Reverend Raymond A. Roesch, S.M. Confident and Optimistic for the University of Dayton's Future

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DAYTON, Ohio, September 16, 1971 — Reverend Raymond A. Roesch, S.M., President of the University of Dayton, in his annual report to the faculty today, expressed confidence in and optimism for the future of the University. He said: "The University of Dayton has been, still is, and must continue to be a very strong and sound institution."

He stressed the need for academic quality, efficiency in operation, a balanced budget and the coordination of all programs and personnel throughout the University. He pointed to the rash of recent nationwide stories on what is called the plight of private universities, and presented a more realistic appraisal of the University. His speech, while given to the faculty, was meant for the entire University.

In discussing his confidence in the University, he said: "The forward strides we have made in the past several years have been toward real excellence. The plans we make for the future are geared unswervingly toward quality. I think the biggest task we have in the next two or three years is to deliver on those strengths, to make them known to as many young men and women as we can, while concurrently we must avoid a self-criticism which militates against a soundly conceived conviction that we have a good product here at UD, a good staff here to deliver that product, and an intelligent student body capable of profiting by the opportunities which are offered here."

Father Roesch noted that this year's freshman class enrollment is almost exactly equal to that of last year and is within the estimate of last spring, upon which the budget was prepared.

"As you know," he continued, "last year we graduated the largest group of alumni in the history of the University—more than 2200. Although we have only preliminary and unofficial statistics at the present time, it appears that we have 6500 to 6600 fulltime undergraduate and graduate students and close to 2000 part-time students, for a total of about 8500."

He felt that this number is very solid and will not drop any further. He said that the latter figure was well within the estimate of last Spring when the 1971-72 budget was prepared.

He felt confident that, with the augmented Admissions Office staff and the opening of the University of Dayton office in New York, admissions would be strengthened and that Admissions counselors would visit more than 1400 high schools compared to 1100 last year. He urged that all UD personnel assist this admissions effort and noted that coordination in this area was needed.

In announcing an eight-point program for the continued strengthening of the University, he said that the University must:

(1) Maintain and increase the quality of its educational program; (2) Respond immediately and directly rather than allow any gradual deterioration; (3) Achieve
all possible savings through improved efficiency; (4) Reduce costs for administrative and supportive services in order to maintain academic quality; (5) Follow principles of equity and fairness to its personnel; (6) Not economize by reducing essential repair and maintenance which would lead to higher costs in the future; (7) Make significant progress in its admissions effort--this is a job for all, and (8) Continue and increase its efforts in the development area to obtain outside support from alumni, business, industry and friends.

In noting that "there is no freeze on academic improvement," Father Roesch stressed for a continued stride toward educational excellence, a response to the students' needs for progressive and innovative education and the rejuvenated use of existing programs and resources. "If U.D. continues to offer what is wanted and what is needed, it will continue to flourish," he said.

He called for effective programming so that faculty can be used effectively and told the professors in the Boll Theater that "teaching is effective only when students actually learn. A professor may be a brilliant scholar but he can fail as a teacher if he does not transmit his knowledge, so that the student is educated."

He asked, too, for regular evaluation of a faculty member by his peers, as suggested by the Faculty Functions Task Force of the Planning for the Seventies, and challenged the group by indicating that a weak academic area must be strengthened or dropped. In this, he said, quality and economic viability must be considered.

In stressing this point, he noted that the student must be challenged and not serve as a memory bank. He urged that different educational methods be explored and said: "...at the beginning of the Planning for the Seventies, a task force stated 'the teaching purpose of the University of Dayton is to create the best possible environment for learning.' I am pleased when I see group solutions, discussion classes, student research papers, workshops, seminars, self-learning centers and students proceeding at their own pace. The student use of our new library is a vast improvement over that in the old AEL. Would that everyone who occupies one of the 2500 seats was truly challenged by your assignment."

He then urged that faculty participate in the Newman Seminar which the University, through its Project Interface, is conducting on October 2. He said that the thoughts and writings of Dr. Frank Newman, Chairman of the U.S. Department of Education Committee, have challenged, truly shaken and intrigued the academic world.

He asked, too, that faculty work closely with Mr. Nesmith, the new Assistant Provost for innovative education on the campus. He said: "We want this university to be responsive, to know the best and most challenging thoughts in higher education, and to do everything possible to make what is good available on this campus. Those of you who are vibrantly alive in your teaching will want to work most closely and cooperatively with him."

In looking realistically at the University's financial picture, he expressed optimism because of the interest which the Congress of the United States and the State of Ohio have recently taken in private higher education. He said that these two groups "have come to realize that the loss of the diversified quality education offered by independent institutions would be a catastrophe."
He noted that the Ohio Instructional Grant Program would increase from $4.5 million in 1970-71 to $15.0 million in the biennium budget, 1971-73. He noted, too, that the eligible family income figure would be raised so that many more UD students would benefit.

Then he announced that the University is doing everything it can to increase its Dayton area scholarships and said that new monies have been placed in this fund from the New Horizons Campaign.

While discussing the financial situation he said: "I am confident that the University of Dayton will continue to be solvent. We have a very good record. There are all kinds of evidence of good management and this was especially true during these last two years when our operational expenses exceeded our income but there were reserves which were built up and planned to be there just when we needed them."

He was particularly pleased, he said, with the results in financial development support over the past 10 years. He noted that during the period, 1956-61, the average yearly support was approximately $470,000 but during the five-year period ending 1971 the average was $1,226,000. "Last year," he said, "a year of economic recession, the amount was $1,714,579."

He indicated that the latter figure was augmented by $3.0 million raised or pledged on a goal of $3.3 million in the New Horizons Campaign. He also revealed that the University's endowment, although not great, had quadrupled since 1961.

In closing he said: "To sum it all up may I say that if our problems and challenges are great, so are our opportunities. We must and we will maintain dynamic educational programs. We must and we will remain financially responsible. Let us remember that our greatest strength is our sense of community and dedication and that this community includes every Trustee, alumni, parent, faculty-staff member and student--and possibly the sequence should have been reversed because our prime goal is to prepare the student of today and tomorrow in the Christian spirit for the society of the seventies and beyond. .... With all members of the community doing their share we cannot fail."