How Will We Foster Human Potential and Well Being Across the Life Course in a Diverse and Changing World?

This forum is designed to bring together scientists and scholars from a broad array of disciplines to discuss the creation of a complex research challenge area related to fostering human potential and well-being across the life course in a diverse and changing world. This overarching theme encompasses a multitude of submitted ideas that shared a common thread of improving people’s lives within a social, cultural, health, technological, and/or structural context.

This theme incorporates wide-ranging ideas from University of Minnesota faculty reflecting perspectives and approaches that can grouped into several categories: education and educational equity, health and well-being for individuals at particular points and in transitions across the lifespan, community and social relations. These ideas encompass the diversity of circumstances and experiences in human development and experiences, and incorporate varied solutions.

The education and educational equity category includes research ideas on how to address educational and achievement equity gaps across diverse individuals, schools, and communities to developing a better understanding of mathematics and transforming STEM education. Those ideas grouped into the health and well-being category range from the promotion of child and youth development, especially in at-risk children to preparing for an aging society. Those ideas included in the community and social relations category range from understanding and improving societal identities and social conflicts to harnessing data and technology for health, community, and societal benefit. Ideas for creating vibrant research communities, expanding locality and ethical orientations, and conceptualizing diversity create additional opportunities for this grand challenge.

Participants at this forum will dialogue on the definition of this broad research challenge idea with the goal of identifying innovative solutions or approaches to improving human potential and well-being across the life course. Solutions or approaches with the greatest impact on the state of Minnesota and potential for global impact are especially sought. Discussions should include the provision of greater detail on a reframed research challenge concept related to human potential and well-being across the life course that is broadly inclusive of the unique scholarly talents and strengths from across the University and potential community partners.

*Summary by members of the Provost’s Grand Challenges Research Strategies Team, October 2015*

For more on the GC Research process, visit [strategic-planning.umn.edu](http://strategic-planning.umn.edu)