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A Program for the Future

Editorial Staff

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2 **A Program
For the Future**

By James E. Cheek

No matter how deep in past history an institution's roots may lie, every institution of higher learning is required to define anew its mission, purpose and goals in the light of changing social conditions and national needs.

Indeed, it is because of its traditions that Howard University viewed this obligation as a responsibility of compelling proportions.

Singular in its field, as the only institution capable of providing a true university environment for Black people, Howard had a singular commitment to review and redefine its role in American higher education.

In 1969, at a time of considerable unrest on the nation's campuses, the options essentially were two-fold: to resist change in defense of the status quo; or to prepare for change to meet the new educational challenges of the next decades. I became the 15th President of Howard University on July 1, 1969.

Howard opted for change, not simply for the sake of doing something different, but to point the University into new directions in order to perform its mission better.

Coupled with this decision on the part of Howard was a determination to endow any new directions program with substance and meaning. That meant that only the most rigorous and disciplined self-study would suffice to properly assess Howard's future.

In 1969, the process of examination and evaluation began at Howard. It was a process that engaged our energies and interests for four years, and by 1973 we were able to formulate our plans for the next ten years.

Along the way, we learned a great deal about ourselves. We were disappointed by disclosures of our weaknesses; frustrated by a recognition of our limitations.

But, more importantly, we were sustained by the solidity of our strengths, excited about the possibilities for our future. We took the position that we could overcome our deficiencies and capitalize on our distinctions.

We have positioned ourselves to transform Howard into a "University of the first rank."

The past four years have seen the establishment of new schools and institutes; innovation and reform in existing academic programs; the upgrading of the faculty and faculty salaries; a responsiveness to student needs and interests, and the reorganization of the administrative departments.

But, over the same period, we have documented the lowly state of our financial resources in comparison with the fiscal position of 11 other universities similar to us in size, range of offerings and complexity.

We know what we want to do—to emphasize the training of Black leadership—of Black professionals and Black scholars.

But, to do that, we need the infusion of substantial funding from the private and public sectors. And, to enlist the support of government, foundations, corporations, organizations, individual donors and alumni, we are launching a ten-year development campaign, involving the University community, the Board of Trustees and private citizens in a decade-long effort to bring us into fiscal parity with our university counterparts.

And, we have specific plans to commit the funding we seek. Some of them include:
■ the reorganization of graduate education in the arts and sciences. The proposed reorganization would establish as a specific academic unit of the University a Graduate School of Arts and Sciences under the leadership of a Dean and appropriate administration, with a graduate school faculty and a specific budget. This school would have exclusive jurisdiction over programs leading to the Master of Arts, Master of Science and Ph.D. degrees in the basic arts and science disciplines.

■ The establishment of all degree programs in professional fields beyond the first