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“The University of California: A Look Ahead,” Comstock Club, Sacramento, California

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6346g3h6>

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Publication Date

1986-09-01

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - A LOOK AHEAD

Comstock Club

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University of California

September 15, 1986
Sacramento

Members of the Comstock Club:

Most of my appearances in Sacramento are before legislative committees concerned with the University of California's budget, so it is a special pleasure to face an audience that is not armed with blue pencils. I am delighted to join you and to have this chance to get acquainted.

I promised to talk about the University's and California's future, to take a look ahead and present some educated guesses about where we may be in the year 2000. In doing so, however, I am mindful of E.B. White's dictum: "The future is like mince pie--long in the baking and never quite done." The future, that is, is never quite so definite and clear-cut when it arrives as our projections suggest. It is much more a case of overlapping trends and broad developments. So my view of the future is definitely a tentative one. The history of prediction is strewn with mistaken guesses and wrong assessments.

Still, organizations, just like individuals, need to plan. That is why we try to decipher the future in the first place, despite the obvious hazards. We need to decide how best to allocate

resources, to recruit sufficient--and sufficiently able--faculty, to educate our students for the kinds of lives they will face after graduation. One way we do this is to think in terms of California itself: what are the broad trends that are shaping its future, and thus the society we and our students will find ourselves living in?

Obviously, universities aren't the only organizations interested in the future. Wells Fargo Bank, for example, has recently released its assessment of where we are headed in business and economic terms. Called "California 2000: A Business and Economic Appraisal," it discusses some of the same factors the University of California has been considering in planning its future. For example:

- By the year 2000, the report estimates, the state's population will have swelled to more than 33 million residents--an increase of seven million over 1985, and double the nation's growth rate. The increase alone will exceed the current population in each of 41 other states.
- California in the year 2000 will have an older and more diverse population. More than a third of Californians will be over 50 years old, compared with one-fifth of the population today. The number of ethnic minorities will approach half the population. Although the fastest-growing ethnic group will be Asian, Hispanics will remain the largest

single minority in California. Much of this diversification has been fueled by immigration, especially from Mexico, Central and South America, and Asia. Immigration will continue, the report estimates, but at a somewhat slower rate.

- The most rapid growth in California's economy will continue to occur in services and information-based businesses. And international trade and foreign investment--particularly with the nations of the Pacific Rim--will grow to about 25 percent of California business, compared with about 17 percent today.
- By the year 2000 California will have created about 6 million new jobs, most of them in service-oriented industries. Incomes will rise appreciably--some 9-10 percent higher than the national average.

The report also points out that California faces an urgent need to improve its deteriorating public facilities in a variety of areas, among them transportation, toxic waste disposal, and education. California industries will have to work harder to reach international markets. Massive population growth will require thoughtful solutions to such problems as congestion and pollution.

The picture that emerges of California is of a population older, larger, more ethnically diverse, and more international in its character and orientation. California will also be a society more dependent on technology for its economic vitality; and that prospect carries profound implications for our state's educational system as well.

How will all of this affect the University of California?

First, the issue of growth. Like California, the University is expected to grow through the 1980s and beyond. Estimating enrollment growth is far from an exact science, of course. Unanticipated factors can alter projections suddenly and dramatically. All of the demographic indicators suggested that enrollments would fall in the 1980s, for example, both in California and the nation. Thus, higher education planned for a slackening of enrollments in the decade of the 1980s and into the early part of the 1990s.

The data proved to be reasonably correct for the community colleges of California and for our independent colleges and universities; somewhat less accurate for the California State University, whose enrollment held up; and drastically at odds with UC's experience. At UC, undergraduate enrollments have done nothing but increase during the past six years, and from all we can tell that trend will continue into the future. According to our most recent projections, by the year 2000 undergraduate

enrollments are expected to increase by about 20 percent, or something over 20,000 students. We are proposing a graduate enrollment increase of at least 20 percent as well for two reasons--to ensure a proper balance among programs at the University generally, and at each campus in particular, and to see that California has the skilled professionals it will need in the twenty-first century.

All of which brings up another question: who will teach this steadily mounting tide of students? A UC study presented to The Regents last May estimates that about 40 percent of our current faculty--that comes to about 3,000--will retire by the end of the century. When one then adds the number of new faculty who will be needed to handle the enrollment increase, as well as vacancies caused by resignations, deaths, and disabilities, we expect to hire approximately 6,000 new faculty members by the year 2000. This dramatic growth is the primary reason we are hoping citizens of California will support the Higher Education Facilities Bond Act of 1986, Proposition 56 on the November Ballot. If passed, that measure will provide urgently needed capital funds for UC, The California State University, and the Community Colleges.

Thus, the challenge of growth is on our minds. If we are going to meet our historic commitment to take all UC-qualified Californians who desire an undergraduate education, and carry out our responsibilities for graduate and professional training as

well, we will need to come up with some highly creative solutions.

Second, and just as consequential in its impact, is the expected increase in the ethnic diversity of California's population. The ethnic changes occurring in our state are being principally driven by immigration, especially from such Pacific Rim areas as Mexico, Central and South America, and Asia. And, as the Wells Fargo report points out, "Foreign immigrants to the United States have traditionally come with a strong willingness to work, but with low levels of education and job skills . . . the California business world of tomorrow will require a higher level of education and skill than in the past (p. 20)."

What will California do with this talent that is pouring into the state every day? Will our state cultivate it and, thereby, use these human resources to help sustain California as one of the most prosperous and attractive states in the nation? Or will we try to shut it out, or take no or little account of these forces, and thus diminish our prospects as a people and as a state?

The answer--at least my answer--is that in a world increasingly shaped by and based on knowledge, we cannot afford to waste any of the human resources available to us. This means that we will have to begin educating our young people--all of our young people, but especially these newcomers--with a greater level of commitment than we have tended to display in recent years.

For example, Black and Hispanic students have historically not completed high school at rates similar to those of White students. A related problem is the low rate at which students from most minority groups in California qualify for admission to California's four year colleges and universities. The situation for Black students is especially disturbing: A California Postsecondary Education Commission study recently revealed that only 3.6 percent of Black high school graduates were eligible for admission to the University of California in 1983, compared with 13.2 percent of all public high school graduates in our state. This is a complicated and difficult problem that is not susceptible to quick or easy solutions. But one step we have taken is to appoint a task force to examine the reasons for the low college-going rate of Black students and suggest what can be done to bring about real improvement. We have also appointed a similar group to consider the problems and prospects of students who come from linguistic minorities, to see if we can clarify what the major educational problems are, and what we can do about them.

It is already clear that the early years of schooling are crucial. It is there--in the primary and secondary grades--that the overwhelming majority of students will take advantage of their opportunity for education or lose it. But if we expect the schools to carry the primary responsibility, we cannot expect them to carry all of it. California's schools, colleges, and

universities have a common concern and a partnership opportunity to help one another in better serving these young people.

The good news is that we are doing something about it. Higher education and the schools are working more closely together these days than they have in many years to strengthen the schools' curricula, to improve the preparation of teachers, and to raise student expectations and the standards of our schools. This partnership, in my view, is one of the most encouraging signs that California stands a reasonable chance of being ready for the twenty-first century when it arrives. Although time prevents my giving you a detailed account of these partnership activities, I will be glad to answer any questions about them at the conclusion of my remarks.

The third issue that I believe will take on increasing importance as the year 2000 draws nearer bears upon our attitudes and perspectives. Despite its tolerant lifestyle and its multicultural character, California is surprisingly parochial in some ways. I am convinced that this attitude will have to change. Some of the reasons are economic; as the Wells Fargo report emphasizes, the internationalization of the world economy means that those who wish to compete successfully will have to adopt a more global, rather than a more local, perspective.

But there are other compelling reasons as well. California is strategically located on the Pacific Rim, that vast stretch of

nation-states that embraces the western coasts of Canada and the United States, Mexico, Central and South America, Australia, New Zealand, the Islands of the Pacific, Asia, and the eastern reaches of the USSR. The Pacific Rim is home to more than half the world's population. It is estimated that by the year 2000, six of the world's ten largest urban centers will be in the Pacific region. If the Pacific nations are emerging competitors for trade, they are also an enormous market for California goods and services. Strategically and politically, the huge Pacific Rim grows daily in significance. And California, by virtue of its geography, its economy, its history, its character, and its wealth, is fitted to play a pivotal role in what will surely be one of the greatest centers of trade, commerce, cultural exchange, and migration the world has ever known.

But only if we take advantage of our opportunities. One way to do so is to prepare our students for a world in which a knowledge of other countries, other languages, and other cultures is a natural part of the curriculum.

Last year I appointed a task force to examine the question of lower division education--the general education undergraduate students receive during their first two years at the University, before they specialize in a major subject. The task force report, which we expect to be released officially next week, made a number of useful suggestions for change, and we have already asked the campuses to review its recommendations. But the task

force made two observations that are especially relevant to my topic today. In thinking about what sort of education will best prepare California's students for the future, the task force specified two lines of change: what it called the "increasing internationalization of the world" and the growing "ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity" all around us. In the words of the report:

The process of internationalization has been pervasive and profound; it is difficult not to believe, moreover, that a further increase in the interdependency among nations . . . will occur in the decades to come. Furthermore, this process itself has posed a deep challenge to our knowledge and understanding of the economic, political, and social world. Most political thinking and most of the relevant academic disciplines have rested on the assumption that the basic unit of social life is the discrete nation, society, or culture. The fact is, however, that the twin phenomena of internationalization and interdependency are rendering this fundamental premise questionable and demand novel ways of thinking, analyzing, and understanding (p. 29).

Thus, the task force urges a special emphasis on those two themes as the University pursues its educational and research missions. The report suggests, for example, interdisciplinary courses with a multicultural or global dimension. It also recommends expanding research and training in academic areas related to

international affairs and cultural diversity. One example is the just-established Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies at UC San Diego, the first of its kind in the country. This is a graduate school that will focus its teaching, research, and public service on the Pacific Rim. Another is the expansion of opportunities for U.S. students to study abroad, especially in Pacific Rim countries, as UC is already now doing through our Education Abroad program. This program will be expanded. The report also urges more language instruction in areas where our offerings are less developed than one would wish--the field of Asian languages, for example. The point is that an education appropriate to California in the year 2000 will need to take more account than we have heretofore of a rapidly shrinking world.

Which leads me to my fourth and final issue: the kind and quality of undergraduate education we provide, especially for our lower-division students. The task force I mentioned a moment ago was appointed, in part, to assess this issue and offer suggestions for change.

I have already mentioned two important themes in the report: the need for undergraduate education to reflect the internationalization and increasing diversity of our world. In addition, the task force recommends that UC do a better job of reviewing the quality of teaching as part of its evaluation of both permanent and temporary faculty members, and do a better job of

training and evaluating our teaching assistants. It also recommends small freshman-sophomore seminars for beginning students so that they might interact more directly with senior members of the faculty and experience the intellectual give and take that small classes provide. And it urges steps to facilitate the transfer of students not only within UC but among and between California higher education in general.

The task force also notes that the explosion of knowledge in this century has tended to skew our programs in favor of more vocational and technical areas, and that the liberal arts and humanistic learning may not be receiving the attention they deserve. The faculty, administration and Regents of the University will be reviewing the report and its recommendations carefully in the weeks and months ahead.

The questions that have been raised about liberal education reflect a central fact about our society and our age. It is said that every age is an age of transition, but I believe ours is special in the intensity, rapidity, and pervasiveness of the transformation going on around us. This is particularly true in California. We are traditionally a place where the future arrives first, or at least we think so. The next 15-20 years will not be easy ones. But they will not be dull ones, either; and perhaps that is all we can reasonably ask or expect.

These, then, are four of the dominant issues that I believe will affect California and its colleges and universities: the explosive growth of California's population and the concomitant demand for education; the burgeoning diversity of California society; the growing internationalization of our world; and the increasing importance of an education that prepares students for the next century and that balances the claims of technology with the claims of the human spirit. As the Wells Fargo report concludes, "Education is perhaps the most vital issue facing California's future." Indeed it is. And, as you pursue your mission of "Searching for Facts," I would urge you to include in your consideration the fact that California has a unique opportunity to prepare for the future rather than to be taken by surprise.

Thank you very much. I'll be please to answer any questions or respond to any comments.