STANLEY S. HUBBARD

The University of Minnesota has announced a strategic plan to make it one of the world's top research universities. This is a wonderful objective because the university's vitality is vital to the state of Minnesota.

President Robert Bruininks and the administration of the university have taken a hard look at what is required to achieve their goal. As so often is the case, taking a hard look and weighing the options can be difficult choices.

The new plan for the university calls for closing the General College. The plan will move General College students into the mainstream at the university and will give those students the special attention necessary to succeed and gain four-year degrees. I entered the university through General College, and I have been grateful for the fact that the General College enabled me, a person who did not achieve in high school, to be brought up to speed and moved me on to a four-year degree.

When I attended the General College, there was no community college system in Minnesota as there is today. The community college system provides more opportunity than existed when General College was the route for "slow starters" to enter the university. As hard as it is for many to face the facts, the true reason General College is no longer required, and the money that it costs to run the General College can be better spent bringing Bruininks' vision to fruition.

As difficult as it is for me emotionally, as I look at the situation objectively, including all the recommendations that the administration's plans call for, I come to the conclusion that General College must be closed as a stand-alone entity, and our scarce resources put to better use.

Let's stop the name-calling and move on, and everyone pull together to make our University of the three top public research universities in the world.

Hubbard is chairman and chief operating officer of Hubbard Broadcasting.