An action plan for reciprocal public engagement at the Twin Cities campus
In September 2016, Associate Vice President for Public Engagement, Andrew Furco, formed the Public Engagement Action Plan Work Group, a 38-member task force charged with recalibrating the Twin Cities campus’s public engagement agenda and developing a set of action steps for furthering the institutionalization of reciprocal, public engagement over the next five years (see Appendix A).

Composed of faculty, engagement unit leaders, staff, and students from a broad range of disciplines and units (see Appendix A), the Work Group held monthly meetings in which they: identified key priorities for advancing public engagement; articulated a vision for each priority; and developed a set of action steps to guide the campus’s work in fully meeting the identified engagement priorities.

In identifying campus priorities for public engagement, the Work Group considered the University’s established definition of public engagement (approved in 2005):

> “Public engagement is the partnership of university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.”

Using the University’s established, system-wide action plan for public engagement (Ten-Point Plan for Advancing and Institutionalizing Public Engagement, 2008) as a foundational document, the Work Group first reviewed information, goals, and recommendations contained in key institutional strategic planning and policy documents, and then worked to incorporate this information into an initial draft of a recalibrated public engagement action plan for the Twin Cities campus. The information, goals, and recommendations reviewed for the initial draft included the following:

- public engagement-related goals contained in the overarching Twin Cities ten-year strategic plan: Driving Tomorrow;
- Campus Compact declaration principles for civic engagement (signed by President Kaler);
- recommendations for advancing policy, infrastructure, and culture, submitted by participants of the system-wide conference, Meeting Grand Challenges through Community-Engaged Research and Teaching; recommendations for improving public engagement, contained in the Twin Cities;
- Carnegie Community Engagement Classification review report;
- faculty recommendations on improving faculty rewards for engaged scholarship; and
- various recommendations submitted by academic units, centers, and individuals.

Drawing on this information, the members identified ten overarching priority themes and self-selected themselves into five working groups (subgroups). Each subgroup worked on establishing a vision statement and a set of action steps for two themes. The subgroups shared their respective vision statement and action steps with the full Work Group to ensure alignment of goals and focus across all ten priority theme areas.

The Work Group completed a full draft of the Public Engagement Action Plan on March 1, 2017. Throughout the month of March, a series of public feedback sessions were held on the Twin Cities campus and in the community for the members of the Work Group to garner internal and external feedback on the initial draft. Individuals and groups were also invited to submit input and suggestions for revision via an online feedback system.
The Work Group considered this important feedback, and on April 19, 2017, the group produced a revised Public Engagement Action Plan, which was presented to Executive Vice President and Provost Karen Hanson for feedback and commentary.

Based on the feedback provided by Provost Hanson, as well as additional feedback submitted from internal and external stakeholders, the Work Group refined the draft and submitted this final version of the action plan to Associate Vice President Furco on May 10, 2017.

About the Plan

This Public Engagement Action Plan is composed of ten priority themes, each of which articulates a vision to be realized over the next five to ten years through the implementation of a series of action steps. The plan is intentionally internally focused, with an emphasis on addressing policy, infrastructure, and culture issues at the Twin Cities campus. While strengthening the University’s reciprocal engagement and mutually beneficial partnerships with external entities is foundational to all aspects of publicly-engaged work, this plan purposely targets issues within the University that need attention in order to secure the full institutionalization of public engagement at the Twin Cities campus. This plan is intended to intersect with other campus-wide and system-wide strategic plans. The successful operationalization of the plan’s action steps will depend on the full engagement of the campus’s local academic and administrative units in advancing the plan’s overarching goals and objectives.

Values

This Public Engagement Action Plan is built on the following set of core values that promotes the University’s definition of public engagement:

Institutional Mission, Goals, and Identity

- Public engagement advances the University’s research, teaching, and public service missions;
- The public engagement agenda is linked to the University’s various institutional identities, including its identity as a land-grant institution, a public institution, a research university, an institution of higher learning with undergraduate and graduate/professional programs, and an urban-situated campus;
- Public engagement is not a program or set of programs, but rather, it is a strategy that is used and applied to accomplish important institutional priorities (e.g., advance interdisciplinarity, optimize quality teaching, produce research with societal impact, address society’s grand challenges).

Reciprocal Engagement through Sustained Partnerships

- Reciprocity and mutual benefits among all participants are at the center of high-quality public engagement;
- Public engagement work requires the equitable sharing of power, knowledge, and intention between University and community partners;
- High quality public engagement activity is responsive to, rather than prescriptive of, community needs and concerns;
- Public engagement honors diverse forms of knowledge and ways of knowing to inform and advance campus-community partnerships, scholarly work, and educational initiatives; and
- The Public Engagement Action Plan promotes the development of sustainable, multifaceted campus-community partnerships rather than focusing on discrete, time-limited community engagement projects.
A Shared Responsibility

- Advancing the campus’s public engagement agenda is everyone’s responsibility, not just the responsibility of units that support public engagement.

From Local to Global

- The University prioritizes engagement with statewide communities in which the University is embedded, but embraces engagement across all levels, from local to global.

The goals and action steps of the Twin Cities Public Engagement Action Plan are to:

- Empower our students, faculty, staff, and community partners to co-create mutually respectful partnerships in pursuit of a just, equitable, and sustainable future for communities beyond the campus—nearby and around the world;
- Prepare students for lives of engaged citizenship, with the motivation and capacity to deliberate, act, and lead in pursuit of the public good;
- Embrace our responsibilities as place-based institutions, contributing to the health and strength of our communities—economically, socially, environmentally, educationally, and politically;
- Harness the capacity of our campus and University—through research, teaching, partnerships, and institutional practice—to challenge the prevailing social and economic inequalities that threaten our democratic future; and
- Foster an environment that consistently affirms the centrality of the public purposes of higher education by setting high expectations for members of the campus community to contribute to their achievement.

(Adapted from the Campus Compact President’s Declaration)

In addition, in developing this plan, the members of the Public Engagement Work Group recognize and acknowledge the following:

- The Twin Cities Public Engagement Action Plan is imperfect in its development;
- The terms “campus” and “University” are used interchangeably; both refer to the work of the Twin Cities campus;
- To live out this plan fully and effectively, members of the campus and the broader University community must both ascribe to the goals of the plan and actively engage in its implementation;
- The University holds the responsibility to create partnerships that value time and compensate all participants and actors in the work (e.g., reimbursements, accessible meeting locations, etc.); and
- The University knowledge systems are in constant state of evolution, and therefore, the plan must be periodically re-calibrated to align with this evolution.
The Twin Cities Public Engagement Action Plan is composed of ten priority themes. Each theme includes a vision statement, a brief description of the theme’s focus, and set of action steps. The plan focuses on key action steps to be taken over the next five to ten years to fully achieve its status as an engaged campus.
1. Strategic Integration

Issues focused on exploring how public engagement can be a strategy for accomplishing other institutional priorities (e.g., internationalizing the curriculum, strengthening multicultural understanding, enhancing the broader impacts of research, securing high quality teaching, enhancing the educational success of underrepresented students, etc.).

VISION STATEMENT: Public engagement principles and practices are integrated into the campus’s key institutional policies and priorities within and across programs and units.

ACTION STEPS:
- Establish bold and innovative initiatives that strengthen linkages between public engagement and the University’s overarching teaching, research, and outreach efforts;
- Cultivate and strengthen relationships with central administrative units in order to embed public engagement strategies into the University’s core functions;
- Further deepen the use of public engagement as a critical strategy for employing interdisciplinary approaches to addressing society’s grand challenges;
- Develop college-wide action plans that articulate the roles and purposes of public engagement within academic departments in ways that further embed engaged research, teaching, and outreach into the disciplines;
- Identify and refine policies and practices that can pose challenges to University community partnerships, such as hiring practices, contract and payment policies, and access to University resources; and
- Establish a network of peer institutions to communicate with regarding innovative approaches to infusing public engagement into research, teaching, and outreach functions and University operations.

2. Scholarly Value of Engagement

Issues concerning the nexus between community-engaged work and faculty scholarship.

VISION STATEMENT: Public engagement is widely valued as essential to advancing the campus’s scholarly agenda.

ACTION STEPS:
- Establish and operationalize protocols and systems that incorporate a 21st Century public engagement frame into the assessment, review, promotion and reward of student, staff and faculty scholars and researchers;
- Make community engagement an integral component of the grand challenges research and grand challenges curriculum initiatives, and elevate the grand challenges that are being met through existing community-engaged work;
- Inspire academic leaders to, and reward those who, utilize their positions of leadership to recognize and represent the scholarly value of community-engaged research, teaching, and outreach;
- Expand student, staff and faculty development opportunities to enhance capacity to incorporate community engagement into scholarly work;
- Establish clear metrics for measuring the outcomes and scholarly value of community-engaged research, teaching, and service, including elevating the value placed on community input into career advancement decisions;
- Establish mechanisms for engaged scholars to receive peer feedback on their scholarly work;
- Expand mechanisms for academic units to ascertain, support, and reward the role public engagement plays in advancing scholarship in the disciplines;
- Expand opportunities for promotion and tenure committees to strengthen their capacity to assess and review engaged scholarship; and
- Identify a set of societal grand challenges that can be best addressed through community-engaged scholarship, and set into motion a set of initiatives that expand opportunities for engaged scholars to address those grand challenges.
3. Student Experiences and Development

Issues concerning the role of community-engaged work in the educational experiences of students (undergraduate, graduate, and professional).

VISION STATEMENT: All University of Minnesota students participate in and help shape academically-integrated and co-curricular community-engaged learning that prepares them to be active community members, civic participants, professionals, and scholars.

ACTION STEPS:
- Secure funding and support for all students, especially underrepresented students, to have access to high quality and impactful community-engaged learning and co-curricular opportunities;
- Develop a plan of action in each college that defines the role and purposes of public engagement in their context and includes opportunities, learning outcomes, incentives, and other relevant engagement experiences specific to each college and its student population;
- Provide funding to support development for faculty and other instructional staff to ensure that instructors are prepared to deliver and integrate high quality community engagement into their courses;
- Provide adequate funding to departments and offices on campus that facilitate community-engaged opportunities for students, in order to enhance, expand, and strengthen their engagement offerings;
- Provide training that enables academic advisors to guide students to engagement opportunities;
- Develop grand challenges research and co-curricular themes that lead to the formation of campus-community reciprocal collaborations which provide experiential and intercultural learning opportunities for students;
- Integrate expectations and encouragement of community-engaged learning through the recruitment, admissions, and orientation process for new students, using appropriate language and activities;
- Create living-learning communities where community engagement is integrated into the design;
- Strengthen student organizations that promote community engagement activities by providing a dedicated pool of funds to support their community-based activities, and by providing incentives that can secure a University faculty or staff advisor;
- Provide students guidance about the meaning and responsibilities of reciprocal public engagement in both curricular and co-curricular settings; and
- Develop a program that builds the capacity of graduate student advisors to support masters and doctoral students engaged in community-based research or community-based learning experiences.

4. Community Connections

Issues concerning ways to improve how the university partners with external entities, including local communities, international communities, non-profits, business, industries, governmental agencies, educational institutions, etc.

VISION STATEMENT: The campus supports equitable, sustainable, and mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships that are co-created with non-profits, community groups, educational institutions, government agencies, businesses, and industry at local, regional, state, national, and global levels.

ACTION STEPS:
- Ensure the provision of needed resources to enhance reciprocal partnerships, particularly that address community needs (fund community liaison positions, provide small grants, host workshops, etc.);
- Create easily accessible channels between the University and community to facilitate connections;
- Increase access to campus spaces and resources for community partners;
- Increase learning opportunities for faculty, staff, students, and community partners to explore strategies for facilitating high quality reciprocal engagement;
- Expand, support, and promote opportunities for community voices in relevant University policy and decision making; and
- Establish a mechanism for systematically assessing and communicating the impact of public engagement to community partners and stakeholders.
5. Cultivating and Supporting Campus Leaders

Issues focused on how to best support the leaders on campus who have responsibility for advancing and furthering public engagement programming (e.g., directors of engaged-focused centers).

**VISION STATEMENT:** Across all colleges and units, the faculty, students, and staff who lead the advancement of public engagement are supported and celebrated.

**ACTION STEPS:**
- Further the talent pool of high caliber publicly-engaged staff, faculty, and students through job descriptions and admissions criteria;
- Enhance public engagement leaders’ knowledge, competency, and skills for leading public engagement through release time, funding opportunities, and professional development;
- Expand incentives that encourage faculty, staff and students to serve as ambassadors of public engagement in their units;
- Endow rotating chairs for publicly-engaged campus and community leaders to share their expertise and affect cultural change on campus;
- Celebrate publicly-engaged leaders in teaching, learning, and scholarly work through high profile campus-wide events and central campus communications; and
- Reward and retain publicly-engaged faculty, staff and students through awards, incentives, and at promotion, annual review, and/or tenure.

6. Internal Coordination and Collaboration

Finding ways to connect existing work within the campus that has common goals and shared vision as a means to reduce duplication of efforts and to better network similar activities that are working in parallel; finding ways to better coordinate efforts to leverage greater impact.

**VISION STATEMENT:** A collaborative culture draws expertise from across the campus to build alliances that allow public engagement to flourish and to maximize its impact.

**ACTION STEPS:**
- Organize ongoing conversations among units (including administration, departments, performing arts facilities, museums, galleries, libraries, and outreach centers) that explore how to better communicate the broad range of public engagement activity across the campus, and how staff, students, and faculty can learn about and easily participate in engagement opportunities;
- Align the multiple engagement agendas of central campus administrative units to provide a more coordinated approach to supporting publicly-engaged research, teaching, and outreach efforts across academic and academic-support units;
- Coordinate and align the accessible ports of entry to the campus, in ways that fit the needs of diverse potential partners and stakeholders;
- Explore creative models for sharing staff-related resources and best practices across campus units;
- Maximize support for public engagement staff positions across units to optimize their work with faculty on publicly-engaged scholarship efforts;
- Coordinate curriculum development across the campus that builds academic units’ capacity to include public engagement learning outcomes in courses; and
- Redesign administrative support of public engagement among colleges, centers and schools in ways that promotes efficiency, cross-college communication, and high-quality service.
Visiblity and Value

Issues concerning ways to better showcase and bring attention to the range and scope of the University’s public engagement work.

VISION STATEMENT: Stakeholders (e.g., students, faculty, staff, community members, legislators) of the University of Minnesota value and laud the public engagement that strengthens our teaching, research, and service.

ACTION STEPS:
- Align the University’s communication strategies and practices with the institution’s public engagement values (e.g., highlighting community partners’ contributions to University research);
- Expand opportunities (workshops, colloquia, etc.) that support communications staff’s capacity to bring visibility to the campus’s publicly-engaged research, teaching, and outreach efforts;
- Support University staff, students, faculty, and community partners’ involvement and participation in prominent local, national and international conferences to present and showcase their public engagement efforts;
- Bring greater attention to the subtexts of messages concerning the University’s engagement, and the implications of these subtexts on different audiences’ perceptions of the University public engagement agenda;
- Support University staff, students, faculty, and community partners’ involvement and participation in publicly sharing their experiences in a variety of mediums and online platforms (e.g., podcasts, blog posts, op-ed, peer reviewed journals, magazines, interviews, zines, art and performance, social media campaigns);
- Engage all stakeholders in sharing and spotlighting the impacts of the partnership;
- Leverage existing University presence across the state to raise visibility and showcase value of public engagement;
- Include relevant information about the University’s commitment to public engagement in the recruitment and orientation efforts for students, faculty, and staff;
- Create, in collaboration with our community partners, a symbolic, physical representation that honors the vision of community engagement at the Twin Cities campus; and
- Ensure that messages about the University’s public engagement efforts incorporate media and language that are accessible to the intended audiences.

Accounting and Assessment

Issues concerning ways to systematically measure the scale, scope, and impact of the campus’s public engagement work.

VISION STATEMENT: A campus-wide framework accounts for and assesses the impact of public engagement on students, faculty, communities, and the institution.

ACTION STEPS:
- Identify and cultivate opportunities for public engagement data sharing practices that establish mechanisms for tracking and recording campus-wide engagement activities;
- Create a publicly-accessible tool that documents on-going community engagement partnerships;
- Embed engagement questions into existing data collection processes through collaboration with the campus’s central administration;
- Establish a system to elicit ongoing feedback from communities on the campus’s initiatives, policies, and other matters in which they have a strong stake or interest;
- Annually compile and analyze data from existing sources to document the scale and impact of the campus’s public engagement work, including a partnership map;
- Establish a process to identify and catalogue public engagement best practices; and
- Create a plan to annually assess overall progress of the campus’s Public Engagement Action Plan and disseminate results to stakeholders.
9. Leveraging Extramural Resources

Issues focused on ways to secure and leverage extramural funding, resources, and other support for community-engaged efforts.

VVISION STATEMENT: The campus has proactive, coordinated leadership and aligned resources that advance bold initiatives that inspire funders and enhance campus capacity to support public engagement.

ACTION STEPS:

• Create a Public Engagement section of the landing page of the University website to communicate, among other things, funding opportunities for community engagement across disciplines and units, including opportunities for both academic and community members;
• Hold frequent, periodic forums that convene internal and external partners in exploring and identifying funding options that support mutually beneficial community engagement partnerships;
• Create and sustain student, staff and faculty development programs designed to increase their capacity to attract external funding for their engagement work;
• Create a repository of resources and technical assistance that the public, students, staff and faculty can access and utilize to make the case to funders about the public value of engaged work;
• Secure funding, including donors and endowment initiatives, that seed and support the development of publicly-engaged initiatives; and
• Establish mechanisms to highlight the compelling stories of public engagement that inspire funders.

10. Local, National, and International Networking

Issues concerning ways that the University can be more fully engaged in [local, regional] national and international networks that provide the advancement of public engagement in higher education.

VVISION STATEMENT: Connections to the engagement field are broad and deep.

ACTION STEPS:

• Identify and coordinate available local, national, and international opportunities that recognize individual and institutional community engagement activities (e.g. awards);
• Encourage, support, and promote involvement in local, regional, national and international engagement networks and conferences (e.g. from travel grants to collaborating with other institutions);
• Encourage and support community-engaged staff, students, and partners (e.g. writing community) to disseminate their engagement work through publications and other dissemination venues (e.g. conference presentations, keynotes, etc.);
• Create a community of practice that focuses on increasing knowledge production and broadening the dissemination of best practices on community engagement;
• Encourage and support leading scholars at the University to serve on the editorial boards of leading national and international journals focused on engagement; and
• Advocate at the national level for the integration of public engagement into program accreditation requirements.
APPENDIX A
Public Engagement Action Plan Work Group

MEMBER LIST

1. ROBERT BLAIR, Professor, Fisheries, Wildlife and Conservation Biology
2. KAREN BROWN, Senior Lecturer and Director, Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Global Change
3. MARILYN BRUIN, Professor, Design, Housing, and Apparel
4. AMBER CAMERON, Associate Director, Office for Public Engagement
5. QUINN CARR, Graduate Student, Humphrey School of Public Affairs
6. BIANET CASTELLANOS, Associate Professor, American Studies
7. ANANYA CHATTERJEA, Professor, Theatre Arts and Dance
8. LAURA DAMMER-HESS, Assistant Director, Center for Community-Engaged Learning
9. COLLEEN McDONALD DIOUF, Chief Operating Officer, Community-University Health Care Center
10. YINGLING FAN, Associate Professor, Urban and Regional Planning
11. ADAM FISCHER, Director, Corporate Foundation Relations, University of Minnesota Foundation
12. PRISCILLA FLYNN, Assistant Professor, Primary Care Dentistry
13. MIKE GRECO, Director, Resilient Communities Project
14. JENNIFER HAWKINS, Program Director, Carlson Global Institute
15. DEB HENDRICKS, Assistant Director, Community-engaged Research Programs
16. KRISTINE IGO, Associate Director, Healthy Foods-Healthy Lives Institute
17. DEBORAH JANE, Outreach Coordinator, Institute for Global Studies
18. CATHERINE JORDAN, Associate Professor, Pediatrics
19. TOMMY KELLER, Undergraduate Student, Mathematics
20. LISA KIHL, Associate Professor, Kinesiology
21. SONJA KUFTINEC, Professor, Theatre Arts and Dance
22. GREG LINDSEY, Professor, Urban and Regional Planning
23. TAMMY McCULLOCH, Regional Director, Extension
24. BRIANNA MENNING, Associate Program Director, Institute for Advanced Study
25. KRISTINE MILLER, Professor, Landscape Architecture
26. KATIE PEACOCK, Assistant Director, Center for Community-Engaged Learning
27. CHRISTINE ROHOLT, Leadership Minor Manager, Office for Student Affairs
28. ROSS ROHOLT, Associate Professor, Social Work
29. SHEREEN SABET, Assistant to the Director, Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Global Change
30. VIRAJITA SINGH, Assistant Vice Provost, Office of Equity and Diversity
31. TODD SORENSEN, Professor, Pharmaceutical Care and Health Systems
32. SHERI STRONACH, Assistant Professor, Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences
33. JULIE SWEITZER, Executive Director, College Readiness Consortium
34. VAUGHN VOLLE, Professor, Civil, Environmental, and Geo-Engineering
35. DAVID WEERTS, Associate Professor, Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development
36. GEORGE WEIBLEN, Professor, Plant Biology
37. AMELIOUS WHYTE, Director for Public Engagement, College of Liberal Arts
38. PAMELA WILSON, Assistant to Department Head, Mechanical Engineering