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In a time of world-wide chaos and change, metropolitan universities have an opportunity to develop and articulate a new vision of community-based education that is locally responsive and globally competitive. With technology as the catalyst, metropolitan universities can redefine the traditional barriers of time and space as ingredients that enable and facilitate student learning. Where faculties and administrators share a vision of the future, universities will flourish. This is the moment when metropolitan universities can determine their own fate.

Chaos and Community: *Metropolitan Universities' Big Chance in the Era of Change*

American universities, especially urban campuses, are surely in the midst of their greatest transformation in a century. Slowly or quickly, intentionally or accidentally, every campus is being affected by forces beyond its control. The plans of administrators and the resolutions of faculty councils are often ignored or made irrelevant in the face of rapid change. We are less in control of our destiny than are other institutions, as recent actions of the University of Minnesota Regents have demonstrated; despite protests by both faculty and administration, the Regents have sought to impose change based on analysis by consultants and on their own perceptions.

The external forces of change—shifts in telecommunication technology, accountability, productivity, costs, student demographics, and credentials, to name a few—have found both voice and authority in agencies outside the academy, placing us on the defensive. Moreover, these separate forces may actually

be the symptoms of an even more fundamental change, which is itself difficult to perceive because of the flux.

Many urban-based faculty are already acutely aware of the few, though serious, failures of the familiar, century-old model of the land grant university updated by Sputnik era research reforms. Many of these faculty see the forces of change as compelling symptoms, if not evidence, of an inevitable breakdown of the old forms and the old assumptions. Along with them, I believe the new vision of American higher education will come from the metropolitan universities, and I want us to seize this rare moment in time to define a model and a vision that will replace the current structure.

To move from the theoretical to the practical, communication technology offers an expedient vehicle for defining the elements of change. Varied applications and possibilities are converging at a moment in time when everything seems possible—from our greatest hopes for a new, profoundly earnest, student-centered curriculum to our worst fears of a sterile, standardized, post-secondary business that replaces the cherished inefficiencies of a timeless campus with high-tech hardware, learning-on-demand, and pay-per-view lectures. The convergence of such forces has created a sense of chaos and crisis, but the opportunity for *real* gain will come by our being able to turn diffuse abstractions into something more concrete and immediate.

Naming Our Fears

That third of the nation which lives in the shadow of the emerging Western Governors' University has already felt the chilling unease which such a specter creates. Around the country—and not just in the West—the proposed 10-state virtual university has stirred passions that are surprisingly deep. I think the governors have unwittingly given a name to most of the fears faculty and administrators have about the uncertainties and chaos of this period. The Western Governors' University thus becomes a symbol of opposition onto which we can project worries about technology, tenure, workload, compensation, student preparation and performance, competition, certification, and dozens of other anxieties. The monster has come out of the closet, and we can each see it from the particular vantage point of our greatest fears. [The Western Governors' University is fully described in the new institution's World Wide Web home page, available for inspection at <http://www.wgu.edu>]

www.concerto.com/smart/vu/vu.html. If you are not familiar with the governors' assumptions and the goals of their university, this is essential reading for all faculty more than five years from retirement.]

The governors have a vision, however, which urban universities could appropriate and make their own. But we must be bold enough to act now, when the advantage of change is on our side and before we become imitative or before other major national universities such as Harvard, Stanford, or Michigan stake out their intellectual territory in specific disciplines or approaches. The Western Governors' University provides a first, perhaps crude and even ultimately unsatisfactory, vision of a new paradigm. We have a chance to use it for our own purposes and then later to replace it with a better, more elegant, vision. By hitching their ideal of the new university to technology, the governors have forced us, as well, to begin our visioning where they have.

However, I think that the focus on technology is actually misplaced—along with fears about the virtual university as any *real* threat to the importance of faculty or to the physical campus. The actual threat comes not from a challenge to the means of education but from a critique of the ends. Our most insightful critics are trying to deal with failures and frustrations of the old paradigm and are not merely embracing the “new.” They are asking about results, about the returns on investments of student time, public resources, and deferred achievements.

Critics such as the governors of the western states have gone directly to the heart of our traditions and practices as best exemplified in residential research campuses, where the public's image of college life comprises visions of ivy walls and cloistered conversations—combined now with graduate education and research. These universities—best represented by the AAU and Carnegie Research I universities—have been enormously successful, especially in the past half century.

Because the old paradigm has not worked when confronted with urban diversity and complexity, however, metropolitan universities should recognize their own dissatisfactions and discomforts in the complaints of critics. Like them, we should begin by looking at evidences of failure without either being seduced and misled by the siren call of technology or reacting defensively because our current style is threatened. Those of us who entered the

profession in the 1960s may have forgotten that our experiences and our academic life style amounted to an aberration instead of the norm in the history of higher education. We were the beneficiaries of an exceptional period of growth and expansion, and a return to the more normal stability and inelasticity of earlier times is difficult. Above all, we should understand that our critics come from many sectors as well as opposite ends of the political spectrum; they are, in fact, representative of the public at large and they are telling us unambiguously that something is wrong.

In using the shibboleth of the Western Governors' University to focus our attention, I do not want to obscure the actual issues or the failures of the old model that serve as a catalyst. Any listing must necessarily be partial, and all of us should add to the body of evidence or modify it to reflect our own experience. Because the real work of change will occur in specific local communities, I want to identify a sampling of the challenges that face metropolitan universities in particular and suggest ways in which they can be turned to our advantage.

Technology

Not surprisingly, technology is first. In embracing a technological solution, the western governors and others have raised a number of vexing issues. Of these, three—scheduling, productivity, and interactivity—come to the fore. Distance learning changes the focus of community from the spatial and temporal to the virtual. The advantage to metropolitan universities lies in our having always taken different views of where, when, and for how long students learn. Most of the concepts of the virtual university can be readily matched to courses offered in many different locations, around the clock and calendar, in shortened time blocks, in modules, or off schedule. Flexibility in meeting the time constraints of learners (instead of the convenience of faculty) or using off-campus locations for classrooms are virtues of metropolitan universities that technology can only enhance. Similarly, we have long since recognized that students will attend part-time or full-time in accord with their needs, fundamentally altering the concept of degrees being time linked or progress being measured in years.

Technology also raises the specter of changed assumptions about faculty productivity. Although the proponents of technology may have in mind

reduced costs and thus have perversely fueled the fears of some faculty that they might be replaced by videotapes, software programs, or contract employees, those faculty who learn to use technology to increase both productivity and the effectiveness of student learning will generate the capital that the university needs to reinvest in other activities. It is already clear that no university (well, except maybe Harvard or Michigan or Stanford) can both maintain current levels of faculty productivity and afford the costs of technology as an add-on. By using technology now to increase productivity, those who are achieving efficiencies can themselves redeploy resources.

Technology offers the possibility of increased connectivity in many dimensions of student learning. This capacity can best be exploited, however, when combined with face-to-face interactions, a realistic possibility when students live within an hour's commute of a campus. Metropolitan universities can thus take advantage of distance learning technology to increase flexibility, interactivity, and self-paced learning without forgoing personal interaction, group meetings, or other activities that take advantage of special equipment or facilities.

Time

Second is time. Increasingly, our critics view faculty and staff time as a resource to be managed along with physical assets and budgets. If time is a resource, however, it can best be allocated according to community objectives instead of workload rules such as sections per faculty member. Arguably, our self-regulation of time is more important to faculty than many other conditions of work, including salary. We don't yet submit invoices for billable hours, nor do we punch a time clock. If we don't want our time regulated by the practices of other professions, however, we may need to think of time in communal terms instead of individual, focusing attention on the results of time allocations instead of accounting for time. The advantages of self-regulation within the community are obvious, but if there is not a generally acceptable measure of results, we risk having time managed in a very different, probably onerous, form.

This point about time is at the heart of redefining the metropolitan university as a learning community. It will be a key element in shifting to a new vision for higher education. The role of research begs for this question to be

addressed. It also inherently raises questions about the time that faculty now allocate to consulting and other activities that do not contribute directly to learning. Conflicts of commitment as well as conflicts of interest take on new importance when time is a managed institutional resource. Time is, literally, money, and in the new model of higher education this fact is certain to be addressed explicitly by departments eager to generate new revenue sources.

Isn't it better for us to take on this issue than legislatures, governors, or even trustees? Because of metropolitan universities' greater involvement in applied research, professional education, and community based professional service, our faculty have a head start both in recognizing the tension between collective responsibility and individual action and in mediating our desires with the realities of opportunities. When more coherently organized and aggressively managed, the very activities that have differentiated us from learning-bound, residential, research campuses will be the means of success in the next decade.

New Faculty Roles

Third, we need to expand faculty roles. The virtual university places its emphasis on student learning outcomes and student activities, not faculty activities. Similarly, critics of the current successful paradigm fault universities for diverting faculty from undergraduates to pursue research. As a consequence, the emergent roles of faculty in facilitating and assessing student learning are likely to be very different from the teacher-centered model. Activities formerly assumed by student service staff, advisors, librarians, technologists, and teaching assistants may fall within the purview of faculty; or others may assume these roles as a part of an "instructional team," of which the faculty member is only a member. In either case, teaching may become more public.

Metropolitan universities, in bringing community experts into the academy as adjunct and part-time colleagues, have recognized that the nineteenth century definition of faculty is inadequate. Some urban universities have already begun to create the new model by defining faculty roles and rewards as the outcome of curriculum rather than accepting conventional roles as a barrier to curriculum innovation. Universities synchronized with their cities

are replete with professional disciplines dependent on practice-based learning, often led by clinicians and other practitioners whose expertise is grounded in patient care or client service. We have an opportunity to conceive and define a much more diverse and public professoriate whose work is not hidden behind classroom doors.

Tenure

And what about tenure under such changed conditions? Not only does the virtual university raise fundamental questions about the management of time and attention, it also inherently asks if there can be lifetime employment relationships when the need for flexibility, diversity, and change is so great. In the conventional university, both tenure and advancement have reflected individual accomplishment based on disciplinary successes—especially those related to research. The virtual university requires a fresh look at the meaning and the role of tenure under changed circumstances.

Tenure is awarded by a local, place-bound community, and the concept is geographic and spatial in its origins. No one is awarded tenure by the MLA or by the NSF. The university imagined by our critics, however, would privilege neither research nor place as the basis of faculty competence. How can tenure be related not only to the local academic community but to the city as well? When our work is made more public, public concern about the privileges of tenure may diminish.

If we know that the rules of tenure must of necessity change, then there may be an advantage to acting upon this recognition earlier rather than later. If we can reaffirm tenure as a local phenomenon and focus our individual efforts on targets of local opportunity, imagine what advantage goes to a university where the faculty understand and accept specific community objectives as the exchange value for which tenure is awarded. There is overwhelming evidence that society will not long tolerate the special privilege of tenure, so that those universities that redefine the concept in terms of mutual responsibility are more likely to preserve local academic community.

Collaboration and Competition

Fifth, institutional competition and collaboration comprise another chal-

lenge. The governors' image of their university can change the rules of collaboration and competition in fundamental ways, and they have struck a chord that resonates with employers nationwide. In their model, students are able to pick courses from among many institutions, not just one. Moreover, a student may not belong to a single institution. Certification and a degree are not necessarily the same. Different agencies might provide each independently, and none of these may even be a university in the conventional sense. Faculty are used to competing locally for students against other disciplines while collaborating among themselves as disciplinary colleagues—especially on research—even across institutions. How do we relate to each other when we must work together locally to recruit and retain students and when the returns for our work in research are guided by institutional, not personal or individual, objectives?

A further implication of the changed educational scene is that there may well be other educational suppliers—government agencies, accrediting organizations, and for-profit businesses—who provide parts of a student's total educational plan. Traditionally, universities have avoided relationships with such unconventional providers. Metropolitan universities, however, may have a natural affinity with corporations and other associations, given the opportunities of location and convenience.

As an alternative to Motorola, General Motors, VISA, USWest, Levi Strauss, Disney, and other corporations forming their own "universities," consortia of metropolitan universities in cities where the corporations have concentrations of employees might offer coordinated and vertically integrated learning experiences (credit and non-credit), using both distance learning and the flexible offerings we have developed in the past decade. Or we might form strategic partnerships with those businesses that meet our standards. And we should develop a national consortium that will help students transfer credits and experiences among metropolitan universities as a way to serve students whose employers move them around the country.

Certification

Sixth, certification is vital to our critics' innovation in proposing a virtual university. But this concept also is the most threatening to the old paradigm and hence the most interesting as we envision a successor model. It

strikes at the heart of the universities' monopoly on awarding degrees and other credentials. If the Western Governors' University not only awards degrees that compare well with those of the separate institutions but also offers certification in specific competencies, the new type of institution instantly has a comparative advantage along with any other that can establish a national market, such as ITT Institute or Phoenix University.

Whether recently transferring from a residential campus or a community college, or whether resuming education after interruptions for family, work, or finances, many metropolitan university students offer a marketbasket of credits and experiences. Instead of resisting the idea of becoming a universal recipient of student learning experiences that can be repackaged into meaningful units for certification, metropolitan universities should quickly appropriate the governors' vision and become learning consolidators where the quality and integrity of credentials granted are based on what students actually know. Imagine how many institutions—including for-profit corporations—have teams already at work addressing the issue of certification for schoolteachers. The report on the state of the teaching profession, issued in September by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, opens the door for institutions to offer new forms of certification. Given the perceived failure of universities in preparing and certifying teachers, we should not be surprised by widespread public acceptance of new, untested certifiers.

Student Diversity

Finally, we should be aware of student diversity. We should note the assumption of a growing number of critics that all students can learn and that university education is not intended to select out the best and the brightest for further elevation. Instead, more political, corporate, and civic leaders expect that universities will help *all* students become better and thus contribute to society as citizens and workers.

With our half-century of experience in accommodating a diverse range of student preparation, experience, and expectations, metropolitan universities are better able to adapt to a model of lifelong learning, including the retraining that employment of the next century will surely demand. "Urban education" has long since become a code term for the human development

model. Instead of fleeing from the “open admission” tag that residential campuses have used to differentiate themselves from their urban competitors, we should embrace this idea as a key element of the new paradigm.

Distance Learning Overcomes Conceptual As Well As Spatial Barriers

In the urban university model of the future, the establishment of a learner-centered institution places a premium on helping students find the resources they need instead of the university’s possessing them. The model values the skills of self discovery instead of the transfer of knowledge. And it defines success by setting standards of performance required for certification instead of requiring time on task or years in residence.

In picking these seven topics, I have intended only to suggest ways in which one issue—technology and distance learning—actually entails a fundamental reconceptualization of our metropolitan institutions. Technology either makes possible or enhances the possibility of each of these elements being fundamentally altered in a new model of urban-centered university education. To recapitulate:

- Technology makes asynchronous learning normative and releases human capital for reinvestment;
- Technology permits us to redefine time as a communal instead of personal asset and hence privileges institutional outcomes over individual (e.g., retention versus publication);
- Technology requires a redefinition of faculty roles and, therefore, a broader concept of who the faculty actually are;
- Technology calls for a new understanding of the tenure contract by uncoupling both teaching and certification from a place-bound community;
- Technology privileges collaboration among faculty and between universities and other learning organizations;
- Technology makes certification independent of degrees and can possibly redefine the meaning of a degree; and
- Technology allows an institution to pursue the human development model instead of the selectivity model as economically—as well as socially—preferable.

The threat of the Western Governors' University has forced us to look inward, but our worries may have only just begun. Even without the western governors, we may have change agents pulling on our paradigm.

If we use the Western Governors' University to focus our concerns about the future, we can use this extreme vision to help us sort out what kinds of places we want our campuses to become as alternatives to both the residential research model and the virtual or corporate models. Instead of having trustees or legislatures or governors restructuring the academic community, we should do it ourselves.

Service Integrates Teaching and Research

Not surprisingly, the whole service experience of metropolitan universities has led us into applied research and the use of local data to develop theory that can be tested or replicated elsewhere. How many medical procedures or drug therapies have developed from clinical services and local patients? How many federal policies or theoretical models have derived from community data and local analyses? At the same time, practice-based learning essential to professional education has been extended through service learning and problem-based learning to the entire curriculum.

In the old paradigm, the isolation offered by the metaphorical wall and tower were the residential university's chief advantage. Under such conditions, research as an individual activity and a personal accomplishment is protected by a system of peer review where none—or few—of the peers are ever local. Thus set apart so the purest and best can interact, though not with each other, the old model flourishes in a pastoral setting. In the new model, connectivity and collaboration—both virtual and tangible—have the advantage. The networked metropolitan university thus gives us an outline, approximation, of what we must become.

Federal research policies (and mythologies) have tended to associate research performance with the individual. Reputations of departments (and universities) are also dependent on the reputations of individuals. To the extent that research has dominated the faculty roles and rewards structures, the inherently collaborative work of teaching and, especially, service has not only been devalued, it has been redefined as less valuable in large part be-

cause it is *not* individual. Until recently (when reduced federal funding sources and technology are forcing changes) peer review has made this structure nearly impervious to reform.

Funding agencies, both public and private, are emphasizing collaboration in research, not only by giving less money to the same number of institutions, but by sharing risks among larger groups. In the failing model, grants have typically been made to a principal investigator with a national, peer-established reputation; if the person moved, grants usually moved along with the person. All of the results depended more on the success of the PI than on the campus. Increasingly, co-PI's—often from more than one university—share in grants, and sponsoring agencies actively promote consortia of institutions working together. It is also easier to hold institutions accountable for a return on investment than individuals. Institutions have more to lose and thus are perceived as better recipients by investors.

Conclusion

“Think globally, act locally” captures a central principle of the new university model. But how many of us can apply this aphorism to the work of faculty? Although many might conclude that the faculty of metropolitan universities are well along this new path, even we have further changes in store. Think carefully about the work in which you are actually engaged. Consider how we spend our time. We have invested much in myths and facades about the relationship of teaching and research, about public performance and private practice. We are still obligated to succeed in the old paradigm even as we recognize its inherent shortcomings

By early in the next century, metropolitan universities must be well on their way to implementing a strategy for individual faculty to function concurrently in a local and international community of teaching as well as research, to use service as a means of integrating teaching and research, to be rewarded and recognized in each independently of the other, and to make personal connections between local and global thinking and action.

Perhaps the only way we can accommodate such individual faculty choices, however, is by having a well-defined local community with a clear mission and purpose and by making explicit what the rewards for local actions will be. Because of their inextricable engagement with their cities and

surrounding suburbs, metropolitan universities can integrate teaching and research with service, and thus provide the new paradigm with a coherence and integrity missing in both the old model and the governors' virtual university.

We need to shift our thinking about faculty roles from an either-or to a both-and approach. "Learning" must be a concept that incorporates teaching, research, and service, while the definition of "community" stretches to accommodate the disciplines, the campus, and the civic communities. Learning communities cannot be limited to students. They must incorporate a larger, more amorphous, and certainly more casual public whose interests include those of corporate researchers, government officials, and social activists, to name only a few of our constituents.

As with politics and news, all education is—fundamentally—local. As human beings, we ground ourselves in a place and in interactions with other human beings whom we can see and hear and touch. Even when distance technology provides the means, learning is still local. Metropolitan universities thus gain part of their quality and distinctiveness from the civic communities they serve. Is it possible to imagine a metropolitan university that is better than the city of which it is a part?

Those universities that establish communities of interaction and engagement, where values and beliefs are enacted together in activities with specified objectives and measurable outcomes, are the places that will be known for the meaning—and value—of their degrees. Traditional, residential campuses will have an equal or greater opportunity to succeed in this dimension of the new paradigm because virtual universities can never hope to replace the intimacy found in a place of concourse. However, metropolitan universities can make their own unique contribution by linking the meaning of a degree even more closely to the place where it is earned, to the people who share in its development, to the values it espouses, and to the meanings it assigns to being a graduate of that community and of that city.

For those of us who believe that the old model is being replaced, this is an exciting time. We have a chance to define a new vision and to see old truths and old conditions in new ways. In the process, we may be able to transform our own institutions into the very ideal of the new paradigm and thus ensure a place of ascendancy for the metropolitan university. The key

to our success will be in forming a community of action as well as belief. I am convinced that those universities where faculty and administrators work together, know their shared values, and focus on common goals will, in time, set standards against which all other educational institutions will be measured.

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