Preparing for a Future That Can Only Be Imagined
A Lesson From "Future Shock"

At a recent meeting with a corporate executive from a large multinational corporation and his communications consultant, I was asked about the University’s vision and mission. As a university president, this is not an unusual request. In fact, hardly a day goes by that I am not asked, when interacting with the private sector, about my – that is the president’s – vision for the University.

Of course, there is really only a single University vision and it focuses on shaping the potential of those we serve, who, in turn, shape the worlds in which they live and work. Frankly, I think many of the individuals with whom I interact are somewhat surprised that we, as a higher education learning community, can so succinctly state our vision for the future. Evidently, such clarity and brevity isn’t always a hallmark of vision statements developed by such complex organizations as Bemidji State.

Our interaction that day moved well beyond the typical conversation about the University’s vision into a discussion of how higher education can prepare undergraduates for an uncertain future. Because the three of us were undergraduates during the same era, we shared thoughts about common experiences and readings as well as not-so-common experiences. The discourse eventually turned to a discussion of the 1970’s book, “Future Shock,” by Alvin Toffler.

Frankly, the conversation was a rather remarkable time of reflection about accelerating social forces and their impact on change. Soon, our attention turned to the mission of Bemidji State University. The communications consultant asked me to provide the proverbial “elevator-speech” version of the University’s mission statement. I replied with the version that I am certain most of us know well: “As northern Minnesota’s university, we engage in new worlds of thought, embrace responsible citizenship, and educate for a future that can only be imagined.”

The discussion led to a final, very thought-provoking question: How does a University create habits of the mind for a future that can only be imagined?

My answer was partially gleaned from Toffler, who, in “Future Shock,” wrote about the importance of developing the habit of anticipation. An anticipatory habit consists of a skill set comprised of problem solving, creativity, flexibility, communications, and reflective thinking. While undoubtedly a few other skills could be added to the list, it seems to me that educating for a future that can only be imagined necessitates well-developed thinking skills and the flexibility to adapt to change.

So, how would have you answered the consultant’s questions? What is your “elevator speech” about Bemidji State’s mission and vision? How do you envision the University educating for a future that can only be imagined?
The shortage of licensed mental health care professionals in Minnesota is well known. Only 17 of the state’s 87 counties have avoided federal designation as Health Professional Shortage Areas for mental health, and every county in the state north of Anoka County holds that designation.

In 2007, the state of Minnesota passed legislation creating a new licensing category, the Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC), in an effort to address this shortage.

However, the legislation included an oversight and did not officially name these licensees “mental health professionals,” leaving them without the ability to bill for their services from state and federal aid programs.

A successful lobbying effort helped the legislature close that loophole in 2009, creating opportunities for graduates of Bemidji State’s counseling psychology master’s program to provide aid in an area where such help is desperately needed.

“Due to the limitations of the LPCC license, graduates of our program had to leave the state to pursue work,” Dr. Louise Jackson, professor of psychology, said. “With the changes to the legislation, these young, qualified professionals no longer have to leave Minnesota to search for work. We can count on our local communities to hold on to them.”

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For the second time in as many years, a Bemidji State University student captured the overall championship at the Third Annual Great Northwoods Sales Warm-Up, hosted by the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Nov. 12-14, 2009.

The Warm-Up is a regional sales competition for Midwestern collegiate marketing students. Contestants deliver two 20-minute sales presentations, one for a product and one for a service, to an individual buyer. Sales calls are evaluated by a panel of professionals who view the presentations via streaming video at a remote location.

Bemidji State captured the top two individual finishes at the competition. Amy Lytle, a senior in marketing communications from Bemidji, repeated as individual overall champion and captured a $1,500 cash prize. Robyn McBrady, a senior in business administration from Hewitt, Minn., was first runner up and won a $1,000 cash prize.

Tony Hietalati, a senior in business administration from Aitkin, Minn., finished 10th and won the $150 school champion prize, given to the top finisher on each competing team outside of the grand champion and first and second runners up.

Molly Krivarchka, a senior in marketing communication from Mayville, N.D., finished 14th.

Dr. David Bahr, associate professor of physics, and other members of the American Physical Society are trying to convince that organization’s leaders to adopt a more objective approach to interpreting global climate change research.

Bahr joined 160 scientists, including one Nobelist and 12 members of the National Academies, in signing a 2009 petition that led the APS to reconsider the wording of its 2007 Statement on Climate Change. Bahr objects to the wording of the APS statement, in part because it describes the link between human activity and global climate change as “incontrovertible,” which suggests that the science is beyond debate.

“I don’t think too many scientists would disagree that global climate change is a hypothesis that has a high confidence level,” says Bahr, an ardent supporter of efforts to curb human activities that may affect global climate change. “But it’s not conclusive and it’s not absolute. There’s some uncertainty involved in it.”

Even so, Bahr applauds the efforts of Bemidji State and other institutions seeking ways to become more environmentally sustainable.

“We simply have to do what we can to make sure that climate change isn’t being exacerbated by our activities,” says Bahr.
University unveils new Bucky the Beaver icon
Illustrated version of Bemidji State’s famed mascot now available for use on merchandise

Bemidji State has a new image added to its official university marks – a Bucky caricature.

The trademarked Bucky caricature represents the determination and drive associated with Bemidji State University and its faculty, staff and students. A secondary graphic, the Bucky caricature may be used for commercial and noncommercial uses, although it cannot be used for official University business or on academic materials. All uses of the Bucky caricature require advanced permission. Requests should be directed to Kathy Berglund at 755-2041 or kberglund@bemidjistate.edu.

“With the launch of Go Green! last year and the increasing involvement of Bucky the mascot at events across campus and within the community, it was time to introduce a Bucky caricature that could be used for those unofficial, lighter, more casual situations,” said Dr. Rose Jones, director of communications and marketing. “Birthday cakes, flyers, T-shirts and sweatshirts, and other such products lend themselves well to the use of the caricature, as long as permission to use it has been granted.”

The caricature was created last year by alumnus Jon Seykora while he was still a student at BSU and working for the communications and marketing office. Current student Matt Ewert added the finishing touches and prepared the caricature for reproduction.

Faculty Feature
Dr. Rodney Witt, professor of criminal justice

What’s your job at BSU?
“I am a professor of criminal justice. I teach intro classes and police-related classes, and some of the technology things related to policing.”

How long have you been here?
“I’ve been at BSU since 1985. Before that, I was director of the South Central Michigan Crime Commission and the chief administrator of a sheriff’s department.”

What’s your favorite thing about being at BSU?
“It always has been the interaction with students. Over the years that has been one of the things I have consistently enjoyed.”

Inside the Beaver’s Studio
1. What is your favorite word?
“Payday.”

2. What is your least favorite word?
“The whole notion of ‘you can’t.’”

3. What turns you on?
“Learning.”

4. What turns you off?
“Barriers to learning.”

5. What sound do you love?
“A bluegrass band.”

6. What sound do you hate?
“Any loud noise before 9 a.m. on a Sunday morning.”

7. What profession other than yours would you like to attempt?
“Anything creative, tangibly creative things you can make with your hands.”

8. What profession would you not like to do?
“College administrator.”

9. If heaven exists, what would you like to hear God say when you arrive at the pearly gates?
“Nice job.”

Thanks to Rodney for playing along for this issue’s faculty feature! Participants for this section are selected randomly using a process that involves Predator drones and an Atari 2600.

This is intended to be a lighthearted look at the nonprofessional side of some of our favorite professionals. If you have suggestions for a faculty or staff member you’d like to see featured here, e-mail Andy Bartlett at jbartlett@bemidjistate.edu or call my office at 2746.
The standard IRS mileage rate for the business use of an employee’s personal automobile decreases effective Jan. 1, 2010, from 55.0 cents per mile to 50.0 cents per mile.

The state bargaining agreements and compensation plans base mileage reimbursement rates on the standard IRS mileage rate that's in place at the time of travel. For trips that cross calendar years, two rates must be used: the 2009 rate for miles driven in 2009, and the 2010 rate for miles driven in 2010.

As a reminder, two options are provided for determining the mileage reimbursement rate for any given trip:

- If the employee travels in his or her own vehicle because no state vehicle is available, the reimbursement rate is the current IRS rate (50¢ per mile for miles driven in 2010).
- If a state vehicle is offered but the employee declines and travels in his or her own vehicle, the reimbursement rate is 7¢ less than the current IRS rate (43¢ per mile for miles driven in 2010).

Please refer to the bargaining agreements and compensation plans regarding mileage reimbursement rates for the business use of an employee’s specially equipped vehicle, motorcycle or personal aircraft.