

One of the striking characteristics of metropolitan universities is the paradoxical role of continuing education. On the one hand, our institutions can no longer maintain a valid distinction between "regular" education as provided on campus for mostly full-time, daytime, young students, and "continuing" education provided in the evening and/or off campus, on a part-time basis, usually for older students. Classrooms are filled with students of all ages, some full time, some part time; many "regular" programs are taught in the late afternoon or evening and some are taught off campus or beamed to distant places by telecommunication. To view continuing education as a distinct instructional category no longer makes much sense.

Yet, at the same time, the innovative and catalytic role of continuing educators is more important than ever as metropolitan universities increase their multifaceted interaction with their region. In most of our institutions, the professionals in continuing education have the experience, the skills, and the commitment needed to span the boundaries between campus and external constituencies. They can be, and usually are, invaluable in helping metropolitan universities serve the instructional and other intellectual and cultural needs of the region. How then does one conceptualize the role of continuing education? What approach is most conducive to engage the entire institution in its metropolitan mission? What organizational arrangements are most effective in implementing the optimal role of continuing education and of continuing educators? To what extent, and in what way, should continuing education move beyond its traditional focus on instruction so as to assist the institutional engagement in other, noninstructional forms of outreach?

This issue of *Metropolitan Universities* has continuing education as its theme. Thanks to the help of Gordon "Nick" Mueller of the University of New Orleans, and Dan Shannon of the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, this issue contains six very timely articles. Dan Shannon reconceptualizes continuing education as moving beyond instructional outreach to be facilitator, convener, or broker of other modes of university extension. He describes the characteristics needed to fulfill these expanded tasks, stressing the role of continuing education as the principal provider of access to the knowledge base of the university by the larger community. Paul Miller similarly sees continuing education as adding to its traditional role a strong emphasis on what he calls the restoration of primary citizenship. He suggests specific initiatives by which people can be educated about education so that the quality of local government and volunteer leadership can be improved, and science literacy and the utilization of knowledge for problem solving can be enhanced.

Joe Donaldson and Norma Long both address the organization of continuing education within the university. Donaldson argues convincingly that this question should be examined not only along the usual centralized/decentralized dimension, but also in terms of institutional boundary and domain, coordination and integration. Long provides

specifics as to how continuing education can be organized to have both a university-wide role while also maintaining a close relationship to the individual units of the institution.

The contribution of Joyce Feucht-Haviar and Timothy Scovill assesses the role of liberal learning in continuing education of practitioners. They argue that the most promising foundation on which to integrate liberal and professional material is the practice itself. The article describes pertinent strategies being implemented by the authors at the University of Virginia. Nick Mueller describes the evolution of what began as a somewhat peripheral advisory group of business people into a very effective, action-oriented Business/Higher Education Council with a budget, a staff, and a substantial agenda. The council helps in extending the instructional resources of the University of New Orleans to the community and in identifying problems in the city that the university may address. It has also been a successful advocate for higher education.

The issue also carries two Forum pieces. Paige Mulhollan speaks to the urgent need for a model of excellence for universities that are committed to a student body far more diverse and to scholarship far more inclusive than what has been the norm for traditional research institutions. Richard Hogarty describes an example of a university striving toward the new model: the University of Massachusetts at Boston. Both pieces are welcome reminders that in spite of, and perhaps even because of, budgetary crises and fiscal restraints, metropolitan universities play an ever more important role in their communities. How much needs to be done is once again underscored by Nicholas Michelli's review of two books, which illustrates the disastrous conditions of children's lives in the inner city. Barry Bull's book review emphasizes the extent to which much of current thought about higher education is still bound by traditional notions of the typical student.