REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE NATURE AND POTENTIAL OF HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY

APRIL, 1977 · ARCATA, CALIFORNIA

MANDATE TO THE COMMISSION

To assess the character, philosophy, and potential future of the University in the light of progress, and of (local, regional, national, and worldwide) events which have occurred since the report of the 1966 Commission on the Future of Humboldt State College.

To prepare a report outlining the observations of the Commission, together with recommendations calculated to assist the President of the University in advancing the qualities, strengths, and educational impact of the University through the next decade and beyond. The observations and recommendations should be in a brief form, and about major issues and principles of a kind which would be useful guides to the Academic Senate, the University Budget Committee, and other bodies of the University whose responsibility it is to translate philosophy into stimulating and practicable courses of action.

The Commission is to submit its report to the President by the end of the winter term, 1977, so that the entire academic community through the Senate and other representative bodies can react to it by the end of the academic year.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE NATURE AND POTENTIAL OF HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY

The President's Commission on the Nature and Potential of Humboldt State University was given the task of assessing the character, philosophy, and potential of the University and of making brief recommendations to serve as guides for those bodies of the University whose responsibility it is to translate recommendations into courses of action.

That it is time for self-assessment is readily apparent. In the years since the report of the 1966 Commission on the Future of Humboldt State College, the climate for higher education has changed drastically. What then appeared to be a future of steady expansion in which we would have much freedom to experiment has evolved into the present reality of stable or declining enrollments and consequent budgetary tightening. The effects of the change are felt everywhere in the institution. For example, a short decade ago we were committing sizeable resources to training teachers for the public schools. But now the marketplace has brought us up short. The demand for public school teachers is shrinking, and demographers predict no reversal of the trend in the coming decade.

Now, and as a University, we are no longer expanding in size. We are in a situation of having to maintain enrollment in a highly competitive market. Should we fail, the result will be yet tighter budetary constraints, for State funding is based chiefly on Full Time Equivalent student enrollment. If we are to survive as a University, therefore, we must act in such a way as to improve our advantage in the competition for students, and must do so without losing--in fact, while reaffirming--the ideals and purpose of university education.

As compared to other institutions, we have certain advantages. Our location is attractive to students from crowded urban areas, we have maintained close faculty-student relationships, and, as the only University in Northwestern California, we have a large service area to utilize. That our isolation also has disadvantages cannot be denied, but our situation is far from being the worst in the CSUC system. In fact, if we work with intelligence and imagination, we can progress, even perhaps flourish.

What, then, will sustain us amid the vagaries of change? If we are to realize our potential and thrive within our limitations, in the Commission's view we must aim for quality in the life of the University. The Commission believes that excellence, and the deserved reputation for excellence, must be achieved for our long-term strength and advantage. Towards that end, the Commission's recommendations bear upon the three main aspects of University life--education, scholarship, and service--and fall into five broad categories. The general recommendations are supported and made specific in later sections of the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission makes the following comprehensive recommendations:

1. That the University increase its financial resources by working to surmount current budgetary constraints and by developing non-State funding, and that it carefully reallocate some present resources.

2. That the University, by increasing the opportunities for research and creative activity, by instituting programs for faculty exchange and development, and by evaluation of tenured full professors, revitalize and improve the morale of the faculty.

3. That the University maintain a balance between breadth and depth in curricular programs, and that it affirm the liberal arts nature of the institution (i.e., its central grounding in those academic disciplines, such as the humanities and theoretical sciences, which develop general intellectual ability and judgment and provide information of general cultural concern, as distinguished from more narrowly practical training).

4. That the University use the principle of division of labor in assigning faculty to research, teaching, advising, and governance.

5. That the University capitalize on the institution's location and personal nature, enhance the sense of community within, and better the relationship between the University and the local community, by improving certain alienating conditions and processes.

These general recommendations, closely interrelated, will variously affect the three focal areas of University life. The Commission identifies and defines these areas as follows:

Education. Develops the student's ability to think clearly, comprehensively, and critically; effects the mastery of skills and knowledge in a discipline; provides educational experience in fields outside the discipline; provides the training and advanced skills required by the society and economy; increases the desire and ability to undertake self-directed learning; and develops creative capacities.

Scholarship. The disciplined examination of experience, which improves the quality of instruction and advances knowledge through research and creative activity.

Service. Makes available to the surrrounding community the University's repository of knowledge and expertise, and recognizes and acts openly in the complex interdependency of University and Community.

How well the University performs in these areas depends upon its endowments and processes. Improvements in performance can be achieved by enhancing endowments and improving the processes by which the institution functions. In the Commission's view, there are opportunities to close the gap between actual and attainable performance. Within very real constraints, the University still has room to move towards excellence.

FINANCIAL ENDOWMENT

In considering the University's financial endowment, which touches every aspect of its operation, the attitude should never be one of easy acceptance of the *status quo*. We should strive more actively to alter CSUC policies from within and should vigorously protest, in our dialogue with the Chancellor and Trustees, against budgetary constraints both in the amounts allotted and in the strictures upon their use. We should actively counter the bureaucratic mentality of the agencies responsible for funding the CSUC system, the mentality which measures education in terms of "productivity" of "units" (i.e., graduates) and quality in terms of quantity.

We should continue reiterating to the Chancellor that, compared to other CSUC institutions, HSU has a greater percentage of high-cost programs whose continuation, with quality, requires adequate funding. Moreover, our geographic isolation, and our existence as the only University in Northwestern California, should be used to argue for a larger share of CSUC funding. Expecially relevant in this regard is funding for faculty attendance at professional meetings, research-related travel, and library acquisitions.

The Commission believes it possible, within the current funding levels, to increase the University's effective resources by (1) pursuing the principle of division of labor whereby individual faculty members, upon approval, could substitute those activities in which they have high productivity (e.g., research) for activities in which they are less effective (e.g., advising), and (2) exploiting opportunities for

pooling resources, as is currently done with temporary help salaries, in order to add flexibility to our allocation decisions.

The Commission is also convinced that the University, in order to provide high-quality education, must broaden its resource base by securing non-State funds from private endowment and from government, foundation, and business grants.

FACULTY ENDOWMENT

The faculty is the heart of any university. While the faculty at HSU is well trained, with a high percentage holding the most advanced degrees in their disciplines, and while it is student-oriented and dedicated to quality teaching, under present constraints it finds great difficulty in achieving the excellence it strives for. Historic priorities at HSU have produced a faculty which has not, as a whole, been successful at generating knowledge. Although hardworking and often overworked, many of the faculty find themselves slipping behind in their fields. So far, an easy collegial relationship has existed; there is little jealousy along disciplinary lines. But the faculty is becoming noticeably more insular. Under the current pressures, constraints, and disappointments, there is a marked loss of faculty morale, which threatens the quality of institutional life.

The current and forseeable stable or declining enrollment represents an environmental change of tremendous significance at HSU. Traditionally, we have augmented the faculty endowment through infusion of new faculty as we grew in size. But the stationary state, combined with tenure, has already reduced the effectiveness of this process. Given the rapid development of knowledge and the heavy faculty workload, our aging faculty will be characterized by dwindling enthusiasm, quality, and performance unless the mechanisms for inducing professional growth are significantly improved.

While the establishment and improvement of these mechanisms becomes imperative under the new set of conditions, the continued existence of the traditional constraints--heavy workload and lack of resources--will make improvement of the faculty endowment difficult. Since not everyone in the University understands how the 12-unit teaching load constrains faculty performance, the Commission thinks it worthwhile to be specific on the subject:

> As all faculty are acutely aware, course preparation is time-consuming and difficult if the professor strives for classroom excellence. A course must be prepared not just once, but every time it is taught--and every

class period requires the work of preparation. Given three or four courses in his 12-unit load, a professor has to cut corners, aim for excellence selectively, and let his performance elsewhere slide.

With a 12-unit teaching load, it is difficult for the professor to keep current with the results of others' research, let alone contribute to learning in his field. Even keeping abreast--doing the minimum necessary reading--can necessitate curtailing performance in instructional duties such as making up examinations and assigning and reading papers. Office conferences with students and academic advising also suffer, and student-initiated discussions outside the classroom, in which the professor should be free to participate, become impossible.

Another consequence of the 12-unit load is that professors, driven deeper into their departments by time constraints, become insular and, since they lose the benefit of discourse with colleagues in other disciplines, alienated. The sense of community among faculty retreats like a dream of Eden.

Given the limitations on State resources to relieve the pressure of the workload in teaching, governance, advising, and research, the Commission recommends that non-State resources be obtained and that a procedure be established whereby faculty can substitute one workload activity for another--a mechanism that reflects the productivity and interest differentials that exist among the faculty.

Research and creative activity are central to the faculty endowment. For academicians, the life of the mind pivots on the discovery of knowledge. Research and instruction are complementary, and high-quality teaching requires continual experience in the discovery of old and new knowledge. In the arts, the professor who does not produce work on his own, who has not the time for the hard play of the imagination among the materials of his art, withers in the classroom as well. The Commission therefore recommends as follows:

That research and creative activities be supported at significantly higher levels through such means as (1) a marked improvement in dissemination of research grant information, and in proposal development, by the Office of Research; (2) activation of the principle of division of labor so that faculty, upon submission of proposals to their School Deans or Division Chairmen, can be partially reassigned to research or creative activity; (3) increasing the weight given to research and creative activity in reappointment, tenure, and promotion

decisions; (4) augmenting the number of leaves granted, especially in those areas where laboratory or library resources are deficient; (5) eliminating time-in-service penalties for research and creative activity leaves; (6) seeking reinterpretation of the Master Plan's statement on research ("using the facilities provided for and consistent with the primary function" - i.e., instruction) to allow for pure research and creative activity as institutionally valuable in their own right; and (7) searching out non-State support for research and creative activity.

To improve the faculty endowment in the situation of no forseeable institutional growth, it becomes essential to concentrate on faculty development both for new faculty and for older, tenured faculty. Excellence in education depends upon the faculty's intellectual and creative excitement, which derives from the infusion of new ideas and from exchange of ideas within the University. Through exchange of ideas new faculty can be brought more quickly to maximum effectiveness as teachers, while older faculty can update and renew themselves, recapture enthusiasm, and come again to the vital sense of intellectual community. To these ends the Commission recommends as follows:

(1) That programs for faculty development be instituted for both untenured and tenured faculty; (2) that a program be devised for exchange of faculty with other academic and non-academic institutions, and that our faculty be urged to participate; (3) that post-doctoral study be encouraged; (4) that personnel procedures be revised to give credit to faculty participating in faculty development programs; (5) that the performance of tenured full professors be evaluated; and (6) that an in-house Journal be established to promote the exchange of ideas within the University.

CURRICULUM ENDOWMENT

Our curricula respond to the Master Plan for Higher Education in California, by which the University has as its primary function "the provision of instruction in the liberal arts and sciences and in professions and applied fields which require more than two years of collegiate education and teacher education, both for undergraduate students and graduate students through the master's degree," and to Title V, the California Administrative Code's specifications for General Education. In fulfilling its primary function, the University offers a wide range of major subjects for students to choose among, with most of the majors contained in the academic disciplines of departments. The General Education curriculum, in the University's interpretation of Title V, allows for student choice in both

lower-division and upper-division components.

The purpose of the major is to enable the student to concentrate in depth in a curricular area of his choice. To fulfill that purpose most departments at HSU, acknowledging the impossibility of covering the field in the major, provide introductory courses and coherent sequences of more specialized courses while conveying methods of scholarly inquiry useful to learning at large in the fields beyond the major. However, not enough departments in the University recognize the relatedness of courses within the major and the value to the major of courses in cognate disciplines within their Schools or Divisions and, in many cases, in disciplines outside School or Division boundaries. Within academic departments, curricular strength depends upon continual evaluation of course offerings in both content and rigor of presentation, to meet student needs and those dictated by the state of the discipline or profession.

In addition to the curricular implications of its recommendations under Faculty Endowment, the Commission makes the following recommendations concerning the departmental major:

> (1) That departments, in their curricular self-evaluation, identify and arrange to use the expertise in cognate disciplines as well as in disciplines outside the School or Division, for the enhancement of the major; (2) that School Deans and Division Chairs identify areas where disciplines cross, and put into effect integrated or interdisciplinary courses where intellectually profitable; (3) that the Academic Affairs Office, through the University Curriculum Committee, inform Schools and Divisions of interdisciplinary possibilities within the current and evolving University curriculum; (5) that supervised student research and student internships be encouraged in the completion of the major; and (6), which should go without saying, that departments maintain or increase the quality of offerings in the major, towards overall excellence.

The University assumes that General Education is as important as the major in attainment of the baccalaureate degree at HSU. Less well contained and easily defined than curricula in the major, our GE curriculum is steadily evolving as choice among offerings and coherence of offerings, both very much desired, play against each other in committee. Although the Commission cannot prescribe the optimal balance between choice and coherence, it sees that, within both lower and upper division components of the GE curriculum, it is absolutely necessary that students fulfill their GE requirement outside the major.

A serious barrier to the University's best use of its GE curricular endowment is one that might be called attitudinal. Throughout the University, among faculty and students, GE courses are too often seen as impediments to the major, as requirements to be "gotten out of the way" so that "real" education (i.e., in the major) can begin. Behind this attitude and supporting it one finds a lack of understanding of the GE curriculum and perhaps even of the purpose of undergraduate education. Too often the departmental offerings in GE are taught with lower standards, less rigor, and less enthusiasm than are courses in the major, with the result that both faculty and students consider GE a wearying burden.

Though it is not possible to legislate attitudinal change, the Commission, seeing that such change will be necessary if the University is to rise to its potential, hopes for improvement through the following recommendations:

> (1) That systematic efforts be made at appropriate levels to educate the faculty about General Education; (2) that the University Curriculum Committee monitor GE courses with respect to quality and adherence to GE program objectives, and be given the power to remove from the curriculum any course not truly general and in which performance is unsatisfactory; (3) that departments assign their best teachers to GE courses; (4) that the University's personnel policy be shaped to recognize and reward excellence in GE teaching; and (5) that students be enlightened as to the importance of general education in the intellectual make-up of anyone who achieves the baccalaureate degree at HSU.

Within the curricular endowment of the University, the Commission considers it of crucial importance to maintain balance if excellence is to be attained. The baccalaureate degree at HSU, signifying as it does a liberal education, must be earned through study in both breadth and depth. It is through adherence to this double commitment, and through striving for high quality in its fulfillment, that the strength resides which will sustain the University through the next decade.

An issue related to balance is that of the allocation of resources among disciplines. The location of HSU makes it desirable to support heavily the disciplines in Natural Resources and related sciences and social sciences; we have and should maintain strength in that direction. But the Commission advises against a too-ready accession to the immediate demands of the marketplace and the winds of popularity, for demands change and winds shift. It is essential, the Commission believes, that the University respond to society's needs and allocate its resources accordingly among disciplines. But it is equally essential that, for survival through

the years, the University pursue policies to remain strong over the broad spectrum of disciplines.

STUDENT ENDOWMENT

The majority of students at HSU come from outside the local area and are here by choice rather than convenience. Whatever their majors, their chief reason for staying at the University is their relative satisfaction, academically and personally, with the educational experience.

While the HSU studentbody is as diverse as any university's in terms of native intelligence, life experience, previous training, and motivation, it is predominantly drawn from the youthful white segment of our society. Consequently, our students on the whole have had limited exposure to other ethnic and age groups and cultures.

With the inherent diversity of the studentbody, it is not surprising that student performance also varies. But within that variation, the Commission believes that certain conditions cause student performance to be less than optimal. The general unawareness of the importance of educational breadth as well as depth, the existence of some adversarial relationships among students, faculty, and administrators, and the constraints imposed by certain alienating institutional procedures are some of the conditions leading to sub-optimal student performance.

To improve the University's student endowment, the Commission recommends:

> (1) That student recruitment be markedly increased with the purpose of attracting students to the particular strength and character of our departments, not just in Natural Resources but throughout the University; (2) that the University further diversify its studentbody in terms of age distribution, ethnic background, and degree objectives; (3) that early in their academic careers at HSU the students be taught the purpose of university education and the meaning of the baccalaureate degree; and (4) that ways be found to improve the student-faculty relationship (see especially Institutional Processes).

INSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES

Because they affect performance everywhere in the University, institutional processes are vitally important if a high-quality educational experience is to be

provided at HSU. From among the hundreds of processes in the University, some of them mentioned elsewhere in this report, the Commission would select a few for special emphasis, where change would result in marked improvement in the quality of the educational experience and our institutional life. Among instructionally-related processes the Commission chooses four for discussion and recommendation.

1. The current computer-dominated registration process, with its high degree of impersonality and uncertainty, is a great source of student and faculty irritation. The process is characterized by numerous and inevitably recurring errors in registration, by students registering for many courses in hope of obtaining a few, by a complicated and costly add-and-drop procedure, and by both student and course underenrollment which lowers FTE and could ultimately cost faculty positions. Given these shortcomings, even the much-vaunted efficiency of the current process is thrown in doubt; and its soul-killing impersonality is obvious to everyone.

   The Commission recommends instituting computer-assisted, arena registration, the system whereby the student, with faculty present for consultation, comes to the gymnasium, learns at a glance what courses are available in his program, and selects cards coded for those courses. That the student will deal with people, not machines, is of definite psychological advantage, and there are several others, including flexibility, on-the-spot decision making, and the camaraderie of the arena.

2. Academic advising, a time-consuming activity with few tangible rewards at present, is cursorily done at HSU. Many departments assign advisors in rotation, so that students establish no long-term dialogue with their advisors; advisors are often ill-informed, particularly about the GE program; some advisors are assigned so many students that individual care is impossible; some advisors can never be found in their offices, as why should they be? –students are not required to see their advisors before registering. The result has been that students avoid the advising process and get their advice from each other. Consequently, many take the wrong courses or follow programs unsuited to their abilities, and waste more time than need be.

   The Commission recommends that advising be made systematic,

effective, and more personal through (1) establishing an Office of Academic Advising under the Vice President for Academic Affairs with a link to Student Services, said Office to train academic advisors and renovate and oversee the advising process; (2) utilizing here as elsewhere the principle of division of labor whereby faculty with talent as advisors would be assigned to that task in lieu of other non-instructional duties; (3) instituting student evaluations of advisors; and (4) giving weight to high-quality advising in the decisions of personnel committees.

3. Orientation of new students, especially transfer students, is sporadic at HSU. Since many students cannot attend the summer orientation meetings, and since transfer students are given no required orientation, too large a proportion of the studentbody is uninformed about the purpose of university education, about what HSU offers in educational experience, and about the processes, including advising, by which the student can best benefit from the time spent at HSU.

   The Commission recommends that an effective process for orientation be established. Such a process would enhance the student endowment, improve the sense of community in the University, and offset the disadvantages of a studentbody not optimally informed about why they are here.

4. In the University's admission process, freshmen are urged to declare their major even before arriving on campus. Since they have little idea of what a university education consists of and what HSU can offer, they are ill-equiped to settle on a major that early. Too many students, by declaring their major early, lose the benefit of wide-ranging exploration which the GE program offers, and too many change majors several times before their final choice.

   The Commission recommends that freshmen be encouraged not to declare their major until the end of the freshman year. Some students, especially those whose majors require a four-year course of study, will have already decided; but most students will find the exploratory year very valuable, particularly under an improved advising system.

The process of university governance on the collegial model, while allowing for

full faculty participation in decision making, requires enormous and often wasteful effort on the part of all involved. Of the 65 committees on which faculty serve, many duplicate work being done elsewhere in the University, and many do nothing at all. Many faculty serve on several committees at once, while others serve on none. In personnel decisions, in the area of service to the academic community, too often the number of committees served on, rather than the quality of that service, is the determining consideration. And throughout the University, there is general dissatisfaction with committee members' responsiveness, on those committees whose composition is representative, to their constituencies.

Although firmly believing that the collegial model for governance should be retained, the Commission offers the following recommendations to make the process more effective:

> (1) That the University's committee structure be reduced to eliminate overlapping functions and committees with no reason for being; (2) that the principle of division of labor be adhered to, whereby work is equitably distributed among faculty according to their interests and talents, in the areas of teaching, research, advising, and committee service; (3) that personnel decisions in the area of committee service–as in the areas of teaching, research, and advising--be based on the quality, not quantity, of participation; and (4) that a means be established, for committees whose composition is representative, whereby the members report and are responsible to their constituencies.

In the matter of personnel processes, the Commission offers one recommendation and two observations. The Commission recommends that, in appointments to positions, the first consideration be the candidate's ability to contribute to institutional quality at HSU and the candidate's potential for growth. As a necessary corollary to this recommendation, the University must guarantee Affirmative Action, thereby committing itself to multicultural diversity, and the full representation of women, among faculty, staff, and administration.

The first observation concerns the sensitive issue of tenured full professors who have, in effect, "retired." Since there are few sanctions that can presently be brought to bear in that situation, and since the educational quality at HSU demonstrably suffers because of it, the University should find ways of dealing with it either through faculty development or, that failing, through measures more stringent.

The second observation concerns "retired" administrators. Since that situation also affects the quality of life at HSU, existing sanctions that could be brought to bear for remedy should be exercised.

COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Humboldt State University, itself a complex and perpetually changing entity, lives in complicated interdependency with its surrounding community. That it is not monolithic, a fact obvious to those within it, is often not apparent to the larger community who see the University as a single, powerful political and economic force with goals foreign to theirs. In the past, the lack of understanding of the University has led to fear and resentment, even enmity, in the surrounding community. In the absence of perspective, the surrounding community has seized upon this student's publicized opinion, that professor's intemperate protestation, or someone's less-than-elegant dress habit, and has taken it to represent the University, this despite the fact that every year University employees, both in their functions at the institution and as citizens living in the larger community, contribute to that community's life in thousands of ways. And of course that community reciprocates by providing many of the resources upon which the University depends.

Any healthy relationship must be reciprocal, and the one existing between the University and the local community has become less helpful than it should be. The University, no longer the community's college as in the past, has allowed itself to become isolated and often seemingly careless of community concerns. To improve its part in the reciprocity, there are certain actions the University can take. The Commission identifies a few of these as follows:

> (1) Establish a tone of openness and cooperation generally, but particularly when dealing with such sensitive issues as land acquisition, the use of private resources for educational purposes, and parking near the campus; (2) publicize more effectively the University resources, both facilities and professional expertise, that could benefit the community; (3) make the campus more accessible and inviting to the local community; (4) schedule more of our degree-objective courses for evenings, and design evening courses and workshops to attract individuals and groups; (5) advertise more fully the learning opportunities available at HSU for local people; and (6) improve community understanding of the University by publicizing our accomplishments in research, innovation, and influential activities within the local community.

In relationships within the University, as other sections of this report imply, improvement will be necessary if we are to arrive at a genuine sense of community. That the University's purpose is to achieve excellence in the three areas of its function--education, scholarship, and service--must be conveyed to all segments of the University, who must then be invited to consider themselves a part of the chief endeavor. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators--all must be brought to feel that in their diversity they share the common life, that each contributes to fulfilling the University's purpose.

As things now stand we fall considerably short of the ideal. Staff members in positions outside the academic areas, since they are largely unaware of the University's mission, cannot help feeling alienated. The same may be said of many of their administrators, who have but an imperfect view of, say, what faculty do to earn their money. Among faculty there is a general feeling of isolation within departments, of being out of touch with other disciplines within the University which might fertilize their own if only contact could be made. And students, imperfectly oriented to the University's purpose and alienated by some of its personnel and processes, often resign themselves to completing requirements mechanically, "getting their education out of the way," and dully setting life aside until freed from the University experience.

Many of the recommendations made earlier in this report would go far towards improving the sense of community at HSU. But in addition, the Commission recommends as follows:

> (1) That staff members and administrators whose work gives little insight into the University's purpose be educated in that respect and brought into the academic community; (2) that faculty be put in touch with each other's work through a program of public lectures in the University, through imaginative use of team-teaching and other cross-disciplinary instructional methods, and through publicizing the creative work and the details of research done by faculty; and (3) that students be brought nearer the University's purpose by being allowed to participate more fully in faculty research, and by faculty participation in student-initiated discussions on the periphery of instruction and outside the classroom.

CONCLUSION

Many of the Commission's recommendations will be difficult to transform into action. But if the University's future is not to be one of basic survival, with

erosion of quality and the gradual loss of principle or even the need for principle, we must act energetically to grow in excellence though we cannot in size. We must earn the kind of reputation that will bring students to us. It is the Commission's conviction that the right reputation can be earned by improving the quality of education, scholarship, and service at the University, by better use of existing resources, and by forceful and imaginative expansion of resources. If we articulate our purpose and put our best talents to the task of realizing it, then much of what we desire we can accomplish.

August 12, 1977

Richard Meyer, Chairman
Susan Armstrong
Richard Day
Nancy Hilfiker
Thomas H. King
Dolores Poelzer
Theodore K. Ruprecht
Carlton S. Yee

PRESIDENT'S RESPONSE

The character of a university is much more than the product of a single plan or a single idea or a single effort. Like human character, it evolves as a consequence of a complex interplay and sequence of influences, conjoined by sustained effort and conditioned by guiding principles.

From time to time, it is well to pause and appraise the character of the University, to see and understand what it has become, as the basis for reflection and decision regarding what it could be, and what it shall choose to become in the future. Out of this self-understanding should grow new vigor and a new sense of academic purpose.

This was the essence of the mandate of the Commission. It was desired that the Commission Report would serve as a milestone statement marking Humboldt's progress as a University, embracing and carrying forward the best of what had gone before, and pointing out new academic beacons towards which to steer in the years ahead.

In formulating its Report, the Commission consulted widely amongst the University community, culminating its efforts in an open forum where commentary upon the Report, together with constructive analyses and suggestions were heard and received. The substance of these, and written commentaries which were invited and received by the President, are offered herein as an appendix to the Report itself. The University owes its applause and thanks to all members of the Commission for the breadth and depth of their consultative process, and for their diligence, thoughtfulness and vision in creating such an excellent and distinctive Report.

Broad acceptance of the Report was clearly manifest at the open forum, and the many valuable commentaries that it provoked are ample evidence that the Commission has most effectively fulfilled its mandate. Several commentaries at the forum made expectant reference to *implementation* of the Report's precepts and recommendations, a task that we shall consider immediately via the established avenues of consultation and governance of the University, as well as via Task Forces to deal with specific recommendations.

In its essence, the President's Commission Report constitutes a redefinition of the University by re-emphasis of certain fundamental principles, and more strongly emphasizing others. The University as it stands today embodies a comparatively greater degree of outward vision than would be characteristic of a college of the kind from which it has evolved. The Report shows that there is and should be less and less inward or parochial vision, commensurate with a broadening spectrum of faculty and student contacts, and scholarly and academic influence by faculty and students far beyond the University itself. Although the University is still in a transition from its former nature as a college, its emergence as a University is characterized by substantially greater expectations. Society-at-large expects comparatively more of us, and we expect much more of ourselves in fulfilling our own and society's expectations. In short, the President's Commission Report constitutes a redefinition of the University, not in terms of the kinds and numbers of degrees that it grants, but rather in terms of the increasingly higher standards, values and expectations that it imposes upon itself in service to an increasingly broad and diverse academic and public community. Given the essence of the Commission's Report, and the numerous outside influences that impinge upon our academic enterprise, the Report makes clear the necessity for the University to engage more consciously in planning for the future, systematically and decisively, so that we shall minimize the risk of being taken unawares by external events.

The Commission Report affirms the fact that the research and scholarly productivity that characterize our kind of University are absolutely essential to the proper discharge of a high standard of teaching excellence. The involvement of students in such research and scholarly activity as a usual part of their learning experience is an increasingly desirable responsibility and expectation of a university that aspires to be more extraordinary than ordinary in its qualities.

Taken as a whole, the Report, while not being a detailed plan for action, has within it the potential to inspire ever greater achievement. Now it is time to move from inspiration toward implementation. Accordingly, I have already sent the Report and this reply to the Senate with the request that they develop proposals for changes or innovations that would be advantageous to the University. If the Report is used as a catalytic instrument, we can stride into the future with confidence that we will achieve our goal of becoming a University of deservedly singular distinction.

Respectfully,

Alistair W. McCrone
President

FACULTY COMMENTARIES

The Curriculum Committee believes that an institution is "liberal arts" in nature only if the entire curriculum is suffused with the spirit of liberal arts.

The recognition that faculty attitudes towards general education constitute a barrier to realizing the potential of the general education program is insightful, and the subordinate recommendation that the best teachers should be assigned to the general education program is a welcome sign.

I am extremely impressed with the directness and courage of the report and can only offer my individual endorsements to all its major points. I feel that the Commission has done an exemplary job and the report demonstrates the presence of integrity and care.

The Commission's recommendation on developing non-State funding, should not be a substitute for endeavoring to secure adequate State funding.

Experience by a former coordinator of research programs indicated that those who had a will to find support (for their research) could usually find it, and that those who did not have the will generally alibied the lack of State support, heavy teaching loads, and so on ad finitum as reasons for not doing anything.

Reliance on generalists will not develop excellence. Reliance on the standards of the department will not always suffice either. The revitalization of a faculty could be better assisted if the Trustees were persuaded to modify the lock-step salary schedule so that merit salary increases would

create that stir which would result when rewards go to those who perform.

Behavioral and Social Sciences need to be closely allied with the School of Natural Resources since Natural Resource questions ultimately have to be decided by human actions. Obviously we have been less successful in implementing sound resource management than our knowledge and technology provides.

Perhaps a serious omission in the Commission's report is any direct reference to academic rigor. They have amply covered scholarship and academic excellence, but for some unknown reason shied away from grade inflation and its insidious influence on academic achievement and the University's reputation as a family of scholars.

All graduates from Humboldt State University are being short-changed if they leave without some general education from the School of Natural Resources.

As regards the registration process, perhaps the "camaraderie of the arena," the desirability of students dealing with people, and the efficiency for students of discovering what is or is not available, could all be accomplished by another approach. We could, for example, have a day at the gym for adds, drops and "camaraderies."

The physical environment of the University has greatly influenced the past development of the University and can be expected to have a significant influence in the future.

The campus itself should be used to demonstrate to the public effective and desirable landscape and building alternatives.

The campus should exemplify the current state of the art in good landscape and building practices. Considerably more regionalization (i.e. use of native plants, etc.) should occur in future plantings and design on the campus.

I see faculty development programs as more relevant to those professors that have not pursued their field of study in an intensive manner for a period of some years and have for many years been at the top of the academic ranks, than they are for younger faculty.

Our survival as a University does not necessarily depend upon maintaining our current level of enrollment. If the University can maintain the quality of its students and staff it should be able to survive and flourish even with some decline of enrollment.

It is entirely reasonable to have professionally oriented majors who have a liberal arts base.

The effects of the 12-unit load on the professor seem to be identified as a relatively new problem when, actually, the condition that results in these effects has existed for many years. The University previously did, but presently does not, have research and creative activity leaves, although I hope they can be reinstated.

Humboldt State is a University only because of the integration of liberal arts and professional program elements. We cannot remain a university if we do not balance our emphasis on both elements.

I hope that the recommendation of "curriculum endowment" concerning

supervised student research and student internships is implemented and emphasized.

Good teachers are good scholars, and research should show up in class.

I believe that the real strength of Humboldt State University lies in having faculty equipped to serve in a variety of areas - good solid teaching, advising and research.

I am aware that we proliferate committees almost for the sake of committees. Perhaps a zero-base concept could be applied to the committee structure. Unfortunately, I am sure that another committee would be necessary to review the question.

Rapid implementation of the recommendations of the report will contribute to the enhancement of standards of excellence already existing at Humboldt State University. I submit a sixth general goal recommendation beyond those proposed by the Commission, namely that the University should keep aware of national and international developments to enable it to direct its human and material resources into curricular and other channels best designed to serve world needs. The world is fast becoming a culturally integrated, interdependent unit, and this institution, true to its mission as a University, has a role to play beyond its local and regional scope.