

Dr. Heyland

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University



GEORGE W. GORE, JR., PRESIDENT

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

February 6, 1968

The Florida Board of Regents
Attorney Chester H. Ferguson, Chairman
Tallahassee, Florida

The Governor's Commission for Quality Education
Mr. Jacob F. Bryan, III, Chairman
Tallahassee, Florida

Gentlemen:

I am enclosing herewith a Position Paper which has been prepared by representatives for the administration and faculty with respect to the Future Role of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in the State-wide System of Higher Education.

There has been so much discussion in the press and throughout the State with respect to the future of the institution that those persons charged with the responsibility of operating the institution feel called upon to make a statement with respect to their reactions to the present situation. It is our combined feeling that the more than eighty (80) years of service which the institution has rendered to the State more than justify the institution's continuance as an autonomous institution.

We sincerely trust that all persons concerned with the administration of higher education in Florida will seriously consider the need for continuance and for expansion of the institution for many years yet to come.

Respectfully submitted,

George W. Gore Jr.
George W. Gore, Jr.
President

GWGjr/ghr

Enclosure

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A POSITION PAPER WITH RESPECT TO THE FUTURE ROLE
OF FLORIDA A AND M UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

Circumstances which flaunt historical facts and existing conditions, as well as future prospects, impel the administration, the faculty, the student body, and the alumni of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University to marshal and array their defenses in a united front to any challenge to the position and the perpetuation of this institution as an autonomous unit. Heretofore, the recognition of institutional autonomy has prevented it from being engulfed or lost altogether and has preserved it as a chartered integral agency and a functioning unit in the higher education system of the State of Florida since 1887.

We are aware that social concepts are being revised everywhere and in every area of human relationships. Consequently, there must necessarily be relevant institutional changes to conform with attitudinal changes. This process has and will involve confrontations on desegregation frontiers. Unfortunately, one of the most embattled desegregation frontiers is education. There are conflicting viewpoints with reference to the educational structures that should now obtain. The staff, students and alumni of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University wish to unequivocally affirm their position relative to providing educational opportunities for all Florida citizens. Henceforth, nothing less than quality-desegregated education will satisfy, and by "quality-desegregated education" we mean a two-way operation

encompassing students, staff, and facilities in a balanced relationship. This dual operation will assure desegregation of facilities, personnel, and management for all previously predominantly white elements as well as desegregation in every respect for all previously predominantly non-white elements in the educational spectrum. The achievement of this prospect and projection for our total educational structure in Florida will safeguard the dual continuation of the unique contributions and obligations of each and every unit. Implementation of this dual-recognition concept will preserve and protect the autonomy of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University as well as the integrity and autonomy of every other unit in the Florida System of Higher Education.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Neither individuals nor institutions should be bound to the past. However, some information about the origins, the struggles, the triumphs, and the accomplishments of individuals and institutions does afford perspective and possibly some appreciations and understandings which cannot be gained from other sources. Historically, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, initially labelled as "A Normal School for Colored Teachers", was constitutionally authorized in 1885 and by legislative enactment became operative in 1887 for the expressed purpose of providing for the training and instruction of colored teachers. Starting with this limited objective and fifteen students on October 3, 1887, it moved through a series of changes in site, in name, and in expanded and enlarged responsibilities to encompass a three-fold mission; respectively, normal, agricultural and mechanical training by the end of the last century.

Even though it operated within the framework of the separate-but-equal philosophy for the greater portion of its existence, the institution was always recognized and operated as an autonomous part of the higher education system of Florida under the direction of the Board of Control and subsequently the Board of Regents.

During the early stages of its development the larger percentage of money for buildings, salaries, and operating expenses was provided either by the Federal Government or philanthropic organizations such as The General Education Board, the Rosenwald and Carnegie Foundations. Despite this and other obstacles to growth and development, vigorous leadership enabled the institution to surmount these handicaps and attain, in 1935, an "A" rating, the highest possible accreditation of the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Since this original accreditation recognition, the institution has in recent years gained additional approvals for specific and particular phases of its programs and operations.

Preceding the elevation by Board of Regents direction upon the recommendation of present administrative leadership to full university status in 1953, legislative authorization of professional and graduate offerings suggested, or at least implied, a firm moral and financial commitment to institutional autonomy. As a university, it was then re-organized into eight schools and colleges; respectively, College of Arts and Sciences, College of Law, School of Agriculture and Home Economics, School of Education, School of Nursing, School of Pharmacy, the Graduate School, and the Vocational-Technical Institute. Without specifically and comparatively noting inadequacies and disparities in the moral and financial support throughout its history, Florida

Agricultural and Mechanical University has made and continues to make, in spite of these limitations and other restrictions, contributions to the economy and the general well-being and upgrading of the State of Florida and the Nation.

INSTITUTIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Any evaluation of an enterprise, primarily concerned with the intangibles of an endeavor dealing with human beings, must necessarily refer to the achievements and records of its products as testament to its worth and value. As far as the alumni of the this institution are concerned, one can cite, without difficulty, ever so many individuals who have distinguished themselves in many fields and in many ways. Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University graduates have filled and are now filling positions in a majority of the significant employment categories in Florida, in the Nation, and in foreign countries.

The following indicates some of the recorded achievements of the 12,500 graduates: Approximately 5,000 have earned the Master's degree with 1,791 through the first quarter of this school year having earned the same from their Alma Mater; at least 175 have earned doctorates in the various academic and professional disciplines; thirty attorneys have been graduated; approximately 6,000 graduates hold teaching certificates in Florida counties; five hundred and forty officers have commissions in the Reserve Officers Training Corps and the Regular Army; events and award winners in State, National, and Olympic International competitions are recorded; regional and national championships in all the major sports have been achieved year after year and representation in the professional ranks; recognition of outstanding performers

on the concert stage, in the fine arts, music and drama, in the State, the Nation, and in foreign countries, is widely accorded.

The stellar performance in certain specialties reflects credit in the form of records established, such as the world record in the 100 yard dash; the honors garnered, such as that of representing the United States in the Wimbledon Tennis Matches; and the recognitions accorded not only outstanding athletes, performers and others in the groups indicated above, but scholars and persons who participate in ever so many other activities during their collegiate experience. What is more important, in this instance, as proof of the position being taken is that what they have done and are doing attests to the constructive development of capacities that but for the opportunities afforded by this institution would not have been salvaged and cultivated.

Excellence - The Credo for All

It has been asserted that, in too many instances, the extra-curricular affairs of an institution receive disproportionate attention and publicity in contrast to the ever-improving but more difficult to discern academic performance and stature. One has to admit that the impact visually and in the mind of the general public by individual and group encounters on the playing fields of the gridiron, track, baseball, basketball, tennis, etc., on the dramatic and concert stage, and in other competitive areas affords an easily discernible status symbol. Certainly no institution wants its image to be distorted; but here again, the institution gains because the efforts in these engagements attest to the fact that this institution strives to attain excellence in all of the activities in which it is engaged. The Florida

Agricultural and Mechanical University takes pride in the achievements of all its graduates, not only those recognized for their athletic prowess, their dramatic and musical abilities, but those who have made their marks in the professions, in industry, in business, as social workers, scholars, in foreign service, and ever so many other occupations.

It is presumed that no excellence in academic and extra-curricular activities can be gained without the dedication and creditable performance of the faculty and staff, who in their own right, have achieved national and international recognition by professional, educational, civic, sports and cultural organizations.

This institution and the State of Florida are indebted not only to their acclaimed graduates, faculty and staff, but to those hundreds of unheralded sons and daughters, administrators and teachers, who are contributing in their own way to the improvement of our social, economic, and political life for the benefit of this State and Nation.

Implementation of the Land-Grant Philosophy

Continuing the point made above, the substantial contribution of average students who may or may not graduate from the institution, must not be overlooked. The developed capacities of this larger group are credited with raising the cultural, economic and social levels and appreciations in which Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University takes particular pride and gears its programs and activities to enhance. Actually working with this group represents one of the primary functions of a public institution in a society that professes to be democratic and equalitarian. A close examination of the program of this institution reveals that it does conform with the intent of the legislation which

undergirds and projects this type of educational institution; that is, educational opportunities for the masses. It is conservatively estimated that no less than 70,000 persons have been enrolled in some program or activity sponsored and managed by this institution. It would be impossible to estimate the cumulative benefits to the State and Nation through the improvement of the contribution-potential and the citizenship status of those people who have been touched by the University as one would estimate the benefits of a commercial payroll. In this instance, estimates would be in terms of annually increased earning capacities, property acquirement, tax accrueement to cities, counties, the State and Nation, and an overall better citizen responsible for the uplift and improvement of the social, economic and political well-being of communities throughout the State and Nation. What is so important, and must be given the consideration it deserves, is this undeniable fact that the influence alumni exert on the social and moral concepts and attitudes of the communities in which they work and serve must not be underestimated and certainly cannot be discounted.

IMMEDIATE NEEDS

There is a need to recognize inadequacies in the present structure and financial support of the several units in the higher education system of Florida. It is the candid opinion of those concerned with the welfare of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University that this integral part of the educational effort of this State has been neglected. In disregard of discernible and provable merit programs, physical facilities, and other recognizable needs have not been adequately supported. Of course, a contributing factor to this situation is that historically,

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University has been dependent upon the majority group who administer and control appropriations. There has been and still is considerable divergence between requested and expected appropriations and realized funds required to adequately sustain the operations of the institution. We have only to refer to the last two bienniums to prove this point. For the last two bienniums, the difference between requested and received funds, was 40 per cent and 50 per cent respectively.

This difference has either caused the deletion or the inadequate funding of such programs as basic studies, speech correction, developmental services, testing program for freshmen and seniors, counseling services, commercial dietetics, new poultry and animal facilities, greenhouse and plant growth chambers; programs for nursing and pharmacy necessary for maintaining accreditation; instructional equipment and materials needed to effectuate educational innovations; financial assistance for approximately 66 2/3 per cent of our students; and the upgrading of programs in technical education.

Physical facilities are still much needed -- requests being cut as much as an average of 94 per cent. The use of present objective data to determine space and facility needs makes no allowance toward diminishing a historical lag. There are certain basic facilities an institution requires regardless of formulas devised and currently utilized to determine present and expanding needs.

In spite of vast differences between original requests and approved appropriations, Florida A and M University by virtue of its experience, interest and concern has done a reputable job in serving its special public in Florida and the Nation.

PROJECTIONS

It is generally accepted that the continuing existence of an institution of higher learning rests primarily upon two positive considerations: (1) it is needed, and (2) it is good.

Evidence has been presented in this position paper that proves conclusively that the program as evolved has been effective in stimulating the growth and achievement of that segment of the population it has served. This is the segment of society that, heretofore, has often been denied entitled learning opportunities. This institution has a backlog of tradition, and the psychological and social expertise, born of long experience in dealing with a specific group. All of these cumulatively provide the necessary environment and techniques to adequately serve not only this group but all persons desirous of educational advancement.

It is necessary, for educational institutions on every level, to re-examine and, in many instances, revise their perspectives and objectives. This revision is due primarily to changing social concepts which stem from increasing demands for involvement by all of the segments in our society.

The ever-recurring theme in the numerous social upheaval spectacles of these times is the demand for inclusiveness in opposition to exclusiveness with reference to the organic composition of student bodies and staffs. In other words, and we are repeating for emphasis a point previously expressed, Florida A and M University has as one of its goals a balanced student body, faculty and staff. Actually, this

is now in process. This institution, as an autonomous unit directing its own destiny, is adjusting rapidly to changing circumstances and will continue to do so with adequate support.

Despite some past inequities, the institution has maintained the desire and the productive capacities of its personnel for creative and constructive developments. With adequate support the University can continue to concentrate its efforts on higher education as a developmental as well as a culminating process.

CONCLUSION

In any management apparatus, such as the one which administers the higher education system of Florida, sweeping changes can be made by either legislative or administrative manipulation. Unfortunately, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University does not have the support of political and economic alignments and, consequently, can do very little with respect to influencing or affecting the ultimate climate of belief relative to substantial operational changes. Therefore, the administration, the faculty, the student body, and alumni are forced to utilize probably the only means available -- an exploration of the situation and the presentation of what amounts to a defense. The defense presents confirmed and provable values in terms of human lives salvaged, improved, and operative as contributing elements in the fabric of our society.

We concede that nothing about the future is sure. We recognize that there are no easy solutions to any problem. In this instance, there are two principal things of which the administration, the faculty, student body and alumni are sure. First, we are convinced of the wisdom of the position taken with respect to the autonomy of Florida

Agricultural and Mechanical University. Secondly, and more to the point, is the proven fact that the overall program of this institution has been and is still geared to the intent of the philosophy enounced in its original objectives: educational opportunities for all -- the masses -- regardless of previous or existing racial, economic, or social conditions.

For as long as there is measurable and tremendous need for an institution with unique programs and proven capability to advance the average student, of whatever race, origin, or color, this institution should be maintained. In view of this position, we are certain that a sense of responsibility on the part of decision-making agencies will obtain. With the aforementioned in mind, it is the obligation of the management apparatus, charged with the challenges of directing the course of higher education in the best interest of all the citizens of the State of Florida, to accede to the discipline of reason.