

## Senate Assembly Address - 5/18

### 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!

But...we are going to have to think very  
carefully about how to approach the  
next year or so...

#### Changes

Recognition: Over a two year period, we will see almost  
a total turnover in the top three tiers of University  
leadership. Indeed, it is interesting to observe  
that if my predecessor Bill Frye were to return in a  
year or so, he probably wouldn't recognize anyone!

#### Senior:

President (Shapiro - 1/88)

Provost (Frye - 5/86)

VP-Finance (Brinkerhoff - 1/88)

General Counsel (Daane - 1/87)

UMD-Chancellor (Jenkins-6/88)

Athletic Director (Canham - 6/88)

#### Regents

Niederlander (11/85)

Dunn (11/85)

Power (3/88)

#### Other Administrators

##### VP-Research

DRDA (Lesch - 6/87)

Other senior AVPs...

LSW herself

##### VP-Finance area

Retirement: Weidenbach, Sturgis

##### VP-Government

Attrition : Nichols, Molin

##### VP-Academic Affairs

Attrition: Allmand, Sauve, Sudarkasa, Mims

##### Deans

Engineering, Law, Dentistry,

Art, Architecture, Medicine, SILS, Rackham, Public Health...

Question: Who will pass the torch of leadership???

#### A strategy for the transition

1. It is essential to convey to the University community a sense  
of stability and continuity...

2. It is also important, however, that we recognize that it will probably NOT be a time for business as usual... we must approach the next two years with some care if we are to sustain the direction and the momentum of the University
3. NOTE: I believe it would be a serious mistake to simply hunker down...to coast. This is a very critical period in the University's history, and we cannot afford to waste it through inaction. Now is not the time to put the University on automatic pilot!!!
4. However, we must also choose very carefully our agenda for this period, recognizing that we will be suffering from an overload. In order to accomplish our highest priority objectives, we will inevitably have to let some other activities go to hell...

Some Questions:

1. How do we convey to the University community (and beyond) a sense of stability and continuity... yet, at the same time, get people to pull together to move through the transition with resolve and enthusiasm, rather than simply hunkering down... or even worst, starting turf battles (since Nature abhors a vacuum -- particularly in leadership)
2. What activities should we focus on as our highest priority in the months ahead?
  - Traditional goals...
    - Faculty salaries, graduate student support, better laboratories, libraries, etc.
    - Pluralism and diversity
    - Public sector (Lansing, Washington)
    - Private sector (son of the Campaign for Michigan)
    - A national championship in a revenue sport???
3. How do we involve the faculty in the key decision process during this period? How do we get you... and keep you...in the loop?

Some Possible Answers

- Let me suggest to you some of the priorities I believe should be essential areas of focus in the months ahead:
- i) The strategic leadership agenda
  - ii) Our renewed commitment to building a community which not only tolerates, but seeks and is nurtured by its diversity and pluralism.
  - iii) Faculty recruiting and development
  - iv) Building greater depth of leadership in the University through greater faculty involvement

**Strategic Leadership**

Charting a course for the 21st Century

Recall my remarks to the Assembly last fall when I

suggested that the University would face a period of unusual opportunity, responsibility, and challenge in the years ahead.

At that time I suggested that the challenge before us was not merely how to respond to this future... to seize the initiative by taking action to determine our own destiny.

All too often in the past, we have tended to respond to external pressures, opportunities, needs, rather than taking control of our own destiny. We have been blown in one direction or another by winds from outside. It is now time that we grasp the wheel firmly to steer the University in a direction appropriate for the future.

To seize the opportunities, to face the responsibilities, and to meet the challenges before us, the University should initiate a process capable of determining both a direction and a strategy capable of guiding it into the 21st Century.

In a sense, I proposed that we initiate a process of "strategic leadership" that first addresses the question about "what" we want this University to be -- what our values, goals, priorities, and objectives should be.

We should approach our future "strategically" rather than merely position ourselves to respond.

How do we begin?

1. Institution level

Triggered a process among selected groups of faculty students, and administrators aimed at grappling with the difficult task of articulating the mission of the University..

Our values and goals, our priorities and objectives.

Hope that this process will propagate to involve larger and larger segments of the University in the year ahead.

2. Unit level

Triggered a similar planning process at the unit level schools and colleges, centers and institutes, administrative and auxiliary units

Over course of next three years, will meet at length with each of our units, to learn about their needs and concerns, their goals and aspirations, and to work with them in achieving their objectives.

Have been meeting over the course of the past term with 5 schools and 3 administrative units.

Meetings have been very productive. We are now engaged in the followup process.

NOTE: These interactions have been kept on a very positive and constructive plane...and have been as informative to the School as they have been to us in the central administration.

### 3. University initiatives

Sometimes, to get a mule's attention...

We have implemented an important process aimed at reallocating resources toward strategic objectives of the University.

#### University Initiatives Fund

##### Plan:

Over the course of the next several years, we intend to launch a series of institution-wide initiatives aimed at sustaining and enhancing the vitality of the University.

To fund these, we will reallocate 1% of the base budget of the University for each of the next three years into a University Initiative Fund.

That is, institution-wide strategic initiatives will be funded "off the top". In this sense, we are reallocating major resources of the University through initiatives that reflect some of its highest priorities.

To begin the process, we have moved forward with three initiatives we believe address priorities so compelling as to require immediate action:

#### 1. The Undergraduate Initiatives Fund

Designed to stimulate activities aimed at improving and enhancing the quality of the undergraduate experience.

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.

We intend to announce the first group of awards in the next couple of weeks.

#### 2. Presidential Initiatives Fund

One of challenges facing any research university is the proper balance between diversity and conformity, novelty and venturesome vs. intellectual conservatism, on the hybridization of ideas as opposed to orthodoxy.

Hence, will be investing \$1 million per year to stimulate innovate, interdisciplinary, and venturesome scholarship.

Supported in the beginning by Kellogg.

The first group of awards were announced last month.

We intend to hold a special conference this fall to discuss this particular initiative.

#### 3. Diversity of the University Community

One of greatest strengths and responsibilities of University is its racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity.

Hence, our third initiative is the investment of major additional resources aimed at strengthening the rich diversity of our students and faculty.

Of highest priority will be programs aimed at reaffirming and

strengthening the University's commitment to the recruitment and retention of minority students and faculty. Again, this initiative will be budgeted at \$1 million per year. I will have more to say about this particular initiative in a moment.

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.

## **Minority Affairs**

The Michigan Plan

In 1970s Michigan assumed a leadership role in higher education with its firm commitment to achieving appropriate representation of blacks and other minority groups among its students, faculty, and staff.

Over the next decade, UM developed and implemented an array of programs aimed at recruiting, retaining, supporting, and developing minority students and faculty unexcelled by any other university in this nation. The commitment of resources -- whether financial or human -- was extraordinary by any measure.

And during this period, it achieved success...

minority enrollments to 10% and black enrollments to 7.2% in 1978.

However, during the late 1970s and early 1980s, Michigan, like every other major university in this nation experienced setbacks in achieving these goals...enrollments began a gradual decline (down to 5% black). Why?

- i) Universities recognized that existing support services were simply inadequate to handle the large numbers of at risk students being admitted, and hence attrition rates were unacceptable high. Therefore, more selectivity in admissions qualifications was necessary.
- ii) Major programs which had traditionally enrolled far higher percentages such as Education suffered major declines due to the sharp decline in opportunities for graduates in these fields. At the same time, enormous demand built in areas such as Engineering which required far stronger pre-admission preparation.

Hence, in the early 1980s Michigan once again decided to assume a role of national leadership by implementing a broad array of new programs -- and once again it was successful in turning around the national trend and rebuilding, albeit slowing, the decline in minority student and faculty representation:

- i) Minority enrollments have risen to 12.7% ; Black enrollment to 5.3%.
- ii) Black freshmen enrollment has increased by 50% in three years
- iii) Black enrollment in Medicine (9.8%), Dentistry (8.5%), and Law (7.5%), Bus (7.6%)
- iv) Indeed, most of our schools and colleges are clearly national leaders, whether in their success in achieving minority enrollments or in attracting minority faculty.
- iii) UM now has higher black faculty percentage than any of our peers...and twice the absolute number compared to anyone else in this group.

But, any attempt at leadership is accompanied by certain risks...and at Michigan, despite our efforts.

- i) We have not been as successful as we should have been...
- ii) Expectations both within and outside the University were very high...
- iii) The growing national concern -- indeed tension -- over minority representation specifically and racial issues more generally was reflected on our campus

We are now convinced that leadership requires a major increase in our efforts...

A renewed commitment to our aspiration of strong participation by all minority groups

But we also recognize this will require new

Commitments of human and financial resources...

And the involvement of our faculty, students, staff, alumni, and friends -- at all levels of the

University, inside and out, in the effort to move toward this goal.

Hence we are setting out upon a new and exciting agenda to move toward these objectives.

The University's Commitment:

On March 23, the University announced a 6-point plan to increase representation of Blacks and other minorities throughout the University. More precisely, we stated:

"The aspiration of the University is to achieve representations of Blacks and other minorities proportionate to their numbers in the population. In order to achieve this target, we believe it will be necessary to establish appropriate goals and timetables within each area of the University."

Key in achieving this objective must be the recognition that the University must reach out to involve itself in all levels of education -- to work with you and your colleagues to build

the capacity of your schools to better provide students with the opportunities to continue their education as far as their abilities and their interests allow.

To facilitate this, we have taken a number of important steps -- outlined in the special editions of the University Record in recent weeks.

- i) We have strengthened our ability to stimulate, sustain, and coordinate the broad range of activities associated with minority affairs by restructuring my office to create a new position, Vice-President for Minority Affairs, and an associated Office of Minority Affairs. As you are aware, we have attracted an nationally known leader, Dr. Charles Moody, into this role. Dr. Moody and I will be working closely in the months ahead to build the team necessary to accomplish our objectives.
- ii) We are undertaking major new efforts in minority student and faculty recruiting, development, and retention.
- iii) We will be implementing new programs aimed at creating new sensitivity and understanding of the importance of a pluralistic community on the part of students, faculty, and staff.

Some personal remarks:

As Provost at the University of Michigan, I have become convinced that key to our mission in serving this State and its people is a renewed commitment to our aspiration of eventual representation of all minority groups in proportion to their numbers in our society.

This will require major new commitments of human and financial resources. It will also require the active involvement and cooperation of our faculty, students, staff, alumni, friends, and supporters in the effort to move toward this important goal.

The new agenda we have embarked upon aligns naturally both with the mission of the University and with our determination to be a leader in efforts to achieve new levels of understanding tolerance, and mutual fulfillment for peoples of diverse backgrounds.

And we must make a special effort to ensure that all students... regardless of race, creed, or national origin... have the opportunity to develop their talents to the fullest...

### **Faculty Recruiting, Development, and Retention**

The key to excellence in our University rests with its faculty.

As I have said countless times, our fundamental objective must be to attract the most talented faculty to Michigan, provide them with the environment that will stimulate, sustain, and encourage them to push to the limits of their own abilities, and then get the hell out of their way.

This activity of attracting the best to Michigan is even more critical today at a time when most of our schools and colleges

are beginning to enter the first waves of massive retirements...  
when a major turnover in our faculty will occur.

However, this is also occurring at a most opportune time.

For unlike the early 1980s when Michigan's ability to attract the best was hindered by an image tarnished by images of the Rust Belt...

Today, we find that most of our units have been remarkably successful in attracting almost anyone they desire.

We are indeed in a very favorable position...and it is the case that much of my and the deans time has been committed to that most important of all tasks, rebuilding the human capital of our institution.

And I would suggest that this must continue to be one of our highest priorities in the months ahead...even in the face of the challenges associated with the Transition Period.

### **Developing Leadership**

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.

### **Concluding remarks**

In conclusion, let me return for a moment to the theme of my remarks to this body last fall..

I am convinced that 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:

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.
5. A sense of community, collegiality  
Resist "centrifical" forces on strong disciplines...  
Pull people together...

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.

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!