

UH System

PERSPECTIVES

Special Edition I

January 1981



University of Houston System Operations—1980

A Statement by President Charles E. Bishop
to the UH Board of Regents

UH Central Campus
January 5, 1981

I judge 1980 as a year of substantial and significant change for the University of Houston System. It was a year of very pronounced growth in the numbers of people served by the University and of continued improvement in the quality of educational services provided. It was a year of notable accomplishments by the faculties and the students.

Enrollment

There has been much discussion of what has happened to enrollment. After a very sharp drop in enrollment in 1979, there was a very significant increase in the fall of 1980, and record enrollments were established at UH at Clear Lake City, UH Downtown College, and UH Victoria Center, and a very substantial increase was recorded on the Central Campus.

We note with satisfaction that enrollment in the arts and humanities remained relatively stable, while there was continued strong demand for the graduate and professional programs. Career-oriented fields such as business, engineering, computer science, law, architecture, optometry, pharmacy, and technology experienced very high demand.

We view these as very positive developments, for it is our responsibility as an urban university to provide for the cultural enrichment of the people, for expansion of the knowledge base, and for the technical expertise neces-

sary to the functioning of a major metropolis. To this end, we graduated 5,358 students in 1979-1980, 253 more than in 1978-1979.

Educational Service Beyond the Campus

In 1980, the University moved vigorously to meet the educational needs of the people of Houston by increasing sharply the off-campus programs of instruction. Hundreds of Houstonians were offered formal and informal instruction in the vicinity of their homes and places of work.

We served a broad spectrum of the population. The University of Houston Central Campus established institutes in The Woodlands and west Houston and initiated formal degree-oriented programs of instruction in both locations. Through close cooperation with major corporate firms in Houston, the UH Downtown College provided new and improved access to higher education in three major employment centers. UH Clear Lake City offered formal courses in five locations in the vicinity of that campus. UH Victoria Center's off-campus courses covered an eight-county territory.

There was a significant increase in the commitment to continuing education at each campus. The Downtown College and the Central Campus conducted "in-house" educational programs in cooperation with several major firms in Houston. The Victoria Campus established a record enrollment in continuing education activities.

The President's Statement . . .

The Faculties

In September 1979, there were 1,205 ranked faculty members employed in the University of Houston System. Of these 56.8 percent had tenure. During the past year, there were 77 retirements, resignations and terminations. There were 99 new appointments, and there were 76 promotions within the faculties.

The faculties attained high levels of productivity in teaching, research, and public service. In spite of a heavy teaching load, the commitment to the discovery of knowledge was evidenced by the more than \$14 million in new research awards generated by the faculties. I deem it to be of particular significance that there was a very pronounced increase in the support for our research generated from the private sector—from industry and from private foundations.

The areas of study ranged from highly abstract to immediate practical problems, and included such diverse areas as solar energy conversion, image processing, computer software design, reduction of child abuse, and methods for giving up smoking. The faculty produced more than 100 books and numerous research publications and scholarly papers. They contributed generously of their time and talents in speaking before hundreds of groups and served as consultants and advisors to many government agencies, businesses, and professional associations. Through these and numerous other activities, the faculties brought distinction to this University as well as to themselves. Many professors were honored by election to office in their professional associations; several were awarded Fulbright-Hayes or other fellowships. One received a career research award, and others received cash awards in recognition of the excellence of their work.

1980 also witnessed a significant increase in inter-institutional cooperation. UH System campuses continued their close working relationships with the community college system. A new cooperative program was developed between the Downtown College and the Central Campus in the field of real estate. The Central Campus, Rice and Texas A&M explored, throughout the year, the possible development of a Houston area research center. The clinical program of the College of Pharmacy was located in the Texas Medical Center this year.

Improvements in Facilities

Some much needed, and especially significant, improvements were made in our physical plant, our equipment, and our libraries in 1980. New buildings were dedicated on the Central Campus for the Graduate School of Social Work and the College of Pharmacy. Construction was authorized for a new dormitory complex and for a major addition to the Cullen College of Engineering.

The Downtown College dedicated a new library, and undertook a \$4 million major renovation of One Main Street.

The capacity of the primary computer system was increased approximately 50 percent, and a number of mini-computers were added. Although our computer equipment remains woefully deficient, these were welcome additions.

In addition, plans were developed for the separation of administrative and academic computer functions, and we hope that these plans can be implemented in 1981. We have been given a grant of \$400,000 to help us achieve this important objective.

Significant improvements occurred in the libraries. The number of volumes added this year was 79,000. More important, circulation in our libraries increased 36 percent. The UH at Clear Lake City library became a select government depository, and the UH Victoria Center library was designated as a special depository service center for information on the aging.

Academic Programs

I emphasize that we introduced very few new academic programs in 1980. A baccalaureate program in dance was developed at UH at Clear Lake City; a Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences was initiated at UH Victoria Center; and baccalaureate programs in applied mathematical sciences, petroleum land management, and business data processing were introduced at the UH Downtown College.

In reviewing the accomplishments of the year, it seems to me that the chancellors chose to stress qualitative improvements rather than quantitative expansion of the academic programs. I strongly support this commitment, and I believe that there is evidence of significant qualitative improvement.

For example, the Downtown College achieved senior level accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. A program in engineering technology at the Downtown College also was accredited.

There were initial accreditation reviews in business administration, administration of health services, and medical technology at UH at Clear Lake City. We await the outcomes with high expectations.

At the Central Campus, there were eight re-accreditations; and so that you will not think that these were automatic, I must tell you that there was a loss of one accreditation.

We were pleased with the establishment of chapters of four national honor societies, including Phi Kappa Phi, at the Clear Lake City campus, and a chapter of one honorary society at the Victoria campus.

Those of you who receive the *Chronicle of Higher Education* probably saw the recent article on the future studies program at the Clear Lake City campus. This program was ranked as one of the top four in the nation. The criminal justice program at the Downtown College recently was cited for excellence. The political science department and the College of Business Administration on the Central Campus received very favorable reviews and rankings by agencies conducting nationwide studies of programs in these important areas. The several athletic programs of the Central Campus continued to carry the University colors with distinction.

Changes in Officers of the University

There were a number of changes in senior administrative personnel in 1980. We welcomed Chancellor Alexander Schilt, who replaced Chancellor J. Don Boney. Dr. Roger Singleton resigned as senior vice president for administration and finance and was succeeded by Dr. John Green. Dr. Allen Commander left his position as vice president for governmental relations and returned to teaching. He was succeeded by Dr. John Alexander. Dr. Patrick

The President's Statement . . .

Nicholson elected early retirement, making it possible for us to create a vice presidency for development and to obtain Mr. John Leslie. There also were a number of important changes in the vice chancellorships, and in the deans' positions on the campuses.

As 1980 closed, we were pleased with the announcements that two members of our administration had accepted positions as university presidents. Dr. Louis Rodriguez, former vice chancellor and provost of UH at Clear Lake City, already has assumed the presidency of Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas. On March 1, Dr. Joseph Champagne, vice president for academic affairs, will assume the presidency of Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan.

A Challenging Future

On the whole, I regard 1980 as a good year for the University of Houston System. Under the leadership of able chancellors, each of the campuses made substantial progress. I must emphasize, however, that the University of Houston, like most major universities in the U.S., faces an exceedingly difficult period in the years ahead. Indeed, for us, the task will be even more difficult, for we must maintain and enhance the thrust of qualitative improvement which has characterized this fine institution in the recent past.

Pursuit of Quality

Perhaps the most difficult task we face is that of recruiting and retaining an outstanding faculty. We began 1981 with a budget that enabled us to reward our faculty with compensation increases that were, on the average, less than one half the increase in the cost of living last year. Our competitive position, needless to say, is not good; and I believe that we are now in danger of losing some of our most able faculty to other universities and to private industry.

We therefore welcome the recommendations of the Legislative Budget Board with respect to faculty salaries, but we would emphasize once again the absolute necessity for maintaining the freedom to allocate salary increase funds in a manner that enables us to recruit and support highly productive faculty. We would suffer tragic consequences if we were required to distribute all of the salary increase funds across the board.

At best, we will be seriously challenged to maintain the quality of our faculty in the years ahead. I believe it is time for us to take innovative steps in that direction. We sorely need funds for additional faculty chairs, and we must intensify our efforts to obtain private support for this important purpose. I believe that the University of Houston components have unusual opportunities to establish closer and more productive ties with industry in the Houston area. I encourage each of the chancellors to explore the possibility of developing more joint appointments with the corporate sector and to establish more effective research relationships with the private sector in the Houston metropolitan area.

The Downtown College has already taken steps, where appropriate, to weigh industrial experience along with academic experience in the selection of its faculty. In our technology programs and in other career-oriented fields, this type of cooperation should be increased in the future. We must also establish more effective inter-institutional

cooperation, both within the University of Houston System and between System components and other institutions of higher learning.

Need for Support

It is imperative that we provide better support for our faculties. Indeed, faculty members require special kinds of support. Of special concern to us are the modernization of classroom and laboratory equipment, library improvement, faculty development programs to enable faculty to keep informed with regard to new knowledge in their respective fields, and enough departmental operating funds to meet our daily needs.

We especially need a major academic computer and ancillary equipment for instructional purposes to provide better access for faculty and students. Graduates of this University are expected to be able to use modern analytical methods and computerized processes. We must rectify the deficiencies we have in this important area.

Although there is a widespread view that construction of new buildings and laboratories in higher education in the recent past has been sufficient to meet the needs for the next decade, such is not the case at the University of Houston. There has been a prolonged lag in the construction of facilities on the Central Campus, and important academic functions continue to be housed in grossly deficient quarters, including "temporary" buildings obtained from the federal government at the end of World War II.

The most serious deficiencies are in the College of Business Administration and the College of Architecture. Although the building housing the University of Houston Downtown College is structurally sound, the need for major repair and rehabilitation probably is more severe there than at any other institution of higher education in Texas.

The University of Houston is not eligible for participation in the Permanent University Fund. As a result of the effective abolition of the *ad valorem* tax, dedicated to the construction needs of institutions not participating in the Permanent University Fund, the Central Campus is left without a source of funds for capital construction. The legislature is expected to remedy this condition in 1981, and we have requested special consideration of the critical needs on the Central Campus and at the Downtown College.

I believe that this decade will witness the keenest competition for students that institutions of higher learning have experienced in forty years. An outstanding faculty with well-equipped laboratories and libraries will be necessary to attract outstanding students. Let me repeat, I said necessary, but not sufficient. If we are going to attract the best students, we must also be competitive with respect to the financial assistance that we are prepared to offer them. We certainly need more money for the University of Houston for National Merit Scholarships and for scholarships to attract able graduate students.

Steps to Improvement

There are a number of specific steps which I shall advocate as means of improving our operations. We must commit the University of Houston System to do what it can to remove the vestiges of the dual system of higher education in Texas and to assure that we are in full compliance

The President's Statement . . .

with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. To this end, I have placed before you a statement for your consideration later today.

We must also continue to develop and improve our articulation agreements with the community colleges and other institutions of higher education. We should facilitate transfer of students among the campuses of the University of Houston System and between the component campuses and other universities.

I hope that we shall soon be able to convert to continuous registration in the University and to computerize scheduling on each of the component campuses. I shall also continue to work for concurrent registration on System campuses and for inter-campus use of campus resources.

We have initiated a codification of Board policies and the development of a series of administrative memoranda to guide us in the implementation of State laws and regulations and Board policies. A new financial accounting system has been developed and is being implemented, and I shall recommend to you later today some changes in administrative responsibilities which I believe to be needed to improve the management of our financial affairs.

I want you to know that the chancellors and I have made a strong commitment to comprehensive and strategic planning to guide us in the future. Planning, of course, is not new to this University, but there is a sense of urgency in our current efforts.

We accept our responsibilities to carry out with distinction the diverse missions of the University of Houston System components. We also commit ourselves to the preservation of the dynamic character of the University of Houston System, to maintaining our capacity for innovation and adaptation within the complementary functions defined for the component campuses by this Board. In the pursuit of the selected excellence to which we aspire, we recognize the need for sound academic judgment, a deep commitment to quality, and the freedom to make the necessary changes in our programs.

I do want to stress that latter point. It is a matter of growing concern. Perhaps the major difference between private, or independent, institutions and public institutions of higher education is the degree of freedom to manage or administer the institutions. Increasingly, the degrees of freedom left to the administration in the public institution are circumscribed through the earmarking of funds and through a plethora of regulations that make it difficult to maximize the attainment of goals which we have established for our institutions.

Commitment to Excellence

This Board has clearly indicated its commitment to the pursuit of excellence in this University. I share this commitment, but I must warn you that excellence is an elusive concept. The allocation of functions to the component campuses is an important part of our commitment to quality. The question of mission is a question of quality, for mission defines the tasks in which we have chosen to

excel. Such choices, therefore, must be made with careful deliberation. We must not strive to do more than we can do well. A well-developed plan is an important part of the commitment to excellence.

The development of excellence is a long-run process. The first rankings that I have been able to find of institutions of higher education in this country were made in the 1920s. If you compare those rankings made in the 1920s with the rankings in the 1970s, you will find that there has been very little rearrangement in the rankings. That stability is not accidental. When an institution is known as being at the top, there are important considerations working for that institution. It attracts better faculty. It attracts better students. It attracts more grants, and it gets more money.

A Sense of Self-Confidence

Money, of course, is necessary; but money is not sufficient to develop excellence. We know that there is more to creating excellence than pouring money into an institution. If an institution is to excel, it first must believe in itself. The institution must radiate a sense of confidence that it can achieve high standards. It must develop within itself a spirit of creativity. It must recognize and take pride in its accomplishments.

The faculties must be characterized by self-confidence and by a feeling that their work is worthwhile, that it is important, and that it is appreciated. There must be a deep commitment within the faculty to the utility of teaching, and at the same time, a desire to discover truth that is so strong that it creates perseverance to succeed even after repeated failures. It is this kind of aspiration to excellence that motivates an institution to attain the improvements that we seek.

In closing, I wish to express my personal appreciation to the vice presidents, to the chancellors and their staffs, and to the faculties and students for the accomplishments of 1980. On behalf of the chancellors and the other members of the University of Houston System, I want to express appreciation to the members of this Board for your continued commitment to the enhancement of the quality of this University, and for your support and encouragement in creating a constructive environment within which we can dedicate ourselves to the fulfillment of the goals which you espouse for this University System.

Perspectives

Perspectives is published monthly by the UH System University Relations Office. Executive Director: Farris Block, 749-4149. Editor: Haise Johnson.

The University of Houston seeks to provide equal educational opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, handicap, or veteran status.

This policy extends to all programs and activities supported by the University.