

CASE Europe Schools Conference 2007
Monday, March 19, 2007

Remarks by CASE President John Lippincott

I'm tremendously honored to be with you tonight to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the CASE Europe Schools conference.

The steady growth and rising reputation of this conference are due in large part to many of you who have helped organize it and have shared your expertise as presenters and moderators. Will those of you who have served in any volunteer role for this conference over the last decade please raise your hands?

This morning Jennifer Evans Casey of Latymer Upper School thanked the planning committee for this conference. Now we should all thank Jennifer for her excellent leadership as conference chair.

Like this conference, the entire CASE organization is guided by volunteers, serving on our advisory commissions and governing boards. And we have two of those board members with us for this conference. Allow me to introduce them.

Carrie Levenson-Wahl is a trustee on the CASE Europe Board and is director of external affairs at the International School of Paris. Kathleen Hanson is a trustee on the CASE Board and the assistant head and vice president for advancement at the Baylor School in the United States.

I would also like to recognize the CASE staff members who have worked tirelessly to support our volunteers to make this conference a reality. Heading up that team is conference coordinator Laure-Anne Garnier.

Finally, let me also introduce to you the newest member of the CASE staff ... so new in fact that she isn't even on the payroll yet. She is Krista Slade and in May she will become the executive director of CASE Asia-Pacific. Krista's appointment is an historic one for CASE, signaling our commitment to bring all of our services to the Asia-Pacific region. Her appointment is also symbolic of the internationalization of our profession.

Another symbol of that internationalization can be found right here in this room. I'm very pleased to see that this conference has attracted delegates not only from Europe, but from Australia, South Africa, Singapore, and elsewhere around the world.

More and more, we are seeing institutions from all corners of the Earth embrace the concepts that we are exploring here in Exeter. Wherever I travel in the world, I find that educational institutions are intensely focused on building relationships with external constituencies who can help them fulfill their mission. They have come to understand that alumni, parents, grandparents, community leaders, and other friends of the institution represent an extremely powerful but often untapped resource.

Schools are seeking not only financial support from these constituencies but also support that takes the form of advocacy, one-to-one marketing, and volunteered talent. It is the strengthening of these relationships and the application of them to the goals of a school or university that define our work and to which we have given the shorthand term "institutional advancement."

Not only are we seeing interest in advancement grow within countries, but it is growing across countries, as institutions are reaching out to past students and potential donors across traditional boundaries. This internationalization has, of course, led to some interesting conversations within CASE. On Saturday, the CASE and CASE Europe Boards of Trustees met jointly in Oxford for a historic discussion about what it truly means to be an international organization with members from 55 countries and growing. More than a third of those members, by the way, are independent schools.

The board discussions centered on understanding the many cultures and constituencies we serve, the variety of backgrounds our members come from, and the variety of institutions they represent. No doubt many of you have had similar discussions at your own schools, as you attract and serve students and families from around the world.

And the implications of this increasing globalization are profound, especially when combined with other trends impacting our institutions. Let me give you just a few indicators of these trends adapted from a presentation by a school staff member in Colorado named Karl Fisch.

He points out that we would all like to be one in a million. But if you are one in a million in China then there are 1,300 people just like you. And among the Chinese student-age population, the 25 percent with the highest IQs roughly equals the total number of students in the European Union. Put another way, that means there are more honors students in China than there are students in the E.U.

Mr. Fisch goes on to suggest some other trends that have significant implications for our work. For example, he reports that the 10 most popular jobs in 2010 will not have existed in 2004. And that means that schools are currently preparing students for jobs that don't yet exist ... using technologies that haven't been invented ... in order to solve problems we don't even know are problems yet!

Fisch also notes the exponential growth in information. There are now five times as many words in the English language as there were in Shakespeare's time. And those words are appearing in text messages whose number every day exceeds the total population of the planet. Consider also that a week's worth of the New York Times contains more information than a person would encounter during a lifetime in the 18th century.

And let's not forget Google. There are now nearly 3 billion searches on Google each month. That begs the question: Who was answering all these questions B.G. (before Google)?

The amount of new technical information alone is doubling every two years. For upper school students that means half of what they learn will be outdated by their third year. By 2023, when today's first-years are beginning their first careers, a computer that costs 500 pounds will exceed the capabilities of the human brain.

In short, Frisch says that the world's population centers are moving, technology is expanding exponentially, and we're heading into a future that we can barely imagine today – even though it's just around the corner. Or as he puts it more succinctly (and I repeat very carefully): “Shift happens!”

We're seeing shift happening at CASE as our areas of professional know-how – of alumni relations, communications, marketing, and fundraising – are increasingly in demand globally. And I'm sure you're seeing it happen in different ways at your own schools. So the question for us all, then, is what does it mean for the future of our schools?

I believe it means our schools are going to have long and healthy futures, that they will indeed thrive as our societies try to keep up with exponential change. Schools will become even more essential as students seek the range of skills and the changing skills that allow them to succeed and adapt in this unknown future.

On the flight over, I was reading a book called *A Whole New Mind*. Its author, Daniel Pink, argues that we are seeing another fundamental shift, from emphasis on left-brain thinking to emphasis on right-brain thinking. And it will be the schools leading that change as well.

And even with all this emphasis on change, it is important to remind ourselves of continuity. Standing in Exeter Cathedral last night with 1,000 years of history around us, I was reminded of an observation by the late Clark Kerr, president emeritus of the University of California.

Kerr observed that “taking as a starting point 1530, when the Lutheran church was founded, some 68 institutions that existed then still exist today in the western world in recognizable form: the Catholic Church, the Lutheran church, the Parliaments of Iceland and the Isle of Man—and 62 universities.”

With all due respect to Clark Kerr, I think he should have included among that number the many independent schools that predate the Lutheran Church. By my count, there are at least 40 in the U.K. alone founded prior to 1530, and many of those schools are represented at this conference.

The larger point, however, is that great educational institutions have survived the shifts of history because education has been the single greatest determinant of any nation’s long-term success. I would also contend that the endurance of educational institutions can be attributed to their creative balancing of tradition and innovation. Because of the trends I identified earlier, that creative balancing will be more important than ever.

The technologies we employ will change. The types of facilities we need will change. The types of students we educate will change, the way they learn will change, and thus the way we teach them will change. And all of that change will mean that our schools need additional resources to adapt.

Schools will be required to reach out to future students and families and graduates in new ways. As they redefine themselves in the face of change, they will need to redefine themselves for their key audiences.

And so our schools will need great advancement professionals, like you, who have the ability to innovate, collaborate, and reinvent the field on a regular basis. In this month's issue of the CASE magazine CURRENTS there is an article on international schools by Jennifer Saxe, director of development for the Zurich International School. In that article, she says the challenges facing schools require us to adopt "entirely new approaches and combinations of techniques." So my advice to all of you is "prepare yourselves." But then that's why you're here, isn't it?

I want to leave you with this quote from Nelson Mandela: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Through your work, you are helping to change the world and change it, I might add, for the better. Tonight, as we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the CASE Europe Schools Conference, I invite you to look ahead to the 20th anniversary conference. And when we get together then, may we indeed be celebrating a better world ... a world in which for every society on the face of the globe the first priority is the education of our children.

So, here's a toast to that better world and to the 10th anniversary of the Europe Schools conference...