When Joan Gabel became the 17th President of the University of Minnesota on July 1, 2019, she made it known that her top priority would be to advance the strength and impact of the University system.

The 2019-2020 Accomplishments Report is designed to emphasize this intentionally elevated priority, rather than enumerate daily activities. The Report also reflects sincere appreciation to the Board of Regents, the Board Office, and the critically important work of the University’s senior leaders and the University community as a whole—as nothing happens and no accomplishment occurs without teamwork, partnership and shared commitment.
While COVID-19 only became an issue in the latter half of the year, its impact and complexity made it a key focus in President Gabel’s work. She led efforts to address the immediate challenges of the pandemic, including keeping the University community healthy, safe, and well. President Gabel called upon the University’s experts and expertise to examine the depth and potential length of the disruption, as well as to shape the recovery; she pushed the University community to ask tough questions about institutional uniqueness and value; and she helped reimagine opportunities for the University to not only advance its nearly 170-year legacy, but navigate new ways to reinvent itself.

**In these efforts, President Gabel:**

- **Appointed an Emergency Management Policy Committee** comprised of senior leaders and chaired by the President, who met daily to coordinate a systemwide pandemic response;

- **Cancelled all global learning abroad programs**, including for May and summer; discontinued all University-sponsored travel until June 30, 2020; transitioned to alternative modes of instruction until the end of the 2020 summer session; provided housing and residential life refund credits to students, as well as other fee and expense credits; provided undergraduate students the option to choose A/F or S/N grading; moved all University employees to work-from-home-status if they were able; continued...
to pay student workers uninterrupted, regardless of the work they could or could not do through the end of the spring semester; established two representative working groups on mission and finance and operations to provide recommendations about the University's recovery from the COVID-19 challenge; and established a “Sunrise” Plan to gradually reopen University functions, amongst other actions;

- **Communicated frequently**, often daily, to the University community to share updates on the latest COVID-19-related decisions and on the University's contributions to the State of Minnesota and beyond;

- **Directed the creation of a Safe Campus website** to host COVID-19 communications and updates, including those from the Health Emergency Response Office (HERO), Minnesota Department of Health, and Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP);

- **Directed the establishment of a COVID-19-microsite** on the University's webpage that provides numerous stories, insights, news, expertise, and other information related to the pandemic, such as three of the country's first COVID-19 drug trials; cross-collegiate partnerships to design Personal Protective Equipment; the nation's first hospitals to treat COVID-19 infected patients exclusively; the FDA-approved and University-inspired “Coventer” ventilator, and the University's partnership with the Mayo Clinic to ensure that every person in the State of Minnesota with COVID-19 symptoms gets tested, and to establish capacity to deliver 20,000 molecular and 15,000 serology tests per day, amongst others;
• **Provided numerous COVID-19 pandemic updates** to individual Regents, at three special Board of Regents meetings and regularly scheduled monthly Board of Regents meetings, including sharing the University’s comprehensive planning and response efforts, updates on student fee refunds, financial impact estimates, University service to the state during the pandemic response, and more;

• **Called for a systemwide student emergency fund** to provide support to students who are financially insecure; provided additional support to students including remote tele-counseling; and increased food pantry access from one day per month to three days per week;

• **Hosted a systemwide COVID-19 pandemic virtual town hall** in which President Gabel and senior leaders addressed questions from the University community;

• **Engaged regularly with Minnesota leaders**—Governor Tim Walz’s Office and the executive branch team; the Minnesota Legislature, U.S. Congressional members (MN), Minnesota Business Partnership, and the Minnesota House and Senate Higher Education Committees (twice)—to discuss COVID-19 and the University’s planning and response efforts; and

• **Planned the first ever systemwide virtual commencement** for Spring 2020 graduates.
President Gabel launched several initiatives during her first year. These initiatives, which are in various stages of progress, align with her top priority to advance the strength and impact of the University system, particularly through a commitment to students, discovery, the State, a welcoming culture, and fiscal stewardship. To this end, President Gabel took important steps to develop the University’s first systemwide strategic plan; collaboratively quantified the University’s outreach and engagement efforts; cultivated efficiency and transparency; advanced community, equity, and diversity; established a student mental health initiative; supported athletics and its role as the front porch of the University; and drove solutions to elevate Minnesotans and society as a whole.
Systemwide Strategic Plan

At the July 2019 Board of Regents Retreat, President Gabel engaged with the Board to establish a year-long process towards the adoption of the University’s first systemwide strategic plan. The plan, anticipated to be completed in Year One, identifies five Commitments that represent the intersection between the University’s values and action – Student Success, Discovery, Innovation & Impact, MNtersections, Community & Belonging, and Fiscal Stewardship – as well as strategically aligned and measurable goals and action items. Planning is underway to update the University of Minnesota Progress Card, which consists of Maroon and Gold measures, during the Board of Regents retreat in July.

The systemwide strategic planning process is noteworthy for its broad and ongoing consultation with faculty, staff, and students, as well as alumni supporters and partners in government, business, and around the state, and more specifically includes:

- **Town hall meetings** in Crookston, Duluth, Morris, and Rochester, and an April virtual town hall across these campuses to seek further input;

- **Discussion of the plan** at the annual Extension Conference in Duluth; Homecoming on the Twin Cities campus with Alumni leaders; FCC, Twin Cities Deans, Internal Audit,
and Senior Leadership Team Retreats; MN Water Resources Conference; UMF Board and Executive Board meetings; University Senate; Student Senate; and across formal and informal faculty, student, and staff committees, including the Black Faculty & Staff Association, the U of M Retirees Association, and among representatives from labor-represented, civil service, and P&A employees; and numerous Colleges and Departments from the CEHD Fall Assembly, to the Dean's Advisory Committee at the Humphrey School, CLA Assembly and CSE's State of the College;

- **Five systemwide email messages** were sent by President Gabel (September 17th, October 9th, February 14th, April 17th, and May 8th) linking to the initiatives tab on the presidential homepage for input at every critical stage during the process. Similar messaging was sent to the University alumni community and to the State's government and elected officials, including the State's 201 legislators, the Governor and Lt. Governor, the Congressional Delegation, County leaders, and the Mayors and City Council Members in Crookston, Duluth, Falcon Heights, Minneapolis, Morris, Rochester, and St. Paul, amongst others;

- **Input** from Senate Higher Ed Chair Paul Anderson and Ranking Member Greg Clausen; House Higher Ed Chair Connie Bernardy and Ranking Member Bud Nornes; the Minnesota business community, including from membership of the Minnesota Business Partnership, the Twin Cities Dunkers and Capital Club; Tribal Partners during the 6th Annual Nibi Miinawaa Manoomin Symposium at White Earth Nation, and during a Native Nations Flag Event at the Humphrey School, amongst other one-on-one meetings and gatherings; Minnesota's public and private higher education institutions during their leadership retreats; and University strategic planning experts, including Humphrey School Professor John Bryson, a recognized national expert in strategic planning.
Listening, Learning and Engaging

President Gabel launched a comprehensive Minnesota listening, learning and engagement initiative during the six-month presidential transition and throughout the first year of her presidency, which included visits to U of M campuses, as well as Extension, research and other locations throughout the State. This engagement included discussions with the Board of Regents; direct reports and senior leaders; chancellors and deans; members of the President’s office team; University faculty, staff, and students; government officials; industry and community leaders across greater Minnesota; and the University’s philanthropic and alumni communities.

More specifically, this engagement included:

- **Developing and deepening individual relationships** with Board of Regents Members;
- **Campus visits** to Crookston, Duluth (3), Morris, and Rochester;
- **National/international travel**, including the Association of American Universities (AAU) fall meeting in Washington D.C.; the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) Annual meeting in San Diego CA; the Rise Conference in Albany, NY; the 2019 National Competitiveness Forum in Washington, D.C.; the NCAA 2020 Convention
in Anaheim CA; New York City for media interviews; UMF trips to San Diego CA, San Francisco CA, Naples FL, Palm Springs CA, and Phoenix AZ; as well as an international trip to Iceland (planned trips to Washington DC and New York City were postponed due to COVID-19);

• **Frequent meetings and interactions with key government leaders**, including the MN Governor and Lieutenant Governor, MN House and Senate Majority and Minority leaders, Speaker of the House and Senate Higher Education Chairs, Senators, Representatives, Office of Higher Education Commissioner, Mayors of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Hennepin County Board of Commissioners, Duluth Mayor, Capital Investment Chair, and Congressional members. In addition, President Gabel attended Senate Higher Education (3) and House Higher Education (2) hearings and a House Capital Investment hearing where she sought support from legislators to pass a robust bonding appropriation for the University of Minnesota, as well as to provide updates on COVID-19. She also became the first University of Minnesota President to brief the Minneapolis and St. Paul City Councils;

• **Numerous events in the community and across the state**, including but not limited to the MN State Fair, Nibi Manoomin Symposium, MN State Leadership Council Meeting, CEO Early Learning Breakfast, MN Chamber of Women in Business, 11th Visscher Symposium, MN Water Resources Conference, Big 10 Council of Presidents and Chancellors Meeting, joint Minneapolis and St. Paul Rotary Meeting, MN Chamber 2020 Session Dinner, Theater of Public Policy, first day of the legislative session, College Bound St. Paul Breakfast, Million Dollar Day for Scouting, and Speaker Science: *Communication with Media, Funders, Policymakers, and the Public*;

• **Numerous events on the Twin Cities campus and across the system**, including but not limited to New Faculty Orientation, Welcome Week, Pride and Spirit, Convocation, welcome back events for students, new graduate student welcome, student government
leaders orientation, Extension annual conference, University Research and Outreach Center (UROC) Community Day, Homecoming, Annual Equity and Diversity Breakfast, Legislative Kickoff Breakfast, Women’s Faculty Cabinet, annual Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute Concert, Native Nation-UMN partnership event, Josie Johnson Community Room for Social Justice Opening Celebration, the University’s Retirees Association (UMRA), Evening with Anne Frank’s Sister, Reception for Newly Appointed Regents Professors, Pioneer Hall reopening, Food and Agriculture Day Celebration, An Evening with Gloria Steinham, Sons of Norway Thanksgiving Breakfast, and TPT documentary titled, This Free North: Black History at the University of Minnesota;

• **Visits with Minnesota’s higher education partners**, from the Minnesota’s Private College Leaders Retreat, to the MN State’s Leadership Council to chart next steps on a range of issues, including the systemwide strategic plan, and to convene a Leadership Summit around student mental health on May 14 (postponed) and another one on equity at a future date. President Gabel also co-authored a joint op-ed with Minnesota State Chancellor Devinder Malhotra on the importance of a legislative bonding bill this session;

• **Meetings and events with the civic community**, including the Minnesota Business Partnership, Greater MSP Board of Directors, MBold, Caux Round Table, MN Chamber of Commerce, Twin Cities Dunkers, Minnesota’s Emerging Leaders Institute, and meetings of the cities of St. Paul and Falcon Heights;

• **Frequent discussions with the Minnesota Business Partnership** to maintain and advance the University’s partnerships with Minnesota’s top businesses;

• **Membership in and sponsorship of Greater MSP’s MBold Coalition**, a strategic initiative of the Greater MSP partnership that works to accelerate solutions to the most pressing challenges facing the food and agriculture sectors;
• **Joining the U.S. Council on Competitiveness**, a non-partisan action network of CEOs, university presidents, labor union leaders, military leaders, and national laboratory directors working to grow our economy and create economic opportunity for all Americans. President Gabel serves as a Commissioner for the Council’s “National Commission on Innovation & Competitiveness Frontiers,” which is developing a national Innovation Call to Action, and recommending the best private and public sector strategies to enhance and expand the nation’s innovation capacities at the heart of competitiveness;

• **Advancing strong partnerships with the University’s philanthropic community** through one-on-one calls, visits, in-home events, and larger scale venues, President Gabel connected with nearly 500 of the University's top benefactors in her first year. Through regional travel to destinations across the U.S., she was introduced to an additional 1,000 University alumni and friends. Fiscal year 2020 is anticipated to be one of the best years in private giving; and could set a new giving record. Unique transformational gifts include the $15 million scholarship match challenge by the Bensten Foundation, as well as an additional transformative gift of $35 million from the University’s largest donor, Masonic Charities, to name a new interdisciplinary effort around child brain health. President Gabel quickly helped make connections and appeals to important University donors inspired by the University’s response to the COVID pandemic; raising more than $8 million to date. Heading into FY21, the University's development effort is well positioned to complete its 10-year campaign goal of raising $4 billion in private support;

• **Helping to shepherd a plan** to create a more engaged and welcoming entrance to the eastern edge of the Minneapolis campus. In partnership with the University of Minnesota Foundation, the East Gateway Project has defined commitments and principles, as well as a shared governance structure to minimize reputational risk to the University;
• **Supporting the University of Minnesota Alumni Association** (UMAA) and the value that the University's alumni represent to the institution by publishing for the first time in the UMAA Magazine; attending the UMAA Board Social and the UMAA Homecoming Awards Dinner; and engaging with alumni across the University system at numerous on- and off-campus events;

• **Participating in numerous media interviews**, including with Minnesota Public Radio, TPT's Almanac Show, New York Times, Bloomberg, MSP Magazine, WCCO, The Hechinger Report, MN Daily's *At the Table with Gabel* (monthly), Duluth News Tribune, *Real Leaders* with Roshini Podcast, Women Crushing it Wednesday, the Wild Live Program, the Star Tribune and the Star Tribune Editorial Board; and

• **Promoted the importance of the 2019 Employee Engagement Survey**, which exceeded the Board of Regents' participation goal of 72% by 2% to 74% overall participation this year.

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**Fiscal Stewardship**

In her first year, President Gabel demonstrated a strong commitment to the careful stewardship of University resources. One of the first actions she took as President was to engage a leading global expert to produce an analysis of the University's overall operational efficiency, and benchmark administrative costs to a similar set of peers. Most recently, she charged a COVID-19-focused Finance and Operations Working Group in April 2020 to examine opportunities for operational and personnel cost savings and efficiencies, with an emphasis on maintaining employees as recognition of their value and contribution to the enterprise. In this work, and in other efforts, President Gabel took the following actions:

• **Launched an administrative cost benchmarking study**, undertaken by Huron Consulting, which established that the University workforce and expenses are not only in range as compared to our peers, but in many cases, are significantly better than other institutions;

• **Charged a Finance and Operations Working Group**, co-Chaired by SVP Brian Burnett and Interim VP Ken Horstman, and guided by a set of Board of Regents-approved principles, including a core commitment to shared governance and to examine opportunities for operational and personnel cost savings and efficiencies, with an
emphasis on maintaining employees as recognition of their value and contribution to the enterprise so that the University is appropriately staffed and ready when regular operations resume as a result of COVID-19;

• **Committed to five unpaid work days before the end of the current fiscal year** and asked senior leaders to consider joining her (190 volunteered for a total savings of $978,382.94). In addition, committed to a 10% reduction in pay starting July 1 and lasting until the University’s operations return to normal (as did the President’s Cabinet);

• **Waived University policy that provides a one-month salary lump sum for relocation** expenses and opted instead for direct reimbursement of actual moving expenses;

• **Reduced the Office of the President overall spend** on employee salaries compared to the previous presidential administration;

• **Identified an additional shared cost savings** with the Office of the Board of Regents of $6,277 in the Regent/President suite at TCF Bank Football Stadium during the 2019 season; and

• **Initiated $114K in cost savings** from an approved presidential inauguration budget of $250K.
Inauguration

President Gabel re-imagined the presidential inauguration, emphasizing accessibility, inclusivity, innovation, discovery, and fiscal stewardship, coming in nearly 50 percent under budget. During inauguration week on the Twin Cities campus, and on ensuing trips across the fall to Crookston, Duluth, Morris, and Rochester, she spotlighted the depth and breadth of the University's work. Other innovations from the inauguration included:

- **The installation ceremony was live-streamed** for the first time in University history;
- **Members of system lined up along Scholars Walk** to celebrate the community's walk from McNamara to Northrop Mall to hear the inaugural address on the iconic steps of Northrop;
- **The inaugural address was live-streamed**, making it available in real time to anyone who wanted to learn about the President's vision for the state's land-grant University; and
- **The inaugural address was followed by a festive lunch** on the mall with food trucks, lawn games and music, featuring University apples, corn, and vegan chili, all free of charge so everyone could participate.
Advancing Community, Equity and Inclusion

Over the last year, President Gabel deepened the University’s efforts to advance a community and culture where a sense of belonging is strong, accessibility is valued, equity and diversity are promoted, dignity in people and ideas is respected, and students, faculty, and staff see themselves in the actions of the University. In this work, President Gabel:

- **Identified Community and Belonging as a core Commitment** of the Systemwide Strategic Plan;

- **Deepened relationships and engagement between the University and Minnesota’s Tribal Nations** through ongoing engagement and growing important multi-disciplinary collaborations; supported the hiring of the first-ever Senior Director of American Indian Tribal Nations Relations for the University of Minnesota system; and honored and promoted the practice of reading a land acknowledgement at University of Minnesota events;

- **Furthered the work of the President’s Initiative to Prevent Sexual Misconduct (PIPSM)** by communicating to senior leadership her expectations for PIPS M training compliance; expanding PIPS M training beginning 2020-2021 to also include undergraduate
student workers and individuals in "persons of interest" roles performing academic functions or supervising the work of University employees or students; enhancing the accountability of sexual misconduct procedures to include written documentation that responsive action had been completed and a monitoring mechanism to ensure all responsive actions have been fulfilled; and communicating results of the 2019 AAU sexual misconduct survey, providing resources to the University community; and

- **Led work to establish a Presidential Collaborative on Institutional History**, including to develop new guiding principles and other proposed changes to the Board of Regents Policy: *Namings*; and co-sponsorship of educational events for the University community, such as a TPT documentary titled, *This Free North: Black History at the University of Minnesota*; a campus conversation titled, *Steps Forward: Our University History: Understand, Acknowledge, Engage*; and a John Wright Luminaries Lecture Series titled, *Slavery and Black History at the University of Minnesota*. 

“Every member of our community should expect to feel safe and respected at the University of Minnesota, free from sexual harassment and intimidation. This commitment to our students, faculty and staff is cornerstone to our values and to the advancement of the University’s land-grant mission of discovery, learning and outreach.”

-President Joan T.A. Gabel
Supporting student mental health and well being is core to the University’s mission of student success, and President Gabel advanced this work this year with a firm commitment to discuss the challenge, act on it, and be part of the solution. In this work, she established comprehensive, multi-faceted efforts across our system and beyond, which included:

- Charging then-Executive Vice President and Provost Karen Hanson, Auditor Gail Klatt, and the Office of Student Affairs to **undertake a systemwide inventory of all activities, resources, and programs related to mental health** to establish benchmarks, gaps, and opportunities to move forward;

- **Launching a student mental health initiative** focused on the maximization of our students’ opportunities to be well;

- **Supporting Gopher Football’s 2019 Mental Health Awareness Game**;

- **Amplifying student mental health** during President Gabel’s inauguration, including an issue-specific panel of faculty and student services experts, and establishing a special philanthropic fund to collect donations to support student mental health;

- Engaging a first-ever partnership with Minnesota’s higher education leaders to co-host a **Student Mental Health Summit** in May 2020 (postponed due to COVID-19);

- **Advancing the University’s national profile on student mental health**, including her work to lead a panel discussion at the 2019 APLU conference; and

- **Ensuring that student mental health services continue remotely** during the COVID-19 pandemic, and highlighting those services in her regular updates to the system community.
Athletics

A firm believer in the importance that Athletics plays as a front porch to the University, President Gabel supported the University’s athletic teams and student-athletes on the playing fields and in the classroom over the last year, stressing the importance to win in both areas, but most importantly, to win the right way. In this work, she has advanced greater visibility and impact for Athletics at the state, conference, and national levels by:

- **Frequently highlighting Athletics** and its role in the University landscape in numerous television, radio and podcast interviews, and through social media platforms, including to tout the University of Minnesota student-athletes’ record 3.33 GPA in Fall 2019;

- **Serving as a frequent guest on athletics-related podcasts and radio shows**, and serving as an Athletics Department Leadership U Speaker Series guest;

- **Supporting Athletic fundraising efforts**, from events such as Golden Gopher Fund Wine Dinner to attending the Elizabeth Lyle Robbie Stadium 20-Year Celebration;

- **Attending summer football camp practice** and speaking with the team; attending all home football games and donor pregame football tailgates; traveling to Iowa, Purdue, and Northwestern for away football games; attending men’s and women’s basketball games; attending men’s and women’s hockey games; and traveling to Pittsburgh, PA, for the NCAA Volleyball Final Four and to Tampa, FL, for the Outback Bowl;

- **Co-hosting an on-campus visit from Big 10 Commissioner** Kevin Warren and attending football practice with now former Big 10 Commissioner Jim Delaney; and

- **Successfully extending contracts** with the UMTC Athletics Director and Head Football Coach after one of the most highly successful football seasons in University history that resulted in a win in the Outback Bowl.
Other Notable Accomplishments

Over the past year, President Gabel has taken important actions to strengthen the University’s senior team, establish new labor agreements and administrative policies, and bolster the finances of University system campuses, as well as overall risk management and safety. This work included:

- **Successfully completing a national search for an Executive Vice President and Provost** with the support of a highly representative search committee and transparent search process that involved the engagement of students, faculty, and staff across the system; in addition, President Gabel elevated reporting lines and launched searches for a Vice President for Human Resources and Vice President for Student Affairs;

- **Signing four labor agreements** with unions representing University employees, including Teamsters Local 320, and AFSCME Technical, Health Care, and Clerical;

- **Directing the final stages of the University’s move to Fidelity**, the single provider of administration and recordkeeping services for the Faculty Retirement Plan, the Optional Retirement Plan (403b), and the Deferred Compensation Plan (457b), including approving the delay of the transition due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
• **Overseeing the President’s Policy Committee’s actions on numerous administrative policies:**
  — Equity and Access: Gender Identity, Gender Expression, Names and Pronouns
  — Campus and Building Closing
  — Outside Consulting and Other Commitments
  — Course Enrollment Limitations and Cancellation
  — Regents Scholarship
  — Major Events – Twin Cities Campus
  — Treasury Management Services
  — Utilizing University of Minnesota Bank Accounts
  — Establishing Change and Miscellaneous Payment Funds
  — Using Vehicles for University Business

• **Committing a $6.8M financial investment in UMD** to eliminate its sequestered debt, allowing for new investments and for the campus to focus on the future;

• **Charging the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) to conduct a review of policies and procedures** related to public access of University information, including, but not limited to, a review of current process, best practices, training and data collection, as well as to recommend improvements, if warranted;

• **Charging Senior Vice President for Finance and Operations Brian Burnett and his team to assess the University’s Public Safety and Enterprise Risk structures and processes**, including organizational structure, best practices, and current Twin Cities campus and University of Minnesota system coordination; and

• **Implementing greater safety and security measures** for the Office of the President, including the development of a new Eastcliff Security Plan.
Board of Regents Priorities

As developed during the Board of Regents Retreat in July 2019, President Gabel worked across the University system to develop plans, strategies, timelines, and definitions to advance the Board’s annual priorities, which provide form and direction to the University’s governance work and help shape the future. This important work was highlighted at Board of Regents meetings across the year and included:

- A developed plan, presented by VP of Clinical Affairs and Dean of the Medical School Dr. Jakub Tolar, noting quantifiable goals and timelines to grow the health sciences research portfolio and substantively develop the enterprise strategy for M Health Fairview;

- Strategies presented by VP for Research Chris Cramer, which seek to grow the University’s impact as a Top 10 research institution while further incentivizing and promoting the impact of research that addresses the challenges and opportunities facing Minnesota;

- Work by SVP for Finance and Operations Brian Burnett, as well as the third-party analysis by Huron Consulting, moving us towards a specific, measurable, multi-year financial framework that sustains the University’s excellence, manages affordability and student debt, and controls administrative costs;

- A clearly defined, articulated, and promoted systemwide plan to guide and measure the University’s impact, highlighted by VP for University Relations Matt Kramer through the University’s new MPact web application; and

- Deepened institutional understanding of pathways to greater faculty, staff, and student diversity and inclusion, and identified strategies across the University system.