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During the past decade, initiatives by groups such as the Urban Affairs Division of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges have helped bring the concept of the urban university to the fore. Conferences, workshops, and publications have addressed specific topics such as school-college collaboration or minority recruitment and retention, as well as more broad-ranging issues related to the urban agenda of the future. But much remains to be done. Curricula will have to reflect the growing diversity of students. Schedules will have to be made much more flexible. Greater cooperation with public authorities and the private sector will be required if urban universities are to make their proper contribution to the economic development of their regions. And of course these urban institutions must be first and foremost universities, retaining their academic integrity, in order to adequately fulfill their potential in the years ahead.

Ten Years of Progress

There are various ways to evaluate the accomplishments and shortcomings of our urban universities—perhaps as many ways as there are observers trying to understand them and to assess their experiences. In the United States we could look back to the great municipal establishments of the early part of our century, comparing their role in the acculturation of the children of European immigrants with that of our contemporary urban institutions in a world that has changed dramatically in the meantime. Or we could focus on the 1960s, when social turmoil reached the flash point and urban universities responded by trying to address the issues as they surfaced on the campus and by offering assistance to the troubled cities. We might note the often unrecognized progress made in educating students with a variety of cultural and physical disadvantages, while recognizing that such successes seldom resulted in enhanced prestige for the urban institutions. And we would have also to note how accessibility was restricted by the fiscal constraints of the 70s and the basic missions of the urban universities made more difficult to fulfill.

In this article I am undertaking a task that is at the same time more modest and more ambitious: to look at the past ten years or so and comment on what we have been able to do to define and further the special responsibilities of the universities in our metropolitan conurbations. I also want to suggest some of the initiatives we need to undertake in the future. My frame of reference is the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) and its Urban Affairs Division, because details of the creation and subsequent development of this division are a good illustration of the struggle to establish the identity of universities that are involved with their

cities. In this account I will use the term urban universities to echo the title of the division. But my remarks in general are of course intended to include the wide range of metropolitan universities in the United States, as well as elsewhere.

The Urban Affairs Division of NASULGC came into existence in 1979 after an uphill campaign waged by a handful of interested administrators. NASULGC had been established in 1963 by a marriage of the association of land-grant institutions and the major state research universities in a way that ensured the central role, proper for its time, of the agricultural interests led by the officers of the great land-grant universities. To be sure, many of these presidents and deans apprehended that urbanization had created a whole new spectrum of teaching, research, and service needs. But for the most part, they resisted the notion that certain institutions, the urban universities, were uniquely equipped—or should become so—to deal with urban educational issues, just as the colleges of agriculture had dealt peerlessly with their specialized concerns. Eventually, the campaign to recognize the special role of the urban universities bore fruit.

The establishment of the Urban Affairs Division was an important achievement. However, thus far it has been a limited one. For reasons that are very complex, it has not even begun to achieve that parallelism with the Division of Agriculture that some of us hoped for at its inception. Indeed, the creation of the Marine Division, important as it is, in some ways has relegated the Urban Division to a somewhat ancillary role when everything we know about the constantly changing character of our society cries out that it must be a genuinely major element of our organization, on a parallel with the Division of Agriculture at the very least. The organizational campaign, in other words, is not yet a part of our history—it needs to go on.

Still, we have managed to come a long way in the past decade. Most importantly, whatever may be the imbalance in our professional organization, its Urban Affairs Division has succeeded in bringing the concept of the urban university to the forefront of attention, not only in NASULGC, but increasingly in the broader educational spectrum as well. From the beginning, the division has conceived its role as being substantially more than that of a mere lobbying arrangement. It has sponsored a series of projects to encourage constructive action on a variety of urban issues. Quite early on, the school project enabled a group of universities to compare their experiences in collaborating with neighboring urban school districts in tackling some of the stubborn problems of urban education. Participants in the project would be the first to concede

that they had scarcely scratched the surface, but the initiative has pointed the way towards a cooperation that is likely, I think, to be more and more useful as time goes on.

Meetings such as the recent Fourth International Urban University Conference held in Montreal or the forthcoming program on the urban universities and the arts to be held at Wayne State University under the cosponsorship of the Urban Affairs Division and the Commission on the Arts of NASULGC foster a healthy exchange of information and experiences among the members of our division. And a series of regional conferences, such as the one at my institution on minority recruitment and retention, and a number of one-day workshops are helping to give greater coherence, including a sharper perception of what we can and cannot do, to the tasks of our urban universities within their urban environment.

Equally valuable has been the publication program of NASULGC's Urban Division. Its monographs on faculty reward systems and student support services address practices that will increasingly have to be improved if urban higher education is to achieve anything like its full potential. Papers such as "The American University in the Urban Context" or "Professional Service in Urban Universities" appear to have attracted a wider, if still modest, range of readers than simply our own membership. Recently, "America's People: An Imperiled Resource," subtitled "National Urban Policy Issues for a New Federal Administration," proposed to stimulate discussion of national urban policy as the nation prepared, under new leadership, to enter the 1990s. The product of long and serious deliberation by six working groups, the report discussed problems connected with economic development, environmental protection, housing, poverty, education, and health—problems of concern to all of America, but particularly important to the majority of the population that lives in metropolitan areas. There is little evidence, to be sure, that a new federal administration or indeed a not-so-new Congress is prepared to tackle some of these issues with imagination and the sense of urgency they require. There are no easy answers, but certainly easy rhetoric alone is not likely to get us very far. As the major collection of public institutions that provide many of the essential services—technical training and assistance, hospital care—required by the people and the governments of our urban areas, we are collectively demanding that attention be paid to those needs and to our importance in helping to address them.

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All in all, we have come a long way since 1979. Yet we have

scarcely begun. Everyone of us, no doubt, has a long agenda of concerns that need to be tackled in the years ahead. I am no exception, and I would like to address briefly—and probably unsystematically—some of my specific concerns.

But first a word on a more general level. Urban public universities are no different from other public bodies. Unless they receive adequate public support, it will be difficult for them to answer increasing public demands, whether for service to the local school systems, government agencies, businesses, or others. Increased state support would provide some help, but it is frequently subject to economic and political uncertainties, making long-range plans and commitments virtually impossible.

Are there alternatives? One that was first proposed in the 1950s is an urban-grant program modelled on the land-grant legislation of the nineteenth century. By 1980, amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965 had brought into existence such a program, thanks to the efforts of a newly created Association of Urban Universities, which had both private and public institutions among its members, together with the help of the Urban Affairs Division of NASULGC and the recently established Council on Urban Affairs of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). As the Morrill Act had concentrated on agricultural and industrial concerns and the Sea Grant Act of the 1950s had directed university efforts toward the problems of the oceans, the new legislation was designed to bring the urban universities' "underutilized reservoir of skills, talents, and knowledge" to bear on "the multitude of problems that face the nation's urban centers."

But a word of caution is in order. The problems of the city revolve around human needs and, as such, are infinitely more complex than the agricultural concerns addressed by the Morrill Act. The urban university cannot solve the problems of the city directly, and it cannot become enmeshed in the inner workings of municipal or state governments. Urban universities can advise, support, initiate, and encourage—not control. Even though urban universities do possess certain technologies and knowledge, experience has demonstrated that we simply cannot take on the job of local governments and remain institutions of higher learning. In any event, though funds were finally authorized for urban grant support, they were never appropriated. The renewal of the program and the appropriation of those funds would help urban universities enhance their urban commitments through the 90s, but it is impossible to predict whether that support will ever come.

Within the constraints I have mentioned, what are we doing that we could do better, and what should we be doing that we are hardly

doing at all? Certainly we have to do a much more effective job of getting minority students into the mainstream of our institutions, particularly at the graduate and professional levels. In the United States minorities already account for twenty to twenty-five percent of our total population, and the percentage is growing. Population shifts in the next twenty years will force urban universities to adapt constantly. As in the past, the city, with the urban university at the hub, will have to serve as the assimilator and the provider of opportunity.

In the meantime, the median age of the population is rising, and as this happens societal expectations will change. Fewer and fewer white, middle-class students of the "traditional" college age will be seen on the urban campuses. Older adult students, already a hallmark of the urban institution, will become increasingly commonplace, and as they do, the concept of adult education will fade. Separate courses, secondary to the university's mission, will no longer be set aside for the adult learner. Instead, I believe, the curriculum will have to reflect—and to incorporate—the diversity of students in the classroom.

Not only the curriculum but the manner in which it is presented must be modified in the years ahead. With a few notable exceptions, we have tended to imprison ourselves in traditional notions of time and place. Because we have not been bold enough in our responses to changing needs, we have been too frequently out-thought and out-imagined by businesses and industries that have set up their own wide-ranging educational (not merely training) programs. More and more, we will have to expand our timid experiments, with offerings at odd hours and in a great variety of places, moving, for example, into the workplace on a scale that might be awkward and even inappropriate for more traditional institutions.

Even more generally, we in higher education—and once again especially in the urban areas—need to talk much more systematically with our counterparts in business about common concerns. We need, for example, to pay more attention to the kinds of teaching—and teachers—required for tasks that will be quite different from the standard models in all of our institutions today.

Although it will never become the basis of our institutions, we are all heavily into continuing education. Our faculty preparation for working with an adult population is still in its early infancy, however. Men and women in mid-career who come seeking new skills, broader perspectives, and fresh information cannot be taught as though they were young people of seventeen to twenty-one, certainly not by teachers whose preparation for teaching even young adults often leaves a good deal to be desired.

In addition, it will be necessary, in my view, for the urban universities to develop, together with business groups, joint ventures—mostly at the local level—to address the whole question of the constant and recurring upgrading of our national work force—the unskilled and semiskilled no less than the managers and technicians who come in the first instance from our colleges and universities.

There is also substantial room for improvement in our collaboration with government and private enterprise in applied research. It would seem axiomatic that urban universities should have a major role in helping to develop the resources that create jobs and satisfy essential needs. I have just completed a six-year stint as a member of Ohio's Industrial Technology and Enterprise Advisory Board, whose task it is to oversee and fund a fairly extensive collaborative program of the kind I have just mentioned. What struck me again and again was how much the initiative for an imaginative or risky venture was taken by the business groups, large and small. Too often faculty members, even in such areas of applied research as engineering, saw proposals for cooperation as little more than a chance to get some additional funding for their conventional—and sometimes even important—investigations.

My point is a simple one. Our urban universities are well-positioned to work closely with the private sector and with public authorities to contribute substantially to the economic development of their regions. I have no illusions about such matters. The West German and the Japanese examples have made abundantly clear that a thoughtful *national* strategy for economic growth should ideally be harnessed to a three-way *national* cooperative program. But in the absence of such a strategy, it would appear that our urban institutions have the potential to expand greatly their local and regional roles in the initiatives upon which future economic health will rest.

It is a truism of our rhetoric that the human capital of our country is its most valuable resource. Some of us, to be sure, have devoted countless hours and a variety of skills to helping deal with the intractable problems of student illiteracy and indifference, the almost hopeless conditions that condemn large segments of our population to lives of poverty and ultimate hopelessness. Our departments of education have, of course, tackled one facet of the problem, but too often they have not been accompanied by their colleagues in the rest of the institution. The crisis in inner-city education quite evidently is too demanding to be left to the professional teacher educators, no matter how dedicated and well-motivated. However, for the most part, neither the humanists,

nor most of the social scientists, and few of the scientists and technologists in our urban universities have ventured to play a major role in attacking the educational illness that may be a greater threat to our future than even the contemporary drug culture.

On the whole, our institutions, with a few honorable exceptions, have left it to the major businesses, and occasionally to local or state government, to take the lead in building coalitions to deal with the most fundamental issues in early childhood and adolescent education. The universities have followed along and have been more than willing to cooperate, but too often they have followed, not taken the lead. And one result, if some of the most prominent initiatives are typical, is that the job is being done badly and with little prospect of effective results.

The problem of balance between vocational preparation and liberal learning will remain.

Positioned as we usually are deep within the metropolitan conurbations, we yet manage to do a miserable job in helping to promote understanding of, and a sense of responsibility toward, what may be called the "civic enterprise." To illustrate, I would venture that teaching about local government, to say nothing of research and service in this area, is among the things we do most poorly of all. More broadly, as one of my correspondents has put it, "The urban university is itself an essential and important element of this 'civic enterprise,' which it ignores at its peril. . . ." We must do more, he suggests, to raise awareness both within our urban institutions and among potential external constituencies of ways in which the urban university and its urban surroundings can and should enrich one another. Somehow the university must become more than a major intellectual and cultural resource for its immediate community, just as that community must be more than a laboratory in which to conduct the research and teaching of the university. Of course my colleague holds up a warning flag. This symbiosis, he cautions, "raises a substantial challenge: how to eschew isolation and lack of interest but retain detachment and disinterest. That's not easy."

It is not easy because the problem of balance will always be with us—balance between the development of knowledge and its applications, between vocational preparation and liberal learning. Critics of contemporary higher education too often set up a false dichotomy between training (a bad thing at a university) and education (a good thing). Both are essential and both have always been functions of the proper university, let alone the urban university. Still, we must constantly remind ourselves that our urban universities are first and foremost universities, not social service

agencies, dispensers of intellectual fast food, or even part of the entertainment industry of their communities.

Forgive me if I conclude by quoting myself, but the caveat is heartfelt and based on long years of struggle to maintain the balance we seek: "If the urban university does not remain, as do universities of quality wherever they may be located, primarily an academic institution, if it does not remember always that its central tasks are teaching and research, then its ability to be effective, other than as another agency of government, will be seriously compromised." And conversely, those institutions, like many represented here, with the wisdom and the character to preserve their academic integrity while maintaining a commitment to public service will, I believe, assume an ever greater role, not only in higher education but in all our lives in the years that lie ahead.