Scholars To Examine Future of 'City of Intellect' at UCR

(February 8, 2000)

Professor of Sociology Steven Brint is organizing a three-day conference at the University of California, Riverside starting Thursday, Feb. 17 that intends to live up to an ambitious name: “The Future of the City of Intellect.”

The idea, Brint said, is to map the future of higher education and its increasingly important role in American economic and social life.

A diverse group of approximately 35 scholars, including UC Berkeley’s Clark Kerr, author of The Uses of the University, will gather from as far away as Hong Kong and Paris to examine the future of technology, diversity, the humanities, the social sciences, the tenure track, funding and market forces that propel higher education.

“A lot of things have happened in a short amount of time that have changed the university," Brint said, citing the growth of professional programs, the erosion of academic tenure, the growing reliance on business funding and the increasing use of distance learning and other computer and video technology. "The landscape has been transformed," he said.

His own interest in the subject stems from a time when he taught at Yale University and heard the administration suggest eliminating the Sociology Department, along with several others, for the sake of efficiency. While Sociology survived at Yale, Brint came to UCR and took a hard look at his own assumptions.

"Before, I had the notion that there were certain basic areas of human understanding that belonged in the 'universe' of knowledge," he said. "After that I knew that sometimes the university is like a multi-divisional firm, with concerns about "product lines."

Brint, who is preparing a book on the future of higher education, said the subject is rarely addressed through academic channels, and it deserves to be.

Brint does not promise an immediate overhaul of any particular aspect of higher education, but he does promise a vigorous three-day debate in the UCR Terrace Rooms among representatives of campuses such as Stanford University, Claremont Graduate University, UC Berkeley, UCLA, UCR, University of Pennsylvania, New York University, Brown University, Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Chicago and Rice University, among others.

"It may mean that we need to reaffirm the principals of academic life," said Brint. "In any case, we will take stock of where we are now."

The Future of the City of Intellect
Conference Schedule
February 17-19, 2000 Thursday Sessions

8:45 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast

9:45 a.m. Welcome
David H. Warren (University of California, Riverside)

9:50 a.m. Opening Remarks
Patricia O’Brien (University of California, Riverside)

10:00 a.m. Session 1
Toward Educational Service Organizations? Opportunities and Discontents of the Market-Driven University
Burton R. Clark (University of California, Los Angeles)
Patricia J. Gumport (Stanford University)
Walter W. Powell (Stanford University)
Robert Zemsky (University of Pennsylvania)

1:30 p.m. Session 2
Locating the University’s Center: A “Practical Arts” Core?
Steve Brint (University of California, Riverside)
Sheldon Rothblatt (University of California, Berkeley)
Sheila Slaughter (University of Arizona)
Catharine R. Stimpson (New York University)

4:00 p.m. Keynote Address
Introduction: Ray Orbach (University of California, Riverside)
Keynote Speaker: Clark Kerr (University of California, Berkeley)
Respondent: Guy Neave (International Association of Universities, Paris)

5:30 p.m. Reception following Keynote Address

Friday Sessions

9:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast

10:00 a.m. Session 3
The Virtual University? Implications of the New Technology
Kenneth C. Green (Claremont Graduate University)
Richard Lanham (Rhetorica, Inc.)
David F. Noble (York University)
Carol Tomlinson-Keasey (University of California, Office of the President)

1:30 p.m. Session 4
Whither the Humanities? Disciplinarity and Interdisciplinarity in an Age of Change
Mary Poovey (New York University)
James Sheehan (Stanford University)
Randolph Starn (University of California, Berkeley)
Longxi Zhang (City University, Hong Kong)

4:00 p.m. Session 5
Whither the Social Sciences? Disciplinarity and Interdisciplinarity in an Age of Change
Andrew Abbott (University of Chicago)
Randall Collins (University of Pennsylvania)
John David Frank (Harvard University)
Bruce Mazlish (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)

Saturday Sessions

8:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast
8:30 a.m. Session 6
The Future of the Professoriate: The "Academic Revolution" Revisited
Richard Chait (Harvard University)
Thomas L. Haskell (Rice University)
Cary Nelson (University of Illinois)
Jack H. Schuster (Claremont Graduate University)

11:00 a.m. Session 7 The Future of Diversity: Selectivity, Class and Race in Student Admission and Outcomes
Troy Duster (New York University)
L. Scott Miller (The College Board)
Thomas Mortenson (Council for Opportunity in Education)
Keith F. Widaman (University of California, Davis)

2:00 p.m. Session 8
Students in the City of Intellect: What's College For?
Mark Edmundsen (University of Virginia)
Zachary Karabell (New York City)
Lee S. Shulman (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching)
Uri Treisman (University of Texas, Austin)

4:00 p.m. Closing Remarks
Steven Brint (University of California, Riverside)

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A broadcast studio with fiber cable to the AT&T Hollywood hub is available for live or taped interviews. UCR also has ISDN for radio interviews. To learn more, call (951) UCR-NEWS.
UC Riverside has dozens of experts in virtually every field you can imagine. Whether it's the latest fad in Hollywood, the latest must-have gadget or the latest row in Washington, UCR has a vast pool of staff and faculty who can present a unique view right now.

These interactions can take place in person, electronically, through a campus ISDN line, or even via video through our Digital Production Studio, which can put a UCR expert on the air anywhere in the world through AT&T's regional fiber network hub.

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