

Frank Newman. *Choosing Quality: Reducing Conflict Between the State and the University*. Denver: Education Commission of the States, 1987.

Every state needs a great university. That is the conclusion Frank Newman reaches in his interesting and informative study *Choosing Quality*. In fact, Newman suggests that the United States is capable of developing at least 100 high-quality public universities. He intimates that there could be even more if the appropriate commitments were made. He states, "it is perfectly possible for each (state university in his sample of 105) to aspire to be of as high a quality as the best of the current state universities." The sample, by the way, includes the University of California at Berkeley, UCLA, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio State, and a raft of others generally regarded as among the nation's best public universities.

Newman, president of the Education Commission of the States since 1985, uses a case-study approach to analyze issues surrounding the need for improved quality in American state universities. His study is provocative, enlightening, and filled with a sense of hope. He communicates a clear sense of urgency while acknowledging that there is much we can be proud of and much on which we can build greater quality. Newman is able to criticize constructively and make numerous insightful recommendations for improving quality through "reducing conflict between the state and the university."

Choosing Quality is a small volume of only 101 pages of text supplemented by another twenty-one pages of appendices that list the studied universities, supply eighteen recommendations for improving trustee selection, provide excerpts of two experts' views on state university governance, and

present a carefully screened bibliography. Newman's work is a nice, tidy, pertinent analysis of what can and should be done to move state universities on the road to increased levels of quality. He makes you believe it can be done.

Newman is no mere iconoclast attacking state universities. When he says, "the aspiration to have high-quality universities is absent in . . . at least half of the states," he comes back with the assertion "No state lacks the capacity to have a state university of high quality."

Early on (p. 13) in *Choosing Quality*, Newman presents some of the most important disclosures of his study. He asks: "What is it that makes the difference?" He indicates that three characteristics are the most important. Interestingly, Newman reiterates these same three propositions in his last chapter entitled "What Is It That Matters?" These three propositions constitute the central thesis of his work:

Aspiration

Newman contends that this is the most critical among his three ingredients for success in achieving high quality. This is the determination of the state to create and maintain a high-quality state university and is expressed through the citizenry in general, the political representatives of state government, and the university community itself. He argues that unless the aspiration is "deeply held and widely shared," a first-class university will not exist.

Tradition

Over time relationships between the university and state can be developed constructively. Where this occurs, the university is protected and encouraged. Unfortunately, according to Newman, this is often not the case. Building a tradition of constructive relations between the state and university re-

quires carefully planned interventions and conscious effort.

Leadership

Newman articulates what almost all the contemporary literature advocates about educational leadership. He does it quite well in very few words. He identifies and asserts the need for vision that transcends normal day-to-day requirements for effective management, the need for wise and courageous exercise of power, the need for the type of risk-taking that leads to quality, the need to empower others in leadership roles, and the need to sacrifice short-term gains for longer term paths to excellence. Above all, according to Newman, leaders "need to create a climate of belief that things can happen."

In Chapter IV, "Creating a Positive Climate," Newman presents brief case studies of state incentive funding as a path to progress in several states, including Ohio, Missouri, and New Jersey. In Ohio, for example, the state stabilized the financial base of support for public institutions and developed initiatives for selective excellence through five interrelated challenge grant programs: eminent scholars, program excellence, academic challenge, productivity improvement challenge, and research challenge. Newman contends that these types of state supported incentive programs represent a new form of initiative leading to increased quality.

In *Choosing Quality* Newman explores the nature of appropriate public policy versus inappropriate intrusion and the causes of inappropriate intrusion. He characterizes these intrusions as: bureaucratic, political, and ideological. He presents an insightful list of some ten "causes of intrusion" one of which states: "The desire of bureaucracies at all levels is to exercise power."

He reminds us that the issue of intrusion into state university affairs by external agencies or individuals was debated before the Supreme Court in *Sweazy v. New Hampshire*, 354 U.S. 234,263 (1957). The Court explicated "the four essential freedoms of a university": to establish who may teach, what may be taught, how it may be taught, and who may be admitted.

In the final chapter in *Choosing Quality*,

Newman offers conclusions in enumerated form under the following series of questions:

- What must a university do to be great?
- What must a board do to encourage a university to greatness?
- What must a system do to encourage a university to greatness?
- What must the state do to encourage a university to greatness?

In the context of this final chapter Newman moves from producing a good study to an excellent one. He recognizes and asserts: "No university ever moved to greatness by trying to be everything to everybody."

Newman concludes that every university aspiring to quality must develop its niche. Through a clearly understood and articulated mission shared by the board, state, and university leadership, this niche can be established and fostered. Then, there is a beginning. Then, there is a chance for enhanced quality. Then, perhaps, greatness may result.

I will recommend Frank Newman's book *Choosing Quality: Reducing Conflict Between the State and the University* to my colleagues and students. It makes a significant contribution to the literature on improving educational quality in our state universities.

*Frederick Gies
Professor and Dean
College of Education and Human Services
Wright State University
Dayton, OH 45435.*

Ernest A. Lynton and Sandra E. Elman. *New Priorities for the University*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1989.

A persistent theme in higher education relates to the new demands facing universities and colleges and the involvement of new roles for them. This theme includes such critical topics as affirmative action, access, economic development, literacy, drug educa-

tion, public service, volunteerism, cooperative education, job placement, and community cultural support. This ever expanding list introduces some confusion as we seek to define the role of the university in our society. The authors believe that the need to meet these demands, the need to provide lifelong learning to a work force that must cope with a rapidly changing workplace, the apparent surplus of basic research faculty, and the information transfer necessary for economic development forge an exciting and valuable role for universities, particularly those that are not among the leading research universities. Lynton and Elman also suggest that, if taken together, these responsibilities are not completely new and are closely related to the service traditions established by land-grant universities.

Thus the new priorities are akin to an old mission—the purpose of the universities and colleges is to be an intellectual and cultural resource for the relevant community. In the case of land-grant institutions that community typically was the state. Comprehensive colleges and universities (often called AASCU institutions in the public sector, after the American Association of State Colleges and Universities) usually have a more regional role. Thus, the boundaries of a campus can be hard to define, but the concept holds. The college or university exists to serve its region through the information transfer process, i.e., by supporting, helping, and teaching the entire community, not just those individuals who enroll in classes. This can also be viewed as an expansive interpretation of the teaching function, the primary role of comprehensive colleges and universities. Teaching occurs not only on campus but also between the campus and its community. This information transfer function, the authors call it technology transfer, is simply an extension of the traditional teaching function. For this reason it can be argued that the authors are calling for an evolution of the university's mission, not a revolutionary change.

Lynton and Elman take this provocative, if perhaps not novel idea, and elaborate on its application to different constituencies on and off campus, particularly the faculty. If the university is to become a resource for its

community and is to focus its efforts on technology transfer rather than basic research, a number of structural changes will have to occur. Perhaps the most fundamental change will be in promotion and tenure policies. Administrators will need to recognize technology transfer activities (consulting, workshops, seminars) as legitimate scholarly and teaching activity. Also, faculty members will have to learn how to support and evaluate these activities. The university clearly, under this model, becomes an applied research university seeking to serve its community.

These changes would radically alter the professional life of faculty, a potentially disruptive change. Yet the potential for energizing and exciting faculty is high. The authors stress that few universities have the resources to support basic research, and faculty are often frustrated because they cannot acquire support for research interests. By rewarding applied, community-based research, the university would open new intellectual opportunities for faculty, and the teaching function would be enriched by faculty involvement in community issues.

The concentration on faculty reflects the other major area of Lynton and Elman's work—the quality of the academic workplace. In this effort they are supported by the work of Zee Gamson. Lynton, Gamson, and Elman have begun a series of studies, workshops, and seminars focusing on the changing role of the university, the impact of this change on the workplace, and the evolving role of faculty in the changing university. It is an impressive undertaking.

The authors challenge administrators to lead the way in making the university more accessible and responsive. They cover a wide range of topics: departmental structure, promotion, tenure, liberal education, competency-based education, the structure of the major, life-long learning, resource allocation, teaching methods, support for research, and so on. If one reads it carefully, this book can be used as a guidebook for institutional change. But first, one must accept the concept that the modern university, particularly those in urban areas, should cease trying to imitate research universities.

These authors are not alone; a recent

editorial in *Higher Education and National Affairs* by Lehigh University President Peter W. Likins stated that Lehigh must also reconsider its relationship to its community and, as a result, its core mission. He concluded, "If we in higher education truly understand the traditional goals of the university, then we should not fear our new utilitarian role as a bridge linking constructive elements of society."

There is little doubt that there are possibilities for new priorities for the university. The demand is there. However, there are also major forces within the university that may resist the challenges offered by Lynton and Elman. The extent of change, the degree to which a comprehensive university adopts a public service mission, will depend first on the interest, energy, and skill of its president.

This is an issue of vision and leadership. But, as always, it will be an empty vision unless the faculty see its inherent good, recognize its value to their intellectual lives, and move to support it.

I believe that the leaders of comprehensive universities should read this book. It challenges one's assumptions and offers new directions. It is alluring, and yes, it is dangerous. Significant changes always bring risk. Lynton and Elman have offered a useful and interesting concept; it deserves an intelligent reading.

Richard L. Pattenau
Vice-President, Academic Affairs
Central Connecticut State University
New Britain, CT 06050.