

**Inaugural Address
Duke University**

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Members of the Duke University community, and our very welcome guests: to be invited to lead this splendid institution, at this crucial moment in its history, is a great honor indeed. I shall do my best to merit your faith, and to carry forward our shared vision for Duke University.

First I want to extend a hearty thank you to everyone who worked so hard to bring us to this brilliant and auspicious day, to the members of the inaugural committee, to all who planned and participated in every one of the events in this diverse program, to the buildings and grounds people who worked voluntary overtime hours in order to make the campus beautiful for all our guests, to those who provided the food, the music and the sunshine. I also want to join in welcoming all of you who are here as guests of Duke, the representatives of our sister institutions, the city, the state and of the nation, and a special welcome, of course, to the trustees, the faculty, the students, the staff, the alumni and to my many family and friends who are with us.

For my part in this academic festival day, I want to talk with you about the character of our university, including some aspects that are common to all universities, and some that are unique to Duke.

Last April, Bob and I spent several weeks at a retreat center called Bellagio, on Lake Como in the Italian Alps. My task there was to write an essay on "The Mission of the Research University." In that setting of unparalleled beauty and serenity of spirit, I defined the university in terms that sounded very much like Bellagio: a company of scholars engaged in discovering and sharing knowledge.

That is exactly what we fortunate scholars were doing at Bellagio. Each morning we worked in solitude in our separate studies scattered across the grounds. We gathered for lunch to discuss what we had been doing and then, in the afternoons, we hiked together in the mountains talking about ideas. We presented our work more formally to one another in the evening, after a splendid dinner with good Italian wines.

Memories of like places, including our own National Humanities Center, will resound pleasantly in the minds of many of you today. The ideal of the gathering of scholars, untouched by the ordinary cares of life, freed to concentrate on the shared love of knowledge, has ancient and durable roots. It is a secular and more luxurious version of the monastic ideal of cloistering and concentrating the spirit. Rabelais' Abbey of Thélème ... Tennyson's Princess Ida ... the concept has a very powerful appeal.

Such an ideal bears only a passing resemblance to the bustling, complex world of the modern research university, with our hospitals and football fields, our transportation systems and industrial partnerships, our sophisticated laboratories and power plants. How did we get from there to here?

The pure Bellagian ideal is neither self-sustaining nor, for most of us, indefinitely appealing. It is eternally at the heart of what we do; but it cannot stand alone. By considering various steps away from this pure ideal, we can see how the modern research university has been built up around its core.

Note first that someone had to cook all those meals and clean up afterward. Others had to keep the books and make arrangements for our upkeep, to free us to hike in the mountains and discuss ideas.

The first step away from the pure Bellagian ideal is the awareness that those who are engaged in the purest acts of scholarship are only part of the university. Those who cook the meals and tend the grounds and make

arrangements for our upkeep are essential to what we do, and are part of the university in their own right.

Thus we must expand our definition: a university is a community organized around the conviction that knowledge is a crucial feature of human life. It is a partnership in discovery and exploration that must include those who provide the material support for the voyage.

The benefits of belonging to a community dedicated to advancing knowledge should extend to all its members. This means job training and skills development for workers and staff; encouragement to attend lectures or take course credits; challenging assignments and opportunities for personal growth through work. It means respect for the dignity of everyone who contributes to this University. All of us should find in the university a place that expands our understanding of the world and provides us with the tools we need to play our part in the common enterprise.

Note next that someone had to pay for all those splendid meals and all that good Italian wine. The second step away from the Bellagian ideal is the recognition that the university exists because of the generous financial support provided by others.

At Bellagio, all the Rockefeller Foundation asked of us was to think and to share ideas. In a university community, support comes from many sources-tuition and fees paid by students, families and patients; government and corporate support for the costs of research; endowment income and new gifts. Because we accept such support and enjoy its fruits, we have an obligation to ensure that our knowledge will not be sterile or closely held, but will be used to improve the society of which we are a part.

Providing a sound baccalaureate education for the next generation of citizens, and training skilled professionals to perform the tasks that must be done if society is to flourish, are the most obvious ways in which universities improve the human condition. But there are others: disseminating our research results more widely and applying them for the betterment of human life, tackling the causes of diseases and providing patient care.

Among these forms of service to humanity, it is appropriate that we think first of research. It is not accidental that Duke is called a "research university." This name calls attention to a distinctive and richly productive aspect of our work.

Research is the closest thing in the University to the Bellagian ideal of scholarly exploration. The joys of pure research-which some of us pursue in laboratories, surrounded by graduate students and post docs, or in the world's great libraries, rather than in solitary studies-can be profound. For many of us, nothing in the world is more exhilarating than a successful research finding, a discovery that works out as the researcher passionately believed it had to be.

Furthermore, the research done on our campuses contributes greatly to human welfare in directly utilitarian ways: advances in medical science, in both diagnostic and therapeutic techniques, and in the prevention of illness; discoveries in engineering and ecology; in protecting our environment; building more effective legal systems, better communication systems, improved public policies and management systems for large enterprises. In the humanities, in art or literature or history, the benefits of scholarly research are less tangible, but equally important, in expanding our knowledge of the intricate dimensions and potentialities in human life.

We should be bolder in reminding governments and taxpayers about all this. We need to make more explicit the connections between such specific beneficial outcomes and the more general situation of our universities. The so-called "indirect costs" of libraries and laboratory equipment are genuine expenses of research, costs that should be borne in part by the society that benefits, not just by the universities through tuition payments or endowment income.

Research is also the surest way to measure intellectual vigor of faculty members across universities. When peers in their fields find their work provocative and relevant, this is our best guarantee that our faculty are teaching material that is fresh and deeply grounded, rather than reading from yellowing lecture notes honed over the years to produce an undergraduate response of laughter or recognition at just the right dramatic moment.

However, we must also acknowledge that our incentive systems, our rewards both tangible and intangible (in salaries and status alike), our self-definition as professionals, have become heavily bound up with the research part of our enterprise. It is not surprising, therefore, that many people believe that the universities these days do too much research and too little teaching. A number of universities today are taking a closer look at that imbalance; it is difficult for any single university to move against that current all alone.

It would be particularly hard for Duke University to take unilateral steps that might seem to question the importance of research. Several of our departments and schools have recently reached the first rank; others are poised and hungry to do so. We take justified pride in these achievements, and they attract fine faculty members and students to this university.

However, Duke is also well qualified to provide leadership in a national trend towards greater emphasis on teaching in our research universities. As a comparatively small university that grew from a liberal arts college, undergraduate education has always been central to our mission. Duke faculty have prided themselves across the years in their dedication to teaching, and are remembered fondly by alumni for their success. Many Duke faculty today retain this commitment to teaching, and would welcome a climate that provided more tangible encouragement.

Almost all of us find direct rewards in graduate and professional teaching. These students present themselves as apprentices ready to gain mastery; they have cast their lot with those who regard whatever profession it may be—scholarship or medicine or law or engineering or business or divinity—as the most valuable and productive human work. Teaching such students is a direct extension of one's own commitment to one's own profession.

It is in undergraduate teaching that the problems most obviously arise. Yet students who choose to become faculty members, who opt for the academic life, assume that they will teach undergraduates and they look forward to that opportunity. They recall great teachers who presented their disciplines with passion and charisma, and inspired their own choice of a vocation. Students also remember dull or distant teachers, and believe with some degree of contempt that they will of course avoid this fate. Like any generational transfer, newly-minted graduate students are eager to avoid the mistakes of the parents and chart their own course.

Somehow, along the way, this fresh eagerness can get lost. Young faculty members find themselves increasingly frustrated by the twin pressures of teaching and research, drawn to both but uncertain how to do both well, especially when they are raising children and serving on university committees so as to prove themselves good citizens. Small wonder that teaching can cease to be a fresh and lively activity and become one more responsibility to fulfill.

Older faculty too often become jaded or burned out with years of brining yet another generation up to speed in the rudiments of the discipline. As more and more of our undergraduates come to us deficient in the basic skills provided in the past by secondary education, teaching introductory material can be onerous. The difficulty of preparing yourself to enter the mind of the uninitiated yet one more time outweighs whatever benefits one can expect.

Yet undergraduate teaching can bring its own significant rewards. This can be true in any discipline, even the most rigorous, when it is taught so as to enhance the sense of wonder and to stimulate curiosity, rather than only to instill accepted methodologies. At any stage of one's career, a fresh perspective can jolt stagnant

preconceptions and suggest whole new ways of looking at the world.

It is surely not beyond our powers to rebuild an intellectual community where scholars of all ages share in the partnership of learning, and feel a responsibility to one another in doing so. We should not see this as an elective opportunity, something to think about when the pressures of other responsibilities allow. It should be a high priority for Duke University today. The cynical tendency sometimes noted on our campuses-students and faculty members entering a tacit unholy alliance: "You leave me alone, and I'll leave you alone"-corrodes the very heart of the University.

Duke attracts some of the brightest high school graduates in this country and the world. Our brochures promise that Duke will be for them a transformative intellectual experience. That happens for some of them, but by no means all. It is up to all of us to be sure that such an experience becomes the norm.

We have all the raw material: a strong, well-trained faculty in every field of study; a residential campus that allows students to live in close proximity to each other and to the intellectual apparatus of the university; a very diverse student body made up of young people from every kind of background-ethnic, religious, racial, geographic, economic-who are eager as they enter Duke to learn from one another's experiences; interdisciplinary lines of intellectual connection and stimulus across every faculty of the university; and habits of discussion and debate that provide rich fora for exploring issues around curriculum, advising and other aspects of academic life.

We can stimulate exciting teaching by the use of computer-based instructional technology in every field; by encouraging team teaching across disciplinary boundaries; by constructing a stronger curricular framework that demonstrates how teaching each course conduces to a strong undergraduate education. Perhaps most important, we can take advantage of the unique strengths of the research university by providing many more undergraduate students with challenging experiences in research, allowing them to reap directly the intellectual rewards that it provides. We need only the will to recast our incentive system to support excellent teaching as well as excellent research, and a vision of how much enriched we all will be if we succeed.

Yet even a renewed emphasis on teaching, a greater sensitivity to the justified expectations of those who fund us, and an awareness that all of us in the university are partners in this enterprise of learning, do not expand our vision far enough beyond the pure Bellagian ideal. The university is open on all sides to the society around us. We are neither an ivory tower nor an academic village. We are a sizable small city-state, and people and money and requests and opportunities and ideas flow incessantly across our borders. We must recognize the impact of what we do here on our neighbors, and on the quality of the society in which we live.

Members of our university community are engaged in many forms of civic service, drawing skills and energies directly from their work as faculty members, students and staff. Our Medical Center provides care and healing every day for many people who cannot afford to pay. Universities cannot single-handedly solve all the problems of our society; our resources are limited, and they are mostly given to us for other purposes. But we depend heavily on the quality of life in our region. And in partnership with government and business leaders and interested citizens, we can work to develop coordinated programs for addressing some of the most urgent problems in education, housing, violent crime, health care and other areas of direct concern in the City of Durham, our home.

We must also recognize our social obligation to make a Duke education as affordable as possible to bright, ambitious students from every background. We are the stewards of an immensely valuable resource. To ensure that a Duke education is an affordable ambition for all students, we must be vigilant about two things.

First, we must provide need-based financial aid to all matriculating students who demonstrate a need for it, as

generously as we can afford. It is my firm conviction that within the next few years a sharp distinction will develop between those universities and colleges that support need-blind admissions policies, and meet the full need of admitted students, and an increasing number that cannot. Those who have the commitment and capacity to sustain such policies will have a tremendous advantage in recruiting a talented, diverse student body. Those who cannot offer such assurances will find it much harder to attract strong students and will be forced to fill their classes with students who are less well qualified.

Duke must be among those who play from strength. This is a very expensive commitment, but it is essential; we need to plan for it, allocate our resources to make it possible, and persuade alumni, parents and friends of the university to give generously to support this priority.

And secondly, we must take great care about how we administer ourselves. Neither Duke nor any other university can afford to do everything well. Our continued viability and affordability will require hard choices about where to invest limited resources. We must remember to ask ourselves each time we make a decision, "Is this capital investment really necessary to build Duke's strengths? Will this faculty member's appointment extend our reputation for quality and broaden interdisciplinary research and teaching? Will this proposed new program help students in this school acquire the sophisticated and increasingly international perspective they will need for the 21st century?"

To expand our capacities to offer a broad-ranging and high-quality education, we must take better advantage of our fortunate location in a region with several strong universities. We shall continue to compete vigorously on the athletic fields and in our recruitment of students and faculty, of course. But we should much more often think collaboratively about innovative programs, the purchasing of equipment and services that can readily be shared, joint hires of specialized faculty and staff, and other ventures that we have only begun to visualize. Duke should be a leader in these initiatives, and I shall encourage that leadership. We should also expand our collaboration with firms in the Research Triangle Park, to design research partnerships that will produce rich benefits.

One of Duke's great strengths today is the extent to which we have retained our roots deep in our region, the South, at the same time that we have become a truly world-class university. The founders of Duke University were careful to speak of our obligations to the people of this region, especially to poor bright young people deserving of an education. But they also, from the beginning, affirmed Duke's openness to the larger world, our adherence to strict standards of intellectual rigor and broad-ranging exploration.

For our generation at Duke, we must sustain that balance with a renewed sense of what it means to be of service to this region, our homeland, and a refreshed and enlarged sense of what it means to be an international university. Fortunately, this is made easier by the extent to which the American South has itself become internationally connected-through the immigration of people and businesses and ideas from around the world.

We need to ensure that all our students will have exposure to international ideas and information during their time here. This can be accomplished in a number of ways-by encouraging them to spend time abroad, by increasing the number of students and faculty who come to Duke from other countries, by designing courses and extracurricular programs with an international dimension. Most fundamentally, however, we must cease to think of "international" experiences as exotic, separate from our basic experience each day. We should make international links and contexts an integral part of the way we think and live at Duke; we should work past special enclaves and earmarked programs towards the day when everything we do will be informed by our global consciousness.

Our University is a comparative newcomer to the ranks of the world's great research universities. What had been Trinity College, a small regional college with strong ties to Methodism, was transformed into Duke

University in the 1920s by the generosity and vision of James Buchanan Duke and President William Preston Few.

In the founding indenture of the University, James B. Duke asserted his belief that education "is, next to religion, the greatest civilizing influence." His conception of education was practical and robust; he requested that the courses of study in the new institution be chosen and ordered to "develop our resources, increase our wisdom, and promote human happiness." He thus set up this duo: religion and education, as the twin lodestars to which humankind might look for its salvation, spiritual and secular. And his new University took as its motto *Eruditio et Religio*.

When I discovered this, after I had already agreed to become Duke's president, I was initially uneasy. The motto has an archaic sound if one provides a literal translation—erudition and religion—and the emphasis on religion seemed hard to square with the restless yearning for discovery, the staunch and fearless commitment to seek for truth wherever truth may be found that is the hallmark of a great university.

It is clear that William Preston Few, as President of the University, found himself wrestling with the contemporary relevance of Duke's motto, just as I have done. In a speech to the graduating class in 1931, he set forth a rich context for understanding what it means.

As I look back over the life of man in the world [said Few], I think I can trace a long historic conflict that has been waged through all civilization between beauty and fullness of life without a moral meaning, on the one hand, and austerity and barrenness along with religious intensity, on the other.

Few went on to speculate that it was this unresolved conflict in the human spirit that:

... has produced that strange ebb and flow so conspicuous in all human history. It has always been difficult for human society to preserve the gains made generation after generation, and any high and enduring civilization still awaits the synthetic power ... to combine a full and beautiful living with moral energy and enthusiasm for the causes of humanity.

As an example of the two human impulses that are too often in conflict, he mentions on the one hand, the moral impulse to help the poor—and on the other, the scientific urge to find the means to destroy the seeds of poverty. We might add the moral impulse to heal the sick and relieve their suffering—and the scientific urge to find the causes of AIDS or cancer or Alzheimer's disease.

In Few's vision of how these different human impulses might work together in harmony in a great university, he says:

Here stand side by side science and religion—science and scholarship completely given to the full, untrammelled pursuit of the truth and religion with its burning passion for righteousness in the world—and commit the University in its very inception alike to excellence that dwells high among the rocks and to service that goes out to the lowliest.

At a time when all of us in higher education are wrestling to define our mission more clearly in a rapidly changing world this reading of Duke's motto—the harmony between the impulses of science and of moral value—is a promising point of departure. The splendors of scientific research in any field are ultimately barren without the moral impulse to use those findings to help people achieve the good. The moral impulse to help humanity, as an expression of spiritual commitment that transcends solipsistic selfishness, is equally fruitless without the knowledge and discipline that come from scientific inquiry.

So the final step away from the pure Bellagian ideal of the community of scholars in the mountains is the realization that few of us would choose to live all our lives in the rarified atmosphere of pure scholarship, however exhilarating it may be. We would miss the stimuli provided by more heterogeneous companions; and most of us would eventually feel guilty about living a life that involved no form of service to others, a life ultimately derivative from the work that others do.

There will always be a tension between the striving for objective knowledge and the subjective commitment to moral value, between free speech and human sensitivity. Too often, on university campuses, we try to keep these two impulses separately boxed so that they will not contaminate each other. Our goal at Duke should be to make this tension productive, in a new dialectic of achievement for our future.

And in this spirit, we should this day rededicate Duke University to the "full, untrammled pursuit of the truth," and to the "burning passion for righteousness in the world;" to "excellence that dwells high among the rocks and service that goes out to the lowliest." Armed by this power, informed by this vision, we can be confident that Duke will move from strength to strength among the universities of the world.