

Planning for the 1990s

Bad News of the 1980s...

1. Sharp erosion in public support of higher education:
 - ...Michigan: top third to bottom third
 - ...Fed fin aid: 50% reduction
 - ...Research: particularly indirect cost

Silent shift in public principle...
 ...from tax support to "user fees"

Example: UMAA

Tuition & Fees > State support (private public)
 Federal > State support (national state)
 Private ?? > ?? State (goal of 1990s)

FY91: State = 14% of total budget
 = 23% of academic budget

An Aside: I believe that the next 2 or 3 decades will see both a major shakeout and a major convergence in the nature of the comprehensive research university...in which the distinction between public and private universities will become more blurred...and in which the best institutions will become remarkably similar. Two facts of life compell this conclusion:

- i) The costs of excellence in teaching and scholarship will increase more rapidly than the resources available to higher education as a whole.
 - ii) The best institutions will all be competing in the same marketplace...for the best students, the best faculty, R&D dollars from Washington, private support from business, foundations, and individuals...
2. Caught in a squeeze between public resistance to taxes and other social priorities:
 - ...elderly (health care, etc.)
 - ...corrections (almost caught up with higher ed)
 - ...K-12 education (just beginning to grow)
 - ...environment, social services,...
 3. The Forces of Darkness:
 - Much more political tampering...
 - ...from state government

...from federal government
 ...from governing boards

Some Examples:

...tuition control (in our case, stimulated in part
 by a "guaranteed tuition plan", the Michigan
 Education trust)
 ...admissions pressures...instate/outstate mix
 ...ethnic politics (racism witchhunts...)
 ...intercollegiate athletics!!!
 ...elected and appointed boards of trustees

4. Public cynicism about higher education
 - ...costs, prices, value of college education
 - ...quality of undergraduate education
 - ...scandals: intercollegiate athletics,
 academic integrity, conflict of interest

What is really going on?

Profound changes occurring in American society...

While it is always dangerous to speculate about the future,
 three themes seem crystal clear...

- i) It will be a future in which our nation becomes a truly
 multicultural society, with a cultural, racial, and
 ethnic diversity that will be extraordinary in our
 history.
- ii) It will be a future in which America becomes
 internationalized...in which every aspect of American
 life must be viewed from the broader context of our
 place in the global community...where through
 immigration we become a world nation, with ethnic ties
 to every part of the globe
- iii) Finally, it will be a future in which we rapidly evolve
 from a resource- and labor-intensive industrial society
 to a knowledge-intensive society...a society in which
 knowledge itself--that is, educated people and their
 ideas--become the key strategic commodities necessary
 for prosperity, security, and social well-being.

Ironically, even as public confidence in higher education
 has eroded, the university is playing an ever more
 central role in a knowledge-based society...as the key
 source of knowledge, itself, and those capable of
 applying it.

In fact, essentially all of the major challenges before
 society today...
 ...preservation of the environment
 ...health care

...K-12 education
...poverty, crime, the plight of our cities
All, will require the capacities of our institutions.

A particular challenge: Constituencies

Challenge of responding the extraordinary diversity
of needs and expectations of the multiple
constituencies we serve...students, parents, state
government, federal government, business, labor,
public at large...not to mention faculty, staff,
governing boards.

Concluding remarks:

1. Believe that the pace of change in America today is unlike anything seen since the late 19th century, when the forces of the industrial revolution, immigration, and expansion to the frontier drove similar change...and led to the creation of the public university of the 20th century as we know it today.
2. Believe that forces of similar magnitude will drive similar changes in our society...and in the institutions serving this society.
3. I am convinced that the public university as we know it today evolved to serve an America of the past...a homogenous, domestically-focused, industrial nation that characterized the past century. Our challenge during the 1990s will be to re-invent a new type of institution capable of serving the highly pluralistic, knowledge-intensive, world nation that is America of today and the next century.
4. More specifically, the challenge, as I see it, is stimulating and managing the process of change as our institutions evolve from 20th Century to 21st Century Universities.

The Role of NASULGC...

It is clear that NASULGC can and should play a very major role during this period of change in higher education.

But it is also clear that NASULGC must change itself if it is to play this role...

...It must become more strategic in its activities

...It must become more focused...

...It must become lean and mean

...It must configure itself to better respond to the challenges, opportunities, and responsibilities presented by the decade of change ahead.

Bob Bryant and his colleagues have done a marvelous job of identifying key issues and suggesting a set of strategic and structural changes for NASULGC to better enable it to serve us. I, for one, believe it very important that we consider these recommendations carefully and move ahead with them as a framework for change.

EXAMPLE: Federal Relations

It is clear that all of our institutions will be increasingly impacted by activities at the federal level:

- ...many of us are already more federal than state universities...at least when it comes to funding
- ...impact of federal policy, regulation, concerns
- ...rapidly changing nature of Washington scene

It is also clear that as the principal association speaking for public higher education, NASULGC can and should play a key role in:

- i) policy analysis from the special viewpoint of the major public universities
- ii) effectively articulating the positions of these institutions on major federal issues... and influencing federal policy
- iii) and, while there are of course other groups with whom NASULGC should work closely and cooperatively, it is also clear that whenever the vital interests of its members are at stake, NASULGC should assume a leadership role among associations.

While NASULGC is actively involved across a broad front of federal relations activities at present, we believe it is ill-configured to play the role it must in the 1990s:

- i) There are numerous staff assigned to federal relations activities from the various elements of NASULGC...but these efforts are not well coordinated nor even understood...at least by the presidents!

- ii) Too much staff time is being devoted to specialized or traditional issues, leaving too little staff time for federal policy issues of broad, central, and strategic concern to our institutions such as biomedical research, basic research, undergraduate student aid, graduate education, and tax policy.
- iii) In a nutshell, we believe that a far more coordinated, focused, and strategic federal relations effort is needed for the 1990s and beyond.

During the past six months, a special task force of the Committee on Federal Legislation has been working to develop a set of recommendations on how better to position NASULGC for the 1990s. These have been folded into Bob Bryant's decennial report:

*****REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS*****

In summary, then, I believe that the 1990s will be a time of great challenge, responsibility, and opportunity for our institutions.

NASULGC can, should...indeed, MUST...play a major role in assisting our institutions during this extraordinary period of change.

But to do so, NASULGC itself must adapt, reflect, assess, and come forward with a new mission that will represent and help its member institutions.

No other association or vehicle has as much potential for influence national as NASULGC. It is positioned in every state to have influence through its member institutions on local, regional, and national leaders, policies, and the allocation of resources.

But we are not fully developing and using this potential strength.

The issue before us is change...

...but it is also leadership.

And I believe this to be the key decision we face today.

Will NASULGC step up to the challenge of leadership in the decade of change ahead.

Bob Bryant and his colleagues have laid out an excellent framework designed to facilitate change...and to achieve leadership.

And I urge your consideration and support of this effort!