

***From the
Editor's Desk***

Barbara A. Holland

Transitions. Media pundits warn us that transitions come faster in the knowledge age; faster than we can anticipate. Much has happened since I last sat at my computer to write this column and I want to comment on some recent transitions and developments related to urban and metropolitan institutions.

This issue of *Metropolitan Universities* reports on the unique adaptations and applications of “learning communities” as strategies to improve the educational outcomes of our metropolitan student populations. In keeping with the mission Ernest Lynton set for this journal, that it be “practical and useful,” an exploration of these communities is extremely timely and offers immediately applicable ideas and models for further consideration by readers. Clearly, more metropolitan institutions are moving away from wholesale adoption of educational and organizational models invented in traditional residential settings, and are instead devising innovative interpretations and unique strategies that respond to the characteristics of their students. The idea of organizing students and faculty into learning communities was originally conceived of at the most traditional campuses imaginable, yet a significant number of metropolitan institutions have reinterpreted and enhanced the concept to improve the affiliation, retention, and learning outcomes of metropolitan students.

This ability to take the best from other models and boldly experiment with adaptations for our institutions represents an important maturation. Increased interinstitutional communication and a growing understanding of our shared traits is accelerating the rate of collaboration among universities. We are learning more about ourselves and each other, which facilitates the exploration and evaluation of innovative approaches to improving our metropolitan mission.

Collaborative efforts also strengthen our identity as distinctive institutions. The evolving metropolitan university model is attracting greater attention and deeper understanding from others interested in change in higher education. For example, the idea for an issue on learning communities arose from the experiences of the institutional partners in a multi-year grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts, awarded in 1997 to Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis, Temple University, the University of Houston, and Portland State University. The project is called “Restructuring for Urban Student Success (RUSS).” Each participating institution has implemented different learning communities strategies with the common goal of improving student success, and the grant supports a systematic exploration of their challenges, outcomes, and potentials. In funding the project, Pew is acting on its desire to know more about learning communities strategies, to evaluate the effectiveness of interinstitutional collaboration as a tool for change, and to advance understanding of the identity of metropolitan and urban institutions. Some of the ar-

ticles in this issue of the journal speak to early lessons learned from the project, and Guest Editor Jodi Levine has enhanced those with articles from other institutions and perspectives. The sum is a timely and valuable analysis that will greatly advance discussions of curricular reform.

An aspect of the RUSS project is the development of an entering survey that will collect critical data on our students and any particular characteristics that may affect the outcomes of their learning experience. The collection of accurate data characterizing aspects of the metropolitan university was also a major theme at the Conference of the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities held in San Antonio in February 1998. The conference was successful in every regard and congratulations go to our University of Texas at San Antonio colleagues for its planning and production. The meetings built on past successes and represent a transition to a sophisticated and practical agenda that attracted many individuals from or interested in our institutions.

Considerable progress was also made during the conference toward finally creating a statistical portrait of key elements of the metropolitan mission. A workshop on the subject was standing-room only, and produced a useful first-level analysis of the goals and shape of a portrait. Victor Borden, from Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, and I used outcomes from the workshop as the starting point for a recent all-day meeting among other urban and metropolitan institutional researchers. The project will continue to evolve toward a draft set of data elements that can be piloted in 1998-99.

The portrait project will be a major asset to our collective efforts to improve the accuracy of internal and external understanding of the metropolitan mission. An early revelation of the project is that, while urban and metropolitan institutions have elements in common, we also have many institution-distinctive features. The project will identify variables that report on the commonalities, and will support both internal benchmarking and planning as well as contribute to external communications about our mission and performance. As many metropolitan institutions struggle, for example, to be measured fairly by state-developed performance indicators, the portrait project will become a valuable asset in designing more equitable and accurate measures.

The San Antonio conference in February turned out to foreshadow another transition in the history and life of the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities. All of us there at the conference benefited greatly, as usual, from the presence and participation of Ernest and Carla Lynton, who have been part of the Coalition from its earliest days. Although Ernest had been ill recently, his contributions at San Antonio were as strong and influential as ever, especially in the session he led on international perspectives, and in discussions on the portrait project and the Carnegie classifications. His gift for asking the right question and highlighting a creative strategy was fully in evidence, much to the enrichment of every conversation.

All who had the opportunity to interact with him in San Antonio will treasure the memory of those moments, for Ernest died on March 18, 1998. The

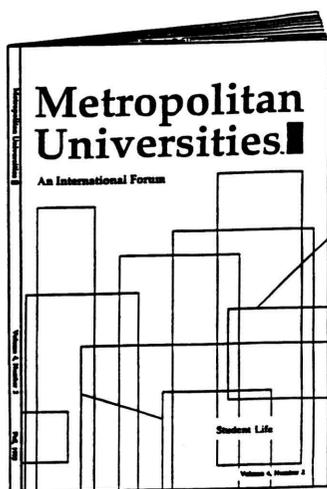
response among those who have worked with him on Coalition matters or other activities has been sadness, yes, but also a remarkable and spontaneous recognition and celebration of the dramatic impact he had on our institutions, our organization, and our lives as individual professionals. From among the many communications received, some highlights are offered in a special section following this editorial column.

For myself, I cannot imagine words to capture fully the impact his work and life had and still have on my sense of personal and professional development. Ernest mightily resisted the notion of being seen as a “mentor,” and was ever modest about his influence on others, but mentor he was, and successfully so for me and many others. I think today not only of the nature of his enormous contributions and legacy to higher education, but rather of the application of his remarkable gifts of communication and collaboration that created a critically important, *living* agenda of ongoing scholarship and innovation in forwarding the mission of metropolitan universities, and the role of professional service in academic lives.

Two expressions of this living agenda were set in motion over the last few years. First was the Ernest A. Lynton Award for Faculty Professional Service and Academic Outreach, created in 1996-97, administered by the New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE), and awarded through a competitive process. Recipients have been recognized at the 1997 and 1998 American Association of Higher Education Forum on Faculty Roles and Rewards. The award pays well-deserved tribute to Ernest’s vision of “colleges and universities as catalysts not only in the discovery of new knowledge, but also in its application throughout society,” by honoring faculty who strongly incorporate professional service into their academic lives.

In addition, the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities has offered research grants in support of scholarship on the characteristics of our institutions for the past three years. In 1997, the Coalition officially identified the program as the Ernest A. Lynton Research Grants. This was a highly appropriate and direct recognition of Ernest’s role not only because of his own significant, pioneering scholarship on the metropolitan mission and the role of service, but because the idea of using the Coalition as a lever to generate broad national interest in the study of our institutions was his. [Articles reporting on the outcomes from the Lynton Research Grants will be included in future issues of *Metropolitan Universities*.]

Finally, this journal was started under Ernest's leadership and, as a result of his own reputation as a scholar, it attracted many top-notch authors and contributors from its very first issue. As founding editor, he quickly established *Metropolitan Universities* as the key forum for sharing information and ideas about our institutions. Each year I shall treasure and honor the opportunity to administer the research grant competition and build future issues of this journal as an expression of Ernest’s ongoing influence on the development and on future transitions for our institutions.



Metropolitan Universities

*The Quarterly Journal of
The Coalition of Urban
and Metropolitan Universities*

“Academic institutions are in a state of transition throughout the world. This is a time of change, of stress and opportunity. The education of those who will lead the world in the twenty-first century is in our hands.

*“If you share our deep concern about the future of higher education in the U.S. and other countries, you’ll want to subscribe to **Metropolitan Universities**. We need not only your interest, but also your input on important issues. . . .*

*“**Metropolitan Universities** aims to be provocative, to challenge readers to examine traditional approaches and propose innovative solutions. **Metropolitan Universities** also aims to be useful. We’re on the ground floor of the Ivory Tower. We want to express vision, but also to document what works.*

—Executive Editor Ernest A. Lynton

Each issue focuses on an important theme in higher education today. We would be pleased to send you a free examination copy!

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Celebrating the contributions of...

Ernest A. Lynton

1926-1998

Numerous colleagues have written us with their reflections on the impressive contributions Ernest made to institutions, individuals, and higher education. From among the many communications received, some highlights are offered here as recognition and celebration of this remarkable individual.

All of us in American higher education, and in particular, those of us in the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities, lost a dear friend and distinguished advocate with the passing of Ernest Lynton. All of us will miss the intellectual leadership he provided our Coalition from its inception.

Ernest was a major leader in articulating the importance and the potential of the role of urban and metropolitan universities. And as the founding editor of *Metropolitan Universities* journal, he created the cornerstone of our Coalition.

Ernest and his work may best be characterized as the glue that held the Coalition together well enough for us to attract a growing membership, now including more than fifty U.S. and four British and Canadian universities. We shall miss his ability to ask the right questions and, more often than not, propose answers that influenced our decisions for our own campuses. As our Coalition forges ahead, we will continue to benefit from reflecting and acting on the example he set for us.

—*Alfred F. Hurley*

*Chancellor and President of the University of North Texas, and
President of the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities*

As publisher of *Metropolitan Universities*, appointed in mid-1995, I had the privilege of knowing Ernest Lynton for a much shorter time than most of those who have written of him in this tribute. But I feel deeply grateful for the opportunity to have worked with him for nearly three years in that close and harmonious collaboration of editor and publisher so essential in the production of a scholarly journal.

Ernest was one of the most vigorous and vibrant gentlemen and scholars that I have ever known. His belief in the mission of the Coalition was profound. The Journal's existence and continued success are due in large part to his dedication, scholarly thinking, hard work, and commitment to fighting for principles—of the Journal, of the institutions we all represent, and of scholarship in general. All of this he did with infallible good humor, diplomacy, and an exquisite sense of timing. As proof, he had the foresight to choose an able successor early in his illness, enabling her to apprentice on the Journal long enough to take on full editorial responsibility without the slightest misstep.

I shall miss Ernie enormously, both professionally and personally. But he has given me and all of us that rarest of contributions—himself and his enduring accomplishments.

—Marilyn Mattsson, *Publisher*
Metropolitan Universities: An International Forum

I first came to know Ernest Lynton in the summer of 1980 when I arrived on the doorstep of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) with the responsibility for organizing a division of urban affairs for the association. When I settled into my office, my colleague Sue Fratkin gave me a very simple first instruction: “Call Ernest Lynton.” At that time he was vice president for academic affairs at the University of Massachusetts and one of the leaders in the creation of the urban affairs division after a long political battle within NASULGC. From that first call until his death, Ernest was a firm ally, mentor, and friend.

What always impressed me most about Ernest was his willingness—indeed eagerness—to push beyond the boundaries and beliefs that American higher education has so comfortably accepted for much of this century. That the urban and metropolitan university could be a legitimate model for higher education, that the most innovative ac-

demic leaders and leadership could be found far from the confines of an Ivy League or land-grant university—these and many other ideas that seemed revolutionary when Ernest first voiced them two and three decades ago—have become key concepts of the late 1990s. Ernest was as steady and forthright as anyone I have known in his belief that the American university could change to serve its students, faculty, and the larger public more effectively.

Ernest's last contribution to *Metropolitan Universities* bore the haunting title, "Time is Running Out." In that essay, he was both warning us about the growing distrust of higher education, and reiterating his belief that the urban and metropolitan university is likely to be the key to recapturing the public trust. The finest tribute we can pay to his memory is to rededicate ourselves to the support and advocacy for these institutions for which he cared so deeply.

—Nevin C. Brown
The Educational Trust

Ernest Lynton will stand out as the most inspiring model of professional creativity and integrity in my life. Even in his last days—when his energy was diminished—he continued to pursue the issues of professional service and the challenges of documenting the related scholarship. He wanted to be certain that faculty would be supported and recognized for their contributions. He committed himself totally to that work, and to its potential to reform higher education and enhance faculty roles and rewards. Ernest was a powerful mentor and friend to me, and I feel immensely privileged to have known and worked with him.

—Amy Driscoll
Portland State University's Director of Community-University Partnerships, and collaborator with Ernest Lynton on the Kellogg-funded Professional Service Documentation Project

In his book with Sandra Elman, *New Priorities for the University*, Ernest Lynton wrote about what a "new" university might be: "The 'new' university is an institution less clearly delineated than the traditional one; it is more interrelated with its surroundings, and it is in fact a part of the context in which it operates....Its faculty will include

practitioners who have learned to incorporate their experience into a theoretical framework, and conversely it will ensure that its academically trained professors will have opportunities for first-hand practical applications of their theoretical knowledge" (p. 163).

We all had the opportunity to work with Ernest Lynton, who served as a Senior Associate at NERCHE, and he joined us in the design of the Program on Faculty Professional Service and Academic Outreach. This program began by exploring what it means for college and university faculty to put Ernest's ideas into practice. He always insisted that we focus on what he called "faculty professional service," and we sometimes wondered why he was so adamant about this term. But Ernest was an experienced administrator and political analyst of higher education who knew that if "professional" were not attached to "service," it would be assimilated into the more familiar, and less valued, sorts of service—committee membership, disciplinary activities, and good works of various sorts. He wanted to underline the usefulness of expert knowledge and at the same time legitimate this way of thinking about it, and he understood that faculty work was the key to bringing higher education back into the public realm after a long period of separation. We will continue to strive toward resolving the issues he raised about how higher education might be changed to accomplish this goal.

—Catherine Burack, Zelda Gamson, Deborah Hirsch,
and Sharon Singleton
New England Resource Center for Higher Education

Among all of the fine individuals involved with *Metropolitan Universities* journal and the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities, Ernest Lynton was a true leader in the field. He took the mission of the urban and metropolitan university seriously and promoted it in every aspect of his administrative and scholarly activity. Perhaps more importantly, he unfailingly commended others for pursuing the mission in their work, thereby assuring that it would be carried into the new millennium. Through his far-reaching insights, Ernest embodied the spirit of the metropolitan university. He contributed time, energy, scholarly and administrative expertise, and most of all, his heartfelt dedication.

—John C. Hitt
President, University of Central Florida