

B. Joseph White: Resilience in Action – Part 1 of 3

Situation

With his stellar performance as interim president of the University of Michigan, it seemed B. Joseph White had the inside track in becoming its next president. However, when the Board of Regents elected the new president on May 29, 2002, it was not he who was chosen.

Background

Education

B. Joseph White completed his undergraduate studies, *magna cum laude*, in international economics at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in 1969. He went on to earn, with distinction, an MBA from Harvard University in 1971. In 1975, he became an assistant professor of organizational behavior and industrial relations while getting his PhD at Michigan. From 1981 to 1987, White served as vice president of Cummins Engine Company. Over his 26 years at Michigan, White worked his way up through the ranks, becoming dean of the Michigan Business School, now known as the Stephen M. Ross School of Business, in 1991.

Work Experience

As Business School dean, White increased its annual fundraising from \$5.5 million to \$26.5 million and grew the value of its endowment from \$35 million to \$260 million. White also doubled the operating budget of the business school from \$50 million when he took office to \$100 million in 2001.

In 1993, White helped to establish MAP – Multidisciplinary Action Projects – that serve to increase partnerships with outside organizations while at the same time increasing the experiential base of MBA education. Throughout his 10 years of deanship, White kept the Business School (MBA, BBA, and Executive Education programs) regularly in the top 10 of national rankings, and often in the top five.

With these impressive credentials, White was named interim president to succeed President Lee Bollinger, who left for Columbia University in late 2001. White knew his presidency might be short-lived, but that did not keep him from setting ambitious goals, while simultaneously carrying out the remaining objectives of former President Bollinger. His priorities as interim president included defending the university against