

Hopes and Dreams of an Even Better Brigham Young University

STAN L. ALBRECHT

My fellow members of the faculty, I appreciate this opportunity to speak to you for a few minutes as we begin a new academic year. This occasion gives me a chance to reflect for a moment on some of the things that I care most about in my own assignments at the university. I promise not to use all of the 1.5 hours allocated for this meeting, at least in part because I regularly remind myself of the graffiti scribbled by a student on a classroom desk: "If I had but one life to live, I'd spend it in this class because it lasts forever." I promise that this talk won't last forever.

Earlier in the summer as I was beginning to grapple with the question of what to talk about in this meeting, I came across some lines from *The Devil and Daniel Webster* (Benét, 1943):

"You have made great speeches," said the stranger. "You will make more."

"Ah!" said Daniel Webster.

"But the last great speech you will make will turn away many of your own against you," said the stranger. "They will call you Ichabod; they will call you other names . . . and their voices shall be loud against you 'til you die."

"So it is an honest speech, it does not matter what they say," said Daniel Webster.

I do not aspire to a great speech, but I hope it will qualify as an honest one. If I step on a toe or two, it is done in the spirit of challenging

us all to do better. It is also done because I care deeply about the things of which I speak.

During those times when I have a few quiet moments, I like to think about the kinds of changes I would make in this university so that it might even more completely fulfill all of my expectations of what it might be. If you could create your own ideal university in which to spend this important part of your life, what would it look like? How might it be different than it is now? Let me share with you some of the hopes, dreams, and expectations that would contribute to making Brigham Young University, for me, an even better place than it now is.

I quickly acknowledge some sense of impotence in talking about the changes I would like to see. My friend and colleague Howard Bahr recently summarized what for him have been the major frustrations that have accumulated over 25 years in academic settings:

(1) When the powers that be know what's wrong with a system but are afraid to fix it.

Stan L. Albrecht was academic vice president and associate provost of BYU when this address was given during the Annual University Conference on 26 August 1991.

(2) When the powers that be don't know what's wrong with a system and don't try to find out.

(3) When the powers that be try to fix something that's already working quite well.

I would probably add a fourth frustration to Howard's list: When the powers that be know what's wrong with a system but are constantly frustrated in their efforts to fix it. Of course, this may simply mean that the powers that be aren't really the powers that be.

Though more perfect worlds are often difficult to achieve, there are six areas where I would have us focus more of our efforts in order that we might continue the progress that we have observed in recent years. The first states an overarching, more basic goal under which I will address two major issues that are of central importance, I believe, to our effort to climb to higher plateaus. The remaining five, though discussed separately, would also contribute in important ways to the achievement of the first.

Let me quickly add one other point by way of introduction. Whereas some of the issues that will follow are designed to make us even stronger in the eyes of the world, I am not in any way proposing a secular model for this university. We will continue to do well many of the things the world does, but we must, at the same time, retain the uniqueness that is such an important part of our mission. We will do things our own way, with our own religious values and traditions firmly in place and with our unique culture and history clearly in mind. We will have the character of a great university, but with our definition of greatness including, at its core, the spiritual values that have always been our primary purpose in being.

1. My first wish for us is continued progress and even greater pace in achieving the Mt. Everest status that was prophetically outlined for this institution by President Kimball.

We have become a very good university; we are not yet a great one. We have climbed, I

believe, some of the hills that President Kimball described and, having climbed, can glimpse horizons that we didn't even know about a few years ago. There are further horizons that can only be seen as we climb even higher. But, as Todd Britsch recently noted, "We have been asked to *become* a towering mountain, not just climb one." There is work enough for all of us in achieving this goal. We must reaffirm our commitment to become an even better university than we now are through increasing the excellence of our performance in all that we do.

I was deeply moved by the tribute that was read this spring at commencement when Jeffrey Holland was awarded an honorary degree. In reminiscing about his work as president of this institution, he observed: "I had one preeminent principle—that cardinal supposition, that consuming vision—that we could be an excellent university, indeed a truly great university, . . . and still be absolutely, unequivocally, forever faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ. In fact, we would accomplish the one because of the other, never in spite of it."

This statement from Elder Holland, together with the challenge from President Kimball, has provided for us a well-defined destination. But, recognizing that a destination is not enough, they have also given us guidance in how to get there. It is up to us to stay the course and to increase our effort and commitment to achieve all that is expected of us.

Mt. Everest status requires a continuing and very substantial infusion of resources, along with wise stewardship in how these resources are managed. We continue to receive strong support from those who have primary responsibility for our direction. In fact, as I will note shortly, when it comes to support, we sit with relative calmness in a troubled sea. We also continue to receive much-needed and much-appreciated assistance from those of our colleagues who work in other parts of the university. This fall we have awarded almost \$600,000 in permanent program improvement

grants to the academic colleges. Most of this money comes from a reallocation of resources from the physical plant. We are deeply grateful to President Andersen and his colleagues for making very difficult cuts in their programs in order to provide this additional support to the academic areas. Substantial amounts in year-end funds have also been reallocated in order to meet major program needs. Over the last three years, approximately 28 positions have been added to the faculty. These positions have come in a variety of ways, including significant cost-cutting in other areas of the university.

Most of the easy decisions have now been made, and most of the fat has been trimmed. Additional changes will prove even more difficult. To continue to become stronger, we must now concentrate thoughtfully and even fearlessly on two areas—faculty hiring and program reviews. What we must do in each of these areas will not be easy, but let me outline some parameters that I feel must guide our decisions.

Let me speak first about program reviews. All involved in university decision making come quickly to learn that change in the university is always slow and, often, quite painful. Academic folklore holds that changing a curriculum is more difficult than moving a cemetery, and other parts of the university may be at least as resistant to change as is the curriculum. It is another generally accepted maxim that in a university setting it is extremely difficult to do less in order to do more. This applies specifically to the work of program reviews. I have learned that there is no more difficult task than that associated with careful, thoughtful evaluations of academic programs. Emotional attachments to programs become very powerful, and objectivity in recognizing that we might need to discontinue doing something in order to do something else better becomes a rare commodity, especially when it is one's own program that is discontinued so that someone else's might be enhanced. Here, probably as much

as anywhere in the university, Chisholm's Fourth Corollary applies: If you do something which you are sure will meet with everybody's approval, someone won't like it.

The general intent of academic program review is to make programs stronger. However, in some instances, the conclusion might be that a program should be radically altered, or even discontinued. Many institutions succumb to the temptation of trying to do too much, of trying to be the best in every possible field. The outcome of such an approach is usually across-the-board mediocrity. Neither BYU nor any other institution can afford to try and be the best in every field. We must choose those areas where we have competitive advantages for whatever reasons—reasons consistent with our unique mission, reasons that are historical, reasons that are associated with the concentration of particularly strong faculty—and make them as strong as we possibly can. This means making tough budget cut choices. It also means moving resources from some areas to others.

I emphasize that these decisions are not made just on the basis of current strength of programs; there may be areas where we are relatively weak, but where we should be strong. In such instances we may find it necessary to move resources to strengthen weaker programs. While the movements of resources from one area to another is never done without pain and criticism, we must continue to look carefully at what we are doing in order that we might establish excellence in those areas where we have the greatest need and opportunity. Opportunities for deans and department chairs to make the changes that will allow them to build stronger programs should constantly be sought. We invite faculty and administrators at all levels to continue to assist in this important process.

Perhaps even more important than program reviews are decisions on faculty hiring. Let me comment on that briefly. We have made some truly exceptional additions to our faculty in

recent years. Some who have joined us are or will become world-class teacher/scholars who will bring increasing recognition and stature to themselves, their departments, and the larger university. We are justly proud of these additions. On the other hand, too often we find some departments continuing to advance candidates who will not really strengthen programs or boost us to higher plateaus. I agree with Peter Flawn that one of the real tests of a dean or a department chair is how insistent he or she is in maintaining higher standards for new appointments (Flawn, 1990). First-rate departments tend to hire first-rate people. Second-rate departments tend to hire third-rate people because they are threatened by people who are as strong or stronger than they are. As Flawn notes, truly the greatest legacy of an academic administrator at any level is to leave the faculty stronger than he or she found it.

Because of the critical importance of faculty hiring, I would have us establish as a general governing rule that—and here I employ an analogy from the sports world—we will not pass up a first-round draft pick in one area in order to hire a fourth- or fifth-round draft pick in another. We cannot afford to give up the opportunity to add to our faculty a world-class musicologist or neuropsychologist in order simply to fill a slot in another unit. I know that there are classes that must be taught and other assignments that must be met in all of our departments, but this is not sufficient justification for making weak hires. We will urge deans to evaluate carefully every hiring opportunity and, when needed, to move lines where weak hires would be made to areas where opportunities for more exceptional hires can occur. We will exercise the same kind of review at the academic vice president's level. If there are continuing patterns of departments advancing mediocre candidates, we will conclude that the line is needed more desperately in another area and will be willing to make that move. Faculty positions are our most precious resource; we

must exercise exceptional stewardship and judgment in using them.

Though I have referred to the responsibilities of deans, department chairs, and the central administration, I remind you that the role of making the decisions that will allow us to climb above the foothills to higher peaks is primarily a faculty role. We urge strong departmental faculties to make the programmatic changes and to demand the kind of faculty hires that will allow us to become better than we now are. We hope that those of us in administrative assignments can assist along the way as you do the work that will make the real difference.

2. My second wish is for a much greater sense and feeling of community among members of the university family.

Universities should be places of debate and discussion, places where ideas can be developed and sharpened through their submission to others for review and comment. The excitement of living in a university community comes, frequently, from the open exchange of ideas, from the challenge of presenting the best of what we have to offer for others to assess and evaluate. "Intellectual community [is] found where people talk, argue, imagine, create, and cooperate about and around central concerns, important ideas, significant problems, and vexing issues that are not confined to the boundaries of determinate groups of disciplines" (Warch, 1990).

But discussion and debate needn't be acrimonious, and disagreements needn't be presented in ad hominem fashion, as is too often the case. Incivility need never characterize our dialogue, particularly as we deal with one another across departmental lines, or across differences in generation, gender, or race. In their recent survey of 500 college and university presidents, Ernest Boyer and Robert Atwell asked presidents what would most improve the quality of life on their campuses. Eighty-six percent responded with a request

for greater civility and more respect for others (Boyer, 1990).

Unfortunately, the academy can, on occasion, “be a small-minded, mean-spirited, stupefyingly bureaucratic, profoundly alienating place” (Wright, 1991). These sins of the academy have been well documented in recent months by Page Smith, Bruce Wilshire, Edward Fiske, and many others. I think that, generally, we are able to avoid many of the worst of these problems here. But we have work yet to do. Men and women in university settings who find stereotyping, prejudice, and discriminations in the larger society to be absolutely reprehensible sometimes turn around and reflect those same reactions in their behavior toward one another. Religion teachers, for example, are sometimes characterized by their brethren and sisters across campus as self-righteous, close-minded, and anti-intellectual. In turn, in other areas of the university, some would classify the science faculty as secularized, godless destroyers of faith. These kinds of categorizations are never helpful. As one of our strong faculty recently noted, in the ultimate sense the work of the Widtsoe Building should be the same as the work of the Joseph Smith Building. I remember some years ago a student wondering aloud to me if he should change his sociology major since a faculty member in another department had warned him that it would be impossible for him to complete a degree in sociology and retain his testimony. At that time we had on our faculty in sociology a couple of stake presidents, several bishops, and one or two returned mission presidents.

Despite the basic goodness of this place and the people who work here, we see too many emotional attacks on those who serve on university faculty committees and councils whose work is difficult, but essential. We fail more often than we should to celebrate the accomplishments of colleagues. Too often we take comment and criticism too personally.

I’ll say just a bit more about the current debate on political correctness in a moment, but let me emphasize here that I am calling for greater attention to the things that bring us together. As Donn Miller recently observed, achieving diversity is not our goal so much as is achieving a real sense of community, a community that can be experienced by individuals with diverse backgrounds, diverse heritages, and diverse interests (Miller, 1991). If true community is achieved, concerns about diversity will become secondary.

There is one other related tendency that limits our progress toward greater community. I refer specifically to the inclination among some to wrap themselves and their work in the flag of assumed gospel truth. I am not suggesting that this tendency is limited to any particular area of campus; it is more pervasive than that. Those who wrap themselves in the protective coating of their own special interpretation of the gospel foreclose discussion. For them, life becomes a holy war in which the infidels who come from other areas of campus or who appear to have alternative interpretations and views must be turned back. When it becomes a holy war, one constantly fears exposing to question one’s faith and commitment to the gospel by the very work one does. Everything one says or writes becomes a measure of devotion to the kingdom. There are basics to which we all must and should pledge allegiance; there are other areas where all of the answers are not yet in. In the latter instances, we must allow greater flexibility of understanding and interpretation.

There are naturally many things that we do at the university that are largely solitary, such as working in our studios or our laboratories. Some of our research is shared, but much of it is individual. Yet we can do more to increase the sense of common purpose, the sense of oneness in mission. Cross-disciplinary symposia, brown-bag luncheons where someone from another college or department is invited

in to discuss his or her work, collaborative research projects—all of these things can help us build both greater awareness of what others are doing and greater appreciation of that contribution. We can also participate more openly and more broadly in the shared rituals and traditions of the campus community such as forums, commencements, and the annual Distinguished Faculty Lecture. I urge broader faculty participation in all of these activities. I also urge that we all become more generous in our attitudes toward one another, that we become more willing to suspend judgment, that we be more open-minded, that we be more tolerant of the risk-taking of others, and that, as I will suggest in a moment, we exhibit greater humility in the limitations of our own work and judgment (Wright, 1991).

The benefits of such an attitude are obvious. We will support and encourage and even celebrate the strong work of our colleagues wherever that occurs. We will eliminate the propensity to stereotype and judge and categorize because we will understand that some quite exceptional things are being done in every corner of the university. Dedicated women and men are changing lives through effective teaching, and they are making a difference in their chosen profession through the quality of their scholarship. Let us do more to celebrate together these accomplishments.

3. *Third, I would urge a greater willingness on the part of us all to see the life of a scholar more as a calling than merely a job, a trade, or a way to make a living.*

This is the way it was once perceived. Why not again? Camille Paglia has observed that today's system of higher education is "geared to producing careerist academics rather than scholars and intellectuals" (Paglia, 1991). But, as Henry Rosovsky notes, "The best of us do practice our profession as a calling and consider ourselves not employees but shareholders of the university: a group of owners" (Rosovsky, 1986). As owners, we all have an

important stake in making the place the very best it can be. This means not sitting on the sidelines and watching others take the most difficult assignments or, worse, sitting there and carping about the kind of job they are doing. Rather, it means that we acknowledge our stake in what this place is all about and that we work our hardest to make it the very best.

In terms of my more ideal university, I would have a faculty who, individually and collectively, recognize how important it is to teach effectively, to be good department citizens, and to carry on programs of meaningful and important research. I would wish for a faculty who did these things because that was who they were, that was what they wanted to do. They would not do these things because, as someone observed, they expected some human equivalent of a dog biscuit for standing, sitting, rolling over, or barking on command. Instead, this ideal faculty would want to teach well, to create strong departments, to maintain a strong program of research and scholarly achievement because that was what they had chosen to do. To complain because a department chair, or a dean, or a faculty rank advancement council expected it of them would be incomprehensible.

I have been interested in the level of emotion with which some of us object to being called employees. Our new activity card will identify us as faculty, not as employees. The symbolic significance of this is readily evident. Its actual significance will only be reflected in our behavior. I hope our behavior will demonstrate, even more than it now does, the real value we place on what is, indeed, a calling, a calling of scholarship. In our spring leadership conference, I quoted Sanford Pinsker as follows: "Seek dissatisfaction and you will surely find it. There is no end of volunteers. They will recite litanies about the papers they must grade, articles they must write, the books they must read, the harried life they must lead. Such tales tell

everything but the truth; for all its problems, there are people in academe who count themselves fortunate—and, yes, lucky—to wear the academic gown” (Pinsker, 1986). I count myself among that number, as most of you do.

4. *Fourth, I would ask for greater humility in our own work and greater appreciation for the work of others.*

Humility about the relative importance of our individual contributions is more rare than we might hope. Maybe we all need to be reminded of that more frequently. Someone once observed that you become greater by having humility toward the great things. We see around us many great things—the wonder of a physical plant that meets our needs, the contributions and discoveries of our colleagues, the privilege of working in an environment where we are surrounded by great minds, the challenge of being called teacher by students whose own capacity and accomplishment is far beyond where ours may have been at that point in our lives.

I hope we appreciate the blessing of the marvelous physical environment in which we work. New additions to our campus will further enhance and facilitate our work world. These include the addition of the new Joseph Smith Building, the fine arts museum that is currently under construction, the opportunity to begin soon a new science building and, following that, a new addition to both the Lee and Law School libraries. We will soon complete a new language house and additional married student housing.

Like Henry Rosovsky in his descriptions of Harvard, as I come onto this campus in the quiet of early mornings, it is indeed an oasis, it pleases the eye and the mind in all seasons, it is a refreshing start to any working day (Rosovsky, 1986). What a special opportunity it is to work at a university. Here, perhaps more than anywhere else, we can continue to invest daily in ourselves. We are paid to read the things we love to read, to create, to share

what we learn with bright and eager young students. We can constantly satisfy our intellectual curiosity and we can take continuing joy in the wonder of discovery. Going to work does not have to be a chore; it can be a joy and an opportunity. I truly feel that we should more willingly view these things with a sense of humility rather than treat them as an entitlement.

When we get caught up in fighting the daily fires, life does tend to become a bit grim, and we do go home tired without feeling much joy in our service. On the other hand, planning, dreaming, and trying to establish institutional vision is exciting and rewarding and results in great satisfaction, as does taking joy in the accomplishments of our fellows. If we can be motivated by the hopes and dreams that led to the establishment of this place, if we can concentrate on what can be rather than just on what is, then we will have much more satisfaction in what we are doing and much more to look forward to. And our own contributions can be placed in the more meaningful context of the contributions of all those who have come before us and who labor with us now.

5. *Fifth, I would have us all develop greater vision in accomplishing the tasks that universities are all about and, particularly, that this one is all about.*

We are at a very interesting time in the history of higher education in America. As Robert Rosenzweig, president of the American Association of Colleges, has recently noted, universities have now lost their immunity from public criticism and, in the eyes of many, there is no longer a presumption in favor of their virtue (*Administrator*, 1991). Or, as Tamar March (1991) has stated, “The public is cross. It has lost confidence in higher education.” For much of higher education, the mixed metaphor I heard recently seems to apply: The future is an uncharted sea full of potholes.

Several recent conferences have addressed the general perception among the larger pub-

lic that universities have lost their integrity. Questionable overhead charges contributed to the recent resignation of the president of Stanford University. Stanford, like several other highly successful research universities, has returned millions to the government in excessive overhead charges. The Ivy League schools and several of their sister institutions have had to confront serious antitrust charges. The June 3, 1991, issue of *Time* talked about this under the headline "Cracking the Ivy Cartel." Problems of plagiarism and doctored research data appear in the newspaper almost daily. The result is that universities are now ranked no higher in the public mind than many other institutions when it comes to perceptions of integrity.

What all of this means is that we have fallen from a high perch in terms of public perceptions. Stephen Trachtenberg (1991) notes that the ancient Greeks had a formula for what has happened: "After hubris, nemesis." Or, in more Newtonian terms, "What goes up must come down." Many are taking delight in the fall. The result is that Congress and state legislatures get more points with the public for cutting funding for educational programs than by providing additional funding.

Many universities are now facing extremely harsh economic realities. Because of this, some institutions are having to wonder what is more essential to their mission and what is less essential. Almost half of the nation's colleges and universities suffered midyear cuts in their 1990-91 operating budgets, and many institutions are now facing a long period of fiscal retrenchment (*Bulletin*, 1991). To deal with these cuts, half of the affected public colleges reduced the number of courses or sections of courses offered or increased class size. Half raised tuition and student fees. Two-thirds said they held off on expenditures for buildings and equipment. The proportion of administrators who judged the financial well-being of their institutions to be excellent or very good has

declined to about one-third of all institutions. We are very fortunate in that we remain relatively unaffected by these and other problems that are tearing at the very heart of many institutions.

As you are aware, many of the criticisms directed against universities are based on the claim that they have lost their focus on undergraduate teaching. More and more states, including our own, are jumping on the bandwagon of requiring audits of faculty assignments under the assumption that if faculty are not in the classroom, they must not be working. We all have a challenge in educating our publics on this matter. Many of you are being asked this semester to respond to a survey we have developed on faculty time usage. We will use the data from that survey to help us with this educational process. We hope you will respond willingly and honestly to our request to participate in this important task.

Increased national attention to the quality of the undergraduate experience is welcome and healthy. Increased attention at BYU to the quality of the undergraduate experience is equally welcome and healthy. We have important challenges in this regard, including a need for substantially more effort in improving the quality of the freshman year. As Provost Hafen noted this morning, you will see us focus much more on this during the coming months.

The reaffirmation of our commitment here, however, shouldn't detract from our other important missions. We need not apologize for the contributions that come from faculty research. Certainly many of the benefits of these efforts flow into the undergraduate classroom where faculty members who are active in their own scholarly agendas transmit to their students a sense of the process of discovery that could occur in no other way. In many of our disciplines, research is the primary mode of teaching at the college level and, as Frieda Stahl has recently noted, "Research is as necessary for student development in the sciences

as performance is in the arts" (Stahl, 1991). The same assessment applies, I believe, to the social sciences.

Stahl further notes that:

The professor's disciplinary practice is indispensable to college teaching. Again, in the arts this precept is obvious: A music professor must be and must function as a musician, helping students develop as musicians by involving them in performance, composition, and conducting. To do so, the professor must also create and perform, and thereby continue to grow as a musician in order to grow correspondingly as a teacher. In the sciences, the research project is the means for involved, integrative learning by students, and by the professor, who is enabled to grow as a scientist in order to grow as a teacher.

Students learn more than the ideas and techniques. They watch the professor think, make mistakes, determine what's been decided or tried is improper, and work out of such errors to arrive at new, verifiable information. Thus, the student members of the team learn the essential reasoning of their discipline, the checks and balances as well as the nuts and bolts, in ways that can never be transmitted didactically.

Some of those who are most critical of the research mission of universities exhibit an embarrassing lack of understanding of the role that university research has played in important developments in this country in science, medicine, and numerous other fields. I believe that t commitment to undergraduate education is shared by many of the institutions that stand at the forefront in these areas. There is nothing wrong with all of us feeling some pressure to do even better than we are doing in this part of our mission. But we should not obscure the leadership our major universities often provide and the contribution they make to undergraduate, as well as graduate, education (Traina, 1991).

I believe these universities have returned an impressive yield on the investment that this

country makes in their laboratories and classrooms. I am pleased that BYU's contribution to this work has increased. Funding for undergraduate education *and* funding for research and graduate education is not merely an expenditure, it is an investment and, I believe, an investment that bears dividends that are substantially greater than would be true in many of the alternative places where these monies could be spent.

In terms of this particular part of the mission of this institution, my own views are straightforward. I do believe that the issue of the relative balance between teaching and research has probably been talked about enough, but because it continues to come up in a variety of different settings, let me reiterate my position.

I believe that ours is a dual obligation both to transmit to our students the best of what is known and to contribute to the creation of that which is new and better. This is not a dichotomy; we are talking simply about the parts of a unified whole. Neither is this an either/or proposition; it is both. I know that I am sometimes rather slow, but I must admit that I struggle with why such a conclusion should be either revolutionary or controversial. All of our faculty should be teacher/scholars. We can comfortably note that some will do more of one thing than of another, or even that some will be better at one than the other, but this does not remove the basic expectation that for most of us it is not a question of dual loyalties or a question of holding citizenship in two different camps. Teaching and scholarship are simply what universities, including this one, are all about. We expect it of one another; it is what our reward systems are based on; it, simply, is what we do. Those working most closely with the faculty, especially department chairs and deans, can work on the proper balance in each individual case.

This means that becoming a great undergraduate institution does not mean abandoning the important research we are doing or

failing to offer graduate degrees in areas where we are appropriately prepared. Our uniqueness as an institution can come from our ability to offer a truly exceptional undergraduate experience, one that is truly exceptional because our faculty are engaged in quality scholarly pursuits and, frequently, graduate instruction, that can supplement and enhance the things that are occurring in the undergraduate classroom.

6. *Finally, and very briefly, I would wish for us a total commitment to providing equal opportunities for all of those who have a BYU experience without regard to race, generation, gender, or other characteristics.*

I fully endorse what Provost Hafen said on this issue this morning and add the following brief comment: Far too much attention is being given nationally to the concept of political correctness, particularly since, contrary to what you would conclude from the level of media attention, relatively few colleges and universities have actually experienced any real controversy over the political and cultural content of the courses, speeches, or faculty lectures (*Bulletin*, 1991). But whatever is going on in the larger world of universities and colleges, we must reaffirm on this campus our basic respect for whatever differences may exist among us. We must acknowledge openly and publicly our commitment to provide opportunities and to reward performance independent of an individual's gender, race, or any other factor or characteristic that is irrelevant to participating in the life of the university. Randall Kennedy, a law professor at Harvard, referred to this in a recent article as a scholar's "skeptical attitude towards all labels and categories that obscure appreciation of the unique feature of specific persons and their work" (Kennedy, 1990).

Now if we are serious about what I have just described, we have difficult challenges ahead of us. In addition to reviewing our individual behavior, we must review our programs. I don't think we can justify programs designed

primarily for young women if those programs are developed with the expectation that we needn't worry about giving all that much substance because we expect them to marry without graduating or, if they do graduate, we don't expect that they will intend to pursue either graduate studies or professional excellence. As one of our recent graduates indicated, without debating the morality of women choosing such an educational path, it is wrong for a university of this caliber to offer dead-end courses of study. All programs offered must openly and honestly demonstrate what type of professional and post-graduate opportunities the students will be prepared for upon graduation.

The standard we must demand is that all we do, in the classroom and out, must reflect our respect and appreciation for our differences. There must be no room on this campus for anything that is demeaning in any way to any member of our university community.

I will conclude now on what will be much more of a personal note. Some of the things I have talked about today may have sounded a little critical or harsh. Administrative roles often demand difficult decisions, and the most difficult of these are the ones that affect the personal lives of the faculty. Occasionally, members of the university family are hurt and disappointed by particular administrative actions. It is these that I anguish over most. Sometimes it would be a great deal easier just to approve each name advanced for faculty hiring, or to avoid creating discomfort by asking for a higher level of performance, or to continue programs just because we have had them in the past.

But we will continue to press for further progress in our efforts to build a better university. As we do that, I acknowledge that whatever else may come from my own time in this assignment, the things I will carry with me, the things I will treasure most, will be the more personal things. I include, specifically,

the dedicated and selfless service of my colleagues in the academic vice president's office. I express my deep sense of appreciation to each of them. I include the ever-increasing sense of gratitude I feel for the service that each of you give as members of the faculty. I include, as well, the great admiration I feel when I watch the president of this university carry out his assignments with vigor, enthusiasm, commitment, grace, and good humor while coping with physical challenges that would cause a lesser man to throw in the towel. One of my sweetest memories will be of the opportunity to stand with other members of the President's Council and two members of the Twelve to participate in a priesthood blessing the day President Lee learned of the new medical challenges that he described to you in this auditorium a little over a year ago.

There are countless other experiences like these that have brought meaning and purpose to the most difficult of days. For example, I will always appreciate the response of Martin Hickman, who served this university so effectively for 17 years as dean, when President Lee and I invited him to be last year's commencement speaker. With tears in his eyes, Martin told us how he had prayed for some affirmation that his years of service in difficult administrative assignments had been accepted by the Lord. He saw this invitation as the affirmation he sought.

A few weeks ago, I attended funeral services for Merlin Myers. Merlin was one of the finest scholars this university has had. Though I knew him for many years, it was only in his role as university teacher and scholar. At his funeral, one of his daughters described a much more personal Merlin Myers. She talked of the many evenings when she walked with her father in the foothills of Pleasant Grove, where he taught her simple things like how to identify the footprints of a deer or the names of plants and flowers. Probably that was the Merlin Myers who mattered most.

On a beautiful fall Saturday a couple of years ago, in fact on a day much like today, I drove to my hometown to spend a few hours with my father, who was in poor health. I pushed his wheelchair out onto the back lawn and then sat on the grass beside him. Together we watched the farmers, with whom he had worked all his life, as they brought loads of baled hay to their yards to stack for winter. His condition was such that he could not talk much, but silently we shared special feelings and memories. Only a few days later, my phone rang and a good neighbor told me that my father had just died. How grateful I was for those few hours we had spent together.

I contrast that with a different set of feelings I experienced two weeks ago. I arrived home from a research conference at about two a.m. on the morning of commencement to find in the newspaper an obituary for a member of our university family. A couple of weeks earlier, this man's wife had called me to report that her husband's health wasn't good. At the end of our conversation, she said, "He thinks so much of you. I hope you can find a moment to visit him one of these days." I had thought of that call almost every day, but I had not taken the time to make the visit. For as long as I live, I will regret allowing other things to cause me to feel too busy to do what mattered most.

In one of the most poignant of all sections of scripture, we read of a dialogue between Enoch, that man of great personal righteousness, and God. At one point, as God looks upon the works of his children, we read:

"And it came to pass that the God of heaven looked upon the residue of the people, and he wept."

Enoch, puzzled, asks: "How is it that thou canst weep, seeing thou art holy, and from all eternity to all eternity? . . . How is it thou canst weep?"

The Lord then responds to Enoch: "Behold these thy brethren; they are the workmanship of mine own hands, and I gave unto them their

knowledge, in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency.”

The Lord then shows Enoch a sampling of the weaknesses and failings of Man. The account continues:

“And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Enoch, and told Enoch all the doings of the children of men; wherefore Enoch knew, and looked upon . . . their misery, *and wept* and stretched forth his arms, and his heart swelled wide as eternity; and his bowels yearned; and all eternity shook” (Moses 7:28–32, 41; emphasis added). As Enoch came to see as the Lord saw, he did as the Lord did; he wept.

Let’s you and I work hard the build the kind of university we must build. Let’s demand of one another even greater levels of performance. Let’s not rest just because we have reached the foothills, and it is evident that the climb to the higher peaks will require even more effort than we have yet given. But let’s not lose sight of those things that matter most. Whatever the joys, sorrows, and challenges that lie before us, whatever the twists and turns that might be in the path ahead, let’s never forget to do those things that will really count. For this I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Bibliography

Administrator: The Management Newsletter for Higher Education, June 24, 1991, p. 1.

Benét, Stephen V., *Twenty-Five Short Stories by Stephen Vincent Benét*, pp. 181–82, Sun Dial Press, Garden City, NY, 1943.

Boyer, Ernest L., “Higher Education: A Larger Vision,” Earl V. Pullias Lecture in Higher Education, University of Southern California, 1990.

Bulletin, American Council on Education, August 5, 1991.

Flawn, Peter T., *A Primer for University Presidents—Managing the Modern University*, University of Texas Press, Austin, TX, 1990.

Kennedy, Randall, quoted in Gerhard Casper, “A Golden Age of Education,” *The University of Chicago Record*, November 1990.

March, Tamar, “Shaping Academic Culture,” *Liberal Education*, March/April 1991, p. 7.

Miller, Donn, *Occidental Magazine*, Summer 1991, p. 3.

Paglia, Camille, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 8, 1991, p. B1.

Pinsker, Sanford, “Excuse Me, But I Actually Like Being a College Professor,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 19, 1986, p. 128.

Rosovsky, Henry, “The Virtues of Academic Life,” *William and Mary*, Winter 1986, p. 5.

Stahl, Frieda A., “Research and Teaching—Partnership, Not Paradox,” *College Teaching*, vol. 39, no. 3, Summer 1991, pp. 97–99.

Trachtenberg, Stephen Joel, “Antithetical Visions of Higher Education: Crisis, Chaos, or Change?” *Educational Record*, Summer 1991, p. 8.

Taina, Richard P., Testimony Presented Before the Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies, U.S. House of Representatives, May 2, 1991.

Warch, Richard, “Communities of Mind and Spirit,” *Liberal Education*, vol. 76, no. 5, November/December 1990, p. 12.

Wright, Barbara, “A Thousand Points of Flight,” *Change*, March–April 1991, pp. 8, 10.