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ABSTRACT

This paper spells out the specific steps that have been taken and will be taken by the Rutgers University President in addressing the school's undergraduate educational needs for the 1990s. Areas examined include the following: (1) the restoration of balance between teaching and research, including valuing and rewarding teaching; (2) the enhancement and evaluation of teaching, including the development of teaching excellence centers; and (3) the enhancement of learning conditions such as controlling class sizes and scheduling, providing student assistance outside of class, and better resource usage. The paper also points to the need for further examination of the curriculum in the remedial courses and explains the appointment of a university-wide committee to consider three areas of undergraduate education: the basic skills; the general education requirements; and the major. Also discussed is the need to develop a more caring university that concerns itself not only with the intellectual development of students but also with their social development outside the classroom. Finally, the paper explains the responsibilities of a new administrative post, Vice President for Undergraduate Education, whose focus will be to spearhead the changes and initiatives outlined in the paper. The appendix provides summaries of recommendations made in major reports concerning undergraduate education at Rutgers during the prior 5 years. (GLR)

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An Agenda for the Nineties*

Francis L. Lawrence

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Undergraduate Education at Rutgers:

An Agenda for the Nineties

Francis L. Lawrence

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Undergraduate Education at Rutgers: An Agenda for the Nineties

I have now been President of Rutgers University for one year. It has been a challenging, exciting, and fulfilling year, one characterized by devastating budget problems, but at the same time a year filled with example after example of dedication, enthusiasm, and good will.

As I look back on this year and reflect on the many reports, discussions, and meetings, I am reminded again of the overwhelming dedication to undergraduate education. It is hard to imagine an institution anywhere in the country where undergraduate education matters so much to so many. Even during a decade in which Rutgers achieved international distinction for its scholarship and research, undergraduate education, to the university's great benefit, has continued to hold center stage.

When I arrived at Rutgers last fall, three Provostial Blue Ribbon Committees were just then wrapping up reports in which numerous shortcomings of undergraduate education at Rutgers were highlighted. These reports were issued shortly after other Rutgers committees and task forces had already offered recommendations about one or another aspect of undergraduate education. Committees of the University Academic Forum, the University Senate, and others had something to say about teaching evaluation and improvement, about admissions, about evaluating programs and student learning, about the curriculum, and more. (Brief abstracts of the major Rutgers University reports are included in the Appendix of this paper.) All of this was occurring in the midst of a national preoccupation with undergraduate education, especially in

research universities. Reports were pouring out of other research universities. Virtually every Washington-based higher education association issued recommendations about what had gone wrong and what should be done to fix it. Together with the series of reports from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the writings of numerous individual higher education pundits and scholars, the result is a "literature" about undergraduate education that is critical and, it seems, unending.

What I find particularly interesting about all of this literature is its remarkable consistency. With only modest variation, the reports generally say that research is the tail that has come to wag the institutional dog, that faculty members' responsibilities have shifted away from undergraduate instruction to graduate instruction or no instruction at all, that teaching is no longer valued or rewarded, that number of publications is really all that matters when considering a faculty member's promotion, and that undergraduate class sizes have escalated.

I have read both the national reports and the Rutgers reports. I have discussed their observations and recommendations with students, with faculty members, and with other administrators. And it seems to me that, while there is hyperbole in some of the claims, there is also truth. What we need now is a series of steps drawing on the hard work of all the various Rutgers committees that I have mentioned so that we can begin to address the problems and put solutions into practice. What is needed now is a clear statement of priorities and an agenda for undergraduate education at Rutgers. Here is what these analyses tell me we need:

- (1) We need to value and develop not only research excellence but high standards for teaching and service. While we continue to provide support and professional development for our faculty as scholars, we must also give them the means to become better teachers and public servants.
- (2) We need a better system of evaluating teaching, as well as a solid program of teaching enhancement and improvement.
- (3) We need better conditions for learning, by which I mean both a better instructional infrastructure including an adequate instructional workforce, classrooms, laboratories, study space, libraries, computers, and other instructional resources and materials, as well as wiser instructional arrangements, such as smaller classes, shorter class periods, accessible faculty members, and adequate academic help for students outside of class.
- (4) We need to publicly recognize teaching excellence through formal awards, recognition ceremonies, and enhanced resources.
- (5) We need to reexamine not only how we teach, but also what we teach. A reappraisal of the undergraduate curriculum is called for, especially in view of the declining talent pool in science and math, inadequate writing skills, and a curriculum that is regarded by many as reflecting a narrow cultural perspective.
- (6) And finally, we need a more caring, more humane environment for our students and for our faculty. We need an academic community that is open, just, and engaging.

These, then, are my priorities for undergraduate education at Rutgers in the decade of the 90's. In the pages that follow, I shall spell out in some detail the specific steps that I have taken or that I will take in the very near future to address these priorities.

Restoring the Balance Between Teaching and Research

Around the country in higher education, there is a growing conviction that research has become more important than teaching and public service and that the increased emphasis on research has resulted in the devaluing of teaching. While this perceived imbalance is generally associated with research universities, it is also asserted of institutions that have traditionally regarded instruction as their primary objective.

Beliefs about this imbalance between teaching and research are widespread at Rutgers. A study issued by the AAUP this past spring reports on a faculty survey that found a great deal of concern,¹ and faculty committee after faculty committee has commented on this perception. The Provost's Committee on Undergraduate Education in New Brunswick suggested that "the ways we reward faculty at Rutgers have had the unintentional effect of devaluing teaching",² and "...it is only the administration's treatment of promotion and tenure decisions and the weight which is given to instruction

¹ Michael E. Gordon and William W. Ward, Survey of Faculty Attitudes at Rutgers University, Rutgers Council of AAUP Chapters, March, 1991.

² Report of the New Brunswick Provost's Committee on Undergraduate Education in the Context of a Research University, (Barry Qualls, Chair), July, 1990, p.8.

during this process that will determine whether the faculty take teaching as seriously as they take research".³ Similarly, an opinion survey on the Newark campus indicates that faculty members have serious reservations about the university's commitment to undergraduate education. The Newark Provost's Committee on Undergraduate Education noted that "what troubles the Newark faculty most is that the university has almost totally failed to communicate that it values teaching."⁴

When I spoke to the University Senate in my first State of the University address, I said that:

...while research and teaching can and should be complementary, undergraduate education, like excellence in research, requires commitment and support. It depends upon demanding that teaching as well as research be emphasized in promotion and tenure criteria. This does not mean, as some misinterpret it, that a research university ought to tenure some good researchers who are very poor teachers and some good teachers who are very weak scholars. On the contrary, both research and teaching are essential. Excellence in one cannot substitute for deficiencies in the other. In order to accomplish this balance, we need to make expectations clear and to inspire the best performance possible in both areas.⁵

During my first year at Rutgers I have been gratified by the unmistakable evidence of the strong commitment to teaching throughout the university. I recognize,

³ Ibid., p.11.

⁴ Report of the Newark Provost's Committee on the Relationship of Graduate Education and Research and Undergraduate Education, (Dorothy DeMaio, Chair), July, 1990, p.11.

⁵ Francis L. Lawrence, Remarks at the University Senate, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, October, 1990.

however, that while this widespread faculty commitment to teaching is essential and laudable, it is not sufficient. We cannot rely on dedication and good will alone. In order for the quality of teaching to be sustained at Rutgers, it will be necessary to do a number of things.

Valuing and Rewarding Teaching

First, and perhaps most important, we must make our intention to value and reward teaching unmistakable. In a recent survey of faculty opinion at Rutgers, less than two percent of those surveyed agreed with the statement "faculty are rewarded for being good teachers."⁶ We must change the perception and the reality. We must be clear to all concerned that all three traditional missions of the university, teaching, research, and service, will be conscientiously appraised and given significant reward. We must indicate through our words and our actions that good teaching will be valued at Rutgers, and indifferent teaching will not be tolerated. I will expect the provosts, deans, and department chairs to transmit very clear signals to members of the faculty at all levels about their responsibilities in undergraduate and graduate education as well as research. Some other committee reports lament the frequent absence of many of our faculty members from the campus and thus, their inaccessibility to students.⁷ Another report

⁶ Gordon and Ward, op.cit.

⁷ Report of the University Academic Forum Committee on the Character and Composition of the Future Undergraduate Student Body, (Richard L. McCormick, Chair), September, 1990.

bemoans the increasing percentage of lower level courses that are taught by part-time lecturers.⁸ These circumstances are not peculiar to Rutgers. Indeed, a review of similar reports at other major research universities indicates that the difficulties are typical on other campuses. Nor are the problems new. Almost forty years ago, Clark Kerr, former President of the University of California, wrote:

The reasons for the general deterioration of undergraduate teaching are several. Teaching loads and student contact hours have been reduced. Faculty are more frequently on leave or temporarily away from the campus; some are never more than temporarily on campus. More of the instruction falls on faculty who are not members of the regular faculty.⁹

But the fact that these problems are not new and that they exist at other research institutions does not mean that we should be less concerned about them. All members of our faculty must recognize that our commitment to research and our expectation that our faculty members be productive researchers and scholars must not come at the cost of our mission of education. Virtually all members of our faculty should teach, and few if any appointments should be made to the faculty ranks that do not include a substantial responsibility for teaching. In those units of the university that include

⁸ Report of the New Brunswick Provost's Committee on Undergraduate Education, op. cit.

⁹ Clark Kerr, The Uses of the University. New York: Harper & Row, 1963, P.65.

undergraduate degree programs, it is my belief that all faculty members should teach undergraduates and that the best known faculty members should be encouraged to teach introductory courses from time to time. It is also my opinion that no faculty appointment should be authorized without a clear understanding of how the appointment will affect the department's resources for instruction at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Steps to address the perceived imbalance between research and teaching at Rutgers are already underway. The Faculty of Arts and Sciences in New Brunswick recently received a three-year grant from the Foundation for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to make the issue of balancing research and teaching the exclusive subject of a program of orientation of new faculty members and to establish a department-based mechanism for reassessing the balance.¹⁰ I am enthusiastic about this project, and hope that eventually it or something like it will spread throughout the entire university community: to alert administrators to the need for reexamining their attitudes and procedures and providing necessary resources for instruction; to move faculty members to a reassessment that results in changes in their faculty evaluations at all levels, from recruitment through promotion to merit awards; and to make research more directly beneficial to students by finding more ways of involving them in research.

¹⁰ Louise K. Barnett, Research and Teaching: Reassessing the Balance, Proposal submitted to the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, February, 1991.

Enhancing and Evaluating Teaching

By and large, American colleges and universities have not done a very good job of preparing faculty members for their roles as teachers, particularly teachers of undergraduates. A recent report of the Association of American Colleges describes the situation as follows:

The emphasis of the graduate school years is almost exclusively on the development of substantive knowledge and research skills. Any introduction to teaching comes only incidentally through service as a teaching assistant, with only occasional supervision by experienced senior faculty. During the long years of work toward the doctoral degree, the candidate is rarely, if ever, introduced to any of the ingredients that make up the art, the science, and the special responsibilities of teaching.¹¹

Nevertheless many of our faculty members care strongly about teaching and work hard at teaching well. This dedication to teaching is documented in both student and faculty surveys and is evident in conversations with people throughout the university. We need to capitalize on this dedication. One way, as I have said, is to reward teaching more. A second way is to provide professional services to faculty members for the evaluation and enhancement of teaching, and thus turn teaching interest and commitment into teaching excellence.

¹¹ Association of American Colleges, Integrity in the College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges, 1985, p.29.

Teaching Excellence Centers

Last spring, after two years of deliberation, the Academic Forum Committee on the Improvement and Evaluation of Teaching recommended the establishment of a Teaching Excellence Center on each of our three campuses.¹² I agree heartily with the Committee's recommendation that such centers are needed at Rutgers and I am taking steps to launch these badly-needed service centers. The Teaching Excellence Centers will provide assistance to the deans, department chairs, and, most importantly, to individual faculty members. They will provide expertise and resources to assist in achieving teaching improvement as well as evaluation assistance designed to yield reliable, valid, and fair assessments of teaching performance as part of the promotion review process. They will offer a variety of services and consultations to faculty members who want to make large lectures interesting, to engage students actively in their learning, to give tests and assign grades fairly, to plan courses, and to determine whether or not their courses are succeeding. I hope that by the end of this semester staff appointments will have been made and that by the second semester their work will be well along. We will then have in place a system that places a high value on teaching along with the means for its systematic evaluation and enhancement.

¹² University Academic Forum Committee on the Improvement and Evaluation of Teaching, (Peter Klein, Chair), A Proposal for Teaching Excellence Centers on Each Campus of Rutgers, the State University, May, 1991.

Better Conditions for Learning

Even with a more explicit acknowledgement of the value of teaching and a solid program of teaching enhancement and evaluation, the quality of undergraduate instruction at Rutgers will miss the mark if we do not give very close attention to several other important conditions of learning. These include our facilities and resources for teaching and learning, the size of our classes, the tutorial and other academic assistance that we make available to students outside of class, how we schedule classes, what use we make of graduate teaching assistants and part-time lecturers, and the quality of our advising.

Facilities and Resources in Support of Teaching

Students and faculty members on all three campuses underscore the obvious fact that the university's instructional facilities, supplies, and other resources are inadequate. My own impression, quite frankly, is that Rutgers simply has not kept up with other major public universities with regard to the adequacy of our classrooms, libraries, study space for students, teaching laboratories, computers and other equipment. We must do better, and I am convinced that we can. Unfortunately, we are in our third consecutive year of having to get by with less. Our operating budget leaves no room for flexibility and, like many other institutions, I am afraid that Rutgers has tended too often to defer maintenance.

One possible solution to this problem is the development of a fund dedicated to the regular support of instructional facilities and equipment. Obviously, by establishing such a fund we are making a priority decision, since the distribution of a given budget necessarily implies reductions elsewhere. Nevertheless, the establishment of this fund represents a clear statement of our desire to increase and improve the equipment and facilities devoted to instruction. I have asked the provosts to work with Vice Presidents Whiteside and Winterbauer to develop a plan for such a fund. It is my intention to have these resources available for acquisitions of instructional equipment and facilities during the next academic year.

Class Sizes

Among the criticisms of undergraduate education at big, public, research universities, surely none is voiced more frequently than the allegation that classes are too large and too impersonal. At Rutgers, to this familiar criticism is added the allegation that class sizes have gotten much larger in just the past 10 years. Various reports indicate that this perception is held by students and faculty members.

To the extent that these perceptions about class size also reflect reality, it is clearly a matter that requires our prompt attention. Class size is one factor that influences the overall tone of the undergraduate environment for learning. Quality of teaching, adequacy of academic support for students outside of class, and quality and extent of instructional facilities and equipment are others. We must do our best to see that all of these dimensions are as good as we can possibly make them for our students.

At the same time, we must also keep in mind our obligation, as New Jersey's state university, to fulfill our research and service missions. No one has yet been able to show me the magic by which it is possible for faculty members to be actively advancing knowledge in their fields while at the same time teaching the same number of courses as faculty members at institutions where research and scholarly accomplishment are not expected. The point here is simply that, in interpreting class size data and teaching load data, it is vitally important to use the proper comparison figures or norms; comparing class size figures or teaching load information at Rutgers with similar figures and facts at, say, Williams, Amherst, or Middlebury, is simply not being realistic.

Now then, having offered that brief defense, let me return to the matter of class size. It is often discussed as if there were a universal given, an immutable law of teaching, that smaller is better. Frankly, I do not think it is that simple. Nevertheless, it is obvious to me that large classes by their very nature are not settings in which it is feasible for most faculty members to engage students actively in their learning. Large lectures generally require more passive student roles. Inviting students to set forth their own ideas, based on relevant course readings and facts, is generally not possible; challenging student views or the interpretations they have made about certain research findings or perspectives is clearly more difficult; conducting classes in ways that draw students into the class as active thinkers and participants is surely problematic. And, obviously, requiring students in large classes to express their interpretations and understandings through writing assignments places unrealistic demands on even the most conscientious teachers. All of these very positive and desirable characteristics of an undergraduate education require reasonable class sizes. Unless one wishes to argue that

the dissemination of information is the primary purpose of college teaching -- and I hope that there are few here who would take that position -- we need to find ways of drawing undergraduate students into the habits of questioning, debating, challenging, and shaping coherent and persuasive arguments and interpretations.

To draw students into a more active form of learning and to help create a learning environment that is more personal, the Committee on the Character and Composition of the Future Student Body recommended that "all enrolling freshmen should be guaranteed at least one course during both the fall and spring semesters of their freshman year (in addition to English Composition) in which the enrollment is 25 or fewer students."¹³ The New Brunswick Provost's Committee on Undergraduate Education noted that "currently, many students experience their only real interaction with an instructor in the required composition course and in science recitations," and went on to recommend that "all courses...should be arranged in such a way that there is genuine opportunity for interaction between students and teachers, and to insure that writing, laboratory work, and other necessary study gets done."¹⁴

I am pleased to learn that the Educational Policy Committee of the University Senate will be reviewing these recommendations this fall, with an eye toward introducing a resolution later this year.

¹³ Report of The Committee on the Character and Composition of the Future Student Body, op. cit., p. 24.

¹⁴ Report of the New Brunswick Provost's Committee on Undergraduate Education, op. cit., p. 20.

Assistance for Students Outside of Class: Learning Resource Centers

As a great public research university, we cannot provide students with the kind of individual attention that students get at small private institutions that do not include research in their mission. We can, however, make sure that every student has access to the kind of assistance that he or she needs in order to succeed academically at Rutgers. Rutgers already provides students with a mind-boggling assortment of out-of-class academic support services, including language laboratories, department-based tutoring, writing centers, efforts in our various Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) offices, the Math-Science Learning Center in New Brunswick, the Learning Center in Newark, and the Academic Foundations program in Camden. These are strong programs and should be continued. But our students need more. After studying our array of academic support services for students, a consultant recently concluded that Rutgers

...provides a host of services and programs for some of its students on all of its campuses. Faculty and staff demonstrate a unique commitment to their students and the teaching/learning process. However, real gaps exist between services for different populations, between campuses, and between program offerings. A clear demonstration of effectiveness and efficiency of program, staffing, and funding is not obvious. Comprehensive learning centers, which will offer similar services for all freshman and sophomore students, should be developed and initiated at each campus over a period of five years.

Accordingly, I have already taken steps to launch Learning Resource Centers for students on each campus. These Learning Resource Centers will coordinate the existing out-of-class support programs, develop new ones, offer tutoring to students in any discipline, supplement instruction, and improve the communication and professional development of the staff members playing these important roles.

Class Schedule

In its report issued last fall, the University Academic Forum Committee on the Character and Composition of the Future Undergraduate Student Body recommended that "...careful and serious consideration be given to use of three 50-minute meetings per week as the normal schedule for 3-credit courses, rather than the currently-used two 80-minute meetings."¹⁵ This recommendation was subsequently endorsed by the New Brunswick Committee on Undergraduate Education in the Context of a Research University. Both committees argued that use of three 50-minute class periods would not only have direct benefits on teaching and learning, but would also have the added indirect effect of returning the academic week to five days and thereby restore "...the intellectual and collegiate atmosphere of the entire academic community."¹⁶ The Senate Educational Policy Committee will also be studying this matter carefully this fall. I look forward to receiving the Senate's advice on this question.

Teaching Assistants and Part-time Lecturers

At Rutgers, as at virtually all other major research universities, graduate teaching assistants and part-time lecturers comprise a small but important element in the teaching of undergraduates. Using graduate students as teaching assistants provides a valuable learning experience for the graduate students, many of whom will eventually become full-time college faculty members at other institutions, and at the same time

¹⁵ Report of the University Academic Forum Committee on the Character and Composition of the Future Undergraduate Student Body, op. cit., p. 25.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 26.

enables the university to offer both more courses and smaller sections of courses than would be possible if we were to rely exclusively on full-time members of the faculty. However, during the past decade we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of graduate students who come to us from other countries and who sometimes do not speak English well. Like other research universities, Rutgers was not originally sufficiently attentive to the effects this practice had on the quality of undergraduate instruction. Fortunately, major steps in the right direction have been taken in the past few years at Rutgers to address this situation. The establishment of a teaching assistant training program on each campus is just one example. In addition, the recent restructuring of the Program of American Language Studies (PALS) in New Brunswick is a welcome and important development. Nevertheless, some problems with our reliance upon TAs remain. In addition, our efforts to screen, train, and evaluate part-time lecturers need bolstering. No teacher should be allowed in front of a class at Rutgers until we are completely satisfied that he or she is fully qualified. It has now been six years since we have carried out a comprehensive analysis of our use of teaching assistants. I have therefore asked each Provost to inquire into the situation and report back to me by the end of the fall semester.

Advising

Surveys of Rutgers undergraduates indicate that, in spite of overwhelming satisfaction with the Rutgers experience, more than one-third report dissatisfaction with their advising.¹⁷ The fact that national surveys show that advising gets similarly low marks at other universities is little consolation. Unless one regards securing a departmental secretary's signature on a registration card to be "advising," it is clear that at Rutgers and other large universities faculty members usually play only a minor role in the academic decisions of undergraduate students. Students rarely seek out faculty members for advice, and generally feel that their best advising comes from other students.

In addressing this problem, a special committee on undergraduate advising in New Brunswick recommended in 1988 that: (1) the university should publish a handbook for advisers that brings together all important information about academic requirements; (2) the university should develop a comprehensive advising database that contains information on the academic status and progress of individual students; (3) all faculty members should be available to students for advice on a regular basis, especially in relation to courses they teach; and (4) the various colleges, schools and departments should designate academic advisors who would receive training and whose advising work would be recognized as a specialized form of teaching.¹⁸ This fall, the Educational Policy Committee of the University Senate passed and the Senate approved a resolution

¹⁷ Office of Institutional Research, Report of a Student Satisfaction Survey, Rutgers University, 1985.

¹⁸ Report of the New Brunswick Provost's Committee on Undergraduate Advising, (James Anderson, Chair), April, 1988.

recommending that disciplinary program chairs assign faculty members to assist college deans and program directors in general and special undergraduate advising mentoring and tutoring duties. Accordingly, I am asking each of the Provosts to reexamine the recommendations of the Committee on Undergraduate Advising and of the Senate Educational Policy Committee, and to apprise me of the extent to which steps have been taken on each campus to achieve the goals identified by those committees. I shall also ask for another assessment of student satisfaction with their advising in the near future as a means of determining how much progress we are making in this important area of student life.

The Need to Examine the Curriculum

During the past several years calls to reexamine curriculum have been numerous. Since I received my Ph.D. nearly 30 years ago I have witnessed -- and been part of -- so many discussions and debates about the curriculum that you might think that by now I would be weary of it. Many faculty members at Rutgers, I suspect, are weary -- and possibly wary, too -- of the prospect of lengthy debates with their colleagues about the content of the undergraduate curriculum. But it is clear to me that various circumstances in American society and higher education today make such a curricular reconsideration absolutely essential.

I have appointed a university-wide committee to consider the three areas of undergraduate education: the basic skills, the general education requirements, and the major. The committee will define areas of special problems and opportunities and will suggest goals and means that colleges and departments can use to attain these goals. The University Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum will propose high standards against which each college will be asked to measure the curriculum and achievements. Each college will be asked to strive to meet the university-wide goals in its own way.

Remedial Courses

As many of you know, Rutgers is required by the New Jersey Department of Higher Education to admit each fall some students who by normal standards are not eligible for admission to the university. These "special admits" comprise as much as 15% of our first year students in any given year. The purpose of this requirement -- to promote educational opportunity for the economically and educationally disadvantaged -- is a purpose that the university strongly supports and will continue to strive for. Unfortunately, however, as a result of this special admission requirement, a sizable fraction of our undergraduate instructional budget is spent on remedial or "E" courses. As many observers have pointed out, this in reality means that higher education has to a certain extent become longer education. An unfortunate aspect of this special admission process and remedial course phenomenon is that a percentage of these specially admitted students do not graduate from the university.

I have puzzled over this for some time. How can the university deliver on its commitment to the disadvantaged citizens of the state on the one hand, and maintain its valued and traditionally high academic standards on the other? How can the university fulfill its social obligation to the state it serves without being wedged into the position of offering secondary school courses? How can Rutgers continue to truly be "a people's university," a university that reaches out to "...a broader more inclusive spectrum, of our society?"¹⁹

¹⁹ Inaugural address, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, March 3, 1991.

After much thought, deliberation, and consultation with many knowledgeable sources throughout the university, I am prepared to offer a bold solution to this problem. By the year 2000 -- yes, I know, in less than ten years -- I propose as a goal the reduction if not elimination of non-credit courses from the university's curriculum and still welcome to our classrooms as many or more young men and women who are economically disadvantaged as we do in 1991.

I propose to do this by means of a four-point plan. First, as I have charged the University Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum, I want to develop a very clear articulation of the necessary pre-college academic courses and skills that incoming students must have to succeed at Rutgers. Obviously, such pre-college specification is most crucial in the mathematical and physical sciences, but it should also pertain to skills essential in the humanities and social sciences. Guidance counselors throughout the state should have no misunderstanding or ambiguities about the courses their students should take, and the teachers in the high school should have no lack of information about the content of those courses.

Second, in various ways I will be encouraging our faculty members to establish closer working relationships with faculty members in the secondary schools of the state. Many of the schools in New Jersey -- and especially those in the so-called "special needs" districts -- would benefit enormously from a better relationship with our faculty members and a better understanding of the discipline that is mutually shared. Rutgers already has a large number of fine programs in the schools, and a number of these

are in the very areas that I consider so important. But we can do more, and we will. To do so will be one way that Rutgers can help the schools; but obviously, efforts such as these will also mean that we are helping ourselves.

Third, I wish to have in place within the year programs that will link Rutgers students to students in our local high schools in mentoring relationships. These programs will offer young people in disadvantaged school districts preferred places in our summer programs as well as needed encouragement during the academic year. A New Brunswick faculty committee that I asked to produce suggestions to strengthen Rutgers' relationships with the schools has already recommended such a program to me and is seeking external support for it. I am instructing the provosts of our Newark and Camden campuses to seek similar proposals from their faculties.

And fourth, Rutgers must provide all our students with adequate academic support while they are here studying with us. We can do this in many ways, of course, and the Learning Resource Centers and other support services that I've already described are some of the ways.

A Caring Academic Community

Anyone who has read this far may have concluded that I have a naively narrow perception of the Rutgers experience for undergraduates. Judging from the attention I have given to teaching, the curriculum, and other conditions of learning, I may have given the impression that I believe that most of our students spend all of their time either in class or in our libraries and laboratories. I hope that a large fraction of our students' time is spent that way, but I have been in higher education long enough and in

enough different roles that I appreciate fully what Michael Moffatt reminded us of in his recent book, Coming of Age in New Jersey: a large part of the intellectual and social development of young adults in college occurs as a result of their experiences outside of the classroom.²⁰

Extracurricular experiences at an institution like Rutgers are richly varied. Rutgers, as we all know, is a large and complex place. It is also many different places. The formal academic experience at Rutgers is obviously not the same for students studying in Camden as it is for those studying in Newark or New Brunswick. It is different for a Douglass College student majoring in history than for a Livingston student majoring in computer science. It is not the same for an adult part-time University College students as it is for a full-time eighteen year old. Consider, then, how varied the informal, out-of-class experiences must be. Not only are the types of experiences different -- the residence halls, the fraternities and sororities, the off-campus houses and apartments, the social occasions and athletic events, and all the rest of it -- but the individuals themselves come from so many different racial, ethnic, economic and social backgrounds. This variety and diversity is one of Rutgers' great strengths. But it is only a strength if we work hard to capitalize on it and do not allow it to divide us.

²⁰ Michael Moffatt, Coming of Age in New Jersey: College and American Culture. Rutgers University Press, 1989.

In addition, there is the need for students to deal with the day-to-day realities of Rutgers' unavoidable bureaucracy. Registering for courses, having access to the courses they want or need, dropping and adding courses, arranging for financial aid, finding parking, riding the buses in New Brunswick -- all of these are important aspects of the daily lives of our students. To overlook these facets of student life would be neglecting an important part of what it means to be a student at Rutgers, and would be a serious mistake.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching recently proposed principles of day-to-day decision making on the college campus which, taken together, define the sort of community I think Rutgers should strive to be.²¹

The Carnegie report suggests that a college should be a purposeful community, a place where faculty and students share academic goals and work together to strengthen teaching and learning. I addressed some ways of strengthening teaching and learning at Rutgers earlier in this paper.

In addition a college or university should be an open community, where freedom of expression is protected at the same time that civility is powerfully affirmed; it should be a just community, where the sacredness of the individual is honored and where diversity is aggressively pursued; it should be a disciplined community, where individuals

²¹ The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Campus Life: In Search of a Community, Princeton, N.J., 1990.

accept their obligations to the group and well-defined governance procedures guide behavior for the common good; it should be a caring community, where the well-being of each member is supported and service to others is encouraged; and it should be a celebrative community in which the heritage of Rutgers is remembered and where rituals affirming both tradition and change are widely shared.

I like the Carnegie Foundation's view of what is important in a University community. I think Rutgers can and should be such a learning community. During the past few years, events here have tended to pull us apart and have diluted our own sense of community. Important groups of the faculty have felt alienated from the administration and frequently at odds over important questions of policy and practice; many students have felt disenfranchised and that the university's allocation of resources were not in their best interests; both groups have complained about the bureaucracy, about the lack of civility, and about occasional failures to respect individuals. In effect, too many have come to feel that there is no longer one academic community but many and that some of them are occasionally at war with one another.

My last priority for undergraduate education at Rutgers in the 90's is to restore this strong sense of community. Being a large and complex university does not mean that we cannot at the same time be purposeful, open, just, disciplined, caring, and celebrative. I shall work hard, with you, to achieve these hallmarks of an academic community.

Administration and Organization

Hard work and good ideas are two crucial components of our efforts to sustain the highest level of quality in our undergraduate programs, and I see good evidence that both of these exist in abundance at Rutgers. But even with good ideas and even with hard work, it will be extremely difficult to achieve the goals that we have set for ourselves if our programs are not administered effectively, organized efficiently, and carried out on all campuses with a spirit of cooperation and pulling together as members of one great state university.

Rutgers' history is unlike that of any other major state university. Though Rutgers is one of the oldest universities in the country, going back to the founding of Queen's College as one of the colonial colleges more than 225 years ago, we are also one of the youngest, with the merging of the various federated institutions into one united state university occurring largely during the early part of this century. Because Rutgers was not born as one institution, but instead has emerged from the union of several, it is not surprising that our administrative structures, our governance, and the way that we organize our work is somewhat complicated. It also helps explain why some allegiances tend to be more with separate colleges or units within the university than to the university itself. It seems to me that it is these very collegial allegiances that give Rutgers its special character and strength, a specialness that, as the most recent Middle States Accrediting report indicated, makes Rutgers "...the best undergraduate program of any large public research university in the country."²² But, if not administered with great care, these advantages can quickly become serious disadvantages.

²²

Report of the Middle States Evaluation Team, 1988, p.6.

This is one of the reasons that I announced this past spring that I wished to establish a new vice presidency, a Vice President for Undergraduate Education, at Rutgers. This appointment will send clear signals about the importance we attach to undergraduate education and in this respect will follow the example already set by most major state universities in the land. More importantly, this person will coordinate the many initiatives and ideas that I have described in this paper and will make sure that the many different collegiate practices and policies in undergraduate education at Rutgers form a coherent university strategy. Some of the new Vice President's areas of responsibility will include:

- * the new Teaching Excellence Centers and Learning Resource Centers;
- * influence in the allocation of resources for instruction, e.g., classrooms, equipment, laboratories, etc.;
- * coordination of the reexamination of the curriculum that I called for earlier in this paper;
- * oversight for policies pertaining to departmental practices with regard to class sizes and teaching loads, as well as direct involvement in the establishment of academic hiring and promotion policies; and
- * responsibility for the inclusion of attention to undergraduate education in all external program reviews.

Conclusion

Those, then, are my priorities for undergraduate education at Rutgers in the coming decade. I will work hard for a university that:

- * emphasizes teaching and service along with research as valued missions;
- * provides a solid program of teaching enhancement and evaluation;
- * offers a curriculum that is coherent and sensitive to special needs of the late 20th century;
- * supports teaching and learning with a first-rate faculty, good instructional facilities and delivery systems, and academic assistance for students outside of class; and
- * nurtures a university-wide environment for students, faculty, and staff that is open, civil, supportive, disciplined, caring, and just.

All of these priorities are within our grasp. Hopefully they will be seen not as new priorities, but as a modification and reemphasis of goals that have been part of Rutgers for many years.

Some of these priorities will require significant human and fiscal resources. I am fully aware of this, but I do not intend to let that fact deter me, and I hope that other members of the university community will not allow it to deter them, either. How we spend the scarce resources the state of New Jersey has invested in us is a true measure of our values and priorities. In this document I have attempted to make my values and priorities clear. All three of Rutgers' primary missions - teaching, research, and public service - must be balanced. Our commitment to undergraduate education is a vital part of the university's pursuit of excellence.

Appendix

Summary of Major Undergraduate Education Reports and Studies at Rutgers in the Last Five Years (in reverse chronological order)

Reports of the University Academic Forum Committee on the Improvement and Evaluation of Teaching (two reports, the first issued in June, 1990, the second in May, 1991)

Recommendations: (all recommendations pertain University-wide)

1. The University should implement an improved system of teaching evaluation that includes a University-wide student rating form and faculty-developed methods of peer evaluation.
2. Greater attention and resources need to be given to various teaching enhancement and improvement activities.
3. More equitable balance is needed between the rewards for research and the rewards for teaching, and greater clarity is called for in communicating this reward system to members of the faculty.
4. Teaching Excellence Centers should be established on each campus to assist departments with their efforts to improve and evaluate teaching.

Reports of the Provosts' Committees on Undergraduate Education in the Context of a Research University (Separate reports on each of the three regional campuses, Summer, 1990)

Recommendations:

1. The University needs a broadly articulated emphasis on the value of teaching to help lessen the tensions caused by a perceived conflict between the research mission and the educational needs of undergraduates. (NEW)
2. At least half a faculty member's instructional work should be at the undergraduate level, and no faculty appointment should be made without a clear awareness of how the appointment would affect undergraduate instruction. (NB)
3. The University must establish a better system for evaluating teaching, and see to it that teaching performance is more heavily weighted in the promotion and tenure process. (NB, NEW, CAM)
4. In attempting to hire or keep faculty members, the University should not offer removal from undergraduate instruction. (NB)

5. Great care must be taken in the appointment and use of teaching assistants; proper training and evaluation must precede their appearance in our laboratories and classrooms. (NB, NEW)
6. The University should improve the milieu of undergraduate instruction, paying special attention to the size of classes, the scheduling of classes, and the adequacy of such essential instructional supports as classrooms, laboratories, computer facilities, and libraries. (NEW, NB, CAM)
7. The University should increase opportunities for undergraduates to work with faculty members on research projects to ensure that students fully benefit from our commitment to research and graduate education. (NB, NEW)

Report of the University Academic Forum Committee on the Character and Composition of the Future Undergraduate Student Body (September, 1990)

Recommendations: (all recommendations pertain University-wide)

1. Rutgers must do more to communicate our undergraduate strengths and to bring RU to the attention of high-achieving high school students.
2. We must offer more merit-based scholarships and should strengthen our various honors programs to give special attention to high-achieving students.
3. The University should extend guarantees of admission and, in some cases, varying amounts of financial support, to students in special-needs-district high schools, contingent upon their successful completion of prescribed courses of study.
4. All enrolling first-year students should be guaranteed at least one course during both the fall and spring semesters (in addition to English Composition) in which the enrollment is 25 or fewer students.
5. Serious consideration should be given to use of three 50-minute meetings per week as the normal schedule for 3-credit courses, rather than the currently used two 80-minute periods.

Report of the Academic Forum Committee on the Liberal Arts Foundation of the Bachelor's curriculum in the Professional Schools and Colleges (May, 1989)

Recommendations: (all recommendations pertain University-wide)

1. Further consideration of the role of the liberal arts foundation of the curricula in the various professional schools must take into consideration the practical limitations of requiring more non-major courses for students in the various professional schools of the University. Because of the very stringent standards of some of the professional school associations, increases in the liberal arts requirements would result in the need to study five years or longer before attaining the bachelor's degree.
2. The University needs to take a more assertive role in developing a clear statement of the campus's concept of core studies. In some of the professions, failure to develop this clarity within the University may very well lead to having the professional accrediting agencies set such standards for the University.
3. The goals of integrating the liberal and professional arts could be achieved through formal or informal clusters of courses developed by allied departments. The development of liaisons between one professional and one FAS department would yield groups of courses that would enrich the majors in each.
4. Examination of the role played by the liberal arts and sciences in the education of professional studies students should include an awareness that both the liberal arts and the professional schools stand to benefit from attempts to integrate our students' education.

Reports of the University Academic Forum Committee on the Assessment of Student Learning (Two reports, the first issued in March, 1987, the second in August, 1988)

Recommendations: (all recommendations pertain University-wide)

1. Every department should be required to conduct an assessment of their undergraduate program with a special emphasis on student learning. The form of this assessment may vary, but must be done in such a way so as to lead to a strong inference about student academic development.
2. Each department's assessment of student learning should be incorporated into the already-existing system of external reviews, and these evaluations included as part of the information submitted to the internal Committee on Standards and Priorities in Academic Development.
3. These evaluations should be required every five years, or as close to that time frame as the budget and other conditions permit.
4. Each undergraduate college should be required to assess student development in general education on a recurring basis, perhaps every seven or eight years.
5. The assessments should be the responsibility of a faculty committee reporting to the provost on each campus, and carried out by staff personnel with appropriate training and expertise in measurement and evaluation who would work with the faculty committees and report to the provost.

Report of the University Academic Forum Committee on the Liberal Arts Foundation of the Bachelor's Curriculum in the Multipurpose Colleges (July, 1988)

Recommendations:

1. All undergraduate units should insist upon, as a requirement for admission, significant training in a foreign language. (NB)
2. All undergraduate students should be expected to make some progress toward competence in a foreign language and knowledge of a foreign culture, and should be strongly encouraged to take at least six credits in a foreign language. (NB)
3. Each undergraduate department should identify a faculty liaison who will actively participate in the life of the college and keep the college informed of changes occurring in the department, e.g., major requirements. There should be some tangible reward for serving as departmental liaison. (NB, CAM, NEW)
4. Serious efforts be made to improve the faculty "homes-away-from-home" so as to make them more inviting for both faculty members and students. (NB)
5. Greater compensation should be made available to faculty advisers. The importance of helping students shape their undergraduate educations must be recognized as a significant factor in improving their educational experience. (NB, CAM, NEW)

Report of the FAS-Newark Task Force on the Student Experience (April, 1986)

Recommendations: (pertains only to Newark)

1. Establish an advising program that will provide the academic, personal, and career guidance necessary to maximize student development.
2. The colleges should construct a bold, new curriculum that will truly educate our students, both with respect to general competencies and in depth in their major.
3. Develop as part of the overall advising, curricular, and instructional strategy a special Freshman Year Program.
4. Develop a comprehensive program of assessment that will provide continuous feedback to students, faculty members and others about their effectiveness as learners or as professionals and the effectiveness of our programs.
5. Attention should be given to the organizational culture of the campus, and appropriate administrators should act with vigor to improve faculty and staff morale.