Forum

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Faculty members in our universities are reluctant to engage in debate on the impact on their institutions of some of the momentous issues in our society, often claiming that the academy is a world apart. In their reading, concerns about "customers, competition, and change," often cited as central challenges to our society, simply don't register the same way in the university context. This attitude is both arrogant and self-defeating. The university community needs to forego the claims of difference that prevent it from engaging in a productive way with the challenges that confront it. To do otherwise is to risk the imposition on the university of practices and values that may be altogther foreign to its goals and its central claims to worth.

Claims of Difference:

University Culture and the Stifling of Debate

Some years ago, I spent a fairly lengthy period of time in the South. As someone who had been raised in Omaha and had lived more recently in Minnesota, I found that the customs and life patterns of the region required some considerable adjustment on my part. I gradually learned to move more slowly, and my speech—never very brisk—took on a languorous quality that suggested both deliberation and lack of worry about whether that deliberation would lead an audience along my intended path. There was, however, one area in which Southern attitudes never claimed my acquiescence, much less my assent. That area was race relations.

The time I refer to was a period of transition, the early sixties. It was a time of profound change in American society, when claims for true equality were being responded to more fully than ever before. Still, there were many who resisted these changes and these efforts to promote change. When I questioned such people

about their resistance or about their view that "good Negroes" were not part of the great civil rights movement that was altering our society in such significant ways, they invariably offered an explanation that was clinched for them by one salient fact: I was an outsider. To questions about differential treatment with respect to job opportunities, or accommodations, or nearly any area in which their customs and practices differed from those I believed to be just and morally comprehensible, they would respond, "You simply don't understand." The argument, that is, always ended by their asserting my inability to understand their culture and by my asserting in response that the matters we were talking about were not the province of a single, special culture but were instead matters in which our entire society had a stake and in which the claim of a unique status had to be denied if that outlying group was to be granted full and appropriate membership in the larger society in which it existed and on which it depended.

I know that in the comparison I am about to make, I risk comparing great things to small, but I do so to be deliberately provocative and to make the case as powerfully as I can. It seems to me that, in the most important ways, the attitude of many of our faculty colleagues today recalls the attitudes of those intransigent Southerners facing an America that is undergoing widespread and profound change; they too think of themselves as belonging to a unique and especially valuable culture; and they too are ready with what they imagine is an ultimately disabling rebuttal: "You simply don't understand."

There are, of course, some areas in which faculty, generally speaking, are receptive to change and even leaders in its implementation. I think first of all of the widespread movement in recent years to make our campuses more diverse and more open to varied points of view, styles of teaching, and even forms of research. Here faculty have, for the most part, been allied with administrative efforts to make our campuses more nearly correspond to the society they serve and whose future is dependent on their good work. They have contributed in significant ways to the transformation of our campuses over the past several years.

But the changes I am talking about here are not matters of social justice. They are, instead, matters that have to do with the university as a workplace. They are changes and responses to change that have emerged most dramatically in American business and industry, and they have been accompanied (or

heralded) by a whole lexicon of terms that are now a too-familiar part of our ordinary discourse about preparing for the new century: rethinking, reengineering, reshaping, redefining. After each gerund one could place any of the following words or phrases as its object: customer service, the work force, management incentives, financial operations, the delivery system and so on and on. Now there is little doubt that some of the recoil (in academic circles) from demands for change has its source in objections to this vocabulary. But the deepest and most intransigent reactions to these widespread aspects of change is not a matter of linguistic fussiness. These elements of resistance arise instead from some fundamental objection to placing the university in a context in which it is called upon to model its workings on those of the other major institutions of our society—here, especially business. At the foundation of this objection is the view that the university is a fundamentally different sort of organization, one with a unique and unusually valuable culture, an organization that can be fully understood and directed only by those who have internalized its values. If in the face of such claims outsiders express puzzlement or disbelief or, worse yet, doubts about the efficacy of the university's operations, or its structures, or the practices of its members, the answer is ready to hand: "You simply don't understand."

Customers, Competition, and Change

The factors that have been so demanding of change in the world that surrounds academe have been described in many different ways. In their *Manifesto for Business Revolution: Reengineering the Corporation,* Michael Hammer and James Champy cut through the extensive list of the factors often cited in assigning blame for industrial and corporate America's difficulties to what they consider to be the center of the matter. For them, the key is that " customers, competition, and change...have created a new world for business," and that "Companies created to thrive on mass production, stability, and growth can't be fixed to succeed in a world where customers, competition, and change demand flexibility and quick response"

Customers

How does the world outside academe think American higher education is faring in relation to customers, competition, and change? I want to begin with

the first of these rubrics, customers, and trace it in a variety of its possible manifestations. It seems best to start with students as customers because they are central to any definition of the university's mission and because they are the locus of the most frequently heard complaints about the failure of the University (higher education generally) to adapt to change. Advocates of the student as customer focus on two major areas of concern. The first is the cost of a college education; the second, its value. No one can dispute the major relevant facts in the first case; the cost of higher education has, over the last period, escalated in a dramatic fashion, outstripping advances in the CPI by something like two percent per year over the past decade. Moreover, tuition at our elite institutions has risen so high, particularly in relation to our students' ability to earn, that the contribution a student is likely to make to his or her own education is a small fraction of its total cost. When I was a freshman at Carleton College in the fall of 1955, the comprehensive fee was $1500. I had a scholarship for $500, a board job for another $500, and at the end of that year I found a construction job that paid me $2.25 per hour. Today the cost of a year at Carleton is $25,410. A typical on-campus job pays $6.44 per hour, and students are limited to eight hours of work per week, which means that a student working the maximum hours can earn $1700 in a year. My summer earnings, assuming a full ten-week period of employment, amounted to $900, a full two-thirds of the total costs of a year's schooling. Today's Carleton student, to earn a like percentage of his or her total costs, would need to earn $1694 per week for ten weeks, not a very realistic possibility given the combination of a highly restricted job market and a minimum wage that is little more than twice what I earned in 1956. Even imagining that such a student could find a construction job or something equally remunerative, the likely total would be more in the range of $500 to $600 per week, less than half of what I made in relation to my total expenses.

The higher education establishment long ago gave up the notion that students could, in fact, make a major financial contribution to their own education when they were in school. What this has meant is that those students who select an elite institution leave after four years bearing a major debt load; and no one, I believe, has calculated the psychic cost of that burden or what it means in terms of limiting long-term career choices and making short-term decisions about commitments to public service. Even more damaged are those

students who do make the maximum effort to earn a major portion of their tuition and fees while they are in school. They work so hard to provide themselves with an education that they don't have the time or the energy to pursue it in a serious way. Their debt load may be lighter at the end of four years, but that advantage has been secured at the cost of a full and truly enriching education.

The cost of higher education is, then, a major area of concern for our students; and however much we may bridle at referring to them as customers, it is clear that their dollars provide an increasingly larger share of the total support of our institutions of higher education. This is a critical problem, and it will not be resolved if we take the position that our familiar ways of doing our work—providing an experience of learning and certifying student achievement—cannot and should not be altered.

Similarly, questions about the value of higher education also need to be addressed. Increasingly, we hear complaints from employers about the deficiencies of our students. We need to find more effective means of guaranteeing that our graduates can succeed in the workplace, both in their initial positions and those that they are likely to move on to over the next decades.

I would be the last to argue that higher education is about preparation for work. At its best, it should be first about preparation for life. Our students need to experience the sort of education that allows them to make independent judgments over a whole range of subject areas; they need to be aware of their own history and culture and of cultures quite unlike their own; above all, they need to acquire the intellectual resources that will allow them to lead full and productive personal lives and to exercise in a significant way the benefits of citizenship in our society. But students also—and this is an emphatic addition —need to be prepared to enter the workplace and make themselves valuable there. If our centers of higher education are not prepared to position them for that move, they are giving less than full value to those thousands of young people who come to the university thinking of it as the means to a rich and fulfilling life in our society.

The point to be made about both the costs of higher education and the value of a higher education is that those of us in the university have been so busy defending our position, finding ways to rationalize near double-digit tuition increases (the use of HEPI as an index to costs is just one of these) that we

have neglected a first principle of any successful rhetorical exchange: we have failed to engage our critics on the fundamental matters they want to see addressed. To claim difference—and the appeal to a distinct Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) is simply the most "scientific" claim of this sort—is at bottom a refusal to face the issues on the level of meaningful debate.

If students are our most obvious customers, those to whom we deliver goods most directly, they do not account for all of the university's activity as a provider of goods and services. In public universities, we are accountable as well to a variety of constituencies or stockholder groups, each one of which has a right to expect value for money and each one of which may with some justification understand its relation to the institution as analogous to the relationship between customer and provider. Here too the university has in recent years come in for a significant and understandable deal of criticism. The available illustrations are so manifold that it seems difficult to choose among them. Let me point to one that may stand as representative, though it is also one of the most vexing, the widespread criticism of the National Endowments for the Arts and for the Humanities.

I think we have to understand that in this case our representatives in government were putting forward a case about an investment they had been making on behalf of the citizens of this nation. In their judgment, that investment was not paying dividends. It would be naive to argue that there were no other factors shaping their attitude toward the two endowments and some of the choices that had been made in awarding fellowships. But I think that the grounds of the debate ought not to have been determined by those matters, especially when any counterargument was based on claims about a special standing for humanities scholars and artists and—by extension—the university communities that many if not most of them represent. Again, I think we have to understand that in this case the government, representing the population at large, stands in relation to the university as a customer to a provider of goods and services. I do not claim that the guiding principle here ought to be "the customer is always right." Rather, I think that the university and its representatives ought to find ways of defending their work on authentic foundational principles related to the most fundamental questions about what such an institution ought to be: the role of the university in a free society, the necessity (and the appropriate means) of representing all of that society's citizens, the obliga-

tion to pursue truth (including the truths of art), and the advocacy of critical analysis and critical judgments. In all of this, the starting point has to be the recognition that the university as provider has an obligation to convince those who employ its services and purchase its goods that those goods and services are needful for society and legitimate uses of its resources. It must not, and it cannot, be the notion that the University inhabits a separate and protected space that renders it immune to the pressures and obligations under which the rest of the society operates.

Competition

The argument about the university's special status is insufficient when it is placed over against the claims of those who purchase its services or invest in its goods. Advanced as a claim when the issue at hand is competition, the argument has, for the better part of fifty years at least, been almost wholly persuasive. Here, though, special status means something rather different. Instead of defining itself as a place apart, the university in this context defines itself as best in class. One can imagine no better theme song for the university's superiority in this arena, in fact, than the old Carly Simon tune, "Nobody Does It Better." What "it" does is a constant matter. The university system of the United States was the leading source of instruction and expertise over the whole range of academic subjects that were considered central to the life and work of modern societies. This does not mean that in every field the superiority of this country was either claimed or acknowledged. It simply means that in terms of global competition the United States enjoyed a tremendous trade surplus. Moreover, no single country had anything like a position that could challenge our superiority.

If that superiority on the international front was all but unquestioned, the dominance of the higher education establishment at home was even more emphatic. Certainly there were institutions that promised a quick route to rewarding careers, but these proprietary establishments were clearly in another league, promising neither the social cachet nor the broad array of career paths that the mainline institutions could offer.

There has been, in academic circles, a certain understandable if misguided smugness about this status. When the American automobile industry fell victim to its own myopia and the nimbleness and precision of foreign competition,

or when emerging technological advances that originated here were captured in their commercial stage by competitors from abroad, more than one spokesperson for the educational establishment was quick to underline the contrast: the American University was still, and by a wide margin, number one. While such assertions aren't as conspicuous or as grating as the gestures familiar from the gridiron that often accompany the claim to be top dog, they have the same effect. Beyond merely inviting counterclaims, they are likely to occasion serious efforts to remove the very basis of the original assertion.

Everywhere one looks, there is evidence that efforts to challenge our superiority are being mobilized. Abroad, we see growing investments in scientific and technological education. At home, the storefront proprietaries and the low-rent technical school have given way to major corporations with substantial investments in technology. The promise of employment that used to accompany the ads for such institutions has been replaced by substantial and demonstrable claims. And this is where the original sense of the claim that "We're different" threatens to be the source of major losses in our position and in our credibility.

The assertion of difference, or the claim that "You don't understand us," is at bottom an insistence on setting the terms of the debate and a refusal to join it on any other grounds. This approach works when one is in control of a market and when everyone agrees that the goods being offered are necessary both in a general way and in a particular form. But the current environment, both in academe and in the world it serves, is undergoing a period of intense and very rapid change. In such a context, the claim to be preeminent seems more open to question, and it is certainly subject over time (potentially, a very brief time) to qualification and to challenge. To refuse to engage in a discussion of the fundamental questions about competition seems, therefore, both shortsighted and self-destructive. American education needs to look around, to see what the competition is doing, and to make some fundamental decisions about how it means to secure its lofty status. Some leaders of higher education are doing that. But faculty of the rank and file are not. They are more likely to nod approvingly when Mary Burgan, General Secretary of the AAUP, speaks derisively about those who bring the message of change, as she did recently at a conference held at the University of Michigan.

Change

For me, all these matters were brought into focus over the past year, when the President's Office at the University of Michigan, in league with SACUA (the executive arm of Senate Assembly, the University-wide faculty governance organization), sponsored a year-long lecture series with the title, "Changing in a World of Change: The University and Its Publics." The speakers in the series, whose talks have been published in a volume that bears the same title, represented the worlds of business, the academy, the law, and state government. The message they brought was remarkably consistent across the fields.

Frank Popoff, since 1992 chair of the board of directors of the Dow Chemical Company and from 1987 to 1995 its Chief Executive Officer, argued that "Managing change is the major challenge facing organizations in establishing and building their presence and influence around the world." Harold Shapiro, President of Princeton University, noted thoughtfully that though "many may be alienated by those transformations that need to happen," change is nevertheless "critical to our ability to serve the society that supports us." For Paul Hillegonds, Speaker of the House in the Michigan Legislature, the realities imposed by changes in the world outside the University have brought it to a point where it needs to redefine its basic missions: "Rising costs, tighter federal and state resources, private sector trends such as capitated, managed health care, coupled with higher tuition rates, will force this great university to refine its missions—missions that must build on your best and commit you to improve, or dispose of, the rest." Steven Olswang is Vice Provost and Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Washington and a student of legal issues in higher education. After examining a number of academic and social causes of change, he declared that "funding is the greatest change factor." Nearly all the change factors he mentioned, however, will have—indeed, are having—an impact on "the ability of an institution of higher education to grant lifetime employment." His account of "The Changing University: Faculty and Tenure" leaves little doubt that the usual ways of managing faculty employment are not going to prove sufficient in the changed and ever-changing circumstances that confront universities today:

We must protect the traditional principles embodied in academic freedom, but recognize that the fixture of tenure as we previously knew it may not be the only answer for faculty security. If colleges and universities don't meet these

challenges themselves and address the nature of the tenure contract, it is clear that legislators, governors, and those who provide our support will step in and change it for us.

In light of recent events at the University of Minnesota, Professor Olswang's suggestion seems prescient; and even though at the time of this writing it looks as though the revisions to tenure policies suggested by the Regents there are not likely to be enacted, it seems nearly certain that the proposals for change are just the beginning, on a local front,of actions that are likely to take place more widely on the national scene. Anyone who witnessed the blizzard of e-mail activity that the Minnesota events occasioned will be aware of how absolutely central tenure is to many academics' sense of their own identity and of the values they ascribe to the academic enterprise. But any disinterested observer would also have recognized a kind of intransigence in the responses to the Regents and even to President Hasselmo, a resistance that seemed almost wholly reflexive. This is, of course, not surprising. Of all the topics that emerge regularly in discussions of change in the university system, none is more likely than tenure to be declared off limits. For many faculty, tenure is not simply one matter in a complex of employment arrangements; it is, rather, the defining element that makes life in the university different from life in almost any other segment of our society. It is not just a closely guarded value, but perhaps the very foundation of the claim that faculty make when faced with the imperative of change: the claim of difference, "You don't understand."

I believe that the single greatest difficulty in getting faculty members to engage seriously in talk about change is that the language employed in talking about change has grown out of the business community and has been unable to sustain itself in the academy. A second factor, perhaps equally important, has to do with academic affiliations. Many faculty members, especially those at the major research universities, identify their academic home not as the university itself but as the discipline, first as it is a subdivision of the institution from which they accept their pay, but second, and perhaps more important, as the subset of that discipline to which they belong by virtue of their research and their closest professional affiliations. What this means is that they are not overly concerned about local conditions (where change is likely to be implemented in the first instance) in large part because they conceive of themselves (however they may dislike the language of business as a whole) as entrepre-

neurs. It is no secret (indeed, it may be a public scandal) that in most of our major research institutions, many of our most highly regarded faculty view the activity of faculty governance with disdain. One result of that attitude is that the work of faculty governance is often left to those who are less valued in the system but who are nevertheless (perhaps paradoxically) more wedded to its protections because they are in greater need of them.

The last of these general attitudes that I want to mention is less easy to articulate because it remains largely unexpressed in serious discussions about change. Yet it is one that relates most closely to my notion about claims of difference and about the failure or unwillingness to engage in debate except on terms defined by those in the academy. This is the notion that academics make a conscious choice in committing to the academy: a choice to forego certain financial expectations in exchange for a particular way of life, a choice to avoid certain elements of hierarchical bureaucratic existence in favor of scholarly independence, a choice for the freedom to define projects over against accepting assignments. In light of this bargain, entered into on the basis of a tacit understanding rather than an explicit contract, faculty members (many of them, at least) think it unfair to ask them to acquiesce in changes brought about or imposed by a world that—for well-understood considerations—they had chosen to renounce.

Tenure

These, then, are some of the overarching considerations that lead to a general reluctance among faculty to accept the imperative of change. What additional factors come into play when the subject at hand is tenure and possible changes to the tenure system? First and most important, I believe, is the notion that tenure and academic freedom are somehow synonymous or at least inextricably joined together. Without tenure, the argument goes, there would be no possibility of guaranteeing academic freedom. In his discussion of "The Changing University," Steve Olswang makes a useful distinction between these two. Academic freedom, he argues, "is a set of norms...a set of goals. It is that concept that says that faculty members shall have the freedom to exercise their intellectual expression and pursue inquiries without fear of retribution or punishment." The institution of tenure, which "was created to protect academic freedom, is a legally protected employment structure. It constitutes part of a

faculty member's contract of employment." Moreover, Olswang points out, "in institutions of higher education which are funded by the state...it is a property interest protected by the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution."

I believe that one source of the reluctance to accept change—indeed, to accept a truly open discussion—in the area of tenure has to do with the perception that tenure and academic freedom are not separable concepts. But if Olswang's analysis tells us anything, it is that academic freedom, while currently under the protection of the institution of tenure, does not necessarily depend on tenure for its preservation. Certainly we have instances to demonstrate that in other segments of our society the right to freedom of expression has been upheld by the courts, and efforts to terminate the employment of individuals who have expressed unpopular opinions (or opinions unpalatable to their employer) have been overturned. Recently, a student in a seminar I'm attending made the case that University faculty members' extreme protectiveness toward tenure has little to do with academic freedom and everything to do with their observation of the phenomenon of "downsizing" in industry. In her analysis, the faculty are a protected class who have witnessed the treatment (or mistreatment) of another protected class—i.e., upper and middle management in business and industry—and have internalized the obvious lesson that for such major cuts to have maximum impact, they have to affect those who are commanding a major share of the organization's resources. This, rather than a concern for academic freedom, is their focus. In other words, what they want to protect is tenure (specifically, their tenure); and academic freedom, by a kind of associative elision, is their most trustworthy shield for that purpose.

I think a case can be made that the shield identified as academic freedom is itself misidentified either through true confusion or through a well-practiced sort of disingenuousness. Conventionally, defenders of academic freedom invoke threats from outside the university (McCarthyism under whatever guise) when they want to suggest the absolute need for preserving our current system of tenure. The truth is, I believe, that since the Vietnam era the major threats to academic freedom have arisen within the university itself in the form of certain pressures for political conformity. But what many faculty members want to protect is not academic freedom but their own autonomy. This is quite a different matter from academic freedom, and when autonomy means something like the right to teach whatever pleases me regardless of the requirements of the

curriculum or the sequencing of courses or the needs of students, it's pretty clear that what began as liberty has become the most asocial form of license. In both these cases—concern for pressures within the University and the desire for autonomy—what faculty are asking for is not protection from some fearsome outside source but in the first instance a bulwark against their colleagues and in the second a concession to their own self-indulgence.

The Choice We Face

All the matters I have touched on here, not merely tenure, are subject to the warning with which Professor Olswang concludes his essay. We have a choice of meeting the challenges before us, of providing our own reasoned solutions, or of having others provide those solutions—based on their values—in our stead. What can be done to move faculty toward a greater willingness to engage these momentous issues of change? As a beginning point I would argue that universities need to move aggressively to define and encourage participation in some dimensions of university citizenship. Our current structures tend to reinforce patterns of autonomy: schools and colleges pull away from central administration to advance their own agendas, departments pursue their goals quite independent of college goals, and individual faculty members, acting as entrepreneurs, give their chief allegiance to a subset of the discipline rather than to the curriculum of the department. Autonomy becomes more nearly centrifugality, with the inevitable consequence that discussions of the larger communal enterprise become difficult to initiate and even harder to bring to a point.

To create and focus such discussions, administrators need to be inventive about adapting the language of business so that it becomes acceptable to those whose native tongue is some dialectical form of academic discourse. If some members of the faculty find it repugnant to hear talk of "the student as customer," perhaps other terms can be used to express the relation between those who are paying for an education and those who are purveying that education. Students, too, want to be honored with their rightful designation, but they also want to be persuaded that the investment they are making in education is a wise one and that it will continue to pay dividends over time. I choose this language of the market not because there is no other set of metaphors available to talk about the provision of an education and its anticipated rewards but rather to

illustrate that thinking about the student as customer is neither unnatural nor demeaning to the enterprise. Somehow, those who speak for higher education must address in a persuasive way the question of what education costs and what its benefits (both short and long-term) add up to. But it will not be enough to talk. We need to find a way of reordering what we do so that we can effect real savings, and faculty need to be leading that discussion. It need not be a discussion about serving our customers and the cost of our product, especially when those terms prove distracting. But it should be about such matters as accessibility, freedom of choice, and the effects on our graduates of being nearly compelled to carry a major burden of debt as they leave the university. In addition, it should be about new modes of teaching, approaches that would allow our students to move at different rates through the courses we ask them to complete and that would give them greater assurance of the transferability of their learning to the world they will be entering in pursuit of work, careers, and personal fulfillment. Above all, it should be about ensuring that the American dream of improvement and opportunity is rooted in the reality of an educational system that is open and available to all our citizens.

Language issues, so troublesome in any effort to get faculty to think and talk usefully about the cost and value of an education (about the customer), are perhaps not a central issue in the matter of competition. Here the more troublesome matter is pace, or as those in the business community would have it, nimbleness. Donald Kennedy is not the only, though perhaps he is the most notable, observer of higher education to note the great disparity between the demands of executive decision-making and the processes whereby faculty, often after agonizingly protracted discussions, come to a consensus on matters of both policy and action. No one can with any assurance predict the course of the challenges to our current superiority in higher education. One can, however, be fairly certain that those challenges are going to gain strength in the years just ahead and that they will call for responses that are both inventive and expeditious. Faculty have to be ready to meet them.

Finally, there is the matter of change. A quarter of a century ago, when our country was being rocked by protests about the Vietnam war and every day seemed to bring with it a new petition and a new demand for change, I was persuaded that too many people had blindly embraced the principle of change and saw it as the only law of nature and of social life. I believed then, and I

believe now, that there are constants in our lives and in our societies that we disregard only at the risk of great cost. But these constants are, I believe, matters that have to do with systems of value, with principles of behavior and relationships, and with fundamental questions about our identities as human agents. The changes before us in the university do not threaten these crucially important matters. They have to do instead with structures and organizational design; or they have to do, as in the case of the tenure system, with conditions of employment.

It seems imperative, then, that we open up to untrammeled debate all the areas in which change is a vigorous and pressing imperative. When the call for change becomes a call for some fundamental revision of principles that are central to the academic enterprise, faculty members with the full support of their colleagues in administration—should be prepared to resist. But to other suggestions for change, faculty should be open and responsive, prepared to debate those matters that require debate but never insisting that the rules for discussion be defined by the terms that seem most comfortable to dwellers in academe. University life deserves to be valued: the culture of our universities is not merely distinct but worthy, in many of its particular manifestations, of a kind of reverence. But it seems a species of folly to defend that life by a repetitious assertion of its uniqueness when its very continuation depends on finding a way of bringing its purposes and its operation into harmony with those of the society on which it depends.

Call for Contributions

Metropolitan Universities continues to welcome the submission of unsolicited manuscripts on topics pertinent to our eponymous institutions. We seek contributions that analyze and discuss pertinent policy issues, innovative programs or projects, new organizational and procedural approaches, pedagogic developments, and other matters of importance to the mission of metropolitan universities.

Articles of approximately 3,500 words should be intellectually rigorous but need not be cast in the traditional scholarly format nor based on original research. They should be *useful* to their audience, providing better understanding as well as guidance for action. Descriptions of interesting innovations should point out the implications for other institutions and the pitfalls to be avoided. Discussions of broad issues should cite examples and suggest specific steps to be taken. We also welcome manuscripts that, in a reasoned and rigorous fashion, are *provocative*, challenging readers to re-examine traditional definitions, concepts, policies, and procedures.

We would also welcome letters to the editor, as well as opinion pieces for our forum pages. Individuals interested in contributing an article pertaining to the thematic portion of a forthcoming issue, or writing on any of the many other possible subjects, are encouraged to send a brief outline to either the appropriate guest editor (addresses available from the executive editor) or to the executive editor. Letters and opinion pieces should be sent directly to the latter:

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