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Changes come in so many ways. Sometimes an improvement is made that is imperceptible to many who will benefit from it. When a Professor improves a course, when a member of the staff makes a wise decision or performs a service better than previously, a few take note. Yet the institution moves forward. If numerous people keep growing professionally, the spirit of accomplishment catches on. Participants, through a host of positive individual efforts, contribute to the creation of that spirit and they begin to feel that they are a community of achievers. They begin to see that their individual efforts are worth the energy expended because they are aware finally of others who also work hard and constructively in their own corners of responsibility. Then some event or surface change takes place, wholly symbolic and highly visible. The collection of individual faculty and staff improvements over a period of years make the symbol a mark of distinction, confirming in the minds of the contributors the legitimacy of their work, and in the public mind a new appreciation for the institution.

The past academic year yielded two such symbolic events for us - the designation of Grand Valley as a University, and the opening of the L.V. Eberhard Center. To the public the two are beginning to hang together. The visible presence (and it is an attractive, large presence) and the name University are natural together. The former gives validity to the latter. But the overall validity comes from all those little noticed efforts and improvements made these past several years. The symbolic events have helped the public to understand and accept the result of what has been in process here during those years.

The culmination of so many positive contributions at Grand Valley is a better institution and one that is beginning to be recognized. The name University and a new academic and public service facility give the public symbolic terms for the recognition of our improvement.

In my address to the Grand Valley community last year I began
by stating that our most important challenge was the integration of the Allendale and Grand Rapids campuses. That remains foremost among our tasks in this academic year. The vision for each campus that I described last year has not altered for me. I see an undergraduate college with a strong liberal arts curriculum and high admissions standards at Allendale, and an urban university with graduate and professional programs in Grand Rapids. They will not be exclusive of one another. They will be integrated, but each will have its own emphasis. To have the broad vision is easier than deciding where the courses will be taught and where the people will have their principle base of operations. We are presently in that decision-making process. I do not know how long that will take. I know that all who potentially are affected or whose interest in the direction of the University generates legitimate concern should be involved. Perhaps consensus on these matters is a naive hope, yet working deliberately, sharing all views, and committed to building a strong University for the region, we can, through careful analysis and compromise, find our way to acceptable decisions on those matters.

Since 1980 two decisions by the faculty have set the course for our institution. The first was the reorganization ending the federation of colleges and the establishment of the present academic divisions structure. The second was the adoption of the general education curriculum for all students. These two actions provide the context for our present deliberations. They have given the institution direction and stability. For now we do not need to tamper with the way we organize ourselves to do our work. That is helpful to us as we settle on what we will do in Allendale and in Grand Rapids. As we engage ourselves in this matter, I see another opportunity. Decisions about location of programs, courses, and people can generate stimulating parallel discussion and debate about the curriculum. As programs shift in location it is natural to re-examine them for improvement. As we cope with the growth of our undergraduate Allendale campus, a continuing reassessment of
our general education requirements and the manner in which they are offered and administered is in order.

The University's character for the 21st century will be set in the next few years as we determine what is to happen on our two campuses. The tendency is to work on the logistical problems; the frustrations of scheduling facilities, the charges for the facilities, the breakdown or installation of technological devices. These life factors are so prevalent that they tend to become dominant.

The task of administrators is to see that they are managed in such a way that the frustration level is diminished to the point that these secondary factors do not fill the consciousness nor set the attitudes of faculty, staff and students. Instead the challenge of defining and integrating two campuses should engage the faculty in academic policy making, program assessment, and course development for the next era. We can do that within the present structure of the four divisions with their schools and departments.

Some old themes recur, and I think they will in the composition of life at our University. I have mentioned General Education. What was adopted two years ago was not an ending, but a beginning. Our goal should be a General Education Program equal to the best. Our present organization of that program allows for continued improvement, and the improvement depends on the will of all of us who are involved.

Unlike so many former state teachers' colleges turned university, our lamp of liberal learning can burn brighter. This is a tradition in the origin of our college. As we examine the soft places in our nation, we see several shortcomings among the citizenry, the lack of historical perspective, minimal wisdom and knowledge that accompanies a familiarity with significant literature, few who have the use of more than one language or the understanding of mathematical and scientific language. Our curriculum must continue to address these problems and search for ways to make our graduates better educated graduates. I look to the
faculty committee responsible for oversight of General Education at Grand Valley to come forth with ideas to improve the programs in their charge. I will make no specific recommendations at this time. I want to keep the heat turned up on this issue, an issue which leads naturally to my next topic - International Education.

The faculty who have been here as long as I or longer know of my interest in International Education. In the early years our international programs were considered a presidential pet, and met with varying responses, most of them negative. In recent years I have been encouraged by the interest of faculty, and the success of our students studying in foreign countries. I hold strongly to the conviction that the inability of most Americans to speak more than one language, and the pitiful lack of knowledge about world geography, will be primary causes of our decline as a nation unless they are reversed.

Just as our general education philosophy must be well articulated, so must our philosophy of International Education. What are we attempting to accomplish through our foreign exchanges and study abroad for our students? I believe it is time for a reassessment of what we are doing. I will ask the committee on International Studies to review what international experiences we offer to our students and faculty and suggest ways that these experiences can be better facilitated. From the committee's deliberations, I hope strategies for Europe, the Pacific rim, and Latin America will emerge; strategies that we can pursue into the next century which include study abroad and foreign students and colleagues on our campuses.

I will ask each division to place on its curriculum agenda the internationalization of its curriculum. Are we doing for our students all that we should to give them international understanding? The business school is particularly vulnerable without an international dimension, and I am pleased at the most recent initiatives taken there to add that dimension. The All-University Curriculum Committee may want to set down conditions for
the academic content of all study abroad programs to insure that what we do makes academic sense, conditions that will serve as a guide to the International Studies Committee and the administrators of programs as they establish and manage the international programs.

There are two more old themes that I want to play. The first is graduate education.

When there was debate about calling Grand Valley a University, I was asked whether or not we had graduate programs. To many, graduate programs give an institution legitimacy as a University, and when I told them we had nine with the 10th before the Curriculum Committee for approval, critics were somewhat appeased. While our applications from aspiring undergraduates has increased dramatically in the past two years, the same is not true for potential graduate students. Our graduate programs need attention. The quality of the curriculum of the schools or departments is not in question. The problem is one of university-wide policies and requirements. Some progress has been made, but this is the year for us to put together a coherent graduate studies policy that we can publish in a separate graduate education catalog.

The second old theme is minority student recruitment. In all categories of minority students our numbers have increased. The most startling is a 35% increase in Black students. The major reason for the increase is the Minority Student Business Program in the Seidman School. These students have been recruited to a program with specific objectives for them. They have been advised and monitored. They have had a spotlight focused on them, giving them an added dose of self esteem as well as a prod toward success. The retention rate is substantially higher than the rate for all students at the University, and last year the retention rate for all minorities at GVSU was higher than for the white majority. This program is working. It costs more, but it illustrates to critics of higher education spending that more money in the right place does make a difference. If we use this model in other schools and
departments, and I think the School of Education should consider it because of the small numbers of minorities going into the teaching profession, we should re-examine our administration of minority affairs on campus. I will ask the Provost and the Senate to consider this matter and make a recommendation to me.

The matter of enrollment for the whole University is of prime concern for all of us. People and systems are straining to cope with our 9.2% increase in student numbers. The planners were telling us five years ago that we should expect a decline in applications and enrollment. For this fall we had 25% more applications than the previous year. The number might have been larger if we had more on-campus housing. For next fall applications are nearly 70% ahead, and from the tri-county area over 80%. This is one of the results of all the positive contributions that so many have made in the past few years. It is also the result of an unanticipated trend - a larger percentage of high school graduates seek higher education. We should compliment our admissions staff, and those closely associated with them, because their work has been outstanding in a positive way, exploiting contributions and trends to the advantage of us all.

Enrollment in the future needs to be discussed within the context of state policy toward higher education. That policy is formulated and/or reflected by the Governor and his advisors, and the legislative leaders and their staffs. Policy and money are so intertwined that they are inseparable. The amount of money available affects enrollment opportunities, and the amount of money is determined by four factors. First the attitude and interest of the Governor; second the attitude and interest of legislative leaders; third the tax policy of the state; and fourth the health of the state's economy. By its own will the University can decide to shrink or remain stable, but that decision, too, has political ramifications.

As I try to assess the attitudes in state government today, I want to share with you some of the comments I have heard recently
in our state capitol:

-- "The universities are fat. They have to learn to live like the rest of state government agencies."

-- "The budget for 1989-90 will be essentially flat. We can't count on more than a percent or two."

-- "The salary settlements were too high. The Presidents and Boards caved in. They can't expect the state to bail them out."

-- "The Presidents are cry babies. All they do is complain about the funding and hold out their tin cups."

-- "The universities knock one another, worried about who will get a 10th of a percent more than the others. We hear 15 competing voices in Lansing."

Comments like these do not raise one's hopes for adequate funding; certainly they are not expansive in nature. They indicate that the universities collectively must get their acts together and harmonized. You will recall that early in this decade the call for closing colleges emanated from our great universities, and ours was one on their list. That did not auger well for trust or respect, and relations reached a low point. The fact that the suggestion was politically ill-advised and that economic arguments against it had their own validity, were reasons enough to have not set it forth. The leader wolves called on the pack to devour their young, but the pack did not respond. But those days are past, and slowly with cautious glances over the shoulder and to the left and the right, the universities must attempt to act in one another's interest and in so doing in the public's interest.

My view of the public interest in higher education has three major elements. State higher education funding should provide for:

1) Growth in numbers and programs in those universities located in population centers that are growing, and whose citizens need access to higher education, and whose economy is supported by a comprehensive educational institution.
2). Maintenance of high quality programs and facilities in regional universities that choose not to grow or do not have the opportunity to do so.

3). Support of basic and applied research at a high level of excellence in the major universities and applied research on a selective basis in the regional universities.

If these three premises were adopted, defined, and dollars were assigned to their implementation, I believe cooperation could emerge and the Governor and legislature could have a plan, a guideline, and more enthusiasm for higher education.

Within this context Grand Valley could grow. Unless the planner's statistics of five years ago catch up with us between now and 1995, there will be some pressure on us to do so. Without a significant percent increase in our appropriation we are nearly at the limit of the number of students we can serve. I am not sure that is fair to the citizens of our region. Though it is not a tense political issue now, the future may see it become one. I believe GVSU could become a University of 12,000 students during the next decade, and in so doing, more adequately meet the higher education needs of west Michigan and contribute to the whole state by making a few more places available for students from other locations. If we were to transform ourselves today into a university of that size, approximately 10 million additional dollars would be required. In appropriations that would mean a 30% to 35% increase.

So long as tax reduction is a major theme in our political life, the making or breaking of a politician, we may have difficulty in financing public higher education at the level to serve the citizens in the most desirable way for them and for the economy. We will do the best we can for a number that the dollars allow. The enrollment is everyone's business, and I invite debate and recommendations from all sources on our campuses that are interested.
Of course enrollment growth implies more space as well as more people. Land is the least of our problems, especially at Allendale, but also in Grand Rapids. Enclosing the land is the problem. The demands of the present, not the plans for the future, beg for more bricks and mortar. For a long time we have asked for new science facilities. There is a good chance that planning money for that building will be appropriated after the first of the year. Let us light a candle of hope, and pray for a strong economy.

Classrooms in that building, and space vacated by Health Sciences and nursing, will give us more room in which to teach and breathe. There has been interest in a chapel on campus. The primary academic benefactor, if such a building is constructed, will be the Music Department. I realize that the prospect of such a structure, while generating enthusiasm amongst some, has quite the opposite effect on others. I believe that money available for the project, if forthcoming, is available only for that, and in no way is diverted from other buildings deemed more worthy by some. I believe it will add positively to our community life and to the work of the Campus Ministries, which has been so effective on our campus.

You have read about the Phoenix Building. There is some irony in the name of the building, a structure that some want to preserve from ever needing to rise from the ashes, and others eager to make ashes of it. The Board of Control will make a final decision about the Phoenix before the end of the month. My preference is always to save buildings when the historic value and the condition of the structure warrant restoration. In the last analysis the money must appear. No magicians have pulled it out of the hat and we have looked for magicians. To prepare and hold the building for a year will cost $250,000. Our objectives downtown are to supply more parking, maintain land and/or buildings for possible future expansion of the Grand Rapids campus, and to do so at no cost to the general fund budget. Within the next few weeks I believe we will be able to announce a deal that will pay the University enough money to demolish the buildings we are not going to use while
making all of those that remain standing at least break even operations. I feel relieved that all this is coming to pass. The only point of concern is the Phoenix building, and the drama surrounding it will continue to unfold with good seats for all. I see Stow & Davis as property in a land bank to be drawn on in the future. Our faculty and staff task force can manage the account. I will ask them to work with a committee from the Grand Valley Foundation to plan for its use. The Foundation members who help us in our private fund-raising efforts, and to a degree our mobilization of efforts to seek state funds, have from their beginning taken on the task of developing a Grand Rapids campus. Their opinions about the maturation of Grand Valley in Grand Rapids and elsewhere for that matter, may be of help to our own task forces and committees.

As I bring these remarks to a close, I will itemize issues that I have not dwelt on. They, nonetheless, will require attention and work during the year.

1) The interference of the Governor in setting university tuition rates. If one of your arms is strapped behind you, you still have one with which to defend yourself. When both are tied down, watch out.

2) The relationship between town and gown. The steps taken this year make me optimistic about the ability of students, staff, and local and county authorities to work together in the interests of all. I was particularly pleased by student leadership during and after the much, and sometimes incorrectly, publicized parties on recent weekends. Many students know what they want their university to be. While parties are fun, they don't want GVSU to be known as the place where the rowdy party is perfected nor do they want GVSU to be unfairly singled out as the place to do some student bashing. Our situation is delicate and ever changing, but the attitudes seem to be right.
A decision about student housing. With the completion next summer of three new residences and a dining building, we will have to decide whether or not we should accommodate more students on campus. Working with landlords of off-campus housing is an important part of the equation. Rent gouging, protection of their property, their maintenance of their own property are all important topics.

Computer policies for the university. The computer budget has had the greatest increases over the last decade. There is no slowdown in the rate of change in computer technology, nor the use of computers by the university community. I pose the question: Should Grand Valley require each student who enrolls to buy a computer for his or her own academic use? The money now spent for student computer labs could be reduced, and used instead to keep more current with the new technologies, and buy more software that will be valuable to students, faculty and staff. I want your answers to the question, and a study by our computer experts analyzing what could happen if we introduced such a requirement.

Finally, I want to thank the faculty and staff for bringing Grand Valley to a position where it is recognized as a sound academic institution and considered by many of its students as an institution where people care - care about the students, about their colleagues, and about what the institution represents. I hope the new members of our community, in sifting through the good and bad, are beginning to discover those characteristics.

I came from a family where concern for the well being of people within their community, whether college or town or church, was paramount. I had a family that cared with a vengeance. You'd be cared for whether you wanted it or not. I chuckle about that sometimes, but on balance helping each other to reach personal and professional goals makes for a happier life. One of my goals is to see that the happiness around here outweighs the unhappiness.