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FACULTY BREAKFAST

FACING 1976-77: SOME SATISFACTIONS, SOME CONCERNS

SEPTEMBER 23, 1976

REMARKS BY:

PRESIDENT DAVID P. GARDNER
UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
Facing 1976-77: Some Satisfactions, Some Concerns

Governor Rampton, present and former Members of the State Board of Regents and the Institutional Council, Members of the Faculty and Staff, Officers of ASUU, Distinguished Guests

When I look out over this room this morning, overflowing and alive with those whose presence and ideas animate and direct the work of the University, I can believe that we are the state's second largest employer. More importantly, the University is the state's greatest single treasure influencing not only the lives and learning of our over 23,000 students but the well-being and future of every citizen of Utah in very real and enduring ways. I take every chance I get to remind our legislators that our budget, which may appear to them to be so significant a part of the appropriations bill is, both in theory and in fact, bread cast upon the waters, bringing multiplied returns to the state's economy, to our people, young and old, and to the nature and quality of life we who live here are fortunate enough to enjoy.

The ultimate returns from education, are, of course, mostly invisible, and respect neither political boundaries nor cost-benefit analysis; but it is good to be made aware occasionally that as an institution we are a source of economic strength, a capital investment in human talent and ideas, and that as individuals we are not only on the payroll but on the taxroll as well and on the good books of many a downtown merchant and financial institution, as we are
similarly on the rolls of innumerable civic and charitable organizations devoted to community service and good works.

In an election year we hear a great deal about native states and favored sons. May I express my appreciation for a favored campus. On this tranquil morning and in this mountain valley our University seems more than ever a retreat from the natural calamities (the floods, fires, famine and earthquakes) and the social malaise (the religious wars, civil strife, and racial divisions) that daily fill the news. Please note that I said a retreat, not an escape. We withdraw for a season in order to return refreshed and revitalized with keener perspective and a more focused understanding than when we took our leave. The mix is crucial, and increasingly so, in a world where to understand a problem is more often than not the tougher part of discovering a solution. A university, of course, provides the society it serves with a time and a place to take thought, to study and to understand.

As I have said from this podium before, and on other occasions as well, my view of the University's mission is avowedly traditional. I believe that the
function of the University is to seek and transmit knowledge and to train students in the processes whereby truth may be made known. I believe that ideas are to be tested in the marketplace, not suppressed, and that truth can be relied upon to combat error. I believe that our obligation in the University is to assure the conditions under which learning will occur, where a respect for others and a tolerance of competing ideas can be developed and issues examined with a clear edge given to intellect rather than to passion. These purposes will abide no matter how a changing pattern of enrollment, fiscal difficulties, government regulations and advances in educational technology affect the traditional forms of the higher learning. The faculty's commitment to high standards of scholarship and teaching, the staff's devotion to service and helping, the student body's desire to learn and grow and the administration's sensitivity to and support of the underlying academic values and functions that permit a great university to live, thrive and prosper will, together, determine the University's present course, future distinction and continued worthiness to be called a university in the sense that the term is understood in western civilization, both ancient and modern.

We are still in a Bicentennial year and it has for the most part been a source of renewal and rededication to and reminder of the principles that gave birth to our country
and have, on balance, guided her destiny since. For having
given the University's Bicentennial observance great scope
and significance, character and color, our deepest thanks
and appreciation are extended to Professor Lowell Durham
and Professor Boyer Jarvis, chairman and secretary
respectively of the Bicentennial Committee and to the members
of the committee who gave so very generously of their time
and talents in fashioning such a memorable past year. The
celebration is not over: in the coming year the Lord Eric
Ashby, immediate past master of Clare College, Cambridge
University, and James Reston, noted American Journalist
will be among other distinguished visitors coming to the
campus for the finale of our Bicentennial year.

The summer quarter has been alive as well, filled with
special events and opportunities. The splendid series at
Snowbird was well-named a festival, a Festival of The Arts,
drawing talent from throughout the land to enhance and
complement the offerings and teaching of Utah artists.
We also served as host for a number of regional and
national conferences and seminars on issues of major
importance and timeliness in which many of you participated.

Let me now, as part of my annual report to you
briefly review the state of the University.
Endowments and physical development of the campus are evident satisfactions. Private gifts to the University are up substantially -- for our libraries and museums; for scholarships and student aid; for the beautification of the campus; for buildings, equipment and research; and, yes, even for athletics; and our permanent endowment is gaining nicely. One need only to look around to see what building is in progress: the Bookstore addition has been completed on schedule and is now ready for use; the General Services Building, just west of the SEC should be ready for occupancy by February and will house, among other facilities, the University Press; we are negotiating for the early occupancy of the Bureau of Mines Building; and we expect to break ground for the expansion of the Medical Center in February 1978, as we similarly expect to begin the complete renovation of The Einar Nielsen Fieldhouse in January of 1977 to house what I expect will be one of the finest indoor recreational facilities in the country.

One of the greatest satisfactions taken in this job is to know of the superior faculty being recruited into the University from throughout the country. Given the reservoir of present academic talent nationwide, substantially oversupplied in several disciplines, we sense a special opportunity and thus the need to manage the University affairs so as not only to assure that Utah has the continuing capability to recruit in a favorable market, but also to make
our recruiting increasingly competitive and our criteria for appointment and promotion more rigorous. The application of more rigorous and demanding criteria and a more insistent attitude regarding them is not always a pleasant or comfortable matter for the responsible parties involved. Nevertheless the careful, conscientious, and professional approach that must be taken by the faculty members and administrators involved is but a small price to pay for assuring the University's standards, and laying the basis for her further development as one of the nation's truly distinguished centers of learning. What is at issue in these personal decisions is the future well-being, strength and capability of the University of Utah; and while the processes and procedures we follow in arriving at our decisions, must be fair, impartial and professional as well as being sensitive to the individual needs, aspirations, careers and feelings of all involved, the hard decisions must nevertheless be made in favor, not merely of sustaining presently attained standards and competencies, but of enhancing and furthering them whenever possible.

Of corresponding importance, is that of the relation between our admission standards and our expectations in the classroom. Grade inflation, both in the secondary schools and colleges and universities of our country, including Utah's, has
had a material and distorting impact on well established criteria for measuring and predicting probable academic success or failure. It is time, I believe, for the University of Utah to examine seriously and carefully the adequacy of its present admission standards in relation to the standards of performance expected of our students by the faculty as a whole. The issue is enormously complex as it implicates virtually every facet of the University's work and the whole of public and higher education in the state of Utah. I do not pretend to know what changes in our present admission standards, if any, ought to be made or what other modifications within the University's overall program ought to be made, but I do believe that it is both timely and necessary for the future well-being of the University and for the future welfare and health of Utah's educational system as a whole that this issue be promptly but not precipitously addressed by the University.

Employment opportunities for our graduating students are another satisfaction. I refer to the doors which have opened to our graduates in a year of uncertain employment. For example, according to our Placement and Career Information Center,
our PhDs have fared unusually well: of the 234 PhD graduates listed in the June commencement, 219 were in the job market and of these 196 (or 89.4%) are employed. This does not include 13 graduates about whom the Center could obtain no information. Ninety-eight (or 50%) of them are employed in educational institutions, 18 (or 9.1%) work for city, county, state or the federal government. Eighteen (or 9.1%) are employed in private industry, 20 (or 10.2%) are employed as administrators or faculty members at our own University. Nine (or 4.5%) are employed abroad, including Mexico and Canada. The search for jobs and self-improvement may account for the fact that enrollment in the Division of Continuing Education was up 14% and part-time enrollment up 40%.

Another sign of vitality on this campus can be discovered by reviewing the results of a recent on-campus survey, as yet little publicized, which has yielded an interesting faculty profile: the typical U of U professor, it seems, spends a majority of his or her time teaching, is anxious to improve instructional skills, dislikes grading and testing, and welcomes student evaluations. Some 650 of you responded to an academic planning questionnaire and, according to Dr. Joyce Newman, dispelled a few negative myths about the likes, dislikes, and work habits of college professors. "The picture that emerges," she says, "is that of a concerned faculty, a faculty interested in teaching, a faculty which has concern for students and their needs." Some of you participated no doubt in yesterday's faculty rendezvous in Wolf Creek Canyon sponsored by the Faculty Club and the Teaching Innovations Committee, where you and a number of student panels looked at a
whole spectrum of questions and learned about resources on campus designed to help you, and I quote, "launch a new idea in a structured environment." I trust the conclusions were encouraging! If not, I wish to know about it and do what I can to help.

A satisfaction closely related to the improvement in the overall quality of our faculty is the effort to improve the quality of our course offerings. We have moved forward with the new liberal education program more quickly than I had thought was possible. We conceive liberal education to be the leaven in the college loaf, its benefits to be spread throughout the undergraduate curriculum and not confined to what we once called general education requirements. Faculty involvement in the design and construction of the new program has been gratifyingly widespread and effective. This year's freshman class will fall under the new Liberal Education requirements and there will, of necessity, be some adjustments across the campus in faculty advising and in the selection by departments of courses that are appropriate or required in major fields of study. Many of you will be involved in teaching undergraduate non majors who have not had this opportunity before, as new courses are being offered in every area of the University.
The University Professorship, which we have long envisioned, also intended to fortify undergraduate instruction, becomes a reality this year. The Liberal Education Council, after reviewing a strong field of outstanding teachers from among many of you, has nominated Kenneth Eble of the Department of English as our first University Professor, the appointment to take effect Winter and Spring quarters. Professor Eble, himself an effective teacher and productive scholar, has for many years made the improvement of college teaching a primary concern. We congratulate Professor Eble on this occasion. As I understand it, Professor Eble in his roving commission is free to negotiate with any college or department on campus that wishes to use him on behalf of liberal education. He has his own ideas, I'm sure, about how he will go about this, but your interest and invitations can help him fulfill our high hopes for this special position. We intend to make annual appointments.

Improving specific skills is as much as part of a University's mission as improving the quality of life through liberal education; indeed, professional training contributes to that quality. New deans have been appointed during this past year in the College of Medicine, the Graduate School of Education, the College of Pharmacy, the College of Business and the Graduate School of Social Work. Several new degrees have been approved
by the regents: a BA in Linguistics, a Master's in Engineering (with specializations in Bio engineering, Materials Science, and Mechanical Engineering), a Master's in Statistics (a combined degree), the MB-AM, in Architecture, and an MA in Iranian Studies.

The Master's in Iranian Studies reminds us that there is a world beyond the Wasatch. It is one expression among several, of the University's reviving commitment to the international dimension in education. Presently, we maintain an annual exchange of students with Japan under the auspices of the Nagoya Broadcasting Company, and we have recently completed agreements with the University of Teheran and the National Taiwan University for educational exchange in a variety of fields. We are sending three undergraduates to Taiwan this year, together with Professor Jason Yu of the College of Engineering on a year's special leave. Taiwan is sending us a distinguished professor of anthropology for the 1977-78 year, and an outstanding graduate student to study in that department. Teheran University will participate in our Middle East Center by way of a $100,000 grant to be made annually, which will permit the center to develop an excellent program in Iranian studies and to anticipate a faculty exchange across a broad spectrum of disciplines.
Study abroad is one, very visible, aspect of international education. A less visible but perhaps more accessible, and in the long run more pervasive aspect, is the increasing attention to other cultures in the curriculum at home. Professor Anita Baker of the Department of History has been appointed Director of International Education and is aware of both aspects. Her office will coordinate ongoing programs of student and faculty exchange and develop new ones. I trust that interested members of the faculty will in every way possible assist Professor Baker as she assumes responsibility for what I expect will be a growing and increasingly important part of our overall educational program.

Satisfactions are inevitably shaded by concerns. A concern remote to students and even to many of the faculty, but of immediate importance to the integrity of our overall funding base, is the growing complexity of our financial and reporting relationships with various federal and state agencies. For example, nearly one-third of the University's revenues are derived from federal research contracts and grants and other federal sources. It follows that federal agencies are in a position to exercise significant influence over our personnel policies, practices and procedures, over our management information and payroll systems, our accounting procedures, tax exemption arrangements and overall contracts and grant administration. And influence these they do.
During this past year, for example, the University, together with most of the nation's leading research universities, has been challenged by the federal government on cost transfers, stipend payments, the payroll system in general and some other areas, and we came face to face with some very substantial disallowances for the current as well as for the previous four years. I must appeal to the faculty members affected by this problem and involved in the securing and administration of research grants and contracts not to take their frustrations out on those in the administration responsible for devising and administering responses to these pressures in ways that are satisfactory both to the federal government and to the principal investigators as well. We must find our way through the tangle of bureaucratic red tape together and the administration regrets the need to do so every bit as much as do the principal investigators and other interested members of the faculty. I have, of course, been describing an inconvenience, not a crisis. It would be a crisis if we were to experience a material loss of the federal dollars which presently support nearly all of our research, most of our student financial aid and significant portions of our teaching and public service programs. One of the discomforting facts of life associated with our dependence on federal funds, however, is the uncertainty and unpredictability of federal intentions regarding the funding of critical university programs. The College of Medicine has had a recent and memorable experience with this problem when the federal government precipitously withdrew last year $1.3 million in a physicians augmentation grant and a further $200,000 in capitation funds.
Relations with our governing boards, state agencies, the legislature and the governor are basically sound, as cordial and supportive in general as one could reasonably expect, especially in these times when estrangement and hostility between state governments and state universities have very nearly become the norm across the land. We are truly fortunate here in that the people of Utah do fundamentally wish to support education and their elected representatives on balance reflect the desires of those whom they represent.

Happily the economy of the state is sound and diversified and the University is in a position to work with the state, contributing the expertise of its faculty and staff toward its continued well-being. For example, with Utah State and Brigham Young universities we have recently formed a Utah Consortium for Energy Research and Education which has submitted a comprehensive proposal to the nation's Energy Research and Development Administration for a $6.5 million expansion of natural resource and energy research in the state.

It is time to close. You will be on your way to your offices and labs and your departmental meetings and retreats where the year's work gets its real launching. For your students, college can be those "very few hours," when life is more fully realized, more awake and aware, than it may ever be again. It is for them a special time and this campus is for them a special place. Though you
have seen the classes come and go year after year, remember their expectations and enthusiasms. If in your round of classes and committee assignments you sometimes feel like Sisyphus pushing his great stone repeatedly up hill only to have it roll down again, think not so much of the endless repetition and routine that mark daily life for all of us but rather of the will, the extraordinary resolve, to shoulder the stone back up again. We can transform the daily grind into the miracle of daily renewal. May we not be guilty of what I have heard described as "hard-core pendency"! Learning itself is not enough; discerning should be its fruit.

I'm a Senior this year at this University -- in my fourth year as President. I am eager for the year to begin. Let's make it a good year, the best ever.