

The Next Step

State of the University

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Americans have long held education in high esteem. Nearly two centuries ago Thomas Jefferson affirmed that “knowledge is power...knowledge is safety...knowledge is happiness.” More than 100 years later, Margaret Mead argued that “children must be taught how to think, not what to think,” and Lyndon Johnson, amid the turbulence of the ‘60s, observed that “the world is engaged in a race between education and chaos.” Americans have consistently looked to the pursuit of knowledge as the foundation of our culture.

But in some quarters in the last decade, widespread admiration has given way to a new sentiment, a rising tide of criticism that has associated America’s colleges and universities with much of what was perceived as being wrong with our society. The end result has been a diminished appreciation for higher education and a withering of support.

I believe that we have weathered the crisis; indeed, I believe that we are stronger now than ever before. We have turned reproof into a positive force and we have not been distracted from our central purpose. Supported by the skills of a gifted professorate dedicated to a love of learning and new discovery, we have made changes where they were needed while preserving the strengths of the academy.

I am proud of our accomplishments, and everyone at Indiana University should be, too. But this is no time for IU to become complacent. Rather, the university must look upon the progress it has made as the springboard for our next step in the continued development of academic excellence. The time has never been better. Indiana University must move forward now to the next level until it is recognized as one of the very best of the nation’s universities.

That means reasserting our core values as a public institution, continuing our emphasis on teaching and, significantly, enhancing the focus on academic excellence in our research mission. IU is positioned to take the lead in renewing an appreciation of higher education, within the state and nationally, by taking a primary role in developing a better public understanding of the importance of discovery and creative activity within major universities.

Before we explore the opportunities in IU’s future, let us look to the past decade and to the forces that led to America’s disenchantment with its most valued institutions, including higher education.

When America won the cold war, it lost a common enemy. With the elimination of a realistic threat to our national security, we as a nation have turned our energy inward. Unfortunately, we have not always used this as an opportunity to address deep social problems, such as race

relations or the growing disenfranchisement of the lower economic classes. Instead, at times, we have followed a more indulgent path.

We have turned a judgmental eye on our own political, economic and academic institutions, higher education among them. To the extent that these institutions have failed to regulate and improve themselves, criticism is justified; but to the extent that this disapproval expresses the frustration of the critics on other issues, it is counterproductive and self-defeating.

A parallel trend has further complicated higher education's position. Americans are increasingly focusing on their own immediate well-being, and many seem to have turned their backs on long-term community values and goals. A new, self-centered version of "rugged individualism" is taking precedence over our long-held and cherished notion of the common good, and one of the results is a diminished willingness to support through public funds those institutions that seek to serve the community and future generations. There is a growing expectation that individuals will take more responsibility for themselves, which in itself is salutary, but not when doing so is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible.

One serious manifestation of these changes in national attitude is a reduced priority for public funding in higher education, especially at state levels. Concurrently, the ever-growing insistence that individuals fend for themselves, coupled with an acknowledgment of how important a college degree is to an individual's economic success, has led to increased demands for an affordable education.

Interestingly, there is a notable recent exception to this trend, and that is the support for higher education from Congress and the Clinton Administration in the form of tax advantages for individuals and families. Indeed, as part of the recent budget-balancing bill, students will enjoy an increase in financial aid greater than they have received in decades. But as good as that is for our students — and it is exceedingly good — it is becoming increasingly difficult to win support for the entire institution. Federally sponsored grants and contracts for basic and applied research and state support for ongoing operations have decreased. In general, what has emerged from these various trends are not calls for major new initiatives in the discovery and applications of knowledge, but for the efficient management of what is already in place.

What many faultfinders are failing to realize is that a great deal has changed in higher education in the past several years. The best universities, IU clearly among them, have been highly responsive to our more thoughtful critics. Let me remind you of some of IU's accomplishments of the last three years:

While remaining focused on our primary academic mission, Indiana University's business and support operations have significantly reduced costs and improved quality.

We have held the line on tuition — in fact, this fall, IU's undergraduate resident tuition increase will be the lowest in 21 years. In response to our constituents, we pushed the university to the minimum increase necessary to sustain quality. We will continue to keep tuition increases reasonable, but let there be no doubt about this: We can never renege on our commitment to high quality.

We have looked intensively at IU's teaching mission. A few shrill voices have lambasted today's college faculties, saying the professoriate is either under-worked or misusing its time on research and scholarship. Such criticism is misdirected. Other, more reasonable observers argue that the faculty assignments have not been properly balanced among teaching, research and service commitments. There is some truth to that assertion, and we have undertaken serious efforts to effect a proper balance.

To begin with, we have reaffirmed the importance of excellent instruction by making communities of learning a cornerstone of the Strategic Directions Charter. Through recognition, such as membership in FACET, and rewards, including merit increases and one-time incentive awards, faculty members have been encouraged to enhance their teaching.

We have monitored teaching responsibilities carefully to assure that faculty teach as effectively as possible, especially in undergraduate courses. And following the lead of the Bloomington College of Arts and Sciences, faculty on all campuses have adopted a model that helps faculties measure whether they are fully utilizing the teaching capacity of departments, schools and campuses.

But we have not yet exhausted our agenda for productive change. For example, much remains to be accomplished in student learning. We need to improve retention rates at most of our campuses and better utilize new information technologies.

Although we must continue to improve, we have listened to our critics and we have responded thoughtfully, conscientiously, and in a timely fashion. IU has done its job well.

It is precisely because of our successes that I say we should now reposition our response to our critics — and to our friends. Indiana University, like higher education in general, must remind its constituents of the vital importance of higher learning. We can begin by pointing out that higher education is clearly one of the primary reasons that the United States has been so successful since the Second World War. We must make sure that others are aware of this essential truth: Higher education will become even more crucial in the future, when economic and political success will be tied closely to the generation and application of knowledge.

But most important, we must remind our constituents that something has been lost amid the fervent demands that we increase the efficiency and decrease the costs of higher education. I believe some of our constituents have lost sight of the important fact that higher education has *multiple* missions.

The nation's great public research universities, IU among them, are not small, residential colleges whose sole purpose is to educate undergraduates. Though the education of undergraduates, including some in a residential environment, is clearly one of our basic and most important assignments, we have also been entrusted with the mission of generating new knowledge and disseminating it for the public good.

As Randall L. Tobias, chairman and chief executive officer of Eli Lilly and Company, has observed, America's real competitive edge is its great universities, which draw and fuse the talents of the whole planet.

In an address to the Midwest Summit on the Future of American Innovation in April 1997, he noted that the deepest need in an economy driven by innovation is for educated minds, and then he added: "Industry is never going to support [basic research] in other than a philanthropic sense, because, by definition, that kind of research does not have a concrete commercializable payoff in mind." Tobias points out the extent to which university research maintains our culture and quality of life. He says, "Nothing in human history has ever been so successful in ... renewing that precious resource — the human mind — as the great research universities of this nation."

Clearly, we must reiterate this message: Fundamental research fuels American economic prosperity and improves the quality of life for American citizens. Nowhere is that more evident than in medicine and health care, but research — basic research — plays a vital role in all aspects of our lives, not just medicine. Scholarship in professional areas is crucial to developing approaches to improved practice, and study in the humanities enhances our understanding of our intellectual past and the human experience. In the social sciences and related policy disciplines, including the law, university research provides the insights needed to conduct social affairs more harmoniously. In the physical and computational sciences, basic research continues to uncover the fundamental laws that underlie all phenomena.

Faculty at Indiana University are involved in all these endeavors and are making substantial contributions to these fields, and many more. I could go on, but the main point is clear: In addition to providing high-quality instruction, the research mission of Indiana University and its peer institutions is crucially important to the future of America — and the world. Therefore, it is imperative that we find a way to identify those ideas and projects that promise to add importantly to our intellectual life and social well-being. It is imperative that we nurture these projects and enable them to realize their promise. Although we will need to add opportunities and resources selectively, we must make this a priority.

Let me pause here to stress a point. Although I believe that it is time to renew attention to the academy's research mission, I do not want anyone to harbor even the slightest doubt about this: Indiana University can, and must, excel in *both* teaching and research. Our students demand it; the public demands it, and rewards and assessment, including evaluation for tenure, are — and will continue to be — based on the quality of *both* teaching and research.

One reason IU can be highly successful at both teaching and research is because we are a large university with a critical mass of outstanding faculty. The unit of analysis, as it were, is not the individual faculty member, but rather the department, the school or even the campus. As a whole, each academic unit must balance teaching and research, though individual faculty members may change concentration from one to the other over their careers. We must evolve administrative structures that permit and, indeed, encourage flexibility at the individual level while at all times meeting our teaching and research responsibilities.

Let me say again that we must banish the notion that research is the purview of just one campus, and teaching the only mission of others. It is, rather, a matter of emphasis. IU Bloomington is a research-intensive campus, but all faculty must be engaged in discovery, scholarship or creative activity. And all faculty must communicate to their students not only what they have discovered, but the excitement and joy of the discovery. It is always important to recall that excellent teaching is inseparable from excellent research: Indeed, research and teaching at the high level of quality appropriate to IU are mutually supportive and complementary.

IU's success in research, scholarship and creative activity will be a critical determinant of whether we do, in fact, take the next step in institutional academic excellence and move into the very top tier of the nation's public universities.

Academic excellence. I keep coming back to the phrase because it is our watchword. It is our most basic goal. It is our reason for being. Not only do we dare not let it slide, now is the time when Indiana University must enhance its academic accomplishments and assure its rightful leadership position among the nation's best public institutions of higher learning.

As a group, the Big Ten universities represent the heart and soul of public higher education in this country. There are, of course, strong public universities on the East and West coasts, but the Big Ten, which has been called the Ivy League of the Midwest, is the engine that drives public higher education in America. These universities share a cluster of familiar values, including a dedication to the pursuit of excellence.

There is little question that Indiana University does well in this peer group, and in a number of fields we are clearly outstanding. Our leadership in musical performance and the arts is indisputable. Our strength in undergraduate business education and in a number of professional fields, such as library and information science, dentistry and journalism, is well known. We can also be extremely proud of our accomplishments in the arts and sciences, along with those in the School of Education, the School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation and International Programs. IU's list of leading academic programs is impressive and long enough that I dare not try to enumerate them here.

Indiana University has the advantage of being a coordinated, multi-campus University. One of the reasons that IU is so strong, and serves the state so well, is precisely because it is a constellation of strong, complementary campuses that have unique attributes but are united in their dedication to academic excellence. In IUB, the state has a traditional residential campus that is well-known around the world, and in IUPUI, a national model for urban universities. And there are the six campuses in Gary, South Bend, Fort Wayne, Kokomo, Richmond, and New Albany, which serve their specific communities and give IU its texture and, together with IUPUI, the lion's share of the state's undergraduate student body.

However, as good as Indiana University is, it can be better. I say this not to denigrate our academic achievements. Indeed, it is a point of pride to say that IU is among the best of the Big Ten. But Indiana University, taken as a whole, is on the cusp of achieving a true leadership position within this strong peer group.

I base my comparative assessment of IU on a number of factors, among them national rankings. There is, for example, the National Research Council, which rates arts and science departments every 10 years and which recently published the results of its 1993 ratings. There are also rankings generated by the academic professional associations and national publications, such as *U.S. News & World Report*, as well as private organizations, such as the *Gourman Report*.

I am the first to stress that great care must be taken in interpreting these rankings, especially those produced by the national media. Their methodology, for example, is far from perfect, and advantage is often given to those universities whose price is higher and whose admissions policies are very highly selective. Nonetheless, these instruments provide the closest qualitative and comparative measures available. Although they are not science, they are good educated and informed estimates.

On the basis of these qualitative measures, imperfect though they may be, IU will need to make progress in order to assert top-tier leadership among the Big Ten public universities. For example, in the recent National Research rankings, IU did not show overall improvement from its previous position in the 1982 survey. Similarly, for several of our professional schools, improvement is needed to show demonstrably that they are among the true leaders in their fields. The recent study by Graham and Diamond, *The Rise of America's Research Universities*, ranks IU tied for eighth place nationally among public universities, and the *U.S. News & World Report* survey ranks IU tenth among public universities in academic reputation. Yet, this ranking does not place us among the highest tier within the Big Ten.

Let there be no mistake: I applaud, and I am incredibly proud of the accomplishments of faculty members in the arts and sciences and the professional schools on all our campuses. Do not for a moment think otherwise. But if our aspirations are high, if we are to be counted among the very best universities in the top group of public institutions, we will have to achieve even more than we have in the past. Good enough is not — and cannot be — good enough! Our goal must be academic performance at the highest levels.

This is neither blind aspiration nor a fruitless wish for a level of attainment beyond what is realistically possible. Indiana University has the faculty and support infrastructure to fulfill this aspiration. Now we must marshal our strengths and make continued academic improvement our priority.

This is a serious, long-term goal, not something we can accomplish in one or two academic years. It will require the committed participation of the institution as a whole, including the faculty and staff, the administration and Trustees.

The Strategic Directions Charter will continue to help us realize this goal, and I call your attention to the next chapter in the process. Although some funding in the second round was reserved for academic excellence, including research, the majority of the monies available in Round III will be designated for selected investments in research, scholarship and creative activity. The remaining assets will be used to expand ongoing projects if they are demonstrating

marked success, and, in a few cases, to begin new projects. These funds will be allocated on the basis of recommendations of the Chancellors, who are to consult with the appropriate advisory committees on their campuses. This change from *ad hoc* panels signals that the goals of the Strategic Directions Charter are being incorporated into ongoing campus processes.

But as valuable as Strategic Directions funding is, we must also look elsewhere for investments in academic excellence. Of course, our primary opportunities will result from maximizing the use of current resources in sustaining and developing excellent programs. Another possibility is enhancing our resource base.

IU's research funding through grants and contracts has increased nicely during this decade. It has risen from \$115 million ten years ago to more than \$200 million this past year. This rise in grants and contracts is a significant accomplishment, but the rate of increase has slowed in light of increased competition for limited federal funds. I believe we must work harder to draw more research dollars to IU. I challenge the university community to increase research funding at least at double the rate of inflation. I am well aware of the difficulty of doing so, and I recognize that we will need to organize ourselves to meet this challenge. But doing so is critical for future success.

Private funding from our friends and alumni will provide us with a margin of excellence. Here, too, we have seen significant increased success; but here, too, we must also continue to make progress.

The IU Bloomington Campaign is finishing its so-called quiet phase, and is preparing for the formal opening of the public stage. Indeed, thanks to the leadership of our volunteers and the professionalism of the IU Foundation staff, we can take pride in reaching over one-half of the \$350-million goal — even *before* we publicly announce the campaign later this fall. The campaign encompasses a feature that will benefit the entire university, a matching-gifts program for faculty chairs and professorships. Our goal, which is admittedly an ambitious one, is to increase the number by 100 for the university.

I am tremendously excited about this. In IU's first 175 years, about 31 chairs and professorships were privately funded; in the past two years, since the matching program began, an additional 48 have been funded. At the outset of the Bloomington campaign, IU was near the bottom of the Big Ten universities in funded chairs and professorships; the addition of 100 new positions will put us in the middle of our peer group. We cannot falter in this endeavor lest we sacrifice one of the well springs of academic excellence at Indiana University.

Indiana University *does* have an outstanding faculty. In fact, other major universities would very much like to have some of our faculty members on their campuses. But to retain valued faculty — and to bring other outstanding teachers, scholars and creative artists to IU — we must have incentives that give us a competitive edge. Increasing the number of endowed chairs and professorships will give us that edge and will contribute to the superior intellectual environment that is the desired end of a great university. We must also assure that faculty compensation is wholly competitive among our peers.

Of course, Indiana University should seek to achieve its move to a new level of national distinction within its historic traditions and core values. Thanks to those who came before us, we promise all who enter our gates, faculty and students alike, academic freedom, the broadest possible access to a high-quality education, collegial campus communities, thriving partnerships with the public and private sectors, and an institution that reflects the diversity of American society and supports the achievements of minorities and women in all aspects of university life.

This is what makes us America's New Public University, with emphasis on the word "public." And in the future, the most successful public universities — and I certainly count IU among them — will be those that take seriously their obligation of being a port of entry for all students into an ever-enlarging world of intellectual discovery and social and economic well-being.

IU must always be an institution in which success is determined by natural ability and motivation, not family wealth. And Indiana University must always be accessible to all students, whether they are recent high school graduates or nontraditional students returning after an absence of months or years.

As America's New Public University, IU will always champion the cause of student and faculty diversity, for, in the words of author Frances FitzGerald, "Intellectual freedom implies intellectual diversity." Although several courts and legislative bodies have recently mandated reversals of affirmative action policies, Indiana University must continue to make strenuous efforts, within the law, to provide opportunities for all students, including those from racial and ethnic minorities.

The reasons are obvious. First, it is morally right. Second, it makes pragmatic sense to provide educational opportunities for persons of color and women in under-represented fields. There is not a single country, state, or community that is not seeking strong leaders, individuals who have had the benefit of a quality education. We cannot afford to turn away a single person who has the skills to lead us into the next millennium. Third, all students are advantaged by a diverse campus community, for a cosmopolitan campus environment best prepares students for the world they will face in the future.

Since at least the time that Chancellor Herman B Wells undertook strong measures to reduce discrimination on the Bloomington campus, IU has demonstrated a strong commitment to diversity. In the past year, the Bloomington and Indianapolis campuses had the highest percentages of enrolled minority undergraduate students in IU's history, with the exception of African-Americans at IUB. And in the last decade, the percentage of women in the faculty has grown steadily.

However, we cannot rest content. The task is far from complete. We must continue to attract students from minority groups and, very importantly, retain them to graduation. The graduation rates for under-represented minority students are below those of the general student body, and that is unacceptable. We must be equally aggressive in seeking out women to join the IU faculty — women who will serve as role models, contribute to the governance of the institution and

assume a larger role in the academy. We must assure ourselves that there is gender- and minority-equity in compensation for faculty and staff. Indeed, to be successful, IU must take advantage of the talents of all, and bring women and people of color into senior administrative posts.

Being an outstanding public university also obligates us to break down barriers to partnerships with the public and private sectors. Each of our campuses is actively engaged in the community in which it is located, and all are enthusiastic participants in the life and well-being of the state. During the past several years, we have approached this obligation with vigor and with success. Through faculty-initiated projects funded by Strategic Directions monies, a myriad of community- and state-focused partnerships have been achieved.

The School of Education has been particularly proactive in lending its support and expertise to school districts across the state, including new initiatives in Indianapolis. The School of Medicine has been engaged in the most significant partnership in IU's history, the consolidation of University Hospitals, including Riley Children's Hospital, with Methodist to form Clarian. This new consolidated hospital group is providing first-quality medical care at competitive prices to Indianapolis, and soon to other parts of the state, while simultaneously ensuring a revenue stream necessary to sustain and, in fact, enhance excellence in our medical school. As one more example, I point to ARTI, the Advanced Research and Technology Institute, which came into existence less than one year ago, but is already providing forward-looking leadership in technology transfer and other areas in which IU interacts directly with the corporate sector.

We will always have challenges to overcome. But we have come through a period of self-examination and critical assessment and we have learned much from the experience. IU is now a better university for the times, bolstered by great traditions and impeccable values.

We should tell this story of reform and achievement forthrightly, even aggressively. We must remind our constituents, including our alumni and friends, of the vital necessity of higher education and the magnificent job being done at Indiana University. Our constituents must be prepared to take the next step with us as we enhance our excellence.

Few, if any, major public universities have renewed their spirit as IU has. They have not yet shed the defensiveness that comes from sustained criticism. IU has reformed and refined itself in accordance with our Strategic Directions Charter. We have emerged as national leaders in how to conduct the business of an academic institution. Despite difficult financial times for higher education, we sustained and in many areas enhanced our academic quality. Let us now lead the way in regaining a positive national attitude toward higher education. Let us move to the front of the line of public, research-intensive universities.

Let us proclaim our progress. Let us remind everyone of the importance of higher education, and of Indiana University in particular. Let us do so with pride, but also with honesty. Let us strive for academic leadership among our peers and do so in a way that is true to our public obligations and our Hoosier values.

It is time to take the next step!