MINNEAPOLIS / ST. PAUL (4/21/2005) -- In a letter to University of Minnesota President Robert Bruininks, 21 members of the Twin Cities Dean’s Council today joined 31 Regents and McKnight Distinguished Professors, Gov. Tim Pawlenty and the Citizens League Task Force on Higher Education in supporting the recently released recommendations to reshape the university’s academic programs.

“(We) are writing to express our very strong endorsement for the vision developed through the strategic planning process,” the deans wrote. “We believe that the strategic planning agenda has set the University of Minnesota on a course to become one of the top three research universities in this country.”

“The time is right for the university to institute programmatic and cultural changes that will set the course for academic excellence,” the deans continued. “As we move forward in the process, we encourage you to seek input from all our constituents and appoint task forces with broad-based representation. We stand ready to help you in anyway we can and look forward to continuing our dialog on these very important issues.”

The signed letter was delivered by Dean’s Council Chair Shirley Baugher and Chair Elect Jeffrey Klausner.

Last month an academic task force, headed by University Provost Thomas Sullivan, made 31 broad recommendations for changing the organization of several university colleges and academic programs. Bruininks is in the process of reviewing the recommendations and consulting with the university community before presenting his own recommendations to the Board of Regents at its May meeting.

“The Twin Cities deans are essential players in our journey to improve our ability to serve our students, faculty and the people of Minnesota,” university President Robert Bruininks said. “Their endorsement reflects broad support within the university and I look forward to working with them to achieve our goals.”

“We appreciate President Bruininks’ vision to make the University of Minnesota a truly world-class institution.” Klausner said. “There is very strong internal support for
change and the deans are committed to reaching these goals.”

The following deans signed the letter:

Shirley Baugher, Human Ecology; Jeffrey Klausner, Veterinary Medicine; Brian Atwood, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs; Interim Dean Victor Bloomfield, Graduate School; Charles Casey, Extension Service; Steve Crouch, Institute of Technology; Interim Dean Joanne Disch, School of Nursing; Robert Elde, College of Biological Sciences; Interim Dean John Finnegan, School of Public Health; Thomas Fisher, College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture; Interim Co-Deans Michael Houston and Jim Campbell, Carlson School of Management; Alex Johnson, Law School; Patrick Lloyd, School of Dentistry; Wendy Pradt Lougee, University Libraries; Charles Muscoplat, College of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences; Mary Nichols, College of Continuing Education; Deborah Powell, Medical School; Marilyn Speedie, College of Pharmacy; Susan Stafford, College of Natural Resources; and Steve Yussen, College of Education and Human Development.

Complete information on the University of Minnesota’s strategic positioning can be found at www.umn.edu/systemwide/strategic_positioning.