

Ethics and Values Conference

"The University Work and the Global Village:

Consequences for Administration, Teaching, and Research

"The Provost's Perspective"...

Introduction...

Roughly a year ago, during the first few weeks after I accepted my sentence to five years at hard labor as Provost, I was presented with the challenge of first assessing and then strengthening the University's international programs...

While it is true that these are numerous, and varied, and in many cases, quite distinguished, it is also true that they are scattered, uncoordinated, and often "invisible".

This afternoon I would like to share with you some of my own thoughts...albeit rather preliminary and disorganized...about the importance of these programs to the University...

More specifically, I would like to share with you some observations:

- i) What is happening "outside the walls of our Ivy Tower"..."...in the global village...
- ii) What we are doing about it.
- iii) What we could be doing about it.
- iv) What we should be doing about it.

But first, let me provide a bit of background to set the context...

1. What is a Provost...

and why should his perspective matter, anyway?

Dictionary: Latin: "the one in charge..."

1. chief dignitary of a collegiate or cathedral chapter
2. chief magistrate of a Scottish burgh
3. a high-ranking university administrative officer
4. the keeper of a prison
5. Provost is the one who says "No"...

Oh, yes...it comes after "provolone"...

At Michigan:

1. Chief line officer for academic staff...
2. Chief budget officer

Yet another important responsibility...

To trigger a "process" capable of charting the course of this University into the 21st century...and it is within this context that we really should examine the University's response to the global challenge...

Let me explain...

2. Strategic Planning Process

Contention: The University of Michigan faces a period of unusual opportunity, responsibility, and challenge...

- i) The quality of our human resources -- our students, our faculty, our staff -- have never been stronger
- ii) We benefit from exceptionally strong support from both the public and private sector.
- iii) We have a degree of autonomy, of control over our own destiny, almost unique among public institutions.

The challenge is, to paraphrase that famous philosopher Pogo, to avoid being "overwhelmed by the opportunities before us"...

So how do we respond to these opportunities?

I suggest that we must not simply "respond"...as we have all too often in the past -- but that we must seize the initiative by taking action to determine our own destiny.

All too often in the past, we have tended to respond to external pressures, opportunities, needs, rather than taking control of our own destiny. We have been blown in one direction or another by winds from outside. It is now time that we grasp the wheel firmly to steer the University in a direction appropriate for the future.

To seize the opportunities, to face the responsibilities,
and to meet the challenges before us, the University should initiate
a process capable of determining both a direction and a strategy
capable of guiding it into the 21st Century.

To this end, during the past year I have attempted to initiate a process
of strategic leadership...

To lead us, as a community of scholars, to address the difficult questions
of just what kind of an institution are we...
And of what kind of institution we wish to become...
This "strategic leadership" process that first addresses the question about "what"
we want this University to be -- what our values, goals, priorities,
and objectives should be.

This year we have moved forward on three fronts...

1. First, we have triggered a process among selected groups of
faculty, students, and administrators aimed at grappling with
the mission of the University...our values and goals, our priorities
and objectives. It is our hope that this strategic process will
propagate over the next year to encompass large segments of
the University community...
2. We next triggered a similar process at the unit level within the
institution...at the levels of schools and colleges, centers and
institutes, administrative and auxiliary units. Over the course of
the next 3 to 4 years, it is our intent to meet at length with each
such unit, to learn about their needs and concerns, their goals
and aspirations, and to work with them to assist them in achieving
these objectives.
3. However, recognizing that the only way to get a mule's attention
is to hit it over the head with a 2"x4", we also have launched
several important University-wide strategic initiatives...
 - i) To fund these, we have decided to pull off 1% of the University's
base budget in each of next several years and redirect these
resources into the areas of highest priority to the institution.
 - ii) Although we intend to develop a process in which the University
community -- our faculty and students -- play the key role in
identifying these initiatives in the future, to begin the process we
moved forward with three priorities we believed to be compelling in
importance to merit immediate attention:
 - 1) The quality of the undergraduate experience at the University
 - 2) The importance of diversity, or pluralism, among the members
of the University community -- with particular emphasis on
increasing minority representation among our students and
faculty
 - 3) The importance of venturesome, interdisciplinary scholarshipTo stimulate activities in each of these areas, we have committed
base budget investments of \$1 million per year...in large measure
designed to respond to proposals from faculty, students, and staff.
In a sense, we are attempting to redirect and focus resources in a
way that will motivate our most creative people to address the most
important priorities of the University.

It is within this context that we should view the issues raised in
today's conference...

How might this strategic process relate to the topic of today...
to "The University Work and the Global Village"?

What is happening out there?

Let's look first at what is happening outside our walls...

Some signs...

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

Some obvious implications...

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

The increasing internationalization of business, science, and political institutions means that an international orientation is becoming increasingly important for diverse, but narrowly defined "communities of experts".

Scholars must expand the scope of their inquiries in order to address pressing world problems and to take full advantage of theoretical and practical progress and achievements in other countries.

Another viewpoint...not from a Provost, but from a citizen of the State of Michigan...a state that has reeled from the impact of internationalization... and must learn how to respond!

International competitiveness...

The warning signs...

7-fold increase in international trade since 1970

market for nearly all significant manufacturing industries has become world-wide

70% of goods we produce compete against merchandise from abroad

Budget deficit

trade deficit

displaced workers

marginal industries

"The odds are greater that America will be bought up by the Japanese than blown up by the Russians..."

The challenge of dramatic economic change...

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

The days of low interest rates, limited foreign competition, slow-moving technology, stable markets, and mass production processes that once allowed our industries to thrive in a sheltered environment have long since passed. Michigan must develop an agenda to achieve and sustain prosperity in a new environment of intense international competition and rapid technological change.

Intellectual capital -- brainpower -- is increasingly regarded as the key element needed to compete effectively in a highly technological and rapidly changing global economy.

The Age of Knowledge in a Global Economy

But knowledge is highly mobile...it is not tied to geographic regions as coal or iron or oil.

Age of Reason, Age of Revolution, Age of Discovery, Industrial Revolution...all were limited to regions, since technology did not allow rapid dissemination of knowledge...

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

Not just industrial nations...less developed nations are also learning the lesson. They are drawing knowledge from the developed world...and increasingly are generating it themselves in order

to meet their development needs. Michigan has no central plan responsive to these fundamental issues.

International activity, while extensive on this campus, is scattered, uncoordinated, often "invisible", and of varying quality

It is important to remember that in the minds of many...including those elected public officials in State government...the University is first and foremost a state university with primary responsibilities to the State of Michigan.

It is a fact of life that we have and will continue to be challenged as we attempt to respond to what all of us in this room believe to be our responsibilities to the global community...

What should we be doing?

1. What should be the nature and scope of international activity at the UM? What are the benefits the UM hopes to obtain from its international activity. What contributions does the UM want to make through its international activity?
Technical elements:
 - i) Can there be true area studies in an intensely disciplinary focus?
 - ii) Can the UM sustain advanced courses in languages?
 - iii) How much of the world should be covered?
2. How much "service" should the UM provide to enhance competencies in citizens/leaders in developing nations?
 - i) What about faculty training (or lending faculty)
 - ii) What about training foreign nationals in specific skills which do not align with the true needs of their homelands?
 - iii) How much is foreign consultation to be valued and promoted?
3. What priority should international expertise have in the hiring and evaluation of faculty?
4. Should UM target a few foreign countries for the development of high level contacts leading to bilateral arrangements. In particular, should we target third world nations, because of their particularly intense needs for the "knowledge resources" that can be provided by a university such as ours?
5. What is the place for international studies in our curriculum?
 - i) Should there be a foreign language requirement for all students?
 - ii) Should undergraduates be required to study foreign affairs?
 - iii) Should there be an international studies component in graduate education?
6. Where should responsibility for international programs reside?
7. Are the mandates and requirements for disciplinary scholarship a help or a hinderance in attempts to build and sustain excellence in international studies (instruction and research)?
 - i) Acquiring international expertise draws away from scholarship.
 - ii) Do disciplines attract the best students?
8. How should foreign faculty and students be integrated into the UM community?
 - i) Adequate support services for foreign students?
 - ii) English language deficiencies among TAs
 - iii) Experience of visiting foreign scholars are often dismal.
 - iv) Should there be better ways to bring together foreign and American students?
 - v) Should there be career planning services for foreign students to assist them in cultural re-entry?
 - vi) What kinds of continued contacts with foreign alumni should we maintain?

Conclusion

In a sense, all of these questions are derived from a broader issue...

Among the University's many responsibilities and priorities, where does one rank our responsibility to the world at large, the global village?

This weekend's conference suggests that this priority must be ranked very high indeed on our strategic agenda..., to recall my earlier terms, as an opportunity, a responsibility, and a challenge...

And I look forward to working with many of you very closely in the months ahead to develop an agenda of actions appropriate to the University

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