

Everybody is getting into the act! Metropolitan universities are being joined by others in stressing the importance of outreach and interaction with external communities. The need for a more external orientation is rapidly gaining emphasis in the rhetoric of more traditional institutions, and there is, as well, a good deal of action. For example, a growing number of land-grant universities, led by Michigan State University, are paying renewed attention to their century-old commitment to being an intellectual resource to their constituencies, not only in agriculture but in other societal segments as well. In most of these institutions—as also in our metropolitan universities—a great deal of external interaction has, of course, been in existence all along. But land-grant and other such universities have come to realize, as we have, that such outreach must assume a more central dimension of institutional responsibility and excellence. In turn that requires a fresh look at the nature of scholarship and at both the processes and the policies guiding the definitions and rewards for faculty work. Indeed, some of the most creative developments regarding tenure and promotion policies have recently been happening in land-grant universities.

On the whole I consider this to be a welcome development for metropolitan universities. It may diminish somewhat our gratification at being at the forefront of change, but at the same time it legitimates our initiatives and innovations in an academic world that still holds on to a traditional pecking order of prestige. In addition, it is from the large, traditional universities that our metropolitan institutions, large and small, continue to recruit what few additions to their faculties current economic circumstances allow. Any change in the more traditional institutions, therefore, will have a beneficial effect on the attitudes and values brought along by these new hires. And, most importantly, it reinforces our claim, so well expressed by Chuck Hathaway, Paige Mulholland, and Karen White in the very first issue of this journal, that metropolitan universities are “Models for the Twenty-first Century.”

Two new themes are emerging in the growing discourse and the emerging consensus about the importance of outreach and professional service. One is that faculty involvement in such activities has substantial *internal* benefits in addition to the ways in which they meet *external* needs. Thanks to the work of Don Schön and others, we are beginning to reexamine the notion dominant in

recent decades that knowledge is created only under controlled conditions in a laboratory or equivalent, moving from there in a one-dimensional flow to the place of application. Recognition is growing that knowledge is created, in its application, as well, and that much can be learned from the use of knowledge in practice. Faculty involvement in outreach and professional service, therefore, enriches both research and teaching. Field-based or action research is gaining importance in a growing number of disciplines and professions. At the same time, there is growing interest in service-learning and in the role of practical experience in a broad range of curricula. For both reasons, experience in the field is becoming an essential condition for optimal faculty effectiveness.

The second new theme is closely related to the first. If professional service and outreach are important for internal as well as external reason, they must be viewed as an institutional necessity that can no longer be left solely to individual initiative. As part of the institutional mission it must be factored into the collective responsibility of a department or equivalent unit—just as there exist collective teaching obligations such as the delivery of a departmental major and the contributions to distribution requirements. In turn, individual faculty members must be expected to contribute to the collective outreach responsibility in ways that represent an optimal match between collective objectives and individual preferences. Implicit in this is a certain subordination of individual autonomy to the needs of the group and the institution. Such a subordination is the hallmark of a true community, characterized by a willing acceptance by each member of a portion of shared obligations. The complexity and multidimensionality of the tasks of a metropolitan university are giving great urgency to the shaping of such a community.

The current issue contains a number of articles on outreach and professional service, some describing specific projects, others dealing with more general considerations. The guest editors were two individuals who themselves are deeply involved in joining university and community and who have achieved national reputations for their work. We are most grateful to Ira Harkavy, Director of the Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania, and Wim Wievel, Special Assistant to the Chancellor of the University of Illinois at Chicago and a key person in its Great Cities initiative.

Metropolitan Universities: Who Are We?

We are located in or near the urban center of a metropolitan statistical area (MSA) with a population of at least 250,000.

We are universities, public and private, whose mission includes teaching, research, and professional service. We offer both graduate and undergraduate education in the liberal arts and two or more professional fields. The latter programs are strongly practice-oriented and make extensive use of clinical sites in the metropolitan area.

The majority of our students comes from our metropolitan regions. Our students are highly diverse in age, ethnic and racial identity, and socio-economic background, reflecting the demographic characteristics of their region. Many come to us by transfer from community colleges and other baccalaureate institutions, many are place-bound employees and commuters, and many require substantially longer than the traditional time to graduate, for financial and other personal reasons.

We are oriented toward and identify with our regions, proudly and by deliberate design. Our programs respond to regional needs while striving for national excellence.

We are strongly interactive. We are dedicated to serve as intellectual and creative resources to our metropolitan regions in order to contribute to their economic development, social health, and cultural vitality, through education, research, and professional outreach. We are committed to collaborate and cooperate with the many communities and clienteles in our metropolitan regions and to help bridge the socio-economic, cultural, and political barriers among them.

We are shaping and adapting our own structures, policies, and practices to enhance our effectiveness as key institutions in the lives of our metropolitan regions and their citizens.



Declaration of Metropolitan Universities

We, the leaders of metropolitan universities and colleges . . .

- reaffirm that the creation, interpretation, dissemination, and application of knowledge are the fundamental functions of our institutions;
- accept a broad responsibility to bring these functions to bear on our metropolitan regions;
- commit our institutions to be responsive to the needs of our communities by seeking new ways of using resources to provide leadership in addressing metropolitan problems through teaching, research, and service.

Our teaching must:

- educate students to be informed and effective citizens, as well as capable practitioners of professions and occupations;
- be adapted to the diverse needs of metropolitan students, including minorities and underserved groups, adults of all ages, and the place-bound;
- combine research-based knowledge with practical application and experience, using the best current technology and pedagogical techniques.

Our research must:

- seek and exploit opportunities for linking basic investigation with practical application, and for creating interdisciplinary partnerships for attacking complex metropolitan problems, while meeting the highest standards of the academic community.

Our professional service must:

- develop creative partnerships with public and private enterprises that ensure the intellectual resources of our institutions are fully engaged in mutually beneficial ways;
- include close working relationships with elementary and secondary schools aimed at maximizing the effectiveness of the entire metropolitan education system;
- make the fullest possible contribution to the cultural life and general quality of life of our metropolitan regions.

