

James Martin, James E. Samels et al., eds., *Merging Colleges for Mutual Growth*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1994. 270 pp.

Few educators or citizens are optimistic about higher education's future. The list of challenges confronting academia seems overwhelming: college costs that persist in rising twice as fast as inflation, concerns about both quality and quantity of potential applicants, deferred maintenance costs which are a ticking financial time bomb on many campuses, skyrocketing financial aid budgets, a growing debt burden placed on students, and, particularly, the challenge of attracting the next generation of outstanding faculty. These are daunting concerns; no wonder few are optimistic.

Some observers have predicted that a substantial number of our nation's 3400 colleges and universities will close their doors as a result of these challenges. Estimates have ranged as high as 10 percent, but the truth is that no one knows exactly how successfully or unsuccessfully higher education will chart its course through these uncertain waters in the next decade. The answer, of course, will be very different for each institution. Virtually every campus has begun a program to rein in escalating

costs, and some are embarking on more dramatic restructuring initiatives. Foundations and policy centers, from the Pew Charitable Trusts on the east coast to the California Higher Education Policy Center on the west, have weighed in with imaginative and useful agendas for change. But as yet there are no long-term solutions in sight.

Although pessimism is widespread, it is not universal. James Martin and James E. Samels see the challenges facing higher education as opportunities rather than dangers. Their book, *Merging Colleges for Mutual Growth*, presents an optimistic point of view as well as specific strategies for confronting higher education's challenges.

The book is a collection of fourteen research essays with contributions from ten other experienced higher education administrators. It focuses specifically on the potential of mergers and other forms of collaboration to provide win-win solutions for all participants. It argues that mergers can provide positive results and significant growth in a era of declining resources and documents its case through examples.

It is important to note, as Samels does in his chapter, that mergers can have many definitions. He presents an interesting typology of eight different kinds of mergers ranging from a pure

merger to a loose affiliation. Each has advantages and disadvantages for the partners, and each has both political and financial considerations that much be weighed when deciding how to proceed. Samels identifies many more forms of collaboration than this reviewer imagined possible, and emphasizes that every institution must find its own appropriate form of merger.

The editors describe their book as a handbook, a practical guide on the issues involved in collaboration, merger, consolidation, and other forms of partnership between previously independent institutions. It is organized in three key sections: leadership, operations, and constituents. Each section includes chapters that describe the administrative, political, legal, and other issues to be resolved. Some issues, like bond financing and debt management, are clear presentations of highly technical issues for the lay reader.

Martin and Samels list ten components or core principles of merging colleges for mutual growth that they believe can be achieved. Every institution would find these core principles attractive: a strengthening of academic offerings, a strengthening of the financial base, economies of scale, stabilized or increased enrollments, and so forth. The power of these principles is that they offer advantages to all partners in the merger process; in theory, at least, everyone can gain.

Based on experience as well as their survey of specific examples in the United States and Britain, the editors argue that "mergers...have become one of the most creative, effective vehicles academic planners now have to achieve academic excellence." They describe several historical examples that have produced outstanding institutions today, such as Case and Western Reserve Universities, which became Case Western Reserve, The University of Missouri and the University of Kansas City, Mount Ida College, and others.

They also remind us that mergers have been an important corporate strategy in the business world for decades: General Motors, AT&T, and countless other powerful corporate enterprises were created through merger. These corporate consolidations, in almost all cases, provided mutual growth and added value for management, employees, and shareholders. With few exceptions, however, higher education has not followed the corporate experience and tends to view merger, in most forms, as win-lose rather than win-win. The authors believe that higher education can learn a great deal from corporate America about mergers as a source of intellectual, financial, and human capital for the benefit of all partners. They make a convincing case.

The book has some shortcomings. Like any volume written by different contributors, the style is somewhat un-

even although, in fairness, it is among the better examples of collaborative authorship. About half of the contributing authors work, or have worked, at Mount Ida College in Newton, Massachusetts, which has had three mergers in its recent history. Certainly Mount Ida is one of the success stories of merging colleges for mutual growth, but the number of specific references to Mount Ida's experience would benefit from more extended description of other successful mergers. Missing also is a detailed case study of one institution's entire process of developing a merger strategy from start to finish. The book is sprinkled with references to different examples of successful collaboration but lacks a more in-depth analysis of one institution's experience. The description of Boston State College's merger into the University of Massachusetts at Boston comes closest.

In the last chapter, Martin and Samels develop a useful model of five developmental phases for a successful mutual growth merger, and this model could be applied constructively to a specific case. *Merging Colleges for Mutual Growth* is certainly a useful handbook, but some readers may want a road map as well.

Despite higher education's challenges in the next decade, not every institution will need to consider potential advantages of different forms of collaboration for survival. These fortunate institutions have sufficient numbers—of

qualified students, endowments, other income sources, and such—to survive independently. But the great majority of American colleges and universities will find great benefit in considering strategies for shared growth. Martin and Samels provide a good place to begin.

Daniel S. Cheever, Jr.

Clifford Stoll, *Silicon Snake Oil*. New York: Doubleday, 1995. 247 pp.

Silicon Snake Oil is an acclaimed "computer jock's" impassioned jeremiad against the rapid virtualization of American institutions, particularly education, commerce, and community life. The author possesses unusual credentials for a critic of the computer world: Stoll is an astronomer and computer systems guru, as well as author and star of the real-life cybersleuth story *The Cuckoo's Egg*. He has seized the moment to provide an insider's account of why, although he "look[s] forward to the time when our Internet reaches into every town and trailer park...the medium is being oversold [and] our expectations have become bloated."

Stoll has chosen to compose his lamentations as a free-form meditation in a point-and-click style that entertains, occasionally annoys, and leaves unsatisfied those wanting a more coherent argument. He warns the latter in the preface: "I apologize to those who expect

a consistent position from me. I'm still rearranging my mental furniture."

Each chapter roams, free-range style, along the paths by which computers are becoming indispensable participants in our culture. ("Or are they?" Stoll would question.) The fourteen chapters discuss the difference between computer dungeon games and real-life cave exploration; a survey of the Internet, from interactive media to computer dating; the culture of computing; the mechanics of computing; the rapid obsolescence of things virtual; style over substance in computerized professions; the unhappy marriage of computers and business; how the Internet is like CB (but not ham) radio; the inappropriateness of computers in education; a comparison of e-mail versus the U.S. Mail; an assessment of the electronic library; socialization (or the lack thereof) on the Internet; a little eavesdropping on a well-behaved computer chat-line, while the participants just happen to be praising Stoll's previous book (a convenient plug); and a one-page conclusion.

The author has a discerning eye and ear for the absurdities of computer culture and the unwarranted hype that is helping to virtualize key components of our civilization almost without debate. Perhaps the most sustained and successful discussion concerns the electronic library (chapter 11), which should be required reading for administrators, librarians, and the purveyors of electronic

education. In short, Stoll believes that the technological "advances" mask the loss of centuries-old information organization methods, and lead to a hemorrhage of precious resources on rapidly outdated hardware and software.

His critique of computer-based education also cuts to the quick: "Name three multimedia programs that actually inspired you. Now name three teachers that made a difference in your life." The hardware and software, Stoll claims, are incidental to the larger purpose of stimulating students to think for themselves. Money and time are now being funneled toward acquiring, setting up, and maintaining balky equipment—but not toward teaching students.

A third arena in which the book's venom is felt is the world of virtual versus face-to-face community-building. Stoll admits that online groups are communities, but eulogizes them with a Keatsian flourish:

"But what an impoverished community! One without a church, cafe, art gallery, theater, or tavern. Plenty of human contact, but no humanity. Cybersex, cybersluts, and cybersleaze, but no genuine, lusty, roll-in-the-hay sex. And no birds sing."

However, a reader might wish that Stoll had also read John Keats's letter to P. B. Shelley, in which he admonishes his expansive Romantic poet-friend to "load every rift with ore," i.e. infuse every sentence and chapter with meaning.

Instead, we are treated to a breezy, digressive, overly cute exposition of computers in culture, as if entertainment is the only way to keep readers' minds engaged. Ironically, after two readings *Silicon Snake Oil* has the aftertaste of the over-the-Net grazing its author himself decries: many subjects accessed, few issues explored thoroughly.

For this reason, I consider the work a half-success, a ground-rule double when a home run was desperately needed from a heavy hitter like Stoll. In my experience, the proponents of computer-based culture and their Luddite opponents are congealing into one of the many lose-lose dichotomies so enervating in today's society. Can the computer be a tool without being a tyrant? Clifford Stoll is half technogeek, half Luddite: surely he, of all people, could make the distinctions between appropriate and inappropriate applications of computer technology! Yet one is hard-pressed to recall a single application which Stoll endorses wholeheartedly. What a pity—and what a blessing it would be if someone of his stature could enter the public debate and provide a coherent framework to help educators, taxpayers, and voters differentiate between the hype and the legitimate uses of computers.

But this asks too much of a "free-form meditation." Read this book (it's a quick read), question the role of computers in your classroom or department,

and then write a more thorough book than this one to help us use computer technology wisely.

John Knox

Rebecca R. Martin, *Libraries and the Changing Face of Academia: Responses to Growing Multicultural Populations*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1994. 263 pp.

Arranged in three sections, this well-researched book's first section begins by identifying barriers to the use of academic libraries by multicultural students as well as their perceptions of academic libraries; focusing on what libraries need to do to change and adapt, including considering the possibility of a position for a multicultural services librarian, and distinguishing the unique needs of multicultural students in their own homeland from those of international students.

In the second section the author describes her research methodology and offers case studies from three different regional university libraries illustrating the issues these libraries encountered. Their experience will prove useful to librarians at other institutions.

The third section offers assistance for developing services directed at multicultural students. The first chapter reviews the case studies and the next offers models for change by examples from the case studies. For instance, too

often library services are designed only for students who come to the library. But some students do not approach the library even though their course needs obviously can be met through use of its services. Librarians must reach out and help these students, possibly by changing library use instruction methods.

The case studies reveal three libraries well managed by committed leadership willing to take risks. Recognition of the need to assist multicultural students, expressed in an institutional mission statement, provides strong incentive for the library and its staff to rise to the challenge. Commitment at the highest administrative levels will support the library and its leadership in working toward the objective of reaching all students, especially to meeting the needs of those students whose cultural backgrounds may differ markedly from those of the majority. A final short, and pertinent chapter furnishes an agenda for change, listing actions librarians should take to address the issue of service to multicultural students.

Each of the eleven chapters has a focused list of references, and the book ends with a selected bibliography. It will serve as a manual for librarians interested in providing full services to all the members within their academic community. The case studies, from larger academic libraries with strong institutional support, should be useful to librarians at other colleges and universities, met-

ropolitan or rural, who can use the insights they provide. Adaptation to local situations will be facilitated through understanding the experience of these pioneers. The library service requirements that multicultural students encounter should be addressed, with no segment of the community left unreached and development policies should recognize the special needs of students in all multicultural courses offered.

This book is recommended for the consideration of all academic librarians. Multicultural students need understanding and assistance, and this is a source for resolving their service issues for them.

Gerard B. McCabe

Michael Clay Smith and Richard Fossey, *Crime on Campus*, American Council on Education/Oryx, 1995. 235 pp.

Two issues are commonly discussed at metropolitan college campuses throughout the nation. The first is parking, and the second is personal safety. In this book, Michael Clay Smith and Richard Fossey focus on court rulings and legislation that directly relate to the issue of personal safety and crime on campus. The authors provide readers with some strategic guidelines to peruse in their quest for a safer campus, but unfortunately, they fail to discuss why

some campuses are more successful at facing the issue of crime than others. They do not expound on the development of a philosophy of “keeping customers for life” or a systematic organizational culture focused on “customer satisfaction.” All of these are neglected here.

But the book is an excellent overview of what types of crimes occur in a typical metropolitan university. The intertwining of recent court rulings and reactive legislation will help administrators develop a knowledge of *what* to do, but not necessarily *how* to do it. The chapter on “Firing the Miscreant” might have been better entitled, “Reducing Work Place Violence.” Still, there is value in examining some aspects of opportunity and challenge for university administrators.

The reader is constantly reminded that the problems of campus crime are not new, although, the issues and challenges presented have been more highlighted by a litigious technically sophisticated society. But the infinite variety of human conduct gives each incident a uniqueness unto itself. While this book gives no black and white answers, it does meet its billing; it is a “concise and informative resource designed for the nonlawyer.”

Richard P. Turkiewicz

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.

