

A strong supporter of *Metropolitan Universities* recently expressed concerns about the journal's subscription base. He pointed out that "its themes often fall under different occupational or professional headings. Consequently people in those fields will be interested in an issue on their topic, but not enough to subscribe."

It would be very regrettable if the author of these remarks turns out to be right. That would obviously bode badly for the future of the journal—but more importantly, it would bode badly for the future of metropolitan/urban universities. That future depends, in a crucial way, on the presence of administrators, staff, and faculty throughout these institutions whose interest, vision, and commitment transcend their particular area of specialization and the formal limits of their specific tasks. Every one of these institutions is still, to a greater or lesser extent, in a state of evolution and of self-definition. Every one is, as well, engaged in making external constituencies understand its nature and mission. Ideally, all individuals in metropolitan/urban universities, be they in faculty, staff, or administrators, and regardless of their specific task, should see their institution whole if they are to contribute effectively to its ongoing development as a new model for American higher education. Ideally, therefore, all should be interested in learning about issues and challenges facing parts of metropolitan/urban universities other than their own area of competence.

The current discussion of an expanded definition of scholarship and of the multiple roles of faculty often refers to the negative impact of excessive disciplinary specialization. After World War II, the dominance of basic research over all other faculty activities in the academic scale of prestige and value put a premium on a faculty member's disciplinary rather than institutional identification. In recent years, much has been written and spoken about the need to move the pendulum in the opposite direction and to reinforce a faculty member's interest in and commitment to the collective mission of her or his institution, and to build a sense of community and identity that cut across disciplinary boundaries.

What holds for faculty is pertinent as well for administrators and staff throughout an academic organization: whatever their specific tasks, they must identify with their institution as a whole. That need exists in any college or university—and for that matter is highly desirable in any organization, whatever its kind—and it is essential in a metropolitan university that is consciously engaged in developing new priorities and new definitions for its mission.

The need is based not only on the abstract notion of community. It reflects the reality that in an academic institution, change along one dimension is likely to affect many parts of the organization. When a metropolitan university responds to the diversity of its student body with flexible scheduling, off-campus sites, and intensive orientation and advising, the registrar and buildings and grounds, campus security and the library are all affected. When a metropolitan university enhances its professional outreach by means of interdisciplinary centers and institutes,

the comptroller and the director of personnel must adapt traditional procedures.

In short, the process of development and innovation essential to the emergence of metropolitan universities involves all functional units, with change in any one affecting all others. The willingness to go along depends crucially on the extent to which staff and administrators in these other units are familiar with the overall mission of the institution, and have information about the issues and challenges faced by each of its components.

I speak here on the basis of personal experience as the founding dean of Livingston College at Rutgers University almost thirty years ago. We tried to be innovative in many ways, from grading policy to co-educational housing, from multiple use of space to interdisciplinary use of faculty, and above all in building up a genuinely multi-cultural and multi-ethnic institution. From the beginning we had the commitment and support of the president and provost. That was essential but not sufficient. Ultimately we succeeded only to the extent that mid-level staff and administrators understood and identified with the overall mission of the College. That made them recognize that changes in their bailiwicks were necessary in order to accomplish overarching institutional goals. As they became generalists in terms of Livingston College in addition to being specialists in an academic discipline, or in student affairs, or admissions, or registration, they contributed actively to the development of our collective mission.

Today it is equally important that faculty, staff, and administrators throughout metropolitan universities identify with the overall institutional goals and understand their implications for all academic and administrative units. They require information about the particular issues and choices faced by other offices and departments within the metropolitan university, not only at their specific institution but also across the range of metropolitan universities. The progress of the metropolitan/urban university concept testifies to the existence of such broadly interested individuals.

We therefore believe that the current issue of *Metropolitan Universities* with its articles addressing the overall condition and mission of metropolitan universities will find many interested readers in all units of these institutions. We also trust that an issue devoted to Student Life, like the previous one, or the next one on the Fine Arts, will provide faculty, staff, and administrators throughout metropolitan universities valuable information and insights: not as specialists in student affairs, or in the fine arts, but as individuals committed to the overarching mission of their university and therefore interested in, and welcoming information about, all its aspects.

*Metropolitan Universities* is predicated on these assumptions. We ask our authors to address themselves to non-specialist colleagues. We urge them to analyze issues and projects, to draw conclusions and to make recommendations with regard to their specific area in ways that are understandable and useful to the individuals in other parts of a metropolitan university whose cooperation is needed. We view ourselves as a journal for a new category of individuals: "specialists" in metropolitan/urban universities, who share a common interest in all that pertains to these institutions and a common commitment to their continuing

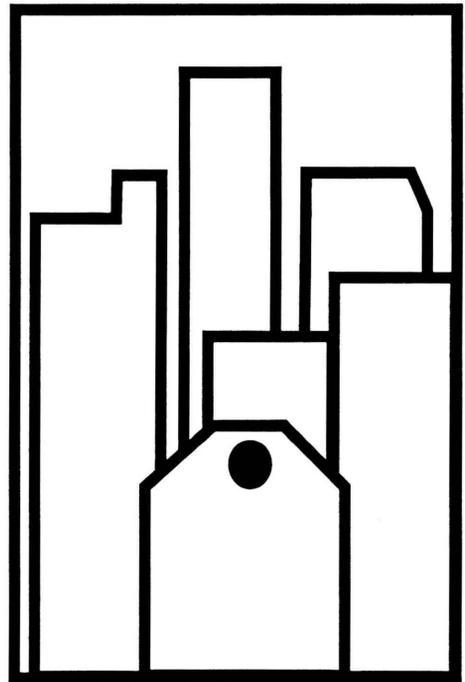
development. We hope, for our sake and for that of metropolitan/urban universities, that the number of such individuals will continue to grow, and with it the number of our subscribers.

As I mentioned in the last issue, the journal is now published by Towson State University and the University of Massachusetts at Boston on behalf of the newly created Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities which, in turn, is jointly sponsored by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC). This issue contains a joint statement by the presidents of the two associations, as well as a preliminary list of members of the Coalition as of 1 September. The articles in the issue are based on several of the presentations at the second national conference on metropolitan universities, held at the University of North Texas in March, 1993. I am grateful to Dan Johnson, Dean of the UNT's School of Community Service, for his work as guest editor.

THIRD CONFERENCE OF

# Metropolitan Universities

The University of  
Arkansas at Little Rock  
will host the  
Third Conference of  
Metropolitan Universities  
March 19 through 21, 1995



METROPOLITAN  
UNIVERSITIES

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*Tentatively, the conference will focus on clarifying the mission of metropolitan/urban universities and linking the reward structure of faculty to this mission.*