Engaging Minnesotans across the state, leadership and outreach in agriculture, elections

Engaging Minnesota: As the state’s only land-grant university, the University of Minnesota engages directly with Minnesotans to improve communities in all corners of the state.

- County fairs statewide and the Minnesota State Fair (Aug. 25-Sept. 5) offer a unique opportunity for the University to highlight our statewide benefit and important discoveries, to connect with Minnesotans and prospective students, and to engage people in our research mission.
- The Driven to Discover (D2D) Building on the State Fairgrounds allows the University to take its research directly to Minnesotans while potentially lowering the cost of conducting studies. As many as 30 researchers will engage Fairgoers in studies on topics such as vaccines, cancer, genetics, autism treatment, agricultural tourism, and bullying.
- University of Minnesota Extension’s 4-H youth development program is a county and State Fair mainstay. In 2015, more than 67,000 Minnesota youth from across the state participated in an Extension youth development program. Studies show that youth who participate in 4-H do better in school and are more involved in their communities.
- President Eric Kaler and Goldy Gopher will host UW-Madison Chancellor Rebecca Blank and Bucky Badger at the Fair on Friday, August 26 from 9 to 3. They will visit displays, participate in friendly “border battles,” and maybe even take a ride on the Giant Slide.

• President Kaler is also spending time at the Steele, McLeod, and Dakota County fairs this month, visiting with legislators, fairgoers, and 4-H members.

U leadership and outreach in agriculture: The future of our University includes our continuing commitment to agriculture, from training the next generation of ag and food leaders, to helping solve some of the industry’s most pressing problems, to enhancing economic development in Greater Minnesota.

At Farm Fest in Redwood Falls, MN, President Kaler announced a nearly $5 million state investment in agriculture to hire scientists and improve infrastructure. The program is a result of intense discussions with industry leaders, and was established by the Minnesota Legislature in 2015 in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. More information about the program, AGREETT, can be found at cfans.umn.edu/agreett.

Talking to candidates about the importance of the University: It’s election year and it’s important to urge alumni, donors, faculty, staff, and students to ask candidates about their support for the University of Minnesota. As you are writing and talking to various constituencies, remind them that legislative and other races are important to the University’s future and urge them to talk to candidates.
1. We combine the power of research, excellence in teaching, and a commitment to the common good to transform lives, fuel creativity, and strengthen MN’s economy.

- **ROI:** Every $1 invested in the U by the state generates about $13.20 in economic benefit; this totals about $9 billion in annual economic impact.
- **Scope:** We are one of only four universities in the nation with schools of engineering, human and veterinary medicine, law, and agriculture on one campus.
- **Workforce:** About 284,000 U of M alumni live in Minnesota, holding more than 360,000 U degrees; we graduate about 80% of the state’s medical school grads and all of Minnesota’s pharmacists, dentists, and veterinarians.

2. We are driven to address the Grand Challenges of a diverse and changing world—and we are uniquely positioned to do so.

- **Funding:** We are the 8th most active public research university in the nation, with more than $900 million in research funding.
- **Innovation:** In 2015, U research helped launch a record 16 startup companies for a total of 57 new companies over the last four years.
- **Community:** Liberal arts scholars study the identity and interaction of communities, and the relationship between individuals and their communities.
- **Teaching:** Many undergrads participate in research; our professors are working across disciplines to engage students in courses focused on Grand Challenges.

3. We ignite students’ drive to discover, preparing them to become tomorrow’s leaders and global citizens.

- **Students:** We have more than 60,000 students, mentored by some of the world’s leading scholars on five campuses and learning increasingly via interdisciplinary teaching.
- **Graduation-focused:** Twin Cities graduation rates more than doubled in the past 15 years (four-year rate: 63%; retention rate of first-year students: 93%).
- **Access:** Among the most affordable colleges in MN for students from families earning less than $75,000 per year. Students at the lowest income levels receive grant aid—without loans—that exceeds tuition and fees. Forty percent of Twin Cities undergrads graduate with zero debt from U sources.

4. We engage with people across the state and globe to drive innovation, transform communities, and apply knowledge to improve lives.

- **Statewide:** Nearly 23,000 Minnesotans work at U of M campuses, research and outreach centers, and regional Extension offices across the state.
- **Reinvestment:** In 2013–14, the U invested about $253 million in public service.
- **Improving communities:** We work with an increasingly diverse region to enhance understanding, bridge disparities, and dismantle barriers to opportunity.