

PERSPECTIVE

Vaun Waddell—Editor

Choosing the theme “Re-Imagining Ricks” for this issue was not hard. For a new editorial board, re-imagining the publication was. We settled on two objectives: to be read and to be talked over. We hope you will feel compelled to discuss with colleagues topics, ideas, and problems you find in these pages.

“New wine in new bottles” is the metaphor of the moment, and we devote this issue largely to it. Perhaps you will write a response, as our next issue will continue the important topic of imagination. But next semester will already find buds appearing and vines branching. For *Perspective*, we will move to the related topic of transformation. Some tentative answers will appear even as we continue formulating questions. We look forward to printing your best expressions in those incipient spring days.



How bewildering this historical moment could seem to new faculty—and how disappointing to some near their departures. I am glad for time to participate in the growth and to even see some fruit of BYU-Idaho. I am grateful for prophetic leadership. I will gladly tend a few tender shoots.

Last summer during a couple of months abroad, I phoned home now and then about news and business. On July 1, I phoned my sister in Sugar City from St. Petersburg. When we had exchanged everything important and were ready to hang up, she said, “Oh, I thought of mentioning something else. President Hinckley announced a while ago that Ricks will be a four-year university.”

For years I had responded to the four-year question with, “Naw—our mandate is to give to as many as possible a Ricks experience, meaning that we are forever a two-year college. And we’re happy with that.” I happen to believe that half the universal truths, gospel truths that is, are extra-rational rather than logical. Now we are caught up in a quantitative paradox: set out more students and cultivate them longer. I do not doubt that both will happen.

But the larger question is the qualitative aspect of BYU-Idaho. You have your ideas, imagined and re-imagined from your viewpoint, and I have mine. For example, I have been classmate with my former students in a university, where they told me uses they find for what they learned at Ricks. I am a parent of Ricks College graduates now at universities and

in professions, groping for the impossible balance between success and goodness. I have been with Ricks students at work overseas, where the possibility of grafting secular study to principled living inspires and thrills our foreign counterparts, though as yet they find no means for doing likewise. My essential locale is the classroom and my favorite technology is chalk. Your experience and taste are likewise singular, compelling, fruitful.

Here is the new part—not merely to transplant, but to resist custom while developing a new strain. Higher education as we know it is a fusion of cultural traditions and market forces. BYU-Idaho will neither ignore nor be bound by the past. We are not now a university, and President Hinckley has made clear that we will not become one in a typical sense. Rexburg’s latitude could encourage, not prevent, some new version of viticulture in BYU-Idaho.



We at *Perspective* desire to provide motive and medium for expressing a few fertile works of mind and spirit. The eventual details of BYU-Idaho will not flow from one or two visionary minds. Given our size and diversity and absent the mentality of the faculty lounge, we don’t talk much with each other. We don’t participate enough; we don’t contribute enough. More sociality is not the point, but more synergy is.

Have you watched branches emerge from the husky old trunk? How portentous the soft, green swelling; how imperceptible but inexorable the appearance of leaves and flower clusters; how rich the ripening and the harvest. The final gathering is beyond our present season, but we are now sent into the vineyard. Let’s commune concerning it; let’s be laborers worth our hire.

To all who contributed this time, enormous thanks. You weren’t always willing and we were not always light with the editorial touch. But we hope you are happy with the result, as we are. You made it possible. ∞