

'The Relevant University: The Next Five Years'
Fifth Annual Address to the Community
by Lloyd A. Jacobs, M.D.

Henry J. Doermann Theatre – University Hall
Thursday, April 14, 2011
11 a.m.

Universities as we currently know them will be dramatically changed in the next five years. This will result from external pressures both fiscal and related to the fundamental value proposition for higher education. It is not too much to say that a revolution in higher education will occur in the next five years and this will occur whether we lead or follow. Higher education is at a turning point, an inflection point, and we are at the five-year anniversary of the creation of the new University of Toledo, a perfect moment to celebrate the past and look to the future. The University of Toledo will continue to provide leadership during this period of change.

Thank you for coming here today for the fifth of this series of Annual Addresses. Every one of you is important to this institution, indeed the institution itself is comprised of you, and people like you, whether you are a student, a faculty member, a community supporter, or other stakeholder. Your University of Toledo has no life independent of you, it is you; and you are it. Its strengths are your strengths, its weaknesses your weaknesses. This mystical union is particularly true of the faculty of The University of Toledo. You are important to me and I hold you in the highest esteem and affection. Sometimes, because of the centuries old divergence of interests between us we don't realize our mutual dependence, and don't speak of our care for one another.

Let me do so now: faculty of The University of Toledo, I admire you and your intellect. We need you. You comprise the institution, without you there would be no University of Toledo. Without you we have little hope of surviving the coming revolution in higher education.

Trustees of the University, Trustees of the University of Toledo Foundation, Trustees of Innovation Enterprises; thank you. You are important contributors.

Public officials here today, Carol Contrada, Bob Vasquez, and Michael Collins. I am honored by your presence and thank you.

I would like to take note of the presence of Judy Herb here today, the person for whom the Judith Herb College of Education, Health Science and Human Service is named. Thanks for being here.

Students, you are the reason we exist. You are the future and hope of our world. Thank you for being here today.

Five years ago, on March 31, 2006, then Governor Bob Taft signed legislation here on this platform in the Doermann Theatre creating a new University of Toledo, the legislation was

to be enacted July 1, 2006. The legislation had been introduced into the General Assembly by Representative Peter Ujvagi and Representative Mark Wagoner; Dick Anderson and Jim Tuschman as well as several others had testified in support. The bill had passed in both Houses of the General Assembly unanimously.

The ensuing five years have been among the best years of my life personally. They have been challenging but infinitely rewarding. For this institution they have been exciting years of growth. There have been major renovations, several new buildings, and significant reductions in backlogged maintenance. We have merged 452 separate policies from the two original institutions. Although it is my intention to speak of the future for most of the time you have given me, I will review briefly some of the subtler, less visible aspects of our growth.

We have emerged as a leader in the national effort to hold down tuition, taking a leadership role in January 2007 when we announced a moratorium on tuition increase during the Martin Luther King, Jr. Unity Day celebration. A statewide two-year tuition freeze resulted, which was widely emulated by other states. As we formulate our FY12 budget, we will again try to adhere to this ethic.

Within weeks after the merger, we embarked on a strategic planning effort, which resulted in a document that has helped us recruit students and faculty, and has served as a guide to our action. We have recently re-calibrated that plan to be even more excellent. In five years we have become “a planning organization.” I want to stress how important this idea is. It is hard to plan for change as revolutionary as that I am predicting. At the same time, without planning there is little hope of developing sustainability. I urge that all of you re-read the document called *Directions 2011* and that you make decisions during the next five years consistent with those *Directions*. I wish to acknowledge the leadership of Penny Poplin Gosetti, Kaye Patten Wallace, Jamie Barlowe and Chuck Lehnert for this effort.

In five years we have enjoyed nine consecutive semesters of increased enrollment, which has enabled increased admission standards for most Colleges. We have grown in both size and excellence! We thank Larry Burns and his colleagues.

The University’s commitment to diversity has stressed actualization. Underrepresented minority students in the College of Medicine have increased from 4% to 8%. We have created an incubation program for minority businesses. We have created a “Blue and Gold” scholarship award program which gives selective advantage to urban minority students. Again, thanks are due to Larry Burns, Shanda Gore and many others.

The University of Toledo has made significant contributions to health care of the city, the region and the nation. Our students’ score on the United States Medical Licensure Examination has improved dramatically. The UTMC ranks 45 out of 857 U.S. hospitals for the time elapsed between arrival and therapy for heart attack patients. A new relationship with the ProMedica Health System is being recognized nationally as an innovative game changer. Our gratitude to Jeff Gold and Olivia Summons. I wish to acknowledge the presence here of Larry Peterson of the ProMedica Health System.

The University of Toledo has significantly improved its fiscal strength. One measure of this is the institution's Senate Bill Six composite score. This composite score has gone from 3.3 to 3.9, highly significant on a scale of zero to five. Building financial strength is an important aspect of any institution's sustainability. Our gratitude is due to Scott Scarborough, David Dabney and many others.

The University of Toledo has put northwest Ohio on the world map as a Center for Solar and Advanced Renewable Energy. A Wright Center grant from Ohio's Third Frontier, multiple federal grants and contracts, as well as multiple corporate relationships in this arena show promise for the rejuvenation of Ohio's economy. Thanks Al Compaan, Rob Collins and many others for this great accomplishment.

The University of Toledo has accomplished another of its strategic goals by emerging as a force for economic development in northwest Ohio. It has created a unique non-for-profit subsidiary called The University of Toledo Innovation Enterprises. It is recognized as the convener of multiple agencies in the region. We are working on a unique relationship with the Third Frontier's Entrepreneurial Signature Fund called Rocket Ventures. Our gratitude to Rick Stansley, Mary Jo Waldock, D'Naie Jacobs, Frank Calzonetti and many others.

The University of Toledo has undertaken a significant reorganization of its colleges' structure, which promises to make the institution more accessible to students and more supportive of interdisciplinarity and the excellence that derives from it. Thanks are due to the twelve bold and creative people who constituted the Committee on Strategic Organization.

In summary, while not without the growing pains, the first five years of the "new" University of Toledo have been characterized by significant growth, advancement and accomplishment. We have much to celebrate. This is your University, these are your accomplishments. Congratulations!

But what about the next five years? Will the next five years be similarly rewarding years of growth? What lies ahead when the value equation for higher education is being threatened at the very moment of intense financial stress in our society?

Education has been the primary vehicle for "The American Dream." That dream of unlimited upward mobility, the dream that anyone in this great country can achieve anything by diligence and perseverance, has always acknowledged education as a necessary pillar. That belief is being challenged. Education is at a turning point; The American Dream itself is losing credence. We at The University of Toledo, aspiring as we do to be leaders with a global impact, must face and understand this crisis of confidence in education.

To face a crisis is of course to face the hard truth in the situation; so let me state it directly: The current Kantian, Humboltian University is unsustainable as a model of human interaction. The funding, the value equation, and the way of doing business in the modern, state supported metropolitan university is not sustainable for the long run.

Now I know that it is dangerous to speak of the future. One wag, Yogi Berra, I think, is said to have opined: “It’s tough to make predictions, especially about the future.” But it is fairly easy to see dramatic and revolutionary changes in the next five years for the higher education establishment, and for The University of Toledo. Let me allude briefly to what I believe to be the causes and character of some of these changes.

Tuition increases have been more than double the rate of general inflation for two decades. We are in imminent danger of pricing ourselves out of the market, even accounting for the deep discounting of tuition for many student cohorts and our own efforts to hold tuition down. Students graduate with increasing debt loads in both the undergraduate arena as well as for graduate and professional schools. Even for those achieving an M.D. degree, usually high earners, the payback time for student debt has lengthened dramatically, the return on investment is increasingly dubious. In a recent survey, approximately 17% of respondents thought that college is no longer a good investment.

Paul Krugman, a Nobel Laureate in Economics and a Columnist for *The New York Times* wrote recently, “It’s no longer true that having a college degree guarantees that you’ll get a good job, and it’s becoming less true with each passing day.”

Even more disconcerting is the growing number of questions about the intrinsic value of education; some are questioning whether students are learning anything at all in the process. Mark Taylor of Columbia University, a recent visitor to our campus, asserted in his recent book: “The quality of Higher education is declining; colleges and universities are not adequately preparing students for life in a rapidly changing and increasing competitive world.”

And then recently, the higher education world received a damning report from Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa in a new book entitled, “*Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses.*” Two thousand and three hundred undergraduates from 24 schools were evaluated using a tool called The College Learning Assessment; the authors stated: “After two years in college, 45% of students showed no significant gains in learning; after four years, 36% showed little change.” Students spent 50% less time studying compared with students a few decades ago, the research showed.

This new work is entirely consistent with what universities have been hearing from industry CEOs for several years: that university graduates are ill equipped to work in teams, ill equipped for problem solving, and inadequate in communication skills.

So at exactly the moment of great fiscal stress, the fundamental value of a college or university education is being questioned. Can we blame legislators and governors for being confused, or less than enthusiastic about further funding of higher education?

A major commitment of the 21st Century University is the production of a workforce that meets societal needs. However, workforce requirements are changing rapidly and universities find themselves unable to react quickly enough. A few decades ago, it was not unusual for a worker to be employed for a lifetime in one job or a series of related positions with a single employer.

Currently, many industries are utilizing a workforce which has six to eight jobs in a lifetime, or in the extreme, is only contracted for individual projects. The ability to reinvent oneself has become an important qualification for the prosperous, fulfilled life. It is widely acknowledged that the knowledge we teach or possess today will be largely obsolete in a decade so that upon entering one's second or third job, one's university obtained knowledge is largely useless. Still, most universities have been slow to move from the teaching of factual content to teaching skills useful for self reinvention, such as critical thinking and communication. Furthermore, lifetime employment at one's university is still the goal for most university faculty members, a model which increasingly is being looked upon as unsustainable for today's world.

Careful re-evaluation of the sustainability of the modern university is obviously in order; The University of Toledo is undertaking this reexamination. Faculty, higher education needs your help. I, the institution, and the nation are asking you to guide these revolutionary forces. Workload, tenure, curriculum, areas which traditionally receive significant faculty input, are the very areas which this revolution will affect.

Universities have knowledge as their stock in trade: they create it; they transmit it and apply it. But we have come to recognize that knowledge is no longer owned by individuals or institutions. Knowledge is now fluid, mercurial, moveable, and exists in cyberspace.

The University as we currently know it is unsustainable. The cost of education is rising rapidly toward a price point which would put us out of the market; the value of the product is being questioned, and the durability of knowledge is being questioned. We must regroup.

So what, you ask, are we to do? Is the American Dream salvageable? Can the higher education enterprise be made sustainable? I believe the answer is yes, but it will require a bold, courageous journey. Let me attempt to provide a glimpse of an alternative future.

A fundamental requirement will be a major increase in productivity by universities. This will be derived from at least two sources. First, best practices from corporate America concerning productivity must be borrowed.

Second, significant technological breakthroughs will enable productivity increases to occur.

I am not speaking of the corporatization of the higher education enterprise as has been deplored by authors such as Soloway in his book: *"Failed Grade: The Corporatization and Decline of Higher education."*

Still the corporate model of societal organization is increasingly embraced throughout the world and aspects of corporatization must be embraced if higher education as we know it is to survive. Not everything about the modern corporation is good, not everything is to be embraced. But to reflexly reject everything about the pervasive organizing force of the modern world is retrogressive. More rapid cycle times, just in time delivery, and many human resource practices could clearly benefit the higher education enterprise.

The notoriously long decision making cycles common in higher education could benefit from corporatization. Performance appraisal, pay for performance, and merit based incentives, all common in the corporate world, could transform the higher education establishment.

The word “Corporatization” should be used not simply to imply a slavish worship of the bottom line, but could also suggest a borrowing of systematic quality improvement methodologies such as Six Sigma or Lean Manufacturing from the corporate world. We must stop resisting corporatization.

Similarly, we must embrace the need for and seek other methods for a radical increase in productivity. This will probably involve a quantum leap in the use of technology, as well as teaching methods which reach more students in less time. Creative and widespread use of simulation is also likely, for undergraduates as well as for graduates. Fortunately, The University of Toledo is becoming a leader in this area. Personal productivity on the part of faculty members will also have to be increased.

It seems to me to be a statement of faith, unsupported by evidence, that smaller classes produce better outcomes. Similarly the frequent statement that “one-on-one” or “face-to-face” interaction is necessary to learning is disproved daily by teenagers with iPhones and corporations using Skype. Indeed, almost all major increases in productivity in the last three decades are attributable to technology. Bank cards, e-mail, Twitter and the computerized diagnosis of automobile engines have all supported major increases in productivity by their users.

Recently Kurt Carlson of SRI, International asserted in conversation that the only scalable, sustainable productivity increase for the higher education enterprise will be found in a major leap in technology; probably outside the traditional classroom.

Education will no longer be place bound, because knowledge, its stock-in-trade, is no longer place bound. From Afghanistan to space, to the high seas, knowledge is available and ubiquitous; the modern university can no longer be thought of as connecting with its environs; the modern university becomes a cloud university and will not exist in a place at all.

If productivity increases are to be derived from corporatization and technology, relevance of knowledge may require a revisitation of some ancient concepts. Aristotle distinguished “Sophia” and “Phronesis”; conceptual knowledge from practical knowledge. Schopenhauer, centuries later, recorded similar ideas: “...the head is crammed full of concepts by being lectured and taught and through reading, before there is yet any extended acquaintance with the world of intuitive perception! Experience is then supposed subsequently to furnish the intuitive perception to all these concepts.... In this manner, education produces disturbed and biased minds...”

Schopenhauer, it must be admitted, might have been a bit over the top, but the message is clear. Internships, service learning, travel and work experience must be more fully embraced by the higher learning establishment. Currently, these activities are grafted on to the Kantian University, which supplies context free knowledge with little durability, in contrast to

Aristotelian practical knowledge or Phronesis, which is learned in application. Problem solving, critical thinking, and other skills conducive to self re-invention fall into this category.

Such skill-based knowledge is to be contrasted with the traditional Kantian knowledge provided by the Humboltian University. This analysis is entirely consistent with the Higher Learning Commission's emphasis on assessment of outcomes of our work. I believe this emphasis will be evident when they visit in February of next year.

So let me return to the risky business of predicting the future. The higher education enterprise will be dramatically changed in five years, but will survive because leaders like The University of Toledo will develop and embrace a more sustainable business model.

The undertaking will not be without pain and will often seem to be driven by the crass budgetary pressure of the moment. But ultimately we will not only survive but thrive.

That future will be characterized by a major increase in productivity derived by adoption of the best methods from Corporate America and by a quantum leap in the technology of education.

The future will be characterized by renewed emphasis on Phronesis or practical knowledge. Indeed full integration of the higher education enterprise with the world of work, whether corporate or governmental, is likely by the end of five years.

But finally, the future will still be a function of human intellect and a manifestation of the human spirit. Our faculty and students will define it, create it, and bring it to fruition. Because of them, The University of Toledo will emerge as an internationally recognized leader of the higher education enterprise. Let me show you a few examples of what I mean.

SHOW VIDEO

AFTER THE VIDEO

A revolution in higher education is already underway, and in five years will dramatically change universities. Our hope for the future of this University, indeed for the future of our society, is vested in young people like the faculty members shown here. The students we teach today will guide the changed enterprise in a changed world. We are entering uncharted territory. We may depend, I believe, on the young faculty members shown in the video to help us find our way.