

# **Institutional Saga**

# How to be a successful university president

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Rule No. 1: Be well informed (acclimated or indoctrinated) to the history, traditions, and cultures of your university.

Universities are NOT like Washington, adapting to a new administration, or a corporation, adapting to a new CEO.

Universities are based on long standing traditions and continuity, evolving over many generations (in some cases, even centuries) with very particular sets of values, traditions, and practices.

# Institutional Saga

“An institutional legend or saga, located between ideology and religion, partakes of an appealing logic on one hand and sentiments similar to the spiritual on the other. Universities develop over time such an intentionality about institutional life, a saga, which then results in unifying the institution in shaping its purpose.”

“An institutional saga may be found in many forms, through mottoes, traditions, and ethos. It might consist of long-standing practices or unique roles played by an institution, or even in the images held in the minds (and hearts) of students, faculty, and alumni.”

Burton R. Clark, UCLA

# Some Examples

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- Yale University (my own alma mater)
- Harvard University
- MIT
- Virginia
- Notre Dame
- Big Ten universities
- Stanford University

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**this week** [Calendar](#): click here to view Yale University's calendar of events

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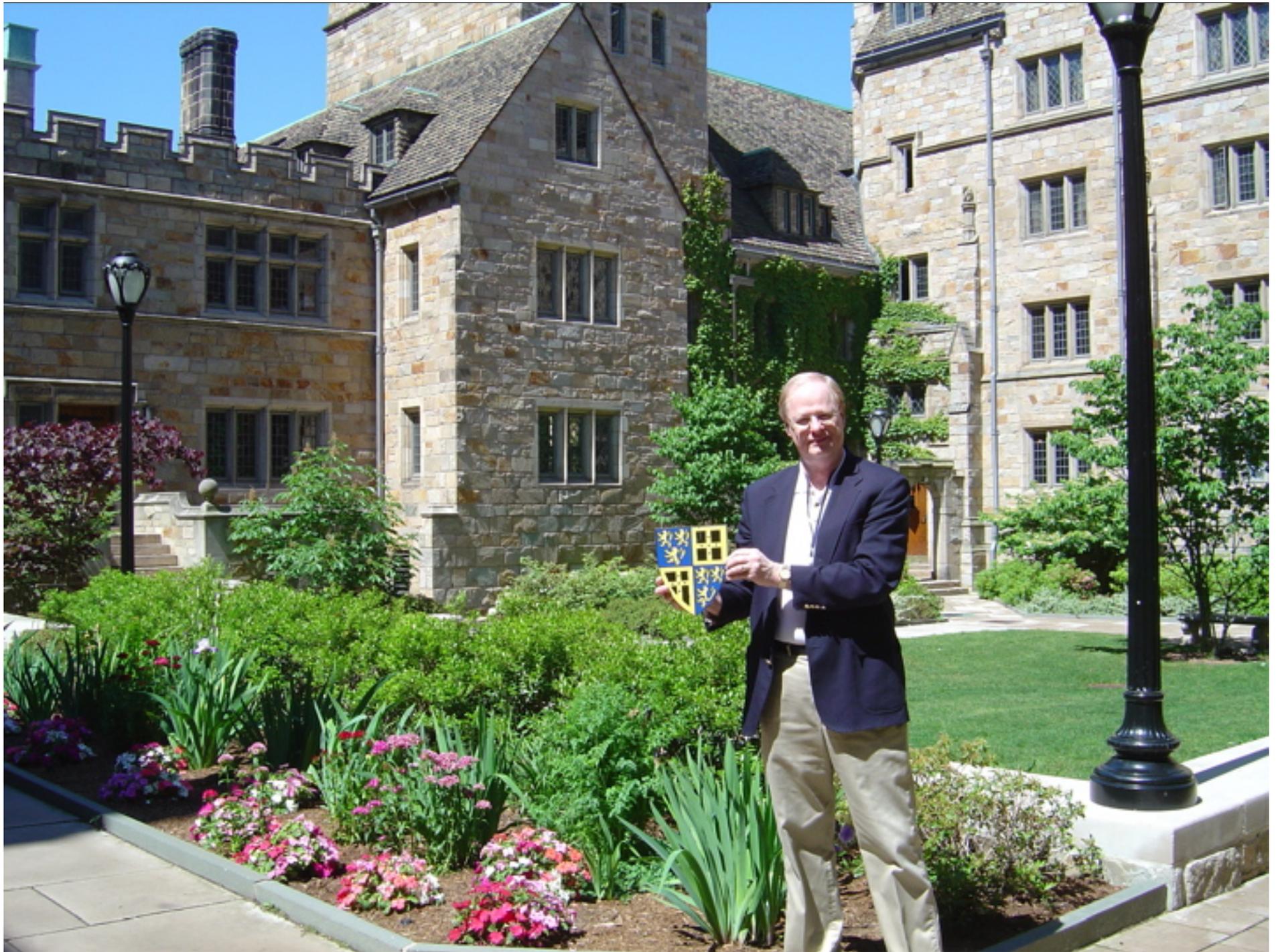


















# Leadership?

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- Willam Howard Taft
- George H. Bush
- George W. Bush
- William Clinton

# Leadership?

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- Willam Howard Taft
- George H. Bush
- George W. Bush
- William Clinton
- Gerald R. Ford

# Leadership?

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- Willam Howard Taft
- George H. Bush
- George W. Bush
- William Clinton
- Gerald R. Ford
- (and Joe Lieberman, John Kerry, Howard Dean, and Hillary Clinton...)









JAMES  
ROWLAND  
ANGELL

BORN BURLINGTON  
VERMONT  
MAY 8. 1869

DIED NEW HAVEN  
CONNECTICUT  
MARCH 4. 1949



# Harvard University

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## Cold boat



A frozen Charles River leaves vessels stranded on the snow-covered dock of [Newell Boathouse](#). During warmer days the Charles hosts a variety of recreational and competitive boating activities, including Harvard's [crew teams](#). Harvard [Athletics](#) is the largest Division I program in the nation.

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January 7, 2004

**Crimson turns blue as B.B. King visits Harvard**  
Blues legend teaches and entertains during 'History of Urban Blues' class at the Extension School.

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### In Other News

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wednesday, january 5, 2005



[massachusetts institute of technology](http://massachusetts.institute.of.technology)

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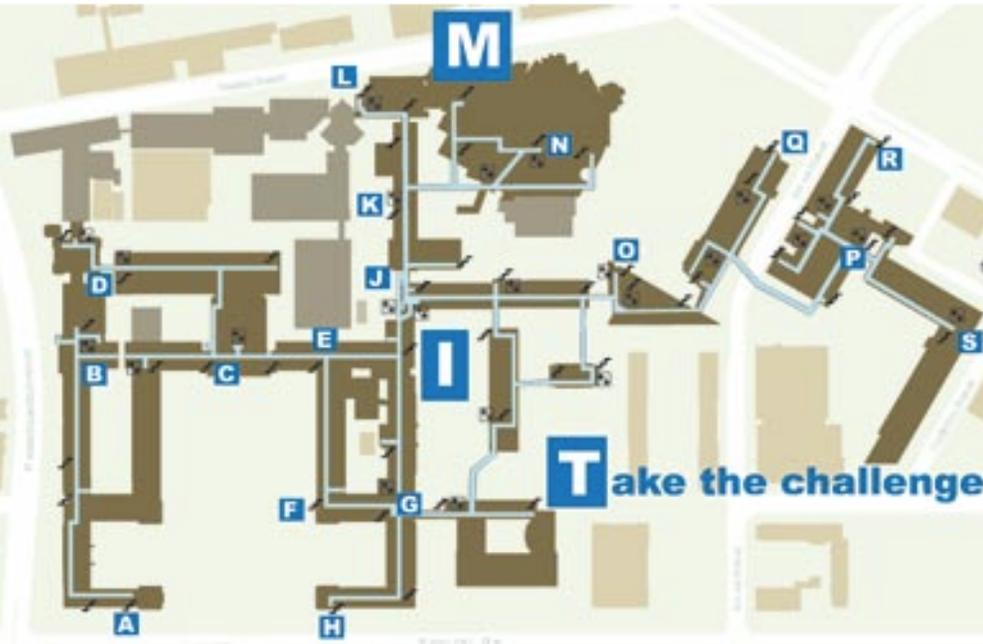
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spotlight: **get fit in the infinite**  
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today's homepage: Kim Schive and Jonathan Rissmeyer





















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Wed., January 07, 2004

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> The Founding

The Code of Honor

A Reconstructed University

The New Century

Two Wars

Changing Times

Best Public University

By  
Susan Tyler Hitchcock  
(Grad Arts & Sciences)



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# The Founding

Jefferson set to work on building plans that would mirror his philosophical vision. For Jefferson, the college experience should take place within an "academical village," a place where shared learning infused daily life. Plans were developed for ten Pavilions—stately faculty homes with living quarters upstairs and classrooms downstairs—attached to two rows of student rooms and connected by an inward-facing colonnade. Each Pavillion was identified with a subject to be studied and inhabited by the professor who taught that subject.



**The Pavilions originally housed faculty and classrooms.**

At the head of the shared lawn would stand the library (not, as in most other colleges and universities of the time, a chapel), its dome shape inspired by Rome's Pantheon and symbolic of the enlightened human mind. The plans grew to include two more colonnades of student rooms facing outwards and attached to a set of "hotels" where private businessmen served food for the students.

Jefferson corresponded with scholars in America and Europe, seeking the best faculty to teach in the areas of philosophy, arts, foreign languages, science, law, and medicine. Construction and transatlantic travel delayed the date of opening, but in March 1825, the University of Virginia opened to serve its first 123 students.

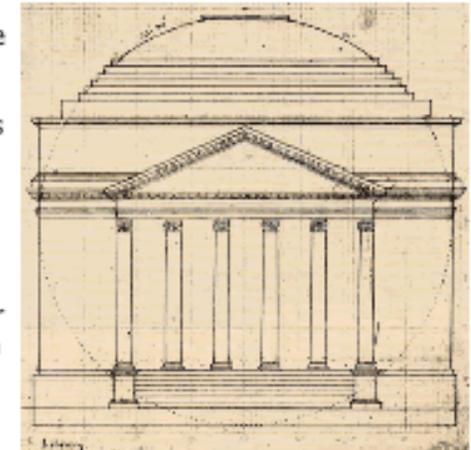


**Edgar Allan Poe attended U.Va. in 1826-27.**

For more than its first year of operation, Thomas Jefferson was a living legacy among University students and faculty. Each Sunday, he hosted students for dinner at Monticello. Among those students was Edgar Allan POE, a University student in 1826. POE was among the students, too, who journeyed up the mountain to pay their respects at the funeral of their University's founder, who died on July 4, 1826.



**Thomas Jefferson**



**Jefferson's design for the Rotunda echoed the design of the Pantheon in Rome.**



## Short History of U.Va.

The Founding

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Best Public University

# The Code of Honor

In the early years, most University of Virginia students came from plantations of the middle Atlantic and Southern states. Independent and often cocksure, these students lived a rowdy life, bound to provoke disciplinary action. The University's Board of Visitors, in those first months led by Jefferson himself, began articulating laws limiting student behavior—an action Jefferson regretted, revering instead the ideal of student self-government.

On the night of November 12, 1840, a masked student shot and killed John A. G. Davis, beloved professor of law. Sobered students agreed to a plan whereby students "vouched" for one another, agreeing to report misbehavior. In the same spirit, University faculty established an "honor pledge" on examinations, agreeing to trust students when they pledged that they had "neither received nor given assistance" on their schoolwork. Over the years students at the University of Virginia stepped up to the ideals held by Jefferson. According to the rules of the nation's oldest student-run Honor System, students must pledge not to lie, cheat, or steal, and must agree to report anyone doing so to a court of their peers.

Today that same Honor System is alive and well at the University of Virginia, frequently coming under scrutiny by both student leaders and the full student body, always affirmed in its reliability and importance through results of student referenda.

By the late 1850s, the University was the "pride of Virginia" and the "head of Southern colleges." Courses in engineering had been added to those in liberal arts, medicine, and law, available from the beginning. Enrollment had grown so that in 1852, an Annex was added to the central Rotunda, providing more classroom and meeting space.

The University, unlike many other Southern schools, stayed open through the Civil War. In March 1865, Union General George A. Custer marched troops into Charlottesville. Faculty and community leaders met Custer at the corner of the Grounds and convinced him to spare the University. Union troops camped on the Lawn and ravaged many of the Pavilions but, without any bloodshed, marched on four days later.

**"On my honor,  
I pledge that I  
have neither given  
nor received help  
on this assignment."**

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Matt Cashore

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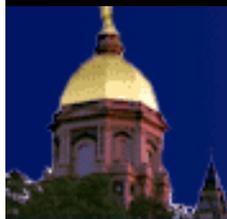
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Notre Dame, Indiana 46556  
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 November 27, 2004 • 8:00 PM EST  
 Memorial Coliseum • Los Angeles, CA

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Weis Hopes to End Notre Dame's Misery Quickly

Carroll Says He's not



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## Notre Dame Stadium



- [Stadium Has Legendary History](#)
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Notre Dame Stadium, maybe the most renowned college football facility in the nation, now qualifies as one of the most up to date as well, thanks to a major addition and renovations that boosted its capacity to more than 80,000 beginning with the 1997 campaign.



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## Rockne Heritage Fund

### Rockne Heritage Fund

The Rockne Heritage Fund is the first athletics annual fund ever named for the famed Notre Dame football coach, the first fund designated solely for all sports at Notre Dame, and already the most prominent fund created to improve the experience of the entire student-athlete population at the University.

### Why the Rockne Heritage Fund?

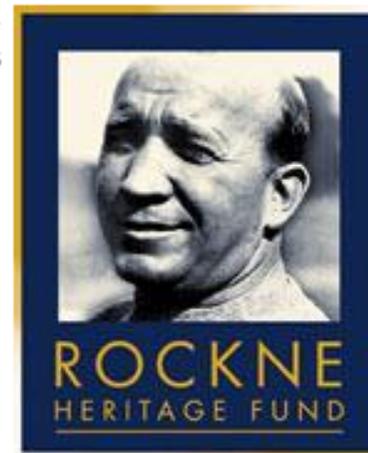
The current cost of an athletic grant-in-aid at Notre Dame is approximately \$37,000; and in fact, grants-in-aid are the largest single line item in the athletics budget. Meanwhile, over the last 25 years, the University's varsity athletics program has doubled in size- from 13 to 26 sports- resulting in a grant-in-aid shortfall.

Introduced two years ago, the Rockne Heritage Fund is geared to:

- Offset the growing cost of funding these scholarships.
- Give every coach the ability to recruit the best and the brightest.
- Offer every student-athlete the opportunity to compete on a national championship team.

The University's athletic tradition may be unparalleled, but each year the competition gets tougher, the recruiting more aggressive.

All Notre Dame alumni, parents and friends interested in supporting Notre Dame athletics are encouraged to make a gift to the Rockne Heritage Fund. There is no minimum donation required.



# ILLINOIS

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

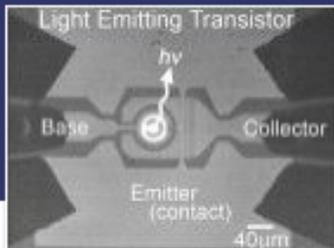


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College of Applied Life Studies  
Institute of Aviation  
College of Business  
College of Communications  
College of Education  
College of Engineering  
College of Fine and Applied Arts

## Calendar

07 Jan Men's Basketball vs. Ohio State  
08 Jan Women's Basketball vs. Ohio State  
10 Jan Men's Basketball vs. Purdue  
11 Jan East Central Illinois Youth Orchestra

view campus calendar

## Announcements

Winter break ride service  
Willard Airport raises security due to orange alert  
Host a Korean student for the spring semester

### From the Chancellor

Congratulations to both 2003 Nobel Laureates  
Chancellor's statement on the Nov. 13 Board meeting  
Cross-campus initiatives offer new courses  
Chancellor's Recent Remarks

Graduate College  
Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations  
College of Law  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Graduate School of Library and Information Science  
College of Medicine at Urbana-Champaign  
School of Social Work  
College of Veterinary Medicine

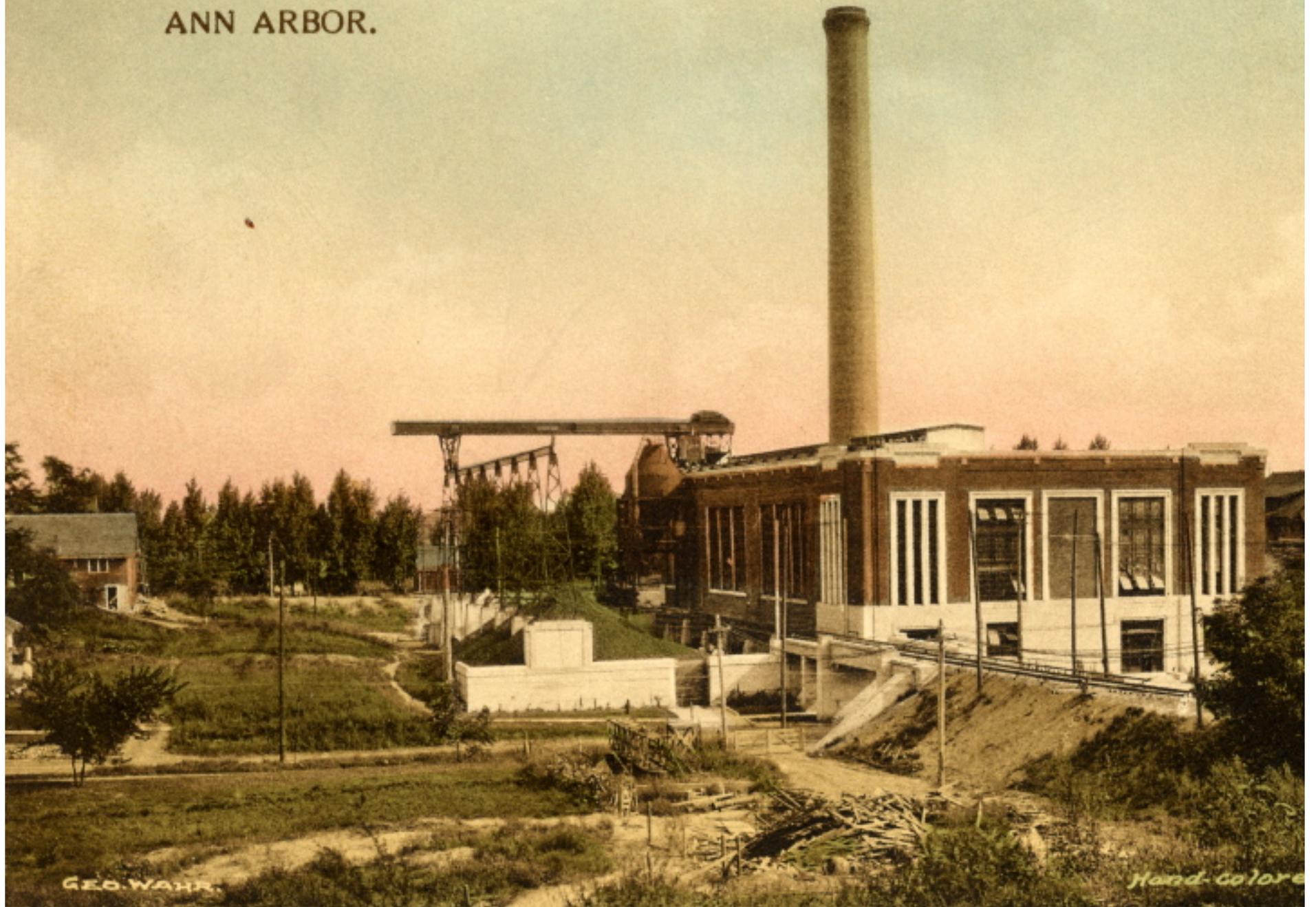
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## News & Events

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**Blood donations needed:** Blood banks throughout the Bay Area, including the Stanford Blood Center, are asking for immediate blood donations to boost critically low blood supplies. In the aftermath of the holiday season and with many of their regular blood donors sick with the flu, blood banks are seeing near-record deficits of blood. [MORE](#)

**Online student journals:** Two undergraduates in Berlin and Santiago began posting journals on the Web site of Stanford's Campaign for Undergraduate Education (CUE) this month, joining a senior who has been documenting the progress of her undergraduate research project since last fall. The journals highlight programs supported by the \$1 billion campaign. [MORE](#)

**Hudson River School:** 55 masterpieces of American landscape that helped shape our national identity. These paintings are from the nation's oldest museum, including works by Thomas Cole, Frederic Church, and Albert Bierstadt. Cantor Arts Center through January 18. [MORE EVENTS](#)











# A Warning to University Presidents

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Although university presidents can influence the saga of their university, they also must recognize that these characteristics provide the framework for their role, capable both of enhancing and constraining their actions.

Successful presidents are attentive to an institution's saga, carefully aligning their own tenure of leadership with its elements.

Presidents either ignorant or dismissive of the institutional saga of their university have little impact and rarely last more than a brief period.

