Luncheon Remarks, delivered on February 6, 1987

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Grand Valley State University
President Lubbers' remarks at February 6, 1987 Luncheon

These are important times for the people of Michigan; the most important since Henry Ford and others in Detroit launched the transportation revolution at the turn of the century. They changed the economy of the nation and shaped Michigan's industrial character to the present time. Now the national economy is being altered by the world economy and the people of Michigan have felt the repercussion of that alteration more than most. We are taking stock of ourselves. We are looking to the future, deciding what kind of a future we want and what will help us achieve it. We want a high culture, one in which literature and the arts flourish, where medical and health research and practice are on a high plane, where recreation blesses our lives, sports flourish, and poverty and crime diminish. The last recession reminded all of us that the economy is the engine that makes a modern society run, and our engine in Michigan sputtered. All that we want for ourselves depends fundamentally on that engine.

The process of taking stock, of planning for the future, requires sharing and probing, finding out what the other guy does and thinks and why. How do we all contribute to the running of the engine and the perpetuation of the high culture sustained by the engine? We know there are many human parts needed. And we know that schools and colleges are where those parts come from. The kind and quality of the parts depend heavily on what we in the schools pursue and how well we pursue it.

The recent economic upheaval and the lingering uneasiness even as the state recovers, has had the effect of making those of us in the schools more responsive to the problems of other professions. We are listening and sharing. We are trying to make improvements in what we do work for the direct benefit of the economy of the state. The people of the state have a right to expect that from the schools they support. The leadership of the state in both
political parties, in the professions and in industry and in labor are agreed on the objectives of a high culture and a strong economy to drive it. Since the economy is in a state of change it is our primary concern, and becomes the responsibility of people in the colleges and universities, as well as the legislature, to assess and direct their energies to making the changes advantageous to the state's economy.

At Grand Valley State College we have taken a major initiative toward contributing to a strong Michigan economy. That contribution is symbolized and made possible by the new building under construction on the Grand River at Fulton and Front Streets in Grand Rapids. There we anticipate the education and retraining of thousands of adults for the jobs in our future. There our Office for Economic Expansion will reach out in cooperation with other institutions and organizations to help the entrepreneur in west Michigan analyze markets, organize and finance his business, and sell his product. There in cooperation with Michigan State University we will bring a new level of engineering education to this area for the purpose of enhancing the productivity of area-wide industry. There in cooperation with other universities, colleges, and industries a new level of applied research will evolve in our area, assisting existing business and industry and drawing new industry to our area. There too will develop the first institute to study productivity in the work place, a subject closely related to the furniture industry in west Michigan. An effort that in the long run we hope will contribute through basic research to maintaining that industry for the state of Michigan.

Along with all this economic activity the building must be a hub for teacher education at the graduate level and inservice training for teachers and administrators so that the teachers and administrators of our elementary and secondary schools have access to what they need to improve and grow as
they educate our children for the new Michigan.

At the same time we are working with Muskegon Community College and other universities to bring new capabilities for advanced training and education to Muskegon so in that area too people will have the opportunity to prepare for the future. In a few years there will be a new facility there so that the work of all of us can proceed.

In Michigan we cannot surrender our manufacturing base, high tech, mid tech or low tech. The people of the state must take the actions necessary to be competitive, and Grand Valley State College will create and adjust to help those who use its services to function effectively to build a strong economy.

These last few years the compass has been set. To accomplish what I described earlier, internal planning moved forward, lobbying in Lansing proceeded, personnel were appointed, programs initiated, and a ground-breaking on the Grand River celebrated last June 5th. During the time it took to set the compass one question was continually asked, "What is going to happen to Grand Valley at Allendale?" That question was followed often by another, "Do you think the college should have been located in Allendale in the first place?" We have invited you to the Allendale campus. You can see for yourself that it is substantial, attractive (though more so in spring, summer, and autumn), full of students, and though not apparent to the naked eye in a short visit, moving forward in its academic and social program. I want to give you a vision for the future of this campus.

My vision is quite different from the one concocted for the most part on the campuses of other universities a few years ago. That vision saw all these buildings with a wall around them and towers with armed guards at each of the corners. I could never imagine the second largest population area without a senior state college. So far as saving money for the state, I
suggested closing a large university rather than a couple of small colleges. That could make a real dent in the budget, and accommodate all the prison overcrowding.

There are essentially two models in the United States for senior higher educational institutions - the university with its research and public service functions in addition to graduate and undergraduate education, and the liberal arts undergraduate college that usually has a few professional programs in its curriculum. The former teachers' colleges mostly pursue the university model. Being located in a relatively large population area (our television station is carried to households that contain 2,700,000 people) we are asked to perform many functions of a university, such as those I described in the new Grand Rapids Center. Also over 15% of our students are enrolled in graduate programs and most of their courses will be in Grand Rapids and Muskegon. On the other hand, here in Allendale we have the ideal setting for the type of liberal arts college with professional programs so typical of the midwest, and so often of high quality. Because of our locations in the tri-county area (Ottawa, Kent and Muskegon) we are unique in the state to fulfill both the function of a regional university and a self contained undergraduate college for the whole state. So far as Grand Valley is concerned, the people of Michigan can have their cake and eat it too - the services of two distinct kinds of institutions in two distinct environments, city and rural.

I am excited about the future of the Allendale campus, just as I look forward eagerly to what we can do for graduate and upper level adult students in our Grand Rapids and Muskegon centers. Here are the characteristics of Allendale as I perceive the future.

I. A college of between 5,000 and 6,000 students, 2/3 living on or adjacent to campus and 1/3 commuting from their homes. Several commuters will
choose Grand Valley to save travel and room costs so they can afford to participate in one of our international programs in France, Poland, Yugoslavia, Mexico, Taiwan, or Japan. The quality of the 18-year-old freshman as measured by ACT scores will gradually increase so that the average score will level off around 24. Presently our freshmen who are required to take the test average 20.2 - not quite 2 points above the national average.

II. > A freshman class with 15% to 20% enrolled in the Honors Program, a program for bright students who want to work to capacity. Throughout their four years their general education courses are especially designed and team taught by leading professors. Anticipating a special program for special students, plans were laid for an honors program several years ago and implemented three years ago. This past year 7% of the freshman class enrolled.

III. > A growing student interest in liberal arts majors. Applications to our School of Education have doubled in the past two years. We do not have a major in education. We never have had, and therefore do not need to follow the wisdom of the major universities where advice to drop the major pours forth these days. The teachers we educate major in the arts and sciences. The predicted shortage of teachers in K-12 will be followed by a host of college and university professors taking their TIAA and CREF rewards. This will encourage professors in the arts and sciences to do once again what for more than a decade they have hesitated to do - clone themselves so that the colleges and universities will have an adequate supply in the future. In addition to the practical factors I believe the mood is right again for the liberal arts.

IV. > A movement slow, but more surely this time, where minority students find their way to college and succeed in larger numbers. We will begin
to identify them in high school. Our people will ally themselves with high school teachers to identify and nurture minority students so that they will be ready for college. Then we will continue the nurturing in college. Part of the program is to find a mentor for each student in business who will provide a job while the student is in high school and carry him through college; perhaps if the stars are right, employ him after college. This program is underway in the Seidman School of Business. Twelve students enrolled last fall and twenty will begin in September 1987. If the plan works for the Business School, we will initiate it in other departments of the college.

V.8 A campus of students where the majors in the professional fields, business, engineering, nursing, physical therapy, social work, sports medicine, communications will be engaged in internships, working and learning on the campus and in the workplace so that our graduates will have superior preparation. We require internships already in several fields, including engineering. Teaching, of course, has always had the requirement, and we want our teachers to be among the best, as they have proven themselves to be - especially in special education.

VI.8 Finally, and as important as any characteristic, I perceive the Allendale campus to be a happy place to live where a student's personal growth blends with intellectual development in the maturation of a healthy, positive adult. The social life, the opportunity to exchange ideas, to share fears and insecurities, to participate in sports, music, dance, drama and the myriad of extra curricular activities on a campus should be easy, encouraged, and give positive reinforcement to the individual. The living conditions, too, are important to making a happy life. The most publicity we have had about the Allendale campus throughout the state in the last two years dwelt on an alleged housing shortage. In
part we invited you here to show you what we are doing about that allega-
gation, and in a few minutes our Dean of Students, Dr. Bart Merkle, will describe our new houses and the concept that generated them. We want to use our housing as a place to learn as well as a place to sleep, a place for happy leisure, as well as a place to "goof off."
Reality will not be quite so ideal as my perceptions, but we can achieve more rather than less.

There are some conditions that must prevail for us to accomplish our objectives, and in concluding my remarks I want to share them with you. I talked about an enrollment of 5,000 to 6,000 students at Allendale, Is that possible to achieve and maintain between now and 1995 when the 18-year-old cohort begin to increase rather than decrease as it has since 1982? In your packet you have three charts attached to one another that resemble the three on the platform. Let's look at the first one on enrollment.

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I believe we will have the students to make the vision a reality.

For us state policy and private support are predominant in shaping our destiny. Ours is a dynamic environment, demanding from us creativity and change in some areas and stability in others. State policy must allow for the emergence of what is best for the state and particular areas of the state. We are a relatively "new kid on the block." When I was 12 I remember an attractive new girl moved to town and into our 7th grade. She was ostracized by many of the other girls. She was perceived as a threat. To the boys she was exciting, yet there was an ambivalence toward her because girl-boy relationships were already established. Some denigrated her, others were curiously interested. In the end she won a place, she prevailed, and she was still beautiful. We are and will too, but we need the understanding of state policy-makers and we appreciate the attendance of so many Legislators today.
We are called by some a developing institution. That is true. But I am aware that to some the category of developing is stationary. You never are permitted to develop into what you can and should become. This we must prevent. Our state needs creative strong development whenever it emerges, and it is emerging at Grand Valley in Allendale, Grand Rapids, and Muskegon. Money is the fuel for our engine, and the second chart shows how our current fund has grown in the past decade.

The third chart shows the source of our revenues and how they are spent.

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This year over $45,000,000 will sustain life at Grand Valley State College, most of it spent to support what happens on the Allendale campus. As we increase our work elsewhere, Allendale will continue to be the home base, the place where young people especially will come for a good quality of undergraduate education. To care for those special 6,000 we will need a few, not many, new facilities. Our science facilities, though good, were built for a college of 3,000; our library is beginning to burst and needs expansion. These are the next projects for which we will seek state support. When we complete our $6,100,000 drive for private funds for the Grand Rapids Center ($4,600,000 already pledged) I plan to ask our Board of Control for approval to seek private contributions to build an inter faith chapel on the campus. The interest in matters of faith has increased in this generation, and the work of the campus ministry is effective and important in our campus life.

From bonding sources and private developers we will seek more campus housing, a subject dear to Dean Merkle.

So to the question, "What is going to happen to the Allendale campus?"
I answer, "It is already happening." We hope students from the schools represented here will join us to make it continue to happen.
CURRENT FUNDS REVENUES
GRAND VALLEY STATE COLLEGE
Includes General, Designated, Auxiliary, & Expendable Restricted


- Revenues in Thousands

- Fiscal Year 1976-77: 20974.9
- Fiscal Year 1977-78: 22889.0
- Fiscal Year 1978-79: 23838.1
- Fiscal Year 1979-80: 26142.5
- Fiscal Year 1980-81: 26376.1
- Fiscal Year 1981-82: 27415.7
- Fiscal Year 1982-83: 29964.2
- Fiscal Year 1983-84: 34637.8
- Fiscal Year 1984-85: 38657.2
- Fiscal Year 1985-86: 42954.9