

Opening Remarks

When I agreed to come over 2 years ago

as Provost, it was because I believed the UM would face a period of unusual opportunity during the 1990s...a period in which our society would become ever more knowledge-intensive... dependent upon educated people and their ideas... and hence ever more dependent upon the research university.

I also believed it would be a time of great

challenge...

- i) as the nature of American society changes rapidly... as we become ever more diverse and pluralistic...
- ii) as America becomes internationalized...part of the global community
- iii) as more and more institutions would compete for a declining pool of resources...students, faculty, and financial resources
- iv) as our diverse constituencies expected, indeed, demanded, more and more from our universities...
- v) and as changing intellectual currents--the nature of a liberal education--the balance between disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship--buffeted our institutions

In such a future, I believed it was simply not sufficient

for the University to respond passively to these opportunities, challenges, and responsibilities. Rather, I believe that it was time that the University seized control of its own destiny...that it chart a course to take it into the 21st Century.

And that has been job the for last several years...

For while one generally thinks of the Provost as the chief operating officer of the University, in fact, much of my time has been spent leading a process designed to look far into the future...10, 20, 30 years or more...to determine the possibilities for this University...what it is...what it could become...indeed, what it must become

I and my colleagues have meet with students

faculty and staff, with people throughout the state and the nation, to listen and to learn the process of charting a course for the University into this future of opportunity, challenge, and responsibility.

We sense the extraordinary quality and

excitement "out in the trenches"...among the faculty staff, and students of this University...individuals deeply committed to teaching, scholarship, and serving this state and the nation...

We began to understand more clearly the

very special nature of the University--of the extraordinary intellectual breadth and diversity of teaching and research on the Ann Arbor campus... of the deep commitments of our Flint and Dearborn campuses to serve their regional communities, even as they respond to the needs of the state.

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.

As I and my colleagues have become ever more

deeply involved in this process over the past two years, we have become ever more convinced that the University today faces a pivotal moment in its history... a fork in the road...

Taking the path in one direction will, with dedication

and commitment, preserve the University as a distinguished-- indeed, a great--university, but only one among many such institutions.

However there is another path...a path that would

require great vision and courage in addition to dedication and commitment...in which the University would seek not only to sustain its quality and distinction, but it would seek to achieve leadership as well.

We believe the University could...and should...

accept its heritage of leadership in public higher education... that the 1990s and beyond could be a time similar to that extraordinary period in the late 19th century when the University of Michigan was a primary source for much of the innovation and leadership for higher education.

In a sense, I and my colleagues believe the University

has the opportunity to influence the development of a new paradigm of what the research university will be in 21st Century America...a new model capable of responding to the changing needs of both our state and our nation. But this will require clear vision, an unusual commitment to excellence, and strong leadership...

Leadership capable of working with the University

community and those throughout the state and the nation that depend on us, to develop and articulate an exciting, challenging, and compelling mission for Michigan as it prepares to enter the 21st century leadership capable of identifying and articulating an exciting, challenging, and compelling mission for the

And then to unite the University community...and

those who support and depend upon us...in a common effort to pursue these goals.

I, and my colleagues, are absolutely convinced

that the future can be a time of great excitement for the University...a time in which it can not only provide leadership for higher education in America, but can develop new ways to serve the State of Michigan and its people ever more effectively.

I believe firmly in a future of leadership for

the University. And I believe the people of the State of Michigan expect...and indeed, deserve... nothing less!