



# President's Bulletin

## University of Missouri

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### State of the University

Based on remarks presented  
by President C. Brice Ratchford  
at Board of Curators Meeting on  
June 30, 1973 in Columbia

Although I report on a monthly basis to the Board of Curators regarding the condition of the University, I try annually at the end of each academic year to give you a more expansive statement on the "State of the University."

Many of the ideas in this statement flow from a conference on this subject I called on June 19 which included the Vice Presidents, the Chancellors, the Inter-Campus Faculty Council, and the presidents of the Faculty Councils or Senates on respective campuses. I thought it was a positive and a productive meeting.

As we entered into that conference, I outlined two points, which are national in scope, and I believe the Board of any state university would recognize that they must be considered as we think ahead.

First, most of the veteran staff members have spent their entire academic careers during a period when the word was "growth". The concerns were how to handle the increase in number of students (which were always larger than we predicted) and creating new programs (many stimulated by federal funding).

In contrast, the next decade promises over-all stability in terms of numbers of students and relatively little money for new programs. However, there will surely be sharp shifts in student interest and enrollment among fields on a single campus and between the campuses. There will also certainly be a need for some new programs.

If this assessment is correct, the major thrust in the next decade must be creating internal flexibility for handling the changing interests of students and phasing out low priority programs to partially finance new ones with greater priority.

This task will be difficult, but in my judgment necessary, if we are to be a greater university within realistic fiscal constraints. This is one topic discussed at a recent national meeting of the University Systems Executives. Every president had at least one campus in the situation of the Rolla campus, which is experiencing a significant drop in enrollment.

The second national concern is that higher education no longer enjoys a "sacred" status. The citizenry is now reluctant to provide more and more funds, particularly when the number of students is not rising. There are calls on every hand for accountability and productivity.

In the last two years we have worked mightily on a number of steps to cope with this concern. Other universities are taking similar steps. I have reported to you month by month on the actions.

A few of the highlights include:

(1) The guidelines for a long range academic plan, popularly called "Role and Scope", has been approved. They provide for the development of a total university academic plan and also specific campus plans.

(2) There is an awareness of the concept of cooperation to improve quality and to provide wider access of programs to the students and the opportunity for faculty to serve in a variety of institutional, research and extension roles.

(3) The program evaluations in both academic and non-academic areas are far along and are providing guidance for constructive and planned change.

(4) A start has been made on studying organization and administrative structure and procedures.

(5) The important role of the Department Chairman has been defined and published.

Some things have been done but there is yet a great deal to be accomplished.

(1) We need to make a doctoral faculty concept operational.

(2) We need to complete our evaluations, primarily in the non-academic area, decide what they mean, and then make the changes indicated.

(3) We need to take a hard look at the entire administrative structure, philosophy, and procedures and make those changes which are deemed desirable.

(4) We need to find ways to improve efficiency in areas such as exchange of library materials and the transfer of students between programs and campuses. Also we must continue to review student admissions policies and practices, particularly in those schools with enrollment ceilings. The faculty, working with the administration and this Board, must find ways to not only improve, but also to explain what I think is basically a sound concept.

(5) We need, most importantly, to complete meaningful campus academic plans.

Now let me turn to some immediate concerns.

Our General Assembly has adjourned and, while we are disappointed with the results, we did receive \$7 million more in operations and over \$6 million in capital funds with the promise of more to come. We must heed, however, statements made by legislators on a wide variety of questions.

Many members of the General Assembly have stated that they do not understand

the highly complex University budget. In such a serious matter of communications, I feel it is essential that we face the challenge and work toward more effective means of explaining our budget. To this end, I have asked the Senate and House appropriations committees to meet with us and give us their questions, comments and advice on how to compile and present the budget more clearly. We will seek similar advice from faculty, alumni, the press and other institutions. In this way we hope to make our budget needs clear and to explain the use of taxpayers' funds so that all may comprehend the benefit of their investment.

In essence we must be more successful in telling the public what the University is, what it does, and what its aspirations are. The general citizenry must understand the mission of the University of Missouri. As a land-grant institution, we have a unique set of obligations. Our role is not the same as certain academically elite institutions or other institutions which excel only in a teaching mission. The University of Missouri is very good, particularly in light of the relatively low per capita support by the State for higher education. I think we should be better in terms of our unique mission and achievement. Judge us as the University of Missouri.

Our extension mission was one area that came under close scrutiny from legislators. Let me emphasize that we already have in process formal outside team evaluations of the extension program which will be completed in July. We can then make some judgments and changes that are indicated as necessary.

The greatest concern that we face, and this is true in every state, is accountability. A few of the questions that arise about accountability are as follows:

- The question is often raised, "Is it not possible ever to drop a program?"
- "Is it true that the average faculty teaching load is seven semester hours?"
- "Are not our administrative expenses too high?"
- "Why can a student not get personalized academic advisement from a senior professor?"
- "Why can you not control student newspapers when you finance them?"

• "What about the 'extra pay' that faculty get from the University and through consulting?"

There are, of course, answers to these questions and in many cases very good ones. Further I do not want to focus on these particular questions because I could list others that come to my attention personally or through letters. They are simply typical of the inquiries aimed at greater accountability. This general issue of accountability will not disappear.

There are three conclusions I reach regarding the point of accountability:

(1) There is no way that we can mount a public information program that will achieve what we desire unless we are "tidy" internally. The public will continue to accept the University as a first-class institution only as long as it really is good and is continually striving to be better.

(2) The problem of securing accountability is one for the entire University. It is easy to say that this is a problem for someone else. The problem is not "they". It is "us"--administrators, faculty, and students. Only by each of "us" doing our own part will we reach the desired goal. Further there is not one, single simple answer. Rather, we must work out answers to a long series of problems. This is what came out of the conference on June 19.

(3) I am convinced that the basic concept of a single university in multiple locations is sound. Each year another one or two states go this way, Arkansas being the latest.

In still other places we see the traditional powers of university governance being taken over by state government, with the primary justification being coordination. And in another one or two states each year there is movement toward a single board or a coordinating board so strong that many powers of the institutional board are taken away.

There are those with strong and specific ties to a campus who do not like this trend. Parts of it I do not like, but it is a way of life we must recognize.

We now have been a multi-campus system ten years. We have learned much. The potential for higher quality, greater service in its largest sense to the state, and greater efficiency is within our reach. Our challenge is to achieve this potential.

In the process of dealing with some tough problems, we must remember that we are a very good University, we have an excellent faculty and a superb student body.

As a faculty member said at our June 19 conference, we--administrators, faculty, students and staff--should take some of the time we spend complaining to be proud of our achievements and talk more about our accomplishments.