

# Project Proposal for Centers of Excellence

## **Proposed definition:**

Renowned nationally, centers of excellence retain, attract and engage employers, jobs, students, faculty and partners in strategically chosen instructional areas to address Minnesota's greatest needs or elevate distinctive and unique programs across the System. Centers of excellence make the most efficient and effective use of resources through their economies of scale and network of partnerships.

## **Conceptual framework:**

The centers of excellence concept will be developed in consultation with the Board of Trustees, the Leadership Council, policymakers, faculty, and business and industry representatives. The study questions and timeline below provide a general context for advancing this discussion with the aforementioned groups.

## **Anticipated outcomes:**

1. A Request for Proposal process to identify distinct programs and program partnerships at System institutions.
2. Strategies to position the System to attract faculty, respond to business and industry, and define and develop exceptional programs.
3. Revenue from state and non state sources to implement the identified centers.

## **Relationship to current work plan:**

This initiative supports the following FY05 workplan goals to enhance educational programs and services:

1. Continuously improving programs and services for students, workers and employers
2. Supporting innovation and quality

## **Relationship to current strategic plan:**

This initiative supports two of the Systems strategic directions:

1. Expand High-Quality Learning Programs and Services
2. Fully Integrate the System

## **Resources required and sources:**

The project will be staffed by Research, Planning and Academic Programs and Strategic Partnerships units, with assistance from other staff in Academic and Student Affairs and other divisions in the Office of the Chancellor and campus experts. It is anticipated that the project research and development can be undertaken with current budget resources. The awarding of proposals is contingent on the legislature and the Governor reaching agreement on the System's biennial budget to include this initiative or the ability of the System to find resources within its current budget.

## **Objective statement:**

To develop a process and criteria for recognizing exceptional programs across the System that enhance specialization, promote expertise, and improve responsiveness.

**Assumptions:**

1. The System has a number of distinctive programs that are not formally recognized as centers of excellence and could be recognized as part of this initiative.
2. Such an initiative could provide greater incentives for resource reallocation, program partnerships, and business and industry responsiveness.
3. There are limited resources for base or categorical funding to encourage and recognize centers of excellence making this a critical barrier to implementation.

**Study Questions:**

1. What approaches to centers of excellence are being used by other states? How successful have these approaches been?
2. What are the attributes of a distinctive or exceptional program that can be used to evaluate centers of excellence proposed by institutions?
3. Who will evaluate and monitor institutional proposals and what process should be used?
4. What are some current examples of centers of excellence within the System?
5. Will the System encourage the development of centers of excellence without designated state resources?
6. What are the expectations of campuses regarding reallocation and targeting resources to centers of excellence while maintaining other program areas?
7. How will centers of excellence affect compensation and the System's ability to attract and retain faculty?
8. What system and institutional policy changes are needed to support centers of excellence?
9. How should proposed center address the Board expectations to increase access and success of students and faculty of color?

**Proposed Timeline:** *see following page*

# PROPOSED TIMELINE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE

AS OF 4/07/05

