

In the pages that follow, we have compiled an initial set of interesting, focused, and serious articles on regional economic development and the various ways that metropolitan universities can, do, and should participate in the development process.

Public policy in this country has made communities increasingly responsible for their well-being, now and into the future; and more and more of those communities are metropolitan areas of primary and secondary size. As a result, perhaps no theme covered so far in this journal positions metropolitan universities more clearly as the 1990s *urban* equivalent of the agricultural extension service units of the land-grant universities created over a century ago.

The impact on rural America of the land-grant institutions obviously was profound; with urban America now evolving (but probably not progressing) so rapidly, an equivalent form of comprehensive assistance and support is needed. In limited ways in certain urban areas, such assistance and support have come from metropolitan universities; however, the ways need to be increased and improved, especially because the communities need them more and more.

In such a context, this issue on regional development is the first of two that have been conceived to bring together and relate actual "urban extension service" experiences, and to provide information, if not lessons, to other metropolitan areas and universities from those experiences.

The particular ways in which metropolitan universities can participate directly and meaningfully in regional development have been varied. First, metropolitan universities are major institutions in their communities, possessing large pools of professional and technical expertise to help to address priority issues. Similar to corporate headquarters (but positioned even better than corporations due to the universities' *perceived* respectability, neutrality, and lack of selfish economic motivation), metropolitan universities can be both the catalysts for bringing together and the glue for keeping together otherwise fragmented and/or diverse groups that have to be together if complex development issues (that often have underlying political dynamics) ever are to be addressed effectively. Two articles in this issue provide case studies of this role in two major U.S. metropolitan areas.

Mary Ellen Mazey's article discusses the particular role Wright State University has played in creating a regional approach to economic development planning in the Dayton-Springfield, Ohio, area. Robert Caret and Ted Zaleski present a comparable view of the experience in the Baltimore area of Towson State University through its extended staffing commitment to a regional development planning initiative.

Second, metropolitan universities, again like major corporations, are institutions *of* the communities in which they are located. This means that their mere presence—irrespective of any formal programs—generates environmental, social, and economic consequences. These, in turn,

lead to a series of institutional responsibilities that go well beyond those entailed in a university's primary—i.e., academic—mission. Gene Grigsby's article presents a case study of such a responsibility to the Los Angeles neighborhood surrounding Occidental College, and of how the college has tried to deal with that responsibility.

Third, particular academic activities of metropolitan universities also have regional development impacts or potential impacts that go beyond their formal teaching, research, or service purpose. These programs also can be consciously used as formal parts of a regional development strategy. John Naughton's article is comparably illuminating. It describes the outcomes of the increasing leadership role played by the University at Buffalo medical school with its eight independent teaching hospitals and the effect that new role has had on the cost, marketability, quality, and accessibility of medical care in the greater Buffalo area.

And finally, as with any institution (especially one in an ever-changing environment) that has to remain open to and capable of change if it is to continue to be vital and competitive, metropolitan universities—even though relatively young in concept—need to evolve if they are to be as important to their urban societies as their land-grant university predecessors were to rural America. John Melville's article presents carefully delineated scenarios as to whether and how that change can occur and what outcomes can be expected from each.

The next issue of *Metropolitan Universities* also will focus on regional development. It will extend the perspectives contained in the present articles to other countries and will contain as well articles on urban extension and Ohio's Urban University Program. In addition, the issue will present an assessment of the actual impacts of university research/technology parks on ongoing regional economic activity and consider ways in which metropolitan universities can meet the information needs of the community's regional development professionals who are increasingly interacting with their metropolitan university colleagues.