

It is a time of transition, within our small campus and on the national scene. At the micro level, this issue, the last of our third volume, marks the end of our association with Transaction Publishers. Beginning with the next issue, *Metropolitan Universities* will be published by and at Wright State University. We are happy about the move because it will consolidate and facilitate production. But we never could have started our new venture without the personal support and the technical resources of our partners at Transaction. We are most grateful to Irving Louis Horowitz, its president; to Mary Curtis, its publisher; and to all the members of its staff who contributed to the evolution of our journal.

Transition, of rather more profound significance, has taken place on the national scene. These remarks are written on the day after the presidential election. By the time they are published, Bill Clinton will have been sworn in and his initial program presented: a quarterly journal with a production time line of several months is not the vehicle for timely comments on current events. Yet the potential impact of the change in Washington on the fate of our metropolitan areas and hence on the role of metropolitan universities is so considerable that it must be mentioned in these jottings. Metropolitan issues did not loom large during the campaign, but there is much reason to hope, and to expect, that they will receive substantially more attention from the new administration than they have had in the recent past. Metropolitan universities will have increased opportunities as well as greater responsibility to be, as is our claim, major intellectual and cultural resources to our region.

That intensifies the urgent need for these institutions to take a critical look at the institutional practices, structures, and policies so as to ensure that these facilitate, and do not hinder, the complex tasks ahead. Paramount among the matters requiring attention is the quality of the teaching and learning that goes on, under our aegis, both on and off campus, inside and outside the classroom. Assessment, a powerful tool in this undertaking, is the theme of the current issue of *Metropolitan Universities*. I am most grateful to Barbara Wright, who for three years directed the Assessment Forum of the American Association for Higher Education and has now returned to the faculty of the University of Connecticut. She has done a magnificent job as guest editor: indeed, she identified so many excellent authors that we are forced to hold over several contributions until the next issue.