

**The Inter Faculty Organization's Report
on
Reimagining Higher Education in Minnesota**

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Executive Summary of the IFO Report on Reimagining

In a sequence of IFO initiated meetings inviting all faculty at the seven state universities to envision the future of higher education in Minnesota, faculty voiced their ongoing dedication to providing an excellent, transformational education for students and contributing to the public good. Through independent discussions, paralleling those of the Board of Trustee Reimagining the Future of Higher Education Forums, faculty discussed how these overarching goals have and will continue to be realized going forward. Those discussions gave rise to five important points: 1) faculty are already bringing important innovations to the state universities; 2) major initiatives to which faculty are committed call for leadership, partnering, and investments; 3) faculty are unwavering on core principles that enable successful completion of responsibilities of the academy; 4) there is a need for a new commitment to support universities as they contribute to the greater good; and 5) faculty are optimistic that state, system, and campus support can lead to continued excellence at the Minnesota State Universities.

Running through all five points of these is an unwavering faculty commitment to ensuring equity, diversity, and inclusion at Minnesota State Universities. We must “reimagine” our universities as vibrant learning communities in which all students feel welcomed and valued, have access to the support and opportunities to succeed, and for which retention and graduation rates reflect equity. This is ethical responsibility that will also bring financial revitalization due to increased recruitment and retention.

Among the innovative achievements that faculty have contributed are: 1) stackability (i.e., new ways in which students can complete meaningful units that can be aggregated (e.g., completing a certificate on the way to a baccalaureate or combining two graduate certificates for a masters’ degree)); 2) pathways (i.e., disciplinary pathways ensuring that students can move from associates to baccalaureate degree smoothly and in 120 credits); 3) flex-pacing (especially working adult students are seeking ways to have greater control over when they are devoting intense time and energy to their education, and methods like accelerated courses, concurrent enrollment, and credit for prior learning are ways in which faculty are already innovating); 4) equity, diversity, and inclusion are increasingly driving innovation in professional development, curriculum, and programs serving students; 5) offerings for engaged student learning (e.g., learning communities, first year forums, community-engaged learning, research, presentations of student research, capstone projects, internships, and study abroad); 6) new and revitalized academic programs to meet changing demands; 7) new and revitalized course offerings to ensure students are cutting edge; 8) offering appropriate courses in innovative online and hybrid formats; 9) integrating new teaching methods to raise the level of learning; and 10) when high quality teaching materials are available in open learning commons, adopting Open Educational Resources for classes. Faculty are proud of the many innovations falling into these categories on each of our state universities, and exemplars are featured in the report.

Faculty also identified big initiatives for which leadership, partners, and resources are all needed: 1) closing all equity gaps through the removal of barriers and systemic change needed to reach that goal; 2) increasing the success, retention, and graduation levels of students; 3) ensuring that contingent faculty are supported to bring their best to teaching and other

responsibilities; 4) engaging in region planning that involves faculty early in the process; 5) increasing the transfer of students within the Minnesota State system; 6) recruiting more students for state universities; and 7) preventing burnout among the most valuable resources of Minnesota State University and Colleges – the personnel.

Faculty identified core principles on which they are unwavering because these principles enable faculty to honor their responsibilities to ensuring a quality education and bringing scholarship and artistry that contributes to the public good: 1) tenure; 2) maintaining a high-proportion of full-time, permanent faculty lines; 3) academic freedom; 4) faculty control of curriculum; 5) faculty ownership of their intellectual property; 6) integrity of the baccalaureate; 7) liberal arts education; 8) comprehensive universities offering a wide range of programs; 9) campus autonomy; and 10) shared governance.

Faculty expressed strong concerns about the market decline in state funding for higher education over the last four decades rather than contributing to the public good. Between 1981 to 1988, over 75% of the costs of higher education were state funded, but then began falling. By 2002 to 2013 state funding fell every year, reaching a low of 39.5%. While there has been a slight rise from 2014 to the present, state funding continues to cover less than 50% of the costs of public higher education. The decline in state funding has significantly impacted students. The rising debt loads of students reflects the inability to meet the increased burden. Faculty oppose the narrow focus that casts higher education as a training ground for specific jobs rather than a commitment to endowing students with knowledge and skills that provide a foundational base for a lifetime and realizing the significant contributions publicly funded universities make to the broader public good. The interest of faculty in holding separate discussions was in large part due to the history of reimagining efforts that prioritized discussions coming from the narrow, job-focused perspective rather than honoring the much broader commitments to students who need outstanding preparation for lives that call for continued adaptation rather than narrow skill sets.

Finally, faculty are optimistic for two reasons. Leaders are renewing commitments to serving the public good, and with that they are pledging adequate funding for public higher education and reductions in the financial burdens faced by students. Second, the slate of initiatives recommended by the faculty offers great promise for increasing service to students and contributions to the public good.

Inter Faculty Organization Report on Reimagining the Future of Higher Education in Minnesota

In 1979, Bob was a student planning his admission to Moorhead State University. His passion was modern English literature, but he also loved writing. He dreamt of becoming a high school English teacher. Given needs to pay his own way for his university education, he carefully figured out how to cover expenses. If he worked 16 hours a week during the school year, was employed full time in the summer, and received a PELL grant, he could cover all his living expenses, tuition, and books without taking out student loans. As a student at Moorhead State University, he immersed himself in his learning, spent free time reading and discussing books with other English majors, wrote short stories, and worked with excellent teachers who furthered his dreams about his future work. As a graduate, he was prepared to make a difference in the lives of his students as a town's new English teacher.

Forty years later, Kalkidan is planning to pursue a baccalaureate in Biology at St. Cloud State University in 2019. Her dream is to go to graduate school and become a scientist working for the Department of Natural Resources. Knowing she will pay her own way, she also carefully calculates costs. She realizes that even with continued full-time work and a small grant, she will need to take out loans to cover her frugal life style, tuition, and books. She has excellent teachers, and one has invited her to join a research team. While she would relish the chance to spend time working on a research project, her full-time job on top of school leaves her over-extended. Most days she barely gets through her obligations, and she is frustrated that she cannot devote more of her attention to learning. She struggles to hang on to her dream of graduate school.

Over the last four decades, thousands of students like Bob and Kalkidan have attended Minnesota State Universities. The vast majority of students admitted came seeking transformational educational experiences leading to lives of contribution as educated citizens and professionals. However, over the last forty years, there has been a significant disinvestment in public higher education and an undermining of the commitment to a public good. Between 1981 to 1988, over 75% of the costs of higher education were state funded, but then began falling. By 2002 to 2013 state funding fell every year, reaching a low of 39.5%. While there has been a slight rise from 2014 to the present, state funding continues to cover less than 50% of the costs of public higher education. This shift has dramatically altered the experiences of students both in terms of the financial debt they owe as they leave our institutions and the extent to which they were able to fully immerse in the learning opportunities surrounding them.

This report is written with a clear commitment to a future that restores the investment in state universities as contributors to the public good. In partnership with leaders and staff throughout the Minnesota State system, we see the need students have for accessible, affordable, high-quality paths to transformative educations. We know that these paths enrich lives, develop skills for citizenship, and lead to vocational and avocational contributions throughout society – all of which contribute to the public good.

Through the Board of Trustees Forums on Reimagining the Future of Higher Education in Minnesota, speakers, trustees, leaders, and staff came together to discuss the continued vitality of our educational system. The Board of Trustees Forum provided an impetus for the IFO to independently initiate a sequence of forums exploring the future of higher education from a faculty perspective. Beginning with discussions among the academic committees, and moving to larger forums open to all faculty on each campus, faculty have explored trends, concerns, ideas, and solutions.

This report presents the major themes from our 2018-2019 independently-held faculty conversations at all seven state universities: First, we identify the many ways in which faculty are already innovating to meet ever-changing trends. Second, we note high-priority changes that are needed, and for which system and campus leadership is essential. Third, we provide a list of the core principles on which we are unwavering because of their importance in our work. Fourth, we make transparent the economic perspective that pressures higher education to direct attention away from transformational student learning and contributions to the public good and narrowly focus on employment. Finally, we express our faith in the bright future that belongs to the Minnesota State Universities.

Faculty Innovations: Addressing the Trends

Faculty live at the intersection of student demographics, technological advances, new teaching methods, research discoveries and creative works, social and political debates, and career demands. Looking at our classes and advisees, we see increasing work obligations, mental health concerns, academic preparation gaps, financial concerns, and efforts to pack work, school, and family obligations into such tight schedules that one sniffle and it all falls apart. Our students carry new technologies in their backpacks and tell us about blogs, tweets, videos, and finishing homework on their phones. Colleagues in hallways discuss the newest teaching methods and share their uses of class materials from open educational resources. We attend conferences to present and absorb cutting edge research and pedagogical applications. We prepare annual professional development reports documenting our reflection on student and peer evaluations and address how we plan to implement changes for the next iteration of the course. We try to make informed decisions about when and how to invite complex, but growth evoking discussions into our classrooms. We advise students, and we serve on committees addressing trends. We bring guest speakers to our classes, meet with advisory boards, help students find informational interviews and internships, and write letters of recommendations for jobs and graduate programs.

At a forum after hearing a list like that, one of the campus Academic Affairs Representatives stated, “In the report, explain that we have already reimagined. We have already innovated. We do it every day.” In our discussions, faculty shared proud achievements of their work reimagining and innovating. So, in this first section of our report, we want to highlight the innovative work of faculty throughout the state universities. We want to acknowledge that much of this work been possible through partnership and support from the system office and local administrators. As we tout our achievements and test runs, we thank all of those contributing to these projects.

1. Stackability

“Stackability” is the term for enabling students to combine meaningful, orchestrated learning opportunities (e.g., associate degrees, certificates, majors and minors) that develop knowledge and skills and are useful for both vocational and avocational pursuits. Throughout Minnesota State universities, faculty are working with “stacks” of many kinds. Certificates are one of the fastest growing “stackable” learning opportunities in development by faculty. Although long the domain of continuing education lingo, for-credit certificate programs are on the rise especially at the graduate level but increasingly at the undergraduate level as well.

At the graduate level, the Minnesota State University, Mankato, Communication Studies Professor Dan Cronn-Mills reports that students can now combine certificates to fulfill requirements for master’s degree programs. This enables students to pursue interdisciplinary interests between communication and other disciplines and potentially gain employment benefits associated with certificates as they move toward completion of their master’s degree. Similarly, at Metropolitan State University, the new Individualized Studies M.A. encourages students to use blocks of courses comprising graduate certificates toward the program requirements. In addition to options using certificates to meet program requirements, there are also numerous graduate certificates designed to complement or stand independently from programs. Metropolitan State University offers a wide range of certificates for graduates (e.g., Database Administration, Design of User Experience, Information Assurance and Information Technology Security, Mathematics, Project Management). Other universities make use of these same models. For example, Winona State University’s Graduate Programs in Nursing just added a Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Graduate Certificate Program, and the list could go on.

Undergraduate certificates are also emerging. Through Bemidji State University’s Department of Human Performance, students can earn their Sport and Health’s Coaching Certificate. St. Cloud State University’s Information Media Department offers a Certificate in Instructional Technology. At Southwest State University, education students can pursue a Certificate in Autism, and at Metropolitan State University, students can complete certificates in Cybersecurity and Computer Forensics. Minnesota State University Moorhead has undergraduate interdisciplinary certificates in Sequential Art, Scientific Illustration, Book Illustration, and Women & Science.

The value in offering certificates that require typically three course combinations is to offer students clearly labeled packages of knowledge and skill development that can be articulated for employers and understood in terms of personal growth and development. As alluring as lego-university may be, faculty also pride themselves on keeping stackability in perspective. We are ever mindful of the importance of completing degrees because they bring transformative educational foundations and more comprehensive knowledge and skill development. In addition, decisions to expand stackable credentials are complex, involving consideration of learning goals, assessment of how students will learn best, and monitoring of whether enough interest exists to invest in the development costs of any new program.

2. Pathways

As was well documented in several of the Board of Trustees' Reimagining Forums, research clearly indicates that jobs and careers of the future will require more education than those of even the recent past. As reflected in the Office of Higher Education State of Minnesota website, the push is on to see seventy percent of Minnesota high school graduates moving on to attain associate and baccalaureate degrees.

Over the last three years, faculty, administrators, and the system office have made great strides in developing disciplinary pathways that smoothly transition students from colleges to university in the Minnesota State system. Pathways now exist for 27 different subject areas ranging from business to psychology to mechanical engineering. To develop each of these pathways, more than a dozen faculty from colleges and universities met with system staff for nearly a year to determine the exact college courses that would serve as the preparatory foundation for majors completed at the state universities. The process of discussing programs, courses, learning outcomes, and long-term goals not only built pathways, but also relationships among faculty throughout the system and information exchange for better advising. The pathway work continues. This spring, faculty and Minnesota State staff on the Minnesota State Transfer Governance Team and two sub-committees are overseeing marketing and training programs to ensure that students hear about the pathways and staff are prepared to advise, code, and record progress in the pathways.

Preceding the pathway initiative, university and college faculty were designing innovative programs to move students from colleges to universities. Some partnerships have been elaborate and highly specialized. For example, since 2009, the Minnesota State University, Mankato has been receiving accolades for the Iron Range Engineering Program that it operates on the Mesabi Range College campus in Virginia, MN. This program is a partnership with Itasca Community College that enables 25 students to enter annually. It is centered around industry-sponsored, semester-length projects using a Project Based Learning approach in which students establish learning goals and outcomes and write reports. In contrast to the high specialization of this program, more common methods of encouraging students to pursue baccalaureate degrees include university faculty working closely with community college faculty to "articulate" how courses from the community college would transfer into specific university programs. While administrators, faculty, and staff have acknowledged that articulation agreements are fraught with concerns about small numbers of students using and understanding them, they did create the knowledge base needed for the more recent system-wide disciplinary pathways.

Another focus on pathways has been centered on geographic accessibility. Throughout the state, and in the Twin Cities, faculty and administrators worked hard to build bridges between colleges to the most local state university. This focus led Metropolitan State University to offer upper division coursework on college campuses, with many faculty teaching at these sites. This work continues as the "Twin Cities Baccalaureate," and efforts are now underway to look at data to find effective ways to ensure college students have access to courses for baccalaureate completion. Geographically-based, Twin Cities hubs can bring university programs of high interest to students throughout the Twin Cities, serving especially those using mass transit.

In sum, faculty are proud of their innovative work on joint programs, articulations, the new pathways, and efforts to ensure geographically based accessibility to motivate students to move from associate to baccalaureate degrees. Faculty are supportive of efforts to enable students to pursue a high-quality, accessible, affordable baccalaureate degrees. Much more work is needed to make Minnesota State Universities the top choices for students at system colleges deciding to pursue baccalaureates. For those students planning to move from Minnesota State Colleges to Universities, well-structured pathways are now in place for smooth and efficient transitions.

3. Flex-Pacing

Working adults are now the norm at our state universities, and as Bragg and Ruud (2012) point out, many adults “struggle to find programs that accommodate their busy lives and their non-traditional participation.” According to the Office of Higher Education for the State of Minnesota (2019), in the fall of 2017, 63 percent of the students at Minnesota public universities were attending part-time. An expanded demographic report reveals that approximately 75 percent of Minnesota public university students are working, with 50% of our students working 20 or more hours per week (OHEMN, 2006). In fact, 15 percent of our students are working more than 40 hours per week (OHEMN, 2006). Nine percent of Minnesota State University undergraduates are parents (OHEMN, 2006). Not surprisingly, across work, parenting, and other demands there is a growing need for students to be able to vary when, how intensely, and for what length of time, they are devoting effort to academic work. Programming that honors this need for variability is called “flex-pacing” and among the concepts falling under its umbrella are: shortened/accelerated courses, concurrent enrollment, and demonstrations of prior learning for credit.

At Minnesota State universities, we are engaged in innovation for all these forms of flex-pacing. As an example of a program based on flex-pacing, the College of Business at Minnesota State University, Mankato is now admitting FlexPace Business students from Riverland Community College into their Bachelor of Business Administration. This program enables students to take courses that run 5 or 6 weeks and complete a Baccalaureate of Business Administration within 5 years across both Riverland and Mankato.

More numerous are faculty efforts to design and offer accelerated/shortened learning opportunities. In serving primarily working adults, Metropolitan State University offers an increasing number of courses that run for 7 weeks within semesters that stretch for 15 weeks, and “boot camps” which consolidate study into a single week of intensive work. Around the system, faculty are piloting accelerated/shortened courses and the range of programs in which they are offered are increasingly varied. It must be noted however, that when student learning is paramount, faculty often determine that shortened course structures fail to offer the time needed to scaffold, practice, reflect, and develop the knowledge and skills needed. It is imperative that faculty with disciplinary expertise control the discussions surrounding the desirability and efficacy of various accelerated course options.

Concurrent enrollment is also on the rise. In addition to large numbers of high school students in the state who are simultaneously meeting high school graduation requirements and earning college credit, large numbers of students are concurrently taking classes at multiple institutions

of higher education. It is now actively encouraged for college students planning to continue to a state university to be enrolled at both as they finish courses for their associate degree and begin coursework for their baccalaureate degree. Faculty advising undergraduate university students are familiar with “consortium” forms that allow our students to use the financial aid bequeathed at one institution for courses contributing progress toward the baccalaureate at another institution.

Faculty are also actively engaged in the innovations around “prior learning” which enables students to demonstrate prior learning equivalent to university courses and/or in topic areas that are more individualized but reflect credit-bearing acquisitions of knowledge and/or skills. In recent years, we have been involved in efforts to increase opportunities throughout the system to demonstrate prior learning. System and campuses have assembled and revised prior learning policies and procedures, and recently, small Minnesota State grants led to a flurry of activity generating ways to exchange faculty expertise to ensure that students on any campus can receive a prior assessment - even in subjects for which local faculty expertise is lacking. Minnesota State is working to connect faculty to a center that will lead training efforts. We are well positioned to offer this form of flex-pacing to students who, through prior work-, volunteer-, or other learning pursuits have acquired university-level learning worthy of credit toward graduation.

4. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

While there is great need for growth in overcoming barriers and leading systemic change in support of diversity, equity, and inclusion, there are examples of innovative work by faculty. Faculty are offering and attending professional development workshops in efforts to increase cultural competence and the use of culturally responsive pedagogy. Marginalized faculty work within their communities to raise awareness and create systemic change. Faculty across the universities have participated in ally training, and display symbols of their commitment to creating campus environments supportive of all students. At Metropolitan State University, faculty have developed new classes for the new “Racial Issues Graduation Requirement.” Additional faculty have participated in NACADA’s monthly academic advisor training sessions, many of which focus on advising to increase the retention of underrepresented students. Winona has received strong support from administration to build a new Ethnic Studies Program.

Most importantly, many faculty are beginning to adopt a new lens. They are learning to look at every facet of their campuses from the vantage point of under-represented and marginalized students, and they are figuring out how to grow their success and ensure access and equity.

5. Engaged Learning Strategies

The Board of Trustees’ Forums talked a great deal about student engagement, success, and retention. Engaged Learning Strategies (also called High Impact Practices or HIPs) are methods of teaching proven to garner heightened levels of engagement, deep learning, success, and student retention (Bonet & Walters, 2016; Kelly, 2011). We have worked very hard to develop innovative strategies falling into this group: first year seminars, community engaged learning, research with faculty, student research, team competitions, the opportunity to present research,

senior seminars, capstone projects, and internships. This work, largely unmentioned in the Board of Trustee's Reimagining Forums, is one of the most impactful hot-beds of faculty innovation.

Across the Minnesota State Universities, we have ensured that nearly all students pursuing baccalaureate degrees have opportunities to participate in high engagement learning formats. Many majors throughout the system embed multiple engaged-learning opportunities within the requirements. As an example, in working toward the Environmental Studies Major with an emphasis in Environmental Policy and Planning at Bemidji State University, students engage in a Senior Seminar and complete either an internship or a thesis, and along the way have opportunities for service learning and research. A second example shows how the Minnesota State University Moorhead's Bachelor in Business Administration offers flexibility but requires engaged learning. Students must choose at least one experiential learning component (e.g., internship, experiential learning program, study abroad, job shadowing). A final example points out faculty efforts to locate engaged learning in requirements for all students. Southwest Minnesota State University bookends the Liberal Education Program with a First Year Seminar (LEP100) and a Senior Seminar focused on Contemporary Issues (LEP400) to ensure that students in all majors "see connections across the various academic disciplines and develop a deeper, more unified understanding of their university education" (SMSU website).

As illustrated through these examples, faculty have been innovative in both the kinds of engaged learning students are offered and in the ways engaged learning strategies are woven into program requirements. Most campuses would like to continue to grow these kinds of student opportunities. Faculty widely report that these methods require training (e.g., on how to effectively integrate community service into coursework) and funding (e.g., faculty reassigned time for development, smaller classes for seminars and capstones, student research grants).

Learning Communities. Most of the Minnesota State Universities offer "Residential Learning Communities" with different topics (health, outdoors, career connections, agriculture, culinology) meeting in different residential halls and ensuring socially supportive groups as students adapt to campus life. However, there are many other kinds of learning communities that directly involve faculty and involve credit-bearing activities. At Winona State University, faculty are integral to interdisciplinary, one credit classes that meet in the residence halls. Faculty engage these groups in university level learning on such topics as Connections, Leadership, and Future Health Careers. Minnesota State University, Mankato offers yet another model of learning communities: Students take multiple courses together while also living in the same residence halls. Faculty innovate around themes as they work with Learning Community Coordinators in offering classes involving a particular learning community.

First Year Seminars. Designed by faculty, first year seminars bring together cohorts of new students for transformative experiences introducing skill sets like critical thinking, information literacy, written and oral communication skills, and teaming that will enhance students' performance in future courses. At Southwest Minnesota State University, the first-year seminar (LEP100) is designed to build critical thinking skills and information literacy skills, and it is taught by faculty across the university on a wide range of topics sure to attract students with very different majors and interests (e.g., Animal Intelligence, Nonviolence, Modern Day Slavery).

Community Engaged Learning. Every one of our state universities has an office working with faculty in support of teaching and learning opportunities that integrate work in the larger community with instruction and reflection. The Carnegie Foundation states that the “purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepared educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good” (MSU, Mankato website). Forms of this work vary immensely. For example, the Communicating with New Media course at Metropolitan State University has four different student teams each working with a different non-profit to design and create social media that the nonprofit can use in communicating the work of their organization. In contrast, Project Shine has an established literacy training workshop which students complete before they engage in literacy work throughout the Twin Cities. In the first example, faculty are designing the entire structure of the project, and in both the first and second examples, faculty innovation is required to integrate reflective practices and discussions into the courses to ensure meaningful learning experiences.

Research. A proven pathway to get students fully engaged in deep learning is to work alongside a faculty member on a research project. Faculty throughout the system devote thousands of hours mentoring students involved in research projects. Some programs highlight faculty-mentored research: for example, in Minnesota State University Moorhead’s Psychology Program, they proudly post on their webpages that all faculty are engaged in research. Psychology students are encouraged to become engaged in faculty-mentored research projects and, as they advance in their studies, work on their own research projects, supervised by faculty. At Minnesota State University, Mankato students engaged in research with faculty often present at the “Undergraduate Research Conference” and see their work published in a journal designed to showcase research from this Conference. Across many disciplines and at all of our universities, participating in faculty-designed and faculty-supervised research are highly valued learning experiences.

Student Research. Over the last decade, we have launched many new undergraduate and graduate research fairs across our universities. On most campuses, faculty coordinate these events— calling for poster and oral presentations, recruiting faculty reviewers to circulate at the fair or chair panels, developing letters and awards for student participants, and much more. Campus conferences include Minnesota State University Moorhead’s Andrew B. Conteh Student Academic Conference; Bemidji State University’s Student Scholarship and Creative Achievement Conference; Minnesota State University, Mankato’s Undergraduate Research Symposium; Southwest Minnesota State University’s Undergraduate Research Conference; St. Cloud State University’s Huskies Showcase; Metropolitan State University’s Student Poster Conference; and Winona State University’s Ramaley Research Celebration. In addition, two undergraduate scholar events are system wide: The Minnesota Undergraduate Scholars Conference and Posters at the State Capitol in St. Paul. The experience of presenting research encourages more engaged work on the project for presentation and the presentation builds confidence, communication skills, preparation for work environments, and skills for continued study.

Capstone Projects. All of our universities have a wide array of programs with capstone courses and projects. Faculty have designed many kinds of capstone projects ranging from writing literature reviews, prospectuses, original research, applied projects, case studies, art exhibitions, music recitals, and beyond. In addition to the valuable opportunity for deep learning on selected topics, capstones can lead to professional opportunities and preparation for graduate school.

Internships. At state universities, faculty work on internships takes several forms. First, we make decisions on the inclusion of internships within program requirements (what kinds of internships, where in the sequence). Second, we work either directly or through a campus internship center on the nature and levels of learning we want for our students. Third, we work with organizations in the region to locate internship sites and build relationships with those who will supervise students. Fourth, we coach individual students and/or lead discussions with groups of student interns to deepen the learning experiences. While not all programs house internships, faculty at all of our universities have developed internships sites with government agencies, for profits, and non-profits. The Communication Studies Program – Organizational Communication Track at Winona State University is a great showcase of faculty hard work to develop internship sites with major employers in the Winona area (e.g., Fastenal, Winona Health, Benchmark, Wincraft, etc.). Students must have department approval, meet a minimum GPA, and have both an internship director in the major program and a site supervisor to ensure that expectations for rigorous, credit-bearing, college level learning are being met.

Study Abroad Opportunities. Across the State Universities, faculty are involved on a variety of levels in engaging students with study abroad. In some cases, the primary role of faculty is to learn about and encourage students to take advantage of programs run by other institutions. Throughout our state universities, many faculty members are leading and serving at the primary instructors for study abroad learning. For 2019-20, Winona's Study Abroad Center for Global Education lists twelve different faculty-designed and taught trips ranging from Global Literature in London to the Impact of Sustainability on International Business and Culture in Scotland. In addition to trips encompassing topical study, in alliance with the Center for International Studies, faculty at St. Cloud State University also lead and teach volunteer abroad, research abroad, and intern abroad experiences. Among St. Cloud State University's offerings is study abroad at the British Culture Center at Alnwick Castle which is receiving rave reviews from students for as a high quality, transformative educational experience.

6. New Academic Programs to Meet Changing Demands

Another form of tremendous innovation among faculty is new program development. There are many different motivators for new programs. Winona State University's (WSU) College of Nursing and Health Sciences launched a new Master of Social Work (MSW) program starting the fall of 2019 to meet demand arising from the aging of the Minnesota population, climbing prevalence of mental health concerns, and increasing rates of trauma. Metropolitan State University began offering the Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) Corrections Professional Certificate in the fall of 2018 to address needs among Corrections Professionals for advanced skill development in Motivational Interviewing, assessment, group facilitation, and case planning. Faculty innovation for the new Metropolitan State minor in Game Studies was sparked by student interest. The program gives students insight into the cultures, ethics, and writing in

and around video games. The new programs throughout Minnesota State Universities are highly creative endeavors that bring disciplinary and pedagogical expertise together with information on trends, employers, and student interests.

7. Development of New and Revitalizations of Existing University Courses

Faculty efforts to creatively launch and revitalize courses are magnificent. In virtually every Professional Development Report, faculty include a reflection on what went well, what was challenging, what will be improved in the next offering of every course they teach. Most make extensive use of student feedback in this reflective pedagogical practice.

In addition to the changes within courses, faculty also launch new courses. They are far ranging, and any examples offered here will be inadequate as a display of the range of work faculty are doing. This year, Bemidji State's Niiizhoo-gwayakochigewin Program added two new courses to address alternative solutions to modern environmental sustainability problems from indigenous perspectives. These courses, "Sustainable Communities: A Local Indigenous Perspective and Indigenous Environmental Knowledge: A Global Perspective," become part of the curriculum of the program shared by University's Sustainability Office, the Department of Languages and Indigenous Studies, the Department of Environmental Studies and the American Indian Resource Center. Another example of a newly approved course is Metropolitan State University's Professional Communication Program's new "Advanced Health Communication: Campaigns." Due to the increasing use of persuasive campaigns to improve the health of certain populations, many communication professionals hired within the health care system need training on bringing campaigns into a variety of formats (social media, web sites, face to face). Across the State Universities, there is considerable innovation through the addition of new courses to ensure students are abreast of cutting-edge knowledge and skills.

8. Courses and Programs Offered in Online and Hybrid Formats

While demand for online courses is often strong, faculty consider many factors before deciding to move courses into an online or hybrid environment. First, there are the general findings that highly motivated, tech-savvy, and better-than-average students perform better online than their less-motivated, less tech-savvy, and average or below counterparts. Next, there are considerations as to how specific content will be taught online (e.g., public speaking and science labs require some serious work-arounds, and reflection also raises issues about whether all online students would be able to do those work arounds). There are deliberations about whether demand for online and hybrid courses is coming from local or distance students, what is already online within a program and commitments about offerings for the program, and finally, how the university offers training and development support, structures reviews, and grants payment to faculty developing courses above and beyond their other full-time obligations.

Currently, faculty at our state universities are teaching courses in many different formats (e.g., in person, blended/hybrid, mostly online, and completely online) and nearly all of them are offered on the Minnesota State supported D2L Bright Space platform. According to Bob Bilyk, Director of the Center for Online Learning at Metropolitan State University, the 2015 data show that across the Minnesota State system, 56% of students were taking all of their classes in person,

22% were taking most of their classes in-person with some online, and 22% were taking their classes mostly or totally online. In addition to the innovative work required to design quality online and hybrid courses, we are also involved in training to become reviewers followed by the work of serving as reviewers.

When it serves the learning needs of students and the list of considerations provided earlier can be addressed at the program level, faculty have moved entire programs into online or hybrid formats. The most recent addition to the list of online programs is Minnesota State University Moorhead's undergraduate Health Services Administration degree. Designed for those interested in the managerial side of acute care, hospitals, senior support services, and public health, this program launched this spring (2019).

Faculty have benefited from strong system and campus support in developing online courses and programs. The system's provision of D2L Bright Space and the leadership of Kim Lynch, her staff, and the directors of university centers for online learning, have encouraged faculty innovation. Faculty increasingly recognize that if we are to compete with the private, for-profit manufacturers of online materials, a great investment in skilled staff will be required to support the innovative development work yet to come from faculty.

9. New Teaching Methods

Over the years, faculty have reimagined and recreated themselves as instructors. Across careers, many faculty report moving from sage-on-the-stage models to include or move totally into innovative active-learning formats. Faculty have invested in professional development opportunities to learn about and use a wide range of proven methods: Process Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning or POGIL; Just in Time Teaching or JITT; Structured Debates; Role-Assigned Discussions; Gamification; Flipped Classrooms; Digital Story Telling; Use of Activity Spaces; and the list goes on.

Faculty and staff work in our university professional development centers, in tandem with Kimberly Johnson's system work, is credited with bringing learning opportunities to faculty through conferences, online discussions, book groups, workshops, etc. Throughout the Minnesota State universities, faculty have great track-records of embracing new teaching methods that enhance student learning.

10. Adopting High Quality Open Educational Resources

Faculty are keenly aware of the financial pressures on students, the increasing costs of course materials, and the growing volume and quality of open educational resources. While we will not compromise on ensuring high quality resources for our classes, we are engaging in exploring open educational resources to see if there are high quality textbooks and materials that can be used in our courses.

A growing group of university faculty are exploring textbooks available through open educational resources for their courses. The Minnesota State system has been able to offer secondary grants/stipends to faculty interested in reviewing textbooks. When faculty discover

free textbooks that are of the same or higher quality, either through the grant-funding review process or simply by exploring, they switch. For example, the entire team of public speaking instructors at Metropolitan State University has switched a textbook authored by Lucas to an open resource public speaking textbook, saving each student approximately \$91.95. According to Kim Lynch, the estimated total savings to students through Open Educational Resources last year was one million dollars.

Paralleling this movement is the interest many of us have in contributing to the open educational resources shared through the Minnesota Learning Commons, a joint project of the Minnesota Department of Education, the University of Minnesota, and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities commons. A growing number of faculty throughout the system are involved in developing course materials and textbooks to be shared. In some cases, this work is being funded through system secondary grants, and in other cases faculty are independently doing their work. In this process, faculty can retain their intellectual property rights and determine how materials will be shared through Creative Commons licenses.

As a side benefit, faculty are discovering that open educational resources can contribute to culturally adaptive pedagogy. Many shared resources can be modified, allowing faculty to ensure that their course materials reflect diversity and offer cases and activities that are better represent the needs of students in a class.

Faculty throughout the Minnesota State Universities have reimaged. We have brought great innovation to students through both course and program opportunities. Yes, “we do it every day,” and we enthusiastically plan to continue reimagining and bringing innovations through our work.

Innovations Requiring Leaders, Partners, and Ramped Up Resources

In discussing the many innovations needed to meet future trends, much of our faculty discussion time focused on big changes. Faculty pointed to great initiatives, pockets of best-practices, and pilots in progress. However, in order to reach fruition, faculty see the need for a redoubling of leadership efforts, partnerships, and resources. Of key strategic importance throughout this section on important initiatives requiring partnerships, leadership, and resources, is a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion at every institutional level.

1. Close Equity Gaps

We stand in partnership with the Minnesota State Colleges and University System in an unwavering commitment to closing equity gaps. This is an ethical responsibility that calls for the continual identification of gaps through:

1. Increasing awareness, sensitivity, and competence in identifying, understanding, and addressing equity gaps at both the system and campus levels; and
2. Collecting and analyzing data that points out gaps and their causes.

For identified gaps, we must honor our ethical responsibility to close them and ensure equity for all of our students. Data throughout the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities documents significant gaps between students of color, Native students, and other underrepresented groups, and their corresponding traditionally-represented groups. In order to ensure systemic change to overcome racism, sexism, able-ism, and sexual identity discrimination, many kinds of work are needed:

1. Prioritizing the development and revision of policies with a commitment to closing equity gaps;
2. Creating campus climates that ensure every student feels welcome and supported;
3. Increasing system and campus training on developing cultural competence and building supportive communities;
4. Developing structures that support English Language Learners who are applying to Minnesota State Universities;
5. Strengthening support for English Language Learners on our campuses;
6. Expanding grant requests to the U.S. Department of Education for TRIO and pre-college program (e.g., Educational Talent Search) funding;
7. Gathering insights from successful students identifying with impacted groups on factors contributing to their effectiveness, and identifying practices that can be scaled up to increase the success of other students;
8. Recruiting, hiring, and retaining diverse faculty and staff;
9. Supporting and training faculty in the development and use of culturally responsive curriculum;
10. Ensuring accessibility for students across all educational programs and teaching formats;
11. Developing campus structures and programs that communicate to our students that diversity is valued. Among the campus components that matter to students are:
 - a. Events that welcome the experiences of students and bring various diverse perspectives;
 - b. Cultural Coordinators;
 - c. Supportive centers and hubs (e.g., International Student Center); and
 - d. Academic offerings and programs that reflect interest in and commitment to diversity (i.e., ethnic studies, foreign languages, gender studies, women's studies).

The programs, offices, and personnel that serve our diverse students and communicate that diversity in our institutions are valued and must not be cut in budget battles.

Throughout faculty discussions, there were great examples of contributions to all of the above. For example, Bemidji State University offers a model of how to welcome and support students. Their American Indian Resource Center (AIRC) offers a hub for learning and gathering around the rich culture of the Anishinaabe. Both through accessible physical space and in terms of socio-emotional support and learning opportunities, this center brings American Indian Students into community with one another. There is strong evidence of faculty involvement. For example, this past fall, Associate Professor of Nursing, Misty Wilkie, and two students, Chelsey Jourdain and Madeline Treuer, were awarded for outstanding achievements in Native American education at the 34th Annual Minnesota Indian Education Association Conference.

Minnesota State University, Mankato provides additional examples of unique support for other groups: Dreaming by Degrees is an open source podcast for first year students that seeks to raise their success and retention by engaging a team of diverse college students to create podcast episodes addressing the barriers and hidden dimensions of college. Podcasts will focus on groups of students at risk for feeling out-of-place (e.g., first-generation students, students of color, LGBTQ students, and non-traditional students).

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities forthcoming Toolkit; the IFO's Caucuses in support of Faculty of Color, Women, LGBTQA+, and Faculty with Disabilities; and numerous campus efforts all point to momentum. Faculty know that the effort to close the gaps needs to be systemic, sustained, and resourced.

2. Increase Support for the Success, Retention, and Graduation of Students

Given demographic shifts documenting a future with increasingly diverse student body (students of color, immigrant students, first generation college students) at all of our universities, several efforts are needed to ensure the success, retention, and graduation of all students:

- a. Working with K-12 and colleges to increase readiness. Many faculty expressed strong dismay about skill levels of entering students. ACT results for college readiness reveal that across more than 61,000 Minnesota high school graduates tested in 2017, only 31 percent met or exceeded the college benchmarks in all four subjects (English, reading, math, and science) (ACT.org, 2017). Looking at individual subjects, 63% were college ready in English, 50% in reading, 48% in math, and 42 % in science (ACT.org, 2017). Fully 67% of high school students aspire to completing either baccalaureate degrees or graduate degrees. This means that approximately half of the students planning to seek baccalaureate degrees are under-prepared for university coursework. We noted that 67% is below the 70% of all high school graduates that the Office of Higher Education, State of Minnesota wants to see with higher education degrees (OHEMN, 2019).
- b. Designing bridge, orientation, mentoring, and community building programs to support students.
- c. Ensuring strong academic advising connections from the very start.
- d. Selecting and using data analytic tools that support student success, retention and graduation.
- e. Improving student access to, comfortability with, and uses of academic tutoring and support. With climbing online and off-campus options, many faculty raised concerns about the challenges many students face in accessing services when they are not located on the base/home campuses. They also expressed interest in methods that increase likelihood of use, such as embedding tutors in entry level courses.
- f. Evidence-based deliberation about development course offerings. Great efforts are underway through the Developmental Education Taskforce and the content-based workgroups which are committed to this exact goal.
- g. Innovation during the early stages of courses to move students who reveal a lack of preparedness into other learning opportunities that will protect their tuition investment and are a better fit for their current learning needs.

3. Better Enable Our Talented Contingent Faculty to Bring Their Best

In conversations with contingent faculty, many concerns were raised, and we present them in terms of what is needed:

- a. Ensuring that contingent faculty are given as much lead time as possible for teaching assignments. Reports abound of faculty waiting to be notified until days or one or two weeks before course start dates even when department leadership (and in some cases deans) knew their re-employment was inevitable.
- b. Offering quality onboarding. Contingent faculty often said that they were not given adequate information about student services and academic support centers to fully support students in their classes.
- c. Providing information on how their courses fit into sequenced learning by majors, assessment plans, graduation requirements, etc., and welcoming them into discussions on these and other topics. Contingent faculty find it respectful and motivating to understand what needs to be accomplished through their classes.
- d. Livable wages and health care. Many contingent faculty are building their lives around sequenced, part-time teaching making livable wages and access to health care essential.
- e. Providing resources for the work they do at our universities (office space, computer access, books).
- f. Making professional development funds usable at any point during an academic year in which they are teaching (including terms when they are not teaching).
- g. Increasing the respect, so that they feel as valued members of our teaching faculty.
- h. Given higher representation of women and faculty of color among contingent faculty, overall support for contingent faculty will also support these otherwise marginalized faculty.

Research has identified five important elements of faculty work that must be honored, regardless of appointment type, if campuses are to maximize the contributions of all faculty members: respect, employment equity, academic freedom, balance, and flexibility (Gappa, Austin, and Tice, 2005, 2007). The list above underscores the need to raise our ability to provide these for our contingent faculty. In addition, researchers like Kezar (2012) point to the need for supportive policies and practices that maximize the ability of non-tenure-track faculty perform to their capacity.

4. Regional Planning with Faculty Participation Early in the Process

Significant benefits can come to our universities from regional planning efforts – especially efforts aimed at greater access, opportunity, and success for underrepresented and marginalized students. Through our work, we contribute to the artistic and intellectual vibrancy of communities, the non-profit work, the engagement of citizens, which brings specialized skills, knowledge bases, and leadership for our regional employers.

The forms of regional planning vary across the system. In recent years, planning for the Southwest region of the state brought together leaders from the Minnesota State system office, university and college campuses, and external stakeholders. The resulting report focuses primarily on employment needs and the contributions of the area colleges and university to meet

those needs. In a very different kind of regional planning, the Twin Cities Baccalaureate Task Force has explored how to increase the numbers of students completing baccalaureates through Twin Cities Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. This planning involves financial agreements that share fees and 5% of tuition with hosting colleges for the programs, and piloting offerings among Minnesota State University, Mankato and Metropolitan State University courses at Normandale Community Colleges, and Metropolitan State University courses at Hennepin Technical College.

No matter the type of regional planning to date, faculty believe they should be brought into these processes earlier when they could be most useful in exploring ideas about program development, partnerships that could offer on-site student projects and internships, contributions to regional research needs, and opportunities for and awareness of the broader contributions of Minnesota State Universities to the region.

5. Increase the Rates of Transfer from Minnesota State Colleges to Minnesota State Universities

We need the numbers; it is less expensive to retain than to recruit, our programs offer great value to the students, and quite frankly, we have more pride when students vote to continue in our institutions. Despite four good reasons for caring deeply about successful transfer, a recent conversation with Metropolitan State University's Provost Amy Gort revealed that in the Twin Cities, only 10% of Minnesota State College students go on to baccalaureate programs, and only 10% of those who go on choose Minnesota State Universities. Yikes!

Given those numbers, it is not surprising that faculty point to the needs for:

- a. research on students' planning and decision making on transfer.
- b. major marketing work to raise the visibility of the quality, accessibility, and affordability of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.
- c. strengthened internal marketing to current and prior students pointing out the value of transfer to baccalaureate programs, the ease of using established pathways, and offering advising assistance. (This work is underway through the work of the Marketing Team's efforts on Pathways.)
- d. study of other actions like back transfer of credits to ensure completion of associate degrees and dual-enrollment at a college and university to see if they bolster transfer levels.

As evidenced by presentations in the Board of Trustees' Reimagining Forums, all of the large college and university systems throughout the country are grappling with this issue because of its financial importance. Field research, the CCRC, and Aspen Institute's College Excellence Programs revealed that across six states, there was evidence for the following when the goal is increasing transfers from 2- and 4-year institutions: (a) prioritize transfer, (b) create clear programmatic pathways that lays out aligned, high-quality instruction, and (c) provide student advising tailored to the specific transfer (Xu, Ran, Fink, Jenkins, & Dundar, 2018).

How are we doing? Faculty see that we are making efforts, but that more work is needed by Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to raise the numbers.

6. Find Ways to Increase Enrollments at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

We worked hard to think about solutions for the declining enrollments on some of our campuses. One innovative idea suggest by faculty was to look at the states where large numbers of students who would meet admission criteria are being rejected due to stringent enrollments caps at the institutions to which they applied. California has been in the news repeatedly for stories about students being rejected from state institutions, even with GPA's signaling they are A and B students. Granted Minnesota State Colleges and Universities would need to work with the California (and other) schools regarding how invitations could be extended while honoring FERPA guidelines. However, it seems possible to overcome the obstacles, and successfully recruit additional students to Minnesota campuses – especially those with declining enrollments.

Faculty also believe that solving the equity gaps and increasing retention to graduation will also contribute to higher enrollments on our campuses. For many State Universities this will involve a culture shift to increasing commitments to the successful recruitment and support for all students, but especially those from under-represented and marginalized groups. Minnesota State Universities must strive to become the educational system of choice for students of color, immigrant students, and first generation college students.

7. Reduce Burnout

Many faculty expressed concerns about the levels of burnout they are seeing *throughout* the system. Fingers go all directions, but there are four major themes: 1) in our higher education system, every idea, course, program and partnership comes with costs of coordination; 2) the students of today bring increasingly complex challenges and require more emotional labor and problem solving than ever before; 3) technology takes time, it is being introduced at increasing rates, and in our work-from-anywhere world, it cannot be ignored; 4) changes in policies, procedures, forms and systems often take into account time reductions in the originating unit without taking into account increased time demands elsewhere; and 5) institutional support is inadequate to counteract much of the stress experience by underrepresented and marginalized faculty, staff, and students. We talk about the importance of retention as an important financial strategy when it comes to our students. That principle needs to apply to faculty and employees as well. Both on campuses and in the system office, there is a need to restore a sustainable balance between job demands and sustainable human energy.

These seven initiatives are very important to the state universities. In discussions, faculty believed that each of these had the potential to significantly alter the finances of the state universities. Successfully enacting them as a set brings great promise for both the bottom line and the public good.

Core Principles on which IFO Faculty Are Unwavering

As reflected in the prior sections of faculty innovations and major work to come, we are dedicated to offering students a high-quality university education and bringing benefits to the public. Due to the high level of graduate specialization, ethical obligations, and the

responsibilities of the academy, the academy has operated with rights and structures that are very different than those of other governmental, non-profit, and for-profit enterprises. The American Association of University Professionals' 1915 Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure explained that the "conception of a university as an ordinary business venture, and of academic teaching as a purely private employment," demonstrated "a radical failure to apprehend the nature of the social function discharged by the professional scholar" (Gerber, 2015). The committee explained that the function "is to deal at first hand, after prolonged and specialized technical training, with sources of knowledge; and to impart the results of their own and of their fellow-specialists' investigations and reflection, both to students and to the general public, without fear or favor" (Gerber, 2015). While faculty may be hired by college or university trustees, faculty are not "in any proper sense the employees" because "once appointed, the scholar has professional functions to perform" in ways that the "authorities have neither competency nor moral right to intervene" (Gerber, 2015). Among the functions listed are exercising primary responsibility for determining the curriculum, maintaining academic standards, and evaluating fellow faculty members. For faculty to perform these functions, it has been recognized that academic freedom and faculty governance are "inextricably linked" and that certain principles must be upheld (Gerber, 2015). Consistent with this perspective, and in order to fulfill our responsibilities to provide excellent educations for our students and contribute to the public good, the IFO is unwavering in our commitment to ten core principles.

1. Tenure

In the Minnesota State Universities, tenure is awarded only after faculty demonstrate effectiveness on five criteria within the early years of their employment: 1) teaching or other assigned duties; 2) scholarship or creative work; 3) continued preparation and study; 4) contributions to the growth and development of students; and 5) service. Like partners in law or accounting firms, tenure is a method of establishing a culture of hard work and retaining proven talent. Once tenured, the productivity continues to be documented through rigorous, post-tenure plans and reports on the five criteria.

The benefits of tenure are significant. First, it ensures that a hard-working, talented group of long-term faculty are the primary architects of courses, programs, and learning opportunities – especially as the research, development, and rigorous implementation of college-level courses and programs extends over many years. Second, it ensures that universities foster the pursuit “and development of important ideas and findings that might otherwise be belittled or opposed” (Gardner, 2018). Whether it is McCarthy era politics pressuring faculty to sign “loyalty oaths” or the current attacks on the work of climate scientists, tenure is an insurance that creativity and the pursuit of truth will continue at universities (Gardner, 2018). Third, it offers students a consistent cohort of faculty that support learning and bolsters retention rates (Schulman et al., 2016). Finally, it maintains competitive hiring and retention capacities at universities. Challenges to the long-term security of faculty leads to recruitment frenzies: Reports from Wisconsin are that in 2014-15, 37 faculty requested a counteroffer, and this increased to 144 in 2015-16, and another 92 in 2016-2017 (Gardner, 2018).

Many argue, it is tenure that has “made American universities the best in the world” (Gittleman, 2015). There are close relationships between having a stable and significant pool of tenured and

tenure-track faculty with the abilities to devote themselves to programmatic research and continued professional development, and the ability to carry out the mission of educating students and bringing significant benefits to the public. Finkelstein (2017) argues that “What is at risk is nothing short of what placed us at the center of global science and knowledge production and made the U.S. the global industry leader in the first place. What is at risk is our leadership in introducing mass higher education to the world.”

2. Maintaining a High Proportion of Full-Time, Permanent Faculty Lines

A high proportion of full-time, permanent faculty lines guarantees that the group of professionals building courses and programs, pursuing knowledge and creativity even when there is opposition, developing relationships with students, and hiring are sufficient in number to perform well at these important tasks.

Over the last 40 years, there has been a 70 percent increase in part-time instructional appointments in American colleges and universities (Schulman et al., 2016). Benjamin (2002) point out that contingent faculty “lack the professional evaluation, compensation, support and, often, collegial involvement of the full-time, tenure-track faculty,” and that “the latter are appointed based on a highly competitive national search and teaching demonstrations as well as scholarly records, recommendations, and peer evaluation.”

The rise of part-time and contingent faculty not only hampers important work toward long-term goals and challenges reputations, but it also significantly impacts the learning experiences of students. The President Brand of Cornell College worries that without a stable core of long-term faculty invested in the success of the institution, student experiences “become splotchy, with lots of one-off experiences, rather than helping our students pull it all together” (Schulman et al., 2016). Not surprising, many argue that “ensuring a high proportion of tenured and tenure track faculty is one of the best tools to improve quality for all students, and particularly for low-income students” (Schulman et al., 2016). While instructors in part-time positions typically hold graduate degrees and work very hard, research reveals that both the likelihood of taking subsequent courses in a subject and the likelihood of graduating are decreased by having part-time instructors (Schulman et al., 2016). The findings from an extensive study were that for each increase in part-time faculty of 10 percent, there is a 2.65 percent decline in the graduation rate for the institution (Bettinger & Long, 2004), and for each increase in full-time non-tenure track faculty of 10 percent, there is a 2.22 percent decline (Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2004). Benjamin (2002) found that “at best” part-time faculty spend half as many out-of-class hours on students, and the majority spend only one-quarter the time that full-time faculty invest (Benjamin, 2002). It is any wonder that students are impacted when teaching shifts to part-time and contingent faculty.

3. Academic Freedom

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP, 2001) defines academic freedom as involving three fundamental rights:

a) to conduct research and disseminate the results without externally applied presuppositions about the direction and findings of the research

b) to teach subjects in the classroom for which one is qualified and has specific knowledge
c) to express opinions in public through speech or writing, without institutional censorship or discipline.

These three forms of academic freedom ensure the ability of all faculty to pursue knowledge in teaching and research. Given that untenured and contingent faculty lack the structural protections of their tenured and permanent counterparts, greater vigilance must be devoted to ensuring that they too are assured academic freedom in their work on behalf of our universities.

4. Faculty Control of Curriculum

In tandem with academic freedom, faculty control over the curriculum ensures that those with the high-level, specialized knowledge are determining the knowledge and skills taught in courses and programs. In addition to the content of specific courses and programs of study, this extends to determining the structure of general education and other educational requirements for graduation, and oversight committees fostering consultation with allied departments, looking at relative levels of courses (placements within undergraduate and graduate course listings), and so on.

5. Faculty Ownership of Their Intellectual Property

Ownership of intellectual property motivates faculty to bring their very best intellectual work to their students, their colleagues, and the public during their employment at universities. In addition to promoting dissemination of their greatest work, this also contributes to institutional reputations and recruitment capabilities.

The AAUP guidelines read as follows:

- "Intellectual property created, made, or originated by a faculty member shall be the sole and exclusive property of the faculty, author, or inventor, except as he or she may voluntarily choose to transfer such property, in full or in part."
- "A work should not be treated as 'made for hire' merely because it is created with the use of university resources, facilities, or materials of the sort traditionally and commonly made available to faculty members."
- It goes on to note: "funds received by the faculty member from the sale of intellectual property owned by the faculty author or inventor shall be allocated and expended as determined solely by the faculty author or inventor."

Finally, the guidelines clarify that legally it does not work to assume that new hires can be forced to sign agreements to alter these assumptions. Specifically, in the Statement on Copyright, the AAUP warns: "If the faculty member is indeed the initial owner of copyright, then a unilateral institutional declaration cannot effect a transfer, nor is it likely that a valid transfer can be effected by the issuance of appointment letters to new faculty members requiring, as a condition of employment, that they abide by a faculty handbook that purports to vest in the institution the ownership of all works created by the faculty member for an indefinite future."

6. The Integrity of the Baccalaureate Degree

The baccalaureate degree is the primary pathway to a comprehensive and transformative educational experience for students that enriches life, develops skills for engaged citizenship, and prepares for significant vocational and avocational contributions.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017): “Individuals born in the latter years of the baby boom (1957-1964) held an average of 11.9 jobs from age 18 to age 50, and nearly half of these jobs were held from ages 18 to 24.” Overlapping these changes, Thomas Friedman (2014) waxes on Moore’s Law in an opinion piece to explain the exponential increases in technological innovation and how they are driving globalization and rates of change in nearly every sphere of life. To meet these trends, it is crucial that we inculcate transcendent knowledge and skill sets so that students are prepared for life-long learning and adaptation. We believe the baccalaureate degree with the combination of general education plus in-depth disciplinary work offers the best preparation for future demands. More will be said about both components in the next two core principles.

7. Education in the Liberal Arts

William Cronon (1999) boldly asked the questions, “What does it mean to be a liberally educated person? How do we recognize a liberally educated person?” His answer is a sequence of ten capabilities:

- a. They listen and they hear. . . They can follow an argument, track logical reasoning, detect illogic, hear the emotions that lie behind both the logic and the illogic, and ultimately empathize with the person who is feeling those emotions.
- b. They read and they understand. . . across a wide range of genres and media.
- c. They can talk . . . give a speech, ask thoughtful questions, and . . . participate in such conversations not because they like to talk about themselves but because they are genuinely interested in others.
- d. They can write clearly and persuasively and movingly.
- e. They can solve a wide variety of puzzles and problems [through] a basic comfort with numbers, a familiarity with computers, . . . the ability to look at a complicated reality, break it into pieces, and figure out how it works in order to do practical things in the real world. [They also have] the ability to put reality back together again after having broken it into pieces--for only by so doing can we accomplish practical goals without violating the integrity of the world we are trying to change.
- f. They respect rigor not so much for its own sake but as a way of seeking truth.
- g. They love learning, but they love wisdom more. They can appreciate a closely reasoned argument, knowledge [serving] values, and they strive to put these two--knowledge and values--into constant dialogue with each other.
- h. They practice humility, tolerance, and self-criticism, . . . and understand the power of other people's dreams and nightmares as well as their own. They have the intellectual range and emotional generosity to step outside their own experiences and prejudices, thereby opening themselves to perspectives different from their own. . . and celebrate the wider world: studying foreign languages, learning about the cultures of distant peoples, exploring the history of long-

ago times, discovering the many ways in which men and women have known the sacred and given names to their gods.

i. They understand how to get things done in the world in order to leave it a better place. . . . They study power and struggle to use it wisely and well.

j. They nurture and empower the people around them. Liberally educated people understand that they belong to a community whose prosperity and well-being are crucial to their own, and they help that community flourish by making the success of others possible.

k. More than anything else, being an educated person means being able to see connections that allow one to make sense of the world and act within it in creative ways.

Both the Minnesota State general education requirements and the most desired skills listed by employers map exceedingly well onto Cronon's list. Cronon's (1999) Liberally Educated Person has been transformed into a lifelong learner who is prepared for changing demands across life, citizenship, and vocational and avocational pursuits.

The websites and materials moving through the Minnesota State system clearly document that all our universities have a strong commitment to the liberal arts. For example, a Bemidji State University 2018 proposal to change their University mission and vision statement, included "Through the transformative power of the liberal arts..." as a reflection of their beliefs that "a well-rounded education in all aspects of life is not only necessary, but life-changing for the student who receives it. A comprehensive university supports the development of a whole person who makes positive contributions to the world around them. A belief in the transformative power of the liberal arts is one of BSU's Shared Fundamental Values" (Board of Trustee Materials, November 2018).

8. Comprehensive Universities Offerings a Wide Range of Academic Programs

For students, an in-depth disciplinary dive into major requirements develops discipline in the learning process, knowledge acquisition, the development of methodological skill, and competence in performing professional applications. Having a wide range of disciplines at each university ensures that students attending our publicly-funded institutions can try out and pursue educational paths matching abilities, skills, and interests. For faculty, comprehensive institutions bring cross-fertilization and interdisciplinary efforts, and for our institutions, they bring a broader array of contributions to communities as well as better recruitment and retention.

9. Campus Autonomy

Each of the Minnesota State Universities has local administrators, faculty, and staff with proven records to make wise decisions that consider the students served, local/regional interests, and the growth potential of undergraduate and graduate programs with growth potential. The result of campus autonomy are differences in disciplinary expertise, types of campuses (e.g., commuter, residential), student-interest based offerings (e.g., arts, athletics, student activities), and cultures. Our unique campuses offer students a wide range of choices. Everyone from an older commuting student to a traditionally-aged residential student has options within the Minnesota State system. Across the system, local campuses have invested in different stand-out disciplines making the fourth largest higher education system very diverse in offerings.

10. Shared Governance

At the outset of the core principles section, the unique role of faculty was discussed. The IFO - MnSCU Master Agreement delineates shared governments and specifies the topics on which faculty must be involved in the decision-making process. Through “Meet and Confer” processes at both campus and system levels, administration and faculty openly discuss a wide range of issues.

Simply put, the ten principles outlined in this section enable faculty to fulfill core responsibilities. We are unwavering because these are the bed-rock for ensuring a transformational education for our students and contributions to the public good.

Restoring Commitment to Universities Contribution to the Public Good

Disinvestment, Rising Tuition, and Growing Concerns about Student Debt

As noted in the introduction, the last forty years have brought a significant disinvestment in public higher education and an undermining of the commitment to a public good. In the 1980’s, more than 75% of the costs of higher education were state funded. The level of state funding fell to a low of 39.5%, and after a slight increase from 2014 to the present, state funding covers less than 50% of the costs of public higher education.

Much of the reduction has been absorbed, through tuition and fees, by students. As the tuition levels for full time students ballooned from less than \$500 in the 1980’s to nearly \$6000 today, family and student contributions to educational costs have not been able to keep pace, and students have taken on more and more debt.

With growing concern about the escalating shifting of financial burdens to students, there have been significant efforts to reduce costs using three major strategies. First, new opportunities were offered to high school students to take courses for higher-education credit. This approach, while popular, has not delivered good revenue streams. Institutions receive inadequate funding for these program, and in most cases, they exacerbate rather than mitigate underfunding. A second strategy has been to markedly increase part-time and flexible employees. While this has reduced budgets, it has also significantly reduced the full-time, graduate-trained professionals that at institutions of higher education build the curriculum and programs, and contribute to the public good through scholarship and creative works. A third strategy to eliminate budget imbalances has been the increasing privatization of public higher education. A greater proportion of research funding is through private industry, and more and more programs are partnered with for profit businesses to deliver job training adhering to the needs of employers. It must be noted that for-profit partners come with ethical concerns about conflicts in interests in research (the questions asked are likely to be in service of the private interests) and job training (which serves to reduce the training costs of businesses and train large numbers for specific positions to hold wages down).

This new era of low support for public higher education is also characterized by efforts to “Reimagine.” The Itasca Report, Charting the Future, and the Reimaging Report and Forums all focus on “disruptions.” The trends, surveys, and employer needs selected for presentation in those does perpetuate and ramp up the arguments that the costs of higher education must be contained and involving for-profit partners must increase.

The Hidden Assumptions Driving the True Disruption in Higher Education

Since the late 1970’s there has been increasing pressure to increase privatization and decrease government spending and regulation. The resulting unbridled free market allows for the maximization of profits by the business sector. Several persuasive strategies are employed to garner broad public agreement. Given the goals to limit the size of government and ensure that taxes spent further the profits of businesses, there are three very basic strategies: 1) narrow the end goals to those benefitting private enterprise and move away from broad goals about the public good; 2) develop measures that put the spotlight on meeting the narrow goals; and 3) conduct and present research findings that show the failures to reach the narrow goal, to the exclusion of broader goals. Applying these strategies to higher education, the goals are shifted from broader outcomes (e.g., a transformative education offering students an improved quality of life, preparation for citizenship, and enduring knowledge and skill sets serving a lifetime of careers, and contributions to the public good) to the narrow focus of preparing and providing the workforce, measurements that focus on workforce development, and research exposing failures to make the rapid shifts needed in preparing and providing the workforce. Faculty also point out that the work of teaching, learning, and scholarship cannot easily be numerically quantified like mass-produced widgets.

Many faculty expressed great concern that this philosophical shift, more than any real chaos or urgent needs for innovation, is driving this and the earlier initiatives to reimagine higher education in Minnesota. The Itasca Project, Charting the Future, and now Reimagining all have a common pattern: Trends are presented that call for urgent attention. Data reveal that there are inadequate responses to the trends. Reform is needed – nimbleness is essential. Methods are proposed for adaptation. Many of the recommendations are centered on getting many more students trained into the exact skill sets desired by employers. All of this change must be done within the current (significantly reduced since the 1970’s) public funding levels. Inviting faculty to truly participate in reimagining efforts opens the door to debates over definitions, topics, measuring sticks, methods of measuring, the ethics, and most importantly – the goals (i.e., Why are we no longer focused on transformative educational experiences and contributing to the public good?).

In a 2016 *Washington Post* article, Pasquerella (2016) asserted that the belief that education is a public good tied to the American Dream, has all but been abandoned to a new view of the college degree as a private commodity. That sets the stage for ever-decreasing public funding, and increasingly prohibitive educational costs. While public institutions of higher education enroll 80 percent of post-secondary students, Pell Grants now cover only 30 percent of the cost of a four-year public education (Pasquerella, 2016). Without restored belief that public institutions serve a public good and a return to strong public funding, he anticipates a growing

gap between what public and private schools will be able to offer, and that public institutions will increasingly need alternative revenue streams (Pasquerella, 2016).

Faculty feel a strong need to challenge the core assumptions because they are counter to the highest ideals in educating our students and contributing to society. First, for a democracy to thrive, all citizens need access to high quality and affordable educational opportunities that enable them to develop their potential. Second, in order to ensure that a society continues to have the building blocks for greatness, it is essential that scholarly and artistic efforts be produced in a manner that holds truth and the public good as the highest goals. These goals are jeopardized when private investors become drivers. Third, there are many public goods that come from higher education that are far broader than the career preparation and earning potential of individuals. An artistic performance, participation in a political debate, volunteering in humanitarian efforts, contributing to research findings that lead to new inventions and improved practices, and so many other outcomes encompassed within higher education contribute to the public good. As one faculty member put it, “we are doing so, so, so much more than career preparation.” This does not negate our commitment to seeing our students soar in great career paths. Faculty want all of it for their students – enriched lives, citizenship skills, community enriching contributions, and great careers, and we see the result as ongoing contribution to the public good.

From the origin of the Board of Trustee’s Reimagining Forum speakers to the final speaker list, there was modification to include a greater range of speakers and topic. Some speakers focused almost exclusively on career preparation while others addressed broader topics like closing equity gaps and using data analytics for improved student retention. However, other ideas were presented as though they served both students, the public, and business, but for which a closer look reveals, the dominant beneficiary is unlikely to be students. Take PTECH for example. This is a program through which businesses initiate partnerships with technical colleges/systems to provide career pathways for primarily under-represented students using a 6-year educational model leading to a two-year technical degree. Directly stated, it is a program that *recruits* bright, tech-savvy, often low income or minority, 14-year old students to commit to a 6-year program generating getting large numbers of graduates with the exact skills desired by the sponsoring business. If serving students were the top priority, wouldn’t the plan be to have a fully transparent discussion with the student about goals and interests, leading to a comprehensive set of options that included those allowing for smoother transition to baccalaureate degrees (e.g., A.A. degrees that include the full array of general education requirements), and help for any student figuring out how to fund the achievement of career goals? Why not turn the priorities around in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities? Why not insist that any program like PTECH interested in operating in Minnesota commit to transparently explaining options so that our under-represented students are positioned to achieve their dreams? For some students a PTECH-style path will be great, but we owe it to the students of this state to make sure we are focused on their long-term well-being rather than the efforts of business to maximize profits by minimizing training costs and lowering wages through ensuring a supply of ready-workers.

Faculty call on the Board of Trustees and leadership throughout Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to boldly give top priority to: 1) offering high-quality, accessible and affordable, comprehensive and transformative educations to our students, 2) promoting the public good

served by our institutions; and 3) initiating a lobbying effort for public funding to reduce tuition and ensure our institutions can continue their valuable public contributions.

Looking Toward a Bright Future

John Dewey said, “Democracy has to be born again each generation and education is its midwife.” “Democracy is a way of life controlled by a working faith in the possibilities of human nature . . . The democratic faith in human equality is the belief that every human being, independent of the quantity or range of his personal endowment, has the right to equal opportunity with every other person for development of whatever gifts [s/he] has.” (Dewey, 1930, p. 391).

As the “teacher-scholar” faculty of the Minnesota State Universities, our top priority is to deliver to the students of Minnesota (and beyond) a transformative educational experience. By transformative, we mean an education that expands the mind, values knowledge, pursues truth, and makes connections (Peters, 1967, 1973), and hones all the skills encompassed in the description of the liberally educated person by Cronon (1999). This education is not limited to knowledge and skill sets for specific jobs. Rather it plays a foundational role in helping students realize their full potential and develop capabilities enhancing every sphere of their lives. We see this as consistent with our commitment to comprehensive universities that offer students a wide range of occupationally-oriented and non-occupationally-focused programs. Students bring and discover a wide range of goals and interests. As Hanushek, Schwerdt, Woessmann, and Zhang (2017) argue, increasingly college graduates need to blend socio-emotional, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills with training (often technical) for career paths so that they can meaningfully participate in civic affairs and community, engage in life-long learning, and effectively perform at work.

Just as the Board of Trustees Reimagining Forums brought forward complex and at times incompatible ideas, the faculty report also offers complexity. As faculty, we reject treating public higher education as a private commodity, and we strongly believe that we must all advocate for resources to hold down tuition costs and enable institutions to focus on transformative education and scholarly and creative contributions for the benefit of the public good. In loyalty to those commitments, we are presenting our set of core principles on which we are unwavering. We are also working hard on innovations addressing the trends and concerns linked to demographic shifts, technological advances, access and equity gaps, failures to transfer, retain, and graduate students, and the pressures experienced throughout the system. Faculty have been highly innovative: Stackability, Improved Pathways, FlexPacing, and increasing use of Open-Educational-Resources and contributions to Learning Commons are among the praiseworthy ventures. In addition, faculty continue to do excellent, innovative work as they steadily revitalize courses and programs, develop online and hybrid offerings when appropriate, and ensure all students participate in engaged learning approaches. We need to partner to make progress on major initiatives. We must end equity gaps, ensure the success, retention and graduation of students, enable our contingent faculty to bring their best, continue to plan regionally involving faculty early in the process, consider innovative methods for increasing campus enrollments, and prevent growing burnout.

With all the hard work before us, there are many reasons for optimism. To the credit of the Minnesota System leadership and the work on campuses, exemplars and pilots exist within our colleges and universities on virtually every idea advocated in the Board of Trustees' Reimagining Forums that could be focused on the public good. We are poised to make wise decisions about risking commitment to test ideas, ramp up innovations (e.g., stackability, pathways, flex pacing), and to continue the great educational work that engages students in valuable learning experience. With an infusion of resources to close the gaps and maximize retention of students to graduation, faculty see a future with greater financial stability.

In that future, we will realize the Office of Higher Education's goal of 70 percent of all 25-44 year olds possessing secondary degrees. Then, the savings from corrections and Medicaid, combined with taxes received from sales, property, and income, will add up to nearly \$130 million dollars of increased state benefit in 2025 (Office of Higher Education, 2019, Student Flow Model). With that narrow claim to the public's financial good, it will be time to continue returning resources to the Minnesota State College and University System, lowering the cost of tuition and bolstering the contributions to the public good by public universities throughout the state.

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