Annual Report for 2005-06

The year ending June 30, 2006, was one of tumultuous change for the University, as well as significant if less dramatic change for the Institute. In several ways, the former managed to affect the latter, even though the time frame for the new history we are developing will not focus on events after 2000.

University History Project

The first half of the report year was largely consumed with completing most of the remaining research needed for the updated history of the University and making progress on the basic writing of the text. Research included interviews with current and former faculty, trustees, and alumni, as well as reviewing documents in University Archives, Special Collections at the Kelvin Smith Library, the Western Reserve Historical Society, and other repositories.

For reasons discussed below, the second half of the report year saw less emphasis on the main work of the University History project, although this priority was not neglected during this period.

As in prior years, work toward an updated history of the institution included a number of related activities that are designed to support our information gathering and to help build interest on and off campus in the development of Case Western Reserve University through the years. During the report year these activities included:

- Maintenance and continued development of information about the University’s history on the ISUS web site (www.case.edu/artsci/isus/isushome.htm).

- Formal and informal presentations about aspects of the University’s history to groups such as the following:
  - Public Affairs Luncheon Group (Friday brown-bag lunch)
  - “Meet the Faculty” sessions for incoming first-year students

Photograph above, from Edition #7 of the “Campus Markings” contest, shows a detail of the mural in the lobby of Strosacker Auditorium, built in 1958. For more information, see the ISUS web site.
- Mini-College for Family Weekend
- Rowfant Club of Cleveland (bibliophiles group)
- Nathan Derrow Society (donor recognition group)
- Annual Information Technology retreat (IT managers from the University’s central staff as well as from academic units)
- Briefing on the University’s history for new members of the Board of Trustees (now being developed into a DVD presentation)

- Continuation of the “Campus Markings” contest during the report year, featuring three new editions (total of 36 images) of this competition to identify photographs of architectural details of the University campus. Entries came from students, alumni, faculty, and staff. The contest encourages members of the campus community to become familiar with the University’s physical environment, much of which has important historical ties.

- Operation of the small gallery of images located near the Institute’s offices on the fourth floor of the Sears Library Building. In addition to displaying images from the current “Campus Markings” contest, the gallery offers visual and textual snapshots of the University’s history. During the report year, we mounted a new display of selected designs of bridges in Cleveland executed by James T. Pardee, an 1888 alumnus of the Case School of Applied Science, who within a few years of graduating became the city’s principal bridge engineer. He later went on to a distinguished career as the research leader of the Dow Chemical Company, founded by his classmate, Herbert Henry Dow.

- Research and writing for historical information offered in connection with the January 2006 “Throwback Weekend,” an intercollegiate basketball tournament celebrating the notable history of competition in this sport by students from Adelbert and Mather Colleges and Case Institute of Technology. The event was organized by the Department of Physical Education and Athletics and took place in Adelbert Gym, itself a significant campus landmark.

- Participation in the work of the Records Disposition Committee formed by University Archives to advise on retention policies and decisions for materials produced by offices across the campus.

**Role of the Research University in Society**

Interest in the contributions, costs, and benefits of research universities remains strong among civic, business, and government leaders, but there is too little understanding of
the origins and ways of these extraordinary institutions. During the report year, work in this area took several forms:

- Presentation on “What Makes a University Great” to a student audience as part of a panel discussion on this subject during an Academic Happy Hour in April 2006. Included a glossary of terms peculiar to universities.

- Presentation on strategic and public policy issues affecting this and other research universities to students enrolled in Mandel 401, “Introduction to the Nonprofit Sector.”

- Participation in the institutional planning process as a member of the Steering Committee appointed by the President and the Provost to guide this effort. Discussed further below.

**Other Activities**

In November 2005, the President and Provost asked the ISUS Director to become active in the strategic planning process that had at that time been under way within the University for more than a year. The Director became the primary drafter for the plan. The expectation was that a small Steering Committee, composed mostly of administrators, could pull together the elements of a plan from the prior work and present it for approval in spring 2006. Both because these elements proved to be less useful than originally thought and because of the turmoil on the administrative front that broke out in early 2006, the nature and schedule of the planning process and our expectations for its outcome have changed.

As of this writing, the Steering Committee has expanded to include eight faculty members and three student members, and its charge now focuses on the challenges immediately ahead. Due to the time required by the planning project, the Director has had little opportunity since January 2006 to make significant progress on writing the updated University history. Thanks to action by the Provost, the Director’s term in this project has been extended from June 30, 2007, until December 31, 2007, to account for this important but unforeseen diversion.

On an overload basis, the Director taught another University Seminar in the SAGES program in spring 2006, USSO 215, Forever Young: A Social History of the University. As in fall 2004, when he offered the same seminar previously, the experience proved helpful to the history project by involving students in the research process, this time yielding useful papers on such topics as the 1991 fire in Adelbert Hall, the climate for Greek life on campus before and after the 1967 federation of Case and Western Reserve, and changes in ownership and use of land in the vicinity of Adelbert Road and Euclid Avenue since the 19th century.
As in prior years, the Director serves as Campus Faculty Representative for the Udall Scholarships and the Truman Scholarships, national programs that select undergraduates each year to receive special grants to support graduate study or other activities. In the case of Udall, the focus is on students interested in environmental or Native American issues, and in the case of Truman, in public service and government. The Faculty Representative works with students and the national staffs of the programs.

Administrative Developments

As of July 1, 2005, the ISUS director shifted from full-time status to half-time, a year earlier than had been anticipated when the project was initially approved. The change came in response to the University’s need to conserve funds given its general financial stress, one of many cut-backs introduced across the campus in two waves during the report year. Other changes made at the same time for budgetary purposes included reducing Project Assistant Lynice Willis’s engagement in the project from 50% to 5%, and eliminating the Research Assistant position that had been held since 2003 by Ruth Milne, a Ph.D. student in History. In addition, the project’s annual non-salary budget was reduced from the original plan.

Before the fiscal year began, the budget home for ISUS had been moved from the College of Arts and Sciences to University General, where it is administered through the Office of Planning and Budget.

Recognition

During the report year, The Observer published two articles about the work of the Institute for the Study of the University in Society. The first, in October 2005, focused on the “Campus Markings” contest that was then under way. The second, in March 2006, was an interview with the Director about the entire University History project.

Two honors came to the Director as well during the year. He was a nominee for the 2006 J. Bruce Jackson, M.D., Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Mentoring. In addition, he received the 2006 President’s Award for Distinguished Service.

What We’re Learning

In each periodic report of the work of the Institute, we have tried to include several brief items that synopsize some of the threads that emerged from research and discussion in the report year. For the year ending June 30, 2006, we offer the following items, which we understand will serve only to tease the interested reader:
The role of religion in a non-sectarian college. Although Western Reserve College was founded in 1826 without any affiliation to a religious group, its trustees and faculty were predominantly Presbyterian, and they were not reluctant to display their religious preferences through the College. The geopolitical map of Ohio at the time made this a matter of concern to those working to secure a state charter for the new institution, since the legislature was controlled by the more populous (and decidedly less Presbyterian) southern and central regions of the state.

The “revolution in higher education” of 1880 to 1920. So named by the late historian Richard Hofstatder, this period saw the beginning of the transformation of a subset of American colleges into what we would today call research universities, institutions offering graduate and professional education and research as well as undergraduate education, with major strengths in the sciences, and with significant engagement with their cities. Both Case and Western Reserve were part of this movement. This shift in emphasis, aligning their programs with a national agenda, had a major impact on their relationships with the regional leaders who had supported and guided their early years.

Resolutions of “no confidence.” In response to the “no confidence” vote taken earlier this year by the faculty of Arts and Sciences, we have found that there was no direct precedent for such an action in the University’s history. The closest parallel was a series of votes in 1916 by the faculties of Arts & Sciences and the Graduate School at Western Reserve University in which they declined to recommend a faculty appointment for a scholar selected by a donor to head a new Institute of Religious Education, an arrangement approved by President Charles Thwing. In denying the recommendation for a faculty appointment, they effectively expressed their dissatisfaction with Thwing’s actions in the matter, though the resolutions did not specifically refer to “no confidence.”

The “non-federation” in the 1920s. From 1919 until 1925, Case and Western Reserve, surrounded by deeply interested community leaders and bolstered by a national panel of educational experts, considered whether they should merge or otherwise affiliate. At one point, in 1921, there was sufficient energy behind this idea that former U.S. President William Howard Taft was reportedly under consideration for the role of President of the combined “Enlarged University.” Ultimately the two institutions elected not to proceed with a closer affiliation, though they did in 1925 form a joint venture, Cleveland College, the region’s first institution of higher education devoted to meeting the needs of working adults.

Theses are but a few of the fascinating elements of the University’s history that emerge as we review archival documents and other sources. Other elements of the institution’s heritage may be found at the ISUS web site (www.case.edu/artsci/isus/isushome.htm).
Acknowledgements

The work of the Institute depends on the help and support of persons too numerous to list in this report, but it would be inappropriate to conclude without mentioning several people whose contributions were particularly valuable during the report year. They are, in alphabetical order:

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To all those who have contributed through their cooperation, advice, participation, or other assistance, and for this opportunity to be engaged in the satisfying work of helping the members of one of society’s most valuable institutions understand its own heritage more clearly, I am profoundly grateful.

Richard E. Baznik
Director
Institute for the Study of the University in Society

July 2006

For more information about the work of the Institute for the Study of the University in Society, visit our web site (www.case.edu/artsci/isus/isushome.htm) or get in touch with the Director at 216-368-2339 or richard.baznik@case.edu.