STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1) Continue to grow our undergraduate enrollments while maintaining our high retention and graduation rates and increasing the diversity of our students, faculty, and staff.

Specifically, our goal is to increase the size of our incoming freshman class to 700 and its diversity, pending continued high quality of the applicant pool. It is important to us that we maintain our higher than average retention and graduation rates (see linked spreadsheet above for details on these metrics). To achieve these goals, investments in teaching faculty, NOL staff support, and advising are required. This priority links to multiple MPACT 2025 action items and measures. Under Commitment 1: Student Success, this priority supports all measures under Action Item 1.1. Under Commitment 4: Community & Belonging, this priority supports all measures under Action Item 4.1.

2) Grow our industry partnerships particularly as they relate to biotechnology and the growing bioeconomy sector.

With new leadership in our Biotechnology Institute and MnDRIVE, we aim to expand collaborations and funding opportunities with industry partners. We are making investments to develop a new undergraduate major in Biotechnology as well as Education & Workforce Development programs for industry clients, which will generate a new source of revenue. This priority links to Commitment 2: Discovery, Innovation & Impact, particularly with regard to increasing external research funding, enhancing opportunities for new businesses and start-ups, corporate partnerships, and technology commercialization. In addition, we anticipate positive consequences for Commitment 1: Student Success in connection with the new Biotechnology major.

3) Increase the number of large multidisciplinary and multi-institutional research awards and their impact by leveraging our major strengths.

In particular, ensuring continued investment in ongoing work in the College centered on Global Change Biology, for which we already have an impressive international profile, will create synergies and provide opportunities for additional federal and state funding. To achieve this, we are investing in a new research scientist for Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve. This is in response to a request from the National Science Foundation that we ensure continuity of our very successful Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER) program as the current cohort of principal investigators approaches the end of their careers or takes on other leadership roles. This priority links to Commitment 2: Discovery, Innovation & Impact, and will contribute to increased research funding, improved research ranking, increased multidisciplinary collaborations, and increased research opportunities for graduate students and undergraduates (which will also contribute positively to Student Success). Continuing to invest in the field stations at which much of this research takes place contributes to Commitment 4: Community & Belonging, by developing relationships with citizens of the state, and to Commitment 3: MNtersections, by conducting research to inform sustainability goals.