



1-1-1989

## The Plan: A Blueprint for the Future

Edwin J. Andrews  
*University of Pennsylvania*

# Bellwether

University of Pennsylvania

Winter 1989

# 27

## The Plan — A Blueprint for the Future

Over the last several years I have written about a number of topics and often referred to our strategic planning process as one of the most critical tasks to be accomplished.

The Pew Charitable Trusts, in Philadelphia, have given focused attention to national and societal dimensions of health care. As such, they initially concentrated their efforts on dental medicine. Three years ago the Pew initiative was broadened to include veterinary medicine, primarily from the vantage point of re-shaping veterinary education and how these changes might mold the future of the profession itself.

In the United States, there is a tendency to define an issue, have someone provide funding to address that issue, and make the simple decision: "we will do a strategic plan." But one might well ask, without that national focus or a means of funding, why would one want to do such a plan?

I was recently invited to discuss this very issue at a national conference held in Palm Beach, Florida, on "The 21st Century University", and the message I relayed is that very good reasons exist for doing a strategic plan.

Strategic planning is the ability of an organization to understand the effect of outside influences on the institution as it charts future directions. It forces an organization to look at itself, its facilities, staff and resources: it is an opportunity to examine the operations — are they efficient or wasteful in today's environment of dwindling resources and increasing external pressures? Strategic





planning offers an institution the opportunity to map a strategy to attain leadership or to maintain a pre-eminent position. Simply put, strategic planning provides a vision of what can be.

The heyday of public subsidy for higher education is over. Competition among schools, colleges and universities for funding, students, top-notch faculty or public attention is increasingly intense. Future growth will be difficult or impossible without an internal redirection of strengths, resources and priorities. How can one begin to change without the benefit of a plan to guide those critical decisions?

A strategic plan is not a panacea; it will not provide all of the solutions — indeed, it may not even identify all of the problems, but it does ultimately provide a blueprint — “the plan”. The plan is nothing more than one step in a continuous process, a guide to allow tacticians to do their job. It equally signals a constant need to reevaluate goals in light of the original assumptions or changes in the environment that influences the institution.

How one goes about strategic planning is perhaps not as important as what one does with the results. For the former is merely logistical, while the latter is the key to success or failure.

The logistics involve a series of procedures, here simplified, but in reality painfully time consuming. The logistics require introspection — an analysis of self worth, at best a difficult task for academic institutions. They also require an analysis of constituents and their needs and aspirations. Is the institution fulfilling its mission? By whose measure — the institution's or the recipient constituents?

One also has to evaluate innate strengths and weaknesses of the organization. What are the resources available in faculty, staff, discretionary dollars, facilities, programs, unique assets, expertise, geographic locale, and so forth?

Once the analysis is complete and contained in a written document, “the plan”, what does an institution do with it?

The plan must be used to develop the agenda for the changes needed to achieve goals; in our case, definite leadership in veterinary medicine, research and education. It also must be used to ensure that the process will continue dynamically, creating a dialogue with our constituencies and a means of challenging our direction through annual reviews of our original assumptions and the changing environment that influences all that we represent.

Our strategic plan is referred to as a strategic goals document. It is a marvelous document which succinctly articulates six goals and it forces us to focus on a vision of leadership. The strategic goals are:

- Promote growth and excellence in education.
- Promote growth and excellence in research.
- Maintain and promote excellence in service.
- Improve the quality of student life.
- Establish and promote selected specialty areas.
- Strengthen and improve the performance of administrators, faculty and staff.

What that means for the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania is that we can no longer be satisfied with “being” at the cutting

edge — now we must be honing that edge. It means we can no longer be “state-of-the-art” — we now must have “state of vision.”

As we are considered leaders in the present, we must extend ourselves logarithmically to outpace those other clearly capable institutions in their similar aspirations for leadership.

The health science center of the future is what we will be — a school of vision with multidisciplinary programs of veterinary education coupled with research programs on equal par with medical frontiers. Our clinical programs will extend from the expected tertiary care to a level of quaternary care now emerging in human medicine, and as yet unknown in the veterinary profession.

However, we will not emulate our sister profession as we have so judiciously in the last decades. Rather we, as a School of Veterinary Medicine, and, more importantly, the unqualified leader of our profession, will leap beyond to the position of leading the direction of biomedical science itself. What better profession than veterinary medicine to aspire to such a level with its objective and comparative approach to life, science and the necessary interplay of humanity and the environment?

I challenge you, as I have myself and my institution, to become partners in this exciting venture, for with your help and enthusiastic support, the vision can be fueled.

Only the daring and truly committed need step forward.

Edwin J. Andrews, V.M.D., Ph.D.

## New Bolton Center at Saratoga



New Bolton Center went to the races at Saratoga Racecourse on August 10. The festive day included a 20 vehicle Carriage Parade and seven races named in honor of famous horses from the past as well as a luncheon in a railside marquee. The New Bolton Center Day at the Races Committee was chaired by Mrs. J. Maxwell Moran.

The day began when guests ascended the carriages and were driven to the Saratoga Racecourse from the Avenue of the Pines. Mr. Frolic Weymouth led the parade in a 3/4 Park Drag to a four-in-hand of Standardbreds. At the Racecourse, luncheon was served while guests watched and wagered on the races.

Spanning four decades, the 50's, 60's, 70's and 80's, the names of the races reflected the successes of a game gelding (Creme Fraiche), a European grass champion (Sagace), a well known steeplechaser (Lucky Boy) and a stakes producing mare (Royal Dilemma). They also echoed the accomplishments of those who helped make outstanding horses — the owners, the late Mr. and Mrs. Cortwright Wetherill (Kingmaker), and the trainers, such as Mr. William A. Croll (Parka). Above all they provided a fascinating glimpse into the history of New York Racing including the origin of a trophy for the Hopeful and



To the races

Hannibal's exciting part in it. Several of these outstanding horses are no longer living and therefore the day offered the opportunity to pause, pay tribute to their memory and the many exciting moments they gave to racing.

This celebration of racing's achievements benefitted the industry as well. Proceeds of the New Bolton Center Day at the Races are helping fund such equine research efforts as Dr. David Nunamaker's studies on bucked shins and also providing state-of-the-art equipment for the new Connelly Intensive Care Unit/Graham French Neonatal Section. A central part of this facility, the nursing station, has been named to honor the winner of the 1985 Belmont Stakes and two time winner of the Jockey Club Gold Cup, Creme Fraiche. The event raised more than \$45,000.



Larry Hagman of Dallas fame joined Dean Edwin J. Andrews and his wife Paula for New Bolton Center Day at the Races