

**A Contribution
to the
Conversation about the Future
from the
Board of Deans
May 2000**

Introduction

In his October 1999 address to the campus, President McCormick called for a Conversation About the Future. He invited the campus community to participate in a collective discussion. In April 2000, the Board of Deans met for two days to consider the contributions the Board could collectively make to the Conversation About the Future. The Board of Deans comprises the Deans of the colleges, the Director of Libraries, the Chancellors of UW Tacoma and UW Bothell and the Provost. While many events related to the Conversation have occurred throughout the year, including many activities within individual colleges, the Deans considered that they could make a collective contribution to the discussion by focusing on broad university-wide issues. Prior to the meeting, four documents were compiled by small working groups to act as a stimulus to the debate. Two days of discussion took place about the values that define our University, and the assumptions we must make about likely trends and forces that will influence our future. At the end of the discussion an effort was made to identify immediate actions we might take to sustain the quality of, and respect for, the University.

As a starting premise we recognized that higher education is caught in a matrix of forces that are external, enduring and sometimes contradictory. These forces will affect our primary mission as a place of inquiry*. The way we respond to these forces must be determined by our values. The future success of the University of Washington depends upon our ability to:

1. Understand the risks and opportunities associated with these forces of change
2. Identify our values, our core interests and unique strengths
3. Create adaptive strategies that define for the University a clear role at the state, regional national and international levels.

The report of the Deans' discussions represents an open document, designed to contribute to the campus conversation. While it lists our assumptions and assessment of opportunities it also raises many questions. The report lists these questions in the hopes of stimulating discussion and tapping the collective wisdom of the University community regarding who we are, what we wish to be, and steps we might take to realize those visions. We encourage comments in order to continue the conversation: please send them to the Conversation Web site email uwfuture@u.washington.edu or to nowell@u.washington.edu.

Vision and Values

Vision Statement

As a leading public research university, the University of Washington strives for the highest levels of excellence that will maintain and enhance our position as one of the world's distinguished institutions of higher learning. The UW thus serves the long-term interests of the State of Washington, the nation, and the world through its core missions of education, research, and service.

* Burton R. Clark 1995. Places of Inquiry. University of California Press

We are an inquiry-based institution, devoted to discovery, creativity and scholarship and committed to maintaining a comprehensive university community that embraces intellectual and academic diversity. Our efforts produce results that have significance to the State, region, nation, and at times, the world.

Values of a Public Research University

Public

We welcome our responsibility to serve the long-term interests of the State of Washington, the nation, and the world through all of our missions, achieved by a faculty, staff, and student body that reflects the diversity of our society. It is our responsibility to provide access to the highest quality education for the citizens of the state of Washington, to discover new knowledge of enduring value, and to provide significant contributions to the understanding and solution of major societal issues. Our service to the state, region and nation is immediate and lasting through the impact of our students and our scholarship.

Research

We are an inquiry-based institution, devoted to discovery, creativity and scholarship. We believe that research, both fundamental and applied, is of intrinsic value to the future of society. Research plays a role in all aspects of the University.

University

We are a community dedicated to the joy of learning. We are dedicated to the growth of every individual in an environment that embraces intellectual and academic diversity, and that values civil discourse. As a leading public research institution we are committed to maintaining a rich and complementary matrix of programs and opportunities. The impact of our collective contributions exceeds the sum of our individual contributions.

Questions

In order to better understand the meaning of the values described in this statement, we offer the following questions to provoke discussion.

- A. Does the above statement encompass your view of the University?
- B. How do we distinguish short-term pressures and expectations from underlying, enduring values?
- C. Are our underlying values changing or is it the public expectations that are changing?
- D. How best can the University organize itself to strengthen core values in the face of the current demands on public universities?
- E. If the University were to take one action in the coming year, based on these core values, what would that action be?

Assumptions

What are the assumptions we can make or should make in looking at the future success of the University of Washington?

There are eight assumptions: Demographic, Economic, Technology, Research, Organization, Competition, Globalization, Change

Assumption #1: Demographics

Demand for higher education will increase, driven by a new wave of first time students and a growing number of adults pursuing lifelong learning opportunities.

Strategy:

Plan for growth

Background

A new wave of students is coming to higher education. By 2010, total higher education enrollment in the state of Washington is expected to grow by nearly 40%, from 220,000 to 303,000. The University has been asked to provide access to 20,691 additional students by 2010, to be distributed roughly equally across our three campuses. Total enrollment would rise from 32,919 Annual Average Full Time Equivalent students to 52,000; enrollment served by the Seattle campus would rise from 31,297 to 39,000. In addition, adults are increasingly returning to school to upgrade their skills or to seek advanced graduate and professional education.

These projections contain four uncertainties. While the number of high school graduates will increase, we can only estimate how many will seek higher education, though it would be surprising if participation rates dropped over the next generation. While students may seek higher education, new opportunities through distance education may result in fewer coming to campus. It is not clear that the state will decide to fund all of the students who seek higher education. Last, the number of new students allocated to the UW may exceed physical capacity on all three of our campuses unless the state funds future capital construction.

Opportunities

1. Shape the undergraduate and graduate population to educate those students most motivated and prepared to take advantage of the special opportunities at the UW.
2. Recruit a diverse population of students, faculty and staff
3. Adapt curriculum and programs to meet the needs of the population shifts.
4. Create new and innovative educational programs that serve lifelong learners.

Questions

- A. Should certain disciplines grow more rapidly than others? Is there a comparative advantage in growing in some areas and not in others?

- B. What is the optimum relationship among our four “campuses” (Seattle, Bothell, Tacoma, and Extension/Distance Learning)?
- C. How should the curriculum (pedagogy, process and content) be reviewed in light of the changing population demographics?
- D. How should the University plan for growth? What internal changes would allow us to make better use of our faculty and facilities in educating larger numbers of students?

Assumption #2: Economics

State support for higher education will remain below that required to maintain the high quality of our education and research program.

Strategy:

Plan to diversify the University’s base of financial support.

Background

The State of Washington may lack either the ability or the will to support the University of Washington at a level required to maintain excellence in education and research. The state now provides approximately 16% of our operating budget, and funds a large part of our capital construction. Demands for state funds make it likely that support to the University will not change significantly and may decline over time.

Opportunities

1. Funding diversification can arise from the UW considering the whole financial picture and focusing energy across a broader range and where biggest returns will come from:
 - Federal support
 - Foundation support, private gifts
 - Income generating, corporate partnerships
 - Tuition setting authority
2. Explore the possible impacts of changing the balance from state-supported to state-assisted higher education, including a careful analysis of tuition-related issues.
3. UW Development will increase its partnerships with units.
4. Partnerships with foundations and corporations will provide new opportunities to introduce new technology into the University.

Questions

- A. What strategies should the University develop to operate in a more efficient and effective manner so as to maximize our financial resources?

- B. What opportunities exist, in what areas, to develop additional resource streams for the University? For example: Changes in tuition policy, number of out of state students, increase in self-sustaining distance learning programs, corporate collaborations, expansion of federal and grant funds, private donations.
- C. How can we communicate and work most effectively with the state legislature?
- D. Can we coordinate better on federal budget/policy issues?

Assumption #3: Technology

The use of information technology will accelerate, changing the way faculty teach, students learn, and how education is distributed and delivered.

Strategy:

Ensure that technological infrastructure remains at the highest level and access to technology is widely available to faculty, students and staff. Support the development of new methods of teaching and learning based on emerging educational technology.

Background

The University remains at the forefront of information technology. In recent years we have become one of the elite universities chosen to participate in Internet II, ensuring that we will enjoy a national advantage in information technology. We took lead responsibility for the development of the Washington K-20 network, thus creating new opportunities for partnerships with other institutions. In addition, through UWired, we have developed a comprehensive structure for bringing information technology to students and faculty and have begun a transformation in teaching and learning. All of these achievements have greatly expanded our capacity for offering various forms of learning including distance education.

Opportunities

1. Foster an organization-wide view of technology as an investment, not a cost.
2. University-wide technology services continue to be developed that are compatible with unit-based technology plans.
3. Develop a coordinated strategy for the increased use of technology in teaching and learning in service to students (PETTT, CELT, UWIREN, etc.)
4. Improve infrastructure development to meet instructional and research needs.
5. In addition to C&C's crucial transformational role in bringing state-of-the-art broad-band networking to the University, enhance the role of C&C as a service unit and a responsive technical support organization.
6. Increase the number of technology-oriented educational programs on campus that contribute to technological innovation and capitalize on the strengths in technology and technology program content available in academic units.

7. Utilize Foundation support to position the UW as a world showcase for the use of technology in teaching and learning in higher education.
8. Through professional development activities, overcome resistance to technology as a perceived threat, both as an enabler for teaching and learning and as content in curricula or programs

Questions

- A. How do we sustain an effective investment strategy for new technology on campus, especially in light of differing funding sources and the spectrum of local needs?
- B. How do we ensure that all sectors of the University are brought into the fast changing world of information technology?
- C. If we are going to have an adaptive university, how do you maintain information flow and coordination?

Assumption #4: Research

The demand for new knowledge to fuel economic growth and address social problems will increase, leading to a greater investment in research by the federal government, foundations and private business.

Strategy:

Secure the University's excellence in research and its success in competing for research funding.

Background

We are moving into what some call a Knowledge Age. Universities now serve as the primary institution for the production and distribution of new knowledge and this part of our mission is likely to become even more important in the future. There is evidence that the federal government is preparing to increase funding for the major agencies that support university research while at the same time research partnerships between universities and private industry are becoming much more common. The University of Washington has been extremely successful in competing for research funds and the future excellence of the institution depends on maintaining our competitive edge in research.

Opportunities

1. Enhanced facilitation and support for research through central services that provide a coordination mechanism can increase research funding success and complement locally based services.
2. Strong funding support will come to the UW for its interdisciplinary research.
3. The ability of research programs to compete will be enhanced by increased attention to facilities maintenance and renovation.

Questions:

- A. Faculty are the foundation upon which the University success is based, how do we ensure we remain competitive in attracting and retaining our best faculty?
- B. Future growth in research depends on the availability of adequate physical facilities. Given the tremendous demand on the state for construction funds, and current bonding limits, what new strategies should the University follow to meet its capital needs?
- C. A key to research success is that the institution remains “nimble” enabling faculty to move quickly to pursue new opportunities. What are the barriers to such nimbleness within the University now and how can they be reduced?
- D. The capacity of the University to create new opportunities in emerging fields will be a key to our future success. The UIF is one mechanism for reallocating existing funds to new and promising enterprises. What additional means can we use to promote and support innovation in scholarship and research?

Assumption #5: Organization

New educational organizations, coalitions and partnerships will emerge to take advantage of growing opportunities in information technology, educational markets and research. Increasing these partnerships will involve the private sector.

Strategy:

Actively pursue opportunities with appropriate partners in both the public and private sectors when such opportunities further our core missions of teaching, research and service.

Background

The organizational structure of higher education is rapidly changing. New educational providers such as University of Phoenix and Western Governors University are just two examples of a bewildering number of new partnerships, consortia, and private ventures all made possible by emerging technology and the public’s desire for education. At the same time our research activities are creating new licensing agreements, start-up companies, and partnerships with the private sector. The University is poised to participate in this new environment. Our challenge is increasingly one of choice: with whom and in what way should we participate?

Opportunities:

- 1. The UW can become a learning organization.
- 2. The organizational culture can help build community.
- 3. Continuing to develop an effective balance of shared services versus individual operations.

Questions:

- A. How can we best organize relationships between our three campuses?

- B. New educational coalitions are all ready beginning to form in both the public and private sector. How do we best collaborate or compete with others?
- C. What barriers and opportunities exist for extending collaborative relations in research with private industry?
- D. What new organizational arrangements or investments need to be made on campus to ensure that we maximize opportunities for new partnerships?

Assumption #6: Competition

Competition will increase as both traditional educational institutions, coalitions of institutions and new organizations in the private sector challenge us for students, research and funding.

Strategy:

Clarify the roles the UW plays and the niches to occupy at the state, regional and national levels. Organize to dominate our niches.

Background

Defining the University of Washington in terms of who we are, what we do and what makes us unique will become increasingly important as we compete for students, state support, research funds and private philanthropy. At the state level, and at the regional and national levels in some schools and colleges, our challenge is to attract the most prepared and motivated students. At the regional level we have played a key role in providing specialized educational and medical services and in the future will have opportunities to do yet more. At the national level our challenge is at least twofold: to be identified as national leaders in certain areas of research and to differentiate ourselves from other large research intensive state universities as we compete for students and seek private support.

Opportunities:

1. Units can define their niche more carefully in order to better understand and serve their needs.
2. Better definition of strategies that will enhance competitiveness.

Questions:

- A. Should the University of Washington increasingly select its undergraduate student body from the most prepared and motivated students in the state? Should we expand our current role in the region or nation?
- B. As the pre-eminent research and graduate training institution in the region, should we shift the mix of our students toward graduate education?
- C. Is there value in investing more heavily in our strongest undergraduate and graduate programs, or are we better off maintaining a broad range? How should we shape the role and clarify the image of our Bothell and Tacoma campuses?

D. How do we develop “brand names” locally, nationally, and via the Internet?

Assumption #7: Globalization

Strategy:

Organize to use the University’s considerable resources in people and programs to address worldwide opportunities and challenges.

Opportunities

1. The UW can identify a niche in the rapidly changing global environment by analyzing the dynamics of the globalization of higher education.
2. The UW can become pre-eminent in this area by capitalizing on regional advantages, issues and technology.

Questions:

A. What allocation of resources is necessary to develop an international strategy?

Assumption #8: Change

The rate of change in higher education will accelerate over the next several years.

Strategy:

University leadership should continue to develop its agenda for change, to ensure that we successfully capitalize on evolving conditions and new opportunities.

Background

All of the eight assumptions about the future predict change. The type of academic leadership needed, at all levels of the University, in a time of change may be different than that required under conditions of stability. Institutions that are best led and most adaptable have the best chance of future success.

Opportunities

1. Creation of a shared vision of leadership development for faculty/staff/students.
2. Establishment of programs to help people develop as leaders and build depth of leadership experience in units.
3. Increased adaptability created by enhanced flow and coordination of information.

Questions

- A. What is required of leadership in times of change?
- B. How can Deans, the Provost’s Office and the President’s Office most effectively work together to provide the most effective leadership for colleges and the University?
- C. How can we improve communications?

- D. How do we confront “change avoidance” behavior?
- E. Are we too risk averse?
- F. How can we make change without tearing the university apart?

Ideas for Change

On the last morning of discussion the Board quickly tried to list ideas where action could be taken. This compilation represents the individual ideas from Deans and is not ordered nor ranked by importance or impact. The ideas are arranged under the headings used to examine our assumptions. We strove to recognize the need for overall strategies that characterize the university’s responsiveness to major societal changes and the efficiency of university-shared services, and balance this against the local desire for autonomy.

Demographics

Shape the student population, including the balance between undergraduate and graduate enrollments, to educate those most motivated and prepared to benefit from a UW education.

Recruit across state, region, and nation to attract the most motivated and prepared students

Recruit to ensure a diverse student population

Make SAT and GRE scores optional in the admission process.

Develop new metrics to measure “prepared” and “motivated.”

Examine the advantages of a university-wide strategy for online learning and provide technical infrastructure and support. Especially assess global opportunities.

“Recalibrate Undergraduate majors”. Remove 20% of required courses from a typical major. Free faculty time for new educational activities.

Identify and implement mechanisms to attract more out-of-state minority students.

Economics

Build an infrastructure to encourage collaborations (ranging from within our university community to the global community) with governments, industry and business, that enhance our (faculty, staff, students) joy of learning.

Lay out a strategy to support those units with the potential for public-private partnerships. In light of future funding uncertainties and constraints within the state, examine the costs and potential for increased privatization of parts of UW

Assess space and infrastructure needs for support and explore models for long-term leasing of off-campus space.

Technology

Identify how best to infuse technology (current and anticipated) into our entire academic enterprise

Organize meetings with sponsors (public, private and philanthropic) to brainstorm about how to make UW the most advanced university in the use of technology.

Research

Create an on-going, coordinated mechanism for us to influence the federal funding agenda. We need to be in the position of anticipating and shaping, not just responding.

Examine the costs and benefits of a separate, not-for-profit UW research foundation with all grants and contracts going through. Develop models and options specific to schools and colleges for purchasing versus providing central support.

Streamline grants & contracts, ensure rapid dissemination of information about new opportunities and improve infrastructure for programs.

Competition

Develop programs to recruit, retain and reward the best people

Identify the “niche,” specific mission, for each of our three campuses (each campus shouldn’t try to be all things to all people) and aggressively develop each campus accordingly. For example, make UWT and UWB high quality, exemplary institutions offering undergraduate (4 years) and Master’s programs. Further strengthen and develop UWS as graduate and research institution.

Globalization

Develop support mechanisms to sustain multi-university partnerships which encourage international and multi-cultural educational experiences

Change

Implement leadership development for all levels of administration, faculty and supervisors.

Re-evaluate the campus calendar and time schedule in light of our identity as a research university and significant changes in pedagogy, especially those related to new technologies.

Allow graduate, professional and educational outreach programs to have a rolling calendar (i.e. programs can begin and end at different months of the year; “terms” can vary in length to suit the academic needs of the program). Use the conversion from quarters to semesters as a catalyst to re-think curriculum and course structure.

Extend the system of incentives and structures that supports interdisciplinary and cross-college academic initiatives. How do we best inspire collaboration wherever it is needed?

Pilot test on a significant scale a university-wide venture capitol fund to provide modest grants in support of faculty and staff who are putting together grant proposals for external funding of worthy projects.