

file Hesburgh 1980

1) The most significant development in education in the 1970's:

The most significant development in higher education during the 70's was, in my judgment, the topping-off of a spectacular growth that began after World War II. At that time, about 1950, the students in higher education numbered about three million, a high point since the founding of Harvard and the beginning of American higher education in 1636. By the end of the 1970's, that total had reached more than eleven million, a summit that represented almost a fourfold growth in faculty, students, and facilities -- a monumental task that quadrupled in thirty years what had taken more than three centuries to achieve. That was no insignificant development in the history of American higher education.

2) What significant development can we expect in the 1980's?

Here we are guessing futures, not analyzing facts. One development of the 80's, quite the opposite of the 70's, will be the management of shrinkage without compromising quality of education. This will be no easy task, as it is always easier to grow than to retrench. It is most difficult to retrench without compromising quality. Cutting often affects muscle more than fat. There is nothing more difficult to eliminate with discrimination than entrenched mediocrity. Its ability to survive is legendary.

My advice for the 80's is simple. Preserve quality at all costs. Cut when cutting is necessary, but cut fat, not muscle. Compromising quality is to surrender in the 80's all the victories of the 70's.