Book Reviews

An introductory note...

The book review section of the inaugural issue of *Metropolitan Universities* included a review of the Ernest A. Lynton and Sandra E. Elman volume, *New Priorities for the University.* The choice for review reflected what might be taken as one of the journal's major themes. With this second issue, we recapitulate and extend the reflection in this book review section with the consideration of two volumes—one dealing with higher education governance, the other with the life and times of cities, i.e., the larger context of which higher education is a part. The intent here and in future issues is not to attempt attendance on all of the many books dealing directly or peripherally with metropolitan universities but nonetheless to draw attention to critical issues beyond the immediate traditional span of higher education. Thus, future issues will in some instances deal with matters of gender and access, or the sociology of discrimination, or the interplay of economics, interinstitutional competition, and state politics, as well as higher education and urban matters more traditionally considered. There will of necessity be some tension between scattering of attention and too narrow a focus. We would like to hear from you as to how we deal with that tension. We welcome, too, your suggestions for books to bring to the attention of the *Metropolitan Universities* audience.

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Jack H. Schuster, Lynn H. Miller, and Associates.
Governing Tomorrow's Campus: Perspectives and Agendas.
New York: ACE/Macmillan, 1989.

It is not often we learn the premise for why a book is written, but Governing Tomorrow's Campus is the exception. This collection of essays results from a symposium held at Temple University several years ago. The theme of that symposium was "Shared Governance in the Modern University."

Knowing the context for the origin of these essays is helpful in their analysis. Temple University has in recent years typified the strife within higher education over governance structures and faculty/administration disputes. Temple moved from collegial to collective bargaining in governance format, from prosperity to retrenchment in finances, and from cooperative to adversarial in relations with its faculty, first winning arbitrations and then being censored by the AAUP. These transitions set an appropriate stage for understanding the virtually unanimous cheerleading in the book for the preservation of traditional faculty participation in institutional governance.

While the title and theme of the book projects into the future, its substance reads of the past. With few notable exceptions (e.g., the chapters by Keller and Finn) this book focuses on an historical retrospective of the "good ol' days"—how it was, or rather, how it should have been. Chapter after chapter describes how in past times the academy was simpler, conflicts fewer, administrators knew their place, and faculty ran the academic enterprise. None of this is news to those who study higher education or work within its confines. Unfortunately, we are given little insight into why things must be different in the future.

The organization of the book follows logically, moving from a description of the historical roles played by faculty in the academic governance of the higher education enterprise at the campus level to a description of the actors in the campus environment. Also of some focus are the internal and external elements that have affected faculty control. Much of the book, however, concentrates on historical conflicts between the faculty and administration, with no clear answers on how to improve or even avoid such conflicts in the future.

Professor Birnbaum, in his chapter on leadership, hits the mark peripherally. He depicts five classic forms of institution, their status and structure. One of those structures is new, and arguably the most critical in the

future of higher education—the "Metroplex University." While recognizing that "there is a long history of urban universities in the United States that have become national and world-class institutions," the emerging metropolitan institution is new in form and now expected to meet all the "old needs that have been neglected by the Flagship Universities or which other institutions have been unable to meet." Without question, it is these institutions that will go through the greatest degree of governance turmoil as they expand and try to meet the conflicting demands of their broad constituencies.

Confronted with conflicting priorities of escalating academic standards yet open access, broadened liberal arts curriculum yet practice-oriented, as well as with professional education pressures, and technology generated/economic development rationales for programmatic change, the faculties will inevitably be thrust into a new role for which they may not be prepared. It is these faculty, and administrators and trustees, who can best benefit from learning about historical patterns of governance, and thus it is for these faculty and others that the book may have its greatest value.

If it is true that history repeats itself (and I believe it is true) parallels to the days of the growth of our now "elite" institutions can be drawn. Add to this historical context of institutions being pulled into greatness by their leaders (what Metzger describes in his chapter as the period of the "despotic president") the current of public and governmental pressures for good management, such institutions must find ways to simultaneously be responsive to industry and local and state governments while preserving faculty autonomy over curricular decisions. For those campuses without long-standing governance traditions, this text should be required reading for faculty and administrators. They might learn what were in the past viewed as good governance models, but, regrettably, they won't learn what governance should be now to handle their changing environment.

Unintentionally, I believe, the authors have produced an excellent introductory text of readings for first-year doctoral students in higher education administration. The offerings within the book are prepared by some of the most respected higher education historians, researchers, and theorists. The text sets the historical framework of governance and the issues for the future. But its title, *Governing Tomorrow's Campus,* is misleading. While the traditional demarcations between faculty responsibilities, administrative functions, and board authority may once have been functional, the need to manage higher education for the future demands change in those historical patterns. This is an issue the book, despite its title, fails fully to address.

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William H. Whyte. *City: Rediscovering the Center.* New York: Doubleday, 1988.

The city has often appeared antithetical to American culture. This was never truer than during the 1920s, when as Loren Baritz argues "provincial hegemony" dominated. Urbanization and concomitant industrialization and immigration generated political, economic, and even moral change which appeared repugnant to idyllic rural small town America. "Nonmetropolitan America" opposed "urban power," its crime and corruption. And the small city, Zenith, as Sinclair Lewis labeled it, self-righteously exercised its will over the nation through its attitudes and ideals, breeding racism, ethnocentrism, anti-intellectualism, and fundamentalism.

We witnessed a rekindling of this parochialism during the 1980s, much of it again aimed at the city. Politicians, in particular, wrapped themselves in the flag and preached values rooted in an agrarian past. They revived localism and proposed volunteerism, evoking the romantic symbol of barn raising, as the solutions to our dire social problems. They castigated metropolitan institutions like the Chicago public schools, revered rural ones such as the one-room schoolhouse, and praised their suburban counterparts like affluent school districts. Popular culture, in general, equated pessimism with things urban and optimism with things rural. Meanwhile, the plight of the metropolitan homeless grew and intensified and the conditions of the poor deteriorated. All of this culminated in cinematic images of the

city like "Blade Runner" and "Batman," which portrayed cities as dark, sinister, and crime-infested places, reinforcing the public's urban paranoia.

This popular metaphor claims an intellectual counterpart as well. For decades, historians and sociologists studied cities as arenas of social dilemmas, focusing on the anonymity and aggressiveness of their inhabitants, among other problems. This followed the Jeffersonian vision of this country, that is, a pristine wilderness with its neighborly, persevering, and pure yeoman. However, since the 1960s, historians have chipped away at this metropolitan-rural nexus. Gary Nash points to the colonial seaport towns of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia as the "urban crucible" for the American Revolution. Richard Wade dispells the Turnerian notion of the frontier roots of American culture by arguing persuasively that settlements like Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Lexington, Louisville, and St. Louis did not follow the early frontier, but led it. Other historians paint similar pictures of the American city as pioneering and dynamic, implying a hopeful future for this metropolitan society.

William Whyte's study, the culmination of 16 years of research, likewise refutes common urban stereotypes. He maintains a positive tone, emphasizing that the city represents a stage set specifically for social intimacy—the interaction among people and between them and their physical environment. Whyte sees metropolitan life as fluid and exciting, thus serving as vital context.

Whyte and his research team began this study in 1969 amidst the obsession then with overcrowding and concomitant alarm over deviant behavior. Yet the focus on density became outmoded as urban areas continued to lose people to the suburbs, and redevelopment projects leveled city blocks, leaving them undeveloped. "Too much empty space and too few people—this finally emerged as the problem of the center in more cities than not." Hence, Whyte's concern is with the "practical, and in particular, the design and management of urban spaces." He and his researchers relied heavily on ethnographic methodology, employing time-lapse photography to remain as unobtrusive as possible. This book is replete with photo studies, schematic drawings, and appendixes. Although statistics occasionally whirl past the reader, Whyte's engaging style enlivens the topic and weaves this information into a rich and often humorous narrative. What emerges is not just a study of spaces and patterns but an analysis of animated metropolitan culture. It concentrates on the city center with gritty chapter titles like "The Sensory Street," "Blank Walls," and "How to Dullify Downtown." While the research team concentrated on New York City, this study appears inclusive rather than exclusive, relating that city's data to other metropolitan areas, small and large, American and foreign. Consequently, Whyte makes some generalizations about urban life, particularly concerning misconceptions and policy recommendations.

Whyte's comprehensive scrutiny confronts numerous metropolitan myths, among them crime, undesirables, and corporate flight. Crime relates to population density but in ways we never imagined. In addition to pedestrians, a rich variety of street people including vendors, messengers, entertainers, and pitchmen occupy the city. They represent a critical ingredient because they attest to the health of a place; that is, if they leave, something is wrong. Furthermore, an urban area bereft of such street people is just bland. This leads us to Whyte's surprising assessment of metropolitan crime: . . . "the central business districts are among the safest places during the hours that people use them. Conversely, among the most dangerous are the parking lots of suburban shopping malls." Moreover, as Whyte sadly adds, people have little to fear from the homeless, who have appeared in increasing numbers since the mid-seventies. Many are formerly institutionalized patients and remain fiercely independent, without access to outpatient treatment or any visible means of support. Contrary to our biases, Whyte found that many "bag women" claimed middle-class roots.

Metropolitan officials and planners tend to avoid certain humanizing amenities such as food vendors, enticing plazas, and comfortable seating, in order to discourage "undesirables." Most cities, except for New York, remain puritanical concerning vendors. Merchants usually oppose them, arguing that they draw undesirables. But a self-fulfilling prophecy has occurred. Designers and developers employ defensive measures to deter objectionable people, resulting in stark plazas with no seating and protected by security guards, as well as underground walkways and skywalks. Downtown megastructures, like De-

troit's Renaissance Center, loom over city centers like fortresses, which is what they are. This antisocial planning does not discriminate; it repels average people as well as derelicts. As Whyte concludes: "The best way to handle the problem of undesirables is to make the place attractive to everyone else. The record is overwhelmingly positive on this score." He further observes ironically that thousands of families pay good money to visit Disneyland and stroll along a simulation of an ordinary old-fashioned street with its inviting stores, cafes, and windows, where people congregate, mingle, and laugh.

Whyte's most disturbing finding deals with corporate flight. This disinvestment process, as with most phenomena surrounding metropolitan life, has been exaggerated. Nevertheless, when it has occurred, corporate executives have usually relied on irrational motives: "(1) The center city is a bad place: crime, dirt, noise, blacks, Puerto Ricans, and so on. (2) Even if it isn't a bad place, middle Americans think it is and they don't want to be transferred here. (3) To attract and hold good people we have to give them a better environment. (4) We have to move to suburbia." Whyte supplements his biting comments with some revealing analysis regarding these reasons. He also found an inverse relationship between job location in suburban corporate headquarters and executive productivity. His assessment of urban versus suburban job performance should serve as a warning.

Whyte presents his vision of the ideal city, and the means to attain it appear relatively simple and affordable, stressing thoughtful building and spatial design, rigorous horizontal and vertical zoning, and cooperative public and private investment. His recommendations may be summarized as "A Return to the Agora," the *title* of his final chapter. Whyte remains optimistic; cities seem healthy and their future is bright. They have, for example, experienced a net jobs gain during the past 15 years. More importantly, his policy suggestions, based on this longitudinal study, are appealing and achievable.

Whyte's implicit message emphasizes that metropolitan areas do not inherently repulse people, but too often people reject the cities. He attributes this phenomenon to persistent negative images of urban life. Whyte's explicit message is that large cities remain safe, vital, and animated places of social interaction, destroying the enduring myth that small cities appear friendlier than large ones. Hence, Whyte's investigation sheds new light on contemporary life, and its deep texture should appeal to a wide reading audience. Urban historians will see recent history unfold, with its successes and pitfalls. Policymakers will find a rich context and renewed hope for the assessment of the future of metropolitan institutions. Whyte euphemistically refers to the streets as "the river of life of the city, the place where we come together, the pathway to the city . . . the primary place." This encouraging, cosmopolitan attitude serves as a breath of fresh air as we leave the oppressively provincial eighties.

Suggested Readings

Loren Baritz, "The Culture of the Twenties," in *Perspectives on the American Past,* ed. Michael Perman (Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman, 1989).

Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: The Northern Seaports and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986).

Richard C. Wade, *The Urban Frontier: Pioneer Life in Early Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Lexington, Louisville, and St. Louis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959).

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