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THE ENDGAME

Sooner or later, several facts of life begin to dawn on most university presidents. They become increasingly aware of just how much of their time is spent doing things they do not really like to do, such as stroking potential donors for gifts, lobbying politicians, pampering governing board members, and flying the flag at numerous events—football games, building dedications, political rallies—that eventually become rather boring. This is particularly true for those who come from academic ranks, since these are just the kind of activities that most faculty members avoid like the plague. Presidents also begin to notice how much of their time is spent with people that most faculty members would choose to avoid, including politicians, reporters, and bureaucrats of various persuasions. Finally, they realize how much of their role has become that of a lobbyist, a huckster, or, worse, a sayer of things they know to be exaggerations, intentionally confusing, or even (for some) mildly false.

These are all warning signs that a university president is outgrowing the job—or at least growing weary of its trials and tribulations. This realization soon leads one to a critical decision: determining when and how to step down (aside or elsewhere). Note that there are two concerns here: when and how. In many ways, knowing when to hold and when to fold is far more straightforward a decision than

figuring out how to do it, particularly in public universities. The challenge is analogous to dismounting a bucking bronco without getting trampled in the process.

Of course, one approach is to simply accept a job elsewhere and leave. Some presidents move like gypsies from one university to another, typically staying five years or so at each before moving on to the next. Sometimes, their progression is upward, through institutions of higher and higher distinction. But just as frequently, the transition is sideways or even downward, leading one to suspect, in many cases, that the president has left just before the fall of the ax. Other presidents move into retirement, although this is becoming more of a rarity as presidents end their service at ever-younger ages. Some—although few and far between—return to active faculty roles, although very rarely in the institution they have led.

In private universities, presidents usually are allowed to step down with honor, grace, and dignity and return to the faculty or retire completely from academic life. In sharp contrast, many public university presidents these days end their tenure by stepping on a political land mine. Sometimes, they run afoul of their governing board or faculty discontent or even the intrusion of a powerful political figure, such as a governor determined to control the state's public universities. Occasionally there is a triggering event, such as a financial crisis or an athletic scandal. But more frequently, it is the continued wear and tear of university leadership that eventually leads to a personal decision that enough is enough, that the further sacrifice of health and good humor is simply not worth it. Whatever the reason, many presidents who have served their institutions well, with deep commitment, loyalty, and considerable accomplishment, all too frequently leave bitter and disappointed. One of the greatest fears of many presidents, particularly those leading public universities, is that they will not be able to control the endgame of their presidency and will be savaged by hostile political forces and perhaps even severed from the very institution on whose behalf they have worked so hard and sacrificed so much.

The history of presidents at the University of Michigan provides examples of each endgame strategy. Several Michigan presidents—including Angell, Hutchins, Ruthven, Hatcher, and Fleming—retired after many years of service. Since Angell had served for 38

years, until the age of 80, the regents gave him the honorific title of chancellor and allowed him to continue to live in the President's House until his death. One Michigan president, Marion Burton, died in office, after a very brief but productive five-year tenure. Several have moved on to university presidencies in private institutions (Erastus Haven to Northwestern University and Syracuse University, Harold Shapiro to Princeton University, and Lee Bollinger to Columbia University), suggesting that the grass may indeed be greener on the other side of the fence between public and private universities. Two of Michigan's presidents left under more difficult circumstances: Tappan, regarded by some as Michigan's most influential and visionary president, was fired by a lame-duck board of regents; C. C. Little, Michigan's youngest president, lasted only a brief four years before being driven out by faculty discontent. One Michigan president—and only one—has managed to return successfully to the Michigan faculty in an active role as a teacher and a scholar: me.

It is also interesting to note that most Michigan presidents have ended their presidencies on a sour note. Tappan was understandably bitter at the capricious actions leading to his dismissal and wrote an incendiary letter lambasting all of those among the regents and faculty who had undermined his presidency. His successor, Erastus Haven, also became frustrated at what he viewed as lack of support. Haven's papers indicate that he felt he had accomplished little as Michigan's president, while being subject to unfair criticism: "I started with an unfair sentiment against me and can never secure impartiality. Why should I work all my life to sustain a cause at a dead lift? Nothing whatever would, or should, induce me to remain here but a belief that I can do more for truth and good than anywhere else."[1]

Harry Hutchins was effective in sustaining Angell's legacy, but he was eventually worn down by the stresses of World War I on the university. Burton remained upbeat and energetic throughout his very brief presidency, but he was the only Michigan president to have died in office. C. C. Little left Michigan after a brief four-year period, frustrated with the faculty's unwillingness to accept his proposals for reshaping the university's programs to more closely resemble those of the Eastern colleges, his personal life in turmoil.[2]

Although highly successful as president, Alexander Ruthven was weary after his two-decade-long tenure and called his decision to accept the presidency "the greatest regret of my life": "I find now that I get little satisfaction in looking back over the years. I have only done what my conscience dictated but in driving ahead, I have failed to make friends and to enjoy life. The job has been a lonesome one."[3] Harlan Hatcher had a similarly long and successful tenure, but in his latter years, it became clear that the university would require a different style of leadership to cope with growing student activism and campus disruption. The Hatchers disengaged from the university after his retirement, and it was only during my presidency, two decades later, that my wife, Anne, and I were able to reinvolve them in the university community—much to our delight and the university's benefit.

Robben Fleming was one of the few Michigan presidents who stepped down on a high note, leaving to assume the presidency of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and then returning to the campus several years later as president emeritus. Perhaps because of Fleming's personality and achievements in leading the university during the difficult period of the 1960s and 1970s, he and his wife, Sally, remained highly engaged in the university, with Fleming serving as a confidant of later presidents and regents. Harold Shapiro left Michigan after a highly successful tenure as a faculty member, provost, and president. Although he had accomplished a great deal as president— and would continue to provide strong leadership at Princeton University—his last years at Michigan were made difficult by a marked deterioration in the quality of the board of regents and by attacks directed at his leadership by student activists and intrusive legislators. As for me, well, this chapter is intended to reveal the endgame period of my Michigan leadership experience. Like most of my Michigan predecessors, I also did not have the opportunity to ride off peacefully into the sunset.

SURVIVAL INSTINCT

Michigan scores! The hockey fans begin to point at the visiting goalie and chant: "It's all your fault! It's all your fault! It's all your fault!"

Perhaps out of reflex, I find myself slinking down into my seat, trying to hide.

"It's all your fault!" is perhaps the most common invective tossed at a university president, because the presidency of a major university is one of those rare leadership roles in which anything good that happens is generally due to someone else, but anything bad is always the president's fault. Or so students, faculty, trustees, and the media like to believe. The governor cuts a sweetheart deal to slip a few extra million to his alma mater, Michigan State University—my fault. A racist flyer is taped to the door of a minority faculty member in the Law School—my fault. As the stock market drops 100 points, the value of the university endowment loses a few hundred million dollars, at least temporarily—my fault again. A congressman interested in publicity attacks the university for "political correctness" (I have always marveled at how Congress always seems to know what is politically correct and what is not)—again, the president's fault. When the Colorado quarterback Cordell Stewart faded back and tossed a 70-yard bomb to beat Michigan as the clock expired, whose fault was it? Well, the president did not call Michigan's prevent defense, but since I was at the game, it was probably my fault. Ditto for Chris Webber's illegal time-out in the closing seconds of the NCAA basketball championship game against North Carolina.

One of my Michigan predecessors, Robben Fleming, put it best: "Anyone in public office, or a position like a university president, is subject to the continual expression of unkind, unfair, inaccurate, and sometimes vicious criticism which we have to accept as the price of a society in which we place so high a value on freedom of expression."[4] It is characteristic of the university presidency, as of many in leadership positions, that one acquires a sense of personal responsibility for everything bad that happens in the institution, even though most of these events are clearly beyond the president's control. Furthermore, although most rational people understand this, someone has to take the blame. The president is usually the most convenient scapegoat.

As a consequence, a strange personality transformation occurs during the years of a university presidency. Successful presidents—or shall we say, surviving presidents—develop a sixth sense, a primitive instinct that keeps them always on the alert for danger, almost as if

they were hunted animals. And well they should, since today's university presidents seem increasingly under attack by politicians, governing boards, and even their own faculties. Understandably, university presidents must develop not only an unusually thick skin but also an acute instinct to sense danger.

Anne and I had the good fortune of entering the Michigan presidency with a great deal of knowledge about the university from many years on the faculty, as members of the campus community, and in service in key leadership positions, including dean and provost. We already knew where most of the snakes nested about the campus and where most of the bodies were buried. But even with this advance forewarning, we were probably not prepared for the onslaught that accompanies public life.

Like other public figures, university presidents are frequently targets for those—both on and off campus—who are mad at the administration, at the university, or simply at life itself. This long list might include faculty members with particularly political or personal agendas, student activists, regents (including the inevitable mavericks on the board), the media (always on the lookout for a provocative story), politicians (local, state, and federal), and the usual list of obsessed or disturbed folks for whom the university president is simply a convenient target for their personal angst. Of course, one might add to this list the usual practitioners of court politics, particularly within the administration.

To some degree, this aggravation just goes with the territory characterizing any public leadership position. Following the meeting in which the Michigan Regents elected me as the eleventh president of the university, Robben Fleming pulled me aside for some advice. He suggested that a public university president should never regard the slings and arrows launched by others as personal attacks. Rather, he argued, most critics were simply angry at the institution, not the president. But he also acknowledged that university presidents made a most convenient target for taking out frustrations and that such attacks could not only hurt but cause fatal injury.

Some degree of paranoia is both appropriate and advisable. There are always those who believe that their personal agendas can be advanced by attacking the president. There are numerous examples

(including the overthrow of Michigan's first president, Henry Tappan) where even the most successful presidents have been toppled and universities have been torn apart by individuals or special interest groups whose causes seem minor in the broader scheme of university priorities but whose ability to destabilize the institution—particularly its governing board—was seriously underestimated. After years of enduring such attacks, one develops a survival instinct, a tendency to look under every rock and behind every tree, to question everything and everyone. It is little wonder that some presidents eventually self-destruct and that others surround themselves with mildly paranoid staff to serve as canaries in the mine shaft.

PUTTING IT ALL ON THE LINE

I received another piece of well-heeded advice from Robben Fleming: "A university president must develop the capacity to tolerate risk as a necessary characteristic of the position. If you do not occasionally face critical moments when you must put your job on the line in defending or advancing the institution, then you are likely not doing your job well."[5] Well, if living dangerously is a measure of a successful president, my experience must rank high, since my list of tightrope walks is long indeed. After a particularly frustrating day late in my presidency, I went back over my calendar and tried to identify some of the times when the interests of the university required me to confront powerful forces that posed significant risks to my presidency. Several examples from that list illustrate the point well:

1. Building and leading a statewide coalition of university presidents and influential alumni to block a governor's efforts to control public university tuition

2. Launching and leading the Michigan Mandate and Michigan Agenda for Women, to diversify the campus

3. Modifying the university's nondiscrimination policies to include gays and lesbians, then extending staff benefits to same-sex couples

4. Putting into place a new student disciplinary policy against strong student opposition (and regent lobbying)

5. Creating a campus police force—the first in the university's history—to protect the campus

6. Insisting on academic control of the admission and academic progress of student athletes—much to the ire of power coaches in our football and basketball programs

7. Restructuring the formula for sharing football gate receipts within the Big Ten Conference—an objective that required a not-too-subtle threat to withdraw Michigan from the Big Ten but resulted in a 40 percent increase in Athletic Department revenues

8. Standing up to and surviving an attack on the university by a powerful congressional investigative committee attempting to exploit a preliminary indirect cost audit, which, on later review, actually substantiated the university's integrity

9. Challenging the leadership of Michigan's fraternities and threatening strong action if they did not address serious disciplinary behavior that was threatening both the university and the Ann Arbor community

10. Publicly challenging the UM athletic booster clubs' tradition of excluding women

11. Creating and leading a statewide effort to build stronger support for public higher education in the midst of a close gubernatorial election campaign

12. Year after year, persuading, pressuring, and pleading with the regents to support adequate increases in student tuition and fees to sustain quality and provide adequate need-based financial aid

13. Attempting to improve the quality of university governing boards in Michigan by working with alumni and the media, thereby earning the great ire of several Michigan regents who believed this matter should be left to incumbent board members

14. Challenging city government to stop beating on the university for its tax-exempt status and instead support a city income tax that would generate adequate tax revenue, which would be paid in large measure by university employees

15. Challenging state government to recognize that a tax structure from the 1950s, based on a manufacturing economy, would lead

to disaster as the state's economy was increasingly dominated by knowledge-intensive services that were excluded from the tax base—a warning that would prove all too true by the end of the 1990s

16. Persuading the regents to adopt new (and occasionally high-risk) strategies for financing highly needed academic facilities on campus

17. Using the bully pulpit of the Michigan presidency to take on important national issues such as diversity, K–12 education, post–cold war national priorities, the regressive nature of public policies for supporting public higher education, global change, and so on

18. Threatening sacred cows by publicly raising the possibility of spinning off major auxiliary activities—such as the university's hospitals and semiprofessional athletic programs (football and basketball)—or by suggesting that Michigan was evolving into a "privately supported public university"

19. Making difficult personnel changes, particularly when they involved replacing highly visible or regent-popular staff

20. When necessary, standing up to individual regents over issues important to the university or the community, including gay rights, supporting a Holocaust monument on campus, retired faculty housing, minority admissions, and personal behavioral issues (e.g., conflict of interest, "perk-itis," and abusive treatment of staff)

And the list goes on and on and on.

Not surprisingly, I used to worry about this frequency of putting it all on the line time after time. While it was true that this high-risk style led to quite remarkable progress for the university, it also put considerable strain on Anne and me, while sometimes putting the university administration at some risk. I wondered about the wisdom of always putting the president out front to fight these battles when others, such as executive officers or senior staff, were far less vulnerable. Yet putting someone else in front was not my style—after all, my position in college football was tackle, always first into battle.

Perhaps it is not surprising, in retrospect, that while these high-risk actions were some of the most difficult and important tasks the president performed for the university, few folks—particularly among the faculty—were aware of them. Instead of sympathy and support, it was more common to encounter the attitude expressed in the phrase "So what have you done for us lately?" While tentativeness has never been one of my character traits, I must confess a growing weariness that arises from fighting battle after battle to keep the university moving ahead, with little understanding and appreciation and even less support. It is hard to keep fighting the good fight when those you are trying to protect keep pecking away at your rear flank.

<div align="center">WEAR AND TEAR</div>

The presidency of a major university is a 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year job—both for the president and the spouse. Needless to say, the wear and tear can be considerable. Today's modern university runs year-round, around the clock, as do the various elements of society that depend on and influence it. While faculty can look toward summertime as a more relaxed period for rest and travel, June and July are usually the time when key budget decisions are made both in state legislatures and Congress, and when legislative bodies are in session, no one and no public institutions are safe, particularly public universities, such as the University of Michigan.

Modern telecommunications has made it even more difficult to decouple from the stresses and strains of presidential leadership. Associated with its early years in building and managing national computer networks, Michigan benefited from an exceptionally advanced e-mail and computer conferencing system that permeated the university. On a typical day as president, I would receive and respond to literally hundreds of e-mail messages from staff, faculty, students, and others, both on and off the campus, nationwide and worldwide. Wherever I went, my laptop computer and cell phone were constant companions. Like most of the senior officers of the university, I also carried a pager that could download brief e-mail messages anyplace in North America—the precursor to today's Blackberry device. Hence, this electronic umbilical cord—computer, phone, and pager—kept

me constantly in touch with the university and kept it constantly in touch with me.

I do not doubt that many would seriously question the wisdom of this real-time connectivity. Yet my experience with leading such a complex institution in a continually changing environment convinced me that beyond carefully developed strategies, much of the advancement of the institution occurred through unanticipated opportunities—being in the right place at the right time. So too, many of the greatest threats to the institution ignited rapidly and would reach the explosive stage if prompt effective action were not taken. Hence, while the personal toll was great, I was convinced that the times required this style of leadership. I always had to be prepared for the unexpected.

THE TWO-MINUTE WARNING

There were many factors that eventually persuaded me that it was time to step aside as president. Since I had served both as acting president during Harold Shapiro's sabbatical and then as provost and "president-in-waiting" for roughly two years prior to being inaugurated as president in 1988, I was approaching the 10-year point in my leadership of the university. I was already second in seniority among Big Ten presidents (serving as chairman of the Big Ten Conference) and sixth in longevity among the 60 AAU presidents. Hence, as Anne and I approached a new academic year in 1995, we felt it was time to take stock of how far the university had come and what the road ahead looked like.

Looking back, I would identify three quite separate phases in my presidency. The early phase involved setting the themes of challenge, opportunity, responsibility, and excitement and developing a vision for the future of the university. During this phase, much of my time was spent meeting with various constituencies both on and off campus, listening to their aspirations and concerns, challenging and encouraging them, harvesting their ideas and wisdom, and attempting to build a sense of excitement and optimism about the future of the university. This period marks the establishment of some of my administration's most important strategic directions for the univer-

sity: for example, the Michigan Mandate, financial restructuring, the Campaign for Michigan, the Undergraduate Initiative Fund, NSFnet and the Internet, and numerous international activities. This bottom-up visioning process was assisted by numerous small groups of faculty and staff, some formal, some ad hoc.

The second phase of my leadership, while not so public, was equally substantive, since it involved developing and executing an action plan to move toward the vision. Key were a series of strategic initiatives designed to position the university for the leadership role proposed in Vision 2000, described in chapter 9. These ranged from the appointment of key leaders at the level of executive officers, deans, and directors, to setting new standards for academic and administrative quality, to rebuilding our campuses, to a bold financial restructuring of Michigan as the nation's first privately supported public university. Largely as a result of these efforts, the university grew rapidly in strength, quality, and diversity during the early 1990s. One by one, each of the goals of Vision 2000 was achieved.

By the mid-1990s, my administration began to shift the university into a third phase, shifting from a positioning effort to a transformation agenda. I had become convinced that we were entering an era of great challenge and opportunity for higher education, characterized by a rapid and profound transformation into a global knowledge society. I realized that the task of transforming the university to better serve society and to move toward a new vision for the century ahead would be challenging. Perhaps the greatest challenge of all would be the university's very success. It would be difficult to convince those who had worked so hard to build a leading public university of the twentieth century, that they could not rest on their laurels, that the old paradigms would no longer work. The challenge of the 1990s would be to reinvent the university to serve a new world in a new century.

It was clear that the transformation agenda of the university would require wisdom, commitment, perseverance, and considerable courage. It would require teamwork. It would also require an energy level, a "go for it" spirit, and a sense of adventure. But all of these features had characterized the university during its past eras of change, opportunity, and leadership. These were, in fact, important elements of the institutional saga of the University of Michigan.

During this final phase, my administration launched a series of initiatives aimed at providing the university with the capacity to transform itself to better serve a changing world. Several of these initiatives were highly controversial, such as the launch of several cutting-edge academic programs (e.g., the Center for Molecular Medicine and the School of Information), a new system for decentralized budgeting that transferred to individual units the responsibility for both generating revenues and meeting costs, and a new approach to academic outreach involving the Internet (leading to the creation of the Michigan Virtual University). Hence, it was important that, as president, I returned once again to a more visible role. In a series of addresses and publications, I challenged the university community, stressing the importance of not only adapting to but relishing the excitement and opportunity characterizing a time of change.

During this decade-long effort, begun with Harold Shapiro during my provost years, the university made remarkable progress. Due to the extraordinary talents, commitment, and depth of the leadership team (not to mention a great deal of luck), we had been able to accomplish essentially everything we had originally set out as goals. The institution had been restructured financially and was now as strong as any university in the nation. The Campaign for Michigan, with over a year yet to go, had surpassed its original goal of $1 billion. The endowment had passed $2 billion, almost 10 times the amount we began with. Minority enrollments and faculty representation had doubled as a result of the Michigan Mandate. Michigan had surpassed MIT and Stanford University in research volume, to become the nation's leading research university. The massive $2 billion effort to rebuild the university's campuses was approaching completion, with over a dozen new building dedications already scheduled in the year ahead. Not only was our senior leadership team—executive officers, deans, and administrative directors—highly regarded as one of the strongest in the nation, but talent ran deep throughout the university administration and staff. Furthermore, most of our enemies in state and federal government had either been vanquished or had long since moved on, leaving us with relatively strong support among various external constituencies—including, for a change, even the state's media.

The more difficult transformation effort, Vision 2017, was also well under way, with the key strategic initiatives in place, important planning teams and faculty commissions up and running, and extensive communications efforts continuing to both educate and engage on-campus and off-campus constituencies. Many of our most important experiments were launched and coming up to speed, such as the effort to improve undergraduate education, the new School of Information, the creation of a new university health care system, and the Big Ten academic alliance. New facilities, such as the Media Union and the School of Social Work, were nearing completion. Furthermore, we were grooming the next generation of leaders and had begun the search effort for several key positions, including provost, dean of graduate studies, and executive vice president for medical affairs.

Hence, there was every reason to feel satisfied as Anne and I walked amid the construction cranes on campus in the summer of 1995, with yet another academic year soon upon us. But I hinted at my deeper concerns in a passage contained in several of my speeches to the campus community and various alumni groups during the spring of 1995:

> I believe the UM is as strong as it has ever been right now, . . . better, stronger, more exciting. That is due to the efforts of an enormous number of people, obviously. I inherited the fruits of the financial wisdom of Harold Shapiro, the diplomatic-political skills of Robben Fleming, and an enormous number of talented faculty and executive officers that brought us to this point. Yet while Michigan is very strong right now, it is also a time when institutions of higher education are being asked to change very dramatically to serve a changing world, just as other social institutions are. And leading an institution during a time of change, during a time of transformation, puts an additional stress on the entire system.

I had become increasingly convinced that the university needed to undergo a further series of profound transformations and that this period would require sustained leadership for many years. Both Anne

and I were increasingly concerned about whether we would be able to sustain the energy and drive necessary to lead Michigan through such an extended period.

Another related consideration was the very nature of the activities I saw as necessary for the university in the years ahead. In part because our progress had been so rapid, I began to look farther ahead—five years, a decade, even a generation or more into the future. I became more interested in blockbuster goals than in the incremental and opportunistic approach of our earlier efforts. I sought larger agendas than those that could be addressed by Michigan alone, agendas that would require new coalitions at the national and even international level.

Although I had a personal vision for the future of the University of Michigan, I also realized that there were many questions involving the evolution of higher education that remained unanswered. As a scientist, I preferred to look at the decade ahead as a time of experimentation, in which leading universities, such as Michigan, had both an unusual opportunity and a responsibility to explore new paradigms of the university. Looking through my notes from that period, it is clear today that my sense of the challenges and opportunities facing higher education in general and the University of Michigan in particular were moving ever farther beyond the perceptions of my colleagues.

Although I had a very strong interest in leading progressive efforts, I began to question whether I could do so in my role as president. The ongoing roles of the presidency must continue—as chief executive officer for the institution; its lead promoter and fund-raiser; the shepherd tending its many flocks; and defender of its values, missions, and quality. I became increasingly concerned about whether I could build sufficient regental understanding and support for this bolder agenda, particularly when the board was becoming increasingly divided. Although many faculty and staff in the university were excited and energized by the boldness of the transformation agenda, many others were threatened. Hence, awareness began to build that my next stage of leadership for higher education might best be accomplished from elsewhere, far from the politics of the presidency and the glare of the media. It was becoming increasingly clear that as I challenged the uni-

versity to change in more profound ways to serve a changing world, I would gradually exhaust my political capital.

Ironically, Anne and I were forced to think a bit more seriously about our future when two regents of the University of California flew out to visit us over a Memorial Day weekend to discuss the possibility of the UC system presidency. This was probably the only leadership position in the nation more complex than Michigan, with nine major campuses and three national laboratories. This, combined with our earlier experiences in California, compelled us to at least consider the possibility of the UC presidency. The University of California had looked earlier to Michigan for its leadership, tapping UM provost Roger Heyns for chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley, in the 1960s and approaching Robben Fleming about the UC presidency in the 1970s.

But for us, there were serious drawbacks to the UC presidency, not the least of which was the intent of the UC regents to pass a motion to ban the use of affirmative action in admissions (a decision later reinforced by California's Proposition 209). Such a policy would have placed me in almost immediate conflict with both the UC governing board and the state of California, in view of my successful efforts through the Michigan Mandate to build diversity at Michigan. But more significantly, Anne and I also realized that we had invested far too much in serving the University of Michigan to simply walk away.

Yet perhaps it was in this effort to take stock of what we had accomplished and what remained that we began to think more seriously about just how much longer we could serve. Early in the fall of 1995, as Anne and I walked through the campus and saw all the new buildings and landscaping and went to events to meet the new faculty, we had an increasing sense that our job might be complete. After all, we were entering our eighth year in the presidency, a term comparable in length to the terms of our predecessors and longer than average for public university presidents.

As fate would have it, another factor became the straw that broke the camel's back, pushing us to a decision to step down after 10 years at the helm: this was the deteriorating support provided by the university's board of regents. As a result of the 1994 elections, the board

of regents had become badly fragmented—in political beliefs (it was composed of four conservative Republicans and four labor-left Democrats), in generation (four young regents resisted the leadership of more senior members of the board), and in relations with the university (four regents who were Ann Arbor residents were regularly lobbied by students, faculty, and staff on various agendas). But more seriously, the long-standing senior leadership of the board, its chair and vice-chair, were defeated in the 1994 elections. The four-to-four political division of the newly elected board made it difficult for members to agree on new leadership. Several regents soon reached the conclusion that the board would remain dysfunctional until a new political majority could be reestablished. One regent even stressed to me that my role must become that of protecting the university from its governing board during this stalemate. As a sign of the difficulties to come, the board finally assigned its most senior member, ironically the board's true maverick (in whom they had little confidence), with the task of being the primary interface with the president and administration—a decision perhaps meant to send a signal of the eroding support of some members of the new board.

As a result, the executive officer team was forced to deal with a governing board without any internal structure whatsoever—no chair or even party caucus leadership. Although I, as president, had constitutional authority to preside over the meetings of the board, I did so without a vote. Hence, with a four-to-four political split, it became increasingly time-consuming to obtain the additional vote to achieve a majority on matters of importance, such as setting tuition or approving property acquisitions, and to avoid getting a majority vote on issues that could harm the university, such as the rejection of the Michigan Mandate diversity agenda or our student disciplinary policy. The political divisions on the board, its inability to agree on many issues, and its instability made the executive officers increasingly tentative, always concerned that the regents might fail to support them or even attack them publicly on one agenda or another.

A badly divided governing board can take a considerable toll on the executive officers, the university, and the president. Roughly one-third of my time was spent dealing one-on-one with various regents

because of their inability to trust one another. Regent intrusion into such areas as finance, personnel, state politics, and athletics was particularly excessive, placing added pressure on the executive officers responsible for these areas.

It soon became apparent that the changing character of the board not only had put our transformation strategy at risk but was also increasingly threatening the university. The executive officer team eventually concluded that we had no choice but to narrow our transformation agenda, stressing only those efforts we believed could be completed over the next year or two and lashing down the wheel to prepare for the stormy seas ahead. Since it was also becoming increasingly clear that my own tenure might be shortened considerably by an intrusive governing board, we began to lock in place a series of key actions—for example, developing the responsibility center management structure and endowment investment strategy and protecting university financial reserves—and moved even more aggressively to decentralize authority to the unit level. Needless to say, developing and executing this doomsday strategy was depressing at times, particularly in view of the extraordinary progress that the university had made over the past decade. But in the end, we became convinced that our responsibility to the institution and to those it would serve in the future demanded such downside strategies.

This was the atmosphere surrounding the university administration as I approached my last year in the Michigan presidency. It was the calm before the storm, characterized by both a sense of satisfaction about remarkable accomplishments of the past decade and a growing dread of the damage that, despite the best efforts of several regents to heal divisions among their colleagues, an increasingly divided governing board was capable of inflicting on the institution as some members pursued their political and personal whims.

Finally, following a particularly difficult week in early fall, when several of the regents undercut my efforts to recruit a new provost, I realized that the oscillations of the board were becoming increasingly volatile and dysfunctional. Hence, I concluded that the only way to stabilize the board, regain control of the agenda, and refocus the university on academic issues once again was to use the visibility of my

resignation and a year as lame duck to regain command. This was not an easy decision (at least as far as timing was concerned), but sometimes the general has to fall on his sword to save his army.

My decision was announced simultaneously to the regents, the university community, and the world (via the Internet). By carefully designing both the tone of the announcement and its broad release, I tried to take the high ground and set the right context for the decision as the key paragraph in my letter to the board indicates.

> After considerable thought, Anne and I have decided that the university, the board, and the two of us would be best served if I was to retire from the presidency at the end of the current academic year (June 30, 1996). This would provide the Regents with both the opportunity and the time to conduct a search for a new president. It would also allow me to keep the university on course, hold together a stable leadership team, and prepare for a graceful transition back to the faculty. We ask only for the respect, honor, and dignity that our efforts and accomplishments merit through service both as president and as dedicated members of the university for the past 27 years.[6]

Unfortunately, Michigan's governor at the time, John Engler, ever the political opportunist, used my announcement to blast the Michigan regents, in an effort to make the case for shifting from elected to appointed governing boards. While his criticism was valid in principle, his attacks were far too strident, too blatantly political, and without any follow-through. This unleashed a torrent of criticism by the media,[7] with most calling for a new process for selecting university governing boards and condemning the behavior of the Michigan board. Anne and I were deluged by hundreds of letters of support and thanks, which were reassuring, but we now faced the challenge of repairing the damage the governor had inflicted on the board. Fortunately, the regents' new role in searching for and selecting a successor soon smoothed the waters, while most people close to us understood and accepted our decision. Over the course of the next several months, the many constituencies we had served throughout the university arranged events to both honor and thank us.

TAKING STOCK

I mentioned earlier that one of the most important guidelines for a university president is to make certain that you pass the institution along to your successor in better shape than you received it. In 1996, Anne and I handed off a university that not only benefited from the highest academic program rankings in its history but had become regarded nationwide as a leader and an innovator. Michigan led the nation in the magnitude of its research activities. It had the most successful medical center in the nation. It had achieved national leadership in information technology, playing a key role in building the Internet. It had become the strongest public university in the nation in a financial sense, as evidenced by the fact that Wall Street gave it its highest credit rating, Aaa, in 1996 (along with the University of Texas, the only two public universities in the nation to receive this rating). A *CBS News* segment on the University of Michigan in 1995 observed, "While America has a number of world-class universities, Michigan truly stands in a class by itself."

More specifically, by the time I stepped down, Michigan's endowment had surpassed $2.5 billion, an increase of almost tenfold. The Campaign for Michigan was nearing completion, raising over $1.4 billion, 40 percent beyond its original goal. The university's portfolio of resources was far more balanced, with tuition revenue increasing to over $450 million per year, and private support (gifts received plus endowment payout) had passed $260 million per year, clearly on track to surpass my administration's goal of exceeding state support by the end of the decade.

The campus environment for teaching and research had been improved significantly. All of the university's campuses—Ann Arbor, Dearborn, and Flint—were essentially rebuilt, with over $2 billion of new construction and renovation. The campuses had also been relandscaped, and new master plans had been not only adopted but achieved. As the quality of the campus was improved, a new sense of pride appeared within the campus communities (particularly among the students), resulting in a dramatic decrease in littering and other activities that defaced the environment.

There was also a significant change in the quality and style of uni-

versity events and facilities. Both the President's House and Inglis House had been completely renovated. There was a new level of quality achieved in university advancement events. The university had also begun to reconnect itself with its remarkable past, developing a new sense of understanding and appreciation for its history and traditions and restoring historically important facilities, such as the Detroit Observatory.

The student body was characterized by a new spirit of leadership and cooperation. Such programs as Leadership 2017 attracted a new generation of leaders, and fraternities and sororities accepted a new sense of responsibility for their activities. Although initially difficult to implement, the student code and campus police had become valuable contributions to the quality of campus life. This was augmented by a major effort to improve campus safety, including the improvement of lighting, transportation, and security.

Michigan athletics had evolved far beyond its football-dominated history, to achieve leadership across a broad range of men's and women's sports. Furthermore, Michigan became the first major university in America to achieve full gender equity in varsity opportunities. The Michigan Mandate and Michigan Agenda for Women had a dramatic impact on the campus, doubling the number of underrepresented minorities among Michigan's students, faculty, staff, and leadership; breaking through the glass ceiling to appoint women to senior leadership positions; and creating a new appreciation for the importance of a diverse campus community.

The external relations of the university were back on track. There were strong teams in place in Lansing, Washington, development, and alumni relations. The university also benefited from what was regarded as one of the strongest leadership teams in the nation at the level of executive officers, deans, and senior administrative staff—although, unfortunately, many of these were to leave early in the tenure of the next president.

Not to say that there were no remaining problems. The regents still suffered from a political selection process that posed a gauntlet to many qualified candidates. The state's sunshine laws had become increasingly intrusive and were clearly hampering the operations of the university. A scandal was uncovered in the men's basketball pro-

gram that would plague future presidents. Prospects for the restoration of adequate state support continued to look dim.

Yet in assessing the decade of leadership from 1986 to 1996, it is clear that the university made remarkable progress. It approached the twenty-first century better, stronger, more diverse, and more exciting than ever, clearly positioned as one of the leading universities in the world. During this decade, the University of Michigan completed the ascension in academic quality launched years earlier by Harold Shapiro. Its quality and impact across all academic disciplines and professional programs ranked it among the most distinguished public and private universities in the world.

As the strategic focus of my administration shifted from building a great twentieth-century university to transforming Michigan into a twenty-first-century institution, a series of key initiatives were launched that were intended as seeds for a university of the future. Certainly, highly visible efforts, such as the Michigan Mandate and financial restructuring, were components of this effort. However, beyond these were numerous exciting initiatives led by many of our most distinguished faculty members and designed to explore new paradigms for higher education. These included the Institute for the Humanities, the School of Information, the Global Change Program, the Molecular Medicine Institute, and the Media Union.

Each Michigan president seems to have filled a particular leadership role for the university, perhaps less because of how they were selected than the degree to which the institution and its needs shaped their presidency. Which earlier presidency most resembled my administration? There were probably some faculty members who initially regarded me as the barbarian from the North Campus, an engineer rather than a scholar. To be sure, I was a builder, like Burton, leading a successful $2 billion construction effort to rebuild all of the university's campuses. While bricks and mortar do not make a great university, it was difficult to conduct high-quality teaching and scholarship in the dismal facilities that housed many of Michigan's programs prior to my presidency.

Some on the faculty regarded me as a corporate type, a CEO president, who completed Harold Shapiro's effort to financially restructure the university. Driving the $1.4 billion Campaign for Michigan,

increasing endowment from $250 million to $2.5 billion, fighting the political battles to build Michigan's tuition base to compensate for the loss of state support, providing the environment and incentives to make Michigan the nation's leading research university, and reducing costs through such efforts as Total Quality Management and decentralized budgeting were all components of a strategy to preserve and enhance the quality of the university despite the serious erosion in state support, which I believed was likely to continue for the foreseeable future. It was certainly true that I was a driver, with a relentless commitment to completing the ascension on academic quality launched during the Shapiro years. Like Shapiro, my academic roots were with institutions committed to the highest academic standards—Yale and Caltech—and I was determined that Michigan should strive for similar quality. Hence, the aspiration for excellence was pervasive throughout all of our efforts.

It was probably not surprising that a scientist as president would develop, articulate, and achieve a strategic vision for the university that would provide it with great financial strength, rebuild its campus, and position it as the leading research university in the nation. But many were surprised by my deep commitment to diversifying the university through such initiatives as the Michigan Mandate, the Michigan Agenda for Women, and the revision of Regental Bylaw 14.06 to prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation. Furthermore, my broad effort to improve undergraduate education and campus life were far beyond what one might have expected from one who had spent his academic career in graduate education and research.

If, however, I were to choose my own descriptor to characterize my tenure, it would be that of providing leadership during a time of change. In a sense, I aimed at serving as both a prophet and a force for change, recognizing that to serve a rapidly changing world, the university itself would have to change dramatically. In my view, the most important contribution of my decade of leadership was building the recognition that to serve a rapidly changing world, the university itself would have to change dramatically.

Fortunately, in 1996, as I approached the end of my presidency, the state of Michigan and America were entering what would become

the most prosperous time for higher education in decades. State support was relatively generous, and a booming equity market stimulated strong private giving and endowment growth. The university coffers were filled. A strong leadership team of executive officers, deans, and administrative staff were in place, and numerous important initiatives were running in high gear. Hence, when I stepped down from the presidency, the future of the university seemed secure—at least for the moment.

FADING AWAY

During my last, lame-duck year in the presidency, the pace certainly did not slow down. The transformation effort moved ahead, as did other major efforts, such as various academic initiatives, the fund-raising campaign, the major capital facilities projects, and the effort to strengthen support of the university from both state and federal government. The effort to appoint a new provost was put on hold, to preserve the prerogative of the next president. Fortunately, we were able to entice one of our senior deans, Bernie Machen, dean of dentistry, to serve in the interim role. Bernie was highly respected by the deans and executive officers, and although my successor, Lee Bollinger, would look elsewhere for his provost, Bernie went on to highly successful presidencies at the University of Utah and then the University of Florida.

Anne turned much of her personal attention to providing encouragement and support to the deans and executive officers during the transition. As I mentioned earlier, unlike Harold Shapiro, I found that my power, responsibility, and accountability continued undiminished, with major decisions put on my desk up to my final day as president in the summer of 1996. Since people realized that Anne and I fully intended to remain at the university as active members of the faculty and community, they trusted us to do what was best for the institution up until the very end of our tenure.

This decision to remain at the university was rather unusual. As I noted in an earlier chapter, most university presidential searches today end up selecting candidates from outside. While these individuals bring new ideas and experience, they usually do not have the

emotional attachment that comes from years of service on the faculty or within the campus community. Hence, when they step down from their presidency, they usually do not remain as part of the university community but, rather, move on to another institution or retire from higher education entirely.

Anne and I were somewhat unusual in higher education, since we had spent our careers at the same institution that I would lead in the presidency. We had many opportunities to go elsewhere. Yet we turned away these approaches by saying, each time, that our job was not yet complete at Michigan. Our commitment to finish what we had started was firm. We did give some thought to life after the presidency, as all presidents should—particularly in a public university with a political governing board. In the negotiation associated with my decision to continue for several more years of service following my first five years as president, I followed a pattern set by Harold Shapiro and negotiated a path to return to my role as an active professor, but reporting to the provost rather than to a particular academic unit. To indicate the university-wide character of the appointment, the regents approved the title "university professor of science and engineering," noting it was comparable to an endowed chair. I was given a small suite of offices in one of the last buildings constructed on the university's North Campus during my presidency, the Media Union (eight years later to be renamed the James and Anne Duderstadt Center). I was able to marshal sufficient funds for a small staff and several student assistants for a research project called the Millennium Project, aimed at exploring over-the-horizon topics involving the impact of technology on society.

However, remaining at the institution where one had served as president—even when this had been preceded by decades as a faculty member and a member of the university community—was, in itself, a rather stressful experience. I remember well the "good news–bad news" advice given me by a colleague who had also returned to the faculty after long service as the leader of his campus. First the bad news: He warned that life would be difficult under my first successor, since in public universities, there is a tendency for new presidents to obliterate any evidence of the existence of their predecessors—"The king is dead, long live the king!" A retiring president will frequently be ignored—if not buried and paved over. He noted that loyal staff

would be replaced and that programs would be dismantled as the new leader tried to establish his or her own agenda and steer the university in a different direction. However, my colleague also had some good news. First, he suggested that my first successor would not last very long, since, like an ocean liner, a university is very hard to turn about, and efforts to attempt this usually end in failure. Second, he believed that life could be quite enjoyable under my second successor, who no longer would have any need to discount the accomplishments of earlier predecessors and hence could welcome them back once again as valued members of the university community.

TEN YEARS AFTER A DECADE AT THE HELM

What has life been like as a president emeritus? Fortunately, my post-presidency agreement with the regents provided me both the position (with a university-wide faculty appointment) and the platform (as director of a small research center) to reenter the professoriat—an important lesson for those university presidents considering a faculty position in the presidential afterlife. To be sure, there have been occasional frustrations beyond those of suddenly becoming powerless during a period when valued colleagues are replaced and programs are dismantled. The first jarring transition is the loss of the strong support staff so necessary for the hectic life of a university president. In the transition back to the faculty, it soon becomes apparent that execution becomes more important than delegation, as one must learn once again how to make travel arrangements, maintain a filing system, use the copy machine, and make the coffee.

Calendar management also becomes a new challenge. Although has-been presidents are expected to be ghosts on their campuses, the former leadership of such a prominent university as Michigan still retains some visibility and credibility on the national stage. The invitations to speak or participate in various activities are quite numerous. The challenge, of course, is to prioritize these opportunities into a coherent pattern. Otherwise, one soon finds the calendar filled with too many such commitments, leaving little time for other activities, including the normal faculty pursuits of teaching and research. In my own case, this overload of opportunities was compounded by my con-

tinued involvement with numerous state and national agencies, including the National Science Board, the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy, and the National Academies. Beyond this, I faced the very pragmatic challenge of seeking longer-term funding for my own research interests, since grantsmanship is a requirement for any productive faculty role in science and engineering.

It soon became apparent that beyond acquiring the usual speaking and writing roles characterizing the afterlife of a university president, I had become, in effect, a "professional chairman," because of the numerous requests to chair various committees and task forces. Here, I suppose that chairing an elected board of regents for many years had prepared me for almost any chair assignment. The assignments ranged from chairing a wide range of National Academy groups on such topics as national science policy, information technology, and science education to advisory committees for federal agencies on such topics as nuclear energy research and space exploration. Michigan's governor asked me to launch a new Internet-based university, the Michigan Virtual Automotive College—later renamed the Michigan Virtual University—so I was once again a university president, if only in a virtual sense.

Many of my speaking engagements were at the invitation of my colleagues who were still sitting in the saddle as active presidents. I used to refer to my role in such engagements as that of a "professional two-by-four," recalling the old Missouri adage that, sometimes, to get a mule to move, one has to first whack it over the head with a two-by-four to get its attention. I would be invited to a campus to meet with trustees, the faculty, or even governors and legislators, to help them read the writing on the wall about the future of higher education and to raise such issues as tuition, tenure, and college sports, which were dangerous territory for a sitting president.

Fortunately, as I became more adept at calendar management, I was soon able to define my own priorities and began to resume my prepresidency activities as an author, although this time on subjects of current interest, such as the future of the university, public higher education, and intercollegiate athletics, rather than, as in my past efforts, on such archaic subjects as nuclear engineering and mathematical physics.[8] I launched a series of projects under the umbrella of my research center, the Millennium Project, including exploring the

impact of rapidly evolving digital technologies on learning, the development of strategies for assisting regions in evolving into knowledge economies, and the future of engineering education.

Since I had considerable freedom in my teaching activities, I arranged with the deans to develop and teach an array of new courses scattered across the university, depending on my interests of the moment. These ranged from new undergraduate courses in engineering to a history course developed for last-term seniors in our liberal arts college to graduate-level courses on information technology, nuclear technology, science policy, and higher education. Finally, after Lee Bollinger had left for Columbia and Mary Sue Coleman had arrived as Michigan's new president, it became politically acceptable once again for the president to ask me to take on various assignments within the university, including building a new program in science, technology, and public policy within our Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy; leading a university-wide effort to build a major effort in energy research; and helping the university develop a strategy for information technology.

Ironically, however, perhaps of most lasting value to the university was my and Anne's effort to better capture and articulate Michigan's remarkable history. This effort was really stimulated by Anne. During my presidency, she developed a strong interest in historical preservation and documentation, stimulating the creation of a university-wide History and Traditions Committee and launching numerous projects involving the renovation and preservation of facilities of major historical importance, such as the University's historic Detroit Observatory. Hence, one of the major activities within the Millennium Project has become an effort to document the history—and hence the institutional saga—of the University of Michigan. This has resulted in a growing series of books on the history of the university.[9] In addition, we were able to utilize the unique resources of the Duderstadt Center to develop new ways to present this history, including three-dimensional virtual reality simulations of the Michigan campus in various eras, a highly detailed computer model of the historical evolution of the campus, and a historical Web site designed as a research tool for scholars (see http://umhistory.org.)

Hence, 10 years after the conclusion of my presidential service, I

can confirm that there can indeed be an active life after a university presidency. To be sure, there are particular challenges when one decides to return to faculty life at the same campus one has led, not the least of which is reentering faculty life as a ghost—or in my and Anne's case, I suppose guardian angels would be a more appropriate analogy. Furthermore, it is possible to have considerable impact built on the experience and external visibility gained during a presidency. It is even possible to have greater influence and impact after serving as a university president than during the actual leadership period, at least beyond the campus, since as a faculty member, one not only has more time to think but, perhaps more significantly, fewer constraints on one's activities. Put another way, as a faculty member, one regains those valuable prerogatives frequently absent in a university presidency: academic freedom, freedom of expression, and freedom to think.

WHENCE AND WHITHER THE UNIVERSITY

It is hard for those of us who have spent much of our lives as academics to look objectively at the university, with its tradition and obvious social value, and accept the possibility that it might change in dramatic ways. But although its roots are millennia old, the university has changed before. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, scholasticism slowly gave way to the scientific method as the way of knowing truth. In the early nineteenth century, universities embraced the notion of secular, liberal education and began to include scholarship and advanced degrees as integral parts of their mission. After World War II, in return for federally funded research, they accepted an implied responsibility for national security, economic prosperity, and public health. Although the effects of these changes have been assimilated and now seem natural, the changes involved profound contemporary reassessment of the mission and structure of the university as an institution.

Of course, this ever-changing nature of the university is part of the challenge, since it gives rise to not only an extraordinary diversity of institutions but also a great diversity in perspectives. What is a university? Is it a "college," in the sense of the heritage of the colonial col-

leges (and, before that, the English boarding schools)? Is it the twentieth-century image of university life—football, fraternities, Joe College, protests? Is it Clark Kerr's multiversity, accumulating ever more missions in response to social needs—health care, economic development, entertainment, and technology transfer. Or is the true university something more intellectual: a community of masters and scholars (*universitas magistorium et scholarium*) or a school of universal learning? What is the core of its university activities: student development; creating, curating, archiving, transmitting, and applying knowledge; or serving society, responding to its contemporary needs—health care, economic development, national defense, homeland security, entertainment (e.g., athletics)? What is its core value: critical, rigorous thinking (e.g., "the life of the mind"); academic freedom; or individual achievement (with the contemporary organization of the university designed to enable individuals to strive to their full potential as students, faculty, and even as athletes)?

With the university having much the character of the proverbial elephant being felt by the blind men, it is not surprising that discussions involving the future of the university can be difficult. It is particularly difficult to ignite such discussions among university presidents, who generally fall back on a famous observation by Clark Kerr: "About 85 institutions in the Western World established by 1520 still exist in recognizable forms, with similar functions and with unbroken histories, including the Catholic Church, the Parliaments of the Isle of Man, of Iceland, and of Great Britain, several Swiss cantons, and . . . 70 universities."[10] In contrast, during a recent workshops for university presidents and provosts, Susanne Lohmann, of the University of California, Los Angeles, noted that in a single generation following the Civil War, higher education in America changed quite radically.[11] There was a shift from the colonial colleges to the Humboldtian research university, with the Land Grant Acts creating the great public universities with strong service missions. Enrollments went from hundreds to thousands of students, and empowerment shifted to the faculty. Everything that could change about the university did change during this brief period. The consensus in several of our workshops has been that we are well along in a similar period of dramatic change in higher education. Some academic leaders have even been willing to

put on the table the most disturbing question of all: will the university, at least as we know it today, even exist a generation from now?

Today, we live in a time of great change, an increasingly global society, knitted together by pervasive communications and transportation technologies and driven by the exponential growth of new knowledge. It is a time of challenge and contradiction, as an ever-increasing human population threatens global sustainability; a global, knowledge-driven economy places a new premium on workforce skills through such phenomena as off-shoring; governments place increasing confidence in market forces to reflect public priorities even as new paradigms, such as open source technologies, challenge conventional free-market philosophies; and shifting geopolitical tensions are driven by the great disparity in wealth and power about the globe, national security, and terrorism. Yet it is also a time of unusual opportunity and reason for optimism, as these same technologies enable the formation of new communities and social institutions, better able to address the needs of our society. Not surprisingly, we have also entered a period of significant change in higher education, as our universities attempt to respond to the challenges, opportunities, and responsibilities before them. Much of this change will be driven by market forces (by a limited resource base, changing societal needs, new technologies, and new competitors), although we must remember that higher education has a public purpose and a public obligation.

It is likely that the university as we know it today—or, rather, the current constellation of diverse institutions that comprise the higher education enterprise—will change in profound ways to serve a changing world. But this is just as the university has done so many times in the past. From this perspective, it is important to understand that the most critical challenge facing most institutions will be the development of the capacity for change. Universities must seek to remove the constraints that prevent them from responding to the needs of a rapidly changing society. They should strive to challenge, excite, and embolden their campus communities and diverse stakeholders to embark on what should be a great adventure for higher education.

What might we anticipate as possible future forms of the university? The monastic character of the ivory tower is certainly lost forever. Many important features of the campus environment suggest

that most universities will continue to exist as physical places, at least for the near term. But as digital technology makes it increasingly possible to emulate human interaction with arbitrarily high fidelity, perhaps we should not bind teaching and scholarship too tightly to buildings and grounds. Certainly, both learning and scholarship will continue to depend heavily on the existence of communities, since they are, after all, highly social enterprises. Yet as these communities are increasingly global in extent, detached from the constraints of space and time, we should not assume that the scholarly communities of our times would necessarily dictate the future of our universities. For the longer term, who can predict the impact of rapidly evolving technologies on social institutions—including universities, corporations, and governments—as they continue to multiply in power by the thousands, millions, or billions?

What are university leaders and stakeholders to do as their institutions are buffeted by such powerful forces of change and in the face of unpredictable futures? I certainly can claim no particular wisdom on this issue, but my decade of leading a major university transformation effort does suggest some possibilities. First, it is important to always begin with the basics, by considering carefully those key roles and values that should be protected and preserved during a period of transformation. For example, how would an institution prioritize among such roles as educating the young (e.g., undergraduate education), preserving and transmitting our culture (e.g., libraries, visual and performing arts), basic research and scholarship, and serving as a responsible critic of society? Similarly, what are the most important values to protect? Clearly academic freedom, an openness to new ideas, a commitment to rigorous study, and an aspiration to the achievement of excellence would be on the list for most institutions. But what about such values and practices as shared governance and tenure? Should these be preserved, and at what expense?

Of course, all academic leaders aspire to excellence, but just how do we set our goals? There is an increasing sense that the paradigm characterizing many elite institutions, which simply focuses more and more resources on fewer and fewer people, does not serve the broader needs of our society. Rather, the future premium will be on the development of unique missions for each of our institutions, missions that reflect not

only their tradition and their unique roles in serving society but also their core competency. If such differentiation occurs, far greater emphasis should be placed on building alliances with other institutions that will allow universities to focus on core competencies while relying on alliances to address the broader and diverse needs of society.

In a rapidly changing world characterized by unpredictable futures, perhaps experimentation will become more important. Perhaps more emphasis should be placed on exploring possible futures of the university through experimentation and discovery. Rather than continuing to contemplate or debate possibilities for the future, perhaps academic leaders might embark on a more productive course if we build several prototypes of future learning institutions as working experiments. In this way, we could actively explore possible paths to the future.

Finally, it is important for university leaders to approach issues and decisions concerning institutional transformation not as threats but, rather, as opportunities. True, the status quo is no longer an option. However, once we accept that change is inevitable, we can use it as a strategic opportunity to control our destiny, while preserving the most important of our values and our traditions. Creative, visionary leaders can tap the energy created by such threats as the emerging for-profit marketplace and technology, to engage their campuses and to lead their institutions in new directions that will reinforce and enhance their most important roles and values.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENCY

The importance of the university in our society demands experienced, enlightened, visionary, and committed leadership. It is my belief that the most appropriate training ground for a university presidency remains the traditional academic path, where one first establishes a solid record as a teacher and a scholar before climbing the academic leadership ladder. I also remain convinced that the best university presidents are those who have progressed through the ranks of academic leadership, assuming positions of increasing responsibility and accountability and developing a strong, intuitive understanding of

university values and academic excellence in institutions of quality comparable to those they will serve as president.

To be sure, a university president has many responsibilities that simply have no counterpart in academic life: working with governing boards, influencing governors and state legislatures, fund-raising, and intercollegiate athletics. There may indeed be a need to augment the academic experience of potential university leaders with additional training, similar to that given through executive management education by business schools. But it is my belief that without an understanding of the fundamental purpose, values, and traditions of the university and a sense of academic intuition that understands what excellence is all about and how to achieve it, a university president can rarely be effective. This understanding can only be gained by toiling in the vineyards of teaching and scholarship. For a lay governing board to select a president with little experience or understanding of academic institutions is to perpetuate the fallacy of the blind leading the blind.

Part of the reason that the university presidency has become less attractive and less capable of attracting talented candidates is due to the wearisome and distasteful nature of many presidential duties. Fund-raising, political lobbying, pampering governing board members and prima donna faculty, scrapping with other presidents over such trivia as the sharing of football gate receipts, and enduring endless committee meetings and rubber-chicken banquets and water-sogged shrimp receptions eventually becomes quite tiresome. To repeat an earlier epiphany, when presidents realize that most of their activities involve things they do not like to do, with people they do not enjoy being with, and saying things they do not believe, it is probably time to look for other employment.

There are many other frustrating aspects of the job. Many find the mismatch between responsibility and authority disturbing; most grow weary of being responsible and accountable for everything that happens in the university, whether they could influence it or even know about it. The distraction of the current and urgent from the strategic and important is an ongoing annoyance. Yet when a trustee calls (or a governor or a donor or a football coach), everything stops until his or her matter is handled.

For true academics, perhaps the greatest frustration of the position is the all-consuming nature of the responsibilities and duties, leaving precious little time to think deeply about substantive issues. Many presidents fall into a "rip and read" practice where they reach for the script from a speechwriter as they head out the door for their next meeting (or, rather, performance). The time for careful consideration and reflection vanishes during a presidency, at least if one wants to keep on top of university matters. While I actually enjoyed the spinning-plate trick—that is, keeping lots of activities moving ahead with only a nudge from time to time—many others have difficulty partitioning their brains to handle such massively parallel processing. Even in my case, a plate would occasionally spin out of control and crash to the floor.

In reading over an early version of the manuscript of this book, one of my colleagues remarked about how depressing it made the life of a university president appear, observing, "You make it sound like you were continually beaten with whips." In looking back over that period, it could well be that the memory of frustration and occasional failure lingered longer than the joys from success. Yet whenever I hear university presidents proclaim publicly how much they enjoy the position, I must question their candor, their sanity, or perhaps their effectiveness. It is my belief that, like so many leadership roles in our society, a successful university presidency requires great personal sacrifice. It is the kind of job one enjoys most afterward, looking back with a sense of satisfaction in serving an important institution or community, but decidedly not because of personal enjoyment or reward while in the role.

There is one very positive aspect of the hectic pace of a presidency, however. One does meet some interesting people and has the opportunity to enjoy (or endure) some fascinating experiences, creating a storehouse of memories (or, more accurately, notes) that can be digested later, long after a president finally gains the understanding and wisdom to see the true path. There might even be enough material to write a book.

Shortly after announcing my intention to leave academic administration and return to the faculty, after a decade of leading the University of Michigan as provost, acting president, and president, one of

my colleagues slipped me a scrap of paper with the following well-known quote from Machiavelli:

> There is no more delicate matter to take in hand, nor more dangerous to conduct, nor more doubtful of success, than to step up as a leader in the introduction of change. For he who innovates will have for his enemies all those who are well off under the existing order of things, and only lukewarm support in those who might be better off under the new.[12]

To this, I could only respond, "Amen!" Leading in the introduction of change can be a challenging and risky proposition. The resistance can be intense, the political backlash threatening. As one who has attempted to illuminate the handwriting on the wall and to lead an institution in transformation, I can attest to the lonely, hazardous, and usually frustrating life led by an agent of change.

The times clearly call for such leadership. Today, our society faces a crossroads, as a global knowledge economy demands a new level of knowledge, skills, and abilities on the part of our citizens. We have entered an era in which educated people and the knowledge and innovation they possess and produce have become the keys to economic prosperity, public health, national security, and social well-being. Sustaining the strength, prosperity, and leadership of our nation will demand a highly educated citizenry and hence a world-class system of higher education.

This educational goal faces many challenges, including an increasing stratification of access to (and success in) quality higher education, based on socioeconomic status, questionable achievement of acceptable student learning outcomes (including critical thinking ability, moral reasoning, communication skills, and quantitative literacy), and cost containment and productivity. Equally challenging is the ability of our colleges and universities to adapt to changes demanded by the emerging knowledge services economy, globalization, rapidly evolving technologies, an increasingly diverse and aging population, and an evolving marketplace characterized by new needs (e.g., lifelong learning), new providers (e.g., for-profit, cyber, and global universities), and new paradigms (e.g., competency-based edu-

cational paradigms, distance learning, open source/open content educational resources).

In particular, higher education today faces the challenge of complacency. This was captured by an observation of a senior member of Congress, who portrayed the typical message from today's academic leaders as: American higher education is the best in the world, so give us the money we ask for and leave us alone! It has become increasingly clear that higher education must do more than change and become more innovative to meet the changing needs of the nation. If it is to play the role it must in our future, it must strive to rebuild a far greater sense of trust and confidence on the part of the American public and its elected leaders.

In part, the lack of confidence that American higher education can adapt to the imperatives of a changing world has occurred because of a leadership vacuum among university presidents, governing boards, and faculties. In the face of formidable resistance to change, many presidents have resigned themselves to becoming more "representatives" than "leaders" of their institutions. There is ample evidence today that few lay governing boards offer presidents the degree of support necessary for courageous or visionary leadership. Boards are increasingly detached from their institutions, in both experience and understanding, and are hence more likely to withdraw support at the slightest sign of concern from within (e.g., from the faculty) or from without (e.g., from politicians, donors, and the media).

There is an even more fundamental reason for the leadership vacuum in American higher education. We have allowed the contemporary university presidency to drift ever farther from the academy and the academic mission of the university, redefining it as a separate profession in and of itself, more similar to the professions of corporate executives or government leaders than to academic leadership. To some degree, this has been a consequence of the marching orders many presidents receive to focus their energy on external activities, such as fund-raising or political persuasion. It has also occasionally arisen from lay boards whose deep suspicion of the academy motivates them to bring in leadership with little experience with the academic activities of the university.

Today, there is an urgent need to reconnect the university presi-

dency with the academic values and public purposes of higher educa-
tion, to link university presidents tightly to the institutional saga that
animates and shapes the evolution of their institutions. The pace and
nature of change affecting the higher education enterprise both in
America and worldwide in the years ahead will require such strong,
informed, and courageous leadership. True, it is sometimes difficult
to act for the future when the demands of the present can be so pow-
erful and the traditions of the past so difficult to challenge. Yet such
academic leadership will be the most important role of the university
president in the years ahead, as we navigate our institutions through
the stormy seas of a changing world.