Timing right to restore prominence, quality of ‘U’ as state’s research flagship

By Ron Wirtz

Nation’s Top Five Public Research Universities, the League recommends a number of strategies for the University to achieve greater quality in its research and advanced degree programs. The report was prepared by a committee of 30 League volunteers cochaired by former League president Carl “Buzz” Cummins, vice president and general counsel of the Workers Compensation Reinsurance Association, and current League board member Jane Vanderpoel, a research consultant with the Minnesota House of Representatives.

The need for high quality in research and advanced degree programs at the University is clear: In a rapidly accelerating global and information-based economy, the state’s ability to remain prosperous depends on high-skill workers, new technology and continual innovation. Research and advanced degree programs at the University’s Twin Cities campus provide much of this capacity. Yet, ironically, they ought to keep their brains in high gear and their sights forward.

Instead, the region should be thinking creatively. All the transportation players ought to be challenged to figure out how to plan, design, cost out and test services that will serve potential customers while meeting transportation policy goals. The region should be making commitments now to put together all of the potential customers while meeting transportation policy goals. The region should be making commitments now to put together all of the

Make Hiawatha corridor pathbreaking example of efficient, attractive transit

By Lyle Wruy

The possibility of turning the Hiawatha Avenue corridor between downtown Minneapolis and the airport into a dedicated transitway offers the Twin Cities area an opportunity to work smarter on our transportation needs.

The proposal for Hiawatha as it now stands would be to acquire land, improve the corridor for use by light-rail transit (LRT) later on. Hennepin County—wearing its “Rail Authority” hat—is advocat-
Invest now in state's human capital for future success

Today's globalization and knowledge-based economy is demanding major departures from "business as usual"—not only from businesses but from education institutions and government as well. New challenges in this massive economic transformation is percutting through the public institutions—like those—on a significant labor and skills shortage. Between 1970 and 1980, 70 percent of the learning workforce was added to Minnesota's workforce; between 1980 and 1990, 46,000 new workers will be added.

Add up these trends and the bottom line is that Minnesota's success in the future depends on the brains, productivity and creativity of the people we do have. We've had the Advisory Council on Minnesota's Economic Future, created by the 1997 Legis- lature partly at the urging of the Citizens League, that said invest its time in outlining a human capital strategy. Where to start?

Take a broad view of a statewide strategy for the economy. There should be a clear, state-level vision to guide appropriations, bonding bills and tax policy. State policy- makers should not only give the sector’s leaders the "pick’-n-choose” and local officials the idea that the health of the entire public ecosystem depends on them. That at least a major reason why the University needed a new president and research director in the first place.

Strong research and development and technology transfer activities at the University of Minnesota are, in fact, what its newly released report The Citizens League (see article on page one) recommends seeks to build on the University's efforts in technology transfer and to boost research in critical areas, Building faculty strength, increasing funding for research and adding more grad- uate student fellowships are some of the steps that will pay dividends over the long term.

Atract top talent. A constant infla- tion of leading-edge thinkers with cosmopolitan perspectives is one of the conditions that foster excellence, innovation and international- ism. Minnesota must have a place that attracts the most talented, provincial and national and long-term and short-term faculty from Minnesota and throughout the United States and Abroad. And bright, academically talented, westerners, from all walks of life, can grow up in the Twin Cities should have a reason to want to stay here.

Viewpoint

by Lyle Wray

Yudof wants "U" control of proposed research entity

From a statement by University of Minnesota President Mark Yudof: It outlines new research priorities for the "U," digit

nomous Development is already doing. It makes little sense to pro- vide public subsidies—either directly through investments, expansion or relocation for loss— wage jobs that will have businesses that have

It does make sense to focus also on encouraging export-related busi- ness. Exposure to foreign competi- tors will increase and the winners will be those who are associated with many other benefits; pay levels are from five points lower than the average in nonexporting companies, produc- tivity is up to 20 percent higher and firms have to be innovation-driven. Akey step in the environment of technology

Step two: the use of technology for on-the-job training and continuing education. A consortium of technology training and education institutions is already building a "virtual university." That's a welcome development. Being able to respond to changing skill needs with timely and convenient technology training systems will give Minnesota a competitive advantage.

Focus economic development: higher value-added and export- related jobs. As the labor shortage intensifies, jobs and local communities must focus on the economic development activities in high-wage jobs, as the state's Department of Training and Eco- nomics Development is already doing. It makes little sense to pro- vide public subsidies—either directly through investments, expansion or relocation for loss— wage jobs that will have businesses that have

On Balance

By Lyle Wray

Return purse strings to SCU board, editors urge

Star Tribune (Dec. 17) suggested the University of Minnesota’s School of Education should get "the full power of the purse" to the Min- nesota State Universities and University of Minnesota, while legislators dictated, for the state's to-do list. (Dec. 15) 26 concern over whether the Asian economic troubles could affect Minnesota's "U" technology. New Tribune (Dec. 31) the fact that four new members to the board of Education and re- publicans "should follow the govern- or's lead and go slow on any plans for a new college that was lost before it's ever opened." St. Cloud Times (Jan. 2) the Governor and Legislature should "exercise restraint in using the large surpluses from a boom in the state's” public affairs organization, said improvements and must be open to out working poor

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On page 7

Unemployment remains high, as positive outlook for the future

U of M

Continued from page 7

On page 7

Yudof wants 'U' control of proposed research entity
Job of journalism should not be to lead, but to inform

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providing transit services. The only argument we have is that their transit service is very effective for the people that use it. (Fredrickson, 2009)

Hiawatha

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elements necessary to make the Hiawatha corridor successful is that the city of Minneapolis is in favor of funding for a Twin cities

Hiawatha

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people around the region, efficiently and at reasonable cost.

Not a stand-alone route

The Hiawatha corridor connects downtown Minneapolis and the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP), two of the Twin Cities’ major job and visitor locations.

However, together these two destinations account for fewer than 15 percent of the total job trips in this corridor. In contrast, the destinations probably account for fewer than one-fifth of those of typical transit region’s job trips.

The Hiawatha corridor, then, shouldn’t be viewed as a stand-alone route, but should be expected to contribute to meet the transportation needs of its surrounding area.

To do this, the transitway must meet two challenges. First, it must

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Hiawatha

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provide transit services not only to ‘core and workers in downtown Minneapolis, but also for many work trips destined to other nearby locations. The Hiawatha line enjoys a very high rate of ridership, but there is no concentration of jobs. In Dakota County, along highways 55 and 110, small buses, vans or larger carpools might start from individual companies or firms instead of at multiple points at a transitway stop.

Hiawatha

Continued from page 1

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Leadership

Continued from page 1

im-making authority are all over the place and the rules below a
president is to get everyone moving in the same direction," said Robert
Vanueske, legislative consultant and former Minnesotta House Speaker.

The relationship between Universi-
ty administration and faculty is a
unique one," Vanueske said. In a pri-

Based on the text, the key points are:
1. Vanueske's observation about the unique relationship between University administration and faculty.
2. Charles Denny's emphasis on the importance of embracing change and new ideas.
3. The challenge of balancing tradition and progress in university administration.

Denny Banne, executive director of the U of M's CFTC, said the University of
Minnnesota is a model for public and private business, where there is a need for
change and new ideas. He noted the University has a unique culture of excellence,
based on the value of new ideas.

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Timing right to restore prominence, quality of ‘U’ as state’s research flagship

With an energetic and visionary new president in Mark Yudof, the University of Minnesota appears primed for greater excellence. In a new report released this month the Citizens League urges the Legislature, business community and the University itself to support Yudof’s agenda and take steps to improve the quality of the University’s research and advanced degree programs.

In the report, A Competitive Place in the Quality Race: Putting the University of Minnesota in the Nation’s Top Five Public Research Universities, the League recommends a number of strategies for the University to achieve greater quality in its research and advanced degree programs. The report was prepared by a committee of 30 League volunteers cochaired by former League president Carl “Buzz” Cummins, vice president and general counsel of the Workers Compensation Reinsurance Association, and current League board member Jane Vanderpoel, a research consultant with the Minnesota House of Representatives.

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The proposal for Hiawatha as it now stands would be to acquire airport shuttles and taxis, while reserving the option to develop light-rail transit (LRT) later on. Hennepin County—wearing its “Rail Authority” hat—is advocating for developing an LRT line in this corridor immediately, however.

No doubt about it, railroads defined the 19th century. The Upper Midwest map looks the way it does because of the transcontinental rail network, which developed between 1870 and 1880. In the 20th century, the car has been king, to our everlasting joy and dismay. As Twin Citians contemplate the solutions to their mobility and access requirements in the new millennia-

Shepherding ‘U’ offers challenges to public leaders

The University of Minnesota is an enormous public asset in the life of the Twin Cities and the state as a whole.

But the trials involved in leading the “U” reflect in microcosm—albeit a very large microcosm—many of the challenges public leaders from all sectors—government, business, communities and the University itself—confront while shepherding the University for the benefit of the state.

‘It’s so big’

“The single biggest challenge the ‘U’ faces is its size,” according to Carlos Mariani, executive director of the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership Project and a DFL state representative from St. Paul. “It’s so big, and people feel it as big,” he said. Added to the mammoth size of the organization—it’s as big as many metro suburbs—is its long-standing tradition of decentralized management. Budgeting and decision-making now stands would be to acquire light-rail transit (LRT) later on. Hennepin County—wearing its “Rail Authority” hat—is advocating for developing an LRT line in this corridor immediately, however.

No doubt about it, railroads defined the 19th century. The Upper Midwest map looks the way it does because of the transcontinental rail network, which developed between 1870 and 1880. In the 20th century, the car has been king, to our everlasting joy and dismay. As Twin Citians contemplate the solutions to their mobility and access requirements in the new millennium, they ought to keep their brains in high gear and their sights forward. Focusing on either rail or the drive-alone automobile is looking backward.

Instead, the region should be thinking creatively. All the transportation players ought to be challenged to figure out how to plan, design, cost out and test services that will serve potential customers while meeting transportation policy goals. The region should be making commitments now to put together all of the necessary building blocks to ensure that the corridor is ready for light-rail service when the time is right.

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Welcome
New and Returning Members

Terry L. Bock
Eric Black
Cindy Carlsson
Marcia Droeger
John F. Finn
John L. Hannaford
Rick Hanson
Georgia L. Haug
Coral S. Houle
Barry A. Kelner
Lawrence King
Susan King
Katherine Lehmann
Walter Lehmann
Al McFarlane
James Pagliarini
Margaret Preska
Marge Schwab
Darryl Sedio
Zona Sharp-Burk
Sylvia Strobel

Thank you recruiters:
Ernest Lehmann, Shef Lang

Work begins on leadership response to labor shortage

Committee chairs and staff are busy preparing for the next League study, which will explore the question: How should Minnesota's public leadership—which includes the government, business and civic sectors—address the problem of Minnesota's labor shortage?

Co-chairs Gary Cunningham and Steve Keefe are in the midst of a rigorous schedule of 14 meetings with key leaders from government, business and the non-profit sector. Information from these briefings will help chairs and staff to frame the research questions and design a study process based on the feedback from important leadership groups.

The new study will begin with a series of Mind-Opener-type forums. While committee members will be recruited and selected prior to this series, the forums will be open to the public. Following the initial testimony stage, the committee will also conduct roundtable interviews with constituencies—such as employers and educators—who have a stake in the labor shortage problem.

And for the first time, the Citizens League will involve teen leaders in the study process. The League has formed a partnership with the Downtown Minneapolis YMCA to involve 5 to 12 teen leaders in the study sessions. The youth will also be responsible for developing a plan for increasing awareness in the youth community of the opportunity a labor shortage represents. Makeda Zulu-Gillespie, director of community programs at the Downtown YMCA, will coordinate the teen project.

Minnesota's vigorous economy and demographic pressures are both contributing to a shortage of workers. Minnesota's labor market is shifting in favor of jobs that require advanced education and skills, so there is not simply a shortage of potential workers, but a mismatch between the skills of potential workers and the skill requirements of the jobs available.

A shortage of workers might not appear to be a problem, but a prolonged labor shortage can result in inflation, slower economic growth, inefficiency, and the departure of local businesses. There can be social repercussions, too—for example, if employers import high-skill workers at the same time large numbers of lower-skill, inner-city residents are unable to find jobs.

The League study will explore the range of policy options for responding to a labor shortage and will outline the challenges for public leadership on the problem. Applications to serve on the committee will be mailed soon.

U of M report captures media attention

The Citizens League released its latest report, A Competitive Place in the Quality Race: Putting the University of Minnesota in the Nation's Top Five Public Research Universities, on January 7 at a packed press conference in St. Paul. (See the accompanying Journal story.) Handling the work for the League were Committee Co-chairs Buzz Cummins and Jane Vanderpoel and League President Mary Anderson. Committee members Jack Evert, Linda Ewen and Marvin Marshak and League Executive Director Lyle Wray and staff member Ron Wirtz also assisted.

The report garnered a great deal of attention. Both the Star Tribune and the Pioneer Press ran prominent stories—it was the front page lead story in the Pioneer Press. Both papers also ran an editorial on the report. The Minnesota Daily also covered the report.

Lyle Wray was a guest with University President Mark Yudof on KTCA-Ch. 2's NewsNight. Committee co-chair Buzz Cummins and committee member John Adams joined host Gary Eichton on MPR's Midday and Cummins was also on a call-in show on WMNN.

In addition, WCCO-radio's Eric Eskola featured the report on the "good neighbor's" 9:00 a.m. news show. And television stations KARE-Ch. 11 and KSTP-Ch. 5 covered the report on their six o'clock news programs.
December 18, 1997

Dear Lyle:

Not that I needed your timely letter about year-end contributions to the Citizens League to remind me of the League's contribution to the community.

No, your letter prompted me to do some personal reflection on some of those contributions, specifically the father and daughter I came to know at early-Tuesday Citizens League breakfasts in the basement of Central Lutheran Church.

As I recall I began visiting with the daughter, first, as she looked about for her father, who very shortly appeared, all smiles, as she was. It seems that they were both professional people with time constraints that threatened to restrict their times together. As a remedy they had decided to meet for these breakfasts—to visit a bit, to keep up with lively community topics, and share this early morning meal with each other. And, with me, as it happened.

Over the years, I greeted the father at other mind-opener breakfasts, and learned that all was well with each of them. Always a friendly smile—the kind of welcome I have come to treasure in these Citizens League breakfasts—that nourishes one's soul in necessary ways.

It was not until last month when I read about the passing of "esteemed cardiologist Frank E. Johnson" that I realized that this is the father who came to breakfast with his daughter, Katherine Johnson, "a psychologist," who greeted me with a friendly smile, through the years.

So my 1997 year-end contribution is in memory of Dr. Johnson, humanitarian and Citizens League member, who continued to help others in ways of living and service which may have escaped more official notation. And in this memorial, I salute the Citizens League for continuing to provide space and time for people to gather, to learn and to smile together.

Sincerely,

Lots of mail and correspondence crosses our desk each day. But from time to time a few pieces really hit home and remind us of the wonderful collection of people who make up the Citizens League. The letter at left (the author prefers to be anonymous) is testament to that. And the email note highlights the fine volunteer work of Diane Gibson.

We're fond of saying that the League is only as good as its members. Well by that standard the League can't get much better.

With increasing frequency, people across the country are running into the League through our web site. We owe a great debt of gratitude to League member Diane Gibson for her care and feeding of our web page. Diane was the driving force behind the creation of the page a couple of years ago and has volunteered considerable time since then to keep it updated.

During the release of the University study, many media outlets and other interested parties wondered if the report was on our site. Diane worked through the night of the report's release to ensure that it was on the site the day the newspapers covered the story.

The following email is just one of many we have received lately.

After learning about the Citizens League in your web site, I am very impressed! If I lived in Minnesota, I'd jump at the chance to join.

Do you have any idea whether similar organizations exist in Chicago? I would like to get involved at this level but have never been aware of any group that takes the same approach.

The writer discovered that no such similar organization exists in Chicago. But he was so impressed with the League that he joined anyway—despite living in Chicago.

Visit our web site soon—http://freenetmsp.mn.us/ip/pol/citizen and look for more changes and features in the months to come. And make sure that while you're perusing the League's web page you say a hearty thank you to Diane Gibson for all of her hard work on the League's behalf.