multiplicity of peoples and cultures, ideas, perspectives, and knowledge systems.** As new infrastructures support both emerging and established scholars in collaborations across cultures and knowledge systems to explore new frontiers of knowledge, we will see that, and how, diversity drives discovery.

◆ **A University where the possibilities for learning and achievement are broadened, advanced, and sustained by interconnected communities of students, faculty, and staff representing the broadest possible range of cultures, experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives.** This means encouraging vibrant intellectual and cultural interactions among people across borders of gender, race and ethnicity, socioeconomic backgrounds, sexual orientations and forms of gender identity and expression, and kinds and levels of ability and disability. It means recognizing that that a vital, productive, and socially just campus environment is one that respects all voices and all identities and enables all members of the community to be fully who they are and to realize their full potential.

◆ **A University whose organizational strength and agility are enhanced and sustained by the strategic alignment of institutional goals with equity and diversity goals.** As we build the infrastructure necessary to achieve equity and diversity in our teaching, learning, and outreach, we will also develop the policies, practices, and administrative structures that will advance the University toward its strategic positioning goals.

◆ **A civically engaged University that builds strong, transformative relationships with diverse communities and sustainable, mutually beneficial community-based research, outreach, and teaching programs.** Strong community connections bring vital new perspectives to the teaching, learning, research, and outreach that constitute our public land-grant mission. They also send a powerful message to alumni, friends, and other stakeholders throughout Minnesota and beyond: This is *your* University; building a stronger, more diverse University means stronger communities for everyone.

◆ **A generative and transformative educational and professional climate** where all members of the University community feel welcomed, supported, and valued for their contributions to the institution, and where they can do their best work.

Much good equity and diversity work is already underway at the University, but it will be fully realized and sustainable only as part of an integrated and comprehensive effort. The time has come for us to coordinate our efforts and resources; to agree on common paths; to stay focused but flexible, adjusting our strategies when new circumstances require; and to make University transformation a collective enterprise. What follows is a holistic model for that enterprise.

"As a public institution, the University of Minnesota has an obligation to play an important role in rectifying historical inequities that have resulted in exclusionary practices that have produced the underrepresentation of certain racial, ethnic, and other socially disadvantaged groups from higher education."

— Systemwide Taskforce on Diversity

Values and Principles

Reimagining Equity and Diversity: Core Values and a Model for Change

Seven core values inform and drive our transformational work on equity and diversity. These values underlie and infuse every facet of teaching, research, outreach, administration, support services, and day-to-day life at the University of Minnesota.
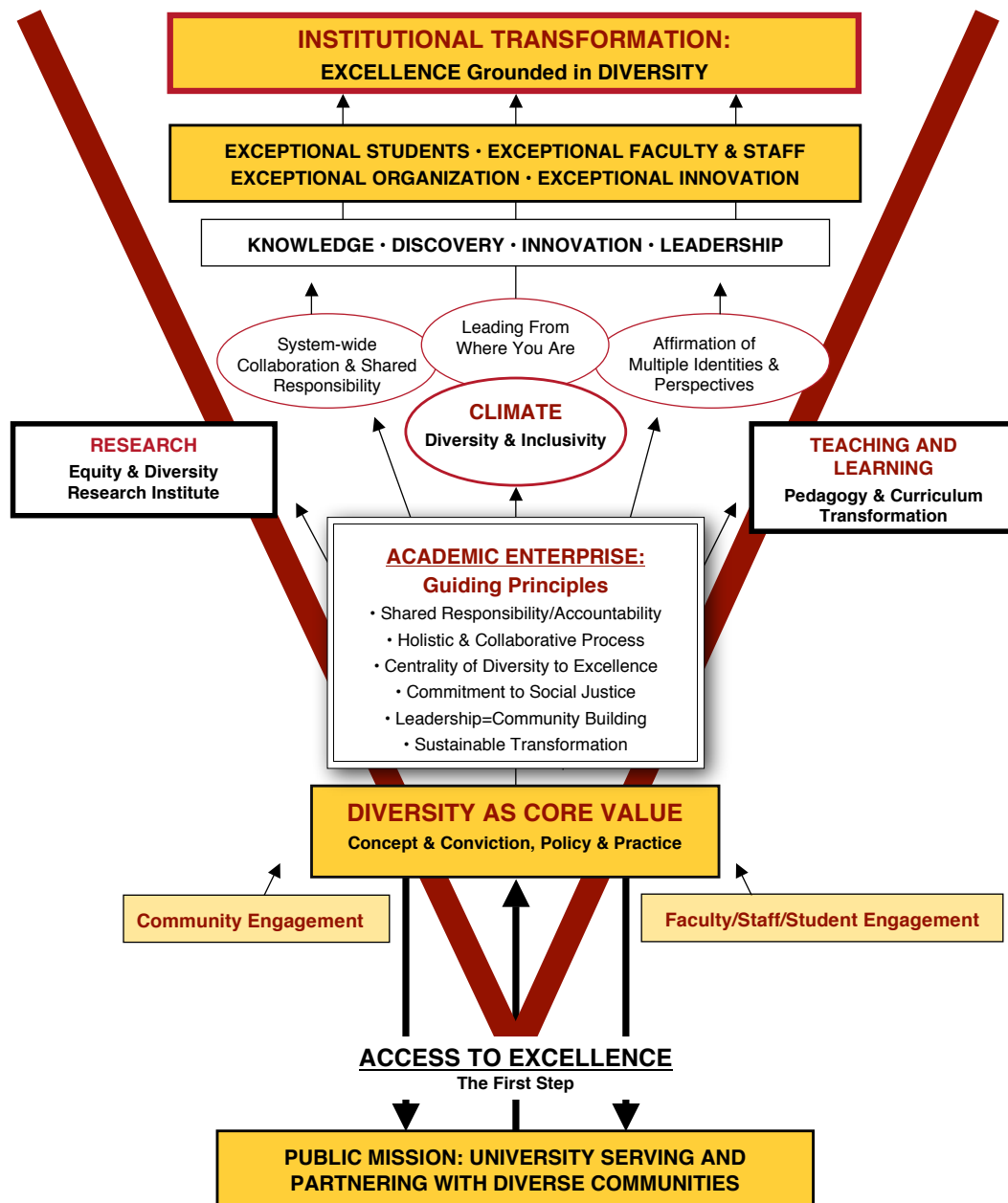
1. **Social Justice:** We recognize that equity and diversity are essential to social justice for all, and that aspiring to meet our equity and diversity goals is a moral imperative. In pursuing these goals, we seek to address the inequities and barriers that keep people from learning and working to their full potential and that impede access to all that the University has to offer.

2. **Excellence:** We recognize that diversity is *integral* to academic excellence, and that without the synergy of diverse people, perspectives, and ideas, we cannot achieve the highest level of excellence in research and teaching/learning. *Diversity drives discovery.*

3. **System-wide collaboration/shared responsibility:** We recognize that the University will achieve equity and diversity goals only through the individual and collective investment of ideas, energy, and resources by people at all academic and administrative levels, across all functions and operations, and across all campuses. Senior administrators, faculty, staff, and students—all share responsibility for the work.

4. **Community engagement:** We recognize that the values, ideas, and perspectives of diverse communities and individuals beyond the University are crucial to our work, and that the active participation of these people and communities is essential to achieving the University's equity and diversity goals.

5. **Sustainability:** We recognize that a sustainable commitment to excellence requires holistic models of equity and diversity that incorporate the perspectives of myriad identities and cultures on teaching, learning, research, and outreach. We must develop and share best practices, engage in ongoing assessment, and integrate equity and diversity into the University's infrastructure, so that the work is proactive and shared, not compensatory or reactive; so that it is done with conviction, not detachment; and so that the results are systemic and sustainable, not dependent upon an individual person, group, or unit. As Minnesota's population changes, sustainable excellence at the University of Minnesota will depend more and more on a sustainable model for and commitment to equity and diversity.

6. **Continuous improvement, outcomes, and accountability:** We recognize that as we work toward our equity and diversity goals, we must identify outcomes and benchmarks, measure the results of our efforts against those benchmarks, and continuously seek ways to improve based on our measures.

7. **Transformation through self-examination:** We recognize that University transformation comes from within. It means challenging our own ways of thinking and knowing, and turning on its head what we think we know. It means confronting our personal, academic, and institutional biases and belief systems head-on. The University will transform itself only when equity and diversity are at the core of its own reimagining.

Building on these core values, the Office for Equity and Diversity, under the leadership of Vice President and Vice Provost Rusty Barceló, has proposed a new paradigm—an inverted pyramid—that demonstrates how institutional integration of diversity drives discovery and excellence, broadens the University's capacity to achieve sustainable excellence through community building and sharing of leadership, and leads to institutional transformation.

The Inverted Pyramid: A Model For Diversity and Excellence

The model begins at the bottom of the inverted pyramid, with access—which draws on community relationships—and then branches upward and outward through the processes of institutional integration, collaboration, and community building to achieve broad-based excellence across all four pillars of Strategic Positioning (see page 14): exceptional students, exceptional faculty and staff, exceptional organization, and exceptional innovation.

In this new paradigm, access is an important goal, but is just the first step in a dynamic, comprehensive institutional change model that engages every aspect of the University's work across all campuses, and also engages with diverse external communities. Here, equity and diversity are systemic; they permeate the institution at all levels. They are fully integrated as core values in institutional philosophies, policies, and practices, with responsibility for diversity work shared across the entire University system. They give rise to excellence. Application of this powerful holistic model for "Reimagining Equity and Diversity" will fuel our progress toward the goals set forth by "Transforming the U."

INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION:
EXCELLENCE Grounded in DIVERSITY

EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS · EXCEPTIONAL FACULTY & STAFF
EXCEPTIONAL ORGANIZATION · EXCEPTIONAL INNOVATION

KNOWLEDGE · DISCOVERY · INNOVATION · LEADERSHIP

System-wide Collaboration & Shared Responsibility

Leading From Where You Are

Affirmation of Multiple Identities & Perspectives

CLIMATE
Diversity & Inclusivity

RESEARCH
Equity & Diversity Research Institute

TEACHING AND LEARNING
Pedagogy & Curriculum Transformation

ACADEMIC ENTERPRISE:
Guiding Principles
• Shared Responsibility/Accountability
• Holistic & Collaborative Process
• Centrality of Diversity to Excellence
• Commitment to Social Justice
• Leadership=Community Building
• Sustainable Transformation

DIVERSITY AS CORE VALUE
Concept & Conviction, Policy & Practice

Community Engagement

Faculty/Staff/Student Engagement

ACCESS TO EXCELLENCE
The First Step

PUBLIC MISSION: UNIVERSITY SERVING AND PARTNERING WITH DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Laying the Foundation, Building the Framework

We have identified eight priority areas for initial focus and attention, as well as a number of possible action steps within each priority area. The Office for Equity and Diversity will guide the implementation of these priorities. Yet no single office can accomplish this work alone. We must link expertise and resources and align efforts across colleges, departments, and units on all of the University's campuses.

We will call upon the knowledge and expertise of the six units of the Office for Equity and Diversity, as well as of collegiate and administrative units across the system, each with specific knowledge and understanding of its own constituencies. Within the overarching institutional framework—which is intended to be flexible and adaptable—particular diversity plans and strategies will develop and take shape as appropriate within each unit.

Strategies for implementation will apply best practices and continuous improvement principles as appropriate across administrative and academic units; and progress toward equity and diversity goals will be measured against outcomes and benchmarks identified for each unit.

The areas of priority outlined below are intended not to prescribe actions, but to offer a framework and guiding principles for each administrative unit, department, college, and campus to use in creating its own goals and strategies for equity and diversity and aligning those goals and strategies with those of the University. The possible action steps within each priority area suggest how that priority might be integrated into the work of a given unit.

The appendix to this document offers a small sample of existing University initiatives that might serve as resources and models for units developing strategic equity and diversity plans.

1. **Develop leadership capacity around equity and diversity work across the system.**

   Organizational change occurs when leaders are truly committed to change and when they challenge prevailing orthodoxies and model new modes of thought and action. This is especially true in equity and diversity work. As the publication *Now is the Time: Meeting the Challenge for a Diverse Academy* notes, "Transforming an institution truly happens from the inside out, as leaders anchor change in their own behavior and mirror the diversity commitment to the campus through their words and deeds."

   That said, we must recognize that transformational leadership is not tied to institutional hierarchies. If the University is to be transformed through its commitment to equity and diversity, leadership capacity must be developed throughout the organization. Equity and diversity efforts must be led not only by people with formal authority, but also by faculty, staff, students, and administrators at every level of operation and responsibility. Across all functions, classifications, departments, administrative units, and campuses, people must be encouraged to "lead from where they are," and to be open to the myriad forms and expressions of leadership found in different communities.

2. Improve campus climate for diverse students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

A respectful, inclusive, and welcoming campus climate is the ground on which a truly equitable and diverse institution flourishes. Too often, however, the responsibility for creating such a climate falls on the shoulders of the very people for whom the absence of such a climate has been a defining experience. A transformed University will minimize the burden on individuals—particularly those from marginalized and under-represented populations and cultures—to take sole or primary responsibility for diversity work.

People are sometimes asked, in essence, to leave parts of themselves behind in order to accommodate the culture or comfort zone of a particular department, discipline, or workplace. Overt or implicit pressure to assimilate, or "fit in," can create an inhospitable, if not overtly hostile, work environment, where difference feels unwelcome and unsafe. The result is disconnection, dissatisfaction, and a lack of authentic and mean-ingful interactions—an environment that undermines people's ability to perform to their full potential.

In a climate of respect and inclusivity, both individuals and the institution are expected to assume respon-sibility: individuals are encouraged to realize their potential and succeed; diverse identities are honestly and courageously affirmed; and the infrastructure supports the success of anyone and everyone who strives for success within its parameters.

3. Support and strengthen University-wide pre-college and community outreach efforts.

We recognize that pre-college and community outreach efforts are critical to Minnesota's economic future as well as to our sustainable future as the state's public flagship university. In the spirit of our public mission, we must build and strengthen relationships with Minnesota communities to assure mutual benefit—to ensure the college-readiness and success of diverse learners; to open the pipeline to the University for diverse students; to prepare leaders for Minnesota's diverse communities; and to foster the social, cultural, and economic vitality of those communities.

Many precollegiate initiatives are already in place system-wide to create opportunities and incentives for diverse students to prepare for and succeed in college. And a number of new initiatives, such as the University Northside Partnership, have been developed to strengthen the University's relationships with and service to underserved Twin Cities communities.

Through strategic investment of both human and financial resources in these and other outreach initiatives, we will build our relationships with the diverse communities whose futures are so crucial to the future of our state and whose young people will be tomorrow's University students, tomorrow's workforce, and tomorrow's community leadership.

Possible Action Steps

◆ Identify potential collaborations across administrative units, departments, and colleges to partner with K-12 schools and build pre-collegiate outreach efforts within and across colleges and disciplinary communities.

◆ Share resources and improve campus-wide coordination of pre-collegiate efforts already taking place to ensure best practices, strengthen our presence in and relationships with diverse communities, and ensure maximum effectiveness.

◆ Increase the presence and impact of federal grant programs on all campuses.

◆ Pursue external funds and grants for pre-collegiate programs and services and other community partnerships around urgent issues of equity and diversity.

4. Engage internal and external communities in reimagining strategies for achieving the University's retention and success goals for diverse students.

The University's goal of becoming one of the top public research institutions in the world is predicated in part on increasing the retention and graduation rates of its undergraduate students. For graduating cohorts 2012 and beyond, the University has set its graduation goals at 60% in four years, 75% in five years, and 80% in six years.

We cannot reach these goals without enhancing the success of undergraduate students of color and other underrepresented or underserved student groups. To do that, we must offer diversity-infused curricula throughout the University; strengthen pre-collegiate outreach efforts aimed at improving student preparedness; enhance our student support services and co-curricular offerings; and take steps to ensure a welcoming and supportive environment for all students. We must do the same for graduate and professional students, particularly with regard to the pipeline into the professoriate.

Although the primary goal will be the increased success of students from underrepresented and marginalized groups, *all* undergraduate and graduate students at the University will benefit from these strategies, because *all* students will share in the rewards of inquiry and discovery at the intersection of multiple perspectives; and *all* students be expected to live, work, and succeed in increasingly diverse professional and personal arenas upon graduation.

Possible Action Steps

- Grow, support, and develop "academic bridge" programs for majority and diverse students who need additional academic support, and seek opportunities for collaborations between and among programs already in place at the University.

- Conduct a comprehensive audit of University curricula using diversity measures and work across colleges and campuses to develop a framework for transforming curricula in a way that incorporates and reflects diverse cultural content and perspectives and that is grounded in the most recent scholarship on diversity.

- Convene a group of diverse faculty and students to develop guidelines for inclusive pedagogies that fully and fairly engage all students in learning. Relying on best practices (including universal instructional design) and current research, develop recommendations and strategies for inclusive teaching, and offer workshops and other training opportunities to help faculty and teaching staff develop course materials, syllabi, teaching methods, and assessment models that recognize, respect, and affirm the diverse identities, backgrounds, cultural values, and perspectives of diverse students.

- Develop and strengthen programs aimed at the academic and personal development of diverse undergraduate and graduate students.

- Support identity-based undergraduate and graduate student organizations in their work of engaging and supporting students.

- Develop qualitative metrics based on continuous improvement principles for evaluating strategies to enhance student success.

5. Engage internal and external communities in reimagining programs that support the recruitment, retention, and success of diverse faculty and staff.

Recruiting, retaining, and advancing a diverse faculty are among the endeavors most fundamental to University transformation—and also the most challenging. To be successful, the University must recognize that diversity in disciplines, departments, and academic leadership is fundamental to institutional transformation. And to promote that diversity, the University must be committed to improving recruitment and search processes, mentoring diverse faculty, working on climate issues, and developing and supporting cohorts of diverse graduate students headed into the professoriate.

Since the University is a workplace as well as an institution of learning, we must also create an environment where diverse staff can thrive and succeed in their work. Such a workplace environment benefits not only staff, but also the faculty, students, and community members who look to those staff as work partners and as ambassadors and representatives of the institution. Such an environment also supports the University's mission as a land-grant institution dedicated to serving all the people of the state of Minnesota.

Possible Action Steps

- Actively seek support—from funders, allies, advocates, faculty and staff colleagues, internal and external communities, alumni, and University and community leadership—for efforts to diversify faculty and staff.

- Build on best practices gleaned from the University's "Keeping Our Faculties" conference to develop programming designed to recruit, retain, and advance professional and academic development opportunities for diverse faculty and graduate students.

- Inspire conversations and develop support structures among faculty and staff around work/life issues, such as challenges around childcare, the care of elderly parents, and balance of work, family, and life obligations.

- Support and develop programming that prepares all faculty and staff to teach and work in diverse environments with diverse students, colleagues, and community members.

- Develop both formal and informal mechanisms to support conversations, collaborations, and resource sharing among majority and diverse faculty.

- Audit recent position postings to determine whether the University is stressing equity and diversity capacity in searches and hires, and modify search strategies where appropriate.

- Develop incentives and accountability measures to ensure compliance and good-faith efforts to engage with diversity issues.

6. Engage faculty in reimagining University curriculum, pedagogy, and research to ensure inclusivity and accessibility throughout the academic enterprise.

World-class research and scholarship are central to the University's public mission and value. A complex understanding of the impact of diversity on both teaching and research—on content, methods, process, outcomes, and evaluation—is critical to the University's continued leadership in discovery and innovation.

Discovery and innovation happen when diverse perspectives collide. We will achieve excellence only by fostering a climate that supports diverse cultural and scholarly perspectives and knowledge systems in our classrooms, in our laboratories and research centers, online, and in our formal and informal interactions.

We must support diversity-infused research, scholarship, and teaching because, as the University's Senate Committee on Equity, Access, and Diversity observed, "The potential for discovery narrows when research is conducted by a homogenous group whose members bring a similar set of background assumptions and approaches to the research process."

We must support not only diverse scholars but also scholars *of* diversity—those whose research and teaching actually focus on topics of equity, diversity, and marginalized populations. These scholars have much to teach us about these critical issues. Yet they are often under-resourced and isolated from each other.

Support for diverse scholarly perspectives as well as for scholarship with diversity-related content will enrich University teaching and research and help transform our pedagogies and curriculum to become inclusive, culturally conversant, and open to interrogation from different cultural perspectives. Such support will advance institutional excellence through the fullest realization of principles of academic freedom.

Possible Action Steps

◆ Support faculty participation in the new University of Minnesota Equity and Diversity Research Initiative (EDRI), which will be the signature program and cornerstone of the university's equity and diversity research initiatives. The EDRI will be a clearinghouse and forum for research and scholarship on equity and diversity issues and also a site of vital collaborations across disciplines for faculty working on such scholarship.

◆ Support and create community-based research opportunities that are collaborative and mutually beneficial and that widen and clear the pathways between the University and external communities.

◆ Create research-based faculty workshops and symposia that incorporate universal instructional design principles to develop pedagogies and curricula that are inclusive and respectful across cultural communities and that recognize multiple ways of knowing and learning, with the goal of improving the educational experience and success rates for students of all backgrounds and from all walks of life.

7. Support institutional assessment, accountability, and collaboration through the application of continuous improvement and universal instructional design principles and use of innovative metrics, technology, and communication tools.

Innovative uses of new technologies have never been more important to the academic enterprise as a whole. This is particularly true with regard to assessment and accountability measures. The University's policies, practices, and, most importantly, its outcomes with regard to equity and diversity efforts must be transparent and measurable, and must be communicated effectively and regularly to all constituents, using the most up-to-date and accessible communications technologies and media.

We also must take into account the rapidly changing ways in which faculty, staff, and especially students communicate with each other. Up-to-date knowledge of and proficiency with digital media and new management and communication technologies are critical to equity and diversity work, just as they are to the entire academic enterprise.

Possible Action Steps

◆ Support the selection, purchase, and implementation of a Constituent Relations Management (CRM) system for those University units that would benefit from such technology. The use of CRM will provide multiple benefits to service units across the University, and also will provide an absolutely critical platform for inter-unit collaboration and knowledge sharing.

◆ Build on existing technological infrastructure and communication tools that can be used to support equity and diversity goals. This includes both University resources, such as the U Portal and the UMContent system, and external resources, such as Facebook and MySpace.

◆ Support the development of metrics that are meaningful to the constituencies with whom we are working to eliminate barriers, in order to ensure that equity and diversity initiatives are resulting in progress toward articulated goals.

8. Engage University alumni, donors, and other community partners and stakeholders in achieving equity and diversity goals.

Reimagining diversity at the University requires a strong commitment to the ideals and mission of the University and to those of public higher education in general. There are few populations more committed to these ideals—and to the success of the University of Minnesota—than our alumni and donors.

It is critical that alumni be involved in equity and diversity work. Our alumni are the strongest evidence we have of this University's powerful and enduring impact on people's lives and the lives of communities. Our alumni and their community allies—especially members and allies of underserved populations—should be fully engaged as mentors, role models, advisers, ambassadors, and advocates for our students, faculty, and staff.

Given the enormous reservoirs of untapped philanthropic potential in many alumni communities, our renewed commitment to diversity work also provides a singular opportunity for developing a case for support from both individual and corporate donors.
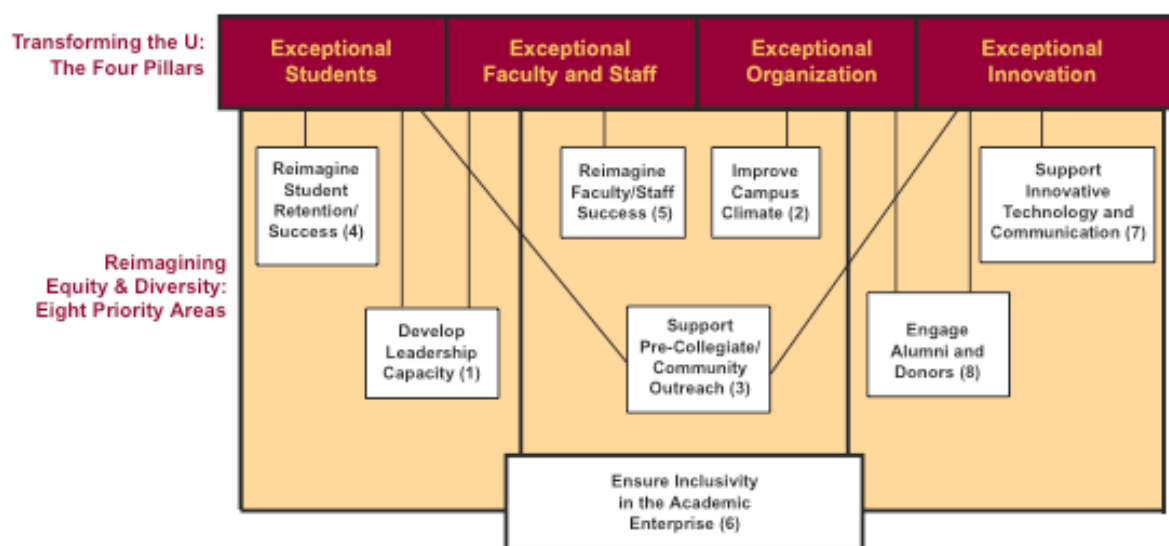
Possible Action Steps

◆ Create and support opportunities to promote equity and diversity programs, services, and projects to current and potential donors.

◆ Create and support efforts to raise funds for scholarships and fellowships, particularly those critical to recruiting and retaining students from disadvantaged and underrepresented groups.

◆ Partner with the University of Minnesota Alumni Association in its cultivation of Alumni Interest Groups (AIGs), which provide a UMAA "home" to alumni who identify more strongly with a given population or organization than with a college or major.

◆ Create mechanisms for tracking and cultivating alumni from underrepresented and marginalized populations.

◆ Develop a database of community partners and stakeholders with philanthropic interests and capacity in relation to diversity issues.

◆ Cultivate corporate sponsorships for media captioning services for all University-produced media.

Strengthening the Four Pillars of Strategic Positioning

The 2007 Strategic Positioning Report to the Board of Regents notes that the four pillars that support strategic positioning—exceptional students, exceptional faculty and staff, exceptional organization, and exceptional innovation—address every aspect of the University's mission and operations.

The ultimate goal of "Reimagining Equity and Diversity" is to strengthen those four pillars. Each of the eight priority areas identified above has grown out of and is directly aligned with one or more of the pillars. This interconnectedness is illustrated in the graphic below:

Transforming the U: The Four Pillars	Exceptional Students	Exceptional Faculty and Staff	Exceptional Organization	Exceptional Innovation

Reimagining Equity & Diversity: Eight Priority Areas

- Reimagine Student Retention/Success (4)
- Develop Leadership Capacity (1)
- Reimagine Faculty/Staff Success (5)
- Improve Campus Climate (2)
- Support Pre-Collegiate/Community Outreach (3)
- Engage Alumni and Donors (8)
- Support Innovative Technology and Communication (7)
- Ensure Inclusivity in the Academic Enterprise (6)

It is worthwhile to note that while each priority area directly supports one or more of the four pillars, Priority Area 6, which focuses on strengthening equity and diversity efforts within the academic enterprise, supports all four. The academic enterprise is at the very core of the University's mission and is the primary source of its impact on and value in the world. In reimagining that academic enterprise—which includes research/innovation/ discovery, teaching, pedagogy, and curriculum—to reflect the multiplicity of people, ideas, and perspectives that are shaping this century, we will thus contribute in vital and fundamental ways to every aspect of the University's transformation.

Ultimately, the priorities and action steps envisioned here will have an impact only if they are informed by the cultures, knowledge and knowledge systems, experiences, and commitment of the *entire diverse University community*. What we offer is a solid and sustainable foundation to be built upon by departments, units, and colleges across the system. We hope that every unit will develop its own goals, its own strategies, and its own innovative ways to confront and overcome whatever barriers stand in the way of our transformation.

As we look to the future, we honor the achievements of the people who have, over the decades, dedicated themselves to this profoundly important work. It is now up to every one of us to build on their work by rededicating ourselves to the goal of a University transformed by diversity.

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Diversity Drives Discovery

Office for **Equity and Diversity**

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