Interim President Jeff Ettinger's Remarks at Task Force #5
November 21, 2023
As prepared for delivery

“Thank you for letting me take a few minutes of your time. I greatly appreciate the effort of this Task Force toward advancing the University of Minnesota's academic health mission.

I know that you have had the opportunity to hear from the University about the alignment of our mission to the interests of the State of Minnesota, and about the scale of our commitment to health sciences. This history and structure have come together to form a strong legacy that today serves Minnesotans through 1.2 million patient visits each year.

But we know that the State of Minnesota is asking for more from the University: leadership in ensuring the health of Minnesotans in the future. As the University's interim president at this critical time, I am grateful to share with you that we have a bold vision for the future of Minnesota’s health.

We will have near-term, medium-term and longer-term recommendations for the State to consider. We hope that the Task Force will allow us to expand upon these concepts at the upcoming meeting on December 6.

But I do want to take a few minutes today to preview those plans, even as you hear from our health sciences deans and deepen your understanding of the strengths the University brings to this challenge for our State.

In the near-term, the critical priority is bringing stability to the clinical enterprise that funds the academic operations of our medical school. We will be asking the 2024 legislature for support to the academic enterprise.

In the medium-term, our plans will focus on ensuring the State has good information upon which to consider investments in physical infrastructure for health care. Potentially, this may involve bonding to lengthen the lifespan of existing facilities, but also a feasibility
study to better understand the transformation of needs for physical infrastructure of
health care service delivery.

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greater control of the facilities that serve as the primary base for academic health and clinical practice of the next generations of practitioners.

The University does not intend to ask for specific financial support for new facilities in the 2024 legislative session. The near-term need is clearly to stabilize the funding for academic medical programming.

We will be keenly interested in soliciting and receiving your conceptual support for this vision – for a world-class medical center on the Twin Cities campus that fosters our academic health mission, is core to all health sciences, and serves Minnesotans with the best we have to offer.

Thank you for allowing me the gift of your time, and for your attention to this incredibly important issue for our state, the University, and the health of all Minnesotans.”