

I recently attended an international workshop dealing with innovation and regional economic development, held at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. That not only provided me with an opportunity to visit, once again, one of the most beautiful cities on this continent, but also to gain a most interesting insight into current thinking about the topic of the meeting. In essence, science and technology based economic development has come to be recognized—in the words of one participant—as being *lumpy*. It does not occur uniformly across an entire country, or state, or province. Rather, *regions*, and most typically regions including one or more metropolitan areas, are emerging as the central focus of economic activity as a result of the flow of goods, services, and investments, and—with ever increasing importance—the flow of information and knowledge. Those regions that excel in this will be the engines of growth for the province, state, or nation of which they are a part.

A major reason for the importance of regions in development in a knowledge-intensive economy is that the flow of knowledge is not in one direction only. As I put it in a contribution to this journal last year, “knowledge is not an inert commodity, created in laboratory, library, or study, to be...dispensed like a patent medicine....It is dynamic, constantly made fresh and given new shape by its interaction with immediate issues and concerns...the domain of knowledge has no one-way streets....It is everywhere fed back, constantly enhanced.” As a result, development in a knowledge-intensive society is increasingly dependent on multiple and effective feedback loops linking those involved in research and development with those who deal with application and distribution of knowledge-based products. It requires a dense, multi-faceted, and multidirectional interaction which is most effective when there is proximity.

The new recognition of the pivotal function of the region of course reinforces the importance of the role of metropolitan universities. They are committed to working with and for their regional constituencies both in the provision of a wide variety of formal instruction to students of all ages and backgrounds, and in carrying out applied research and professional service in areas germane to the interests of their region. This makes them key components in the knowledge-centered infrastructure essential to regional development.

The Winter 1991 and part of the Spring 1992 issues of *Metropolitan Universities* were devoted to regional development. They contained descriptions of a number of pertinent programs and projects. Professor Hans SchÜtze of the University of British Columbia, organizer of and substantial contributor to the workshop I have described, has agreed to guest edit a future issue of the journal that will place such activities within a conceptual context by describing current understanding of regional development. The issue will contain a number of articles adapted from presentations at the Vancouver conference as well as other pertinent contributions.

The quality of community health is, of course, also a major factor in regional development, and one to which metropolitan universities can contribute substantially. I am grateful to David Bell and Dan Johnson for their work as guest editors of the current issue that, thanks to them, contains a number of interesting articles on this topic. Also in this issue are a number of other contributions of great interest to our institutions. One of these, by Leslie Wagner, head of Leeds Metropolitan University in Great Britain, strikingly illustrates the similarity of issues and challenges across national borders. We look forward to increasing contact with our colleagues abroad on matters of shared concern.

I want to draw our readers' attention as well to the Call for Proposals for short term research projects on topics of direct pertinence to metropolitan universities. The call constitutes a welcome initiative by the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities, one that is intended to serve the needs of its member institutions in additional ways. We look forward to the eventual publication of the research reports in the journal.

With this issue we bid farewell and express our gratitude to its former Publisher, John Brain, who for more than two years took charge of the many facets of publishing the journal beyond the selection and content editing of manuscripts. We are all much in his debt. His responsibilities have been assumed by Marilyn "Matty" Mattsson, whom we are happy to welcome. She has had much experience with publishing as managing editor of several technical and scientific journals, is a contractual writer/editor for several applied research organizations, and teaches in the Professional Writing program at Towson State.