

# UC Office of the President

## Working with University Constituencies, Within and Without

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For Alumni Annual Report 9/17

Now that my freshman year is over as president of the University of Utah, let me share with you some of the ways I have spent my time and how I hope to spend it as a "sophomore." I want to relate this, of course, to the University's needs and priorities in the months ahead. Let me say, emphatically, that my first year, in terms of faculty, student and staff understanding and community support, has been heartening; and I am grateful for it.

In a nutshell, during the past year I have been like a man who has just acquired a house and first sizes up the neighborhood. During the next year, I intend to inspect the house itself more closely and come to know it room by room, closet by closet. I have tried, first of all, to see the University in its largest contexts: (1) in relation to the state it serves, (2) in relation to its sister institutions under our system of governance, and (3) in relation to our assigned tasks and inherent objectives as we try to honor our dual mission of providing an education that is both liberal and professional, both general and specialized, both traditional and up to date.

To oversimplify, I have devoted most of my energies to University relations and to funding: I have worked to strengthen public opinion regarding the University and to secure its fiscal base. Without efforts in these areas nothing I could have done internally would have made much difference. I met with Utah State legislators and worked with them before and throughout the 1974 legislative session. I visited every institution of higher learning in the state and spoke in its major cities, often with alumni groups. I have come to know regents, businessmen, and community leaders, extending my circle of acquaintances richly and far beyond the four people I think I knew when I came to Utah (other than relatives who comprise in the aggregate what I sometimes believe must be 20 percent of the state's population). Toward the end of the

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year I took time to visit every college on the campus to meet with the deans and department chairmen and plan the allocation of the University budget with them.

During the coming year I want to reverse the emphasis somewhat and make a major effort to become intimately and personally acquainted with academic and administrative affairs on campus--to improve services, increase efficiency and, at the same time, consolidate and further strengthen ties with the community. And I shall continue to work with the State Board of Regents and the Commissioner for Higher Education in a common effort to improve the performance of Utah's colleges and universities.

I am convinced that the University and the state will be best served by our insisting on rigorous standards, on quality and excellence in all that we do. I shall gladly defend us against any complaint that we are academically too tough. We already enjoy, of course, a national reputation for distinguished teaching and research. Graduate work flourishes and our professional schools are stronger than ever. More disciplines are joining together, as in biophysics, to open up new specializations through fusion rather than through fission as was the case for so long. The specializations are seeking each other out and calling for people with hyphenated skills. While assuring the continuing stability of our graduate and professional work and securing strength we now have, we must also devote a greater measure of attention to undergraduate instruction, especially our lower division work which tends to be a forgotten cause in higher education. Undergraduates, to be sure, have not been a silent majority, but they have been getting minority treatment.

We plan to strengthen the Honors program, to more effectively provide for and equip undergraduate labs and library resources, to reduce the University's heavy dependence on teaching assistants and to expose more of our lower classmen to senior professors.

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We want to encourage innovative programs such as last year's seminars in the College of Humanities in which faculty from English, history, philosophy and languages successfully collaborated and combined traditional study on campus with meaningful work in the field, such as in the seminars on Alienation and the Subculture, The New England Experience, The Mexican Revolution, and Germany: from Romanticism to Revolt. Equally innovative is the broadly conceived program of University Studies in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences which does not require a traditional major; and the University Year for Action, which makes it possible to earn a block of academic credit through professionally related activity in the community.

We believe in providing a liberal education for every student who comes to the University whatever his specialization, and in the need steadily to improve the possibilities for such an education rather than weaken them, whether specifically in the curriculum or generally in the academic tone and climate that prevails on campus.

We hope without further delay to implement an idea a faculty committee recommended more than a year ago which would benefit both undergraduate and graduate study: the appointment of University Professorships--eminent men and women with a kind of roving commission on campus, making their presence felt not only in their own discipline but in the University at large. I would also encourage visiting professorships: Departments might well keep more slots open for the infusion of fresh air, perspective, and personality such visits always bring.

It has been an excellent year for faculty recruitment in general: Our turnover has been normal, our appointments superior. Faculty vitality here seems to be less a question of age and rank and tenure: Freshness, energy, imagination, maturity, commitment and usefulness are found up and down the line.

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I sense no sharp division here of Young Turks versus Reverend Signors. There is a growing appreciation of interdependence among the disciplines and among the colleges, fostered paradoxically by the good health of independent college councils. We have, in short, a federal system that seems to be working. I find the morale good, the outlook optimistic, the judgments measured.

We have our problems but we draw our hopes and strengths from the wisdom of Spinoza who noted that "all things excellent are as difficult as they are rare."

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