FIVE YEARS FORWARD
THROUGH COLLECTIVE INSPIRATION AND DISCOVERY
In May 2013, the Office of the Vice President for Research, in consultation with the university and research community, embarked on a strategic planning process designed specifically to advance the university’s research mission and bring increased focus, alignment and excellence for the university-wide research enterprise over the next five years.

As we started this process, we were aware of the challenges we face. Federal R&D funding is on a flat growth trajectory and is set to stagnate in the next decade. And while the university has undertaken several promising initiatives in recent years, our decentralized systems hinder our ability to work effectively toward meaningful change. We recognize that our funding and organizational challenges must be addressed as part of our plan.

Yet, we were also aware of the unique opportunities and strengths the university has, and over the next five years, we see tremendous potential to refine and transform our research enterprise in a way that will create opportunities for faculty, staff, students and external partners to come together to address the most crucial issues that can have a profound impact on society.

We engaged a broad and diverse community of close to 4,000 individuals on our five campuses and in our surrounding business and nonprofit communities representing 65 stakeholder groups. Input from these groups came through a number of ways—online surveys, interviews, focus groups, meetings and public forums.

The results were encouraging; we found clear consistency among four overarching strategic priorities, or cornerstones, and support for the vision that we will use to chart our course going forward...
OUR PLAN

VISION & CORNERSTONES

Bringing people together in new ways, fostering discoveries and making our world a better place.

We will enhance research excellence by investing in research infrastructure and faculty and educating our students for the industries of tomorrow.

We will accelerate the transfer of knowledge by creating opportunities for public-private partnerships that move information out of the ivory tower and into the community where it can do the most good.

We will advance transdisciplinary partnerships by encouraging collaboration between researchers and among disciplines to derive new concepts and approaches and enable new ways of understanding.

We will promote a culture of serendipity where researchers can come together across departments, colleges and disciplines—and with colleagues and communities outside the university—to think creatively and cultivate new ideas.
ENHANCE RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

SUPPORTING GOALS

Promote targeted initiatives where the university can demonstrate global preeminence.

Ensure high quality, state of the art research systems, capabilities and spaces.

Grow and recruit more honorific award winning faculty.

Reduce faculty administrative burden.
ACCELERATE TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE FOR PUBLIC GOOD

SUPPORTING GOALS

- Expand economic development and external engagement.
- Showcase university research discoveries, capabilities and economic impact.
- Increase informatics capabilities.
- Emphasize and promote entrepreneurship.
ADVANCE TRANSDISCIPLINARY PARTNERSHIPS

SUPPORTING GOALS

Develop metrics and incentives to motivate transdisciplinary research.

Provide funding and shared resources to implement partnerships.

Increase prominence of international research.

Reengineer public-private partnerships.
PROMOTE CULTURE OF SERENDIPITY

SUPPORTING GOALS

Create networking tools, spaces and forums.

Increase experiential research and learning opportunities among diverse disciplines.

Sustain an environment that nurtures creative innovation and discovery.

Focus knowledge and innovation on solving society’s most urgent and formidable challenges.