

## Alumni Talk

### Introduction

#### What is a "Provost"?

Dictionary: Latin: "the one in charge..."

1. chief dignitary of a collegiate or cathedral chapter
2. chief magistrate of a Scottish burgh
3. the keeper of a prison
4. a high-ranking university administrative officer

At Michigan:

1. Chief line officer for academic staff...
2. Chief budget officer
3. President = CEO, Provost = COO
4. President leads, Provost pushes...
5. President determines direction, Provost determines pace
6. Provost is the one who says "No"...

### Images of Michigan

#### Fall in Ann Arbor....

Bright football weekends...

Students walking across the Diag, the Engineering Arch, the Blue Front

#### Or, perhaps, an image of roses...

#### Michigan...the nation's flagship of public higher education

a tradition of excellence

### Yet University is undergoing rapid change

#### Not in quality of students in faculty,

nor in its commitment to excellence

#### But in other characteristics:

its physical plant...

\$700 M in construction over past 5 years...

Medicine, Engineering, Business, LS&A

Information technology

Computer access, telecommunications, supercomputers

its funding base...

Most interesting experiment in higher education...

less than 20% State (\$220 M in \$1.2 B)

Rest comes from tuition, research, and private support

its attitude toward the world beyond the ivory tower...

Revised policies to encourage rather than constrain

MRC, ITI, CMI, Health Care

and in its basic philosophy...

Note: We are changing, not so much in an effort to respond to external pressures...but rather to position ourselves to take advantage of some extraordinary opportunities.

We are attempting to seize control of our destiny, to determine a direction and a strategy to take us into the 21st Century.

Let me explain...

### Some parameters of the University

#### University of Michigan = "mega-university"

- i) Spans all intellectual disciplines and professional areas
- ii) Provides instruction, research, service
- iii) Attempts to conduct programs that rank among the nation's best in all areas (and succeeds...)

#### Parameters:

Enrollment: 34,340 (Ann Arbor) (46,725 total)

Faculty: 2,600 (14,000 employees)

Budget: \$1.1 billion (\$406 million for academic)

\$206 million State

\$166 student tuition and fees

\$495 million "auxiliary services" (hospital, housing, ..)

\$192 million, sponsored research

\$45 million, gifts

Quality:

Students: Top 3% of high school graduates

Faculty: Recruit the best in the world

Programs: Generally all ranked in top 10 nationally

### **A time of opportunity, responsibility, and challenge**

#### **Opportunities**

1. Reputation as the flagship of public higher education
  2. People
    - A faculty of great intellectual strength and unusual breadth
    - Student body of quality unsurpassed by any public institution
    - Quality x quantity = #1
    - Largest alumni body in US (1 out of every 1,000 Americans)
  3. Resources
    - Prosperous state, with the potential for greater support
    - Federal support...learning how to play game better
    - Private support...Campaign for Michigan
  4. Ability to control our own destiny
    - Best of public and private worlds
    - Public support - \$200 M/y -- \$4 B endowment
    - Greater than Harvard and Texas
    - Autonomy of private institution
- Summary of Opportunities:  
Believe UM faces opportunities unmatched by another other institution in this nation...  
The opportunity is there...  
But then so are some important responsibilities!

#### **Responsibilities**

To our students

The "raw material" entering this institution today is the most valuable resource of our nation... Truly extraordinary quality and commitment. We must be responsible stewards and provide the "value-added" of an outstanding education. Incidentally, despite the fact I'm an engineer, I am firmly committed to the importance of a broad and liberal education...including some science, of course...

To our faculty

Hired over 900 new faculty in past 5 years  
Salaries to asst and assoc prof the best  
Getting the best!  
And we owe them the opportunity to develop their exceptional talents to the fullest by providing them with the environment, support, and encouragement to push to the limits of their abilities.

To our State and nation

We are a public institution, after all...and as such, we have an important responsibility to our state and nation.

#### **Challenges:**

It is a time of unusual opportunity, to be sure. But, if we are to grasp these opportunities while meeting our responsibilities, I believe we must face several important challenges.

These challenges are no so much concerned with resources state funding or physical facilities or such.

Rather they are concerned with the very nature of what we believe the University is...and what we wish it to be.

These are challenges of excellence!

1. Picking up the pace a bit...

To build a level of intensity and expectation to

- settle for nothing less than the best in the performance of faculty, students, and programs  
The thundering herd...the hoofbeats behind us  
Excellence sets us apart...  
    provides the visibility to attract resources  
We must shake off that extraordinary intolerance of extreme excellence which seems to plague midwestern institutions... and set our course for achieving the best.
2. Focusing resources to achieve excellence...  
    Should not try to be all things to all people...  
    The time of continual increases in public support ended more than a decade ago.  
    Quality should dominate breadth and capacity...  
    Build "spires" of excellence
  3. Highest priority: academic excellence  
    UM's reputation and quality will be based on its activities in instruction and scholarship...  
    Academic excellence must be our highest priority...
  4. Changing intellectual currents...  
    Intellectual leadership...  
        demands pushing to the forefront of discovery working on the exponential part of the knowledge curve  
    Shift to a change-oriented, risk-taking culture  
    Relish change!!!  
    Stress bold, new initiatives...  
    Defy the deification of disciplines  
    New knowledge created at interfaces...  
    At turbulent mixing, collision of disciplines
  5. A sense of community, collegiality  
    Resist "centrifugal" forces on strong disciplines...  
    Pull people together...

### **Strategic Leadership**

**So how do we respond to this time of opportunity,**  
responsibility, and challenge?

**I suggest that we do not "respond"...as we have all too**  
often in the past, but that we 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 propose 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.

#### **A Plan to Respond to the Challenge of Leadership**

First phase: "what" do we want to be?

"Smaller but better"?...

"Poorer but wiser"?...

What is unique about UM -- our "market niche"?

A large, comprehensive, public, research university

A serious commitment to scholarship

Unusual breadth, rich diversity of academic disciplines,

professional schools, social and cultural activities  
Unusual degree of participation of faculty and students in  
University decisions  
AND... probably the highest quality undergraduate student  
body of any public university in the nation...  
Indeed, UM probably enrolls more outstanding students  
than any university in the nation.

Idea:

Why don't we take advantage of these factors by choosing a  
mission which links together  
Teaching, research, and service  
Quality, breadth, and size  
Undergraduate, graduate, professional education  
and faculty development  
to provide UM with a unique role in higher education.

**Suggestion: A mission of leadership**

For the decade ahead, the UM should select as its primary  
goal: "Building the leadership of tomorrow on a foundation  
of academic excellence.

We should place primary emphasis on the development of  
leadership through the education of our students, the  
intellectual development and contributions of our faculty.

Of course, the key to success in this mission will be academic  
excellence: education, scholarship, and research of the  
highest quality.

Such a mission would:

- 1) Take advantage of where we are today...
- 2) Enhance our impact on society in a manner consistent with  
our responsibilities as a public institution
- 3) Lay the foundation for the long term strength and distinction  
of the University through the achievement, contributions,  
and influence of its graduates and faculty.

And this is where you come in...

**The Role of Alumni**

**Key factor: active involvement by alumni...**

**Not just for financial support...**

although you can expect to hear from us even more  
frequently

**Not just for influence...**

although since Michigan produces leaders, many of alumni  
have the opportunity to have major impact on UM through  
their roles as leaders of government or industry

**But beyond that, through your active involvement...**

to provide to our students a sense of potential, what the  
future holds in store for them...

for our faculty, since by buying in to what we are trying  
to do, you provide them with strong evidence of the  
profound importance of their activities

**Cannot stress strongly enough the importance of this**

active involvement...

**Concluding remarks**

**For I believe 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 I have put before you:

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.

## 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...and I look forward to working  
closely with you and your colleagues during this  
period of opportunity and excitement to maintain and  
strengthen Michigan's long tradition of excellence.**

## Conclusions

**UM is on the move!**

**We are committed to strengthening our role of leadership**  
in education and research.

**And, of course, the key in accomplishing this will be your**  
continued interest, involvement, and support.

**Go Blue!**