

**ACCESS, QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY:
LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE CALIFORNIA MASTER PLAN**

President Robert C. Dynes
American Council on Education Annual Meeting
Tuesday, February 14, 2006

It's a pleasure to be up here with Constance [Carroll], who lives in my favorite city in California, and Charlie [Reed] and Mark [Drummond]. They are real collaborators on higher education in California.

When I received the invitation to join this panel, I immediately rewound to my predecessor's predecessor's predecessor's predecessor's predecessor, Clark Kerr, who played a very important part in the conception of the Master Plan. Clark died about two months after I took over this job, about two years ago, and every major newspaper ran his obituary and described his role in the California Master Plan.

As I travel around the nation and around the world, the California Master Plan, as much as it is understood by other people, is truly the envy of most people I talk with, and I'll come back to this at the end of my brief words here.

The Plan was crafted in 1960 as California was facing a lot of pressures: huge increases in enrollment demand from Baby Boomers; rising costs for California taxpayers; and long-range planning necessary for future needs. It sounds like today, and it is like today.

Kerr and the other framers saw the Master Plan as an infrastructure that would give each of the systems a distinct mission, a mission that would be sufficiently complementary, although there are interfaces between us that raise tensions and pressures as we move back and forth across those interfaces. It was designed to give us clear differentiation in our missions. And it did, and it does. The principles are still very strong. It's endured for 46 years. It's sort of like the U.S. Constitution: It gets revisited, reinterpreted, re-discussed over and over and over again. And you'll get that sense as we talk.

In terms of undergraduate admissions, it envisions college, or at least the opportunity for college, for every high school graduate in the state of California. The University of California was envisioned to admit the top one-eighth, or the top 12½%, of the high school graduating class. CSU was envisioned to admit the top 33%, or the top one-third, and the California community colleges were to be accessible to every high school graduate. And one of the really important parts of the Master Plan, one of the reasons why it works today, is that there is mobility from the community colleges to the CSU and to the UC. It's really remarkable how mobile it is and where the opportunities are. You do not close out your opportunities at the end of high school if you decide to go to one or the other of the higher education systems.

It's envisioned that the University of California, for example, will be 60% upper-division and 40% lower-division. How the heck do we do that? We do that by transfer students, primarily from the community colleges, to make up that 60%, so that by graduation, fully one-third of our graduates are students who have transferred from the community college system. By way of comparison, for CSU, and I'm sure Charlie will repeat this, probably close to two-thirds of the graduates from CSU are students who transferred from the community college system. So it's the mobility which is really the magic of the Master Plan for undergraduates.

For graduates, there is constant tension – those of you who are in the California systems know the tension – about who does what and to whom. UC was originally envisioned to be the research arm, and for the most part, we've continued to take that role, although a lot of collaborations go on between UC and CSU, and I'm going to touch on a couple of them.

But degree inflation continues to proceed, compared to the 1960s. If you look at the number of high school graduates who go on to get baccalaureates and masters and doctorates, the number keeps going up. So there's continuous pressure on the Master Plan, and we have to continue to revisit it, the details of it, not the principles. I am a strong proponent of the principles. But we must constantly revisit the manifestation of it.

Let me give you a couple of examples of what I think the Master Plan allows us to do and I'll close with an example of what surprised me on a visit to China last fall.

In my 7 years as Chancellor of UC San Diego, one of the prouder moments that I had was when two of our local representatives, a Republican, Duncan Hunter and a Democrat, Susan Davis, called us together after 9/11, "us" meaning me and Steve Weber from San Diego State University and Augie Gallego from the community college system, and said, "Please, you guys carry the imprimatur of fairness, of neutral territory, please help us bring together the San Diego community on how we respond on natural or man-made disasters in San Diego County." Steve and Augie and I pulled together a variety of people from government, service agencies, military, and industrial, into a Homeland Security group in San Diego County that brought together the technical and social expertise of our three organizations.

Let me give you an example. On that awful day of 9/11, I was sitting watching on television as different response teams were trying to respond in New York, and the police were not able to communicate with the fire units who were not able to communicate with the ambulances, and I thought, no, we have the technology, why can't they talk to each other? And we did that in San Diego with the CSU and the community college system, we brought together industry, the first-responders, the Border Patrol, the Chief of Police, and a variety of people, and we did it as a collaborative in such a way that to this day, there's strong communication across first-responders. In fact, when the Super Bowl occurred in San Diego in 2003, we put together the "Shadow Bowl" which was a group of people who developed response technology through San Diego State, UC San Diego and the community colleges.

It's not a precise result of the Master Plan, but I think it illustrates what the Master Plan has done for us in that we communicate with each other, we cooperate with each other, we sometimes fight each other, but it's always a respectful fight.

Another example: I've spent a lot of time in the past few years traveling around the state in places that are not UC or CSU communities and looking at education. And I have been shocked at the lack of science and math teachers. CSU produces most of the teachers in the state of California, and I realized to my own embarrassment that the UC was not doing its job. And so Charlie and I, together with the Governor, announced the Science and Math Initiative where CSU is going to increase by 100% their science and math teachers and we're going to increase from 250 to 1,000 science and math teachers a year. And we're doing this together, following an initiative by the Governor, who is going to nurture and kick us, to do things like forgiveness loans and support at the front end and recruitment and retention at the back end. It's something that I don't think without the template of the Master Plan we could possibly do together.

Another example is the relationship with the community colleges. It doesn't just happen that these students enter the community colleges and transfer to CSU and UC. It requires us paying attention, having advisors – it's not perfect, we can always improve – but it depends upon cooperation between the community colleges and UC and CSU. I know that in San Diego, we put together agreements with all the community colleges in San Diego and parts of Los Angeles to ensure that students who go into the community colleges, who take the appropriate courses and perform in those courses, will be admitted to UC San Diego. It's that kind of cooperation that I think the Master Plan envisioned.

Finally, a quick story: I was in China in October looking toward a relationship between the major research universities in China and the 10 UC campuses. I sat down with the Minister of Education, and through a translator, he said, "You know, we've been thinking hard about how to build world-class universities in China. And we were convinced that the only way to do that was to have private universities. And then someone pointed out that the University of California was a public university with world-class research campuses." And he said, "I was so pleased, and I asked, 'How did that happen?' And the answer was, 'The California Master Plan.'"

And I kid you not, he showed me a word-for-word Chinese translation of the California Master Plan. China is trying to re-engineer their higher education system by tracking the California Master Plan. Some people have said to me, "You should really worry about that." I'm not worried. It is a living concept, a living document, and we in California believe that the principles of the Master Plan are what we should maintain and not the precise details. But it is an interesting notion that China, in looking at its own resources for higher education, has decided that the California Master Plan is their model. I'm very proud of the Master Plan, and I'm a staunch defender of it.