

UGLI Dedication

Questions:

Let's set aside both the myths and the realities for a moment,

and address the most critical questions of all:

1. What is the role of the comprehensive research university in undergraduate education?

2. How effectively are our research universities...
in particular, our great public research universities such as the University of Michigan, responding to the challenge of undergraduate education?

What we are...and what we are not!!!

What is unique about our universities -- our "market niche"?

Large, comprehensive, public, research universities

With a serious commitment to scholarship

Unusual breadth, rich diversity of academic disciplines,
professional schools, social and cultural activities

Unusual degree of diversity of students, faculty, and staff

Unusual degree of participation of faculty and students in
University decisions

Unusual commitment to the quality of students, faculty, and
programs

In a sense, the strength of our institutions depend upon

our efforts to achieve an optimum blend of

Quality, breadth, and scale...

We attempt to do a great many things...

to involve and benefit a great many people...

and we attempt to do them all very well!

Teaching, research, and service

Undergraduate, graduate, professional education
and faculty development

Note: Not a conflict!

Rather an opportunity, a "creative tension"

It is this which provides our research universities with

a unique environment for undergraduate education...

We are not (and should not try to be)

a small, liberal arts college...

with faculty chosen primarily for their teaching skills..

with a narrow curriculum limited both by design and resources...

Rather, we are large, comprehensive, research universities...

spanning almost every intellectual discipline and profession...

with the capacity to attract and sustain many of the world's

leading scholars...

with resources unmatched elsewhere in our society...

whether in the extent of our library collections...

or in collections of our museums...

or in the laboratory facilities we can provide...

or in exotic new tools of our intellectual trade...

...supercomputers

...molecular beam epitaxy machines

...positron emission tomography accelerators

Our unique role...

1. To provide our undergraduates with an experience which draws on the vast intellectual resources of a research university...its scholars, its libraries and laboratories, its professional schools...its remarkable diversity of people, ideas, and endeavors

2. To expose our students to the excitement of great minds struggling to extend the bounds of our knowledge...
3. To develop in our students both the ability and the will to strive for knowledge. Few of our research universities will deliver an education to its students on a silver platter. Rather, we believe that a critical component of an undergraduate education in a research university is the development of the skill to seek and the will to find.
4. To expose our students to the diversity, the complexity, the pluralism of peoples, cultures, races, and ideas that can only be found in the intellectual mixing pot of the modern research university.
5. Oh, yes, we also believe that our mission is also to educate the leaders of American society. Indeed, if past experience is any guide, most of our leaders will continue to be produced by the great research universities of our nation.

Activities in Undergraduate Education

Of course, for several years, long before the Carnegie

Foundation report, there has been a resurgence of efforts to reexamine and improve undergraduate education in our public research universities.

Indeed, essentially every major university I am familiar with has some level of activity well underway.

Why?

Cyclic??

Well, I suppose one could explain this by saying that curricular reform is cyclic, and the pendulum is

now swinging back after the permissiveness of the 1960s...

Market concerns??

Perhaps it is also due to market concerns.

We are all too aware that the population of high school graduates will drop in our part of the country by 25% to 30% by the early 1990s.

There is nothing like a demographic crunch -- to simulate educational institutions to improve their product.

Stewardship??

I noted earlier the remarkable quality of the students now entering our institutions.

Perhaps our renewed focus on undergraduate education is the result of a higher motive to be a responsible steward of these extraordinary human resources.

What is happening, therefore, is not a revolution!

We do not need a revolution!

Rather it is a renewal!

A renewal in our commitments to quality undergraduate

education...stimulated by our sense of responsibility to our students, and our aspirations of excellence for

Rebalancing is Needed

Note: We do not need a revolution!

Rather we need a renewal...a rebalancing...

But where should we head...

The Michigan Initiatives

Goal:

To launch a series of initiatives designed to improve the quality of undergraduate education at Michigan

Common thread: Grassroots involvement...

Each involves an effort to seek proposals...ideas and participation in defining programs...from our faculty, students, and staff to address the University's highest priorities: in education, scholarship, and the attainment of a rich cultural and racial diversity in our University community.

We seek to invest resources in a way that will motivate our most creative people to become involved and committed.

Phase I:**1. The Undergraduate Initiatives Funds**

\$1 million per year to support innovative projects

Program will provide an ongoing source of support, up to \$1 million per year, for a wide range of experiments designed to improve quality of undergraduate education.

Looking for good ideas...but prepared to make base commitments from other sources to support successful ventures.

Categories of awards:

- i) promoting critical thinking and writing skills
- ii) Creating a new spirit of liberal learning
- iii) Promoting acceptance of pluralism and diversity
- iv) Promoting improved faculty-student interactions

First awards:

Development of new core curriculum in liberal arts

F-S revision of sciences (math, chem, bio)

Integration of arts into UG curriculum

Theatre, dance, electronic music

Counseling and Pluralism

Career planning in liberal arts

Sensitivity training

Student activities

UG colloquium

Faculty "fellows" program in residence halls

Safewalk program

Alternative Career Center

TA training

2. School and College Initiatives

LS&A

i) Collegiate Council

ii) Associate Dean for Freshman/Sophomore Years

iii) Special Assistant to the Dean

Engineering

i) Commission on UG Engineering Education

ii) Associate Dean for UG and Grad Instruction

Natural Resources

i) Major curriculum revisions underway

Phase II:

1. Focusing of the Undergraduate Initiatives Fund

Will work directly with schools...not open solicitation

i) The unique nature of undergraduate education in
the research university

- ii) Linkages to the graduate disciplines and professions
 - iii) Enriching the intellectual life of undergraduate students
 - iv) The role of the sciences in a liberal education
2. The Thurnau Professorships
To honor faculty with extraordinary achievements in undergraduate education
 3. Central Campus renovation projects
 - i) Renovation of UGLI
 - ii) Renovation of all Central Campus classroom space
 - iii) Angell-Haven Courtyard Project
 4. Residence Hall Study
Appointment of commission to study ways of better integrating academic programming into residence hall environment

Phase III:

- Enhancing the educational (intellectual) quality of student life
- Liking together academic life with extracurricular life
- Stressing more of a “customer focus” approach to students
(a “total quality program”)
- Stressing more of a developmental approach to undergraduate education

What is the aim of undergraduate education at Michigan?

To prepare our students for a career?...

As doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers

...investment bankers???

Well, we will do our best, but that is not our real mission...

These challenges I have discussed suggest that the principal

focus of an undergraduate education appropriate for the 21st Century will be the goal of liberal learning... that is, a liberal education as the preparation for a lifetime of learning.

We must take heed from T.S. Eliot's haunting passage:

"Where is the life we have lost in living?"

"Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?"

"Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"

While one might view a Michigan education as

aimed at extracting knowledge from the vast information characterizing our society, let me suggest that our real goal is something far beyond that.

Our goal, indeed, the goal of any liberal education,

was to help our students learn how to seek wisdom from knowledge -- and through that wisdom, prepare them to learn the art of life itself...