

## Senate Assembly Address

### Introduction

What is a "Provost"?

Dictionary: Latin: propositus... "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

Oh, yes...it comes after "provolone"...the big cheese

At Michigan:

1. Provost is the one who says "No"...  
...so the President can say yes!
2. President leads, Provost pushes...
3. President determines direction, Provost determines pace

At Michigan, the Provost, like the President, is chosen

from the academic ranks.

Remember, I am first and foremost a faculty member...

who has spent 20 years in the trenches teaching, doing research, serving on committees -- including

Senate Assembly...and pushing against administrators

So why did I leave my comfy home in Engineering?

I do not have an unusual streak of masochism...

Nor do I have an unusually high threshold for pain

Nore was it HTS's persuasiveness alone, although that was certainly a factor...

Rather, I sensed the University at a stage remarkably similar to my own College of Engineering when I was sentenced to 5 years of hard labor as Dean in 1981.

A time of opportunity, responsibility, and challenge:

Clouds on the horizon:

Poor State funding...

Gram-Rudman, federal tax reform...

the demographic crunch...

Ohio State is getting better with each passing week

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 and unusual breadth  
Student body of quality unsurpassed by any public institution  
Quality x quantity = #1  
Largest alumni body in US (1 out of every 1,000 Americans)
3. Resources  
Prosperous state, with the potential for greater support  
Federal support...learning how to play 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 -- \$4 B endowment

Greater than Harvard and Texas

Autonomy of private institution

Summary of Opportunities:

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

The opportunity is there...

But then so are some important responsibilities!

Responsibilities

To our students

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...

To our faculty

Hired over 900 new faculty in past 5 years

Salaries to asst and assoc prof the best

Getting the best!

And we owe them the opportunity to develop their exceptional talents to the fullest by providing them with the environment, support, and encouragement to push to the limits of their abilities.

To our State and nation

We are a public institution, after all...and as such, we have an important responsibility to our state and nation.

Challenges:

It is a time of unusual opportunity, to be sure. But, if we are to grasp these opportunities while meeting our responsibilities, I believe we must face several important challenges.

These challenges are no so much concerned with resources state funding or physical facilities or such.

Rather they are concerned with the very nature of what we believe the University is...and what we wish it to be.

These are challenges of excellence!

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

The thundering herd...the hoofbeats behind us

Excellence sets us apart...

provides the visibility to attract resources

We must shake off that extraordinary intolerance of extreme

excellence which seems to plague midwestern institutions...  
and set our course for achieving the best.

2. Focusing resources to achieve excellence...  
Should not try to be all things to all people...  
The time of continual increases in public support ended more than a decade ago.  
Quality should dominate breadth and capacity...  
Build "spires" of excellence
3. Highest priority: academic excellence  
UM's reputation and quality will be based on its activities in instruction and scholarship...  
Academic excellence must be our highest priority...
4. Changing intellectual currents...  
Intellectual leadership...  
demands pushing to the forefront of discovery  
working on the exponential part of the knowledge curve  
Shift to a change-oriented, risk-taking culture  
Relish change!!!  
Stress bold, new initiatives...  
Defy the deification of disciplines  
New knowledge created at interfaces...  
At turbulent mixing, collision of disciplines
5. A sense of community, collegiality  
Resist "centrifical" forces on strong disciplines...  
Pull people together...

#### Strategic Planning Process

So how do we respond to this time of opportunity, responsibility, and challenge?

#### A Plan to Respond to the Challenge of Leadership

Use transparencies

Stress "process", not content.

First phase: "what" do we want to be?

"Smaller but better"?...

"Poorer but wiser"?...

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

A large, comprehensive, public, research university

A serious commitment to scholarship

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

Unusual degree of participation of faculty and students in  
University decisions

AND... probably the highest quality undergraduate student  
body of any public university in the nation...

Indeed, UM probably enrolls more outstanding students  
than any university in the nation.

Suggestion:

Why don't we take advantage of these factors by choosing a  
mission which links together

Teaching, research, and service  
Quality, breadth, and size  
Undergraduate, graduate, professional education  
and faculty development  
to provide UM with a unique role in higher education.  
Let me suggest such a mission:  
For the decade ahead, the UM should select as its primary  
goal: "Building the leadership of tomorrow on a foundation  
of academic excellence.  
We should place primary emphasis on the development of  
leadership through the education of our students, the  
intellectual development and contributions of our faculty.  
Of course, the key to success in this mission will be academic  
excellence: education, scholarship, and research of the  
highest quality.  
Such a mission would:  
1) Take advantage of where we are today...  
2) Enhance our impact on society in a manner consistent with  
our responsibilities as a public institution  
3) Lay the foundation for the long term strength and distinction  
of the University through the achievement, contributions,  
and influence of its graduates and faculty.

#### JJD 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. I am a faculty member  
Fought for 20 years in the trenches...  
Convinced that faculty should run this place!  
UM strength: HTS, me...  
Hope that I can understand, share your values and concerns,  
...and respond effectively...
4. Have to get out of blockhouse...  
Sit in on Senate Assembly...  
Visit schools and colleges...  
E-mail...

#### Concluding remarks

For I believe the University will face many opportunities in the  
years ahead.

Exceptional quality of its people --  
students, faculty, and staff  
Abundance of resources  
Ability to control our own destiny...

But we also have responsibilities

Students

Faculty

State, nation, world...

Challenges

To respond to these opportunities...to meet our responsibilities...

I believe that we must pull together as a scholarly community  
to address the challenges of excellence I have put before you:

1. We must intensify our commitment to excellence...  
our determination to seek only the best!
2. We must focus our resources to build spires of excellence...  
to stress quality over breadth and capacity!
3. We must place academic excellence as our highest priority.!
4. And we must build the kind of exciting, change-oriented  
risk-taking environment which will stimulate our 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.

Add one more word...

The decade ahead will indeed be a time of opportunity,  
responsibility, and challenge.

But there is one more word that I believe we should add  
to those characterizing Michigan's future: excitement!  
I believe Michigan is going to be an extraordinarily exciting  
place in the years ahead...and I look forward to working  
closely with you and your colleagues during this  
period of opportunity and excitement to maintain and  
strengthen Michigan's long tradition of excellence.