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James B. Appleberry*

*Three presidents of
metropolitan universities
and the presidents of
NASULGC and AASCU
discuss the relationship
between their
organizations.*

Higher Education Associations and Metropolitan Universities

Paige E. Mulhollan

Where do we go from here? How do we capitalize on the momentum gathered in this conference to whatever may come in the future? Do we need a formal organization? Those are the nuts and bolts questions that we must now address. The idea for an association that would bring together folks from our kinds of institutions began as a group of co-conspirators or committee of correspondence at my home in Dayton, Ohio, about five years ago. It involved eight or ten institutional presidents and chancellors who shared the feeling that higher education needed to develop a new institutional success model if we were to respond to those criticisms and credibility problems that we were suffering in the larger body politic. But we knew that we could not change the paradigm that made the comprehensive research university the only acceptable model of institutional prestige until we could provide a sufficiently attractive and prestigious model that faculties and others would choose to seek as an alternative to the traditional model.

We set out to do this, knowing it to be revolutionary, because it involves a complete paradigm change. We chose the name "metropolitan", recognizing that there was no agreement on that name or any other. We did not reject "urban" as a name, but

we concluded that "urban" had not proved over many years of utilization to be inclusive enough to establish the kind of critical mass of institutions that we thought was necessary in order to achieve our outcome. Unfortunately, we spent several of the next few years arguing about "metropolitan" versus "urban". I hope we have now solved the argument in typical academic fashion by deciding to use both.

At the time we undertook this activity, we consciously rejected any organization. None of us wished to pay dues to a new national association. None of us thought that we needed another structure. Instead we set upon a course of action which emphasized occasional conferences of this sort which could bring us together, and the publication of an intellectual foundation for our activities which became the *Metropolitan Universities* journal. Since then we have come quite a ways. I am completely gratified when I see so many institutions from such a widely disparate geographical area beginning to use the terminology and mission statements of our movement. They are beginning to describe what they do in perfect consistency with the definitions that we have jointly developed during the intervening years. Institutions as different and as dispersed as the University of Texas at San Antonio and Weber State University, the University of Northern Kentucky, the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, as well as some of the original institutions such as Wright State University, have all found some utility in aligning themselves with this direction and this niche as they plan their futures.

As the movement has come forward, the question of organization has become current again. We have come to believe that the time has come for some structure in order to assure the continuance and the stability of the movement. Therefore today we have a panel of people who have thought about that issue, who have been involved in the discussions almost from the beginning, and/or who hold some position which gives them the opportunity to play a constructive and leadership role in answering the question of how we organize for the future. Our panel contains two institutional presidents, both of whom have been, in one way or another, present at the creation in talking about metropolitan universities. Don Swain is president of the University of Louisville and has a very long period of service as a member and subsequently as chair of the executive committee of the Urban Division of NASULGC, the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges. Hoke Smith is president of Towson State. He was present at the first informal discussions at Wright State in 1988, was present at the first conference, and has been present at every serious discussion of metropolitan universities activities since that time.

Don and Hoke are joined by the presidents of the two organizations which represent most of us in our national identities. Jim Appleberry is the president of AASCU, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, an organization of more than four hundred public institutions, including the majority of the institutions represented here. Peter Magrath, the president of NASULGC, represents not only a number of metropolitan universities such as the University of Louisville, Wright State University, and the University of North Texas, but also a wide

variety of other land grant and state universities, about 150 in number. AASCU and NASULGC, which occupy adjacent quarters in Washington, have under the leadership of these two presidents, finally begun to work constructively together in ways that give great promise in the future for a more coordinated and effective Washington presence for all our universities.

Hoke L. Smith

The metropolitan university concept affords an exciting opportunity for us to think anew about higher education. It may even revitalize our associations at One Dupont Circle. Scholars historically have supported themselves by selling scholarly services. That goes all the way back to Egyptian priests and those who preceded them. The three kinds of service we sell are teaching, research, and consulting. If the people don't want to buy what we have to sell, we don't make any money. One of the things happening right now is that people are raising the question of whether we are selling them what they want to buy. Questions are raised about the kind of research agenda we have for the metropolitan university, the professional services we render, and what we teach and to whom we teach it. Today we are being challenged in all these areas to prove that we are actually delivering what the people who are buying our services want to buy.

For many years, the federal government has played a role in supporting higher education buying certain kinds of research and consulting, mostly discipline based. I do not think we will be able to eliminate the disciplines. They are the ways that we transmit knowledge and explore knowledge. But they are inappropriate tools for many of the things we want to sell to new customers, now that federal support is decreasing. That shift confronts us with a constant problem of reorganization internally. When it comes to teaching, most of us survive by selling human development. We specialize in facilitating learning. One of the questions being asked is who decides what kind of humans we develop? Historically the faculty have said that they do, but we have had a number of other definitions from those who wish to buy our services.

Thus change is occurring in many ways, and it is a substantial change. I would even regard it as a paradigm shift. We have had one paradigm according to which we determine ourselves what we sell. That is now changing. We will have to listen much more carefully to our customers. I think that can lead to a very dynamic dialogue in which the metropolitan university plays an important role.

Another area in which I think that there is a paradigm shift is one that affects the associations. That is why I am pleased that AASCU and NASULGC have agreed to cooperate in the appointment of a person to work with metropolitan and urban universities. For many years the associations at One Dupont Circle have concentrated on federal policy, which is natural being inside the Beltway. But reflecting on the contributions from Kay McClenney, John Kincaid, and Charles Royer elsewhere in this issue of *Metropolitan Universities*, we recognize that the policies which affect the metropolitan areas are not totally federal. Indeed most of the services we

sell are sold either to the states or to individual clients, not to the federal government. The federal government buys some wholesale, the states buy much more, but basically we sell to individual clients. It is time that we look at a national education policy encompassing both federal and state policy, rather than concentrating solely upon the federal level. And the metropolitan university, because of its particular nature, is a good focal point to bring about the beginning of that discussion.

One of the reasons for the awkward phrase "metropolitan and urban" is that one can have different views represented here on what is a metropolitan university. According to my dictionary, "metropolitan" is derived from "mother city", which suggests relationships between a central core and whatever is in that metropolitan area. The concept of relationships brings about a rich fabric of possible perspectives on the metropolitan university. Much depends on the number and the degree levels of higher education institutions in the region. A university which constitutes the only action in town has a different task than one which is among six or seven coordinated institutions in a major metropolitan area. There is a lot of room for variation as we move beyond the initial discussions and conceptualization. We need to allow for this variation as we continue to explore the ideas of what a metropolitan university is and as we look for ways to relate that to those who support higher education. That variation is important as we redefine what people want to buy and what services they want.

To progress with this exploration we do need to move beyond the Quaker meeting style in which we have been operating so far. That is why the relationship with the associations is very important to us and why we have taken some preliminary steps to becoming at least a semi-organized coalition at this point to try to further the discussion of the agenda.

I look forward to an opportunity to continue to participate in that discussion. We are putting together a descriptive statement of what the metropolitan university coalition is about. We are taking steps to finance certain programmatic activities beyond the range of what the existing associations are able to do, and we are developing a structure for defining that agenda and continuing the work that has been carried out to date.

Donald C. Swain

We have reached this point as a result of a long process of change with which I am very comfortable. We have decided now to establish a coalition of urban/metropolitan universities. I base my comfort level on twelve years of involvement as president of what we call with some satisfaction an urban university, but also as a person who has worked in various institutional formats at the national level to bring us in the direction we are now going. I am comfortable about this for several substantial reasons.

First of all, the whole concept of urban/metropolitan universities and the need for a coalition reflects a continuing evolution of the definition of our niche in higher education, which is filled with a great variety of universities. Some are quite old. My own is one of those. Our university

is coming up on its 200th anniversary. In a speech I give when I am out on the hustings around Kentucky I describe the concept of an urban university or metropolitan university as being older in some ways than the land grant concept. It goes back in our case before the Civil War when the city of Louisville believed in higher education so much that it created a university. It continued to provide support for many years. So there is a historic, long-term link between our university and our metropolitan area.

But there are many other kinds of universities that consider themselves metropolitan/urban and they are all legitimate. Some are very young. Some have been evolving in this direction after starting with different mission statements in their own states or localities. But we have all been evolving and that is very healthy. And I have detected that we have all had a sense from the very beginning of wanting to be inclusive. Whenever we have gotten together to talk we have felt a comradeship; we have had a sense of shared evolution. And that included a lot of debates over what it means to be an urban university or a metropolitan university. We have gotten through these debates because we have participated in a very healthy and productive evolutionary process.

Secondly, I am comfortable because throughout this entire period I have perceived an enormous level of vitality and energy among our group of universities. This is a major national resource that needs to be tapped more fully than ever before. These universities are vital places. They are dynamic in the true sense of that word. They are experimental. They are unblushing in trying to adapt to very rapidly changing situations. They are exciting places. They are grappling with the main problems of our entire society. We share excitement. I came from the University of California where I spent about twenty years of my career. I have a very fond memory of that phase in my career. But looking back on that rather well-established land grant university, by comparison to a dynamic metropolitan/urban university, I recollect that occasionally there were a few dull days. As president of the University of Louisville I have no dull days.

A third reason for my comfort level is that the urban/metropolitan institutions are confident and future-oriented. They perceive a great opportunity out there to be grabbed. And that is not a universal feeling among the institutions of higher education in the United States right now. Universities with the self-designation of metropolitan or urban are poised and eager to seize opportunities as they come along to serve our states, our metropolitan areas, our nation. And we are able to do it.

A further important point to note is the very healthy movement of structural and organizational change in both NASULGC and AASCU that I have observed over my twelve years of involvement. When I went to the early meetings of the Urban Affairs Division in NASULGC, we were a few beleaguered colleagues coming together and trying to establish legitimacy in an organization that was dominated by land grant universities. NASULGC had a more or less dominant agrarian ethic, not an urban mentality. Over a period of about a decade, there was a big change within NASULGC on exactly that point. There is now legitimacy of the urban perspective. An important niche in the newly organized

NASULGC has emerged in an institutional process of change that has been very healthy and that recognizes the importance of our kinds of universities within the association. It was not easy. It was not without conflict, but it got done. And I feel good about that.

The current stage of this structural change in NASULGC is the Commission on the Urban Agenda as one of the main components of the organization. The existence of that Commission reflects, at long last, a recognition that there are urban agendas. There are important issues that members of NASULGC ought to be focusing on that are urban, that are metropolitan. NASULGC now understands that we ought to get organized on these issues, and make ourselves very effective in Washington, or among the states, or wherever we need to be heard. All of that, I think, is beginning to happen.

The final point to note is the coming together of NASULGC and AASCU as part of this process. There are many factors causing that convergence. I believe the discussions of the Division of Urban Affairs in NASULGC and the urban and metropolitan universities in AASCU in recent years have helped to nudge both associations in this needed direction. The creation of a Linkage Committee to build bridges between AASCU and NASULGC was really an impulse that came largely from the urban and metropolitan universities. That linkage is now a reality. The presidents of both national organizations cooperate so fully, it is quite something to behold. It is a revolution at One Dupont Circle that bodes well for the future of the development of a Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities.

As long as I am president of the University of Louisville, I will continue to support the important evolving themes that we share, and will do everything I can to help this Coalition thrive. We have a great opportunity in the next few years. We should grab it and help higher education adjust, help our nation change, and find a way to make available, even more in the future than in the past, the enormous human resources that our urban/metropolitan universities contain. They have not been fully tapped. Now is our chance.

C. Peter Magrath

Don Swain's final comment leads me to make one rhetorical observation that goes beyond organizational nuts and bolts, and moving agendas along. America is many things. But it is cities and education, including higher education, that are critical to our society's well-being. It is well for us to remember that we come together and want to get certain things done because there are certain people-serving agendas to which we can and must be responsive.

I want to make a couple of comments about the two associations that are supporting this effort, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, and the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges. We are closely linked thanks to the initiative that four or five or six people took a couple of years ago. Several of these individuals are among the leaders of the metropolitan university movement. We have a very close, very special, and increasingly fruitful relation-

ship, not for the sake of the associations but for the universities that these two associations serve.

We want to work with you and we need your engagement on what I want to label as an action agenda. We need your support and involvement through us as your vehicles to accomplish the kinds of things that you and others in the urban and metropolitan higher education movement have been working on for many years. That work is more important today than it has ever been. We really have an opportunity to move forward.

Let me quickly mention some of the pertinent things that NASULGC has done and participated in just since 1991-92. We have created the Commission on the Urban Agenda mentioned by Don Swain, as one of the six major commissions of NASULGC. We have succeeded, thanks to the help of many of you in the metropolitan university movement, after a twenty year struggle, finally to get appropriations for Title XI that enables some urban-oriented activity to take place. We received an appropriation of \$8 million the first year and got it up to \$9.2 million last year. Now we have to fight to hold that appropriation and hopefully to build on it. We have also succeeded in getting funding through HUD for Community Outreach Partnership activities: \$6 million, not a huge sum, but a start.

So we have got grant programs that enable us to work in the local and city environments outside of Washington, using the resources of our metropolitan and urban universities. We are also very much engaged in the national service and summer service activity which will include our metropolitan areas. Just a few weeks ago we sponsored a meeting in which we presented an urban policy concept as presented in the *Journal of Urban Affairs*. What I found startling on that day is that we had not only the presence and co-sponsorship of Senator Riegle, but we also had access to about 80-90 congressional staffers who were deeply interested in what our urban and metropolitan universities are doing. They want to engage with us. We have initiatives now with the new administration at HUD to further these kinds of agendas.

Now let me speak on the alliance between AASCU and NASULGC. Our presence at this conference is not only to show support, but to appeal that we work together in the challenging years before us. We need to develop a national urban university strategy and we need a strong effort to do that. We need to build on the various metropolitan and urban university efforts of the past. We have a wonderful base of enthusiasm and groups to build on, none of which is more comprehensive and important than yours that has come together in this metropolitan universities conference. The time to do so is now. We need more action. We need to bring together our diverse efforts. There are a lot of great things that we can do, through which we can serve in some special ways the needs of our society.

You do have new leadership at AASCU and at NASULGC, with proven commitment to the metropolitan agenda. In addition to the staff that the associations already commit to urban and metropolitan issues, the two associations are appointing Dr. Judith James as Director of Urban Programs. She will work for both AASCU and NASULGC, and with all

of us who want to move the metropolitan and urban agenda forward. The commitment of the people who have proposed the new Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities is equally proven. We have a new federal administration and great opportunities there. We have a real base from which to move forward.

James B. Appleberry

AASCU and NASULGC have been involved in the urban/metropolitan agenda and on the urban/metropolitan scene for several years, and both associations continue to be interested. Peter Magrath has described some of the efforts in which we have been engaged up to the present time. However, I can list a few areas of cooperation between our two associations about which some of you may not know.

We have weekly meetings of our legislative representatives to talk about various issues that are coming up before either Congress or the executive branch. This permits us to coordinate the activity of AASCU and NASULGC and combine the weight of both of the organizations and all our members in the effort to achieve our agenda.

We are working on state level issues. We have staff reporting to both associations that work with the Education Commission of the States, the National Conference of State Legislators, the National Governors' Association, and other state-based groups. We are increasing our ability to monitor what is happening in various states, and to alert members of our association. This is going to be an increasingly important component of our responsiveness to your needs.

We have made a commitment to the urban/metropolitan agenda, and intend to be responsive to the full range of institutions, including those that are located in and are serving urban core areas and those that are involved in a broader metropolitan region. We will work with member institutions of either AASCU or NASULGC, or both.

We will also continue to coordinate the effort of both the private metropolitan/urban institutions and the metropolitan/urban serving community colleges for at least an indefinite period of time until we can decide how we are going to resolve the issue of serving institutions that do not qualify for membership in either organization. There will be a steering committee appointed from the Coalition, which will be representative and ensure that your needs and expressed interests are accommodated as we move forward. Campus-based, campus-coordinated meetings such as the one that we have had here are extremely valuable and important, and we hope this concept continues.

Both of our associations have remaining internal issues that we will continue to discuss to make sure that we are all working smoothly together. Our purpose, however, in both NASULGC and AASCU, is to empower you because both of us depend upon you for us to do our jobs

effectively. We have to find a way, whatever the organizational structure, to let you do what you need to do to get your jobs done effectively. Both Peter and I are committed to do that. We will help you to coordinate future meetings. We will also be helping you help us form both a state and a federal agenda toward which we can be focusing our efforts.

There is broad support for the journal. However, I have abject fear of AASCU ever being responsible for a publishing division again, ever. We simply won't do it. But there is no reason why we can't work with your steering committee, help you find a place for that publication to be published, and set up an agency account for its expenses. We can help you to resolve issues of publication funding, subscriptions, and things like that, though the journal will not be housed in either AASCU or NASULGC. We think there are relatively easy ways of resolving that issue for you.

AASCU and NASULGC have very diverse memberships. Both of us have member institutions that focus on a rural agenda as well as urban or metropolitan ones. The issues of rural poverty and how we deal with rural America are also matters that we have to be able to address effectively. We will be reaching out to find ways of linking what we learn either from urban/metropolitan activity or from the rural agenda that can help us to deal with problems common among all of us. AASCU and NASULGC will need to commit to assist those other interests as well, and we will.

I have learned from this meeting that metropolitan institutions must address issues that do not relate simply to the urban core. There are things that must be done in the surrounding regions before the urban core can resolve their problems. We have to find ways of helping. By the same token, we have to find ways that the urban-based, urban core serving institutions can be a part of that agenda because we do indeed have things that are in common and issues on which we need to move forward together.

I would suggest a few things for your consideration, to think about in the future. First, what is it that makes you unique? If we are to move ahead effectively on a metropolitan agenda and help you accomplish what you need to do, help us think through what it is that makes the metropolitan responsibility different from the urban core. What makes you different in the way you address issues from the rural areas? It is just as important to clarify what we have in common. Some of the things discussed at this meeting cut across all institutions regardless of the region they serve, and regardless of their composition or characteristics.

I would like to suggest to you as well to be careful about what you agree to do. You must be able to help our citizens. Our universities are committed to empowering people, the citizens of our country. They must keep that focus and understand what they can be called upon to do. But they must also know what they can't do as well, and be willing to say: "No, we are not the appropriate agency to be responsible for that kind of an agenda."

Most importantly, don't be caught up in the responsibility of taking the responsibility and authority that has appropriately been given to governmental units. Yes, you can serve in a bridging fashion. Some of

you do that now, because, in spite of all the criticism, our higher education institutions are still societal entities that work effectively. People turn to us because we do our work well. Let us make sure we keep working well and keep our focus. We must make our resources available to our citizens, to our government, to our businesses. We must make our universities permeable so they can know how to access our resources, but also make our universities permeate the communities so they understand us better and know what resources we have available. We must make sure that we as universities do the work of society. Any societal organization that fails to serve that society well will ultimately be discarded. We in higher education cannot afford to let that happen, and we will not.

One final word of advice for presidents and chancellors. Many of you let the presidency consume you, and you cannot. You must be able to find a way to set your priorities, to get your rest and your relief, and be able to move forward so as to provide positive and effective leadership for your campuses and your regions.

Note:

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