

HBCU Remarks

Welcome

Welcome to the University of Michigan...

I am deeply appreciative of your willingness to
attend my inauguration tomorrow...

The inauguration of a college president is a bit
of an cross between a coronation and an execution...

In fact, I have arranged for the carolliner to play
Berlioz's "March to the Scaffold" as the Academic
Procession walks over to Hill Auditorium

Although the pomp and circumstances surrounding
an inauguration is

Stress their importance...

...to the nation...

...to research universities such as Michigan...

For the graduates you provide us...

For the models you provide us of a
nurturing, tolerant academic environment.

Importance

I would like to use this opportunity as well to stress
how important we believe your institutions are,
not only to the nation, but particularly to massive
research universities such as Michigan.

As some of you may be aware, for the past several
years I have served as Vice-Chairman of the
National Science Board's Committee on Education
and Human Resources and had the opportunity to
work with the Historically Black Colleges and

Universities in setting up important new programs such as the Minority Research Center of Excellence program.

It became clear through these efforts that your colleges will play a particularly critical role in determining the future strength of this nation in the years ahead.

Human resources

In America today we are experiencing a profound transformation of our society.

Our traditional industrial economy is shifting to a new knowledge-based economy, just as our industrial economy evolved from an agrarian society at the turn of the last century.

Today, an unprecedented explosion of knowledge marks the onset of a new era. Since people are the source of new knowledge, we will rely increasingly on a well-educated and trained work force to maintain our competitive position in the world and our standard of living at home.

Yet the US faces a manpower crisis of unprecedented proportions in the knowledge-intensive professions...just as we prepare to enter the Age of Knowledge...

- i) The demand for educated graduates is increasing rapidly...
- ii) Yet, the number of high school graduates is declining by 25%-30%
This alone will imply a shortfall of almost one million scientists and engineers within two decades.
- iii) But the situation is even more serious, since recent surveys indicate more students are turning away from knowledge-intensive and demanding majors such the liberal

arts, sciences, pre-law, pre-medicine, engineering, to "get-rich-quick" majors that promise an immediate vocational payoff.

- iv) Composition of college age population is also changing...
By 2000 30% will be composed of Blacks and hispanics...
students who have not traditionally have not had the opportunity or encouragement to pursue these knowledge-intensive careers...

NOTE: We must make special efforts to expand participation by these groups...not just because that is good social policy, but because we cannot afford to waste their talents!

And your institutions will play the key role in educating the leaders of America in the 21st Century.

Goals

But you will also play critical roles with respect to institutions such as Michigan.

Of course one of those roles will be to provide the talented graduates that will continue on to our graduate and professional schools.

Another role will be to produce graduates who will become our faculty in the years ahead.

But one of the most important roles you will play is to teach us through example of how to build more tolerant, nurturing, and supportive multicultural environments on our campuses.

Let me explain why this is so important to us today.

The Michigan Mandate

Many of us have become firmly convinced that the ability of the University to achieve and sustain a campus community recognized for its racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity will determine not only our capacity to serve our state and nation and the world, but indeed will become the cornerstone of our efforts to achieve excellence in teaching, research, and service in the years ahead.

We believe the University has a mandate to build a model of a multicultural community for our nation...an environment which is supportive of all individuals, regardless of race, creed, national origin, gender, or sexual preference...

Which values and respects and indeed, draws its intellectual strength from the rich diversity of peoples of different races, cultures, religions, nationalities, and beliefs.

Indeed, we view this commitment to the achievement of diversity as the key element in our efforts to build a University for the 21st Century.

Imperatives

Fundamental Premise: Our racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity will be a critical element of the University's ability to achieve excellence in teaching and research while serving our state, nation, and world in the years ahead.

We believe that

America of the 21st Century will be the most pluralistic, multicultural nation on earth.

In this future, full participation of underrepresented minorities will not be just a matter of equity and social justice.

It will be the key to the future strength and prosperity of America, since our country cannot afford to waste the human talent represented by its minority populations.

America cannot afford the loss of this human potential, cultural richness, and leadership.

If we do not create a nation that mobilizes the talents of all our citizens, we are destined for a diminished role in the global community and more tragically, we will have failed to fulfill the promise of democracy on which this nation was founded.

This is probably the most serious challenge facing American society. While it is true that universities cannot solve this problem alone, we must not use this fact as an excuse for doing nothing.

The Challenge of Change

Institutions do not change quickly and easily any more than do the societies of which they are a part. We are addressing the most urgent and difficult issue confronting our nation. To make progress, we need both a commitment and a plan.

To make progress toward our goal of diversity, universities must move away from their present reactive, and uncoordinated efforts toward a

more strategic approach designed to achieve long-term systemic change.

Efforts that focus only on affirmative action...

that is, on access and retention...on representation...rapidly become mired down in bureaucracy and will inevitably fail...

Instead, we must strive to achieve permanent and fundamental change in our institutions.

We must link diversity and excellence as the two most compelling goals...recognizing that these goals are not only complementary, but will be tightly linked in the multicultural society characterizing our nation and the world in the years ahead.

In our efforts, we must take the long view that will require both patient but persistent leadership

Progress will require sustained vigilance and hard work as well as a great deal of help and support.

To make progress, we will need not only commitment and support...we will need a strategy, a plan, designed to achieve fundamental and permanent change of our institution.

Mission and Goals

1. Commitment:

To recognize that diversity and excellence are complementary and compelling goals for the University and to make a firm commitment to their achievement.

2. Representation:

To commit to the recruitment, support, and success of underrepresented minority groups among our students, faculty, staff, and leadership.

3. Environment:

To build on our campus an environment which seeks, nourishes, and sustains diversity and pluralism. We must insist that the dignity and worth of every individual is valued and respected.

Concluding Remarks

The plan is simply a map showing our institutional direction and commitment to a destination.,

However, the plan will continue to evolve through continuing interaction with our community, and as we gain experience and insight into how to improve or expand on it.

What cannot change is our determination to achieve our goal of a pluralistic, multicultural university appropriate for America of the 21st Century.

And what also cannot change is my commitment to work to build strong bonds between your institutions, so critical to America, and the research universities which will become so dependent on graduates and your programs.

Once again, welcome to Michigan!

And I look forward to seeing you tomorrow...
after my execution.