REACTION AND CONFERENCE SUMMARY

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This conference gave me an opportunity to learn a lot of things I wouldn't usually have the opportunity to learn. The University of Kansas is not an agricultural institution, but much of what is happening in the agricultural schools is complementary to us. It is important to realize the ways in which our missions interact.

Kim Wilcox talked about having academics in the Board of Regents office. Let me expand his statement: it is important to have the *right* academics there – people who can get the message across. Administering academic institutions is difficult. Higher education is a fragile system and can be taken apart. We need people in the Regents office who are sensitive to what happens on campus and can motivate faculty to do their best. There is no substitute for having the right kind of academics in the Regents office.

I have four conclusions about science in a time of national crisis:

1. The universities represented here have a great deal that could help the country.
2. Our country has not been able to organize the expertise it needs during this crisis.
3. What we know hasn't been well used by our country.
4. We are eager to help. There is nothing we wouldn't do to bring our expertise to the aid of the country.

What do we do now? Should we build capacity in order to respond to the national crisis? One of the important things an administrator says is "no" – and sometimes this is what we really should say. The super-conducting project is an excellent example. Many universities put lots of money into super-conducting, and these investments were wasted when the project was abandoned. In retrospect, it would have been far better for the university to use this money elsewhere. If we build staff for the current crisis and things calm down, will the university be left with lots of investment in areas that are no longer relevant? In terms of vaccines, if we focus resources on projects like developing a botulism vaccine, we are aiming for a narrow market.

I'm not suggesting we have to be in perpetual crisis to justify an investment, but I am suggesting that we must be careful about where we put resources. We should organize the resources we currently have, rather than make significant additions to them. Higher education is not simply about

research. Our concern must be research *and teaching*. Our mission is best accomplished when we do what encompasses research and teaching. Training experts for the future is better than solving specific problems now. Preparing our citizenry for the future is why universities exist. In deciding how to respond, we must keep our mission in mind, else we risk losing support from the individuals who support our educational mission.

Martin Apple, our keynote speaker, said that society has many big problems, and the university has departments. He urged us to work across departmental boundaries. We do this with research institutes and other devices. He also said to think large. If we want to address societal crises, are the university boxes too small? Universities don't have it all. We are accustomed to putting together grant proposals that expand the university with great expertise from other places, but with a single university base. Think about the nature of the problem, and the dysfunction of the federal funding system. If you want to address bioterrorism, where do you go for funding? NSF? NIH? USDA? We've mentioned a dozen entities and every one of them has a piece of the action. You probably would have to go to all of them because there is no multi-grant system.

That brings me back to what Martin Apple said about earmarking. He is opposed to it. At my core, I probably agree. But how will the federal government respond to this problem through its individual agencies – none of which can address the problem with a multi-university team? The Merrill Advanced Studies Center does a great service in bringing us together. Are there areas where it makes sense for us to collaborate across multiple disciplines? Can we put together such a persuasive collaboration that it might be a candidate for direct funding? Given the reality that things are being done piecemeal in Washington and the resources of academia aren't being used, is it worth investing our time to see if we can create a successful collaboration?