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UD Enters Field of Forecasting

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DAYTON, Ohio, October 6, 1975 --- With the recent formation of a new group within its Research Institute, the University of Dayton has formally entered the field of the forecasting of technological and social change. Ralph C. Lenz and Dr. Joseph P. Martino, both among the earliest and foremost of the theoretical and practical workers in the relatively new field of technological forecasting, form the nucleus of the new group.

The addition of technological and social forecasting capability now enables the Research Institute to respond to the needs of industry and all levels of government for scientifically-established estimates of future trends and conditions that will affect, or result from, today's decisions.

While decision-makers in industry and government have been dealing intuitively with problems in this area for many years, it is only within the past fifteen years that scientific methods have been available to help them determine the possible or probable course and effects of technological change. The pioneering publications in technological forecasting were Lenz's 1962 monograph, "Technological Forecasting" and extensive writings in the 1960's by Martino, including his comprehensive book, Technological Forecasting for Decision Making.

The growth of technological forecasting has come about because leading decision-makers have recognized that conditions will not remain as they are today. New technologies change both products and markets, demand new skills and cause others to become obsolete, shuffle the raw materials markets, and alter the balances of regional power and prosperity. Technology alters the lifestyles of societies, while the demands of society direct the course of technology. Decision-makers can no longer depend upon guesswork or intuition because their decisions will commit people and resources to a future which may be greatly changed by new technologies or social demands. The conditions likely to prevail at the time their decisions become realities must be considered when the decisions are made.

Scientifically-based forecasts make it possible to estimate the direction and magnitude of technological change, and to assess the social and economic impacts of the change. The new group, backed by the resources of the University of Dayton, will use technological forecasting to help industrial and governmental leaders plan current programs and new ventures with high confidence that today's decisions will be right for tomorrow's world. The group can consult on specific topics, prepare in-depth studies for broad or narrow areas of technology, and conduct seminars in the application of technological assessment and technological forecasting. They will also be able to provide consulting services for organizations who wish to establish their own forecasting activities.

The group has already completed a survey of innovative concepts in an area of national interest. In interviews with more than 20 major industrial and government sources, they evaluated almost 300 ideas and concepts which may reach practical application at times ranging from now until the year 2000. They are currently discussing other technological forecasting work with potential clients.

Mr. Lenz's experience in the field of technological forecasting dates back to 1958. He has extensive experience in planning the development of new systems, gained while in responsible positions with the Air Force and more recently in consulting work. He lectures on trend extrapolation methods of technological forecasting, and has written many articles on this topic which are frequently cited by others.

Dr. Martino, a recently-retired Colonel with the Air Force, has applied the techniques of systems analysis and operations research in research and development planning, and has prepared extensive technological forecasts.

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He has edited four books and written numerous reports on forecasting, and has consulted widely for both government and industrial organizations.

Dr. Martino and Mr. Lenz both serve in editorial capacities for the journal Technological Forecasting and Social Change. Dr. Martino is also a member of the editorial advisory boards of Transactions on Engineering Management and The Futurist.