

Inauguration 8.2

Possible Titles:

The Challenge of Change: The Opportunity for Leadership
Challenges for Today; Opportunities for Tomorrow

Introduction

Governor Blanchard, Distinguished Guests,
Members of the Board of Regents, Faculty, Students
and Staff, Alumni (and Friends)

It is a great honor and privilege for me to be able to serve
my University and my State...

In a sense, this marvelous institution embodies the hopes and
dreams, the commitment and stewardship of

almost ten generations of Michigan citizens.

To be chosen as its 11th president is not only a great honor
and privilege; it is also a formidable responsibility to
the people of this State--and indeed, the nation and the world.

Actually, I should correct myself here, for I am really
only the "approximately 11th" president of the University.

In that hectic period following the announcement
of my appointment as President-Designate, I received the
following electronic mail message from two distinguished
historians:

"Congratulations. ...

"Do you know that you are not the 11th president of the
University? For some reason, the Regents did not renumber
the presidents in 1929 when they changed the date for the
founding of the University from 1837 to 1817. There is no
doubt, if the University of Michigan began in 1817, that
our first president was John Monteith, who was so appointed
and so signed his letters. You are the 12th president,
not the 11th."

"As 11th or 12th president, you have our support. Best wishes."
Peg and Nick Steneck

Hence, perhaps I should be regarded as the 11.4th president

Michigan Presidents

Whether 11th or 12th, the fact remains that in
the 170 year history of the University, it has
had remarkably few presidents...

Hence, it is both a manageable and a mandatory
task for any new president to read carefully
the inauguration addresses of his predecessors

Earlier Inauguration Themes

Was impressed by how each responded to the times...
and set the theme for the subsequent administration...

3 + Harold Shapiro

Who, in his address "Civic and Servant: The Role of the University"
articulated the delicate balance between serving
and challenging society, even as he prepared the
University to face a future of limited resources
with a firm commitment to sustaining its quality.

Robben W. Fleming:

In his address "The University and the Humane Citizen",
stressed the important and unifying values of the
University which would be so essential to preserving
the nature of an academic community during a period
of unrest and confrontation.

Harlan Hatcher

In his address "A Legacy, and a Call to Action"
Prepared the University to face a time of extraordinary
growth, in response to the surging population and
needs of this state...

Burton

I was particularly struck by the address of Marion LeRoy Burton who assumed the presidency of the University shortly after the end of the First World War...

Perhaps it was natural I would be attracted to Burton...after all, he was 45 years old...

he was a tall redhead...

and a graduate of Yale University...

and his wife founded the Faculty Women's Club...

But the real attraction was his eloquent description of the character, role, and mission of the public university.

Burton ventured to give a very simple and direct answer to the question of "What do we conceive to be the function of the State University?"

"The function of the State University is to serve the state and through the state to serve the nation and the world."

The Historical Role of the Public University

To serve...perhaps the most unique theme of higher education in America...

For the bonds between the university and society are particularly strong in this country...

Our institutions are responsible to, shaped by, and draw their agenda from the communities that founded them...

Perhaps this is nowhere more apparent than in our State of Michigan and with its institutions...

For example, the founding principle of this institution, can be found in those familiar words from the Northwest Ordinance above Angell Hall:

"Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."

And perhaps it was appropriate that Michigan

a state with seemingly infinite resources of fur, timber, iron, and copper...

a state of boundless confidence in the future...

should play such a leadership role in developing the models of higher education which would later serve American society.

For while the University of Michigan was not the first of the state universities, it nevertheless is regarded as the model of the true public university, responsible and responsive to the needs of the people who founded and supported it, even as it sought to achieve quality equal to that of the most distinguished private institutions.

So too, our sister institution, Michigan State University, was really the primary stimulus for the Morrill Act and the prototype of the great land grant university that has served America so well...

The State of Michigan, through these institutions and others which have arisen since, has provided a model of how higher education serves society...

i) through the education they provide for their citizens

ii) through their production of the scholars, professionals, and leaders needed by society

iii) through the research and scholarship necessary to generate new knowledge

iv) through the public service they provide across a broad range of societal needs

v) and through their role as independent and responsible critics of society, the status quo...

These institutions grew up with our State...responding to the every changing needs and aspirations of its people...

i) First as it sought to tame the frontier

- ii) Then as it progressed through the industrial revolution
- iii) The theme of the evolving role and nature of the University appears once again in Burton's address, since the Great War had just ended, and America was facing a future as a world power
- iv) And then respond once again to the needs of a surging population of the mid-20th Century... the needs for economic development and diversification in recent years...

Yet the strength of our State, its capacity to build and sustain such extraordinary institutions, lies not in looking to the past, but rather in its ability to look to the future...to take the actions and make the investments in the present that would yield prosperity and well-being for its people for tomorrow...

Hence, as I assume the responsibilities of leading this institution, it seems both appropriate and important that we look ahead...to determine what the themes of our future will be...and how this institution must respond.

(Hence, now is not the time to congratulate ourselves on our past...but a time rather to look to the future...to determine the challenges before our society...and hence the challenges before our institutions)

Challenges for Today--Opportunities for Tomorrow

Themes of the Future

Such a perspective is important for another reason, however, since this is an usual moment in history...
 The students we are educating today will spend the majority of their lives in the 21st century...
 Yet most of us...and our faculties...are products of the 20th Century...
 Furthermore, the structure of the American university as we know it today is a product of the 19th Century!
 And yet the American society we serve has changed dramatically over the last century...and continues to change today at an ever-accelerating pace.
 It is therefore appropriate and important to ask:
 Is the university as we know it today really prepared to educate the citizens and serve the society of the 21st Century?
 Instead, perhaps we should look first into the future to determine both the type of world in which our students will spend their lives...and for which our institutions must be prepared to respond.
 While the future is uncertain, there are three themes that will clearly dominate America of the 21st Century

- i) pluralism
- ii) internationalization
- iii) knowledge

1. Demographic Change: Diversity and pluralism

America is changing rapidly...

By 2020, one of three Americans will be a person of color.

By 2000, one-third of college-age students will be from these groups

By 2000, 47% of our school children (K-12) will be Black or Hispanic

There seems little doubt that America of the 21st century will probably be the most pluralistic, multicultural nation on earth...and perhaps in history...

Note: It is important to realize here that 21st Century America will NOT be a mixing pot in which all cultures are homogenized into a uniform blend. Rather, it will be pluralistic...composed of peoples of vastly different backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs...peoples who seek to retain their cultural roots...to maintain their differences.

Our nation will face a challenge of diversity and pluralism in the years ahead that will determine our strength and vitality .

Full participation of underrepresented minorities is not just a matter of equity and social justice. It will be the key to the future strength and prosperity of American, 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 a social turmoil unequaled at any time in our history.

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

As both a reflection and leader of society at large, higher education has a special challenge and responsibility to develop effective models of multicultural, pluralistic communities.

We must strive to achieve new levels of understanding tolerance, and mutual fulfillment for peoples of diverse racial and cultural backgrounds.

2. The Internationalization of America

It will be a future in which America will become "internationalized"... in which every aspect of American life must be viewed from the broader context of participation in the global community... as America becomes a "world nation", with ethnic ties to every part of the globe...

Some signs...

- Communications, travel, smaller world
- Internationalization of commerce and industry...
- Security and interdependence...
- Nuclear weapons....

The "shrinking globe" phenomenon suggests that understanding cultures other than our own is necessary for good citizenship.

Some facts of life:

- Market for nearly all significant manufacturing industries has become world-wide
- The fact is, a truly domestic US economy has ceased to exist. Today, imports and exports represent about 10% of GNP... 70% of goods we produce compete directly with foreign goods.
- In slightly more than 5 years, US trade deficit has taken us from the world's largest creditor to its largest debtor nation.

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

One-third of annual population growth is immigration

America is evolving into the first true "world nation", shifting rapidly away from Eurocentricity into a society with strong ethnic ties to all parts of the globe--

with a growing focus on the nations of the Pacific Rim.
US is 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.
Among the University's many responsibilities and priorities, where does
one rank our responsibility to the world at large, the global village?
If the UM is to prepare to correctly position itself for an
increasingly polycentric world, it must begin to think more
imaginatively, more strategically.

3. The Age of Knowledge

Looking back over history, one can identify certain
abrupt changes, discontinuities, in the nature,
the very fabric of our civilization...
The Renaissance, the Age of Reason, the Age
of Discovery, the Industrial Revolution
There are many who content that our society is
undergoing yet another such dramatic change...
As Erich Bloch, Director of the National Science Foundation
puts it, we are entering a new age, an "Age of
Knowledge"
The signs are all about us.
Our traditional industry economy is shifting to a new
knowledge-based economy, just as our industrial
economy evolved from an agrarian society at the
turn of the century.
Industrial production is steadily switching away from
material and labor intensive products and processes
to knowledge intensive processes:
New ideas and concepts are exploding forth
at ever increasing rates...
Concepts which have shaken apart the
classical foundations of knowledge...
the theory of relativity
the uncertainty principle
the molecular foundations of life...
genetic engineering...
Radical critiques of fundamental premises,
scholarship, and culture by feminists,
minorities, and third world scholars.
Obscure, yet profound, new ways to
approach knowledge such as
Deconstructionism
Knowledge Engineering
A future in which we rapidly evolve from a resource- and
labor-intensive society to a knowledge-intensive society,
in which intellectual capital...educated people and their
ideas...become the keys to our prosperity, security,
and well-being.
It is rapidly becoming apparent that America's great
research universities, as the primary sources of
new knowledge and those who can apply it, will
hold the key to our collective prosperity and well-being
in the age of knowledge that is our future.

The Need for a New Paradigm

The themes of
diversity and pluralism...
the internationalization of America...
the Age of Knowledge
Challenges, to be sure...but also great opportunities...
The university as we know it today,
its missions of teaching, research, and service...

have been shaped by the needs of an America
of the past...
triad of teaching, research, and service...but
Yet our nation, just like our state, is changing rapidly...
Hence, is it not appropriate to question whether our
present concept of the research university,
developed largely to serve a homogenous,
domestic, industrial society...must not evolve
rapidly if we are to serve the highly pluralistic,
knowledge-intensive, world nation that will be
America of the 21st Century.

Of course, many over the past several years have
suggested that the traditional paradigm of the
public university must evolve to respond to the
changes that will confront higher education in the
years ahead...

But will a gradual evolution of our traditional paradigm
be sufficient...or, instead, is it now time for a
more dramatic, indeed, revolutionary shift in
the paradigm of the contemporary public
university...similar in many ways to the revolutionary
paradigm shifts that appear to characterize the
birth of new knowledge itself.

Further, rather than the paradigm serving simply to permit replication,
the new paradigm of the research university for the 21st Century
will clearly be an object for further articulation and specification
and refinement.

The challenge of change

There is one other theme of the future which
I can predict with some certainty...and
that is its character of change and uncertainty itself!
(An optimist is one who views the future as uncertain!)

It will be a future in which permanence and stability
are discarded in favor of flexibility and creativity...
in which the only certainty will be the presence of
continual change...

To be sure, change is not a predictable process...indeed
one of the more interesting discoveries of contemporary
physics has been that complex systems generally
change in high nonlinear, sometimes discontinuous,
and frequently random ways...
and changes in society or in its institutions have
similar features.

Just as with other institutions in our society, those
universities that will thrive will be those that are
capable not only of responding to this future of
change...but, indeed, have the capacity to
manage change.

One can argue that such renewal and change
are essential both to the achievement and
the sustaining of excellence.

It may well be that the renewal of the role, mission, values
and goals of our institutions is the greatest challenge
of all before higher education...

What are the important themes that we should embrace
as we prepare for this future of change...

Key Themes

The Commitment to Quality
Of course, one of the canonical invariants, the constants
that will allow us to respond to a future of change
is an unrelenting commitment to quality...

This will require that we also commit ourselves to focusing resources to achieve excellence...since in a future of limited resources, quality must inevitably dominate the breadth and capacity of our programs.

So too, must we recognize that, over time, the distinction of our institutions will be determined by their academic excellence...the quality of their teaching and their scholarship.

And we must also recognize that in our quest for excellence, arrogance and elitism has no place...

A Return to Fundamental Values

Of course, there are other important values that will provide anchors from which change and renewal can occur...

Of course, academic institutions usually focus first on intellectual values...characters of the mind....

- The seeking of wisdom
- Discipline of the mind
- Respect for reasoned conclusions
- Intellectual integrity
- Freedom of inquiry

While these are of course essential in any university, there are also other sets of values which we must not ignore:

Values of moral character:

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Truthfulness
- Nonviolence
- Tolerance

Values of a civilized society:

- Compassion, Caring, Kindness
- Tolerance and respect
- Collegiality, civility, and community

The All-Important "C-Words"

In a future characterized by rapid and unpredictable change, a future dominated by the themes of pluralism, internationalization, and knowledge, it seems clear that our universities will increasingly become the crucibles in which the new ideas and social structures capable of responding to this future are created.

But we must take care that the ferment and controversy that always surrounds the birth of new ideas does not tear apart our communities.

We must recognize that in this future of change, other important "C-words" will provide the bonds that allow us to function as a community of scholars, dedicated to serving the society that supports us.

The C Words

- Community, comity, compassion
- Caring, concern, comforting
- Cooperation, communication, civility

Non C words

- Competition, contempt, coldness
- Compliance, control, command

This is particularly true in meritocracies such as universities
Academic institutions are profoundly people-dependent
Hence, the key to excellence is attracting and retaining the outstanding students, faculty, and staff, and providing them with the environment

and encouragement to push to the limits of their abilities, and then getting out of their way!

However, in striving for a culture

Which stresses excellence, achievement, and excitement...which removes constraints from talented people and encourages them to "go for it"!

Do we also run the risk of losing that sense of collegiality, that sense of a scholarly community attempting to focus its collective wisdom on the great problems of our times?

As we attempt to build stronger and stronger programs in the traditional disciplines, do we also create strong centrifugal forces which tend to pull the various components of the University to the periphery and diminish its core?

It is both a challenge...yet also an important theme of the modern university to search for ways to unite us through shared values and goals this institution.

For example, in an intellectual sense through integration of academic disciplines, the professions, and the arts into a more self-confident academic community, a community in which the human mind is brought boldly to bear on the most enduring questions that confront us.

For that reason, we are convinced that we must look for experiences beyond the academic process to bring people together...to establish new bonds of friendship and understanding.

The Commitment to Service

And finally, of course, the theme of service to society must continue to be the theme which shapes our institutions.

Public institutions must acknowledge and embrace public service as an essential component of their mission.

It is true that today's public university is more heavily involved than ever in public service activities, ranging from economic development to health care delivery to strengthening inner city schools.

But the theme of change also applies to our service activities.

The public service component of an institution's mission is not immutable. It has changed in the past, and will change in the future--as will the needs and expectations of society.

Since no institution has the resources to provide all of the services society seeks, we must choose carefully and respond in ways that are more effective and appropriate.

And, we must keep in mind that our institutions can best serve society when we channel our public service activities through our academic programs, through our teaching and research, in a way that aligns naturally with our primary missions.

The Challenges Before Us

A future of change...a time of challenge...

challenges to our institution...

and challenges to each and every one of us...

require each of us and our institutions to respond

To the Administration of the University...
its Regents, Executive Officers, and Deans
The stewardship of this marvelous institution is
a heavy responsibility...It requires total
dedication and commitment on your part.
Yet it is also the case that universities are very
fragile institutions...
Furthermore, they are highly voluntary in nature...
indeed, they might be described as a creative anarchy
We must never forget that while the primary responsibility
for the distinction of the University rests on our
shoulders, quality is determined at the grass roots
level...with our teaching and our research...
not at the level of our leadership...
Hence the momentum of this University...of
any great university...must flow up from the
faculty and the students...and energize the
administration...

To the faculty (and staff)

It is sometimes said that great universities are
run by their faculties...for their faculties...
The quality of our institutions is determined by
the quality of our faculty...by their talents,
their commitments, their actions...
While your commitment to quality in your teaching
and scholarship will determine the quality of this
institution, let me suggest that something more
is needed...
Let me urge a greater sense of daring and
adventure in your intellectual activities...
For it is the excitement of attempting to push
beyond the limits of our present knowledge that
enlivens our teaching, our students, and our
institution, while best serving the society that
depends upon us.

To the students

If our faculty is the key to our distinction, then it
must also be acknowledged that our students
are the reason for our being...
Hence, let me challenge our students to seek
wisdom from the knowledge that you will learn
in your studies...and seek to learn responsibility
from the very considerable freedoms you will
be granted on our campus.
After all, as Alfred North Whitehead put it,
a college education is a time to learn the art of life...

To our alumni and friends

Become involved with your institution...
Learn about us...
Tell us when we are wrong...
Challenge us to rise to new levels of excellence...
And help us to serve our state and our nation

To our sister institutions

One of the great strengths of higher education in
America is the remarkable diversity among our
institutions...a diversity that is all the more necessary
to respond to the remarkable diversity in the needs
of our people.
Yet, despite this diversity, we have far more in common
than in contrast...
And it seems clear that we can only face the challenges

of the future if we come together in a new spirit of cooperation...setting aside competition (this Saturday afternoon excepted, of course...) and instead, working together to address the serious needs of our state, our nation, and the world.

To state and federal government

As we prepare to enter the Age of Knowledge, our ability to sustain the strength of our state and our nation...to achieve the quality of life for our citizens...will be determined by, more than any other factor, how we develop, nurture, and educate that most precious of resources, our people.

In the long run it will be our investments in the most important resources of all, in people and ideas, that will determine the future prosperity and well-being of our state.

While it is true that our state and our nation have developed the finest system of higher education in the world... we must also remember this resulted from the willingness of past generations to look beyond the needs of the present and invest in the future by building and sustaining educational institutions of exceptional quality-- institutions that have provided many of us in this hall today with unsurpassed educational opportunities.

You must cast aside the temptations expressed by the T-shirt slogan, "Eat dessert first; life is uncertain!"

Today's public leaders have inherited the products of the commitments and sacrifices of previous generations; they face the challenge of being responsible stewards to preserve and enhance these institutions to serve future generations.

To the private sector

So too, while the relationship between the university and the private sector---business and industry-- must become ever stronger in the knowledge-based society of the future, it is important to keep in mind a very important fact.

This relationship is symbiotic---it is an association between two unlike organisms for the benefit of each.

While it is true that both the university and industry have a "service to society" mission, their fundamental goals are different---
The University seeks to create, maintain, and transmit knowledge, while
Industry seeks to make a profit...

In the university-industry partnership, it is essential that each partner focus on what it does best...

To the public at large

It is important for the public to recognize that universities are not working on their own agenda... but rather an agenda formed from the needs of society.

While it is always tempting to ask "what have you done for me lately", it is also important to imbed this challenge to higher education within the context both of the history of past service...and the challenges that will face our society in the future.

Higher education represents one of the most important investments a society can make in its future...since it is an investment in its human resources...in its people and their ideas

We must never forget the commitments that past generations of citizens have made to build educational institutions of exceptional quality -- institutions that have provided many of us for years with unsurpassed educational opportunities.

We are a nation that has always believed deeply in generational improvement--in the prospect that things will be better for our children.

We simply must re-establish the importance of both our personal and public investments in education, in the future of our children, in our own future, at the local level if Michigan -- indeed, if our nation -- is to face the challenge of the age of knowledge.

To JJD

And, finally, it seems appropriate to challenge myself...

To listen, to learn, and to understand the nature of this remarkable institution...the manner in which people have come to depend upon it...

To have the patience, the courage, the dedication, and the wisdom to assist it in continuing to serve the state and the nation which gave rise to its birth...

Concluding Remarks

For over 170 years there has been an unusually strong bond between the people of the state of Michigan and this University...their university!!! Generation after generation of Michigan citizens have reaffirmed a commitment to an institution capable of providing to their sons and daughters an education equal to the best in the nation.

They sought an institution capable of attracting to their state the most outstanding scholars, scientists, engineers, doctors, lawyers, and other professionals essential to prosperity and well-being.

They recognized the need for an institution capable of creating through its teaching, research and scholarship, the new knowledge and human capacities necessary to economic growth and development and to the fuller realization of human potential.

And they sought an institution which could address, through a myriad of public service activities, the many challenges facing our state and our nation.

This sustained public investment and confidence in UM over the decades has enabled it to serve the state in all of these ways and more. Through this unique partnership, the University and its activities in education, research, and public service have served our state and its citizens well.

Today our state and nation face serious challenges that will call once again on the vast resources of this institution---

the challenge of pluralism...

the challenge of participation in a global community...

the challenge of the Age of Knowledge that is our future...

Indeed, perhaps at no previous time in our state's future has there been a greater dependence upon this this University...

for the people it educates...

the knowledge it produces...

and the service it provides.

A future of challenge...a future of opportunity...

and a future of excitement!

A future in which this University must serve the
State of Michigan...and through this service to the
state, serve the nation and the world...