

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-FLINT  
CHANCELLOR'S ADDRESS TO THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY  
UNIVERSITY THEATRE  
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*The Future of the University, the University of the Future*

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**Chancellor**

Before I get into the substance of my remarks, let me say a few words about the budget situation. As you know, we are expecting still another budget cut to be imposed this fiscal year. The announcement may be made as soon as tomorrow. I cannot tell you yet what will be the university's response to the latest reduction in the state's allocation, because we do not know the extent of that reduction. For the purpose of planning, we have assumed a 6% cut in the state allocation. [Note of 12/15/03 : It appears now that the reduction will be 5%.] It is also too early to know what the enrollment situation will be in the winter semester. For the purpose of planning, we are assuming that there will be no further erosion of enrollment.

Once we know the depth of the state cuts, I will address the campus again to explain our response. I can share with you now the principles that are guiding our decisions regarding budget cuts:

- Avoid a midyear increase in tuition and fees.
- Protect academic activities, inside and outside the classroom, that support the students' progress toward graduation.
- Protect the safety and health of the campus community.
- Avoid across-the-board salary cuts.
- Avoid lay-offs or keep them to a minimum.

If our assumptions about the state cut and winter enrollment are correct, I am confident that we will be able to meet the goals of those guiding principles.

Let me move now to the originally intended purpose of my remarks. Two years ago, I presented a statement of "purpose and direction" to the campus community. The statement made four fundamental commitments:

- To settle for nothing less than excellence in all we do.
- To maintain an environment in which our students feel academically and intellectually challenged, supported as individual learners and members of a learning community, and encouraged to be good citizens and eager participants in the care and improvement of their university.
- To reflect in our values and behavior society not just as it is, but as it should be, which is to say that we are committed to setting a good example.

- To ask as we ponder every important decision, “Is it in the best interest of the students?”

My remarks that day came at the conclusion of a campus conversation about the future of the University of Michigan-Flint; a discussion that engaged faculty, students, staff, alumni, and friends from the neighboring community. The Campus Conversation yielded two documents, *Toward a Shared Vision* and *Voices Shared*, which are available on the university webpage at [www.umflint.edu/resources/offices/chancellor/speeches.php](http://www.umflint.edu/resources/offices/chancellor/speeches.php). My remarks that day also announced the creation of the Student Learning Task Force, organized around “purpose groups” whose charge was to turn the general observations of the Campus Conversation into recommendations for action. There were seven purpose groups, covering the following areas:

- Curricular collaboration
- Online curriculum development
- Retention enhancement
- Improvement of community college articulation
- Marketing strategies
- Enhancement of campus life
- Living and learning centers

The reports of the purpose groups are available on the university webpage at [www.umflint.edu/resources/offices/chancellor/speeches.php](http://www.umflint.edu/resources/offices/chancellor/speeches.php) and, in printed form, at the Thompson Library.

What I bring to you today is neither a formal report from the Student Learning Task Force nor a compendium of the purpose groups' recommendations. Many of the group's recommendations have already been implemented or are in the process of implementation. I bring you thoughts, initiatives and recommendations that were informed and shaped to a great extent by the work of the task force and its purpose groups, but also by subsequent suggestions from other campus groups and individual members of the campus community.

Some of the items I will mention impact enrollment, as you would expect since enrollment growth is the university's main non-academic strategic priority. However, I do not have a comprehensive set of initiatives on recruitment and retention. The Enrollment Management Task Force is concluding its work and will present its report in the next few weeks. I do not want to preempt that report.

I can tell you, however, that I still consider student housing a central ingredient of our growth strategy. We are drafting a request for qualifications (which is similar to a request for proposals but less detailed) to ascertain the interest from private developers in building and managing student housing facilities on our campus. This mechanism should give us a sense of the cost and conditions of this undertaking. As I have said on many occasions, student housing must pay for itself. The university does not have the resources to subsidize campus residences.

The directives and recommendations that I will present now are based on the recognition that UM-Flint is already an excellent academic institution. They acknowledge the high quality of our faculty, staff and students, as well as their commitment to the academic enterprise and their sense of civic responsibility, both toward the campus and toward the neighboring community. It is much easier to make improvements when excellence is the starting point. You will see, too, that most of the items that follow assign specific responsibilities to specific individuals or groups and establish deadlines. (I am postulating, because that is our standard practice, that governance policies and procedures will be followed whenever applicable.) For the most part, we are talking about action items.

- The purpose group on the enhancement of campus life relied to a great extent, and with good reason, on the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) administered in the fall of 2002. This was a reliable instrument, because the randomly selected sample consisted of more than 1,000 students. The results showed that the overall satisfaction of our students was significantly higher than the national average for four-year public universities. The margin of satisfaction was particularly notable in the area of campus safety. There was no statistically significant difference in the responses of minority and non-minority students, though females were generally more satisfied with their campus experience than males. The main concern expressed by students was the difficulty in getting the classes they need to graduate on time. Our students have expressed this concern often, and I will address it later in these remarks.

As a result of this experience, we will take the following approach to take the pulse of campus life on a regular basis:

- Administer the SSI (along with ten campus-based supplementary questions) every three years to a sample of 1,000 or more students and distribute the results widely to help campus units on their own self-assessment. In the years that the SSI is not administered, the students' perception of their campus experience will be ascertained through activities such as forums, focus groups, and fireside chats with the chancellor.

**The Vice Chancellor for Student Services and Enrollment Management will incorporate these actions into her unit's standard practice and schedule immediately**

- Separate reports on the status of women, minorities and the LGBT community will be issued every three years, preferably in the years when the SSI is not administered. These reports will include students, faculty, and staff.

**The Director of the Women's Educational Center will prepare a plan and schedule for the report on the status of women and will submit the plan and schedule to me by May of 2004.**

At a later date, we will determine who will assume responsibility for issuing the reports about the other two groups.

- The purpose group on living-and-learning centers conceptualized life at the future student residences, integrating the learning experiences of the students into their residential lives. The group did an excellent job in paving the way for the future. In the process, it found that living-and-learning communities could be established even before we have student housing. This is an appealing idea and deserves to be encouraged.

- **The Director of University Relations, working with students and members of the faculty and the staff, will assume responsibility for advancing this concept on campus and in the neighboring community through educational and organizational means. She will submit a progress report to me by May of 2004.** Professor Teddy Robertson is the godmother of living-and-learning communities on this campus. She is no longer my Senior Advisor, so I cannot include her in this charge, but I know she'll be delighted to assume a leadership role in this area.

- Also in anticipation of student housing, **I am asking the Vice Chancellor for Student Services and Enrollment Management, to move toward the establishment of an Office of Residence Life by Fall of 2005. I will make more specific requests for progress reports once we know more about the timeline for student housing .** Obviously, this directive would be cancelled if we were not to proceed with student housing.

- I mentioned earlier that the most persistent complaint we hear from students is that they are unable to enroll in the classes they need for timely graduation. That simply should not happen. We must do everything in our power to facilitate the students' progress toward graduation.

The expectation of getting an undergraduate degree in four years has become almost obsolete for public institutions. Increasing numbers of students have family and job responsibilities that prevent them from making a full-time, uninterrupted commitment to their studies. At UM-Flint, these non-traditional students constitute about half of our student population. Rather than belittle them for not achieving their educational goals according to an artificial timeline, we should commend them for persisting in reaching their educational goals. In other words, the concept of “timely graduation” is relative. Granting that, we still must remove all institutional impediments to timely graduation.

By fall of 2004 we should be able to make a firm, *written* commitment to students who request it, at the time they declare their majors, that they will graduate on time, provided that they follow successfully a pre-approved program of courses and receive periodic advising from their departments and/or the Advising Center , as appropriate. The departments that make this commitment—and I cannot imagine why a department would not make it—would make appropriate substitutions when the required courses are not available.

- **The Provost, working with the deans and department chairs, will develop processes, procedures and documents to implement this policy by September of 2004.**

- Good advising is the key to the success of this policy and necessary, in more general terms, for the students' success in reaching their academic goals. We need to examine closely our overall approach to advising, making the system more efficient and more responsive to the needs of students.
- With that purpose in mind, **I am asking the Vice Chancellor for Student Services and the Provost, to appoint jointly an Advising Enhancement Task Force, composed of staff, faculty, and students. The task force should be in place by May of 2004 .**
- There are two other measures we should take to facilitate the students' progress toward graduation. We must review the times when we offer classes to make the schedules consistent and responsive to the needs of current and prospective students.
- **I am asking the Provost to appoint a task force with the purpose of performing that review and submitting recommendations to her. The recommendations should include changes that are effective in the near future as well as policies and procedures that will ensure the continuation of good practices. The Provost will submit a report to me by September of 2004 .**
- The central recommendation of the purpose group on online curriculum development was to increase the number of degree or certificate programs—not just courses—that can be completed by taking classes online or in mixed-mode.
- **I am asking the Provost to work with the deans and department chairs in identifying programs that are appropriate for that approach and are willing and able to take it, and to devise ways of supporting those programs in that effort. We should also aim at identifying or developing a sequence of courses that will allow students to complete the general education requirements online or through mixed-mode delivery. The Provost will give me a progress report by September of 2004.**
- The deans of the three professional schools and the College of Arts and Sciences have expressed the need to review all academic and non-academic programs on a regular basis. There is a review system in place for academic programs, but it needs improvement.
- **I am asking the Provost, working with the deans, to revise the review system for academic programs standardizing it and making it consistent with established criteria, such as effective use of student outcomes assessment, participation in interdisciplinary academic activities, use of new delivery technologies, and responsiveness to students, in addition to the standard core criteria of academic and intellectual excellence. She will report to me by September of 2004.**
- **I am also asking the Provost to do a viability review of all academic programs in the next few months to identify those that are not productive in terms of enrollment and graduation rates, and could be either discontinued or merged with other programs .** Productivity should not be the only consideration, of course. Some small programs must continue because of their quality and reputation, or their contribution to

general education or to other programs, or their ability to generate external funding. Nevertheless, it is important, especially at a time of financial need, to concentrate our resources efficiently. Phasing out programs that are no longer viable will free resources to help other programs grow. **The Provost will report to me on the results of this review by September of 2004, and we will begin implementing the recommendations by Fall of 2005.**

- The principle of periodic review must be applied to non-academic programs as well. The criteria will be different, of course. Since there is no review system in place, we will have to create one. We need a system flexible enough to apply to the great variety of non-academic units. Fortunately, some professional organizations have developed standards of performance and identified examples of best practices that we can use as reference.

- **I will work with the executive officers in developing criteria, processes, procedures, and schedules to review all non-academic programs every five years. The system should be in place by September of 2004, and the cycle of reviews must start no later than September of 2005.**

- One area that requires particular attention is our relationships with community colleges in general and with Mott Community College in particular. Our aim must be to facilitate the transfer of students to our campus once they have completed their associate degrees. This transition should be seamless.

The purpose group on improvement of community college articulation recommended that we make a concerted campus-wide effort—involving central administration, academic departments, faculty, and admissions staff—to establish optimal ongoing communication with our counterparts at community colleges. A smooth transition for the students requires trust and familiarity between the representatives of both institutions, as well as sound policies and efficient procedures. Specifically:

- We need to increase the number of program articulation agreements, evaluate the effectiveness of those we already have, and establish a system of periodic review.
- We need to develop more two-plus-two and two-plus-three programs, and explore the possibilities of integrating online and mixed-mode delivery courses into these programs.
- We need to maintain up-to-date transfer guides, including specific course equivalences, and make them available through interactive, user-friendly web access.

Already in motion, though in its initial stages, is an initiative with Mott Community College to market our most promising articulation agreements as a package, under the heading of “the Flint degree.” Jennifer Hogan and the University Relations staff are working on this initiative with their colleagues at Mott Community College .

- **I am asking the Provost to work with deans and department chairs in setting in motion the academic aspects of this enhancement effort and to submit a progress report to me by May of 2004.**

**• I am asking the directors of Admissions and University Relations to address jointly the admissions and marketing elements of this enhancement effort and to submit a progress report to me by May of 2004.**

• I also would like to facilitate the transfer of students among the three campuses of the University of Michigan . Chancellor Daniel Little, of UM-Dearborn, and I have been talking informally about ways to achieve this ease of transfer between our two institutions. The Ann Arbor campus has agreed already to encourage the applicants from our regions whom they do not admit to consider attending one of the regional UM campuses. That is a significant step forward, but more can be done in this regard, and I will take the initiative from our end, with the support of the Provost and the Vice Chancellor for Student Services and Enrollment Management, to explore the possibilities of greater inter-campus collaboration.

• We need to change our budgeting philosophy and improve the process by which we develop our annual budgets. Vice Chancellor David Barthelmes has developed a new budget model that, in addition to providing for the good management of resources, creates financial incentives for individual units to grow and be entrepreneurial and creative. This budget model also gives greater responsibility to the units for the administration of their own resources. Faculty and staff have had the opportunity to express their views on the proposed model, and Vice Chancellor Barthelmes has revised his original proposal to reflect the suggestions arisen from the consultation process. He will present the revised version to the Budget Priorities/Chancellor's Advisory Committee and to the Chancellor's Council for final comments. At that time, we will determine the timeline for implementation.

• As most of you know, the University of Michigan is about to launch a major capital campaign. UM-Flint will participate, of course, and we have decided to make our campaign *student-centered* . This means that our main funding goals will support the central purpose of the institution: to provide the best education possible to our students, with all the obligations that statement implies. The term “student-centered” should not be read too narrowly. It signals a concerted effort to raise scholarship funds, but it also covers goals such as endowing faculty chairs and visiting professorships. Constantly improving the quality of education at UM-Flint is central to the best interests of our students. Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement George Wendt will share more information about the capital campaign early in the winter semester.

At the risk of stating the obvious, I must say that a university of our size cannot be, or do, everything for everybody. The financial challenges that we have faced in the last year and a half underscore that reality. We need to create our own niche of excellence without ever ceasing to be a comprehensive institution that integrates its liberal arts core with its professional programs. We need to make choices, to determine what areas are going to define our identity and place our efforts and resources in making those areas as good as they could possibly be.

UM-Flint should be identified not so much by the vastness of its offerings as by the quality of what it does, especially, but not exclusively, on academic matters. That should be the core of our identity—that and our commitment to act in the best interests of our students and to be responsible citizens of our community. In other words, we should be an excellent, student-centered educational institution, proud to be part of the University of Michigan and just as proud of being the University of Michigan- *Flint* .

Establishing and recognizing our niche of excellence leads to a sense of strategic direction. **The university needs a strategic plan, and we are going to develop one, beginning next semester. In January of 2004, the Chancellor's Council and I, in consultation with other groups, will set in motion the process that will lead to a strategic plan. The plan should be completed in the Fall of 2004 .**

We will envision together the university of the future, but let me advance some thoughts in that regard. I see some elements of what will be our niche of excellence, areas of potential emphasis and growth:

- Graduate programs. Even as our overall enrollment declined, our graduate enrollment increased. This seems to indicate the presence of a market interest. We should learn more about the nature of that interest and develop graduate programs that fit with our centers of strength.
- Online and mixed/mode programs. Online courses are the fastest growing area of our curriculum. They expand our geographic reach and add flexibility to the students' schedule. We must build on that success by increasing the number of degree and certificate programs that can be completed by a combination of online and mixed/mode delivery. This should not be a mad rush, but a deliberate consideration, always ensuring that the adoption of a new mode of instruction does not result in loss of instructional quality.
- Interdisciplinary programs. We tend to construct our curricula along the lines of our disciplines and to view our disciplines within the structural limits of our departments. This is not the way we operate intellectually, but it is the predominant way to build the curriculum. We should bring down the artificial walls between disciplines and let the intellectual waters flow more freely. I hope the review of general education will result in more interdisciplinary and team-taught courses. I also hope that the improved general education program derived from that review will emphasize joint research by faculty and students as well as service learning.
- Applied, community-based research. We are a public university serving a region and located in a city that need us. We must encourage and reward—especially in the sensitive process of tenure and promotion—research that responds to public needs and reflects our civic commitment. Much of that research is going on now. Professor Mark Perry, of the School of Management , has just finished a study of the economic impact of the Crim Race in the Flint region. The results of the study will be very helpful to the city and the

county in planning their economic development. This is a clear example of putting the intellectual resources of the university at the service of the community.

Obviously, the university faculty will continue to engage in research of a different nature, and the university should continue to encourage and support good research regardless of its application or its degree of abstraction. The emphasis on applied research is meant to establish a particular niche for our campus, responsive to the conditions of our location, and representative of our civic engagement.

- Halo programs. Some programs have earned exceptional recognition in their fields. Others are on their way to reaching that degree of recognition. Still others deserve more recognition than they receive. We must identify those programs, nourish and market them, not necessarily to help them grow—some may wish or need to remain relatively small—but to create a halo effect over the entire institution that will help us attract students and external support.

So far I have focused on the academic aspects of the university, but our niche should extend to other areas. I would like UM-Flint to become a national model for its well-designed, comprehensive system of academic support for minority and non-traditional students. I would like us to become a national model in service-learning. And I would like us to become a national model for the integration of intellectual pursuits with community service.

These are just a few of the components that I envision as part of our niche of excellence and, consequently, as critical elements of our strategic plan. We have a vision of the university of the future and a sense of the future of the university. We have purpose and direction. Let us now design the road map. Thank you.