

## **REMARKS TO THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

### **In Support of Integral Leadership**

**I envision this Committee, on behalf of the entire Board, as a strong supporter of *integral leadership*. Such leadership, the Association of Governing Boards proposes, links administrators – the president and the academic officer, the faculty, board and others – into a “well-functioning partnership purposefully devoted to a well-defined, broadly affirmed institutional vision.” Because academic excellence and educational quality usually are at the core of that mission, the academic officer must be key to the partnership.**

**As I have been reminded time and again over the past few weeks, academic leadership involves more than management of a set of given functions. It implies engagement with every element that is important in the realm of education. Within a system it means identifying synergies, collaborations that contribute to ever stronger educational outcomes. It acknowledges that successful outcomes demand superior instruction and learning opportunities, innovative and transformative scholarship – and a high-quality, diverse faculty prepared to address these ends.**

**The chief academic officer, I have been advised, should do far more than track what already obtains. Perhaps no recommendation for the future emerges more forcefully from our own Provosts that this: that the chief academic officer should look outward toward the future, to many years hence, in anticipation of demographic, technological, and international changes as well as ones in the world of scholarship. This recommendation coincides with the interest the Education Committee has expressed in our probing together more deeply the changing context of higher education.**

### **The Role of the Board**

**The Board can promote effective educational leadership in several ways. It can ensure that the provision of high quality educational opportunities stands at the core of the mission – of the System and its institutions. That insurance should be evident in actions taken related to financial, external, and other matters. In other words, it cannot exist only in mission statements.**

**The Board can recognize just how complementary must be the roles and responsibilities of the two central officers: the chief executive officer and the chief academic officer. Unquestionably, excellence in**

**higher education requires a strong partnership between the two positions, as one system after another has recognized.**

**The Board can set expectations about the partnerships that should prevail within the organization and the educational consequences those partnerships should yield. Obviously, its most direct link institutionally is to the chief executive officer, the president. Accordingly, the Association of Governing Board proposes that the Board can advance integral leadership “by helping the president chart a course of action that respects faculty, students and the prevailing context while carrying the institution forward to meet new challenges. The chief academic officer can, in turn, help steer the course towards educational outcomes. This might well imply drawing attention to the fact that educational excellence is not defined by the presence of policies that discipline wayward faculty and staff. Nor is it evident simply in the number of students who enroll in post-secondary institutions.**

**This Committee and this Board are critical to the creation of a climate and a sense of confidence, hope and expectation that academic excellence will be the centerpiece of the University of Wisconsin System. This is an opportune time for an assessment of that climate. The description from a different place fits us: “We have in our midst an**

**array of students, who are endlessly inquisitive, unfailingly curious, and extraordinarily capable of mining information.”**

**Let me end with this observation: *Education is not a trivial business, a private good, or a discretionary expenditure. It is a deeply ethical undertaking at which we must succeed if we are to survive as a free people.* As I take leave, I do so knowing that there are dedicated people within Academic Affairs, extraordinary academic officers within the institutions, impressive faculty and staff across the System, as well as others who are prepared to work as partners in the pursuit of the ethical undertaking on which our very future rests. Consider those partners, as you strive to determine how the educational mission must be framed, led, and integrated, if the University of Wisconsin System is to attend even more creatively to the current and developing needs of our citizens and students – in the state and the world.**