

## Dean's Dinner

### Welcome

Welcome to the annual

"Thank God we made it to the end of the term"  
dinner for the deans!

Only a week to go until commencement!!!]

Ah, perhaps you have wondered why we have  
chosen such a charming location for this end of  
the term celebration?

- i) Is it because we are preparing to begin a  
strategic retreat with LS&A this week, and we  
wanted to put ourselves in the right frame of  
mind?
- ii) Or is it because we see certain common traits  
among the Deans, the Duderstadts, and the  
Dinosaurs--such as the threat of mass  
extinction by a cosmic event?
- iii) No, rather we are simply keeping  
with our brief tradition of arranging  
each of these occasions in a location designed  
to show you some of the intellectual excitement  
in one of our schools and colleges.

### Thanks

Actually, the real purpose of this occasion is  
not so much to celebrate together the joy  
of making it through another academic year.

But rather it is an occasion for Anne and I to  
extend to each of you our personal thanks  
for your extraordinary--indeed, heroic--  
efforts over the past year.

I believe the occasion calls for several toasts:

To the deans' leadership team....

This has not been an easy year for any of us!  
The challenges of sustaining the momentum and  
direction of the University is challenging enough  
under normal circumstances.

But to sustain our pace in the face of the unprecedented  
turnover in leadership we have faced in the  
University administration is an extraordinary challenge.

Yet, through your efforts, we have not only met this  
challenge, but we have even accelerated!

- i) We have had the best faculty recruiting year  
in our history!
- ii) Student quality has never been higher.
- iii) We are rapidly assuming leadership in key  
areas such as the diversity agenda, new  
interdisciplinary initiatives such as the Humanities  
Institute, and so on.

This past year has proven once again that  
in a very real sense the real leadership of the  
University of Michigan is in the trenches...  
the leadership is with the deans, directors,  
and chairmen at the school and college level  
where it must be to deal with what really  
matters in a great university...  
teaching and research...  
students and faculty...

To our partners...our very significant others...

We all know that the responsibilities of a dean  
are generally not borne by a single  
individual...but by spouses and families...

really an extended leadership team for the University.

Anne and I know all too well the pressures that leadership brings to bear...and we know as well the role that you, as spouses, have played in keeping the University on track

To the Flemings...

Bob and Sally, your service to the University over the past several months has been heroic by any measure...

To return as the imminent, eminent, interim, and reincarnated President and first lady of the University is truly an act of dedication to the University above and beyond the call of duty.

In just a few brief months, you not only managed to address a number of the critical issues before the University, but you have provided a strong sense of continuity, optimism, and--- a certain lightness, a sense of humor and tolerance--that has given all of us a renewed sense of optimism and enthusiasm.

Finally, to Anne...

This has been a very tough year and a half for the Duderstadt...

When HTS talked us into coming over from our comfy home in Engineering, little did we realize that within 6 months we would be asked to assume a broader role of attempting to hold this place together during one of the most extraordinary turnovers in leadership in the long history of this place.

It rapidly became apparent to both of us that our only hope of accomplishing this was to work together as a team in an effort to pull the campus together as a community...

I think you all know the effort Anne has made... whether it was in her attempts to bring the deans and directors together...

or to rebuild a sense of community among the faculty through countless dinners, receptions, and other events...

or to reach out to involve students...ranging from the residence halls to intercollegiate athletes.

or her efforts to strengthen the role of the Faculty Women's Club in playing a vital role in our campus community...

Once again, this was indeed, an effort far above and beyond the call...and yet, I also feel when I look back over the past couple of years, that these efforts have had as much impact on the nature of this place as anything else we have been able to accomplish.

Developing Leadership

One final comment:

I feel a bit like Bo Schembechler must have felt when he watched Michigan beat Alabama in the Hall of Fame Bowl...

With a team this good, who needs a coach!

The real leadership and continuity of this University

rests not over in the "blockhouse" but rather in the academic units themselves!

It has been the Michigan tradition to attract into position of leadership as department chairs and deans individuals with energy, vision, and strong commitments to the achievement of excellence.

There is no doubt in my mind that, even if a massive transition at the helm of the University was not occurring, the real continuity and strength in leadership would be provided by the academic units themselves.

However, the rapid turnover in leadership faced by the University suggests that we simply must not leave to chance the development of leadership in our institution.

Rather, we must make a special effort to both broaden and deepen the leadership of the University by identifying faculty with abilities in this area and providing them with opportunities to develop these skills.

And, of course, we must also make a special effort to attract to the University individuals with particular talents in these directions.

#### The Challenge of Transition

##### Words of assurance

Michigan has been around for a long time... and prospered, in times of strong leadership...weak leadership...and occasionally, no leadership at all!

Continue to believe it is a time of unusual opportunity

Convinced that we can maintain both the direction and pace!

#### Conclusion

It should be obvious that I and my colleagues have absolutely no intention of slowing down the pace during the transition period we face in the months ahead.

To be sure, there will be additional challenges.

But, working together, I have no doubt that we can continue to accelerate even as we move through the transition as we rise to new levels of achievement and excellence.

And you have my personal commitment that I and my colleagues have committed ourselves totally to the objective of sustaining the pace and direction of the University in the months ahead!