INITIATIVE TWO:

Build a strong, university-wide culture of excellence in graduate and professional education, research, scholarship, and the creative and performing arts.

A first-rate faculty is the key to excellence in a comprehensive research university, and one of our top priorities is to recruit and retain faculty known as leaders and innovators, whose accomplishments place them among the top ranks of their peers. Many of our programs and departments have achieved national distinction through the efforts of their outstanding faculty; to achieve the level of excellence of the very best public universities, it is essential that we nurture our current successes and raise the expectations for excellence in all departments. Recognizing the growing interconnections among academic fields, we must continue to encourage programs and research activities that cut across departments and colleges. We must also continue to target our resources and seek external resources to take advantage of our special strengths and opportunities that contribute significantly to the economic and cultural growth of the region.

A university of national eminence is known also for its ability to transmit knowledge to a student body selected from among the best, who in turn become leaders in their chosen professions. A concerted campus-wide effort must be mounted to create the conditions and incentives for competing effectively for the best graduate students and for guaranteeing that they are well-educated, well-mentored and well-placed. One of the University's widely recognized strengths has been its ability to recruit and graduate a highly diverse group of graduate students, and success in this area must remain a university priority.

Specific steps:

1. Increase the number and proportion of our faculty who are regarded by their national and international peers as being among the best in their disciplines.

- Continue to elevate the standards for appointment of new faculty and the expectations for promotion and tenure of existing faculty to the level of our peers, across all academic units.
- Increase the competitiveness of our faculty compensation packages to allow us to recruit and retain the very best faculty and raise our average faculty salaries to the 75th percentile of AAU public universities (85th percentile of Carnegie I institutions).
- Increase the number of endowed faculty chairs and professorships by establishing this as a major fund raising objective of the University.
- Significantly increase the number of faculty who hold membership in national and international academies by recruiting such distinguished faculty from outside and by promoting better our existing faculty for membership in these organizations.
- Increase the assistance provided to departments to recruit and to retain greater numbers of talented faculty from under-represented groups.
- Seek additional ways to celebrate and reward faculty for their scholarly achievements,
recognizing them for the entire range of their contributions and accomplishments.

2. **Continue to improve the excellence of our best research and graduate programs while also increasing the number of programs of recognized excellence.**

- Invest a significant part of new campus resources in innovative "big impact" initiatives that will rapidly advance the University's excellence.
- Develop strategies to maximize the quality and impact of our graduate and research programs, as measured by national surveys of program excellence.
  - In the next National Research Council survey of graduate programs, using the "scholarly quality of program faculty" (SQPF) score as a measure of quality, we aim to have:
    - at least 5 doctoral programs listed in the "distinguished" category (SQPF>4.0)
    - at least 10 doctoral programs with SQPF 3.5 - 3.99
    - all of our rated doctoral programs obtain a score of at least SQPF 3.0 or higher.
  - By 2004 we aim to have the Clark School of Engineering, the Smith School of Business, the College of Education, the College of Library and Information Services, the College of Journalism, and the School of Public Affairs ranked firmly in the top 15 nationally, as measured by such assessments as the annual rankings of professional schools in US News and World Report.
- Strengthen the University's biological science programs through the selective investment of new resources in the University's multi-disciplinary BioSciences Initiative.
- Strengthen the University's research programs in the computer sciences, the information sciences, and technology and their impact on society by building on current strengths and capitalizing on our proximity to corporations and governmental laboratories that focus in this area.
- Ensure that the key programs in the liberal arts and humanities are commensurate in quality and national reputation with our leading programs in science and technology.
- Build increased strength in the behavioral and social sciences supporting research on major social and public policy issues.
- Take advantage of the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center to strengthen graduate programs in Music, Theatre, and Dance and to increase the University's engagement with the surrounding community.

3. **Increase the University's success in recruiting, developing, and placing outstanding and diverse graduate students.**

- Increase the number and size of Graduate School Fellowships through private fundraising efforts and through the allocation of additional University resources.
- Ensure that the fellowship distribution is aligned with program quality and University priorities to maximize the effectiveness of the fellowship awards in promoting excellence and diversity across a wide range of disciplines.
- Assess the competitiveness with our peers of our graduate assistant stipends and review the distribution of graduate assistant resources throughout the institution.
- Significantly improve the University's marketing of its graduate programs, especially through the
Internet, with the aim of increasing the total number of graduate school applications and graduate student selectivity.

- Improve our ability to select truly outstanding students by using diverse measures of quality for graduate admission, as appropriate to particular fields and populations.
- Streamline the graduate admissions process in the Graduate School, make greater use of electronic communication, and minimize the time required for both admission and fellowship decisions.
- Provide the learning environment, faculty mentoring, and other support for our graduate students, comparable to that provided by our peers, to help our students obtain professional placements comparable with students at other leading research institutions.
- Encourage greater participation and involvement of graduate students within the wider University community and emphasize their importance to the intellectual ambiance of the University.

4. Develop and facilitate access to scholarly information in all formats to support cutting-edge research, scholarship, teaching, and learning.

- Continue to invest in increased access to online journals and academic databases and set strategies for a transition from print to electronic holdings when and where appropriate.
- Lead the deployment of a new Library Information Management System for the USM and affiliated libraries.
- Make the recently-inaugurated Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH) into a national model for integrating cutting-edge technology into the liberal arts.