QB3 Inaugural Ceremony

President Robert C. Dynes
Monday, November 28, 2005

It really is a pleasure to be here. This is one of the days that I have been looking forward to since the turn of the century. You remember the turn of the century? You've probably forgotten this, but we were all worried about Y2K, remember that? We rode through that without a glitch. Five days after that, on January 5, 2000, then-Governor Gray Davis announced his intent to establish the California Institutes for Science and Innovation.

I think that was a galvanizing moment for the University, for our partners in industry and government, and I suspect history will say, for the state of California. I knew these Institutes would open a new era of scientific discovery, with California leading the way. But I had no idea the effect they would have, and will have, on us and the state.

We did believe that, by creating entirely new academic enterprises – and make no mistake, they really are new – with strong regional ties, and with strong ties to industry, we could revolutionize the way universities fulfill their missions of education, research, and public service.

When the four Institutes were formally launched in December of that same year, I was Chancellor at UCSD, and as Mike said, we created something called Cal-IT². It was a partnership between UC San Diego, UC Irvine, and about 35 to 40 industries in California and throughout the U.S., mostly in California, but several large nationals and internationals were part of it.

As I learned about the other Institutes, and I watched the unprecedented alliances that were taking shape, it finally dawned on me that only the University of California had the breadth and scope and intellectual capacity to take on such a thing as these institutes. I realized that only this university system and only this state could attempt anything on such a grand scale.

In the five years since these Institutes were formed, we have celebrated many milestones, and this is a huge milestone today. At each one, our vision for these Institutes has grown broader and certainly bolder, and they continue to get bolder.

In my job as UC President, I oversee all four Institutes, and I am certain that these Institutes will bolster California's economy, lead the way in science and innovation, and ultimately re-define what universities look like. And I don't mean just science and technology; I mean re-define what universities look like as we go into the 21st century.

They represent something quite new in my mind. These centers will generate knowledge that directly advances our national interests and our state interests, and they will drive what I call R, D, & D – research, development, and delivery. This is happening right now in that building on the second floor where two fledgling biotech companies received incubation space to try out their ideas and to look at very early critical stages.

These Institutes will attack complex societal issues that no one discipline or no one institution could possibly take on. Let's take QB3 just as an example. As I travel the world, and I talk to people about these Institutes – and believe me, they all want to know about them – I simply say to them, "Imagine UC Santa Cruz, UC San Francisco, UC Berkeley, and the Berkeley National Laboratories. Think about the intellectual capacity in biological and physical and material sciences. If we can bring that together, no other place in the world can accomplish what we can accomplish here in the Bay Area."

The same can be said for information technology and telecommunications both in the Bay Area and in San Diego and Irvine. And the same can be said in nanoscience throughout the

state of California. It's really true that there's no other collection of institutes that we can bring together, that the faculty can bring themselves together to create new things. And we're well on the way of doing this with QB3 and the others.

In recent weeks, we have seen greater opportunities in the Pacific Rim for international interactions and collaborations. Let me describe a few of those, specifically in China, because it seems to be the place that everybody is visiting right now. Governor Schwarzenegger just returned from a trip to China, where he heard about the academic relationship between China and the University of California. Right now, Senator Feinstein and Mayor Newsom are there formalizing the QB3-Peking University relationship, and Reg is going there tonight to help formalize the relationship with Peking University.

Last month, I led a delegation that had two Regents and two Chancellors to China where we agreed to something I call "10 + 10," the 10 campuses of the University of California and the 10 major research universities in China, solidifying the kinds of relationships that we already have and trying to make them even more communicative back and forth.

It's clear that China will benefit from those relationships. But it's also clear that. with a country of 1.3 billion people who are moving so rapidly, that California will benefit from people moving from there to here. In my discussions with faculty and students in China, and with our own alumni, they all wanted to hear about these Institutes. They knew about them, and they wanted to know, "How the heck did you do this? How did you get campuses to work together?"

And so I described the UC system to them, which was a foreign concept, except for the Minister of Education and the Minister of Science and Technology. They have looked at the California Master Plan for Higher Education and have had it translated into Chinese. And they are following the California Master Plan for Higher Education. They look at us as a model of what they want to be in research universities.

It is no exaggeration to say that the world will be watching QB3 scientists. They'll be watching basic science on the top floor, development of new drugs on the second floor, and the translation of that into trials on the first floor. That is truly R, D, and D in a single building. It's really exciting. The development of basic science into public service is the mission of the University of California.

Now I have the pleasure of introducing someone who has a rather different perspective but I think a rather similar view, and that is Jeff Immelt.

In 2001, to cap off a stellar career at General Electric, Jeff Immelt was appointed the company's CEO, becoming ninth in a line of succession led off by Thomas Edison. Since then, Jeff's vigorous stewardship of General Electric through market ups and downs – and they have ups and downs, as we do in academia – has prompted Fortune Magazine to call him "The Bionic Manager."

During an interview with Fast Company, when he was asked if he ever felt daunted by the challenges of his job, he gave an answer that is quintessentially Californian. He said, "No. I'm an optimist. I've always believed the future is going to be better than the past. And I have a role to play in defining the future."

That outlook has made Jeff one of this nation's most visionary leaders of innovation, and it captures why the University is so privileged to have him as a friend and partner.

Please join me in welcoming Jeff Immelt.