

Every reader of this journal is painfully aware that higher education in this country is not only beset by unprecedented fiscal problems but faces, as well, an extraordinary and threatening degree of external criticism. One of the founders of this journal, George Johnson, president of George Mason University, an institution that has blossomed in recent years and benefited from strong local and regional support, is quoted in a recent issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* as saying, "I am kind of overwhelmed. I have never been attacked from so many different points of the compass. I feel a little ineffectual and futile." The sentiment is likely to be shared by college and university presidents throughout the country.

It is therefore a relief to come across a highly positive article about metropolitan universities in this country's leading newspaper. Before this issue went to press, on August 13 *The New York Times* carried an article by Karen De Witt headlined "Universities Become Full Partners to Cities in the South." The article is datelined Birmingham and features the University of Alabama at Birmingham—hence probably the inaccurate geographic limitation in its headline and some of its text. But that is less important than the article's strong affirmation of the mission of our urban and metropolitan universities.

Consider some quotes:

When the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa opened an extension [in Birmingham] in 1936 it was . . . a small offshoot in the city. . . . But today it is the University of Alabama at Birmingham, not its parent institution, that is the state's hotbed of ideas and progress.

. . . urban universities have become the economic generators in their cities. As their economic importance has grown, these universities . . . have also increased their roles as community leaders, attacking social problems, preserving cultural institutions or generally filling the leadership role once played by business leaders.

[They] increasingly replaced [textile, shipping, and manufacturing industries] as major employers and shapers of the new urban landscape.

And they have played an equally important role in changing the character of the population around them, not only by providing employment but by making a college education more accessible to poor inner-city residents. . . . [U]rban universities . . . have also changed the socioeconomic profile of people who get college educations.

These excerpts are pleasant to read, and additional gratifying praise about urban universities can be culled from the lengthy *Times* article. But the significance of the piece is not that it provides a pat on the back—however welcome—in the midst of a barrage of criticism. Too much of that criticism is justified. It is therefore more appropriate to take the article as a strong and welcome reminder that our highly urbanized

country indeed needs a new category of higher education institutions that are committed to the intellectual, cultural, social, and economic development of their metropolitan regions.

A second article in *The New York Times*, on August 21, underscores this. Headlined "A College's Good-Neighbor Policy," the piece by William Celis 3d describes the efforts of Marquette University in Milwaukee to help its immediate neighborhood, and mentions similar projects undertaken by Cleveland State, San Francisco State, and Portland State Universities. It could well have added the activities of Occidental College in Los Angeles described in J. Eugene Grigsby's contribution to these pages, or the work of Suffolk University in Boston mentioned by Daniel Perlman in the first issue of *Metropolitan Universities*.

Every detail of the *Times* article constitutes an affirmation of the "Declaration of Metropolitan Universities" that we carry in each issue of this journal. The principles contained in the declaration add up to a new conception of the mission of universities, a conception implemented by the University of Alabama at Birmingham as well as by a growing number of metropolitan universities throughout the country. It is a conception that calls for basic changes from the traditional priorities and the conventional modes of operation of our universities.

In his recent Inaugural Address, Donald Langenberg, as chancellor of the University of Maryland System, made an eloquent call for such change. Langenberg proclaimed the need for a thorough and self-critical reexamination of what we are about and how we accomplish our tasks. We are caught up "in a whirlwind of change," he stated, and must make sure "that the revolution results in recreated and revitalized institutions."

Such institutions are described in the two *Times* articles. Both emphasize the extent to which metropolitan universities can be, as stated in the De Witt article, "economic generators in their cities" and in surrounding regions, much as schools of agriculture have been for the country's rural areas. The role of metropolitan universities in regional development has been mentioned frequently in this journal. It provides the principal theme both for the current issue as well as for a subsequent one. Once again I have been able to profit from a knowledgeable and imaginative guest editor to whom I am deeply grateful. Andrew Rudnick, president of the Greater Buffalo Development Foundation, accepted the principal responsibility for selecting topics and authors, and for providing an introductory overview. The articles that are contained in the present issue do not exhaust the various ways in which metropolitan universities can—and do—contribute to regional development. A second issue will contain additional articles on the theme, including a number of contributions from other countries where the need to redefine the mission of higher education has also been recognized.

Providing educational opportunities to a student body increasingly diverse in terms of age and origin is, of course, a major component of the contribution that metropolitan universities make to regional development. The *Times* article that focuses on the University of Alabama at Birmingham places great emphasis on this task of metropolitan univer-

sities, as does our "Declaration of Metropolitan Universities." This issue therefore also contains articles by Morris Keeton, by John Schuh, Rosalind Andreas, and C. Carney Strange, and by John Harris and Donna Ford, dealing with aspects of the student population at metropolitan universities. Keeton, the country's leading prophet and missionary for adult education, shares with us his vision of metropolitan universities devoted substantially to the educational needs of older students. John Schuh and his co-workers describe how greater involvement can enrich the educational experience of predominantly commuting students of all ages. Harris and Ford emphasize the need to be sensitive to significant experiential, contextual, and cultural differences between minority and other student groups.

Articles in a journal rarely have the eloquence of an inaugural address, or the simple directness of a well-written newspaper piece. But I hope that cumulatively the contributions to this journal reaffirm the call for change articulated so well by Langenberg's address and the two *Times* reports, and that they provide assistance to all engaged in the necessary institutional transformation.