

September 26, 2007

Judith A. Ramaley, President
Winona State University
P.O. Box 5838
Winona, Minnesota 55987

Dear President Ramaley:

In the mid-90's, the City of Minneapolis stood at risk to lose Abbott Northwestern and Children's Hospitals from South Minneapolis. Since that time, we have worked with hospital system CEOs in the Minneapolis Lifesciences Corridor to not only avoid losing these important Minneapolis employers, but to build from existing campuses. Now the City is blessed with over \$1 billion in campus investment, securing Minneapolis's future as a health care town. Fairview, the University, Children's, Abbott Northwestern, Allina, and Hennepin County Medical Center are all expanding and adding jobs.

Every solution carries with it a new set of challenges and we now look ahead to a monstrous workforce challenge. Seventeen percent of City residents already work in health care. These jobs are becoming more credentialed, with M.D.s, Ph.D.s, R.N.s, increasingly joining M.B.A.s, J.D.s and C.P.A.s in the modern health workforce. We stand with a struggling school system that is not yet on track with the kind of educational attainment necessary to launch Minneapolis residents into health care careers.

We're quite certain that nothing short of a Marshall Plan will prepare Minneapolis citizens for a future in health care. And we need to jump on this, or face an increasingly suburbanized workforce which competes to fill one of the 1300 vacancies at Allina this morning.

The good news is that we know how to address this. With pioneering leadership from Dean Jane Foote, the Health Careers Institute was established in 2000 and ultimately graduated over 2000 students for the health workforce. That Institute will be relocated in the new MCTC Health Sciences Building in 2010.

We know the delivery system must reach younger populations. For this reason, the Minneapolis Promise now provides a College and Career Center at every high school, 2000 summer youth jobs through Step Up!, and free college at MCTC and the University of Minnesota.

We're comfortable that Minneapolis hospital employers will grow their approach to younger people through the Step Up! Program and the Health Careers Partnership which unites this and other career programs with the industry.

We're not comfortable that we have the same handle on career development after high school graduation. We have great curriculum available and always changing from Minneapolis Community and Technical College, but we need to move across institutions more to present the industry with a model for moving the future workforce through the credentials needed for the future.

For that reason, we turn to you as the MNSCU lead for the Health Center of Excellence. We would like you to consider adopting Minneapolis as a five-year demonstration project for Health Careers. We would be pleased to offer CPED office space and support resources to MNSCU staff for the purpose of locating them here. We know that important questions need to be answered before this could be done, but we also know that it won't be done without asking this question first: will the Health Center of Excellence locate in Minneapolis CPED offices for the next five years?

Sincerely,

Mike Christenson, Director

Cc: Mayor R.T. Rybak
Council Member Scott Benson