

President's Weekend-5/89

Introduction

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to this President's Weekend. The academic year has just ended and we are pausing to take a breath after what has been a breathtaking year for the University.

Most of us tend to remember in terms of images...
...and the images generated from the past year are quite extraordinary...

That feeling of impending doom, leading Miami, the #1 team in the nation by 16 points with 5:28 left on the clock...

...particularly after that frustrating last second loss down at South Bend the week before...

The excitement of Rackham's Golden Anniversary in which scholars from around the country came together to discuss the remarkable impact Michigan has had on the intellectual life of this country...

Of course, my inauguration...

which most others enjoyed more than I (since I viewed it more as an execution than a coronation)
...on a beautiful fall day in which the fall colors mixed with the colors of the academic robes of the 400 delegates

Toni Morrison, holding a packed audience in Rackham spellbound for over two hours while she discussed her deeply moving novels

Leonard Bernstein, performing with the Vienna Philharmonic to celebrate his 70th birthday...and then returning to our house hold court with a large group of music students...
reminiscing, playing, singing...

Back to football again...that incredible second half down in Columbus...with John Kolesar coming back in the final moments with a spectacular catch to beat OSU

Or my birthday...in which I began with a visit to the White House to meet with President Elect Bush...

...and returned to host a dinner in Ann Arbor for Presidents Ford and Carter and the delegates from the world's democracies...

But, of course, the new year was even more exciting...

...Remember Leroy Hoard's breakaway 67 yard run that sealed Michigan's exciting come-from-behind victory over USC in the Rose Bowl...
(or Bo Derek making a surprising appearance at that pep rally at the Century Plaza...)

...What about the sight of over 10,000 students and faculty marching together, arm in arm down S. University to honor the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and to confirm Michigan's commitment to achieving new levels of understanding, tolerance, and mutual fulfillment for peoples of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

...or the CBS Morning News, broadcast live from a luxury condo in East Quad!!!
(and my interview with Kathleen Sullivan...
...4 minutes to blow a career)

...and who will ever be able to forget Rumeal Robinson stepping to the line in Seattle with 3 seconds left in overtime and calmly sinking two free throws to win the national championship against Seton Hall.
...and the Cinderella story of Steve Fisher and his team "with a mission"

The Alumni Satellite Broadcast, in which Anne hosted alumni clubs in over 50 cities to a reception in the President's House

And then the May Festival...a remarkable series of concerts with Kurt Masur and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra...ending that final night with Jesse Norman signing Strauss's Final Four Songs...and the magical moment of silence as the audience attempted to prolong the spell (and, once again back in the House, where we gave Miestro Masur a UM NCAA Championship sweatshirt)

And, of course, Spring Commencement, notable not for the dignified behavior of our students, but rather to the fact that the three extraordinary individuals we honored with honorary degrees this year all happened to be Michigan graduates.

It convinces me even more that there really something very, very special about this institution--that we seem time and time again, whether in academics, in athletics, in the performing arts,...in the achievements of our alumni.

With each passing day we have become more and more convinced that this University is really a very special place...and a very special resource to this state and the nation because of the talents, commitments, and vision of its people.

It is clear that Michigan touches the lives of many, many people in many, many important ways...

Themes of the Future

There is another image in my mind this evening however...

...and it comes from two decades ago...

...in fact, exactly 20 years ago this June 20.

When Apollo 11 set down on the Sea of Tranquility to put man on the moon.

The image is that extraordinary photo of our earth, taken by Apollo as it orbited the moon...

...and image that dramatically revealed how nations and peoples are passengers together on spaceship Earth.

The program today has focussed on a subject of great importance to Michigan, to our nation and to the University--the internationalization of nearly every aspect of our lives. And it appears that this process of globalization has only begun.

The Globalization of America

Whether through travel and communication, the arts and culture, the internationalization of commerce, capital, and labor, we will become increasingly dependent on other nations and other peoples.

Some UM signs:

Professors Ken Lieberthall and Mike Oskenberg's briefing of the nation on the extraordinary events in China. In fact, Ken was over in China with the UMAA tour group

Dean Lee Bollinger, Dean of our Law School is currently hosting an Alumni Reunion ...in Florence, Italy, for his European alumni... ...at the UM Campus in Florence...

University of 21st Century

Spacetime physics course...electronic networks

MIT, Oberlin, Vienna, Towson State, Boise State, New Mexico...

Some facts of life:

The world and our place in it have changed.

For most of our history our political and geographic isolation, abundance of resources, and technological leadership insured control over our own destinies and steady improvements in the quality of life.

Today's reality is different. The world has been transformed. No longer isolated, we are a player, still powerful, but no longer controlling, in a competitive, global market.

The fact is that a truly domestic US economy has ceased to exist.

...It is no longer relevant to speak of the Michigan economy or the American economy...or the competitiveness of Michigan industry or American industry.

Our economy...our companies...are truly international, spanning the globe...and intensely interdependent on other nations and other peoples.

In slightly more than 5 years, US trade deficit has taken us from the world's largest creditor to its largest debtor nation.

Jack Welch, CEO of GE, noted last November:

"Within the next 2 to 3 years, at most, the most important alliances will be forced in every significant global industry--medical, autos, defense, materials, and so on. Those who are slow to recognize the emergence of these global alliances or to act in forming them will find themselves locked out of the game as we enter the 1990s."

American will no longer take its know-how and apply it to low-cost natural resources from third-world countries, turn it into products, and then sell it back to them--as we do in a hierarchical economy. Rather, we'll be only one member in a global dynamic economy with tremendous network interdependency between countries.

In fact, as Robert Reich has noted in his recent article in The New Republic, a company with headquarters in the US, production facilities in Taiwan, and a marketing force spread across many nations

competes with another, similarly ecumenical company. This has extraordinary implications, since it means that we all are really part of an international labor market encompassing Asian, African, Western Europe, etc. Hence, our competitiveness as workers depends not on the fortunes of any American corporation, or any American industry, but on what function each of us serve within the global economy.

This has created dramatic discrepancies in America...

...those professions involved with the manipulation of information, so-called "symbolic-analytic services", are highly competitive in the world marketplace and seeing incomes rising rapidly.

...in sharp contrast, those involved in routine production services or routine personal services are simply no longer competitive, and will continue to suffer from decline real income levels for the foreseeable future since they are competing directly with other low-skilled workers throughout the world.

The Role of Knowledge

Key element in transformation, is the emergence of knowledge as the new critical commodity, as important as mineral ores, timber, and access to low skilled labor were at an earlier time.

This new critical commodity knows no boundaries.

It is generated and shared wherever educated, dedicated, and creative people come together...and, as we have learned, it spreads very quickly.

We are in the midst of an information revolution that is changing the basis of economic competitiveness and world power.

Today information and data flow quickly across continents, oceans, and nations.

We learn about events almost as they occur. The world is linked electronically.

As a result, the relationships between nations and the pace of change are increasing.

A global economy is not only possible, it exists.

Markets are changing and realigning. We have seen it in the far east and now we are seeing it in Europe as the continent races toward 1992, an event whose potential consequences we grossly underestimate in the US.

What's more, these new technologies magnify the effects of change. "Today the velocity of change is so great... that the tectonic plates of national sovereignty and power have begun to shift" (Walter Wriston)

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The knowledge revolution is happening worldwide and at a very rapid rate.

That new technology means economic development and trade is widely understood in developed nations who have been sharply increasing their investments in science and technology.

But less developed nations are also learning the lesson and drawing knowledge from the developed world or generating it themselves.

Brazil, India, Korea are quickly advancing along the competitive path that Japan took 30 years before.

Example:

Over past two decades, India has increased its population of scientists and engineers by tenfold!!!

A World Nation

But there is another important reason for our renewed attention to the international agenda of the University.

The US has become the destination of about half the world's immigrants Probably 10 million this decade alone...

With falling fertility rates, immigration will soon become the main determinant of the variability in our population.

Our nation continues to be nourished and revitalized by the extraordinary diversity of our population--particularly those formerly excluded such as minorities and women and by our immigrants.

Indeed, it is the continuing fluidity of society that is our greatest asset and our primary defense against the doom and gloom prophecies of America's decline.

America is evolving into the first true "world nation", with not simply just economic and political, but indeed ethnic ties to all parts of the globe!

A Future of Hope

It is astonishing to me that these global

interconnections have proceeded so swiftly. It is only twenty years ago that we caught our first glimpse of the planet earth from the surface of the moon. Perhaps in some ways that sight has helped us see ourselves for the first time as one human family.

We are no longer self-sufficient or self-sustaining. We are not immune to the shocks of the world society. We have never been more dependent on other nations and peoples.

Unfortunately, many see internationalization as a threat promising doom on gloom for our future. And indeed the cost has been great for many segments of our society from farmers and laborers to the highest reaches of corporate America. But I believe these can be seen as only temporary dislocations.

Certainly, there are threats to our prosperity and security inherent in the destabilization that comes from so rapid and profound a change in the relations among people. But think of the long term opportunity and challenge this offers! For the first time in history, we are linked together integrally, more self-conscious of our common fate than ever before. Clearly the key thing now is to learn to learn to appreciate our differences while at the same time forging some basis of common values.

We must take care not to lose perspective--

On the whole, the world is becoming more connected and more democratic.

From the moment when we first saw ourselves reflected as one world from the moon's surface back in 1969, we have been increasingly bound together through commerce, culture, arts, literature, travel, and communications.

Despite the pessimists, we have no full scale wars and we have made at least some progress in limiting the arms race.

Chances of superpower warfare are less and prospects for prosperity are good.

Michigan's Heritage

Understanding cultures other than our own will become necessary not only for personal enrichment and good citizenship, but indeed, necessary for our very survival as a nation.

If our institutions are to serve America in its role as a member of the global community, we must think and act more imaginatively, more aggressively, and more strategically to strengthen our role as truly international centers of learning.

As you have gathered today, the University has strong international programs and some of the leading specialists to be found anywhere on foreign people and places and cultures and on international issues.

Indeed, from our founding this University has been linked to the international world of scholarship. The initial vision of the University, set out by French priests in 1817, was based on law governing the Imperial University of France. Our early presidents traveled regularly to Europe gathering books and ideas and borrowing heavily from educational traditions and practices in England, Germany, and other European countries.

And from these international roots grew the distinctively American model of a public research university that has shaped our nation's system of higher education. As partners with our State and larger society, public universities such as Michigan helped to transform the Frontier and harvest its agricultural riches, and then help forge our industrial strength. Today we are an integral part of the knowledge revolution that is once again transforming our society. And we will develop our international programs in this same spirit--to provide intellectual and practical leadership to help our state and nation grasp the opportunities and challenges of internationalization

rather than allowing ourselves to be passively shaped and undermined by them.

The Challenges to Michigan

Certainly we have a long ways to go in this country to know what we need to know to participate fully as members of our human family. American knowledge of other languages and cultures is abysmally inadequate. By every measure we fall short educationally of the knowledge and skills it will take to do business, work cooperatively on common problems or advance our common ideals for humanity.

Too many of our graduates have never been exposed to a foreign language or visited a foreign country. Many have not had a chance to feel the texture of life in another era or another culture through literature and poetry or film. Some cannot locate Mexico or Egypt on a map.

Despite the intellectual richness of our campus, we suffer still from the insularity and ethnocentrism that is the heritage of a country that for much of its history has been insulated from the rest of the world and self sufficient in its economyperhaps even self absorbed

Consequently, we must reexamine the way in which we foster, manage and promote the international dimension of our educational mission.

- We must strengthen the international component of our teaching and scholarship so that it pervades the liberal arts curriculum and that of the professional schools.
- We must be mindful that knowledge is not tied to geographic regions; rather the knowledge revolution is a world wide phenomenon and science speaks a universal

language

-- We must be open to the challenge and excitement for our intellectual work in the disciplines that results from the infusion of other experiences and perspectives of other regions, cultures and traditions.

We must ensure that our students are prepared with an understanding of how the rapidity of modern communications and ease of travel will change the texture of their lives.

Above all, we must enable our students to appreciate the unique contributions to human culture which come to us from other traditions.....to communicate.. to work.. to live.. to thrive..in multicultural settings whether in this country or anywhere on the face of globe.

U of M: The University of the World

Therefore a key priority for the University of Michigan for the future is to build on the foundation of strength in international studies we have in placeand to remain in the forefront of international educational programs in languages, study abroad, faculty and student exchanges, international research collaboration. Indeed, increasingly, I believe it is the infusion of international perspectives into our disciplines and professions that will be critical.

Education, however strongly rooted in a state or nation, is a universal institution just as the language of science and scholarship is a universal language.

We occasionally attempt to develop slogans to represent key strategic thrusts...

...the University of America...or America's University

But perhaps a better slogan is

The University of Michigan:

A University **of** the World...and **for** the World...

After all, as President Marion Burton stated over a half-century ago...
"The function of the State University--of Michigan---is to serve the state
and through the state to serve the nation and the world."