

Devinder Malhotra, Chancellor
Board of Trustees Awards
April 18, 2018

Colleagues, guests: We are gathered here today to celebrate the very best of our teacher-mentors and their transformative impact on our students. It is indeed a delight and privilege to both congratulate the educators of the year and offer some context for why today's winners are so very important to the work we do at our colleges and universities.

Like many other segments of society, our profession in higher education is under a major disruption. Our world is ever-changing. It is becoming more complex as we advance our knowledge of the physical universe and life sciences; as technology and modes of communication change; as the ease with which information is accessible and disseminated increases; and as major geopolitical shifts occur. This 21st Century world will require our graduates to have different types of expertise and competencies to be successful, and they need to be ready for jobs that have not yet emerged.

Meanwhile, our colleges and universities are facing changes in three critical areas:

The first change is in who our students are. Our student body is increasingly diverse, with new learners coming from communities that have traditionally had low participation rates in higher education. We must engage with underrepresented groups and embed ourselves in their communities, not only learning *about* these communities, but also learning *with* them and *from* them.

The second change is in how our students learn. More and more of our students are different kinds of learners compared with previous generations. Our classrooms are not just becoming more diverse, they are increasingly serving students who access, process, aggregate, and connect information differently. In other words, they are digital natives, whereas I am a digital immigrant from the talk-and-chalk generation that's prone to culture shocks every time there's a new iPhone!

The third change is in what our campuses need to do to remain financially sustainable.

All of these changes mean we need to simultaneously scale up our operations and personalize the educational experience of our students. That will require new types of programmatic structures, curricular designs, and modes of delivery.

In terms of new types of structures, in addition to our traditional and important focus on the rigor of our programs, we need to pay more attention to the relevance of our programs. The problem-solving in today's complex world will require team-oriented approaches with team members bringing different kinds of expertise. That in turn requires our curricular designs to be less anchored in specific disciplines.

We also need to meet students where they are. The era of the sage on the stage in the classroom has already passed, because the information the sage provides from the state is now accessible through multiple platforms, and our students can check in real time the veracity of every sentence a professor utters. We need a different relationship between professor and student – a more

interactive and more experiential relationship. We must build a vibrant, robust, new landscape of learning. And we need to create a learning ethos that meets the needs of all our students.

That's where all of you – today's award recipients – come in. No matter what role you play on campus, you are the trailblazers. You are already building that vibrant, robust, new landscape of learning. You are already meeting the needs of all your students.

Consequently, you're not the only winners here today. Students win because of what you bring to your work, whether inside or outside the classroom. Your colleagues win because of the new and transformative approaches you model for them. Your colleges and universities win because you are the women and men who drive our collective ability to make good on our compact with the people of Minnesota.

So, award winners: today you take home the gold, but through your achievement, we all win. And we win every day.

Thank you all!