

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

Barbara A. Holland

Before offering an overview of the articles in this issue of the journal, let me draw your attention to some recent and upcoming developments relevant to our institutions.

Work on the "Urban/Metropolitan University Statistical Portrait" continues through the collaborative effort of a team of institutional researchers. The idea behind the portrait is to create a national perspective on the nature of urban and metropolitan institutions that will not only provide a data source to assist with internal planning and benchmarking, but will also guide external audiences seeking to measure our performance or understand our mission. The need for a quantitative portrait of our institutional characteristics was a topic of a large, pre-conference workshop at the February 1998 Coalition meeting held in San Antonio, and Victor Borden from Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis is now working with a team from the Urban 13 universities while I coordinate the research involvement of the Coalition. The current emphasis is on the identification of data elements for which sources may already exist; next we will establish small teams to identify indicators for characteristics not currently measured and to explore other data sources.

The portrait project will again be the focus of a pre-conference workshop when the Coalition holds its 10th national meeting in 1999 at Boise State University. The conference theme, "Metropolitan Universities: Leading Higher Education into the New Millennium," is based on a vision of metropolitan institutions as places exhibiting characteristics that will soon become important to all of higher education: the types of students we serve, the ways we deliver education, and the partnerships we develop. In addition to sessions devoted to academic concerns, student affairs, and institutional advancement, the Boise State team plans several special events featuring the culture and beauty of their region, and President Charles Ruch says everyone will be delighted by the beautiful Idaho weather in October. Save the dates: October 16-19, 1999.

This journal is also about to mark a major milestone. As we approach our 10th year of publication, we are increasingly seen as a significant voice among higher education leaders. There are several simple measures for judging the level of interest in a publication, such as the number of subscriptions or orders for back copies. A more complex measure is the quality, variety, and quantity of unsolicited articles submitted for consideration. By this measure, *Metropolitan Universities* has made a significant leap forward in visibility and readership—during the past year, the number and quality of submissions have increased significantly, presenting, as most changes do, both a challenge and an opportunity.

The challenge comes in the form of breaking, temporarily, from the tradition of having each issue focus on a specific theme. Given the mission of the journal (to be applicable, practical, and immediately useful), the thematic approach is an effective way to give readers a comprehensive survey of diverse perspectives on a particular topic. Our metropolitan and urban institutions have much in common, but they also have distinctive characteristics, and theme issues allow the reader to focus on a topic

with both depth and breadth, and consider how strategies used by others may be translated into a local setting. The downside to this organizational approach is that there is rarely room to publish unsolicited material. In prior years, there were relatively few unsolicited articles, so it was possible to save one of special merit until space was available to include it as an extra article.

The recent increase in unsolicited submissions, many of extraordinary quality and timeliness, presented an exciting opportunity to devote an issue to "sampling" the best of these manuscripts. In addition, the first two research reports from recipients of the Ernest A. Lynton Research Grant Program, funded by the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities, were ready for publication, and lead off this special edition.

Interestingly, the articles, although prepared by authors working separately, clustered naturally around an apparent theme: "The Challenges of Change." Each reports a specific institutional experience or a study of multiple institutions on organizational responses to internal or external forces that press for changes in institutional traditions, accountability, effectiveness, or responsiveness. As more of our institutions move assertively toward fulfilling the metropolitan mission, more is learned about how we must change to support mission-based initiatives and strategies. These articles are a rich resource for those seeking to explore changes in higher education, especially as they relate to metropolitan institutions.

Kathy K. Franklin, from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, used her Lynton Research Grant to conduct a systematic study of the factors metropolitan university administrators use to define and describe institutional effectiveness, which is extremely helpful in understanding the congruence or disparity in how the public judges us and how we define effectiveness for ourselves. She found that administrators share a vision of effectiveness influenced by tensions along three dimensions: the unique characteristics of our students, the abstract nature of a knowledge-driven enterprise, and the practical issues of institutional management. They focused on the key influences of the curriculum, faculty roles, and the learning environment for metropolitan students as expressions of a specific institutional mission, and as components of a bridge among otherwise disparate academic and administrative units. An effective institution uses the curriculum and campus environment to create strong connections between students and faculty, and to link both to the metropolitan world.

"Exploring the Community College Function in a Metropolitan University" is also the product of a Lynton Research Grant. Jane C. Ollenburger and Marcia Belcheir of Boise State University collaborated on an extensive survey of students, faculty, and community members. Boise State, like some other metropolitan universities, has an integrated community college mission, and this research studied the educational expectations of students, faculty, and the community, whether these were similar across the three groups, and what their key concerns were. In general, they found agreement on the most important aspects of the community college experience. The greatest disparity in what was valued in educational goals was between students and faculty, with the community sometimes agreeing with students and sometimes with faculty. Given our stereotypes about the goals of education and its participants' values, you will be surprised by some of the findings reported here.

One of society's pressures on higher education that closely matches the concept of the metropolitan mission is increased attention to community service as a component of an institution's activities. To explore the match between the rhetoric and reality of institutions, Mary Ann Danowitz Sagaria and Joanne Marie Burrows looked at the service attentiveness of institutions in one of our nation's most urbanized states, Ohio. In particular, they examined internal policies and practices associated with community service, which are often seen as critical barriers/facilitators to service activities, by surveying chief academic officers at 55 public and private institutions in 15 metropolitan areas of Ohio. The article, which needs to be read in its entirety, reports some surprising and some affirming findings about the match between mission beliefs and institutional action. Suffice it to say, however, that the good news is that more than half the institutions perceived service as important to their mission and goals, and some report success in involving faculty, students, and administration in service activities. Consistent with my own observations of institutions and their commitment to service, the authors suspect that service levels may currently be maintained by faculty who feel individual commitment, and more needs to be done to develop institutional support.

Three authors from Metropolitan State College of Denver express their concerns about the future of the primary coin of the realm in higher education—the student credit hour. Joan M. Foster, George Becker, and Patricia Stranahan offer an interesting argument about how the credit hour has come to be the universal foundation for academic standards and so central to the measurement of academic achievement. They go on to speculate on how new delivery systems are challenging the credibility of the credit hour as a means of measurement, and how it is affected by the adoption of new learning formats. They are rightly concerned about a rush to implement alternative methods of instruction without adequate work on new and appropriate methods of evaluating student outcomes, and they offer some specific recommendations for new ways by which to accommodate measurement of student achievement and to protect academic standards, which are important concerns that have not received adequate attention in the highly politicized conversations pushing new delivery systems.

Anne L. Schneider from Arizona State University proposes a way of organizing our thinking around the reward systems for faculty involvement in public service that expands the narrow dichotomy of basic vs. applied research by articulating a wider range of research that may have variable applications to community and societal needs. By exploring different possible meanings of the concept of “relevant research,” she shows us that much research can be shown to be relevant to both theory and practice. All forms of research are valued in her model, and some so-called applied work is actually essential to the advancement of theoretical models. She then provides suggestions for the role of faculty development and incentives to help them benefit from involvement in a wider array of types of research. She also wisely discusses the role of leadership, especially by chairs and deans, in providing consistent guidelines that fairly and rigorously measure the outcomes of diverse kinds of research or of one research activity. Her different approach to conceptualizing the role of research as a tool for community service will be helpful to many metropolitan institutions.

Many institutions are presented with opportunities to serve new areas, neighborhoods, or special populations through an extended campus presence or alternative de-

livery method. David Bell and colleagues at University of Houston—a rare urban university in that it is a multi-campus system—describe lessons learned from an interesting case of campus outreach. When presented with the request of a new community seeking access to higher education programs, the multiple campuses were compelled to work together and develop a shared strategy for a teaching center. The authors present a number of interesting ideas on promoting collaborative academic planning that could apply to any institution's exploration of interdisciplinary programming or interinstitutional partnerships to serve a particular population or location.

While issues of change and strategies, such as in rewards, curriculum, and assessment, are widely discussed, little has been said about the impact of change on shared governance. Many of us who have been involved in leading and/or studying change have worked explicitly with questions of how a change process can foster and strengthen a sense of shared governance—properly done, a change conversation or strategic planning process can actually build a stronger sense of campus community and shared responsibility. Kenneth B. Peter and Linda L. Bain give us an excellent case study of the components they found helpful in uniting the faculty senate and campus administration of San Jose State University in a common cause toward major academic reform. They call our attention to two important elements that are essential to the success of a truly shared change process: legitimacy, in terms of the legitimacy of participation; and energy, in terms of the urgency of issues and clarity of goals and support for implementation. This is groundbreaking work on which other institutions can easily build their own case studies.

Our final article on the challenges of change cuts across all these topics by proposing a framework of four approaches to change, especially that meant to strengthen the outreach role of an institution, in which Frank A. Fear, Lorilee R. Sandmann, and Mark A. Lelle of Michigan State report extensive analysis of cases of change related to outreach, drawing on the experiences of many different institutions as well as the relevant literature. These four approaches provide a helpful way for institutions to think strategically about their approaches to change and to the development of outreach functions, and the article is valuable reading for anyone concerned with the structure and performance of outreach functions that are being purposeful and intentional, using the authors' effective ways of articulating options and choices.

I want to thank all of our contributing authors, some of whom waited more than a year to see their manuscripts in print, and others who worked hard on revisions to make their articles more useful to our audience. At first, I never imagined that the articles would end up organized around a theme—especially change. Perhaps this reflects my own bias of ongoing involvement in studying and leading change, but I think not; the quality of these articles is undeniable and relevant. The fact is that change is happening, in many forms and in many places, and these authors were sufficiently affected by their experiences that they wanted to analyze and share with others. I also believe that the work of the Coalition, through its conferences, this journal, and the research program, is beginning to raise the visibility of metropolitan university concerns among researchers. This is good news indeed, and it will both help expand the understanding of our mission and inform our own efforts.