

Committee 1 Report

To: President Wagner
From: Opportunity Committee, Tom Arthur, Chair
Date: March 22, 2004
Re: Report from Committee

Given the busy schedules of our participants, we divided our roster into two separate meetings of our Opportunity Committee. Following is a compilation of ideas exchanged during those meetings. While not all agreed with each of these items, we have tried to create a succinct document that is representative of the expressed concerns and visions.

1. What are the unique aspects of Emory University and the context in which we find ourselves?

The close proximity to Emory of world class and world renowned institutions including the CDC, the Yerkes Primate Center, the American Cancer Society, the Carter Center, and CARE provides considerable strength and opportunity. The greater physical proximity of the different schools on campus than at some other major universities provides for rare cross-fertilization in curriculum and scholarship. We also have unusual opportunities for engaging in and promoting some of the critical issues of our age, such as the study of health and healing.

Emory's location in Atlanta provides unique advantages. Other local colleges and universities are complementary to Emory and, in general, non-competing in their interests (e.g., Georgia Tech has an engineering school; Emory has a medical school, law school, school of theology, etc; Morehouse, Spelman and Clark Atlanta target minorities; Agnes Scott targets women). This central position of Emory as a top flight research university that is strong in many areas can be enhanced by developing joint programs with local universities. The city as a prominent business, legal, and medical center offers enormous resources, as well.

Located in the second-most diverse county in the nation, Atlanta's demographics and urban environment allow Emory to be introspective and purposeful about diversity (although it is important to note the critical lack of racial and international diversity at the administrative and faculty levels). More generally, we should celebrate our physical environment: the weather here is comfortable, and the city's location is convenient for commuting.

Emory can build on its current strengths, including strong programs in many areas, such as professional training and research in health, religion, law, and business, along with good liberal arts undergraduate and graduate programs).

2. What are the distinctive opportunities that we should seize in moving forward?

Both Emory and Atlanta suffer from a lack of identity. While we may not be able fully to address Atlanta's image, we can greatly develop Emory's. We also must create an identity for the individual schools as parts of the entire University. We must make it the top destination place for a few areas. However, we cannot be a destination unless the common culture of the University is strengthened.

For many years, we thought of ourselves as on a "rising slope," and we were pleased when our faculty members were lured to better places. Now, we must shift our attitude to make sure that Emory is an outstanding place that entices good people to join us and stay, a destination. We must build loyalty. To do this, we must understand the sources of alienation and frustration for recent generations of faculty. To determine how to address this concern, we should hire a third party to conduct a confidential survey to determine:

- Why each faculty member left Emory
- What would entice an existing faculty member to leave
- Why faculty candidates who turned down our offer did not come

We are at a key transition point. Reduced resources are a challenge and an opportunity. With our still-large endowment and upcoming comprehensive financial campaign, we can enable our people to do what is necessary to grow.

We should identify areas where we can excel as a university. These areas should cut across all or most of our disciplines. Health policy and ethics are two possibilities. The current Ethics Center may provide a start, but we must expect a far more scholarly and deep program and make it more interdisciplinary with academic components. We also should make our scholarly activities more visible to our community.

We should take advantage of our diversity and embrace our community. With the close proximity of our schools and the Provost's oversight, we should develop more joint programs. We should develop more centers and collaborations among our many resources noted above.

We can investigate faculty/student exchange programs, and/or invite faculty and students from local universities to participate in our programs here. We can collaborate with more institutions, organizations, and businesses in Atlanta. We should be alert to the complex

ways Emory is and can be a global institution—which, in these times, includes both international and local connections.

3. What are the issues or challenges that cut across our academic (and perhaps some administrative) units?

Each unit should stop thinking of itself as a separate entity. We must get to know each other and learn the challenges and limitations of academic life in the separate units. Then we must come together as a university to make decisions based on the entirety of the endeavor.

The organization and administration of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences is a special concern. It must be empowered and structured to take a leadership role in developing first-rate graduate programs. The current budget is insufficient and the endowment is small, which severely limits its ability to create and grow new programs. The GSAS has no classroom space assigned to it, has no faculty lines to use in building academic specialties, and has no real authority and responsibility to assure success. We will not become a destination university without strong and vigorous graduate programs, and it cannot become strong without a centralized structure.

We need sufficient finances and an appropriate infrastructure to support our initiatives. We should eliminate the bureaucratic impediments to collaborative programming (i.e., make it easier to jointly list and co-teach classes, to change class titles, to access information on different computer systems, and to register students of joint degree programs in both schools).

Since the schools are structured as separate financial units, there is a disincentive to teach or write with faculty from other schools. There is little staff or financial support for joint programs. It is difficult to have joint-appointed faculty members when they are funded differently. The decentralized scheduling of facilities prevents the optimization of space usage.

The University's large size impedes our ability to communicate with each other and to benefit from separate programs. There is no central source of information about the academic specialties and activities of the University faculty. There is no central listing of courses and the class schedules are not synchronized so cross-curriculum study is impeded.

There is no clear commitment to certain clinical scientists and arts and sciences faculty. The time and efforts they must use to raise salary funds from patient visits, grants and contracts directly competes with partial or unfunded mandates to teach. Tenured or tenure-track faculty members in this situation feel little commitment from the University. Directing our clinicians' time towards profitable patient appointments leaves our medical

students with less than optimal instruction and faculty contact. These challenges impede our ability to foster scholarship and research, and to recruit and maintain the best and the brightest faculty.

The budgeting process should be more transparent at all levels. There is no clear understanding amongst the faculty of how the endowment is used or why indirect costs are allocated as they are. The separation of each school's finances is sometimes harmful, and the schools that are not as rich need the University's support. The recent cut in benefits is contrary to the mission of lateral hiring and employee satisfaction.

4. If Emory is poised for a great leap, where should it be certain to land?

We should recruit the best and brightest collegial faculty and staff in the country. We must keep good people here and make them feel part of the community by giving them a voice in the decisions that affect their careers. We should provide the best benefit package, with good retirement benefits, at least on par with any major university. We must have increased number of endowed chairs, including those who are in the upward-slope of their careers.

We should identify areas where we can excel as a university. These areas should cut across all or most of our disciplines. As stated above, health policy and ethics are two possibilities.

We should invest in people and those things that allow people to do what they dream about. With our tremendous resources, we have fantastic opportunities to excel in many new research areas. We should have a multi-academic center to bridge across disciplines. Each person's contributions should be recognized and each person valued. Faculty must not feel that they always are working in "survival mode," which reduces enthusiasm. Resources should rarely be a critical issue.

We should support those who exist on "soft" money by establishing guidelines for bridging resources, should it be needed. We should reward those who obtain grants and contracts for the university with an incentive system that returns to the investigator part of the indirect expenses generated by this support. We could provide a banking system for those on grants so that present funds can be applied to future salary needs. This system is especially important for funds for research. During times of famine when grants are not funded, it is easier to find mechanisms to support salaries than for research. It can take years to get the research back up to speed if there are not bridge-funding mechanisms, and this is detrimental not only to faculty members but to the University that can benefit from research successes. For those doing research, discretionary funds for research are likely to be more valued than an increase in salary. We should do more to support teaching. Provide an endowed fund with staff to support symposia in areas of interest, with designated funds for interdisciplinary studies. We also should have a

centralized database of our scholarship activities so that we can interact with others with similar interests.

We should use our endowment for the growth and prestige of the University. In the past few years, we have ignored opportunities to prosper while the economy forced others to retrench. While a \$4 billion endowment is a valuable asset, there needs to be consideration of when it might be important to draw on the endowment in the short run in order to create valuable structures in the long run. The budget model must be changed to allow us to take advantage of unique times and opportunities when they present themselves.

Finally, while we can learn from our peer schools, we should stop looking over our shoulder to try to match or copy them. We should respect individuality, ourselves and our students. We should enjoy our environment. The potential is here. We should not be “numbers” hungry – if we make the most of ourselves, others will notice and the numbers will come.

Respectively submitted by:

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