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Address to the Faculty of the Davis Campus, University of California, Davis, California: one of a series delivered on all nine University of California campuses

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ADDRESS TO THE FACULTY OF THE DAVIS CAMPUS

David Pierpont Gardner, President

Davis, California

University of California

November 15, 1983

Chancellor Meyer, members of the faculty:

I am delighted to be here and have looked forward to this opportunity of visiting with you about the University and its future. I will have a similar opportunity at each of the other eight campuses this year. I am especially pleased that this series of visits begins with Davis, where you are celebrating an important milestone in your history--seventy-five years of teaching, research, and public service.

In many respects the development of the Davis campus parallels that of the University itself. Like the University of California as a whole, you began in a small but promising way: thanks to Peter J. Shields, who noticed that the young people of California had to go to other states to learn about agricultural science, the first steps were taken toward the acquisition in 1906 of a 778-acre plot that eventually became the Davis campus. Like the University as a whole, the Davis campus went from relatively modest beginnings to national and then international stature. And like the University itself, Davis accomplished this remarkable achievement by concentrating on quality, on constant

improvement in teaching, research, and public service, and by never losing sight of its own future. One measure of your success is reflected in the survey of the quality of graduate programs reported by the Conference Board some months ago. As we all know, five of Davis's graduate programs ranked in the top fifteen in the country; and six were included in the list of the ten most-improved graduate programs. Both the position and the trends are important.

But in other ways, of course, Davis is distinct from the rest of the University. It was the first campus to develop from a foundation of agricultural programs, programs whose fundamental strength gave Davis its initial impetus and whose excellence remains undiminished. In more recent decades that solid foundation has been complemented by the addition of broadly based and comprehensive programs--undergraduate, graduate, and professional--that give definition and meaning to the idea of a general campus of the University. The quality and variety of Davis's academic offerings are impressive, and I congratulate you on how far you have come over the past three-quarters of a century. I know this achievement is the result of many people's efforts--Claude Hutchinson, Knowles Ryerson, Emil Mrak, and Jim Meyer, for example, to name some with whom I have had the pleasure of working personally--and that much of the credit is due to Davis's outstanding and committed faculty, without whom nothing could have been accomplished at all.

Davis is also special in that you have put your own distinctive stamp on how you go about teaching, research, and public service. This campus has an enviable reputation for being able to move easily across departmental, school, and college lines to work cooperatively on common problems and issues. You are known for having done a remarkable job of harmonizing campus and community needs. And you are noted for having managed to create an environment for teaching and learning that is at once lively, exciting, and friendly.

Besides the characteristics that make each campus unique, there are those that we share in common and that bind us together into one university. Principal among those characteristics is the responsibility we bear to the people of California to meet our several obligations at the highest level of quality. Today I wish to speak briefly about some of the issues and opportunities that I believe will shape our future as a university. Although I will be limiting myself to only a few items, and thus will be unable to cover topics that are important and that deserve attention, I hope you will feel free to raise any issue that interests you at the conclusion of my prepared remarks.

First, it is impossible to talk about the future of the University without also talking about its budget.

The University of California is acknowledged as one of the most distinguished institutions--if not the most distinguished

institution--of higher learning in the world. But that international reputation is directly attributable to the momentum built up following World War II and continuing into the 1950s and early 1960s, when our resources matched our needs and we were successful in attracting the most promising young faculty. Over the past decade and a half, in stark contrast, we have experienced a substantial erosion of State support. That erosion began with cuts in the late 1960s, which were never made up, and accelerated with further large cuts beginning in the late seventies. The result has been a dismaying set of problems:

- ° Faculty salaries that are not competitive in the academic marketplace, making it increasingly difficult to attract and retain people we wish to have here.
- ° Facilities that continue to deteriorate; buildings marked by functional and technical obsolescence; a shortage of modern laboratory facilities.
- ° A large inventory of obsolete instructional equipment. There is not enough money in the budget to keep up with annual equipment depreciation, much less to purchase state-of-the-art equipment for high technology fields.
- ° A backlog of deferred maintenance projects--which will end up costing more in the long run than would timely preventive maintenance.

- ° Rising student fees, which have increased by nearly eighty percent in just the past three years. There has been an extensive shift of costs from the State to the students, putting us at the tuition line.

- ° Insufficient funds to expand graduate enrollments in fields of high demand. We cannot continue to reallocate vacant positions from one discipline to another without upsetting our overall academic and disciplinary balance.

Looking ahead, it is obvious that the University cannot continue this slow erosion of its fiscal integrity and in the 1990s be anything more than a shell of its former self. My highest priority as President is not only to halt this trend but to turn it around, to repair the damage sixteen years of inadequate budgets have done to the University and to restore it to its former status.

I'm pleased to say there is reason for optimism. The State's fiscal situation is improving; the Governor has made a number of public statements about the importance of education and about his intent to help all of education in California, including the University. I believe him. One of the University's highest priorities in budget negotiations will be faculty salaries. Current estimates indicate that a sixteen percent increase would be needed next year to bring salaries to competitive levels. My

goal is to achieve those levels within the next fiscal year or two at the most.

I'd like to turn for a moment to a particular budget item I know is of great interest to this campus--the Food and Agricultural Sciences Building. As you know, this building has been the University's highest priority for new construction on the he campuses. The problem, of course, has been insufficient State funds for the capital budget--only \$7 million in 1983-84. This building, by way of making the point, will cost \$42 million. Fortunately, we have been successful in the enactment of two measures that will provide a creative mechanism to obtain funding. The first is SB1067--the Petris Bill--which authorizes revenue bonds as a financing mechanism for high technology facilities for higher education. The second is AB1656--the Farr Bill--which, using the Petris Bill mechanism, authorizes the University to proceed with the Food and Agricultural Sciences Building. The law provides that the facilities be lease-purchased by the University, with funds for lease-purchase payments to be appropriated annually. Both bills are effective on January 1, 1984.

In order to implement this legislation, we need to develop arrangements for lease-purchase and obtain Regental approval. I anticipate going to The Regents with a proposal as soon as the particulars are worked out.

The Food and Agricultural Sciences Building will be our first experience using the new funding mechanism. The prospects look good at this point.

The University's budget isn't the only crucial issue we must address. There is also the important question of our external relations--and by that I mean our relations with the people of California, with the other higher education segments and the independent sector, and with the schools.

It seems to me that at this point in the University's history--concerned as we are about preserving and enhancing the excellence of our programs--we must make a determined effort to strengthen our relations with the people of California. One reason, of course, is that we must have the support of the citizens of this state if we are going to provide the Governor and the Legislature with a congenial public environment within which they can consider our needs and act favorably on them. That's the short term aspect. But it is also essential to improve our relations with the public because, over the long haul, public understanding of what we do and why we do it is fundamental to our ability to thrive. Support comes in many forms, and the encouragement and understanding of the people of California are as important in their own way as adequate funding. I will be working with alumni, our friends around the State who may not have attended any of our campuses, the business community, officials in

Sacramento and Washington--any and every group that has reason to be interested in the welfare of the University.

A corollary of that effort is the need to work closely with the other segments of higher education in California--the California State University, the Community Colleges, and the independent sector. We do not operate in isolation but are, on the contrary, part of a mosaic of institutions around the State, each of which offers its own distinctive contribution. I take very seriously our responsibility to work with those institutions, in the context of the Master Plan, to see that education is available to those who qualify and who have the desire to succeed.

I am especially concerned about the kind and quality of education students receive in the schools. My perspective on this topic has been shaped by my work as Chairman of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, whose report last April was intended to focus sharp attention on the serious problems of the schools and the urgent need to do something about them. You are as familiar as I am with at least some of the results of those problems: too many of our bright and highly qualified students must take remedial mathematics or English composition; too many have trouble with college-level work for which their high school education should have prepared them. I'm encouraged by the work that has been done--the cooperatively produced Statement on Competencies in English and Mathematics Expected of Entering Freshman, to mention just one example--and by the obvious concern

and interest the faculty has shown, even though we have a long way to go. My own concern about public education has prompted me to appoint two committees to look into several aspects of the University's role in helping to address the problems of the schools. One will review UC's efforts in the area of education and the preparation of teachers; the other will assess our use of resources and the adequacy of our attempts to increase the numbers of students who are prepared for study at the college level. Higher education must play an appropriate role in resolving this issue, which is essential to California's well-being as well as to our own.

Finally, I want to talk about two vital aspects of our welfare as a community. One dimension of that issue is the need to bring into the University, as students, faculty, and staff, those who have the ability and motivation to study or teach or otherwise choose to live in our community, regardless of sex, race, or ethnicity. As I said when my appointment as President was announced, I am keenly aware that this is a public, secular University whose charter, obligations, and protections are embodied in the State's highest law. I am also well aware of the profound changes that are taking place in California--in its population, its economy, its social structure, and its character. We must find ways to reflect those changes in our planning and in our educational programs, securing on the one hand the academic standards and educational expectations that have been historically characteristic of the University, and on the other, doing

everything within our influence and capability to enroll in our student body and to engage on our faculty and staff those whose race or sex are less fully present in the University than one would both expect and hope to find. I'm convinced, may I add, that one important result of efforts to improve the education offered in the schools will be an increase in the number of minority students who qualify for the University. In any event, this is a strategic issue both for the University and for the State. The University of California should be deeply involved in its resolution.

Let me conclude by referring briefly to a message that may sound familiar, because it is one that I have already shared with many members of our community--Regents, Chancellors, faculty, staff, students, alumni leaders, and others. The painful and divisive budgetary circumstances this University has endured for a decade and a half have taken more than a financial toll. To some extent, at least, they have taken their toll of our sense of community as well. I recognize that the University, like any large and complex organization, possesses forces that tend to fragment and separate as well as forces that tend to bind us together. Nonetheless, it seems to me--having been away for ten years--that our University community has lost some of its confidence in the future and some of the excitement that was everywhere evident during the years 1960-1973, when I last served the University, despite the turbulent and troubled character of that period. I will bend every effort I can as President to bring

together all the elements that make up this University in ways that will permit us to be more of a house united in the 1980s than has been the case during the past decade. Thus, I hope that whatever differences we have with each other will be shared forthrightly, and shared within the context of our need to draw closer together as a community rather than to divide on issues central to the University's function and future.

The University of California is still looked to throughout the world as a benchmark of academic excellence, of what a university can be. That distinction, in which we take such deserved pride, is less a function of what happened during the past financially troubled decade and a half than it is a function of what happened in the 1940s and 1950s and 1960s. And what we do in the present decade will define what this institution will be in the 1990s and in the first decade of the next century. If we fail in our goal of coming together as a community--united in seeking the support and resources needed to meet our common purposes, even as we acknowledge those that are also individually our own--we will be looking at a very different university in the year 2000 from the one we see today. If we succeed, we can draw deep satisfaction from knowing that we have done our share to sustain one of civilization's truly authentic triumphs.

Those of you here will have the opportunity to make decisions about programs and directions that will define the future of the Davis campus over the next few decades. As you work together on

creating that future, I will do everything I can to see that the hard work of the past seventy-five years remains not as a legacy only, but also as the basis for your further development into a great center of learning, like the University of which Davis is a part and to which it has contributed so much.

I appreciate this chance to share my views, and I hope to have the opportunity to hear some of yours. I'll be happy to answer any questions or respond to comments.