

THE IDEA OF THE UNIVERSITY

The Distant Drummer . . .

by Earl J. Moniz

To this point in our development of an ideal university, we have selected, employed, and organized both staff and faculty who are primarily concerned with providing the best possible education opportunities for each student while eliminating much of the distractions not conducive to effective learning. The task at hand now becomes where and how do we get students to fill the classrooms and take advantage of all the efforts that have been exerted to this point?

The university experience is also a social opportunity. Individuals who attend the university should also expect to be exposed to other individuals from diversified and far-reaching cultures and traditions. For this reason, social adjustments and activities of prospective students should also be reviewed. The records of prospective students should demonstrate a willingness to become involved with community efforts to raise the level of social and economic opportunities on behalf of all citizens.

Students should arrive with open minds anxious to learn social and economic lessons from human history and from diverse cultural traditions that will enable them to lead lives of decency and compassion for all mankind. They should all be prepared to learn to use their knowledge in the strengthening of the fabric of their own communities once they graduate and begin their lives in the world

of work. Students should not come to experience the university in an effort to reinforce the commitment to their own individual prejudices, biases, and narrow-minded views of the world but should be prepared to learn, grow, change, and inculcate in themselves the promise of a better tomorrow, not only for themselves but also for everyone whom they will have the opportunity to influence. Just as the university staff and faculty should set the academic and social examples in their classrooms for their students, so should these students attempt to emulate these examples during their stay at the university and cultivate the proper law-abiding and civil behavior in their own lives when they graduate and return to their own communities.

Many university students tend to believe that the university is a training school of sorts. They only come to learn an occupational specialty that will gain them advanced employment upon graduation. The opportunity to continue to grow, learn, and change is often overlooked by students. Many

have grown up in an atmosphere where high school graduation is the end of their formal educational process. They overlook the fact that the university is an opportunity above and beyond what is required by society to survive and prosper. Many forget, or have never

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learned, that the educational process throughout one's life never ends, and neither does the opportunity for growth and change. Becoming an educated person cannot be a destination; it must always be considered a journey without end. Interestingly

enough, the greatest mystery of life isn't learned and truly understood until just immediately after a person's life ends. In that sense we can say the learning is not only a lifelong endeavor but also something that takes place even after death.

In the final analysis, the university should attempt to recruit students who are academically and socially competent and who view the university experience as an opportunity to learn how to become lifelong learners. These students should also view the university experi-

ence as an opportunity to mold themselves into educated and contributing members of society. Graduates also understand how these molds are formed for not hesitate to break their old molds and begin to form new molds at any time in their lives. The phrase "*change is the only constant*" is often heard throughout one's university experience. A truly educated person will always ensure that these changes being sought are for the better and do not create more problems than they solve.

If life is a series of paces through which we march to the beat of our own drummer, then certainly the university is the place where we learn to fine tune our individual hearing to discern and recognize that drumbeat amidst the daily cacophonies of life. The university experience also provides the students the opportunity to learn to march in that parade without interfering with any of the other participants...or detracting from the overall significance of the entire event.

At this point in our deliberations, the university is manned with an educated, helpful, cooperative, and willing staff and faculty. Students enrolled are academically and socially active and curious. They are willing to take advantage of every learning opportunity afforded them during their stay at the university. What do we do next? Is that all there is to a university: teaching and learning? Should it do more? Can it do more?