

The first substantive item in this issue of our journal is the DECLARATION OF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITIES, a succinct and powerful statement of the nature and goals of the institutions that have given their collective name to the journal. To date it has been signed by the heads of forty-seven metropolitan universities; many more are likely to have done so by the time this issue has been printed and mailed.

The Declaration is being promulgated at a most appropriate time. The tasks to which metropolitan universities are committing themselves, the responsibilities they are assuming, and the priorities they are setting for themselves are steadily growing in importance and urgency as the economic and social problems of this country are deepening. And, in addition, all who are involved with metropolitan universities must hope that the Declaration will help to offset some of the mounting dissatisfaction with higher education in this country. The *Chronicle of Higher Education* recently carried a story on the national conference of the Education Commission of the States under the headline: "State Officials Deplore Higher Education's Resistance to Change." One governor who in his state has been known as a supporter of higher education is quoted as warning that "the taxpayer, one of these days, is going to ask, 'Why are we paying these people?'" Frank Newman, the president of E.C.S. and a contributor to this issue, admonished higher education leaders not to "dismiss the complaints as mere college bashing. 'This is the year that higher education is coming on the griddle.'" The *Chronicle* further reported that "Mr. Newman and several other speakers said states should subject higher education to the same kind of fundamental re-examination that they have given their school systems in recent years."

It is of utmost importance that the higher education community itself assume the initiative in this re-examination. Much of the external criticism is very valid, but much of it is oversimplified by looking only at the teaching function of our institutions. There is no question that this function needs to receive more attention. But universities, including metropolitan universities, can and should be more than teaching institutions. Again to quote Frank Newman from the *Chronicle* article: "What we're after is a higher education system that is more focused on teaching and learning, not less focused on research." Nor, as far as metropolitan universities are concerned, less focused on technical assistance and professional service. Only if metropolitan universities, singly and collectively, take the initiative in the re-examination of their goals and functions can they assure the realization of their full potential as major intellectual resources for their region and their country. The Declaration of Metropolitan Universities is a major step in that direction.

And so, we hope, is the creation of this journal. It can play an important role in the necessary self-examination and redefinition. The first three issues and what is already in the pipeline for coming ones provide, in our admittedly biased opinion, useful indications of how metropolitan universities can adapt their curricula, improve their teaching, adjust their procedures and structures, and enhance their external interaction so as to live up to the objectives stated in the Declaration. Assisting metropolitan universities in this task will continue to be the principal objective of the journal. But we must observe two caveats if we wish to be effective.

In the first place, we must avoid being self-congratulatory. That's not easy—the individuals at the metropolitan universities who have taken the lead in defining and implementing new roles for their institution have much of which they can be proud. But in describing such achievements it is important to be self-critical and to discuss problems and pitfalls, mistakes and mishaps. No significant innovation has ever come about without some stumbles and some errors on the way. Contributors to the journal should help their colleagues and would-be imitators to learn from mistakes that might have been avoided, precautions that should have been taken. Those colleagues want to hear about the desert full of dangers that had to be crossed, not only about the promised land that was reached.

Secondly, metropolitan universities also need more external evaluation of what they are doing. How much impact are they having? Are they meeting expectations or at least explaining why not, if these expectations are unrealistic or inappropriate? Are they beginning to be recognized by their metropolitan constituencies as a truly substantial contributor to the region's economic and social well being? The journal must contain more outside voices, more contributions from individuals in the public and private sectors who are willing to critique as well as to praise, to tell the leadership of metropolitan universities what they expect from the institutions and why.

The journal will keep these caveats in mind as it does its best to continue to contribute to the essential self-examination and evolution of metropolitan universities, and to their realization of the goals set in the Declaration. The institutions' success in meeting this challenge will not only be of great benefit to their metropolitan areas and indeed to the country as a whole, but is likely, as well, to counter the current tide of criticism of higher education.