

THIS KIND OF UNIVERSITY

The Inaugural Address of Terry Sanford, President of Duke University, October 18, 1970

Duke University can lead, therefore Duke University must lead. We must lead in the strengthening of the internal structure of universities, making them freer to fulfill the aspirations of students. We must lead in providing the dynamic dimension of higher education that will provide students with the developed capacity to add to civilization. We must lead in preserving the ancient truths of civilization and in solving the recent distresses of society. Duke University accepts leadership as its hallmark.

Duke has led and is positioned for leadership today not by chance but by careful, deliberate design. This Inauguration looks back to the beginning point of Duke University. It may be traced back through the devotion of Deryl Hart and Douglas Knight, through the building, expanding days of Flowers and Edens, and the brilliance of Preston Pew in gaining for a new university international recognition: and beyond them down the lines of history leading to John Crowell who brought a little college to Durham from the fields of Randolph County where it had been sustained by the intellect of Braxton Craven, and nurtured by the modest means and trusting faith of Quaker and Methodist farmers. The lines of history flow through the people of Durham, encircling particularly the Duke family, the father and sons, who poured in sustaining funds, and finally provided a magnificent endowment that transformed the college into a far-reaching graduate university. But the full story of Duke University does not lead through the names of presidents and benefactors alone. It spreads across and includes sacrifice, achieving, suffering, giving, the life-time devotions of the thousands of scholars and teachers who defined Duke University and infused it with life and personality by their service, scholarship, and intellect. It includes the tens of thousands of students who went from here to prove the worth of Alma Mater, and unsung donors by the thousands whose gifts make up the sinew of the body.

This Inauguration is not the first beginning, but is a new beginning, and it provides us with the opportunity to trim our sails firmly to the fresh, new winds of today: even though we know that the best ordered ship -may be turned off course by the variable winds that blow across the seas of today's higher education and society. Nonetheless, there is some value in knowing where we

want to go.

Nor can we now in this moment chart every reef or anticipate every current. There have been already and there will always be occasions for us to discuss our daily needs and hopes, to plan and program, to design in detail, to examine each part of the University, the positions and problems of students and groups of students, of non-academic employees, faculties, governance, buildings, health, athletics, research, financial aid and special studies. It is sufficient today to know the set of our sails.

It is not enough for Duke University to aspire to be the best—the best of what? Rather it is for Duke University to be unique, with its own talents and strengths, in its own setting, with its own history and heritage. I do not propose that we seek for ourselves a homogenized pattern of the half-dozen great private universities of the nation of which we are one, or that we try to "catch up" or follow any university, no matter what its prestigious position. Simply to do as some other university does, to teach as it teaches, to operate as it operates, to accept it as our model, would make our best success but a carbon copy. We strive to be Duke University, an institution seeking the highest scholarly attainment, and using to the fullest its own peculiar resources and creative capabilities.

Nor can we hope to do everything that needs to be done in higher education, nor even aspire to do partly what large state institutions or entire state systems are doing. And if all we can accomplish is only a part of what they already are doing, then there is little reason for our existence. Rather in our independent, unrestrained, experimental and innovative way Duke University can carve out for itself a primary contribution -- a contribution it alone is shaped to meet.

"The primary concern of American education today is not the development of the 'good life' in young gentlemen born to the purple. Our purpose is to cultivate in the largest number of citizens an appreciation of both the responsibilities and the benefits which come to them because they are Americans, and are free." So said James B. Conant.

Education "is like the culture of the productions of the earth. For our natural disposition is, as it

were, the soil- the tenets of our teacher are, as it were, the seed: instruction in youth is like the planting of the seed in the ground at the proper season: the place where the instruction is communicated is like the food imparted to vegetables by the atmosphere; diligent study is like the cultivation of the fields; and it is time which imparts strength to all things and brings them to maturity." Or so said Hippocrates: "A college teaches: a university both teaches and learns." So said Robert Hutchins.

Duke University says all this, and more, or so we hope, for in the testing of today there is more required.

Duke surely cannot encompass all the skills of the world, but it can encompass all the concerns of the world. While Duke University cannot train even one specialist for every specialty, it can help in the education and growth of many generalists, some of whom in addition will be specialists, all of whom, I hope, might at least be aware of the vastness of human knowledge.

I want to see for Duke University a spirit that makes a Duke graduate a Renaissance Man with a purpose. I want to see Duke University applying its special resources in its special setting to seek out and develop as our primary interest men and women who will exhibit and apply both creativity and leadership, no matter what occupations they might pursue.

Leadership suggests service and creativity suggests contributions to mankind, and I call these the greatest goals. We do not abandon the high academic standards of achievement, excellence and scholarship by applying our talents to the ills of mankind. We do not abandon the liberal education aim that regards "man as an end, not as a means." Instead we validate these aims and standards by making a creative addition to civilization.

Nor do we abandon contemplative scholarship when we seek to put our ' thoughts and knowledge into action. Neither do we abandon individuality when we seek Leadership capacities for all Duke graduates. Indeed there are many kinds of leaders required in all areas of human concern. Many manifestations of creativity are necessary, as well as much diversity and individuality in both leadership and creativity.

We want to provide the kind of university experiences that recognize, nourish, and broaden these talents of leadership and creativity. We do not expect all our graduates to go out into our society and find solutions to society's problems or opportunities, but we do expect to have the kind of university that is capable of turning out such graduates. That kind of a university will make a difference in the world, because its graduates will make a difference.

In a time when problems of our society are so complex, when its future hinges not on conserving the status quo but in the development of major changes, we cannot afford to graduate students who will just "fit into place." We must aspire instead to develop in our students the brain and the heart and the nerve to lead the kind of life that will make a creative difference, in whatever human endeavor they may undertake.

Indeed it is selfish not to apply wisdom and intellect to learning, and learning to sharpening the qualities of creativity and leadership, and leadership and creativity to the causes of mankind. For it is not enough for us to have received the bounty of the past without providing for the assurance of the future.

Duke University right now has the capacity to lead the way into a challenging and exciting new era of change, both on campus and in the total society. We cannot do it by being, as Allan Cartter put it, "a link with the past, not a gateway to the future." We know of the threats to the existence of private universities, as we know the threats to human existence: but we also know that times in history that were grimly discouraging have often in retrospect been recorded by historians as periods of extraordinary human achievement and societal progress.

We need a spirit coming out of Duke marking Duke graduates not as stereotypes, but as diverse leaders exhibiting a morality, a commitment, and a sharpened intelligence, as educated men and women with capabilities to apply that morality and intelligence.

How does a university develop in its students the morality, the commitment, the intelligence, the leadership, the creative capacity?

There are numerous changes Duke University must make, many positions we intend to

strengthen, many old traditions we intend to protect, many innovations we intend to implement.

That is not to say that we are preparing to bend this University into a different direction at variance with her history. In the first place, Duke must, by necessity, respond positively, creatively, and constructively. In the second place, we seek a role that draws on the deepest roots of Duke's traditions and the proudest moments of her history. Duke University is a leader in graduate studies and research. Every distinguished university is so committed. It is already apparent that graduate education soon will be more broadly needed not only for teaching, but for a host of other activities. When our nation begins grappling seriously with such problems as pollution, transportation, designing new cities, production of energy, cleansing the environment and the restoration of the cycles of nature, Duke University as a leader in research and graduate studies will be ready for these inevitable demands by society.

For our Medical School, or School of Law, and our Library, we may rightfully boast of national and international reputations, but we shall remember that it is where we are strongest that we must exert the ablest leadership.

The Divinity School provides the solid connecting link with the United Methodist Church, a principal purpose of the original indenture establishing this University, the fountainhead of Methodism in this region, the source of continuing refreshing of the ministry, and we intend to keep it firmly on its course of providing leadership for the church.

Our other schools and our graduate departments bring strengths and potential to the entire University, graduate and undergraduate alike. We shall shift emphasis where necessary to keep their courses relevant to our general purposes, and shall promote the reputations they have gained for us among the first-ranked universities of the nation.

But our primary purpose for being, so it seems to me, is the education of undergraduate students. Therefore, teaching and providing for the learning experience is the reason for our existence. Duke has over the years not isolated the undergraduate student from the senior faculty, but we must reaffirm the essentiality of this association. Program II of our new curriculum, while not offering much in the way of an imaginative title, offers much in the way of imaginative

university education enabling a student to develop the capacity to shape his own individual course of study, opening up new frontiers of learning both on and off the campus. Our largely successful experiment in the small group learning experience is one of the major innovations of the new curriculum. It indicates that our faculty is keenly alert to changing the learning experience at Duke to make it more personal. These new approaches head in the right direction of developing creativity and leadership and we shall continue that direction.

It is going to be possible for us to tie together existing courses and learning experiences to open to our undergraduate students new possibilities of broader education. For example, we are examining the possibility of expanding our inter-disciplinary capacity to offer experience and study in training for public leadership, giving our students, I trust, not simply technical competence, but broad understanding in problem solving in public affairs. We already have many of the core courses in our different departments that give us the capacity to cut across almost all public problems in a comprehensive educational experience.

We shall do the same for the environmental sciences where the challenge is similar and the need as great. The inter-departmental programming of the knowledge and capacities we already have will enable us to develop the scholarship needed for keeping the environment in balance.

These are but examples of the imagination and innovation flowing from our faculty, administrators, and students, and it will be our constant purpose to seize upon bright ideas and new approaches we need for the never-ending self-renewal a mighty university must provide.

And of prime importance, there is a present need of our society to combine leadership with creative flexibility. In one aspect, this need operates too as a function in that area that has been belabored as the "generation gap." The attitudes of many of our older leaders today seem to have hardened in their response to the vigorous demands and energetic tactics of youth. And in turn, too many young people have reacted in frustration by lashing out chaotically against existing problems in our society. So we have, on one hand, leadership without creativity, which is suffocating, and on the other hand, creativity without leadership, which in social and political terms is non-productive.

I appreciate and understand, I think, restlessness and frustration and impatience and dissatisfaction that students express. This expression indeed is a part of the kind of campus we have, an inevitable element of a significant university.

While I in no way believe destruction and disruption are justifiable means to any end, I choose not to view "student unrest" as the major problem of American campuses, let alone American society.

Ten years ago this fall, students returned to this campus to begin another academic year--just as students had done each fall since these buildings were first opened four decades ago. But that fall of 1960 was different, for there appeared that year an organized number of students who had dedicated themselves to a new form of overt activism as an instrument for effecting social and political changes.

The ultimate influence of those and other students is difficult to reckon. For one thing, they influenced students after them. And altogether, these students have had clearly discernible influences on matters ranging from old traditions to new laws, from internal reforms within our schools to national political elections.

But how was it that they were influenced originally? In the heat of our occasional resentment toward some of their tactics, it has been suggested that they have been influenced either by leaders of subversion or by the devil himself. But I observe that there have been nobler influences on this new generation of American citizens,

Those students of 1960, for example, were just becoming politically aware some seven years earlier when they heard President Dwight Eisenhower say in his inaugural address: "Any man who seeks to deny equality to all his brothers betrays the spirit of the free." And our students of today were at about the same age of awakening when they listened to President Johnson's similar inaugural comment: "When any citizen denies his fellow, saying, 'His color is not mine....,' in that moment, he betrays America.'

During the "Vigil" our students held here two and a half years ago, a student had asked a faculty

member to call her parents on her behalf, because her participation in the "Vigil" was causing them much consternation. And yet, she said in her own defense, she was only doing what they had always told her she should do.

There were many more of these students who were strongly influenced by the high ideals taught to them by their parents, or by their churches, or in their younger school days. Over this past decade, many of these young people have involved themselves in efforts to bring about change, some more effective than demonstrations, ranging from the Peace Corps to the war on poverty.

Meanwhile over the same decade, we have seen how brutally demands for change can be resisted, whether the demands are submitted by a minority of citizens in our own country or in a foreign country. And from the fire hoses of Birmingham to the bombing of a courthouse or university building, we have seen the abusive power of those who resort to force rather than to reason.

The policy of Duke University is that we do not believe in force to suppress dissent and that we do not believe in force to express dissent.

On this very campus, where some of the seeds of this student movement were planted ten years ago, we have still been able to avoid the most violent, the most reprehensible of these consequences. And today, our lines of communication seem relatively clear, and our mutual trust, I feel, is building despite the reverse tendencies in the society around us. At Duke University we intend to keep the faith. We intend to study together, work together, young and old, learn together, believing in one another, relying not on physical force but the moral force of reason.

We must build together here what we would like to see our society become. Duke University, I believe, is uniquely qualified to take the lead. Our students are intelligent and socially concerned, and many of them are among the most morally motivated students in our nation. We reaffirm our faith in them, re-assert our love and respect for them, and solicit and encourage their hope and energies in what can become an exciting venture in the rebuilding of America.

In the same manner, we confirm our confidence in the faculty, the trustees, the employees, the parents, the alumni, and other friends and supporters. To them we pledge that Duke University will live up to its aspirations. We will not flinch from change. We will lead it; we will not turn away from challenge. We will welcome it.

This University aspires to be a leader in all man's hopes. Today we commit Duke to show the way for the education for all those who are to become the creative leaders of society.

We are a private university still in control of our destiny. We are supported financially and morally by alumni and other friends who enjoy the challenge of a stimulating educational adventure. We have a climate attractive to distinguished scholars and teachers. We have students who are concerned for one another and for all humankind. We accept the opportunity of today and tomorrow. We will make this campus a model for a renewed and far better society.

Just back on my right, in the corner of this quadrangle is our main auditorium, named for Walter Hines Page, an alumnus and distinguished journalist of his day. Some years ago he wrote a friend who had remained here to teach English at Trinity: "The effect of the croakers and the critics and all kinds of narrow men," Mr. Page said in his letter, "has been to make us forget that we once had leadership. They keep us forever in the low lands of complaint." Ambassador Page advised, "Let's keep sounding the note of leadership, and the next generation will hear it, and take it up, and do it, praise God!"

Today, we sound that note of leadership for Duke University.