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WITH A NEW CHAPTER AND PREFACE

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HARD CHOICES

Research universities, as well as all of American higher education, face some "hard choices"¹ which they are ill equipped to make. The response so far has been mostly the "politics of caution,"² and no presidential "giants" have as yet emerged to take leadership; indeed, it is problematical how many will. Those who do will be engaged in protecting the academic core against the periphery and the excellent versus the mediocre, in encouraging better use of high schools and extension programs and the new technology to replace on-campus classroom instruction at the lower levels of competency, in making selective academic decisions on merit rather than across-the-board political adjustments, in maintaining libraries and physical facilities from slow decay, in looking at long-term academic welfare rather than year-to-year political survival. In the course of this series of developments, and one way or another, some of the "multi" will be taken out of the "multiversity," which in the age of affluence too often took on too many peripheral activities of low quality.

Some research universities already are choosing the long-term

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academic-quality route, and among those I know best in California are Stanford, Berkeley, and UCLA. It is this capacity to take the hard road that has given them leadership in the past and will make more possible its continuation in the future. These institutions are facing the questions of what is most important to preserve at the highest levels of quality, and of what are the activities most worth doing. They are proving that they have "a brain" as well as "a body." Some other universities are engaged, instead, in making their Faustian bargains—the temptations of current indulgences are so very great. They leave the toughest decisions to the future and to external authority, and lose both quality and autonomy in the process.

Some universities will seize the opportunity to rebuild a more integrated community of scholars as they participate in rigorous consultations and make hard decisions about what they most want to be, about how they can improve teaching *and* research *and* the quality of citizenship *and* ethical conduct more generally within the confines of more constrained resources. Some universities have never lost their sense of an integrated intellectual community of scholars, and I note here as illustrations Princeton, Chicago, and Cal Tech. Each has been advantaged by smaller size; and each by living in an external physical community with its own identity. Princeton and Cal Tech also have greatly restricted their expansions of effort. Chicago, in particular, has a tradition of conversations across the boundaries of the several disciplines. Among the larger institutions, I have always marveled at the cohesion of Harvard, Stanford, Cornell, Yale, MIT, Brown, Berkeley, and Michigan, and I have wondered what the secrets of social alchemy are that give them each their special characters. I wonder, too, about Indiana, Chapel Hill, Madison, and Virginia, among others of the 125 or so research universities—despite their size and the heterogeneity of their activities.

All is not yet lost. The maintenance of federal R&D funds at

current levels would still support an enormous research enterprise far beyond anything even dreamed about in that golden age of 1963, and it would still be the envy of the world. Mere maintenance of current levels of federal R&D, however, will be particularly hard on the many current younger scholars trying to get established, and it will make no provisions for the new faculty members needed to accommodate additional students.

The bigger problem for all of higher education, from which the research university is, however, substantially shielded (most fortunately), will be to accommodate the vast additional numbers of students. Pressures will be placed on faculty teaching loads, on class sizes, on use of teaching assistants, on maintaining existing admissions standards. There will be many "hard choices," and they will be faced mostly at the presidential level, at a time when the presidency is, generally, in a weakened position. The most difficult period of "hard choices" in accommodating students, however, will be over by about 2015. The University of California in its entirety is in an especially difficult situation because the Master Plan of 1960 called for it to accommodate the "top" 12.5 percent of high school graduates (with "top" subject to changing definitions). It will thus be even more than usually difficult for it to adjust by raising admissions standards. Campuses within the system that have reached their targeted growth, however, are potentially protected from enrollment pressures by expansion on other campuses. For most public institutions of higher education, to one degree or another, the difficulties inherent in the new context will intensify substantially, beginning with the fateful year 1997.

Private universities and colleges, in the meantime, will hardly be affected by mass student pressures, and they will generally be in a comparatively advantaged position. They have two additional advantages: (1) greatly lowered taxes on the very wealthy,

who are sharing this largesse through their gifts to private university fund-raising campaigns at levels never before experienced; and (2) greatly increased income to the well-to-do and wealthy as a result of income redistribution that has advantaged them over those with moderate and low incomes during the past twenty years, enabling them better to afford higher tuitions. Attached more to the private economy which prospers in its higher reaches, the private colleges and universities generally have better prospects than the public, which are more attached to the suffering public economy. Some of these private institutions will live in a world apart, fully insulated. Also comparatively advantaged are those public universities that are viewed more as "private," as in Michigan and Texas, where there are no or few private competitors. Among the approximately 125 research universities in the United States, about 40 are private and 85 are public, and among the public, a few are "private-public." The private and private-public also have greater alumni pressure, as well as assistance, to maintain quality. Thus the future of research universities (and all of higher education) appears to be substantially bifurcated, with one fork (the private) generally pointing level or even up and the other generally down—there will be exceptions.

Directions of Responses in the Shorter Run ✕ (1990–2015)

Signs of the future are already emerging, particularly for the public research universities:

1. *More privatization.* Greater reliance on tuition. The Carnegie Commission once suggested, based on relating costs to benefits, that a reasonable general rule might be that students bear the burden of one-third of educational and general costs, with spe-

cial attention being given to differential tuitions in areas that lead to high-income professions.

More income from sales of services and from patents.

More cultivation of alumni.

More R&D funds from industry. (Industry funds for university R&D were 4 percent of federal in 1970 and 13 percent in 1993.)⁴

In the 1860s, there was the land grant university, in the 1960s what I called the "federal research grant university," and in the future may lie increasingly the "private grant" university.

2. *More federalization.* Adam Smith long ago set forth the three major areas for governmental responsibility as protection from external and internal violence, protection of individuals from injustice and oppression (which allows an opening to the welfare state), and provision of an infrastructure including basic education. The Great Depression added guidance of the economy to protect it against depression and then, later, inflation. Care of the environment has also been added in more recent times. Increasingly, particularly as the economy has been slowing down, government responsibility for economic growth has also been added. This latter assignment involves enhancement of labor skills and encouragement of research and development.⁵

In the United States, individual states are mostly in charge of providing basic skills (primary and secondary education) and advanced skills for local residents-preparing for local and regional labor markets (community colleges and comprehensive colleges and universities). Industry is responsible for plant-specific skills and company-specific applied technology. The federal government, increasingly, is held accountable for higher skills for national and international labor markets, as in science and engineering and medicine, and for basic research as well as for the more generally useful forms of applied research (the research universities). The long-term trend is for the federal government

to have more overall responsibility for high-level training and high-level research. Health care is the area now most completely federalized in research support and high-level skill development.

Responsibility for economic growth means, among many other things, the federal government's taking more responsibility for the overall welfare of the research university. As prospects for growth in income have become less assured, the public is more and more insistent that the federal government be held responsible for per capita economic progress. With increases in productivity based somewhere in the area of 40 percent on "advances in knowledge" and 20 percent on increases in skills, the federal government is forced to take more interest in education at all levels (as in "Goals 2000") but particularly in higher education and especially in the research university. The federal government could help additionally by giving more subsidies to graduate students in the fields most essential to productivity increases, by providing more funds for new research facilities and equipment, by increasing "overhead" allowances to match those given in industry, and by increasing funds for "academic science" roughly related to the increasing numbers of faculty members in "academic science" fields in research universities.

3. *More cultivation of general public support.* The land grant university was aimed at service to agriculture and industry. At one time, the College of Agriculture made contact with a majority of citizens in the state, and the borders of the campus really were the boundaries of the state. Many state universities, in more recent times, have concentrated mostly on the cultivation of governors and legislators, rather than on the public as a whole. This is no longer enough. Two areas now offer particular opportunities. One is education, where Schools of Education, instead of being specialized liberal arts colleges, might better emulate the old College of Agriculture and work with every school in the

state through extension services and experiment stations. The second is health, where, including through the Area Health Education Centers that the University of North Carolina developed so effectively under the presidency of William Friday, universities with medical centers can make contact with most hospitals and doctors and nurses in the state. A reinvigorated land grant model might yet save the German-model state research university.

4. *More attention to effective use of resources.* Charging "full cost" and providing unlimited across-the-board programs are no longer viable as the basic principles of operation. Costs could be more carefully scrutinized. And not all universities need to provide coverage of all fields of knowledge; rather, some might concentrate more on what is most needed and what they do the best. There is no clear proof that quality of instruction is precisely related to student/faculty ratios, nor need teaching loads be uniform across-the-board; rather, they should be related to the degree to which the individual field is engaged in creating and disseminating new knowledge. Research universities need not provide basic skills and remedial instruction, but rather might transfer this responsibility to high schools, to community colleges, to extension services, or to employment of electronic technology. Facilities can be more fully utilized on a year-round rather than a nine-month basis. Some students can be provided with a three-year degree opportunity. Effective use of resources, overall, can be improved at a significant level.

5. *More pluralistic leadership.* Each of the above requires more administrative effort by more people—to contact alumni, to service and persuade the public at large, to get better results from fewer resources, to work at the federal level, to make contact with each industry and each profession in areas of attention. This requires many more ambassadors, more publicists, and also more budgetary analysts for the sake of more careful use of

resources. This suggests greater decentralization of administrative responsibilities, which will better connect each operating unit with the fullness of reality ("every tub on its own bottom," as has traditionally been the case at Harvard—though this has some costs in allowing some fields potentially to fall below the generally very high levels, a problem Harvard is seeking to correct). This, in turn, suggests longer-term service by administrators down the line to make external contacts and to take responsibility for internal effectiveness, further suggesting more careful attention to the selection of presidents, deans, and department chairs. It also suggests more use of "provosts" at the level of schools and colleges to handle internal academic affairs. Presidents, then, would presumably concentrate more on the selection of deans and departmental chairs, and devote more attention to their coordination, guidance, and encouragement; more all-around pluralistic leadership. The emphasis will be more on team leadership, and that requires more attention to the creation of teams. Fred Balderston has called attention to these considerations: "balance in functional expertise," "high mutual confidence," and avoidance of "tendencies to split" the administration for the sake of the interests of functional constituencies." This suggests that the president be able to build and maintain the team of his or her own choice.

6. *More attention to longer-term directions of movement.* I avoid the word "planning." First, because external conditions can change rapidly and there are so many uncertainties. Second, because it suggests there is such a thing as an "optimal" future for the institution. There are so many activities and so many constituencies that it is impossible to define maximum "welfare" with any precision. Third, I avoid the term because universities internally change so slowly. Faculty have tenure, and teaching and research units at least have seniority rights. The possible

changes in academic personnel and activities, except in periods of fast growth, are in a range normally somewhere below 5 percent a year—universities do not go out of business, or drop major activities because they are not currently profitable, or engage in major layoffs. To put it another way, only a small fraction of activities are in active competition for resources at any one moment.

It is possible, however, to have long-range goals to guide short-term incremental changes—a sense of what is more important and what is less. It is also possible to have good processes of consultation and decision-making to choose long-term directions of movement. These processes need to compensate for the fact that many presidents have a short-term horizon. This suggests substantial involvement by longer-term leadership within the trustees and faculty; but also longer terms for presidents so that there is less disparity between their horizons and those of their institutions—the Harvard customary twenty-year term.

A list of long-term directions might include:

- Improve access on an equal opportunities basis
- Concentrate on core fields
- Keep faculty salaries competitive
- Maintain libraries and physical plant
- Preserve institutional autonomy by high quality of university conduct (nearly half the states have recently been investigating how to influence or even directly control faculty teaching loads)

7. *Consideration of protection for the "non-market" functions.* Higher education is becoming more market-oriented—the student market, the research market, the service market. But there should be more to a university than that. Specific actual markets do not express all the needs of society for university attention. Some such non-market needs are training for good citizenship, advancing cultural interests and capabilities of graduates, providing critiques of society (we hope from a scholarly

perspective), and supporting scholarship that has no early, if ever, monetary returns. There are social benefits of universities that go beyond what sells in the markets—thus the need to encourage "general purpose" support.

From Guarded Optimism to Guarded Pessimism to Guarded Optimism and, Why

What about the longer run? This is mostly guesswork. Among other things, there are bound to be "wild cards" in the future as in the past—World War II was one such "card," as were the student revolts in the 1960s, the "demographic depression's" failure to develop in the 1980s, and the collapse of productivity increases since about 1970—unforeseen or largely unforeseen developments.

The *biggest uncertainty* we can now clearly recognize is what will happen to productivity in the economy. The most substantial negative force in this area is the rising share of "handicraft" employment, as in health care and education, which is now at about 75 percent of all employment, and the falling share of productivity-prone employment, as in agriculture and industry and communications, which is now at about 25 percent. The biggest potential positive force is further "advances in knowledge," perhaps particularly in the areas of usable energy, of new materials, and of biotechnology, in each of which advances might be almost limitless, and further exploitation of the possibilities of electronic technology. It would be very helpful to have another "transformational" development such as the railroads once were.

One thing, however, is almost certain, and that is that the research university, with its contributions to advances in knowledge and to higher skills, will become increasingly important to the maintenance of, and possible improvements in, society. It will continue to be one of the most necessary institutions in the

nation. Frank Press has noted that the greatest advantage the United States has in world-wide competition is that we have "the largest and best trained force of scientists and engineers in the world. . . . This enables us more than anyone else to take advantage of emerging technologies and to harvest the wealth they create." And he raises the question of whether it is "adequate for what lies ahead" for support for science and technology to rise only "at about the same rate as the economy." Instead, we should "capitalize on our leading position in science and technology."⁷ This means, I would add, that we should "capitalize" on our research universities. Productivity, it has been said, is not everything, but there is almost nothing else so important. A return to a 3 percent annual increase in productivity would be a magic cure for much of the current malaise affecting higher education.

A *second great uncertainty*, beyond what will happen to productivity, is whether the nation actually will take full advantage of one of its greatest assets. Fortunately, this is made more possible because of the small proportion that federal "academic science" support is of the total gross domestic product—less than two-tenths of 1 percent. Thus it can more easily be raised without impinging unduly on other uses of the GDP. But it remains open what priority will, in practice, be given to the research university by federal and state authorities. Note that federal funds for student aid, to a degree, compete with funds for academic science, and Tidal Wave II will greatly increase claims on federal aid for student access. Just as with the states, the federal government will face competing priorities within its support of higher education, as well as competition from claimants outside higher education. What will the priorities be?

As society goes, so goes the university; but, also, as the university goes, so goes society. The progress of knowledge remains so central to the progress of civilization. But there is no assured

current prospect for another golden age for the research university in the foreseeable future.

A *third great uncertainty* is how the new resource constraints may mesh with the current signs of possible internal decay and rising tensions noted in Chapter 7. The internal life of the campus may never again be quite the same; the professorial form of employment so distinctive; the professoriate so autonomous. How effectively will the research university of the future conduct itself? At the moment, at least, the university world has hardly begun to try to take control of its future even within the confined limits of its potential influence.

If I were to add a *fourth uncertainty*, it would be whether or not the greatly improved hardware and software for the new electronic technology may, at last, start to penetrate teaching as it has already research and administration; whether the "Fourth Revolution,"⁸ once so confidently expected, will finally take place. The experience to date suggests that each new technology adds to but does not totally supplant prior technology—oral teaching added to apprenticeship experience, the written word added to the spoken word, printing added to handwriting, and it seems likely that the "chip" will add to but not replace all the methods that have gone before.

I am now less assured about the future than I was in 1963. Then I noted the "generally optimistic tone" of the lectures. They were generally optimistic, but the optimism was a guarded one. I saw dangers ahead, but no great uncertainties about the fast-rising supremacy of the American research university. Thirty years later, I have questions:

1. What will happen to national productivity?
2. What priority will American society give to higher education in general, and the research university more specifically, in the distribution of available resources?

3. Will higher education, including the research university, take control of its future by responding in aggressive and wise ways?

I have "guarded pessimism" about the current period (1990–2015), and I have set forth the reasons for this in the above discussion. However, I return to "guarded optimism" about the long-term future because, after the problems of Tidal Wave II are past, I count primarily on the answer to question 2 above: that American society will give a high priority to higher education and to the research university within it. And secondarily on the answer to question 3: that our institutions of higher education will respond at least adequately to the new context.

I have moved from guarded optimism to guarded pessimism, but I remain an unguarded Utopian: I believe that we can become "a nation of educated people," and that our institutions of higher education will find better ways to associate "masters and scholars" together in learning communities, as well as better ways for masters to associate in their thinking across, and within, lines of fiercer specialization.

How may it all work out? We do not know. The research university is ever more essential to society. Yet higher education faces more competition for resources to finance its essential contributions. We need the research universities more but may be able to afford them less. This clash of prospects is the basic reality. Which way will this turn of history move the university: up or down? And what will be the roles of conscious choice and action?

The original Godkin Lectures ended with these words: "These are the uses of the university." They are still the uses of the university—better knowledge and higher skills, and they both become ever more important. It will be a sad situation if, over the long run, public investments in prisons continue to take a higher relative priority than investments in universities; and if,

internally within the universities, preservation of the status quo takes priority over an aggressive commitment to access, to quality, and to autonomy. But higher education in the United States is built on three-and-one-half centuries of triumph, not tragedy. Past triumphs came in response to new opportunities and additional flows of resources, however, and a further triumph under current and prospective circumstances may well be less than fully assured. And, quite understandably, higher education is responding more slowly and more reluctantly to the current challenges. Nevertheless, the longer-run destiny is, I remain convinced, if not further triumph, at least a satisfactory series of responses.

There are some certainties: the university will continue to have its essential uses; the society, as I quoted Alfred North Whitehead in concluding those long-ago lectures, that "does not value trained intelligence is doomed"; and, I now add with caution, the university that does not fully dedicate itself above all else to the continuing advancement of trained intelligence is also doomed.