

Big Ten Development Officers

Welcome to sunny, southern Michigan!!!

I notice that Jon had me listed as

"Provost and President-Designate"...

ah, what a thrilling combination...

And, I can assure you that the past

several weeks have been like that...

with half of the world wanting me to finish up

all of the things I was unable to accomplish as Provost...

and the other half wanting me to move ahead and launch

into the responsibility of the presidency...even before

I take over in September...

This has been a particularly interesting week...

i) passed a set of new regulations governing protest

and right of speech

ii) brought on line NSFnet...

iii) completed installation of the largest concentration

of IBM computers in the free world...

iv) experienced a sitin in our freshman orientation...

...in July no less...

iv) got beaten up by the State Legislature...once again...

iv) and, much to our chagrin, moved a step closer to

becoming this nation's first private public university...

A few words of explanation...

Last Friday our Regents approved our budget for the year ahead. In that budget,

State appropriation = \$225 M

Tuition and fees = \$217 M

Federal Support = \$220 M

Next year, we will find that

Tuition will exceed state appropriation

(public to private)

Federal will exceed state appropriation

(state to national)

And Jon Cosovich and his colleagues have

promised us that private fund-raising will also

exceed this goal-- roughly \$230 M per year....

A rather interesting situation...which brings me

to a rather interesting perspective of the challenges...

but also the opportunities that our universities will

face in the decade ahead -- and may well stimulate

some remarkable changes in the nature of higher

education in this nation...

And that has been job the for last several years...

For while one generally thinks of the Provost as the

chief operating officer of the University, in fact, much of

my time has been spent leading a process designed to

look far into the future...10, 20, 30 years or more...to

determine the possibilities for this University...what

it is...what it could become...indeed, what it must

become

1. The changing role of the university in modern society

The primary role of the research university in America appears

to be shifting somewhat

Higher education in American has always played a variety of important roles.

i) To provide an education for our citizens

ii) to produce the scholars, professionals, and leaders needed by our society

iii) to perform the research necessary to generate new knowledge

- iv) to provide service to society across a number of fronts that draw on our unique expertise
- v) and to act as an independent and responsible critic of society.

Yet, even as these traditional roles continue, one can now discern an important shift in the priority given these roles for an important subset of higher education: the comprehensive research university.

Throughout the world, industrialized nations are making a transition from resource-intensive to knowledge-intensive societies... Intellectual capital is replacing human and financial capital as the key to strength and prosperity.

It is rapidly becoming apparent that America's great research universities, as the primary sources of new knowledge and those who can apply it, will hold the key to our collective prosperity and well-being in the age of knowledge that is our future.

To provide knowledge:

Contention: While the principal rationale behind most of higher education will continue to be that of providing instruction, the rationale behind America's great research universities has shifted to their role as the key sources of the knowledge necessary to build and sustain the strength and prosperity of this nation.

Our universities will face a period of unusual opportunities during the 1990s...a period in which our society will become ever more knowledge-intensive...dependent upon educated people and their ideas...and hence ever more dependent upon the research university.

2. Diversity and pluralism

American faces a challenge of diversity and pluralism in the years ahead that will determine the strength and vitality of our nation.

As both a microcosm and leader of society at large, higher education has a special challenge and responsibility to develop effective models of multicultural, pluralistic communities.

In particular, we face the challenge of reaching out to increase the participation of those racial, ethnic, and cultural groups not adequately represented among our students, faculty, and staff--of taking "affirmative action" to compensate for the inequities faced by these groups in our society.

But simply providing access and encouraging participation is not enough. We face the challenge of building supportive environments which accept, embrace, and sustain diversity as essential to the quality of our missions of teaching, research, and service.

We must strive to achieve new levels of understanding, tolerance, and mutual fulfillment for peoples of diverse racial and cultural backgrounds.

3. Relationships with various constituencies

The modern research university must deal with and respond to many constituencies:

- Students and parents
- The public at large
- Federal, state, and local government
- Business, industry, labor
- Internal constituencies
- Faculty

Staff

Students

Governing Boards (Regents and the like)

Higher education today faces greater pressures than ever to establish its relevance to these constituencies.

Yet this poses two serious problems:

- i) The diversity--indeed, incompatibility--of the values, needs, and expectations of these various constituencies who all view higher education through quite different lenses (Blind men feeling an elephant...)
- ii) The tension between such responsiveness and the university's role as an independent and responsible critic of society.

4. Intellectual challenges

There are many who would content that the most significant challenges before higher education today are intellectual in nature.

- i) The debate over the importance and nature of a liberal education...

or Allen Bloom vs. Bloom County...

On the one hand are those who suggest that without a knowledge of the great tradition and philosophy of our civilization, students cannot help to understand the order of nature and their place in it (Allan Bloom vs. the world)

Others maintain that the liberal arts today are only a very partial response to the responsibility of the contemporary university and that there is a need to develop a new paradigm of liberal learning through the professions themselves.

And what about the moral education of our students...the development of character???

Of should we just rely on the philosophy of "literalism", first stated in last week's Bloom County by Opus...

"You're born...

You live...

You go on a few diets...

You die."

Think about it...

Some real words of wisdom, there...

- ii) The debate over the balance between the disciplines and interdisciplinary teaching and scholarship.

It is certainly true that the academic disciplines today tend to dominate the modern university...whether in the areas of curriculum, resource flow, administration, or rewards.

Some would even contend that this deification of the disciplines may be leading the academy toward intellectual stagnation, trapped in the sterile pursuits of increasingly specialized studies.

There are many who believe that the most exciting work today is occurring not within the disciplines, but at the interfaces between them where there is a collision of ideas that leads to new knowledge.

- iii) New ideas and concepts are exploding forth at ever increasing rates...

New forms of thought such as

Feminism and Pluralism
Liberation Theology
Obscure, yet profound, new ways to
approach knowledge such as
Deconstructionism
Knowledge Engineering
The intellectual renewal of the role, mission, values,
and goals of the university may be the key challenges
before us.

Observation

It may well be that the most significant challenges facing
higher education today are not the tangible external
issues such as resources or public perception, but
rather the need to understand better and gain broader
consensus about the central goals and beliefs that
guide decisions made about the university.

5. The costs of excellence

It is certainly the case that the costs of excellence will
increase faster than the resources available to most
institutions.

We face the challenge of making the transition from the
growth era of the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, characterized
by increasing populations, resources, and prestige,
to a no-growth era of the 1980s and beyond.

We know all too well the impact of demographics...

The decline in the number of high school graduates...

The aging of our faculty...and the challenge with
educating and recruiting the next generation of the
scholars and teachers.

The effort and ability of more and more institutions to
compete for the same pool of resources...

State and federal support

Private support

Students

Faculty

Suspicion: The Big Shakeout...

The absence of adequate resources to build and sustain
excellence in all institutions, may lead to a process in which
there is a shakeout...

Most institutions may tend to be pulled to a common level of
quality...

However, those few institutions which have the critical mass of
excellence...**and** which have the determination and capacity
to sustain it, may be able to draw the best from the available
resources of students, faculty, and funds and accelerate
away from the pack...leaving the remainder of higher
education to compete for a declining resource base.

HTS Theorem 1:

There has never been enough money to satisfy the
legitimate aspirations of a truly enterprising faculty
or administration.

HTS Theorem 2:

The cost of quality in teaching and research will rise
faster than the total resource base of most institutions

DEVH Theorem:

Over a sufficiently long time span, none of our constraints
are rigid. They can be managed or changed.

How do we manage constraints, goals, and change?

Can we adjust our goals to relax our constraints?

Do we accept constraints as "constraining" planning,
or instead view them as challenges to be overcome?

And, of course, this brings us back to where I started...
and this is where you come in...

The challenges before higher education today...

the challenges of the age of knowledge...
of the ever pluralistic nature of American society...
of the tensions among the expectations and aspirations
of the constituencies we must serve...
of the need for renewal in the face of rapid intellectual changes...
and, of course, the challenge of acquiring the resources
necessary to achieve and sustain excellence...
as suggest that it is perhaps time to develop a new paradigm
of what the research university will be in 21st Century
America...

Leadership capable of working with the University

community and those throughout the state and the
nation that depend on us, to develop and articulate
an exciting, challenging, and compelling mission for
Michigan as it prepares to enter the 21st century
leadersh capable of identifying and articulating an
exciting, challenging, and compelling mission for
the

Remember...

While we have spent the majority of our life living in the
20th century,
the students we are educating today will spent the bulk of
their lives in the 21st century...
We are indeed educating not for the world as we know it
today---but for the future...

After all, the best way to predict the future is to

create it...and isn't that just the role of the University...