

Comments by Chancellor McElroy on future of the University of Calif., San Diego

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For release with remarks made by Chancellor William McElroy

Improving undergraduate education, strengthening the humanities and social sciences, strengthening the clinical aspects of the School of Medicine, and developing a sense of campus community are the major issues dealt with by the academic plan developed by the San Diego campus of the University of California.

The plan was presented to the University of California Board of Regents Friday, May 16, by Dr. William D. McElroy, UCSD Chancellor. The presentation was made to the board during a consultation hour and was intended for discussion by the Regents.

According to McElroy, the overall objective of the academic plan for UCSD is to develop and maintain a great university of the highest academic quality.

"There are many factors that go into the making of a great university," he said, "but the central, overriding factor is the quality of the people - in particular, the faculty and students.

"By quality of faculty I mean the quality of their ideas, scholarly leadership, and their ability to communicate their creativity," McElroy said. "Quality faculty will attract those excellent students absolutely necessary for a lively academic situation."

McElroy said one difficulty in improving the undergraduate education is the growing desire by students for a curriculum which gives them immediate job opportunities.

"While we should be sensitive to this and improve the career options in some fields, we are still of the general opinion that a broad general education is, in the long run, the best undergraduate education," McElroy said.

The Chancellor said that new master's degree programs will be at least one answer to the problem since such programs can be tailored closely to a specific employment opportunity. The master plan provides for the development of 12 to 16 "terminal" master's programs, both departmental and interdepartmental, that will serve to broaden the scope of UCSD's graduate enrollment as well as provide career alternatives to those students not pursuing doctoral or professional degrees.

A major emphasis of the academic plan is toward postdoctoral education at UCSD. According to McElroy, UCSD is already a leader at this level of training due to its strong science components. In the future, he said, postdoctoral leadership is expected to extend into the humanities and arts on the campus, bringing with it improved undergraduate and graduate teaching in these areas.

McElroy said strengthening the humanities and social sciences to provide a more balanced campus will be done through faculty distribution rather than the development of new departments. He said considerable emphasis will be given to the establishment of new multidisciplinary programs at both the bachelor's and master's degree levels.

"In essence," McElroy said, "we will form what we call the 'second matrix,' that is, using departmental strengths to create problem-focused, multi-disciplinary programs for both teaching and research." Such programs, he said, are designed to take advantage of the academic strengths in the departments, putting them together to form new programs which cut across departmental lines.

"I strongly believe that in the future the good university must organize, in addition to departments, in ways that allow many disciplines to concentrate upon one specific societal problem," he said. As an example he cited the proposed Center for Policy Studies at UCSD designed to develop new ways of studying and organizing the relationship between the University and the world of practical day-to-day political and administrative action.

He also cited a Cardiovascular Institute at the UCSD School of Medicine that will consolidate and improve the effectiveness of the extensive research programs in the area of heart and vascular diseases, and the newly established Energy Center which brings together several academic disciplines to study the various energy problems facing the nation and the world.

McElroy said the strengthening of the clinical aspects of the School of Medicine will be handled through new faculty appointments.

"During the next five to seven years, the School of Medicine will accept an entering class of 128 students and move toward steady-state enrollments in the early 1980's," he said. "The primary emphasis for the medical school plan will be to add clinical strength to the faculty in a manner most complementary to the needs of medical education and the growing complex of affiliated hospitals."

The academic plan envisions a maximum undergraduate population of 8,000 students by 1978 and a total student population - undergraduate, graduate and professional - of between 11,000 and 12,000 by 1985.

"These projections are considerably smaller than those of five years ago," McElroy said. "I should note that we are very content with a smaller campus. It is entirely feasible to have a small but distinguished university provided we plan very carefully and do not attempt to cover as wide a range of academic activities as found on a larger campus."

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