

The summer of 1998 was highlighted by a number of opportunities to discuss higher education trends and issues, all of which had implications for urban and metropolitan institutions. Let me highlight three for you very briefly.

First, I was pleased to participate in the start-up conference of an exciting grant program that may help expand our understanding of the mission of urban and metropolitan universities. The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), with support from a Kellogg Foundation grant, has competitively selected eight of its private member institutions that have made an explicit commitment to the concepts of an urban mission, and exhibit many characteristics familiar to public urban and metropolitan universities. They not only provide high quality, responsive academic programming to citizens of major metropolitan areas; they are also acutely aware of the potential impact their economic and intellectual resources can have on major metropolitan issues.

Through the Kellogg grant program, these schools are exploring the external and internal implications of the urban mission through implementation or expansion of specific community-university partnerships, working individually and collectively to capture lessons learned that may serve as useful guides for other private institutions interested in community engagement. I believe that public urban and metropolitan universities will also learn much by observing how the complex issues of community involvement and metropolitan challenges play out in the setting and context of a private institution. Some of you may have met representatives of the eight colleges when they attended the Coalition conference in San Antonio in February.

A second highlight for me was the opportunity to participate in a challenging meeting hosted by Robert Diamond of the Institute for Change in Higher Education at Syracuse University. More than fifty higher education researchers, presidents, provosts, deans, and trustees gathered for a three-day session that considered the question: What would be the curricular content and program design for a proposed "National Academy for Academic Leadership?" In a rich and complex discussion we explored the pressures for change in higher education and the impact these might have on the preparation and professional development of academic and administrative leaders and faculty. Bob Diamond and his group are working on the idea of an academy that would provide diverse programs in support of institutional teams and leaders seeking to achieve academic change and mission distinctiveness.

The discussions produced an understanding that pressures for change will not only affect institutions differentially, but that some are already changing and we can learn from their experience. Many of the challenges faced by colleges and universities involve issues of higher education that have long been part of the working experience of metropolitan universities—yet another affirmation that the deliberate attention our institutions give to the characteristics of our missions and the measurement of outcomes

from our organizational strategies often become models for others. We look forward to hearing more about this project from the Syracuse group; such a strategy may accelerate institutional change across higher education through new forms of professional development and technical assistance.

The third event of the summer was a major professional move in my life. From 1991-98, I had the opportunity to contribute to the strategic development of Portland State University as an urban research university seen by many as a model for mission-driven change leading to significant academic and administrative enhancements. My work there was rewarding, especially as a member of the leadership team guiding PSU through rapid but sustainable changes that have since inspired many other institutions to tackle reform. The PSU experience taught me much about my own interests and changed my career directions in many ways, and I owe a great deal to many wonderful colleagues at PSU. Among other things, I learned that I truly love the creative and innovative aspects of organizational change. Thus, this summer seemed the right time to accept new challenges in a new setting where I could help to make a difference in another institution's development.

As of August 1, 1998, I serve as Associate Provost for Strategic Planning and Outreach at Northern Kentucky University (NKU). During 1997-98, NKU's new president, James C. Votruba, led the campus through a highly inclusive review of the "Vision, Values, and Voices" that shape NKU and its relationship to its region. NKU identifies itself as a "learner-centered metropolitan university" and is building effectively on its already excellent reputation for teaching and learning. Located in the Greater Cincinnati Metropolitan Area, NKU is in the heart of an expanding regional economy with complex and changing educational and information needs. In addition, Kentucky places a high priority on the development of its entire educational system as a way of creating a strong economy and a high quality of life. NKU's potential to become a national model of the fully-realized metropolitan university is enormous, and the commitment of faculty, staff, students, and community is impressive. I joined NKU to help facilitate the implementation of its strategic vision and action objectives, and to contribute to the enhancement of diverse external partnerships that respond to economic, social, and human development needs of the region. I will, of course, continue to serve as Executive Editor of this journal and to be active in Coalition affairs. Please make a note of my new address information on the inside front cover, and stay in touch!