



TO: Sheila Stearns
Commissioner of Higher Education

FROM: Geoffrey Gamble
President

DATE: October 15, 2004

RE: October 26 Retreat

Sheila, you asked me to suggest strategic issues on which the Board might give us guidance that would help us direct our campus based planning efforts. We have adopted a five year horizon on most of our planning. A longer, ten year horizon might be appropriate at the system level. With that in mind I would suggest that you focus your effort on answering a few general but strategically important questions.

1. What is your vision of MUS as a system ten years from now? Should we expect greater collaboration amongst our campuses? What kind of relationships will we have with other educational institutions in the state? Should the President of MSU have lesser or greater authority and responsibility for allocation of resources among its campuses?
2. What do you expect the MUS student body to look like? Will it mirror the population of the state in terms of racial/ethnic diversity? Will it be more or less traditional than it is today?
3. Do you expect us to maintain the current balance between quality of programs and access to those programs? How important is affordability and are the current tuition differentials at our campuses appropriate? What role does nonresident tuition play in our future?
4. Do you expect the level of state support and students' share of the cost of education to stabilize or to continue to shift toward the student? How does this shift (or stabilization) impact our ability to offer competitive compensation to our employees?
5. What will be the outcomes of partnerships with other government and private sector entities? What will our contributions to workforce development yield?
6. In terms of academic variety and program level, is our current mix and array of program offerings appropriate? Will our distance education programs be stand alone educational offerings or extensions of our more traditional degree offerings?