

INTRODUCTION

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This year marked the sixth annual research policy retreat hosted by the Merrill Center in Valley Falls, Kansas. As scientists and citizens we have all been preoccupied with the situation in the United States following the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001. For this reason, we selected the topic: "Science at a Time of National Emergency." Twenty-four administrators and senior faculty came as teams from four public universities in Nebraska, Kansas and Iowa. These are: Iowa State University, the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, the Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, Kansas State University, the University of Kansas – Lawrence, and the KU Medical Center in Kansas City, Kansas. Keith Yehle from the office of Senator Pat Roberts and David Kensinger from the office of Senator Sam Brownback also joined us.

Participants discussed the ways scientists can come to the aid of the country, while also recognizing the difficulties our universities face because of increased security measures. We examined the complimentary areas of expertise among our institutions, and realized we could build a strong base for joint research on preventing and mitigating bioterrorism.

The 2002 topic built on discussions at the five previous retreats in the Merrill series *The Research Mission of Public Universities*. The inaugural event in 1997 focused on pressures that hinder the research mission of higher education. In 1998, we turned our attention to competing for new resources, and ways to enhance individual and collective productivity. Michael Crow, our keynote speaker that year, encouraged us to identify niche areas for research focus, under the premise that it was most promising to do selective areas of investigation at the highest levels of excellence. In 1999, we examined in more depth cross-university alliances. Keynote speaker Luis Proenza encouraged participants to think in terms of "strategic intent" and he highlighted important precedents in university-industry cooperation as well as links between institutions. In 2000, we focused on making research a part of the public agenda. We heard from George Walker who encouraged us to meet the needs of our state citizens, business leaders and students who are quite able to "carry our water" and champion the cause of research as a valuable state resource. In 2001, Joan Lorden brought to the table her experience with the topic of evaluating research productivity. She provided a valuable overview of key elements to consider when selecting measures for evaluating performance, with a focus on the very important National Research Council (NRC) study from 1995.

Our keynote speaker in 2002 was Martin Apple, President of the Council of Scientific Society Presidents. He proposed unique ways to lend our expertise on bioterrorism, while at the same time remaining faithful to the task of generating new knowledge that can lead to societal benefits such as better health and sustainable energy sources.

In 2002 more than ever, we realized the significance of our job at public universities. Our discussions reflect this dynamic engagement. As always, the pages of the Merrill white paper reveal many fascinating perspectives and a frank examination of the complex issues faced by research administrators and scientists every day. This year in particular, we found ourselves faced with questions of paramount importance. As David Shulenburger summarized on our last day together: What do we do now? Should we build capacity in order to respond to the national crisis? Martin Apple also reminded us that universities must honor their social contract and be leaders as we face not just this, but many national crises.

It is with pleasure that I encourage you to read each of the following papers from the 2002 Merrill policy retreat on *Science at a Time of National Emergency*.