

RUNNING THE UNIVERSITY: REPORT FROM THE KNIGHT COMMITTEE

By STEVE SHINN



"The campus is where the action is—here are the faculty, the students, the libraries and laboratories and all that is required to make a university. . . . The life of the University of Missouri is made manifest in the four campuses."



THE UNIVERSITY of Missouri is nearly 150 years old. The four-campus system is not yet 25 years old. Is it any wonder that Columbia Campus alumni, faculty and staff felt uneasy and even threatened when the Board of Curators and the system administrators used to talk about "one University in four locations"?

For that matter, is it any wonder that the Rolla, Kansas City and St. Louis campuses felt threatened by Mizzou, the first public university west of the Mississippi River?

Fifteen years ago, when the University administration indicated that "no single campus will be comprehensive" and presented a plan that would move doctoral programs, departments, schools and colleges (including, perhaps, the College of Engineering) from Columbia to other campuses, fear intensified. That role-and-scope plan was not implemented, but the suspicion lingered.

The Knight Committee apparently understood this. It concluded that there never had been one university in four locations, but in fact there were four distinct universities bound together in a multicampus system.

The Knight Committee was responding to an objective of the University's long-range plan that called for a study of the administrative structure, "with special emphasis on the appropriate division of responsibility between central administration and the campuses." Appointed by President C. Peter Magrath, the committee was headed by Charles F. Knight of St. Louis, chairman and chief executive officer of Emerson Electric Co. The other member outside the University family was Dr. Harold L. Enanson, president emeritus of The Ohio State University and a consultant for several education groups. The committee held public hearings on each campus. Knight met privately with each chancellor. Enanson visited each curator. Both met several times with Magrath.

THE COMMITTEE came down on the side of greater autonomy for the campuses, calling for strong chancellors and a strong president. It rejected a proposal that the offices of president and chancellor of the Columbia Campus be combined, pointing out that the president could not serve effectively as leader of the management team while being an advocate for a single campus.

The president will concentrate on planning, budgeting and fund raising, both private and through legislative relations. The president's precise role in fund raising has yet to be determined. A fund-raising consultant is to make recommendations in June.

The chancellors, reporting directly to the president, will be part of his management team that will help determine budget allocations and program responsibilities for each of the campuses. The chancellors "enjoy the

luxury of promoting the fortunes of a single campus, while the president balances the interests of all the campuses," the report says.

"The campus is where the action is—here are the faculty, the students, the libraries and laboratories and all that is required to make a university. It is the campus that has the sports programs, the alumni, the web of rewarding linkages with the community. The life of the University of Missouri is made manifest in the four campuses. It is here, in the classroom and laboratory, that the quality of teaching and learning is largely determined, shaped only indirectly by administrative officers in University Hall."

CHANCELLOR BARBARA S. UEHLING says she "applauds the report. I'm extremely grateful to Chuck Knight and his committee for the time and attention they gave."

The campuses asked for more freedom to manage their own affairs. The committee agreed and so does the president.

Magrath already has taken steps to implement the recommendation that calls for perhaps moving some support services from central administration to the campuses. Possible candidates for transfer include facility planning, computing and some accounting services. The president asked Jim Magill, vice president for administrative affairs, to work with his campus counterparts to recommend changes within six months.

Perhaps the key recommendation was as follows: "Resources must be allocated relative to the needs of the campuses. Needs should be determined by the University leadership and the Board of Curators in accord with clearly defined campus missions and program priorities. The committee believes this will require reallocation among the campuses that goes beyond that which can be achieved through differential allocation of incremental resources."

To many on the Columbia Campus, that sounded awfully like the old role and scope. Reallocation, of course, is nothing new. Reallocation of resources has been a way of life within individual campuses for 15 years. But there has been little, if any, reallocation among campuses—that is, transferring some of the rate base of one campus to another. That concept makes members of the Columbia Campus family nervous because it seems easier to reallocate from more to less, rather than from less to more. And Mizzou is the largest, most comprehensive of the four campuses.

All campuses have been underfunded for years, of course. And Magrath makes the point that Columbia's problems are not caused by UMKC, UMR or UMSL. The underfunding is a state problem. And if the University can show that it is well-managed, that it can set priorities and work toward them, then it

will win the credibility necessary to achieve an appropriate level of state support.

As far as reallocation is concerned, Magrath says he has no hidden agenda. The University is operating under a long-range plan, and budgeting will follow the plan.

"It didn't bother me at all that UMC received \$3 million in special funding from the General Assembly this session for Food for the 21st Century and the molecular biology program." Both programs are slated for worldwide eminence under the long-range plan. "Next time, it may be a program on some other campus that will receive special funding."

While it might make sense to move some of what Magrath calls "subsets" of academic programs among campuses, the president sees nothing of the magnitude that would send Mizzou's College of Engineering to Rolla. If the University can be more efficient through reallocation, and effectively make the case to the people of the state, then we will gain credibility, he emphasizes.

COLUMBIA CAMPUS ALUMNI can take heart in Mizzou's mission statement, approved earlier this year by the curators. The Campus "is committed to providing high-quality undergraduate education in the arts, sciences and humanities in order to prepare students for advanced graduate and professional study and to foster self-expansion and fulfillment. As the largest and most diverse campus within the University of Missouri, Columbia will continue in its role as the principal campus offering opportunities for advanced graduate study and as a major campus in offering professional degree programs. The Columbia Campus has exclusive responsibility in agriculture, home economics, journalism, library and informational science, veterinary medicine and special responsibilities in other advanced professional fields such as health, law, business, engineering and education.

"Among its other institutional responsibilities, the Columbia Campus maintains the state's major public research library and the University Hospital. The University of Missouri-Columbia also offers a major intercollegiate athletics program and serves as a local and regional resource for the fine arts and other cultural activities . . ."

As a member of the University's management team, Mizzou's chancellor will help determine priorities and any reallocations among the four campuses. It is clear why the report calls for strong chancellors, as well as a strong president.

Magrath welcomes a healthy competition among campuses. He doesn't want squabbling. "The real challenge," he says, "is to build confidence in the total system. Then, we'll see an increase in resources, both public and private." □