

## Engineering NAC Meeting

### Introduction

#### What is a "Provost"?

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

1. chief dignitary of a collegiate or cathedral chapter
2. chief magistrate of a Scottish burgh
3. the keeper of a prison
4. a high-ranking university administrative officer

#### At Michigan:

1. Chief line officer for academic staff...
2. Chief budget officer
3. President = CEO, Provost = COO
4. President leads, Provost pushes...
5. President determines direction, Provost determines pace
6. Provost is the one who says "No"...

### About the University of Michigan

#### Background

Clear up some possible misconceptions...

the barbarian...

high pain threshold

Key: my optimism about the University

This is going to be a very exciting place in the decade ahead!!!

#### Status of the University:

Clouds on the horizon:

Poor State funding...

Gram-Rudman, federal tax reform...

< - the demographic crunch...

Yet the UM seems poised to surge ahead...opportunities

1. Reputation (as the flagship of public higher education)

2. People

A faculty of great intellectual strength

Student body of quality unsurpassed by any public institution

Largest alumni body in US (1 out of 100)

3. Resources

Prosperous state, potential for greater support

Federal support...learning how to play the game better

Private support...Campaign for Michigan

4. Ability to control our own destiny

Best of (public and private) worlds

Public support - \$200 M/y -- \$5 B endowment

Autonomy of private institution

#### Summary of Opportunities:

Believe UM faces opportunities unmatched by any other institution in this nation...

The opportunity is there...IF we can respond to several serious challenges before us

#### Challenges:

1. Picking up the pace a bit...

To build a level of intensity and expectation to settle for nothing less than the best in the performance of faculty, students, and programs

Tolerating essential singularities...

2. Focusing resources to achieve excellence...  
Should not try to be all things to all people...  
Quality should dominate breadth and capacity...
3. Highest priority: intellectual core of activities  
UM's reputation and quality will be based on its activities in instruction and scholarship...  
Academic excellence must be our highest priority...
4. To shift the University to more of a change-oriented, risk-taking culture...to stress bold, new initiatives.  
Must get more people working on the "exponential" part of the knowledge curve.

#### Operating Principles

1. 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!
2. Strive for an entrepreneurial, change-oriented, risk-taking culture...  
Which stresses excellence, achievement, and excitement...which removes constraints from talented people and encourages them to "go for it"!
3. Importance of undergraduate education  
The "raw material" entering this institution today is the most valuable resource of our nation...  
Truly extraordinary quality and commitment.  
We must be responsible stewards and provide the "value-added" of an outstanding education.  
Incidentally, despite the fact I'm an engineer, I am firmly committed to the importance of a broad and liberal education...including some science, of course...

#### Operational Strategies

Strategic actions:

1. Provide strong incentives and opportunities for individual achievement...
2. Minimize constraints, regulations, and other hassles...
3. Stimulate high-risk intellectual activities.

#### Tactical Responses

1. A "Harvard" style of resource management  
(Every tub on its own bottom)
2. A Stanford-MIT style of interaction with the external

- environment (the "Silicon Valley-Route 128" style)
3. Modify organizational structures to stimulate change and fresh approaches and perspectives (e.g., "matrix" management)
  4. Strongly oppose any efforts to constrain faculty and students (e.g., constraints on research, intellectual property ownership,...)

#### University Priorities

##### Personal belief

The most critical factors in determining the quality of an academic institution are those intellectual disciplines that derive from its undergraduate programs.

These form the cornerstone, the intellectual "soul", of a distinguish university.

At Michigan this "core" include LS&A, to be sure...

but it also includes other disciplines...art, music,...perhaps even a dash of Engineering...

To be sure, the strength of the professional schools and colleges play critical roles in determining the reputation of a great university like Michigan. However over the long term, these schools will inevitably draw their strength from the core academic disciplines.

Concerns: In the ebb and flow of priorities within the University, Over the past couple of decades, we seem to have forgotten the importance of our core academic programs.

Quite frankly we have allowed other priorities to dominate...

In the 1960s, it was the social professions...

Education, Social Work, Natural Resources...

In the 1970s, the health professions had their turn

Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Public Health

In the early 1980s, you might say that Engineering and

Business came to the fore...

And throughout this period as well, we became preoccupied with nonacademic matters...

...with a gigantic medical center complex

...with intercollegiate athletics

...with establishing branch campuses...

Let there be no doubt...

My first agenda is to reestablish the core academic programs of the University as its highest priority in the years ahead.

#### Warnings

Despite the fact that Engineering will continue to benefit as a high priority of the University in the years ahead....

the key to your excellence lies with your internal dedication and commitments, NOT to the resources we can provide externally...

For just as the University, you will face many opportunities in the years ahead.

But to respond to these opportunities...to utilize them to build the quality of your programs, you must respond as well to the challenges I placed before you earlier

1. You must intensify your commitment to excellence...  
your determination to seek only the best!
2. You must focus your resources to build spires of excellence...  
to stress quality over breadth and capacity!
3. You must place academic excellence as your highest priority...
4. And you build the kind of an exciting, change-oriented,  
risk-taking, an "entrepreneurial" environment which will  
stimulate your students and faculty to push to the limits of  
their abilities, to create that sense of excitement, both in  
scholarship and in education, which characterizes the most  
distinguished institutions.