

Parents Weekend

Welcome to what we hope will become an annual
tradition: Parents Weekend

Let me offer both our congratulations and our
gratitude to the many students who made this
weekend possible...

For as you know, this event is entirely planned,
organized, and run by our students!

Parents Weekends are a very important tradition
in many parts of the country...particularly the East Coast.

They are particularly useful for the parents of
first year students -- "fresh-folks"--since not only
to they provide parents with a better sense of
what the campus community is really like...
...and a sense of reassurance and confidence to
their students...
...but they also provide an opportunity to pick up
two months worth of laundry...and provide enough
food and cash to get your students through until
Thanksgiving!

Since Parents Weekend is, in part, a learning
process, I thought I would make a few comments
on the nature of this new home for your sons and daughters.

Michigan as a Home

And Michigan is indeed a home...

In those short years that our students
spent on this campus during their
education, they become a member of
the Michigan family for the rest of
their lives...

And Ann Arbor becomes forever their home...
at least in their hearts...

Traditional Images of Michigan

But just what is this institution,
this force that has had such an impact on our lives?
When we hear the words "The University of Michigan",
we think of those traditional images of any college...

- Great faculty challenging and exciting students in the classroom..
- Students studying in our many libraries
- Scientists toiling away late in the evenings in our laboratories...
...striving to understand the universe
- Scholars pouring over ancient manuscripts in
our collections of antiquity

But there are some very special images of Michigan

Ann Arbor on a Saturday afternoon in the fall...
afternoons in the fall as 105,000 fans cram into
Michigan stadium to watch the Wolverines...
...Remember Leroy Hoard's breakaway 67 yard run that
sealed Michigan's exciting come-from-behind victory
over USC in the Rose Bowl...
(or Bo Derek making a surprising appearance at that
pep rally at the Century Plaza...)
...and who will ever be able to forget Rumeal Robinson
stepping to the line in Seattle with 3 seconds
left in overtime and calmly sinking two free throws to
win the national championship against Seton Hall.
...and the Cinderella story of Steve Fisher and his
team "with a mission"

Then there is the Michigan of the Big Chill...
The tradition of student involvement helping to awaken the
conscience of a nation...

SDS--Tom Hayden, teaches
...What about the sight of over 10,000 students and faculty marching together, arm in arm down S. University to honor the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and to confirm Michigan's commitment to achieving new levels of understanding, tolerance, and mutual fulfillment for peoples of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

There is Michigan of the Arts

...or Leonard Bernstein celebrating his 70th birthday in Hill Auditorium with the Vienna Philharmonic...
...or the visits of Ella Fitzgerald or Toni Morrison or Jesse Normal Kurt Mazur and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra
University Musical Society
Schools of Music and Art
...or the scores of spectacular student productions, plays, concerts, dances, operas, and, of course demonstrations and protests, that have enlivened this campus over the past year.

There is also the caring Michigan as seen by the over 750,000 patients a year who are treated by the UM Medical Center,

Or the Michigan as Silicon Valley East, working to build the high-tech infrastructure necessary to create new companies and new jobs...as evidenced by the \$5 B industry in industrial automation now building up in the Ann Arbor-Detroit-Warren crescent...

Or the Michigan which attracts to our state almost a quarter of a billion dollars of federal R&D each year...not to mention many of the world's leading scientists and engineers

Or the Michigan of the "cutting edge", which conducts the research that changes our lives... as evidenced, for example, by announcement earlier this month that a Michigan team had identified and cloned the gene responsible for cystic fibrosis, thereby opening up the possibility of saving thousands of lives every year.

Or the Michigan of outer space...

...Apollo 15...the Michigan mission to the moon...
...which not only established the first UM Club in space...
...but named a crater after Michigan on the moon.

Or Michigan as the unifying force in our families...
Camp Michigania

And, of course, there is the Michigan as the educator, attempting to provide, in the words of one of our first presidents "an uncommon education for the common man" an education as good as any available in the world for all citizens, regardless of race, creed, and socioeconomic background.

What is Michigan?

The prototype, the flagship, of the large, comprehensive, public research university which has served America so well in the 20th Century
There are nearly 3,000 colleges and universities in the United States, yet only a few are equipped to help generate the creative resurgence of our culture and our economy.

With a serious commitment to quality ranked among the top 10 in virtually everything it does (not just football and basketball)
By any measure, Michigan is known to its peers

throughout the world as one of the preeminent universities in teaching, research, and service. The University of Michigan unquestionably stands among the world's leading institutions of learning and scholarship.

Unusual breadth, rich diversity of academic disciplines, professional schools, social and cultural activities...
...our intellectual pluralism...

Unusual activism of students and faculty
liberal spirit, progressive vision

Extraordinary array of extracurricular activities
performing arts
intercollegiate athletics
Ann Arbor, itself!!!

Well-balanced portfolio

1990 is cross-over year:

Tuition revenue > state support ("private public")

Federal R&D > state support ("national state")

Unusual ability to control our own destiny

The embodiment of the hopes and dreams,
commitment and stewardship of eight generations
of Michigan alumni!

But that is the University of Michigan of
yesterday and today.

What about tomorrow?

Challenges before America

Few realize the the ever-accelerating
pace of change in our nation...and in the world!

Think about it for a moment...

The students we are educating today will spend most of
their lives in the next century...they will be citizens
of the 21st Century...

Our students will inherit a much different America
than you and I have known...

i) It will be future in which our nation becomes a truly
multicultural society, with a cultural, racial, and
ethnic diversity that will be extraordinary in our history
In which those groups we refer to today as
minorities will become the majority population of
our nation in the century ahead...

In which women take their rightful place as leaders
of America...

ii) It will be a future in which America will become "internationalized"...
in which every one of our activities must be viewed within
the broader context of participation in the global community...

Whether through travel and communication, the arts and
culture, the internationalization of commerce, capital,
and labor, we will become increasingly interdependent on
other nations and other peoples.

Further, as the destination of roughly half the world's
immigrants, the United States is rapidly
becoming a "world nation"
with not simply economic and political but strong ethnic
ties to all parts of the globe.

iii) The Age of Knowledge

But there are even more profound changes underway...

Looking back over history, one can identify certain
abrupt changes, discontinuities, in the nature,
the very fabric of our civilization...

The Renaissance, the Age
of Discovery, the Industrial Revolution

There are many who contend that our society is once again undergoing such a dramatic shift in fundamental perspective and structure.

Today we are evolving rapidly to a new post-industrial, knowledge-based society, just as a century ago our agrarian society evolved through the Industrial Revolution.

In a sense, we are entering a new age, an age of knowledge, in which the key strategic resource necessary for our prosperity, security, and social well-being has become knowledge--educated people and their ideas.

Knowledge will play the same role that in the past were played by natural resources or geographical location or unskilled location...

In the knowledge-intensive future that is our destiny it seems clear that education in general...

...higher education in particular...

...and the research university most specifically are rapidly becoming the key ingredients determining the strength, prosperity, and social-well being of our nation.

Just think of the challenges which cry out for attention

- the plight of our cities,
the development of an underclass
polarization of American society
- greenhouse effect and global change
- international competition
Pacific Rim or Europe 1992
- health care: cancer, heart disease, AIDS
- new frontiers: outer space
or spaceship Earth

But the greatest need of all is for leadership and this is the University of Michigan's great contribution to America...

...through its teaching, research, and service

...through its graduates and their achievements

Indeed, leadership is both our heritage and our destiny!

Re-Inventing the University

But we have an even more ambitious mission of leadership:

To re-invent the university for the 21st Century

The winds of change are blowing... stirring the cauldron of higher education to create a new model of the university for the future.

Hence, is it not appropriate to question whether our present concept of the research university, developed largely to serve a homogeneous, domestic, industrial society...must also evolve rapidly if we are to serve the highly pluralistic, knowledge-intensive, world nation that will be America of the 21st Century.

Who will determine the new paradigm for the research? university in America?

Who will provide the leadership?

Why not the University of Michigan?

After all, in a very real sense, it was our University that developed the paradigm of the public university capable of responding to the needs of a rapidly changing America of the 19th century...

as American expanded to the frontier...
as it evolved through the industrial revolution...
as it absorbed wave after wave of immigrants
a paradigm that still dominates higher education today.
In a sense, we have been throughout our history the
flagship of public higher education in America.
In a very real sense, it was the University of Michigan
which invented the University of the 20th Century.
Perhaps it is time that we once again played that role...
re-inventing the nature of the university once again...
...a university capable of educating the citizens
and serving the society of not the 20th,
but rather the 21st Century.

Let's do it again, as America evolves
into a highly pluralistic, knowledge-intensive
world nation of the 21st Century!

Concluding Remarks

You know, Michigan is really a very special place....
It is one of only a handful of universities capable
of truly changing not only higher education,
but the nation and the world.

We believe the challenge of re-inventing
the American university for the 21st Century
...is not only an exciting and
challenging mission for the 1990s
...but it is also a mission befitting
UM's long heritage of leadership
...and it is also a challenge worthy of
the army of maize and blue alumni
across the nation and around the world

Indeed, I'd be very surprised if you
settled for anything less from your university!
The 1990s will be a time of great challenge
opportunity, and responsibility for your university.
But they will also be years of great excitement.

As we stand on the threshold of this
great adventure of re-inventing the
University for the 21st Century,

Let me call on you to demonstrate yet
again that extraordinary sense of
loyalty and pride in your University
that has been our key source of
strength...

Let me call on you to show that
"Go-Blue" spirit that is the key
to our heritage and our destiny.

Thanks and Congratulations...

Let me thank you once again for granting us the privilege
of teaching and learning with your sons and daughters during
these years of their college education.

Let me also congratulate you on the extraordinary achievements
that each of your children have already attained...

I can assure you that we regard each and everyone
of your sons and daughters as someone very special...
and I must confess that we are already very proud
of them...

Welcome you as parents...

and also as new members of the Michigan family!!!