



**Access to Success**

**Report of the Citizens Advisory Commission  
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities  
April 2002**



**Access to Success**

## A MESSAGE TO THE CHANCELLOR

For the past six months, we have been privileged to serve as co-chairs of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Citizens Advisory Commission, charged with advising Chancellor James H. McCormick on strategic directions for the future of public higher education in the state. Our 31 distinguished commission members and we have spent many hours listening to public testimony and learning about the critical issues facing public higher education and these 34 state colleges and universities.

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system is the real workhorse of Minnesota's economy. The colleges and universities provide geographical access throughout the state and financial access through relatively low tuition. They are the natural entry points for first-generation college students and first-generation Americans. And, they provide critical training for employees already in the workforce.

While this report outlines our findings and recommendations in detail, three things stand out in our minds:

- **We are in the midst of an undeniable demographic revolution in the state of Minnesota.** Minnesota's tradition of openness and accessibility to higher education opportunity must be maintained for all citizens, but particularly for new immigrants and first-generation college students who come from diverse backgrounds.
- **We are in the midst of an information revolution.** Large disruptions in the work cycle require constant retraining as traditional job skills are outstripped by market-driven skills. Education is no longer a formal period that ends at age 25. It is clearly true today that individuals will need to be educated throughout their lives.
- **We are in the middle of a very specific e-learning technological revolution.** It is a powerful, evolving technology that has phenomenal potential, but it is not for every purpose. Traditional classroom instruction also is powerful, with its peer group emphasis, its Socratic approach and its ability to impart normative values, none of which can be replaced in an e-learning environment. Thus, our recommendations are appropriately moderate in the discussion of e-learning.

As members of an advisory commission, we understand that this report is only the first step. We have tried to recognize the challenges ahead and to give our best advice on how to meet them. It is our hope that this advice will lead to bold initiatives, and we wish Chancellor McCormick well as he and the Board of Trustees adopt a new strategic plan to guide the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities in the years ahead.

**Vance Opperman and Glen Taylor**  
**Co-Chairs, Citizens Advisory Commission**



**Vance Opperman**



**Glen Taylor**

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**Meeting Dates:**  
September 21, 2001  
October 19, 2001  
November 30, 2001  
December 21, 2001  
January 18, 2002  
February 22, 2002

**Public Forums:**  
September 27, 2001, Grand Rapids  
October 9, 2001, Bloomington  
October 30, 2001, Marshall

## SUMMARY: COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Citizens Advisory Commission makes 11 recommendations to the chancellor addressing access, workforce and economic development, information technology, metro area academic planning and accountability.

### CHANCELLOR'S CHARGE TO THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION

The Citizens Advisory Commission of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities is charged to advise the chancellor on behalf of the Board of Trustees on strategic directions for the future of public higher education in the state and to:

**DETERMINE** the most critical strategic choices facing public higher education and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities;

**EXAMINE** the issues facing the state and their impact on higher education opportunities for Minnesotans at the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, including, but not limited to, quality, accessibility, affordability, economic development and citizenship; and

**RECOMMEND** what role the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities should play in enhancing the state's economic vitality, quality of life and the development of the workforce.

#### Access: The Heart of the System's Mission

1. Increase the enrollment, retention and graduation rates of all students, especially students of color.
2. Make sure that transfer works the way it should.
3. Maintain the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system as the most affordable higher education option in Minnesota.
4. Maximize the way the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities efficiently and effectively use on- and off-campus facilities and technology to serve students where they live and work.

#### Workforce and Economic Development: A Key Role

5. Make sure programs and services are meeting the learning needs of workers and employers, especially in occupations experiencing critical worker shortages such as teaching and health care.

#### Information Technology: A New Way to Do Business

6. Lead a systemwide information technology initiative that coordinates the development and implementation of online courses, programs and services as well as related faculty, staff and curriculum development.
7. Evaluate the return on investment of online learning programs and services to ensure they are serving the targeted learner segments and identified market needs.

#### Metro Area Academic Planning: Coordinated Higher Education in the Twin Cities

8. Work with the University of Minnesota to meet the current and future learning needs of students and the civic, economic development and workplace needs of the rapidly changing Twin Cities metropolitan area, including the Rochester to St. Cloud corridor.
9. Seriously consider consolidating Minneapolis Community and Technical College and Metropolitan State University under a single administrative structure.
10. Determine if other institutions in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, including the Rochester to St. Cloud corridor, should consolidate, either in clusters or as a whole.

#### Accountability: A Public Responsibility

11. Develop and implement an accountability system that provides information about student success and measures efficiency, effectiveness and improvement at the system, institutional and program levels.

## **ACCESS TO SUCCESS: REPORT TO THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

### **Public Education Is Minnesota's Success Story**

Minnesota's leaders and residents historically have invested in public education as a primary strategy to keep the state vital. Investing in public higher education has paid the state back many times by enhancing people's quality of life, increasing their earning capability, building vital communities and creating a strong economy. Minnesota's policymakers, leaders and citizens must decide if providing public support for higher education is equally important to the state's future.

Simply stated, Minnesota cannot maintain and improve its standard of living without a high-quality, accessible and affordable system of public higher education. Minnesota can choose a future in which a few privileged people have access to higher education, or it can create a future in which everyone shares and spreads the benefits of higher education.

The Citizens Advisory Commission of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities reaffirms public higher education as foundational to the future success of Minnesota. Public higher education provides people with a pathway to achieve their own goals and dreams so they can keep the state's communities and economies strong and flexible. This higher education system must constantly reinvent itself to take advantage of the latest knowledge, information and technology to serve Minnesotans and their communities throughout the state.

### **Demographic Changes Require New Approaches**

Minnesota faces demographic changes that require a new definition or access to post-secondary education. The Twin Cities metropolitan area had one of the fastest-growing immigrant populations in the United States during the past decade. This, along with other factors, contributed to the strong and growing diversity of the Twin Cities. In addition, many of the state's rural communities are experiencing substantial growth in their minority populations. These new Minnesotans need an opportunity to learn and grow to build Minnesota's communities and workforce.

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system is uniquely positioned to help the people of the state meet these challenges.

The system's open-door admissions policies, geographic accessibility and financial affordability provide widespread higher education opportunities for thousands of Minnesotans from all walks of life. Many are the first in their families to attend college. Some are traditional students age 18 to 24, while others are going back at an older age to continue their education. These students all are motivated to improve themselves and, in doing so, will make Minnesota a better place to live and work.

### **Minnesota Faces Economic Challenges**

Minnesota competes in a global economy experiencing swift and unpredictable informational and technological changes. Those local and state economies that are strong, diversified and flexible will have the chance to grow and thrive. Creating these kinds of local and state economies requires skilled workers in all levels and types of occupations. A high-quality, accessible and visible system of public higher education such as the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities provides workers with the chance to develop the latest knowledge, skills and abilities in fields ranging from auto mechanics to sociology to information technology.

### **Making a Strong System Better**

The commission recognizes that the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities have the community connections and experience to help students from all walks of life achieve their personal and career goals. The system produces about 25,000 graduates every year with more than 500,000 system graduates currently working in Minnesota. The state colleges and universities produce 50 percent of all new computer information professionals, 50 percent of all new teachers, 80 percent of all new nurses and 90 percent of all new law enforcement officers.

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities have served Minnesota well in the past. However, Minnesota faces a different future that requires more from its largest system of public higher education. The state needs a higher education system that reaches out and invites a wider variety of people to participate and achieve. Minnesotans want to learn using the latest technology, information and teaching methods. They want to keep campuses easy to reach while maintaining quality and affordability. Minnesotans expect a chance to reach their hopes and dreams through the learning and growth offered by a college education. They deserve nothing less than a high-quality, accessible and affordable system of public higher education. The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities must strive to be that system.

*Minnesota can choose a future in which a few privileged people have access to higher education, or it can create a future in which everyone shares and spreads the benefits of higher education.*



**Students succeed: Melanie Benjamin**

*Melanie Benjamin graduated from Bemidji State University in 1988 with a degree in business administration. She was elected in June 2001 as the chief executive of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, the equivalent of tribal chairperson.*

*Benjamin, who started school at Bemidji State at age 27, sees education as central to her agenda as chief executive of the tribe.*

*"One of my top goals is to give our members a voice," she said. "Power is found in knowledge, being educated to understand why we do the things the way we do. We need our people to help us govern in whatever manner that may be."*

*Benjamin's road to governance began after college graduation. She was working in business development for the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe when she was asked in 1989 to be the commissioner of administration for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. An appointed position, the commissioner acts as the tribal government's chief of staff and assumes responsibility for daily operations of tribal government. While commissioner, Benjamin accepted a special assignment to serve as a senior vice president at Grand Casino Hinckley, supervising the casino's finance, security and human resource departments for one year. She held the commissioner position until 1997.*

*Benjamin is a member of the Bemidji State University alumni board of directors and on the board for Woodlands National Bank. She was twice elected secretary for the National Indian Gaming Association and twice elected treasurer of the Minnesota Indian Gaming Association.*

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Access: The Heart of the System's Mission**

**1. Increase the enrollment, retention and graduation rates of all students in the system, especially students of color.**

The Citizens Advisory Commission sees access as central to the mission and role of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.

All Minnesotans need to be invited to share in the benefits of higher education. This is particularly important in an economy that places premiums on knowledge, skills and abilities. The educated will thrive while the uneducated will struggle to survive. Enrolling students is just the first step in helping them achieve success. Students need high-quality programs and services that encourage them to keep pursuing their education until they complete their program or reach graduation. This will help to ensure that students leave the colleges and universities with the breadth and depth of knowledge, skills and abilities they need to succeed.

Minnesota is a diverse state and will continue to become increasingly diverse. This is evident in the Twin Cities as well in Willmar and Worthington and other smaller cities. People of color in Minnesota also represent a much wider range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds than they have in the past. This is partly due to strong immigration into Minnesota over the last 10 years. Moving beyond ethnic categories, the system also should define diversity as including students with disabilities and first-generation college students. As a public system with a mission to serve a wide variety of Minnesotans, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities must work to ensure that institutions are inviting and respectful to people from all walks of life. No person who can benefit from higher education should be denied the opportunity to try.

**2. Make sure that transfer works the way it should.**

Thousands of students transfer each year between institutions – from two-year colleges to four-year universities and vice versa – to accomplish their educational goals in an affordable and geographically convenient manner. Transfer processes between colleges receive much attention because students are increasingly mobile and tend to interrupt their education more frequently. Transfer is a key academic access strategy for the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities because it offers students the ability to move among institutions and apply their completed credits to the degrees, certificates and diplomas they are pursuing. Students should not have to buy the same credits twice or be forced to delay graduation because they changed institutions within the system. The process to transfer credits should be clear and easy to accomplish.

In the overwhelming majority of cases, transfer works smoothly for students and institutions. However, transfer needs to work smoothly all the time so students can focus on learning, not on making their way through confusing administrative processes. While smooth transfer is important, the commission understands that the system must ensure the quality and viability of its programs and degrees. This requires making it clear to students the types of courses that will transfer to other programs and degrees and the types that will not.



### Students succeed: Jim Benedict

*Jim Benedict earned a chemistry degree at Minnesota State University Moorhead in 1966. He was a starting center on the Dragon football team all four years. While a senior research chemist for Procter & Gamble, Benedict invented the chemical formulation for Actonel, one of the nation's leading drugs in combating the debilitating effects of osteoporosis.*

*Benedict left Procter & Gamble 16 years ago to work in a small Denver-based biotech start-up company. This firm is now monitoring human trials of their bone growth material in Europe, mostly on patients undergoing spinal fusions. Called Ne-Osteo, it is a molecular cocktail of proteins that uses naturally occurring bone morphogenic proteins that are extracted from cow bones and then purified. The result is a chemical that signals bone cells to regenerate. These proteins also have the potential to help regenerate blood vessels and blocked arteries following heart attacks and to help in dental and cartilage repair.*

*With more than 30 years of methodical laboratory research under his belt, Benedict is beginning to take a different approach to the rest of his career. Now he is seriously thinking about teaching high school.*

*"Once I feel that my work here is done, I'd like to infect young people with the same enthusiasm I have for chemistry," he said. "So much of the modern world relies on and can be explained by chemistry that I think many more of us need to learn about it. I'd like to contribute to that effort."*

*He has been named a Distinguished Alumnus from Minnesota State University Moorhead.*

### 3. Maintain the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system as the most affordable higher education option in Minnesota.

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities provide the most affordable higher education in Minnesota. This affordability is crucial to keeping the system accessible to Minnesotans from all walks of life. Many students who have the ability to succeed would never apply to college if they thought it was too expensive. This would result in wasted human potential.

The commission understands that Minnesota is experiencing serious shortfalls in the state budget, forcing the Legislature and governor to make difficult funding decisions. As a result, state funding for higher education is less reliable than it has been in the past. Also, taxpayers and policymakers increasingly expect public institutions to do more with less funding. This requires public colleges and universities to be more creative about how they fund their operations so they can control costs for students.

One way to increase system revenues is through partnerships with private, non-profit and public organizations that share the goals of public higher education. The system can help these organizations meet their goals while gaining resources to hold down student costs. For example, foundations trying to promote community development might provide tuition support for students who live in their communities. Employers looking for workers with particular skills might be willing to support facilities and programs to train these workers. This will strengthen support for the colleges and universities while helping them to fulfill their public service missions.

### 4. Maximize the way the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities efficiently and effectively use on- and off-campus facilities and technology to serve students where they live and work.

It costs the system a lot of money to manage its 23.8 million square feet of space on 53 campuses in 46 communities throughout Minnesota. In order to be a careful steward of public funds now and in the future, the system has a responsibility to fully utilize its existing space while mitigating future obligations by not building new space that may not be needed over the long term. One way this can be accomplished is by building flexible space that can be used for a variety of instructional and institutional management purposes. This will allow institutions to adapt to changing programs and curricular needs while mitigating long-term costs.

The system also can mitigate long-term costs by using existing community space at places such as high schools, community centers and businesses to provide convenient access to instruction. Not only would this potentially help to reduce short- and long-term costs, it also would provide institutions with flexibility to offer programs more quickly because they would not have to wait for space to be built. Institutions also would not have to maintain underutilized space when programs have poor enrollment or close.

Information technologies are becoming increasingly prevalent in people's work, home and community lives. The colleges and universities can use these technologies to provide students more efficient and effective access to learning and services without investing in more bricks and mortar. Students can use the Internet to register, purchase books, communicate with their professors and perform library searches. Technology will not eliminate the need for space, but it can help to reduce space needs and keep down related costs.





### Students succeed: Barbara Dawson

Barbara Dawson, who enrolled in the medical assistant program at Ridgewater College at age 57, graduated in December 2001. The next month, she began working in the gastrointestinal department at Affiliated Community Medical Center in Willmar, fulfilling her lifelong dream of having a medical career.

"I feel so good about being in this field, helping patients and making them feel better," said Dawson, a Spicer resident. "It will never be boring. The medical field is always changing, so there's always something to learn."

Jumping into college full time, Dawson completed the medical assistant program in three terms, carrying 18 credits and eight classes at a time. She had taken an occasional college class before, but life had been full with raising four children, coaching tennis and synchronized swimming, and owning a men's clothing store for 11 years. Then she slipped off the dock onto her boat, breaking her elbow. After enduring months without the use of her right arm during two surgeries to repair her elbow and shoulder, Dawson grew restless. She called Ridgewater College for a catalog, spotted the medical assistant classes and soon she was enrolled.

Dawson said she was worried no one would want to hire someone her age. But she interned at the clinic in Willmar and upon graduation, she applied there and landed the job.

"It's so exciting," she said. "I wasn't ready to sit at home the rest of my life. I wish I could talk more people into doing this. My latest kick is that I don't think people should retire – I think they should change their lives."

## Workforce and Economic Development: A Key Role

5. Make sure programs and services are meeting the learning needs of workers and employers, especially in occupations experiencing critical worker shortages such as teaching and health care.

The Citizens Advisory Commission sees the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities as a key part of maintaining Minnesota's economic strength and vitality.

Minnesota's economy is changing and needs to change even more to succeed in the rigorous arena of national and international economic competition. Minnesota's state colleges and universities provide a wide range of opportunities for current and future workers to develop both specific and broad skills.

However, as the economy changes, so must these programs. It will no longer be enough to react to economic changes; colleges and universities must develop processes to forecast trends in the economy and labor market. The colleges and universities must then develop short- and long-term programs that help Minnesotans develop the skills they need to succeed in this evolving economy.

One way that colleges and universities keep their programs current is to work directly with employers to identify the learning needs of their employees and develop and deliver customized training programs to meet these needs. Employers get direct service while institutions get the latest information on industry standards and skill needs.

Minnesota has several occupations, such as teaching and health care, that are experiencing worker shortages and are projected to experience even more shortages in the immediate and long-term future. Providing highly skilled workers in these and other fields is important to maintaining the viability of Minnesota's economy, communities and quality of life. The system should use processes that keep track of key employment trends and then supply programs and recruitment that encourage people to pursue high-need fields. This can provide people with good jobs while making sure that key industries in Minnesota have the workers they need.

## Information Technology: A New Way to Do Business

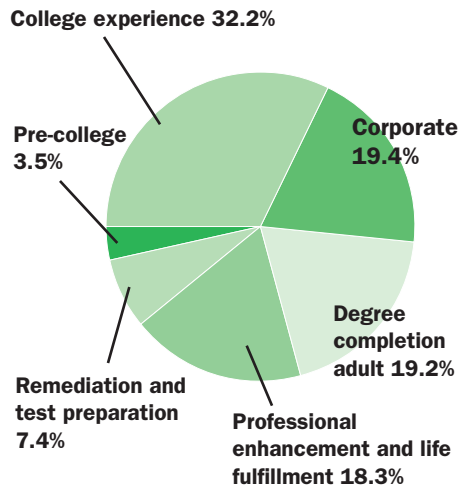
6. Lead a systemwide information technology initiative that coordinates the development and implementation of online courses, programs and services as well as related faculty, staff and curriculum development.

The Citizens Advisory Commission believes that online learning is here to stay and will become an increasingly important part of the learning opportunities for students.

Information and other technologies permeate the lives of Minnesotans. The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities must continue to use computer and other information technologies to enhance learning and services effectively and efficiently or they will fall behind many other higher education institutions. Technology already pervades the higher education enterprise. Institutions that embrace technology will succeed and those that do not will fail to serve an increasing number of students who expect these technologies to be in place at their colleges and universities.

Developing and implementing online learning courses and programs is expensive and time-consuming, making it cost-prohibitive for single institutions, especially smaller ones. In addition, many of the system's institutions may duplicate the work of one another if they develop online learning programs and services in an uncoordinated fashion. In order to make efficient and effective use of public funds, the system must lead the coordinated development of online learning initiatives to share the costs and benefits of online learning. The system also must make sure that the online learning programs and services under development compare with the best ones being developed by other colleges and universities throughout the country and world. Coordination also will ensure that online classes and programs meet system-level academic standards and transfer requirements. Students deserve high-quality online learning experiences that apply to their certificates, diplomas and degrees.

## System Serves Variety Of Learners With Different Goals



**COLLEGE EXPERIENCE LEARNERS** are preparing for life and include many of the 18- to 24-year-old residential college students.

**CORPORATE LEARNERS** work for corporations and are seeking to advance their careers.

**DEGREE COMPLETION ADULT LEARNERS** are seeking to complete a degree at an older age.

**PROFESSIONAL ENHANCEMENT AND LIFE FULFILLMENT LEARNERS** are seeking to advance their careers or shift their careers, or are interested in education for its own sake.

**REMEDICATION AND TEST PREPARATION LEARNERS** are interested in learning as a prerequisite for an examination or enrollment in another course.

**PRE-COLLEGE LEARNERS** are interested in taking baccalaureate-level work prior to completing high school.

Source:  
PricewaterhouseCoopers developed these learner segments. Percentages are based on 2001 unduplicated annual headcount enrollment at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.

7. Evaluate the return on investment of online learning programs and services to ensure they are serving the targeted learner segments and identified market needs.

The short-term costs of online learning may be worth the long-term benefits to student learning and access as well as institutional efficiency and effectiveness. The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities should use business models and other tools to estimate the return it will get from its investment in online learning. One key way to do this is to understand the programs and services needed by current and potential students for online learning. This can be done by evaluating the specific needs of each targeted learner segment, focusing programs and services on these needs, and evaluating how well those needs were met.

### Metro Area Academic Planning: Coordinated Higher Education in the Twin Cities

8. Work with the University of Minnesota to meet the current and future learning needs of students and the civic, economic development and workplace needs of the rapidly changing Twin Cities metropolitan area, including the Rochester to St. Cloud corridor.

The Citizens Advisory Commission believes that the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities should coordinate the programs and services offered by its 11 institutions in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

The Twin Cities metropolitan area has grown considerably over the past decade and is projected to grow in the future. At one time, the Twin Cities was defined as seven counties. The definition grew to 11 counties over the last 15 years. Now the U.S. Census defines the Twin Cities Metropolitan Statistical Area to include parts of western Wisconsin. This Twin Cities growth soon will reach northwest to St. Cloud and southeast to Rochester as suburbs grow and businesses and industries distribute themselves throughout this vibrant corridor.

Higher education planning should evaluate the changing demographic and economic needs of the communities that make up the St. Cloud to Rochester corridor. The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and the University of Minnesota are both public systems and the largest higher education providers in these communities and the state. Both systems share a public responsibility to coordinate their programs to ensure that student service is maximized and duplication is minimized. This can be accomplished through shared approaches to serving students that identify and integrate the unique missions and strengths of each system. These shared approaches will help to identify and fill gaps in service in this growing and changing corridor such as the need for four-year higher education programs in the Rochester area.

9. Seriously consider consolidating Minneapolis Community and Technical College and Metropolitan State University under a single administrative structure.

This recommendation is a result of the extensive collaboration over the last two years between Minneapolis Community and Technical College and Metropolitan State University. These institutions have shared senior executive officers, implemented joint facilities master planning and started to create a shared baccalaureate degree program. The entire upper division portion of the bachelor's degree in business administration from Metropolitan State University can now be completed on the Minneapolis Community and Technical College campus. In addition, the student services divisions of both institutions are completing a planning process to consolidate and streamline their respective student service operations into a single, integrated unit housed at the Minneapolis Community and Technical College. The two faculties have agreed on curricular issues to offer courses in the same location. Finally, the leadership of both institutions has developed the trust and collaborative processes to overcome obstacles and complete the consolidation to unite the strengths of each institution and provide maximum benefits to students.



### Students succeed: John Schiltz

John Schiltz is a 1975 graduate of the culinary arts program at St. Paul Technical College. Originally from Lake Elmo, Minnesota, he started his culinary career at age 15 as a dishwasher at Ben's Elmo Inn, now the Lake Elmo Inn. After graduating from the culinary program, Schiltz worked at many hotels across the country, eventually working as an executive chef at the Hyatt Des Moines, Iowa, where he received the "Outstanding Leadership Award" at age 27.

Schiltz came home to Minnesota and bought the Lake Elmo Inn in 1983. Not only does he believe strongly in technical education, he gives back to the program that helped him achieve his dream. He serves on the St. Paul Technical College Culinary Arts Advisory Committee, hires many program graduates and serves as a guest lecturer in culinary classes.

"I'm a big advocate of the technical college as opposed to the high-priced culinary schools," he said. "It's affordable and gives you a good education."

Because of his achievements and contributions to the school and the field of culinary arts, St. Paul Technical College recently placed Schiltz on its "Wall of Fame."

His occupation suits him so well that Schiltz said he can work as much as 80 to 100 hours a week and still come back the next week with a smile on his face.

He says, "I'm one of the very few people who get to do in life what they absolutely love to do."

10. Determine if other institutions in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, including the Rochester to St. Cloud corridor, should consolidate, either in clusters or as a whole.

The main reason for creating a statewide system of higher education and for organizing the Metro Alliance, a collaborative organization of the 10 state colleges in the Twin Cities and Metropolitan State University, was to coordinate programs and services to provide students with the most efficient and seamless access to effective higher education. Further consolidating other state colleges and universities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, including the Rochester to St. Cloud corridor, should be evaluated to determine if it would serve students better while keeping costs down.

Most major metropolitan areas deliver public higher education through a single institution with multiple locations. This model deserves consideration in the Twin Cities. While the Metro Alliance has developed strong working partnerships its member institutions, it has not developed a specific academic plan that coordinates the development and management of programs. This lack of a plan creates potential programmatic and administrative duplication. It also creates the potential for unhealthy competition between public colleges and universities that have a civic duty to collaborate. The institutions, either all or groups of them, might better serve students if they were consolidated under one administration that was working toward the same goals. This also could simplify coordinated academic planning and collaborative efforts with the University of Minnesota.

The system must continue to improve its service to the Twin Cities metropolitan area while it determines if consolidation of metro area institutions would better serve students. A key strategy to serve these needs is to use the resources of its existing universities such as Minnesota State University, Mankato, and St. Cloud State University to fill in programmatic gaps now and in the future.

### Accountability: A Public Responsibility

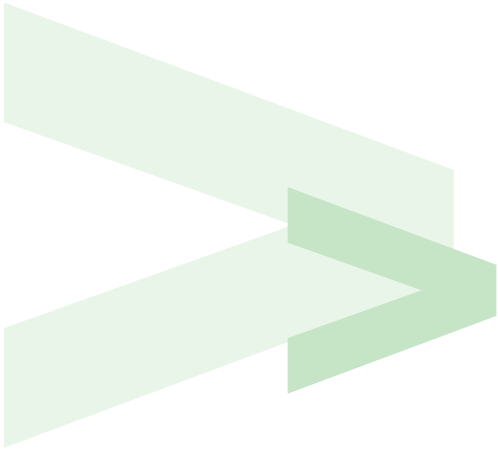
11. Develop and implement an accountability system that provides information about student success and measures efficiency, effectiveness and improvement at the system, institutional and program levels.

The Citizens Advisory Commission believes that the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, as a public system, has a responsibility to demonstrate that it is using public funds in an efficient and effective manner.

Student success is the core mission for the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. In order to show that it is fulfilling its core mission, the system needs an accountability system that measures and reports on how well students meet their learning and personal goals.

Quality is central to the system's mission. The state colleges and universities need an accountability system to evaluate the quality of student learning, programs, institutions and the overall system. Without accountability information, the system will not know the quality of its current programs and services and how to improve this quality.

Thousands of students and graduates say that the state colleges and universities provide a high-quality education at an affordable price. However, the system lacks the information needed to demonstrate the quality of its programs and services to funders and policymakers. An accountability system will help the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities provide evidence of their good work while providing system leaders and instructors with the information they need to improve their work.



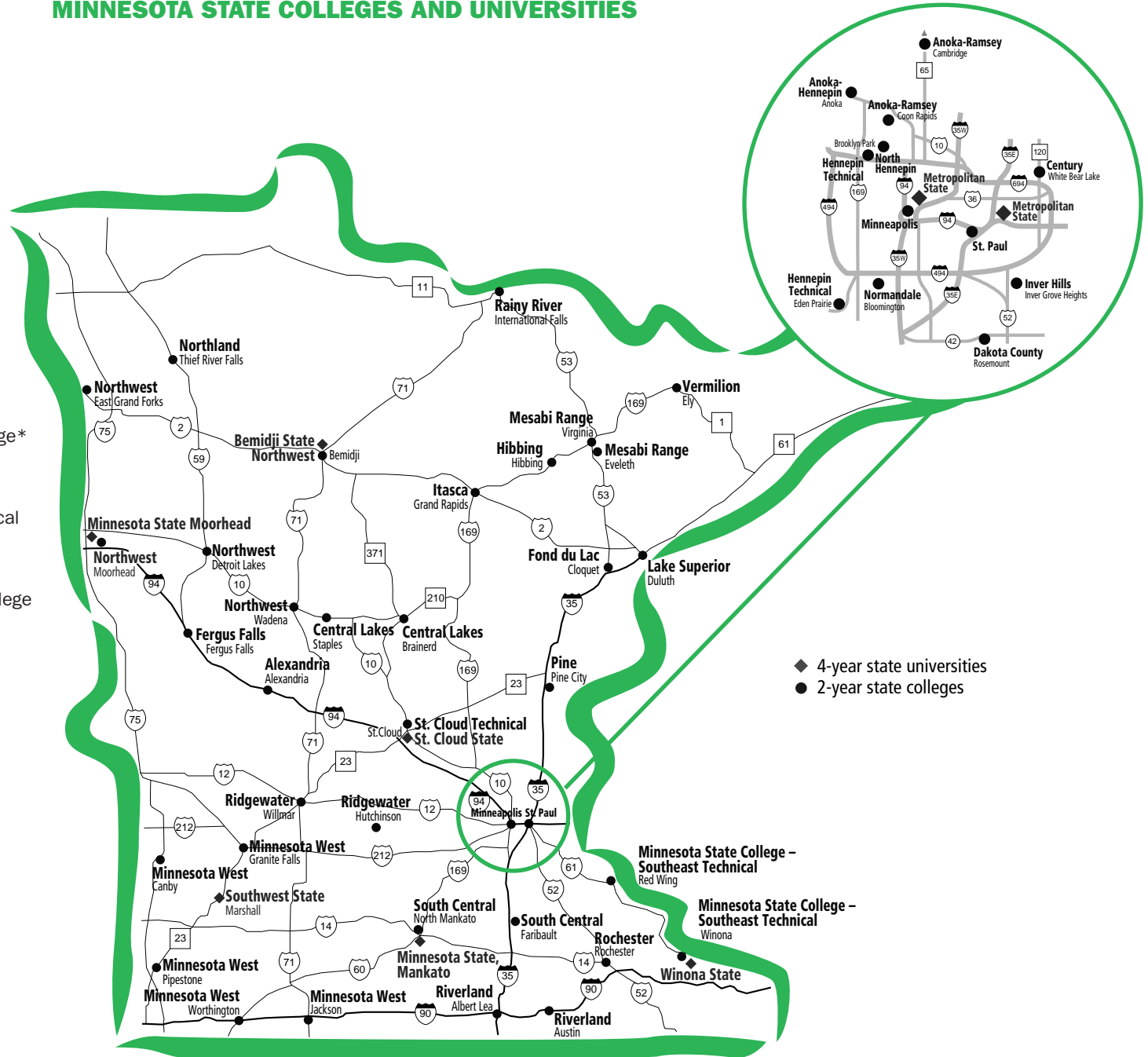
## **CONCLUSION**

The Citizens Advisory Commission believes that the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities provide people with the knowledge, skills and abilities they need to improve their lives. The commission also believes that Minnesotans need higher education now more than ever. Higher education is the main way that Minnesotans will meet the challenges arising from rapidly changing social, cultural, economic and technological changes.

The commission reaffirms that the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, as a public system of higher education, is responsible for working with the wide variety of people, communities and employers that make up the rich tapestry of Minnesota. The system also must serve as a good steward of public funds and facilities by being accountable for how efficiently and effectively it helps students to achieve their goals. Guided by these recommendations, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities can continue to invigorate communities, sharpen the skills of Minnesota's workforce and educate the citizens and leaders of the future.

## MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

- Alexandria Technical College
- Anoka-Hennepin Technical College
- Anoka-Ramsey Community College
- Bemidji State University
- Central Lakes College
- Century College
- Dakota County Technical College
- Fergus Falls Community College
- Fond du Lac Tribal & Community College
- Hennepin Technical College
- Hibbing Community College
- Inver Hills Community College
- Itasca Community College\*
- Lake Superior College
- Mesabi Range Community & Technical College\*
- Metropolitan State University
- Minneapolis Community & Technical College
- Minnesota State College - Southeast Technical
- Minnesota State University, Mankato
- Minnesota State University Moorhead
- Minnesota West Community & Technical College
- Normandale Community College
- North Hennepin Community College
- Northland Community & Technical College
- Northwest Technical College
- Pine Technical College
- Rainy River Community College\*
- Ridgewater College
- Riverland Community College
- Rochester Community and Technical College
- St. Cloud State University
- St. Cloud Technical College
- St. Paul Technical College
- South Central Technical College
- Southwest State University
- Vermilion Community College\*
- Winona State University



\*Itasca, Mesabi Range, Rainy River and Vermilion make up the Northeast Higher Education District, a consortium of four state colleges.



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The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system is the largest single provider of higher education in the state of Minnesota and includes technical colleges, community colleges, comprehensive community and technical colleges and state universities. The system's 34 institutions operate on 53 campuses in 46 communities around the state. The system serves about 225,000 students in credit-based courses annually.



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**Access to Success**

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