

DATE: February 17, 2025

TO: Marion Rarick, Chair
Dan Wolgamott, DFL Lead

FROM: Melisa López Franzen, Executive Director of Government and Community Relations

RE: Workgroup meetings follow-up

Madam Chair and Lead Wolgamott,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide additional information and clarification on the topics discussed at the House Higher Education Workgroup Meetings on January 21, 2025 and January 23, 2025.

January 21, 2025 - UMN Research Overview

1. What is the existing market for winter camelina and winter pennycress?

- A. Winter camelina and winter pennycress have potential for use in biofuels, animal feed, and as cover crops. Winter camelina produces seed-based oil for low-carbon fuels, bioplastics, and high-protein livestock feed. Camelina-based fuel could reduce airline emissions in the future by more than 60% compared to petroleum jet fuel or diesel.

2. Where did the proceeds go from the recently completed property sale in Rosemount?

- A. All net revenues (revenues minus associated costs) generated from UMore commercial activity are deposited into the UMore Park Legacy Fund. This fund was created in 2009 by the Board of Regents as a sub-account of the University's Consolidated Endowment Fund

3. Of the University's \$1.3 billion research portfolio, what amount is comprised of state dollars? Is it possible to get additional detail on where those state dollars are directed?

- A. In fiscal year 2023, the University received a total of \$100.3 million in state and local government awards, of which \$90.2 million was funded by the State of Minnesota. Several of the state awards funded significant research programs including the Minnesota Partnership for Biotechnology and Medical Genomics, the Center for Transportation Studies, Regenerative Medicine Minnesota, and the Forever Green Initiative. Other awards funded educational research and outreach programs, including the Minnesota Child Welfare Training Academy, the Minnesota Transformation Initiative, and the Tribal Training and Certification Partnership.

4. Is the University doing any research into public health impacts of food additives (dyes, etc)? Is there any work being done around reverting back to non-hybridized grains?

- A. Yes, the University of Minnesota is actively engaged in research on the public health impacts of food additives, including dyes and other ingredients.

Ongoing Research Efforts

- **Dr. Lynn Steffen** from the Division of Epidemiology and Community Health has an NIH-funded R01 project focusing on ultra-processed foods, including the role of food additives in classifying foods as ultra-processed and their implications for public health.
- **Dr. Byeonghwa Jeon** is investigating the effects of the food additive octyl gallate on the gut microbiome. This research, conducted in collaboration with the College of Veterinary Medicine, has generated promising animal data through an internal Veterinary Medicine grant, resulting in a recent publication.
- **Drs. Melanie Firestone and Craig Hedberg** recently conducted an epidemiological analysis to identify the cause of a gastrointestinal illness outbreak linked to tara flour, a food ingredient not on the FDA's "Generally Recognized as Safe" (GRAS) list. This case underscores issues with distributors "self-GRASing" ingredients without sufficient studies. Their findings contributed to the FDA ultimately determining tara is not GRAS.

Additionally, our Nutrition Coordinating Center, led by Lisa Harnack (Interim Chair of Epidemiology and Community Health), is expanding its research into this area. The center is in the process of incorporating food additives into its comprehensive database and software, which are widely used across the country for nutrition research and dietary assessment.

Beyond these specific projects, the School of Public Health (SPH) conducts extensive research on nutrition and human health, including studies on food and nutrition and chronic disease prevention. More information on SPH's broader research in these areas can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

We continue to explore the complex relationships between diet, food processing, and public health, contributing to national discussions on food safety and nutrition policy.

- B. To the best of our knowledge, we don't have research focused on reverting to non-hybridized grains.

5. What would cause a University research project or initiative to be abandoned?

- A. The most common reason why a research project or initiative would be abandoned is due to lack of funding. Research requires resources including student and staff effort, specialized equipment, and supplies. Research grants typically last for 1-5 years, and once the funding ends, the project would need to be abandoned unless further funding can be obtained. Grants can sometimes be renewed, but additional funding is usually sought through a competitive process and there are no guarantees of continued funding.

6. Related to intellectual property, how are proceeds divided when a patent creates a windfall?

- A. After recovering patent expenses, the proceeds are shared with approximately one-third going to the inventors as a group, one-third to the college and department, and

one-third to the research office for funding Tech Commercialization. Details are outlined in the [Regents Policy - Commercialization of Intellectual Property Rights](#).

7. How much money does the University receive in the event of a successful patent commercialization?

- A. The amount varies significantly and is unpredictable. A successful patent commercialization can often be a 5-figure, 6-figure or low 7-figure transaction. In some cases, there are one-time payments and in other cases there are recurring royalty revenues.

8. What were the total royalties paid to the University in 2024?

- A. Total licensing revenue for fiscal year 2024 was around \$20 million, which includes a mixture of annual royalties and one-time licensing payments. For the past eight years, the revenue has ranged from \$14 million to \$22 million.

9. Is the University doing any work on how to recycle or reclaim wind turbine components that age out of service?

- A. To the best of our knowledge, there is no active research at the university on this specific question. That said we do have researchers with expertise on the implications of those recycling efforts, in addition to other renewable energy issues and trends.

10. What percentage of research proposals receive funding to move forward? How are those decisions made?

- A. In fiscal year 2022, 53.2% of more than 5,000 UMN proposals were funded. (Decisions on proposals can take up to two years, so this is the most recent complete data available.) This funding rate is consistent with previous years and the UMN is currently on track for an above-50% funding rate for fiscal year 2023. Importantly, funding rates vary based on funding agency, with federal agencies being the most competitive. In fiscal year 2022, 46.8% of UMN federal proposals were funded.
- B. The decision making process varies among agencies. The most common process is for a panel of subject matter experts to review the proposals in relation to guidelines set by the agency and to assign a score, with the highest scoring grants being the highest priority for funding. Some agencies also conduct a programmatic review of grants to assess their fit to the agency's mission, the goal being to select the highest scoring grants that are also the best fit to the program.

11. Is there an identifiable "churn rate" for researchers at the University? When researchers leave, are there trends on where they move to?

- A. The turnover rate for researchers at the University of Minnesota was 16.7% from fall 2023 to fall 2024. In comparison, the overall turnover rate for the University was 11%, which is similar to other higher education institutions, which according to the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) was roughly

13% for the 2023-2024 period. While the University does not track where employees go after leaving, we generally compete in the Twin Cities marketplace for many of our research positions, where there are ample opportunities in other local industries.

12. Regarding Niron Magnetics, will their prices be competitive in the market without subsidies?

- A. Niron aims to make magnets with the same/stronger strength at same/lower prices as their rare-earth magnet product counterparts. The main competitive advantage is that the materials are sourced without using rare earth minerals, which is a national security concern, given China controls about 70% of the world's rare earth mining and 90% of the world's rare earth processing capacity.

13. What protections are in place for companies' IP from potential theft by foreign powers?

- A. Companies typically have a mixture of patents (published) and copyrights and trade-secrets (non-published).
- B. Companies also have confidential disclosure agreements or non-disclosure agreements (CDAs or NDAs) with their partners.
- C. Grants from the US Federal Government have compliance policies that include who can and cannot participate in research projects for a particular grant - including foreign adversaries.
- D. Note that patents, once filed, are made available for viewing by anyone via the USPTO website – by US or foreign citizens. This is true whether the IP was created inside UMN or outside in the company. Policing IP infringement is an obligation (a challenging one) for licensees of University IP.
- E. Once a company (either corporation or startup) licenses intellectual property from the University, they are incentivized to protect (and leverage) the IP.

14. How can innovators within and outside of the University access resources to pursue new ideas?

UMN Resources for Innovators and Startups	Internal	External
Creating Inventions		
University Inventors	x	
Gary S. Holmes Center for Entrepreneurship	x	
Toaster Innovation Hub	x	
Accessing UMN Technologies		
Available Technologies	x	x

2. The state will implement Earned Sick and Safe Time next year, do you anticipate any changes in your researchers?

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3. What research is happening for gender affirming care regarding pediatrics and youth gender affirmation?

A. To our knowledge, there are currently no funded clinical research projects on medical gender-affirming care for minors that are held at the University of Minnesota. University of Minnesota faculty have collaborated with external research teams on studies of gender-affirming medical care.

4. What evidence based research do you use when determining sex reassignment surgery for people?

A. The University, through its clinical enterprises, does not perform any “sex reassignment” (i.e., bottom surgeries such as hysterectomy, vaginoplasty, or phalloplasty) on patients under age 18. Therefore, we do not make such determinations for minor patients.

5. What evidence do you use to decide to continue research on gender reassignment or hormone suppressing on youth?

A. With no known currently funded clinical research projects on these topics active at the University of Minnesota, we are not in a position to make decisions on research continuation at this time.

6. What is Mayo's financial contribution to the partnership? What does this partnership produce? Meaning what does the state get for its \$16M? What is the total budget for this program? On the slide of examples, from the moment the partnership started getting state funding, what goes into this program?

A. For these three questions, see the attached PDF containing the responses which were provided in partnership with the Mayo Clinic.

[illegible]

January 23, 2025- Office of Public Engagement

1. How much did it cost to produce the video?

A. \$1,150.00

2. How much of the O&M funding goes to the awards process in total? And, specifically for this award?

A. The Office of Public Engagement full slate of four Outstanding Community Service Awards (OCSA; Faculty, Staff, Partner, Student) were allocated \$30,000 for honoraria. The OSCA for Community Partner was allocated an honorarium of \$5,000. This award program was discontinued following the 2024 awards and has been reconfigured with the Engaged Scholar Award program.

3. Request for all materials and information that is public on what was said about this award.

A. [Nomination Packet \(blank\)](#); [Email Communication Soliciting Nominations](#); [Website Announcement of Winners](#); and, [Office for Public Engagement newsletter announcement](#)

Note: Four links

4. What is the vetting process for the awards?

A. The independent review process served as the vetting process for the award. If the reviewers had found that the award did not meet the criteria listed above, no award would have been given.

5. How are the courses developed that would use this group in their course work?

A. Courses are proposed by instructors, who develop a syllabus that includes credit number, prerequisites, course objectives, required and recommended materials, and a general description of assignments and assessments. The proposed courses are submitted to the department and college curriculum committees for review and approval. After approval, it is sent to the Provost queue and reviewed by the campus Curriculum Committee. Courses in which this organization was involved have multiple organizations available for students to choose from to do the community-engaged learning component of the course. Courses that are designated with the community-engaged learning attribute must have the following components:

1. At least 25% of the course grade focuses on and/or incorporates community-engaged learning whereby student learning from community-engaged learning experiences is assessed. The course or learning module also offers a method to assess the learning derived from the community-engaged learning experiences.
2. Course objectives demonstrate an integration of an educationally meaningful community-engaged learning to enhance the academic focus of the course. The community experience also promotes the achievement of University of Minnesota student learning and/or student development outcomes.
3. Activities (e.g., readings, discussions, projects, assignments) incorporate the community-engaged learning experience and how it relates to the course subject matter. Students are also required to analyze their community experiences and synthesize these experiences with other materials in the course or learning module.

4. Reflection on community-engaged learning experiences is ongoing and includes dialog about community issues as appropriate to the course or learning module.
5. If a community-based agency is involved, there is an agreed upon set of expectations and outcomes for all involved.

6. How was the decision for the award made?

A. In 2024, nominations for the OCSA Partner Award were reviewed by Office for Public Engagement (OPE) staff to ensure that they met the minimum criteria for the award. CUAPB was the only nomination that year; however, the nomination needed to meet at least 32 out of 40 points to receive the award. The nomination was sent to reviewers outside of OPE who independently reviewed the nomination based on the award criteria:

1. The activity has affected society in positive ways that foster long-term change (10 pts)
2. The nominee has had an innovative approach toward service (10 pts)
3. The nominee has produced extraordinary results (10 pts)
4. Overall impression of the application(10 pts)

7. List of courses and internships that interact with this group?

Department/Program Name	Course Title	Course #
African American and African Studies	Sociological Perspectives on Race, Class and Gender	3251W
African American and African Studies	African Americans, Social Policy, and the Welfare State	3426
African American and African Studies	The Color of Public Policy: African Americans, American Indians and Chicanos in the US	4231
American Indian Studies	The Color of Public Policy: African Americans, American Indians and Chicanos in the US	4231
Anthropology	Anthropology and Social Justice	4031W

Chicano Studies	The Color of Public Policy: African Americans, American Indians and Chicanos in the US	4231
CLA	Introduction to Liberal Education and Responsible Citizenship	2005
Communication Studies	Intro to Public Speaking	1101
Communication Studies	Analysis of Argument	1313W
Communication Studies	Introduction to Small Group Communication	3411
Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature	The Rhetoric of Everyday Life	3173W
Curriculum & Instruction	Social Change, Social Justice: An Introduction to Applied Calculus	1826
English Literature	Literature of Public Life	1501W
English Literature	Protest Literature and Community Action	3505
English Literature	Social Movements and Community Education	3506
Family Social Science	Preparation for Family and Community Engagement	2107
Family Social Science	Family Systems and Diversity	3102
Family Social Science	Field Study: Working with Families	4296

Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies	Feminist Approaches to Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault: Getting to the Roots of Rape Culture	3415
Geography	Cities, Citizens and Communities	3371W
Journalism	People of Color and the Mass Media	3741
Philosophy	Social Justice and Community Service	3307
Psychology	Introduction to Cultural Psychology	3301
Psychology	Capstone in Psychology - Community Engagement	3903W
Sociology	Social Problems	3003
Sociology	American Race Relations	3211W
Sociology	Politics and Society	3301W
Sociology	Social Movements, Protest and Change	3322W
Sociology	Organizations and Society	3411W
Sociology	The Color of Public Policy	4090
Sociology	Sociology of Ethnic and Racial Conflict	4461
Sociology	Sociology of Deviance	4111
Sociology	Capstone Experience: Seminar	4966W

Social Work/Social Justice	Intro to Peace Studies	1501
Social Work/Social Justice	Introduction to Social Justice	2501W
Social Work/Social Justice	Theories and Practices of Social Change Organizing	3501
Social Work/Social Justice	Senior Seminar in Social Justice	4501