

THE ECONOMIC CLUB

O F W A S H I N G T O N, D. C.

**Excerpts from the Signature Event featuring 2017 Higher Education
Panel: Michael V. Drake, M.D., President, The Ohio State
University; Drew Gilpin Faust, PH.D, President, Harvard
University; and Marc Tessier-Lavigne, PH.D., President, Stanford
University**

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“I think American universities – and I know we all agree – are really one of the brightest lights in the country. . . . if I think of the things that we really do in this country that are better – where we do it better than anybody else in the world, I think our Constitution is a great Constitution, our system of government. And I think our universities really are the envy of the world, for good reason. . . . There are challenges. And I would say that for me, the balance of access, affordability and excellence is the nexus of that challenge, that we want to continually be excellent, in searching for the best ideas, the best discoveries, the best teaching. And we want to be broadly accessible to people because this is a great life accelerator for young people in the country. And then we also want to be affordable. It’s a real challenge for American families to be able to afford education.” ~ *Michael V. Drake, M.D., President, The Ohio State University*

“We’ve been very fortunate in this country to be able to be a magnet for extraordinary talent from abroad. People have brought their ideas, their capabilities, and they’ve enriched our country. Fifty-one percent of start-up companies with market capital over \$1 billion were started by immigrants who have come to this country. It creates wealth for the whole country, and for everybody here. It’s also important at the undergraduate level. About 10 percent of our students are international students. I believe among our peers it’s typically 10 to 15 percent. We think it’s very important because it enriches the education of our American students. It’s important for them to interact with people from other nations, other cultures. We’re living in a global world. Every one of our students today, first of all, they will have extraordinary long careers because, you know, life span continues to increase. They’ll probably be active into their 70’s. They’ll have 50 years of active work. And they will be global citizens. They will have to interact with people from every country. It’s important that we expose them to that.” ~ *Marc Tessier-Lavigne, Ph.D., Ph.D. President, Stanford University*

“. . . the best major is something that excites you, something that you’re passionate about, something you can do well in and can help you prepare for your future. But I never thought that there was a specific course of study that was better or worse. And one of the great things about the liberal arts basis of our universities is that there are a wide range of courses of study that people can take to expand their minds and do their best to fulfill their human potential broadly.” ~ *Michael V. Drake, M.D., President, The Ohio State University*

“. . . we’re trying to educate your child for the second job and the third job and the fifth job, not just for the first job. So we want to give your child certain habits of mind, certain ways of asking questions, of sorting fact from fiction, of analyzing information and data that can be adapted to jobs that we don’t even know exist yet. And so how do you get that complex of skills? It can be in a variety of different majors or concentrations.” ~ *Drew Gilpin Faust, Ph.D., President, Harvard University*

“As students focus on STEM, we have the same message as Drew and Michael, which is you want to prepare yourself for a life of change. And we want our education to make our students – sure, we want them to be job ready. More importantly, we want them to be future ready. The world is going to change. We know they’re going to change jobs. The first job is not going to be their job for long. And it’s important for them to have all those other skills that will enable them – critical thinking, the ability to deal with ambiguity, moral and ethical reasoning, and so forth – that will enable them to adapt to a changing job market and changing interests of their

own. . . . We believe in a broad education for all our students. And I might add that if we look at our graduating majors, whatever the subject, they all get jobs. They all get jobs pretty rapidly after leaving Stanford.” ~ *Marc Tessier-Lavigne, Ph.D., President, Stanford University*

“Our research universities – our universities broadly, and our research universities in specific have been a real model. And particularly since the Second World War there’s been a great partnership between the federal government and our universities that have led to incredible discoveries. . . . one [*a sign at a protest march for federal support of science*]that caught my eye said: ‘Got polio? Me neither. Thank you, science.’ I think that there’s lots of things that have happened to and for us that helped our society be better that are discoveries that have come from our universities. And so it’s been the way that we’ve maintained and improved the quality of life in this country and for people around the world.” ~ *Michael V. Drake, M.D., President, The Ohio State University*

“The President’s skinny budget proposes significant cuts to science funding. It proposes about an 18 percent cut to NIH funding and significant cuts to other important scientific funding as well – NSF (*National Science Foundation*), Department of Energy, and so forth. So, I’ve been spending a lot of time meeting – in Washington, meeting with Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle to try to explain what you just said so eloquently, why research support for American universities has been critical to discoveries like how to manage AIDS, how to diagnose a variety of diseases, how to develop the MRI. I mean, there’s so many ways in which university science has changed our world – the internet is one of them as well. That’s not a health-related one, directly, but just so much we take for granted has come out of university research.” ~ *Drew Gilpin Faust, Ph.D., President, Harvard University*

“I have been meeting with Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle. The message that we bring, which is the importance of the research enterprise for the well-being of our Nation, is very well-received. This is a bipartisan issue. People understand the importance of it, that – just to take two examples – build on Michael’s example. You know, polio – there was a time when people thought that iron lungs – expenditures on iron lungs would bankrupt the Nation. With HIV, we predicted that every bed in the Nation would be occupied with HIV patients. And each case, a vaccine [*or treatment was developed*]. ~ *Marc Tessier-Lavigne, Ph.D., President, Stanford University*

“We have other impending threats. With the aging of the population, Alzheimer’s, currently 5 million people in our country are afflicted with Alzheimer’s. By 2050 it’s predicted to be 13 million people. Think of the human suffering of them, their families. The economic cost also is supposed to balloon – is predicted to balloon from \$180 billion a year to a trillion dollars a year just to take care of those people. So we desperately need cures – therapies and cures. And that will only come through research. So the vitality of our research enterprise is essential to develop those new therapies and cures. It also creates jobs. So it creates cures, it creates jobs, it improves societal welfare.” ~ *Marc Tessier-Lavigne, Ph.D., President, Stanford University*

