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PEER REVIEW

Dean to Leave U. of Minnesota College That Is at Risk of Closure; Ex-Editor of America Magazine to Take Sabbatical at Santa Clara U.; Interim Chancellor at UMass-Boston Gets New Post

By EUGENE MCCORMACK, THOMAS BARTLETT, and SCOTT SMALLWOOD

SAYING GOODBYE: A college at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities that works with underprepared students is losing its dean, and may shut down altogether.

David V. Taylor, who has led General College since 1989, will leave this fall to become provost and senior vice president at Morehouse College.

The announcement comes just weeks before a scheduled vote by Minnesota's Board of Regents on a strategic plan submitted by the president, Robert H. Bruininks, that calls for the closure of General College as part of an effort to make Minnesota one of the top three public research institutions in the world within a decade.

General College admits students that do not have the academic requirements to be accepted into other colleges at the university, but are considered to have potential. They must transfer to another college at the university after two years.

In his proposal, Mr. Bruininks cites poor performance by the college as the main reason to make it just a department within the College of Education and Human
Development.

He points out that only 60 percent of General College students transfer to a degree-granting college and that only 31 percent of students who are admitted into General College graduate after six years, compared with 56 percent for the rest of the university.

Mr. Taylor, 59, has been a staunch defender of the college and argues that numbers alone cannot be used to measure its contribution. "This has been a gateway to success in a selective-admissions institution that wouldn't normally be an option for many inner-city students, immigrant and refuge populations, first-generation students, and the lower-socioeconomic class," he says. "Even those students who didn't complete a course of study might have been influenced by the exposure."

Daniel Wolter, a spokesman for the university, says that 73-year-old General College was formed at a time when community colleges didn't exist, but now that there are 10 community colleges in the Minneapolis area to prepare students, the college serves less of a need. Mr. Taylor counters that it is difficult for students to acclimate themselves to another institutional culture.

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REACHING OUT: The Rev. Thomas J. Reese stepped down as editor of America magazine, a Catholic publication, soon after the election of Pope Benedict XVI. His resignation followed years of dust-ups with the Vatican over articles on topics like whether condom use should be encouraged to stop the spread of AIDS.

Now Father Reese, 60, is heading to Santa Clara University where he will spend a year on sabbatical. "He should have a place where he can come that will allow him to reflect and write," says the Rev. Paul L. Locatelli, president of the university. The two priests have been friends since they joined the Jesuit order more than 40 years ago. Father Locatelli says he was disappointed that Father Reese felt compelled to leave his post at America. "He was trying to look at questions from many different angles, and he took a balanced approach to very difficult questions," he says.

Father Reese will have no university responsibilities, though he will have the option of teaching or taking part
in campus activities.

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CONSOLATION PRIZE?: J. Keith Motley won't get to stay on as chancellor at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, but he will get a new post in the president's office.

Mr. Motley, 49, has been serving as interim chancellor at Boston since August and was a finalist for the permanent job. But he lost out to Michael F. Collins, a professor of internal medicine at Tufts University.

Some black leaders in Boston said they thought race played a role in President Jack M. Wilson's decision to pass over Mr. Motley, who is black.

Last week, however, Mr. Motley accepted a newly created position as vice president for business and public affairs.

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CALIFORNIA DREAMING: Buoyed by the nearly $3-billion in stem-cell research money approved by California voters last year, Stanford University has lured two prominent scientists. Stefan Heller, an associate professor of otology and laryngology at Harvard Medical School, and Michael F. Clarke, a professor of internal medicine at the University of Michigan Medical School, will join the Stanford Institute for Cancer/Stem Cell Biology and Medicine this fall.
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