

President James J. Duderstadt
Women of Color in the Academy Project
8:45 a.m. January 12, 1996
Rackham Amphitheater (20-25 minutes)

I am delighted to be with you this morning
to kick-off what promises to be an exciting conference
. . . a harbinger of initiatives organized under
the auspices of the Women of Color in the Academy Project.

Would like to start by thanking conference organizers:

- The conference planning committee
- The Center for the Education of Women,
including Carol Hollenshead and Lynne Dumas
- The Women's Studies Program, including
Anne Hermann and Laura Calkins
- The Women of Color in the Academy Project Faculty
Steering Committee

This conference is a wonderful example of how
the Michigan Mandate and Michigan Agenda
are enriching campus life as well as
energizing and focusing our commitment to diversity.

The political climate swirling around Washington these days or
sweeping westward from California
raises serious questions about our commitment
to achieve equity and social justice for all Americans.

A recent *Wall Street Journal*/NBC News survey found that
2 out of 3 Americans oppose affirmative action.
Federal courts are pondering cases that challenge racial
preference.
In Washington, the Republican majority in Congress
is taking aim at the nation's commitment to civil rights.

At a time when some would try to squelch discussion
about multiculturalism . . .
labeling it just another example of political correctness . . .
I believe we in academe need to talk openly,
with boldness,
about the need for more, not less, diversity.

At the University of Michigan, we believe it is time
to stand up and be counted.
Today it is more important than ever to reaffirm the importance of
diversity for our institutions and our society.

Seven years ago the U-M launched a strategic initiative we called
Michigan Mandate.
It was designed
to change the institution in profound ways,
to better enable it to serve a changing nation
and a changing world.

The Michigan Mandate reflects our commitment to make the University of Michigan a national and world academic leader in the racial and ethnic diversity of our faculty, students and staff.

It is a plan to link academic excellence and social diversity.

The Michigan Mandate has become a model nationwide for institutions of higher education who are working to increase diversity on their campuses.

Let me share with you some highlights of the impact of this important effort:

1. Minority student enrollment is at its highest level ever.
2. Currently we enroll 8,108 students of color, almost 25% of our student body (and 27% of this year's freshman class) – an 87% increase over the past seven years. This is more than twice the total of minority students enrolled in 1986.
3. **Women of color students** – including undergrads and graduate students – **now make up 11.7% of our student body, compared with only 6.1% in fall 1987.**
4. Our graduation rates for African American students have risen to 70% and are among the highest for any public university in the nation – indeed, higher than the graduation rates for white students at most public universities.

5. **The number of undergraduate degrees earned by women of color has almost doubled since 1987, and now represent 9.9% of all undergraduate degrees awarded.**

6. The University of Michigan ranks as a leading source of doctorates in the nation; it plays a key role in producing the next generation of faculty for American universities.
We have doubled the number of graduate fellowships we provide to more than 680 . . . the largest commitment of any university in America.
Women of color hold more than half of the fellowships.

7. **The total number of graduate degrees to women of color has more than doubled,** increasing from 174 degrees in 1987-88 to 388 in 1994-95.

8. People of color now comprise 15.3% of total instructional faculty. Since 1987, the number of tenured and tenure-track faculty of color has increased from 237 (8.8% of tenured and tenure-track faculty) to 394 (14.4%) – a 66% increase.

9. **Since 1990 we have almost doubled the total number of assistant and associate professors who are women of color – for a total of 97.**
Unfortunately, we still have **only 16 women of color who are full professors.** These women represent 1.2% of all full professors.

10. Faculty hiring and retention is an area we've been working on. One of our most successful programs has been the **Target of Opportunity**, which is used to recruit outstanding minority faculty members. In 1994-95 we saw an increase in the number of Target of Opportunity offers and acceptances. Of a total of 23 Target of Opportunity appointments, 15 (65.2%) were to female faculty of color. A total of 16 tenured and tenure-track Target of Opportunity appointments were made; half were to women. **Another important program is the Faculty Awards Program.** This program provides tenured and tenure-track faculty financial support to enable them to spend uninterrupted time pursuing research interests or independent study. **Of the 43 grants awarded through the Faculty Awards Program in 1994-95, two-thirds were to women of color.**

11. **Women of color are represented in larger numbers on our staff.** Almost **9% of professional and administrative positions** on the Ann Arbor campus are held by women of color. **Women of color comprise 13.5% of office workers, 5.3% of technical, and 17.7% of all service/maintenance staff.**

I am still concerned that a large proportion of our women of color staff are in lower status and lower paying positions.

As you know, women of color face a double jeopardy . . .

. . . they are affected by prejudicial attitudes
based both on race and gender.

A year and a half ago we launched the Michigan Agenda for

Women. Its goal: To make the University a national leader in
overcoming gender discrimination and
providing full opportunities for women students, faculty,
and staff in all aspects of the University.

Although this major initiative is still in its early stages,
so far we have:

1. Allocated resources to establish a number of new faculty lines
for senior women faculty
(6 thus far plus 2 offers pending).
2. Overhauled our policies with respect
to dependent care and family leave.
3. Launched a major new task force aimed at improving campus
safety and eliminating violence against women.
4. Made a series of appointments of women in key leadership
positions, including deans and executive officers.

Five of our 18 deans are women.

**The proportion of executive officers who are women
increased from 18% to 27%.**

5. Created Faculty Career Development Awards of \$5,000 each to enhance the professional development of women. Since the program was instituted in 1994, 80 awards have been presented;10 have gone to women of color.
6. Introduced new training programs for academic administrators.
7. Opened the Consultation and Conciliation Service as an alternative to the formal grievance process.
8. Hired two staff members to receive formal complaints and lead educational seminars about sexual harassment.
9. Established the Institute for Research on Women and Gender.
10. Established the Women of Color in the Academy Project, a 3-year project that includes research, advocacy and administrative initiatives focusing on issues of concern to women of color in university settings.
11. Next year Michigan will become the first major university in America to commit sufficient resources to achieve true gender equity in intercollegiate athletics, providing the same number of varsity opportunities for women as we do for men (50% - 50%).

We have moved ahead in some other areas that deserve mention:

1. Our Regents have expanded their nondiscrimination policies to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, and last year we extended staff benefits and housing opportunities to same-sex couples.
2. We are moving rapidly to achieve greater international diversity among our people and our programs.

For example, within the past two years we have opened major new instructional centers in Hong Kong, Seoul, and Paris, and we expect to open a similar program in London this fall.

People ask why we have made this commitment to change, why diversity is the cornerstone of our efforts to achieve national excellence and leadership during the 1990s?

The most compelling reason is that it is morally the right thing to do. Plurality, equal opportunity and freedom from discrimination are the foundations upon which the University . . . and indeed, our nation . . . are built.

But there are other reasons:

- America of the 21st century will be a nation without a dominant ethnic majority.

It will be truly pluralistic.

It is clear that our academic institutions
must change rapidly and profoundly
to serve this increasingly diverse society.

- Diversity is essential for another reason.

Unless we draw upon a vast diversity of people and ideas,
we cannot hope to generate the intellectual and social vitality
we need to respond to a world characterized by great change.
Only with a multiplicity of approaches, opinions and
ways of seeing can we hope to solve the problems we face.

In order to accomplish the goals
of building community and increasing diversity,
we must move in two directions at once.

While we must celebrate differences between people,
we must also make every effort to find common grounds
around which to unite.

The multicolored skein that is Michigan must be woven together,
becoming a tapestry,
with each thread retaining its unique character.

Can we make the dreams of the Michigan Mandate and the
Michigan Agenda a reality during this century?

I hope so.

We may take the wrong turn, stumble, lose our way at times,
even become confused.

It is clear that we do not have all the answers.

There is an old saying among engineers:

If you never fail, you just haven't set your goals high enough. So a few missteps or detours won't bother me, as long as we hold to our basic ideals and direction.

What will not change or falter is the University's determination to lead in a direction that serves all the people of our society. Of course, I know that University administrators can't accomplish the Michigan Mandate or the Agenda alone.

We all must do our part.

I will use the next six months to work for equity and opportunities for women, particularly women of color.

To keep up the momentum of the Michigan Agenda, we need to have a strong buy-in from the executive officers and the deans.

I will be meeting this spring individually with each of the University's 18 deans to talk about what is being done in the schools and colleges to implement the Michigan Agenda.

After July 1, I will continue to work with you to effect change.

As a result of our efforts, I hope our children will be able to look back with pride and gratitude and say that in this time and at this place, the University of Michigan, the people of Michigan, took a stand.

They worked together to build a new model of a learning community that thrives on the glorious and unique differences of our human heritage, which uses its common sense of values and objectives to bind itself together.

I hope that we can say that we made a difference . . .
. . . that together we became a mighty force for change.

Nothing we do in our lives is more important than this.

Thank you very much.