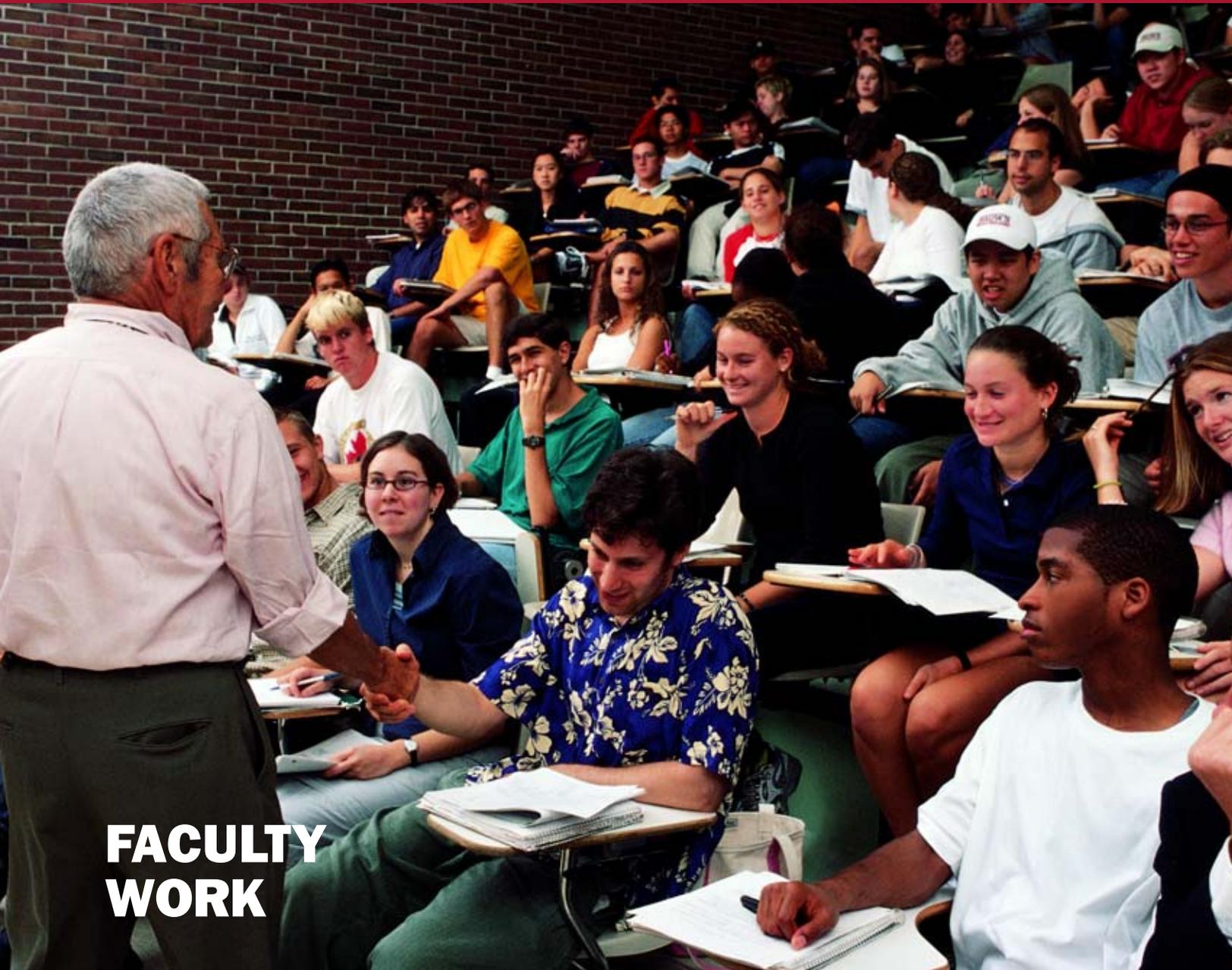


# Liberal Education

VOL. 92, NO. 4 ♦ FALL 2006

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES



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## FACULTY WORK

**The growth of nontenured full-time positions, the uses of adjunct faculty, and the demographic shifts in nontenured faculty are the result of arbitrary, expedient, short-term decisions rather than thoughtful planning for a radically different future**

—R. EUGENE RICE

♦ ♦ ♦

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Institutions committed to liberal education cannot shy away from the fundamental questions students are bringing with them about faith and the intellectual life, about the source and content of our ethical obligations, about the nature and meaning of the world and their place in it.



# Recognizing and Supporting Faculty Work

Faculty stand at the center of the academic enterprise, and their work is the key to educational quality. Since these uncontroversial observations are universally recognized, it is a cause for both surprise and dismay that faculty are almost entirely absent from the recently released report of the Spellings Commission on the Future of Higher Education.

In the commission's report, *A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education*, there is only one mention of faculty members, which appears near the end of the document. In that passage, faculty are charged to set "educational objectives" for students and to invent measures to assess their progress.

Apart from this cameo mention, faculty do not figure at all in the commission's vision for higher learning in America.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

My dismay over this surprising omission was deepened when I

visited the Web site of Neumont University, one of only a few educational institutions whose work is actually recommended in the draft report. Neumont, which offers a B.S. in technology fields and is nationally rather than regionally accredited, lists eighteen faculty members in all. Eighteen.

The commission calls for a new era of innovation in pedagogies, curricula, and technologies to help raise the level of learning for today's students. I endorse that call, of course. But I wish the commission had been willing to see what AAC&U staff and senior fellows see when we work with colleges and universities in our projects, conferences, and institutes, as well as on our hundreds of campus visits. From our active work with campuses, we know that tens of thousands of faculty members already are leading the development of educationally powerful learning innovations across all parts of postsecondary education.

As has been noted in an extensive series of reports from the Greater Expectations initiative, college campuses are dotted with "islands of innovation," including many that make rich use of the educational potential of technology. Many of these innovations are so widespread that they are already being studied by research scholars. And the evidence is mounting that many of these innovations have a particularly beneficial effect on students from less advantaged backgrounds—the very students to whom the Spellings Commission urges a new commitment.

First-year experiences and seminars, writing-intensive courses, learning communities, service learning, civic engagement, diversity learning, global studies, innovations in STEM disciplines,

undergraduate research, curriculum-embedded assessments . . . the list goes on and on. The real challenge before us is not to launch new innovations but to take such tested and effective educational practices to scale.

Unfortunately, the commission overlooked entirely these results of faculty—and staff—creativity and the emerging body of research showing the benefits of the new emphasis on student learning. A huge opportunity was lost that could have been used to build public interest and support for more active, hands-on, and public-spirited forms of learning.

I was tempted, really, as I read early drafts of the commission’s report, to send the members “emergency back subscriptions” to *Liberal Education*, *Peer Review*, *Diversity Digest*, and *On Campus with Women*. Collectively, AAC&U’s quarterlies (and many related journals) show the amazing degree of educational invention and change that is already occurring across higher education. When I look at higher education, I see far-reaching change in the making—albeit largely hidden from the view of the general public and still serving only a subset of our students.

Just as in primary and secondary education, the most important ingredient in quality college learning is effective teaching by well trained faculty members. If any point is well established by education research, it is that close interaction between faculty and students is among the most effective predictors of college completion and achievement.

Yet the future is not bright for the nation’s new and future faculty. As a result of recent and dramatic changes in faculty appointments across all sectors and fields, approximately half of all faculty members today are part-timers and a growing majority of new full-timers are without tenure and ineligible for it. There is grave cause for concern about the potential long-term impact of these structural changes on faculty roles, academic freedom, the mutual commitment of faculty members and institutions, the attractiveness of the academic career, and the amount of interaction between faculty and students.

**We will achieve none of our important priorities unless we make a new investment in the quality and vitality of the nation’s faculty**

We will achieve none of our important priorities—world class knowledge, access and success for underserved students, new synergy with the schools—unless we make a new investment in the quality and vitality of the nation’s faculty. And the first step is to recognize and honor the heroic and essential work that faculty already do.—CAROL GEARY SCHNEIDER

Owing to what Gene Rice identifies in this issue as “the result of arbitrary, expedient, short-term decisions rather than thoughtful planning,” the prototypical American scholar—the full-time tenured professor engaged in teaching, research, and institutional and professional service—is fast becoming an anachronism.

By 2001, less than 25 percent of new faculty appointments were being made to full-time tenure-track positions; roughly half of all new appointments are now part-time, and more than half of the remaining full-time positions are off the tenure track. In an article published here three years ago, Martin Finkelstein, drawing from ongoing research conducted with Jack Schuster, called attention to this startling development and argued that it amounts to a “new academic ‘revolution.’” Finkelstein and Schuster’s research collaboration has since culminated in *The American Faculty: The Restructuring of Academic Work and Careers*, an exhaustive and sobering examination of the trends contributing to this new academic revolution.

## FROM THE EDITOR

Finkelstein and Schuster point out that the traditional notion of faculty work as consisting in the in-

tegration of teaching, research, and service roles has been undermined by “an evolution in the nature and scope of the faculty’s work over the past quarter century.” Overall, they explain, there has been “a sharpening of focus—a narrowing of the scope—of faculty activities: teaching and, increasingly, research form the dyadic core, while other activities, such as administration and academic citizenship, are being relegated more and more to the periphery.” Thus, what is often described as the “unbundling” of faculty roles is being achieved at the expense of the service role.

What do the changes in the nature of academic appointments and in the nature and scope of faculty work mean for the future of the academic profession? What do they mean for academic freedom and shared governance?

In one way or another, each of the authors published in the Featured Topic section issues a warning. Gene Rice warns that the changes affecting faculty work are so significant that incremental approaches to reform will prove inadequate. Neil Hamilton warns that, if the failures of faculty professionalism he describes are not addressed through the intentional socialization of new and future faculty, the loss of professional autonomy may be inevitable. Stanley Aronowitz warns that the steady corporatization of American higher education is imperiling faculty governance. And Roger Baldwin and Deborah Chang warn that, through a lack of support for faculty in the middle phase of their careers, institutions are squandering a key resource.

Even as we continue to champion the value of a liberal education, we must ask ourselves whether an academy where the majority of undergraduate instruction is conducted by contingent faculty, and where arbitrary and shortsighted decisions are resulting in faculty disempowerment and limits to academic freedom, is an academy that can fulfill the promise of a quality liberal education for all students.—DAVID TRITELLI

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AAC&U invites manuscripts that promote liberal learning in a broad sense. For writer’s guidelines and other communications see [www.aacu.org/liberaleducation](http://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation), write to the editor of *Liberal Education* at the above address, or send e-mail to [tritelli@aacu.org](mailto:tritelli@aacu.org).

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**LEAP Pilot Initiative in Virginia**

Under the leadership of Senior Fellow Robert Shoenberg, AAC&U has launched a pilot effort in the state of Virginia. This campus action and public advocacy initiative will unfold over the next several years and serve as a model for other states.

This fall, a meeting of a newly-formed Virginia Leadership Council will be held at the University of Virginia. Members of the council will take the lead in formulating effective ways to (1) advance a public dialogue in Virginia about the aims and outcomes of a contemporary liberal education and (2) strengthen Virginia students' preparation, from school through college, for an innovation-fueled economy and for civic engagement, at home and abroad.

For a full listing of the members of the Virginia Leadership Council, and for additional information about the LEAP initiative in Virginia, see [www.aacu.org/advocacy/leap](http://www.aacu.org/advocacy/leap).

**Calls for Participation in Core Commitments**

As part of its Core Commitments: Educating Students for Personal and Social Responsibility project,

AAC&U invites all college and university presidents to pledge their leadership in a far-reaching re-engagement with issues of ethical and civic responsibility by signing a Call to Action.

Additionally, institutions are invited to apply for membership in the project's Leadership Consortium. The twenty schools selected will focus on assessing the effectiveness of efforts to develop key dimensions of personal and social responsibility in students.

For more information about the Call to Action and the Leadership Consortium, visit the project's Web site at [www.aacu.org/core\\_commitments](http://www.aacu.org/core_commitments).

**Bringing Theory to Practice Student Conference**

The Bringing Theory to Practice project will host its second annual student conference November 10–11, 2006. The "Student Leadership and Service Conference" is designed to encourage college students to reflect on their own attitudes and leadership abilities through areas of engaged learning and civic engagement.

Additional information is available online at [www.bringingtheorytopractice.org](http://www.bringingtheorytopractice.org).

**On Campus With Women Archives**

Old print issues of *On Campus with Women*, which became a purely Web-based publication in fall 2002, have been converted into PDF files. Archived copies dating back to the early 1990s are now available for downloading from [www.aacu.org/ocww](http://www.aacu.org/ocww).

**Wye Seminars Held for Faculty and Presidents**

Each summer, AAC&U and the Aspen Institute cosponsor two seminars at Aspen's Wye River Campus. This year's Wye Faculty Seminar, which was held July 22–28, gathered a diverse group of faculty in roundtable discussions that centered on citizenship, the American polity, and global values. The Wye Presidents' Seminar, which was held July 21–23, focused on the Middle East and explored the implications of fundamental values such as liberty, justice, and democracy.

**Upcoming Meetings**

October 19–21, 2006, *Diversity and Learning: A Defining Moment*, Network for Academic Renewal Meeting, Philadelphia, PA

November 9–11, 2006, *Faculty Work and the New Academy: Emerging Challenges and Evolving Roles*, Network for Academic Renewal Meeting, Chicago, IL

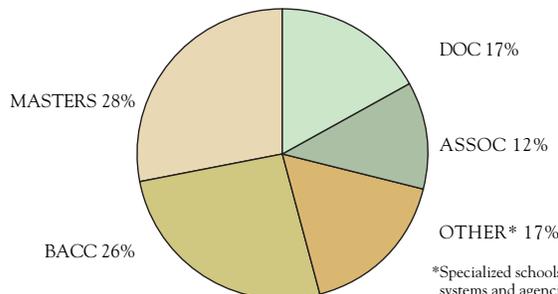
January 17–20, 2007, *The Real Test: Liberal Education and Democracy's Big Questions*, AAC&U Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA

March 1–3, *General Education and Assessment: Engaging Critical Questions, Fostering Critical Learning*, Network for Academic Renewal Meeting, Miami, FL

April 19–21, 2007, *The Student as Scholar: Undergraduate Research and Creative Practice*, Network for Academic Renewal Meeting, Long Beach, CA

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R. EUGENE RICE

## From Athens and Berlin to LA

# Faculty Work &

FEATURED TOPIC

IN SEARCHING FOR AN IMAGE that would best catch the future role of faculty in a changing, vibrant democracy, I—following the lead of Ralph Waldo Emerson—have often referred to “the new American scholar” (Rice 1991). That vision now has lost its resonance; the image has been seriously tarnished in the new global environment and become restricting. In probing for an alternative I have turned to Los Angeles, not because LA is an American city, but because it is an international—a transnational—city. LA is, as the University of Southern California boasts on its Web page, a “global city, the city of the future of the planet.” One visit and you are struck by the rich, pulsating diversity—a stimulating cultural mosaic. But LA is also the template for unplanned, sprawling, privatized growth; it is denigrated as the city with the largest number of backyard swimming pools and the smallest number of public parks. A city on the verge of gridlock, the

City of Angels is the place to encounter examples of the world’s best music, art, and architecture. LA represents the kind of dramatic change and promise the academy of the future will be called upon to address and serve.

In examining the role of faculty in the new academy, I want to underscore the significance of the changes taking place. Faculty, particularly, are prone to dismiss the changes they see coming as cyclical—“we’ve seen that before”—and minimize their impact. I then want to address our approach to change. The additive or incremental approach to reform will no longer suffice; a more transformative way of thinking about faculty work is required. It is important to build on the strengths of our past, symbolized here by references to the contributions of Athens and Berlin, while simultaneously exploring new ways to organize faculty work for the future, symbolized by LA.

### Approaches to change

Following World War II, and particularly during the expansionist years of the 1960s, the major changes made in higher education in the United States were genuinely transformative. The California Master Plan under the leadership of Clark Kerr is one example of such comprehensive, holistic change. The explosive growth in community colleges across the country is another.

My own experience led me directly from graduate work at Harvard in 1964 to participate in the founding of Raymond College, an experimental college at the University of the Pacific. Those were exciting, heady times. Cluster colleges, as they were called, were erected from the ground up. They were living-learning communities in the fullest sense. Raymond College was intentionally patterned after Oxford and Cambridge: students graduated in three years; a complete liberal arts curriculum was required (one-third humanities, one-third social sciences, one-third math and natural sciences); there were no majors; and narrative evaluations were used instead of letter grades.

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R. EUGENE RICE is a senior scholar at AAC&U.

**The additive or incremental approach to reform will no longer suffice; a more transformative way of thinking about faculty work is required**



# the New Academy



While approaching change in a transformative way, the experimental colleges of the 1960s were, by and large, counterrevolutionary. They came into being in opposition to the dominance of the large research-oriented universities. They were opposed to the rise of an academic hegemony dominated by an increasingly professionalized, research-oriented, discipline-driven, specialized faculty. The counter-vision was a more intimate, democratic, student-oriented learning community. These institutions—365 by one count—were decidedly utopian and often naive in their assumptions. They took on an academic juggernaut

of enormous proportions and, in doing so, often met with defeat. Nonetheless, these experimental institutions launched the movement from teaching to learning that continues to have an impact on the academic environment and, particularly, the role of faculty.

The faculty who participated in the launching of the experimental colleges in the 1960s were part of a much larger cohort—a group of early-career faculty who shared a vision for higher education. They saw themselves not as independent scholars bent on hustling a burgeoning academic market—and there were jobs and opportunities aplenty—but as contributors



University of  
Wisconsin-  
Milwaukee

to the building of institutions that would shape the future of higher education in the society. For their associational life, these faculty were attracted not as much to their disciplinary associations as to what was then the Association of American Colleges and the American Association for Higher Education. Many of these same people provided the leadership, ideas, and energy that drove the undergraduate education reform movements of subsequent decades.

In the 1970s, the approach to change shifted from building whole new institutions to reforming what was already in place. The movements to reform undergraduate education that

were launched in the last three decades of the twentieth century were creative, energetic, and initiated in response to serious needs. They were, however, added on at the margins and, in most places, conceptualized and organized to be institutionally peripheral. Every one of these initiatives was important and contributed something significant, beginning with faculty development and followed by the assessment movement, service learning, learning communities, technologically enhanced instruction, problem-based learning, diversity programs, and community-based research. In each case, the reform effort was usually sustained at the margins of the institution and, therefore, created serious problems for faculty—especially the junior faculty most excited about participating in the change initiative.

In only a few places have these important reforms been integrated into the central mission of the institution, structured into the reward system, and built into the life of the departments regarded by most faculty as their institutional home. The additive approach has been utilized so often that, for some faculty, the term “reform” has been sullied; it is viewed as another task imposed by the provost or dean. For that cohort of faculty involved in the experimental colleges of the 1960s, being involved in more holistic changes provided the excitement and the challenge of being in higher education. The more recent approach to change has made innovative reform initiatives distractions from what is perceived as central and genuinely valued in a professional career.

#### **Athens**

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2005) recently asked students from six leading liberal arts colleges to rank, first, their own educational goals and, second, their perceptions of the goals of their institutions. The students reported that their primary goal in attending college was “learning to find happiness.” Of seventeen items, the goal ranked at the bottom was “a broad liberal arts education.” At the same time, when asked about their perceptions of the goals of their institutions, the students put “a broad liberal arts education” at or near the top. What is striking is that these students saw no connection between “learning to find happiness” and a “broad liberal arts education.”



For the ancient Athenian philosophers to whom we look for much of our understanding of what we regard as quality education, the connection between liberal education and “learning to find happiness” was central. This was particularly true for Aristotle. For Aristotle—and later for Thomas Jefferson, who used Aristotle’s phrase “the pursuit of happiness” in this nation’s Declaration of Independence—happiness had a much broader meaning than it has now. In fairness to the students interviewed as part of Csikszentmihalyi’s study, we need to acknowledge that the meaning of the term happiness has been allowed to degenerate into a subjective feeling of momentary pleasure. Happiness was, for the ancient Athenian philosophers, the highest good (*eudaimonia*); it was the deep sense of satisfaction that comes with the development of our uniquely human capacities. Happiness, for Aristotle, meant “a complete life led in accordance with virtue”; “the highest of all goods achievable by action”; “the supreme end to which we aspire” (O’Toole 2005, 28–30). All of these meanings are congruent with the most fundamental purposes of a liberal education, yet as Csikszentmihalyi’s student interviews indicate, we obviously have failed to make the connection.

In *Orators and Philosophers: A History of the Idea of Liberal Education* (1986), Bruce Kimball argues that out of ancient Athens came two traditions that shape the work of faculty in liberal education. The first is the tradition of the philosophers, which holds that the pursuit of knowledge is the highest good (Socrates and Plato). The second focuses on the development of character and the building of community through the cultivation of leadership (Cicero). These two traditions persist today and, presently, divide faculty committed to taking the liberal arts seriously.

I recently participated in a Wingspread conference titled “Religion and Public Life: Engaging Higher Education.” We began with research from the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California–Los Angeles that shows that a large percentage of students want to address questions of meaning and purpose, but also that students perceive that faculty are hesitant to engage larger religious and spiritual questions (Astin et al. 2005). In the subsequent discussion, the classical division between the philosophers and orators surfaced.

Thoughtful religious studies faculty argued that the key function of the professor is the pursuit of knowledge, and the cultivation of the skills that requires, unencumbered with responsibilities for character development and civic engagement. They argued persuasively that the new breed of “change agents” ought to leave them free to pursue their subject matter, that the open discussion of carefully chosen texts will raise the larger questions of meaning. As examples, they cited Saul Bellow’s *Seize the Day*, Augustine’s *Confessions*, and Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*. As one professor put it, “we don’t want to be therapists or community organizers.”

On the other side, equally persuasive faculty contended that the professoriate needs to be attentive to what we are learning about learning, student development, and the power of actively engaged learning. They invoked the responsibilities of higher education in a diverse democracy. The two major thrusts of faculty work in liberal education—and their conflicts—were fully evident in this recent discussion. Much of our understanding of liberal education and the role of faculty continues to be solidly rooted in the scholarly traditions of ancient Athens.

### **Berlin**

The second city that fundamentally shaped our understanding of faculty work is Berlin. Toward the latter part of the nineteenth century, a radically new approach to scholarship was imported from Germany and profoundly influenced the conception of the faculty role in the new American university. The understanding of what was to be regarded as scholarly work narrowed and began to be defined as specialized, discipline-based research. With the conceptual shift came a new organizational structure of graduate education with its research laboratories and specialized seminars. Newly organized disciplines and departments began to assume a dominant place in the new research universities. A powerful vision of the priorities of the professoriate began to take hold, one that has gathered strength and demonstrated enormous resilience over the years.

This vision was articulated best by Max Weber (1946) in a lecture entitled “Science as a Vocation,” which he delivered in 1918 at the University of Munich. Weber spoke of the “inner desire” that drives the scholar to the

cutting edge of a field, and talked eloquently about the “ecstasy” that comes only to the specialist on the frontiers of knowledge who engages in advanced research. The assumption was that if the passion for research were pursued wholeheartedly, the quality of teaching and what we now call service would fall into place. The moral obligation of the teacher was, for Weber, “to ask inconvenient questions.”

After the Soviet Union launched Sputnik in 1957 and the Cold War began to heat up, the infusion of federal funding for scientific research further constricted the dominant understanding of scholarly work. With the rapid expansion and affluence of colleges and universities during what is often referred to as the heyday of American higher education, a consensus emerged to form what I have described elsewhere as “the assumptive world of the academic professional” (1986). The central characteristics of that dominant professional image were the focus on research; the preservation of quality through peer review and the maintenance of professional autonomy; the pursuit of knowledge through the discipline; the establishment of reputations through international professional associations; and the accentuation of one’s specialization.

The consensus that formed around this set of values and commitments is still solidly engrained in graduate education and continues to shape the socialization of the new generations of faculty. At tenure and promotion time in much of higher education—and particularly in the most prestigious institutions—this assumptive world continues to be normative. It becomes particularly dominant when professional mobility emerges as a possibility, as is happening now in many fields. During the last three decades of the twentieth century, tremendous energy and extensive resources were poured into cultivating new priorities for faculty, and imaginative reform initiatives were launched across higher education. But the new efforts to reform undergraduate education were introduced on the margins of institutions—to be added onto what faculty were already doing.

A major study of faculty just launching their careers found that many are overwhelmed

**Early-career faculty  
are feeling  
extraordinary pressure  
and are beginning to  
question whether  
the career  
that has evolved  
is even viable**

(Rice, Sorcinelli, and Austin 2000). These early-career faculty are caught between the times; they have to meet the demands of the research-oriented “assumptive world,” while also responding to the attractions and demands of the new reform agenda.

Junior faculty consistently report having to cope with what they regard as “over-flowing plates.” As higher education begins to take seriously the demands for change in undergraduate education, early-career faculty are feeling extraordinary pressure and are beginning to question whether the career that has evolved is even viable. Questions are being raised about whether the best of a new generation can be attracted into the profession. We can no longer pursue an add-on approach to the changing faculty role; something more comprehensive is required.

**Los Angeles**

While these changes in the academic profession and on campuses are taking place, the larger context within which faculty conduct their work is undergoing a major transformation. This brings us to the third city, Los Angeles. Kingsley Davis (1973) made a career of reminding us that “demography is destiny.” LA represents in a dramatic way the size and the complexity of the changes with which we have to grapple.

The sheer demographic pressures on higher education are startling—new students, new immigrant communities, new demands. The rich diversity found in places like the LA basin is emerging not only as a difficult challenge, but also as an opportunity. It is an educational value and a catalyst. Moreover, the majority of the nation’s students are first-generation learners. How do we prepare faculty to build on the vision of academic excellence? How do faculty prepare students for life in an inclusive democracy?

At the same time, we have moved into a global century. We are interdependent, whether we like it or not. To succeed in the twenty-first-century environment, graduates will need to be intellectually resilient, cross-culturally literate, technologically adept, and fully prepared for a future of continuous and cross-disciplinary learning. And yet, as Clifford

Adelman (1999) has demonstrated, less than 10 percent of today's four-year graduates leave college globally prepared. What does all of this mean for faculty preparation?

The new context requires a rethinking of faculty work. The growth of nontenured full-time positions, the uses of adjunct faculty, and the demographic shifts in nontenured faculty—more female, diverse, and older—are the result of arbitrary, expedient, short-term decisions rather than thoughtful planning for a radically different future. The current generational change in the makeup of the American professoriate provides an extraordinary opportunity. We need to make sure that the changes are carefully planned and make for a coherent whole.

We already have shifted the focus from faculty to learning. Shaping an academic staff to prepare students for participation in an interdependent global community where innovation is vital for success presents a different kind of challenge.

Getting faculty to change the way they think about their work—moving from an individualistic approach (“my work”) to a more collaborative approach (“our work”)—is a critical transition that challenges deeply rooted

### **The scholarship of integration is required to sustain liberal learning**

professional assumptions. Related to this is the call for “unbundling” the faculty role. I've resisted this development in the interest of the “complete scholar,” a concept that values

continuity and coherence, but I am losing the argument. What is already being called for are new “networks for learning” that will reach across academic staff and into the larger community. New ways of reintegrating what we have known in the past as faculty work will need to be developed.

Over the past several years, a tension has emerged between the established “collegial culture” among faculty and a growing “managerial culture” in our colleges and universities. Each culture is driven by an economy that exerts enormous power; on the collegial side is the prestige economy, and on the managerial side is the market economy. Rethinking faculty work and structuring academic work in a way that best serves a dynamic and responsive new academy will require addressing this tension and moving toward a more collaborative culture. The overpowering influences of both the prestige economy and the market economy must be superceded by a primary commitment to the kind of learning required for a knowledge-driven, interdependent world.

### **Coalition on the Academic Workforce**

The Coalition on the Academic Workforce was established in 1997 by a group of disciplinary and higher education associations, including AAC&U, concerned about the dramatic increase in “contingent,” or non-tenure-track, faculty appointments. Its purposes are

- to collect and disseminate information on the use of contingent faculty and the implications for students, parents, faculty members, and institutions;
- to articulate and clarify differences in the extent and consequences of changes in the faculty within and among the various academic disciplines and fields of study;
- to evaluate the short- and long-term consequences for society and the public good of changes in the academic workforce;
- to identify and promote strategies for solving the problems created by inappropriate uses of part-time, adjunct, and similar faculty appointments;
- to strengthen teaching and scholarship.

For more information, visit [www.academicworkforce.org](http://www.academicworkforce.org).

### The future of scholarship

As it is evolving, the broader conception of scholarship provides an opportunity to rethink the scholarly work of faculty in a way that is genuinely transformative and begins to address the scholarly needs of the LAs of the world. AAC&U has argued that narrow learning is not enough. I want to agree and add a necessary corollary: narrow scholarship is not enough. The scholarship of discovery is essential for a diverse and interdependent global community, but it is not enough. The scholarship of integration is required to sustain liberal learning. Thanks to the energetic leadership of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the scholarship of teaching and learning is now well established and is receiving widespread international attention.

The scholarship of engagement, which is only beginning to attract the attention it deserves, will require the greatest change in our thinking about what counts as scholarship. In the future, the walls of the academy will become increasingly permeable. Academics on the inside will be moving out into the larger world, and many on the outside will be moving in. There is serious concern about college and university faculty becoming disengaged, particularly at a time when knowledge creation is at the heart of economic development. Civic engagement and social responsibility can hardly be expected of the students of the future if faculty are not themselves engaged and responsible in their scholarly work.

In order for this form of scholarship to be taken seriously, the role of the scholar must change significantly. This will require a shift in our basic epistemological assumptions. No longer can we speak of the application of knowledge and assume that faculty in the university will generate new knowledge and apply it to the external world. Our understanding of who constitute peers for the peer review process will have to be reevaluated. The relationship between cosmopolitan knowledge and local knowledge will have to be reconsidered. Community-based research and the role of the public scholar will have to be viewed in a new light. We can no longer avoid honoring the wisdom of practice.

Ironically, in thinking about the scholarly work of faculty in this very programmatic, instrumental society, practice has been widely ignored, if not denigrated. Only recently, in

reading the reflections of the Beat poet Gary Snyder (1990) on the power of meditative practice in the Buddhist tradition, have I come to a fuller appreciation of practice. He writes: "Practice is the path.... Practice puts you out there where the unknown happens, where you encounter surprise." As colleges and universities struggle to take seriously the intellectual and social needs of the LAs of this world, we must be more open to the "surprise" that comes with practical engagement in this new global, diverse, interdependent context. □

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NEIL HAMILTON

# Faculty Professionalism

## Failures of Socialization and the Road

FEATURED TOPIC

IN THE TRADITION of peer review, the members of a profession form with society an unwritten contract whereby society grants the profession autonomy to govern itself and, in return, the members of the profession agree to meet correlative personal and collegial group duties to society. The members of the profession agree to restrain self-interest to some degree in order to serve the public purpose of the profession (knowledge creation and dissemination, in the case of the academic profession), to promote

the ideals and core values of the profession, and to maintain high standards of minimum performance. In return, society allows the profession substantial autonomy to regulate itself through peer review. For the individual professional, this translates into substantial autonomy and discretion in work. The concept of “professionalism” captures these correlative personal and collegial group duties to society. Failures of professionalism undermine society’s confidence that a profession and its individual members can be trusted with professional autonomy.

The social contract is stated in the 1915 Declaration of Principles of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP 2001, 300):

It is conceivable that our profession may prove unworthy of its high calling, and unfit to exercise the responsibilities that belong to it . . . . And the existence of this Association . . . must be construed as a pledge, not only that the profession will earnestly guard

those liberties without which it cannot rightly render its distinctive and indispensable service to society, but also that it will with equal earnestness seek to maintain such standards of professional character, and of scientific integrity and competency, as shall make it a fit instrument for that service.

University or college<sup>1</sup> boards of trustees or regents represent society with respect to the social contract between society and the academic profession. The AAUP declaration states that these boards are in a position of “public trust” to represent the public’s interest in realizing the knowledge creation and dissemination mission of the university.

In the context of the academic profession, the concept of academic freedom and the central role of peer review with respect to it represent the professional autonomy granted by the social contract. As the American tradition of academic freedom evolved over the course of the past century, boards have acknowledged the importance of freedom of inquiry and speech to the university’s unique mission of creating and disseminating knowledge. Accordingly, they have granted rights of exceptional vocational freedom of speech to professors in research, teaching, and extramural utterance without lay interference on two conditions. The first condition is that individual professors meet correlative duties of professional competence and ethical conduct, and the second is that the faculty, as a collegial body, assume the duty of peer review to enforce the obligations to be met by individual professors. This tradition of faculty autonomy in the peer review of professional competence and ethical conduct is the linchpin of academic freedom in the United States.

Early AAUP leaders accepted the legal and political impregnability of university charters and employment law that dictated lay, not

**If a significant proportion of the faculty fails in the duties of professionalism, the social contract is undermined and a long-term erosion of professional autonomy is inevitable**

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## to Loss of Professional Autonomy

faculty, control. They proposed the idea of administrative restraint. In the 1915 Declaration of Principles, they called for faculty participation in the prosecutorial and judicial processes of the university relating to faculty and students. This is the concept of peer review through academic due process.

Later AAUP documents softened the idea of board legal control into a concept of shared governance in decision making. While it concedes that the governing board is, by law, the final institutional authority, the concept of shared governance urges that the missions of the university and the professoriate are best realized by granting varying degrees of deference to faculty decisions, depending on how closely they relate to the faculty's expert disciplinary knowledge concerning research and teaching. The faculty deserves maximum deference on core academic issues like appointments, promotion and tenure, and the curriculum. Both peer review and shared governance are embedded in an earned deference tradition.

“Faculty professionalism” defines the ethical duties required by the social contract for each professor as well as for the relevant groups of professional peers. The following six principles of faculty professionalism capture the correlative duties of academic freedom, including a faculty member's contributions to peer review and shared governance.

1. Each professor agrees to meet the ethics of duty—the minimum standards of competence and ethical conduct set by peers within both the profession and discipline and within the university (including attending to the stated mission of the institution).<sup>2</sup>
2. Each professor should strive, over a career, to realize the ethics of aspiration—the ideals and core values of the academic profession, the professor's discipline, and the professor's



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- institution, including internalizing the highest standards for professional skills.
3. Each professor agrees to act as a fiduciary (with the corresponding duty to avoid conflicts of interest) where his or her self-interest is over-balanced by devotion to serving both the students through teaching and the advancement of knowledge through scholarship.<sup>3</sup>
  4. Each professor should, over a career, grow in personal conscience in carrying out the duties of the profession, including the capacity for both self-scrutiny and moral discourse with colleagues, students, administrative leadership, and the board.
  5. Each professor and the members of the faculty as a collegial body agree both to hold each other accountable to meet the minimum standards of the profession, the discipline, and their institution, and to encourage each other to realize the ideals and core values of all three.
  6. Each professor agrees both that public service in the area of the profession's fiduciary responsibility is implicit in the profession's social contract and that he or she should devote professional time to public service.

### **The socialization of faculty**

The reality is that the vast majority of the professoriate receives virtually no formal education on the ethics of the profession. We assume that an osmosis-like diffusion in the apprenticeship model will transmit the principles of the social contract, academic freedom, and faculty professionalism from one generation to the next. Yet the available evidence indicates that, for the vast majority of students, virtually no time is spent in graduate study on professional ethics (Brown and Kalichman 1988).

There are three national, multi-institutional socialization initiatives. I am not aware of any survey of individual institutions reporting initiatives on socialization concerning some or all of the principles of professionalism. Two major national initiatives are the response of universities to (1) federal mandates that require research institutions receiving federal funds to bear primary responsibility for the prevention of research misconduct and (2) the National Institutes of Health training grant requirement that universities provide instruction in the responsible conduct of research (RCR) to

training grant recipients. With respect to the first initiative, current Public Health Service Policies on Research Misconduct require institutions to “foster a research environment that promotes the responsible conduct of research, research training, and activities related to that research or research training, discourages research misconduct, and deals promptly with allegations or evidence of possible research misconduct” (Public Health Service 2005, 28388).

The mission of the Office of Research Integrity (ORI) includes a focus on educational programs to prevent misconduct and promote the responsible conduct of research. ORI is encouraging and funding efforts by disciplinary societies and universities to develop educational programs that engage faculty members with research ethics. Many research universities make available RCR training materials, and some require RCR training for researchers. The focus has been on medical and biological sciences, with a growing interest in social and behavioral sciences.

Although they constitute a major faculty professionalism effort, these initiatives emphasize research ethics and the sciences, not all the disciplines of the university. They do not deal with broader issues of academic ethics in terms of teaching, service, shared governance, and intramural and extramural utterance other than teaching and research. And they appear to lean towards the ethics of duty, rather than the ethics of aspiration and the other principles of professionalism.

In a third national initiative, from 1993 to 2003, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) organized the Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program. PFF provided doctoral students “with opportunities to observe and experience faculty responsibilities at a variety of academic institutions” (see [www.preparing-faculty.org](http://www.preparing-faculty.org)). The PFF programs addressed the full scope of faculty roles and responsibilities, including teaching, research, and service, and provided participating students with multiple mentors who gave reflective feedback in all three areas. Implicit in understanding faculty roles and responsibilities, observing role models, and having mentors are many of the principles of faculty professionalism. However, only some PFF programs explicitly included faculty professionalism.

Since 1993, approximately 295 universities have participated in PFF, and an additional twenty-five individual institutions have initiated campus-wide or departmental programs or courses that are similar to the PFF program. The principal funding for PFF ended in 2003. Although outside funding is no longer available to establish additional programs, most campuses and disciplinary society PFF programs continue, and some new PFF-type programs continue to develop using institutional funds. A major independent assessment of PFF was very favorable, finding that both graduate student participants and senior faculty evaluating the participants thought that the program improved teaching skills in particular, and to a lesser degree research skills (Goldsmith et al. 2004). Over four thousand doctoral students have enrolled in PFF since 1993, but this number is still a small fraction of all future faculty.

As of 2000, some of the professional disciplinary societies—approximately one-quarter to one-third—had adopted comprehensive, clear, and accessible codes of ethics; some societies had codes of ethics addressing only selected ethics issues, and some essentially had not yet developed a code of ethics (Hamilton 2002). Of those disciplinary associations that

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did have a code of ethics, few knew if their codes were working. Mark Frankel, director of the Scientific Freedom, Responsibility, and Law program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), found the lack of knowledge about the impact of codes of ethics to be “one of the most striking aspects of the

AAAS’s 1999–2000 survey of disciplinary societies’ codes of ethics” (Brainard 2000, A38). Although many of the disciplinary associations in the AAAS survey were willing to expend time, effort, and resources to promote research integrity through codes and activities, they were not “engaging in any systematic assessment of the effectiveness of their efforts” (Iverson, Frankel, and Siang 2003, 150).

**Faculty understanding and compliance**

In contrast to scholarship about the ethics of its sister peer-review professions, law and medicine, the professoriate tends not to study its own ethics. Academic ethics is not a significant field of study, although the subfield of RCR is getting some attention. This general lack of attention to and complacency about the social contract and professionalism speaks volumes about the profession’s ability to maintain the public’s trust.



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Three studies indicate widespread failure of graduate students and faculty to understand the social contract, academic freedom, and the principles of faculty professionalism (Clark 1987; Swazey, Anderson, and Louis 1993; Golde and Dore 2001). One of these—a major study of two thousand faculty in chemistry, civil engineering, microbiology, and sociology—found that just 13 percent of the respondents judged that the faculty in their department exercised a great deal of shared responsibility for the conduct of their colleagues (Swazey, Louis, and Anderson 1994). There are no studies making contrary findings.

The major studies of actual faculty misconduct in terms of violations of the principles of professionalism also indicate serious failures. Analyzing all research misconduct studies conducted through 2005, Nicholas Steneck (2006, 53) concludes that the accumulated evidence “appears to put the level of occurrence for serious misconduct near 1 percent” (serious misconduct defined as fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism and referring to 1 percent of research

studies or articles). Steneck further concludes that the incidence of questionable research practices is higher (questionable practices violate traditional values of the research enterprise and may be detrimental to the research process). While nearly all of these studies focus on the sciences, there is no reason to believe that professional misconduct is less common in the social sciences or the humanities.

If serious misconduct occurs in approximately 1 percent of the research studies or articles, and questionable research practices occur in a substantially higher proportion of studies and articles, then how serious is the problem? If studies showed that in 1 percent of all litigation matters a lawyer committed serious misconduct (fabrication or falsification of evidence or theft of the client’s money), or that in 1 percent of all patient matters physicians committed serious misconduct, there would be moral outrage both within the profession and in society. The public would demand to know what the profession is doing about the misconduct. If the answer were that the legal and medical professions were doing nothing in response to these levels of misconduct, the moral outrage would intensify.

The available data as a whole demonstrate that the osmosis-like diffusion of professional ethics on which the professoriate currently relies has substantially failed to realize a generational renewal of the social contract. Osmosis-like diffusion fails to produce clear understandings of the social contract, academic freedom, and faculty professionalism.

### **Reasons for the failure to socialize**

#### ***The desire for autonomy in work***

Individuals drawn to the peer-review professions strongly desire autonomy in their work. Swazey, Anderson, and Louis (1993) conclude that the culture of the academic profession everywhere emphasizes personal autonomy, which takes strong precedence over a norm of collegial self-governance. Braxton and Bayer (1994) find empirical evidence that professional solidarity—allowing each individual professor a maximum degree of autonomy—shapes attitudes toward research misconduct in general and toward taking action against wrongdoing in a particular case. In order to protect maximum individual autonomy in work, peer collegia tend to abdicate the role of effective peer review, permitting even gross deviance in performance.



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### ***The increasing size of the professoriate***

The joint AAC (American Association of Colleges, now AAC&U) and AAUP Commission on Academic Tenure in Higher Education observed in 1973 that, historically, institutions were able “to rely on individual self-discipline and the informed correctives of collegial associations” to ensure that general professional standards were enforced. However, the commission found that the campus turmoil of the late 1960s presented “acute problems of professional conduct, for which broad general professional standards and traditional reliance upon individual self-discipline” were inadequate. The commission believed that “the vast and rapid growth of the profession in recent years has surely weakened the forces of professional tradition” (Commission on Academic Tenure in Higher Education 1973, 41–43).

The profession has continued to expand from approximately 369,000 full-time and 104,000 part-time faculty in 1970 to 632,000 full-time and 543,000 part-time faculty in 2003, further weakening the social capital of and opportunities for mentoring in the profession (National Center for Education Statistics 2004). The loss of norms is predictable in a profession whose numbers increase dramatically while no new institutions appear to build communities around common norms and expectations.

### ***Increasing specialization and consulting opportunities***

The growth of specialization, the increasing emphasis on disciplinary recognition in scholarship, the emphasis on success in securing grants and contracts in some disciplines, and the expansion of off-campus consulting and entrepreneurial opportunities for some disciplines all have fragmented the profession. Because of the market pressure to define all relationships in terms of private advantage, “professionalism” has a tendency to drift toward a link between strong technical professional skills and private market advantage in a discipline rather than to focus on all the principles of faculty professionalism (see Sullivan 2005).

### ***Lack of a licensing authority***

The professoriate’s sister professions, law and medicine, have stepped forward to require educational engagements on ethics and professionalism for graduate students and, in some

states, for licensed professionals. Socialization is made more difficult for the academic profession because it lacks the advantages of being one discipline rather than many, a licensing authority in each state that governs the profession, and a single accrediting authority for professional education.

### ***Fear of acknowledging lack of expert knowledge***

Professors are experts in specialized areas of knowledge, but many veteran faculty members have only a limited formal education regarding professional ethics. They experience discomfort when asked to engage in critical self-analysis, discussion, or teaching of professional ethics.

### ***Results of the failure to socialize***

Without proper socialization to counterbalance self-interest and market pressures, too many faculty members tend strongly toward self-interest in terms of emphasis on protecting autonomy, job security, or personal advantage. They tend to avoid both the more difficult tasks of peer review and an enlightened shared governance that is responsive to changing conditions and the institution’s needs. Some faculty members adopt knee-jerk blocking strategies with respect to institutional change. This excessive emphasis on self-interest and prerogative undermines governing board and administrative leadership deference for faculty decisions.

If a significant proportion of the faculty fails in the duties of professionalism, the social contract is undermined and a long-term erosion of professional autonomy is inevitable. When a significant proportion of the accounting profession chose self-interest over professionalism, the Congress passed the Sarbanes-Oxley legislation, which largely took away the profession’s autonomy to regulate itself. For the same reason, the Congress also sent a shot across the bow of the legal profession by authorizing the Securities and Exchange Commission to substitute a regulation for the profession’s own rule on the representation of corporations.

We see the same phenomenon of erosion of autonomy in the academic profession in several respects. In response to the faculty’s focus on job security rather than both institutional mission and responsiveness to increasingly dynamic market conditions, the governing

boards and administrations at many institutions have moved substantially toward part-time and non-tenure-eligible appointments. From 1969 to 1998, the expansion of the part-time faculty was enormous, jumping 164 percent at universities, compared to 59 percent for full-time faculty; 236 percent at other four-year institutions, compared to 36 percent for full-time faculty; and 801 percent at the two-year colleges, compared to 55 percent for full-time faculty. In addition, by the late 1990s, the majority of new full-time appointments in higher education were to non-tenure-eligible positions. The best estimate is that, by 2003, approximately 34.8 percent of all full-time faculty were in non-tenure-eligible positions, but this proportion is growing rapidly, especially among the four-year institutions (Schuster and Finkelstein 2006).

The federal government has had to mandate that universities accepting federal research funds address research misconduct. Because some faculties fail in their duties of professionalism to provide shared governance consultation that is both reasonably timely and professionally competent given dynamic market realities of a decision, some boards and administrations seek minimal faculty consultation. In any case, a faculty dominated by

**A faculty dominated by part-time and non-tenure-eligible professors has limited time to participate in meaningful shared governance**

part-time and non-tenure-eligible professors has limited time to participate in meaningful shared governance.

A reasonable hypothesis is that the growth of the for-profit sector of higher education, and its success in reshaping government and accreditation policies in its favor, are greater than would have been the case if faculty at institutions threatened by for-profits had demonstrated greater professionalism.<sup>4</sup> Finally, corporations funding research increasingly limit professional autonomy through restrictive commercial agreements.

**What should be done?**

The empirical data on (1) faculty understanding of the social contract, academic freedom, and faculty professionalism and (2) the incidence of research misconduct indicate a failure to renew the social contract. We are not fulfilling the pledge made in the 1915 Declaration of Principles that the profession “will with equal earnestness seek to maintain such standards of professional character, and of scientific integrity and competency, as shall make it a fit instrument for [its high calling and responsibilities]” (AAUP 2001, 300). Complacency, the dominant ethos of the profession concerning socialization of new and veteran professors on these topics, will lead to continuing erosion of professional autonomy. Ultimately, this path will end in a future where the academic profession is no longer a peer-review profession.

My experience tells me that the academic profession cannot by itself break out of its complacency. We need help from outside groups who understand the importance of a healthy academic profession. The most effective potential sources of such help are the governing board and administrative leadership at each institution; the accrediting authorities; national academic organizations like AAC&U, the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, and AAUP; and federal and state governments.

The professional societies are part of the profession, but they can play a modest role in addressing these issues. There are few scholars on faculty professionalism, but they can play a useful role in developing an emerging field. Of the potential sources of help, the federal and



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state governments are the least desirable alternative because they pose the greatest risk of excessive external control of the university.

The most important step is simply to encourage, engage, and support the professoriate in its assessment of professors' knowledge and effectiveness regarding the social contract and the principles of faculty professionalism. The professoriate should also assess its effectiveness in fostering professional identity formation in both new and veteran professors. If efforts to encourage and cajole the profession into self-assessment fail, then the board and administrative leadership at individual institutions will need to intervene and direct the profession to undertake self-assessment.

Self-assessment will provide clear evidence of the failures discussed here, and this information will provoke the profession into action. If self-assessment shows failure, and the profession does nothing, the academic profession will ultimately forfeit its rights under the social contract and lose its autonomy. □

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#### NOTES

1. Hereafter "university" includes both colleges and universities with a significant knowledge-creation mission.
2. By acceptance of employment at a particular institution, a professor agrees to attend to the institution's specific mission. In the event of conflicts among duties to the profession, the discipline, and the institution, those articulated by the institution are normally the only legally enforceable duties (the institution normally would incorporate those duties required by federal or state law into the institution's rules). However, a professor should aspire to the highest ideals and core values of the profession, discipline, and institution, and so should seek to fulfill whichever duties are the highest.
3. Implicit in a professor's fiduciary duty is a continuing reflective engagement, over a career, on how much private advantage in work is appropriate in light of the six principles of professionalism. Private advantage includes, for example, excessive emphasis on income through consulting, slacking conduct in terms of failure to work a professional work week, and shirking conduct in terms of failure to undertake a fair share of shared governance duties.
4. The for-profit sector of higher education now has one million students. Annual enrollment increases in the for-profit higher education sector have been running as high as 18 percent and predicted enrollment growth is 10–17 percent for the next several years (Blumenstyk 2006).

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STANLEY ARONOWITZ

# Should Academic Unions Get Involved in Governance?

THE STEADY CORPORATIZATION of American higher education has threatened to relegate faculty governance, never strong, to the historical archive. In the twentieth century, many scholars—notably Thorstein Veblen, Robert S. Lynd, C. Wright Mills, and Richard Hofstadter—deplored the tendency for boards of trustees

and high-level administrators to concentrate power in their own hands and for corporations and corporate foundations to play a more prominent role in governance of some institutions of higher learning. Nonetheless, this has already come to pass. The past quarter century has witnessed a powerful trend toward the disenfranchisement of faculty. The introduction of online degrees in public and private colleges and universities, the reshaping of curricula to meet particular corporate needs, the systematic starving of the liberal and fine arts amid the expansion of technical and business programs, and the increasing importance of competitive sports are just some of the elements of the vast transformation that has spared few institutions. Added to these are the openly sanctioned comparison between college presidents and corporate CEOs and the unembarrassed justification of paying academic presidents high six-figure salaries.

Where are the forces that are prepared to defend true higher learning? Who will address the new challenges to academic autonomy posed by proposals for periodic tenure review,

the signs that some administrators are prepared to use political and ideological criteria in tenure cases, and the thorny question of who owns the intellectual property generated by faculty innovations? In short, how can we defend the fragile institutions of academic freedom? The conventional answer is faculty senates and councils, of course. Didn't the Harvard faculty succeed in driving its sitting president from office? Haven't faculty assemblies and representative bodies voted "no confidence" in errant and arrogant administrators who, when the pressure has been unbearable, occasionally have chosen retirement or resignation rather than risking a costly and embarrassing struggle to keep their jobs?

A close examination of these relatively rare instances of the exercise of faculty prerogatives through the senates' collective action would show that most of these occurred in research universities and elite private colleges. But of the more than four thousand institutions of higher education in the United States, only about three hundred fall into these categories. The rest are public colleges and universities controlled directly by the state legislatures that appropriate budgets and must approve the appointment of all top administrators; community colleges that often are subsumed under county legislatures, and sometimes are accountable to the state as well; and second- and third-tier private institutions that, in some parts of the country, operate as fiefdoms often subject to the will of their respective boards of trustees and presidents. In these schools, academic freedom is sometimes a state of being devoutly to be wished.

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**The past quarter century has witnessed a powerful trend toward the disenfranchisement of faculty**



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At the overwhelming majority of schools, the problem of faculty governance is rooted in the institutional, quasi-judicial limits of the powers of faculty senates. At best, they have a degree of moral authority stemming from endangered tradition. On the whole, faculty councils and senates are advisory bodies to the administration; they possess no formal institutional power and, in many cases, are controlled by administrators who sit on their executive bodies on the fiction that they are faculty on leave to perform the necessary tasks of administration, but intend to return to the ranks. That senates and councils are elected and appoint committees that review curricula and tenure and promotion decisions barely disguises the reality that the president and her or his administrations have final authority. Where once this authority was regarded as little more than a “rubber stamp” of decisions made by faculty, it is no longer uncommon for the president to overturn the decision of a professional and budget committee, sometimes in behalf of an aggrieved candidate, but most

**At the overwhelming majority of schools, the problem of faculty governance is rooted in the institutional, quasi-judicial limits of the powers of faculty senates**

often against departmental and campus-wide committees that recommend tenure and promotion of the candidate, or seek to implement program innovations.

Underlying these conflicts is the fact that in the private academic sector boards of trustees and top administrators have absolute control of the budget. But there is another factor influencing the decline of faculty governance: so-called executive pay plans set middle and top administrators’ pay and perks at levels significantly above those of faculty, creating an unbridgeable gulf between faculty and administration. Although it is still true that most institutions recruit their top and middle administrators from the ranks of faculty, once in positions such as dean, provost, and president, few top administrators return to the ranks of the professoriate after their term(s) of office. Instead, when their term is over, in preference to resuming their duties as a professor they enter the executive job market and trust their futures to headhunting firms. Administration becomes for most, if not all, a career that



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brings with it substantial financial rewards compared to faculty salaries. Broadly speaking it may be argued that, in keeping with the corporate nature of the institution, academic administrators have become a part of the professional/managerial class. While it is still convenient to pay lip service to what is now termed “shared governance,” since the boundary between faculty and administration has continued to harden, it is no longer in their interest to empower faculty.

In public institutions, faculty disempowerment has been codified by law; legislatures, the governor or county executive and their staffs, or state boards of higher education reserve all rights, except those that have been wrested by academic unions that, alone in the academic community, still possess formal if not substantive autonomy. The relative powerlessness of most faculty senates and the independence of unions suggest that the time may be propitious to raise the possibility that, if unions choose on behalf of their members to become involved in governance issues, there is a chance to reverse the long-term trend toward faculty disempowerment. It is a long shot for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that private-sector faculty remain largely outside unions.

### **The growth and consolidation of academic unionism**

It is a little known fact that, since the 1970s, academic unions have been among the few sectors of the labor movement that have experienced significant growth. As large sections of the unionized manufacturing workplaces disappeared, academic labor began to stir and to unionize. In the past thirty-five years, the three major academic unions—the National Education Association (NEA), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP)—have added more than 200,000 members among the professoriate. Thousands of university and college clerical and maintenance employees have won union representation as well. Today, in terms of density—the proportion of union members to the overall labor force—academic labor is among the highest in the union movement. A third of the total non-managerial academic labor force is represented by unions—most, but not all, in public institutions. Missing from the unionized are

professors in most of the leading private and public research universities, and private four-year liberal arts colleges, although clerical, professional, and graduate student employees have significant union density in these institutions.

Prior to the 1980 *Yeshiva* decision of the Supreme Court, which ruled that college professors in private institutions were managers because they participated in the governance of the university or college and, for this reason, were ineligible to receive the protections under Labor Relations Act, union growth in the private academic sector was quite healthy. In the 1960s and 1970s, faculty at Long Island University, St. John’s, Hofstra, Adelphi, and other large universities won union recognition and continue to maintain their contracts. Until 2005, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) had ruled that graduate assistants at private institutions of higher education were not managers and that, in research and teaching tasks, they were employees, not students. Graduate assistants at Columbia, University of Pennsylvania, Brown, Yale, and New York University (NYU) joined thousands of graduate student employees in leading public universities such as the Universities of California and Michigan to secure union organization.

Except for NYU, which initially recognized and bargained with the union, the other university administrations have declined to recognize the graduate assistant unions, and have successfully resisted several strikes. But graduate teaching and research assistant unionization suffered a blow in 2005 when the NLRB ruled that they were students and not employees, even though they taught a fairly sizeable portion of the undergraduate courses and were paid. In 2005–6, graduate assistants at NYU conducted a losing strike when the administration took advantage of the NLRB ruling and refused to recognize the union unless it forfeited most of the assistants’ rights.

During the period of growth and consolidation, academic unionism faced a series of constraints dictated by state law and by its acceptance of traditional trade union culture. During the struggles for union recognition, academic employees were obliged to accept a deal written into the law of public labor relations according to which they forfeited their right to strike in return for the right to bargain over the terms and conditions of employment. One of the most onerous, New York’s Taylor

Law, construes any concerted action that results in the withdrawal of labor, even if not sanctioned by the union, as a violation punishable by heavy fines and possible imprisonment if union leaders fail to order their members to cease and desist. Moreover, the law specifies the mandatory and non-mandatory subjects of bargaining. New York State and California have the highest concentration of unionized academics, accounting for about a quarter of the national total. Management must bargain with their employees over salaries, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment except those conditions not considered mandatory.

### **Governance**

Among the non-mandatory subjects is governance. While all of the unions frequently invoke the traditional AAUP principle of “shared governance,” itself a compromise from the premodern concept that higher education was constituted as a community of scholars that shared administrative as well as instructional duties, the reality is that almost nowhere in the public sector do faculty have a legal or institutionally sanctioned right to negotiate over issues of governance, whether through unions or faculty senates. In the case of the latter, the senate has, at best, advisory status, but unions are barred from addressing this question at the bargaining table. In the case of the prohibitions of the Taylor Law, the question of what constitutes “terms and conditions of employment” is becoming a hot topic.

Unions may be in the best position to take a stand when administrations devise protocols regarding intellectual property; close down a program, such as library science and geography at Columbia in the 1990s; institute an online bachelor’s degree, as the City University of New York (CUNY) has done; raise “academic standards” for admission that result in declining enrollments of blacks and individuals from underrepresented ethnic groups; institute a five-year tenure review for all faculty over the objections of faculty organizations, a “reform” that is already in effect on dozens of campuses in the private and public sectors; or undertake dismissal proceedings for dissenting professors or those suspected of cooperating with “terrorists”

## **Since the 1970s, academic unions have been among the few sectors of the labor movement that have experienced significant growth**

without proffering charges or observing other due process protections for the accused. Even those unions that are not recognized by administrations for the purpose of collective bargaining can publicize the effects of these actions—which are typically unilateral or done in consultation with essentially powerless faculty senates dominated by administrators—and wage a campaign in the community, on the media, and among students to reverse them. Where unions do have bargaining rights, they should consider broadening their demands to include governance issues.

### **Impediments**

Beyond the inevitable resistance of administrations, boards of trustees, and legislatures to this admittedly novel redefinition of the role of academic unions, there are practical impediments. Coded as a “non-economic” demand, expanding the right to bargain over issues that are reserved for administrations will encounter membership concern that economic issues might be sacrificed in the bargain. Moreover, even more than salary and benefit gains, the demand for power in the governance of the institution is likely to become a strike issue, especially if the other side takes the position that they will “never agree” to such an impudent demand. It would take a serious education campaign among faculty, union as well as non-union, who either retain confidence in the faculty senate to address these issues or have been habituated to considering the union as they consider an insurance company: the bargaining committee and the leadership are responsible for “delivering the goods,” principally salaries, health, and pension benefits. And there will be problems with those in the union leadership who share the members’ predispositions or, if they grasp what is at stake in making these radical demands, lack confidence that the members will go to the barricades to win genuine participation in governance.

In public institutions, the fight would by necessity have to be waged on several fronts, including state legislatures that are unlikely to receive the request for broadening faculty powers with sympathy. In order to achieve this goal, unions of professional staff, clericals, graduate students, and maintenance employees would

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have to be recruited to the fight. But these unions and their members might actually believe that shared governance is none of their business. To convince them, faculty would be required to alter their own attitudes and hierarchical values. Why should a registrar, a program assistant, an adjunct, or a maintenance mechanic be interested in governance? One reply is that, in this era of relentless cost cutting and budget shortfalls, the entire community is affected by planned downsizing, by weakening faculty and staff power, and by the structural changes that occur more frequently. Another is that, if working in the university is not just a job but a career choice for most employees, being concerned with broader policy issues may be a vital matter, not just for faculty but for all.

Prior to accepting an appointment at CUNY's Graduate Center, I worked at two major research universities—the University of California–Irvine (UCI) and Columbia. UCI has a very weak faculty union with no bargaining rights, but graduate assistants, clerical workers, and some administrative employees are unionized. Similarly, Columbia underwent a fierce struggle to organize maintenance workers in the 1940s and, twenty years later, clerical employees joined the ranks of organized labor. But, in the main, faculty remain convinced that their interests are best served by relying on their individual merit. They sincerely believe that collective action may be appropriate for manual and white-collar workers, but as members of the informal academic elite, they are well advised to stay away from unions.

In the past twenty years, however, faculty at UCI, a public university, have been subject to several budget crises that have affected their salaries, but more to the point, occasionally restricted access to research resources. Their senate seems powerless to address these issues effectively. As a private institution, faculty at Columbia have few levers to restrain administrative decisions to shut down, alter, or differentially support various programs or to impose their own tenure recommendations on an administration whose major goal is to restrict tenure to senior scholars recruited from the outside. Like other Ivy League schools, Columbia regularly denies tenure to accomplished junior faculty on the theory that they should prove themselves elsewhere and come back as mature scholars.



I have no illusions that the most privileged among the professoriate are prepared as yet to recognize that they are really employees whose powers within the institution are limited. Yet if academic unions were to raise the ante on the terms and conditions of academic employment to include questions of governance, more than salaries and benefits, they might begin to persuade even the most individualistic of the faculty that there is a chance for faculty and staff empowerment. In any case, in public colleges and universities, pursuing this perspective is more than desirable: it is imperative. □

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# Reinforcing Our Strategies to Support Faculty in the Middle Years of Academic Life

MID-CAREER FACULTY are the keystone of the academic enterprise. They fill essential instructional, program development, administrative, and citizenship roles at their institutions. They form a bridge between faculty generations by mentoring new colleagues and assuming leadership duties as their senior colleagues move toward retirement. Mid-career faculty are key players as their institutions adapt in a time of continuous change. They can be either allies or stubborn opponents as their institutions adjust to competitive pressures, revise programs to meet the needs of increasingly diverse stu-

dents, and integrate new educational technologies.

This article examines strategies that several progressive higher education institutions are using to support and gain maximum benefit from their mid-career faculty members.

There has been much attention to early-career faculty, and even to future faculty, over the past two decades. Recent research clarifies the challenges novice faculty encounter (see Austin 2002a, 2002b; Boice 1992, 2000; Sorcinelli and Austin 1992). At many institutions, ambitious orientation programs, mentoring systems, and grant opportunities targeted specifically at new professors help to ease their transition into the academic profession. Likewise, programs such as *Preparing Future Faculty* and publications such as *Building the Faculty We Need* (Gaff, Pruitt-Logan, and Weibl 2000) help to equip aspiring professors for the demands of academic life.

In contrast, we know little about faculty in the long, ill-defined phase after their probationary years and before retirement emerges on the professional horizon. These mid-career

faculty have been largely ignored in higher education policy and practice. There has been little acknowledgment of this long and important phase of academic life or of the distinctive challenges it presents. We know even less about what colleges and universities do specifically to support mid-career faculty. To a large extent, faculty in the middle years are taken for granted and expected to fend for themselves as they carve a path into the uncharted middle years of the academic career.

Clearly, mid-career faculty deserve attention and support because of the critical roles they play within their institutions and the academic profession. They also deserve support because of the many transitions and adjustments required in mid-career, as veteran professors strive to maintain productive and meaningful professional lives. After years on the job, mid-career professors frequently need to update their knowledge and skills as well as adapt to the rapidly advancing technologies that are reshaping the nature of academic work. Many also need to realign their work with the changing direction and expectations of their institutions. Furthermore, after the demanding probationary years, many mid-career faculty seek a better balance between their personal and professional lives. Essentially, professors in mid-career need to define new goals and chart a clear path forward without the structure and specific targets that the goals of tenure and promotion provided earlier in their careers.

## Strategies to support mid-career faculty

To what extent are institutions capitalizing on and supporting the mid-career phase of their faculty? In an attempt to answer this question, we conducted a national Web-based investigation to identify strategies specifically designed to address the needs of mid-career faculty in colleges and universities. Focusing on institutions with teaching and learning centers, we examined support for mid-career professors in

**We know little about faculty in the long, ill-defined phase after their probationary years and before retirement emerges on the professional horizon**

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# “Keystone” Faculty



small, mid-sized, and large public and private colleges and universities across the United States. We examined in our analysis any program or policy information that specifically addressed mid-career faculty.

From our systematic search, we learned that programs or initiatives addressing mid-career faculty needs often vary in purpose, structure, and approach. We have categorized these initiatives by their principal focus or strategy in order to clarify the varied ways institutions are aiding mid-career professors.

#### ***Mid-career awareness/mid-career information resources***

Initiatives in this category utilize Web sites or publications to increase general awareness of mid-career faculty issues and any resources available and applicable to professors in mid-career. The University of Washington, for example, uses an informational Web site to support mid-career faculty development. Specifically, this Web site promotes mentoring of mid-career faculty in areas such as proposal development and redirecting research activities. It also provides recommendations on how to enhance mid-career development and address specific mid-career issues such as keeping pace with new developments in one's field and identifying new research topics.

#### ***Programs for career planning, development, and renewal***

This category includes programs and initiatives that encourage faculty to reflect upon their professional lives, identify new professional goals, acquire new skills, and develop concrete career plans. The College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University offers a post-tenure faculty development program. This program provides an opportunity for post-tenure faculty to reflect on their teaching, scholarship, and service. Additionally, the program assists faculty in designing professional development plans. Similarly, the Professional Renewal of Faculty Program at Kansas State University provides mid-career faculty with opportunities for career development. The program aims to help mid-career faculty achieve or increase satisfaction and success "by redesigning their current position or developing a new job role in cooperation with their department heads." Likewise, a collaborative program involving Colgate University, Hamilton College, Skidmore College,

and Union College provides an opportunity for post-tenure faculty at the four institutions to participate in faculty exchanges among the colleges as part of a development process for planning future career goals. Macalester College's Academic Leadership Seminar offers another avenue to promote mid-career faculty development. The seminar gives mid-career faculty an opportunity to learn about major challenges confronting higher education, especially liberal arts colleges, and cultivate the skills needed to move into key leadership roles on campus.

#### ***Mentoring or networking***

Programs in this category aim to bring faculty together to form mentoring or networking relationships in an attempt to exchange ideas, enhance productivity, and promote professional growth. The Faculty Mentoring Project at Oregon State University places mid-career faculty in mentoring relationships and provides professional development stipends to support either instructional design, career growth in new areas of scholarship, utilization of technology, or projects that extend the one-on-one mentoring to larger groups. Macalester College's Co-mentoring Program in Teaching and Scholarship places senior and junior faculty in mentoring partnerships with the expectation that junior faculty will benefit from senior faculty experience and expertise, while senior faculty will profit from the fresh perspectives of junior faculty as well as their state-of-the-art knowledge and research skills. Post-tenure faculty issues can also be addressed through inter-institutional networks. One example is a peer network that links veteran faculty from liberal arts colleges in different regions of the United States to advance the careers of senior women science professors.

#### ***Teaching support***

This category of programs for mid-career faculty focuses on updating or expanding teaching skills and the enhancement of student learning. The Ohio State University is addressing the needs of mid-career and senior faculty through the Ohio State Teaching Enhancement Program. This program offers yearlong opportunities to reflect on and improve teaching within a community of peers. The program is designed to revitalize career

development and establish interdisciplinary collegial relationships across the campus. The University of Minnesota offers the Mid-Career Teaching Program, in which a group of post-tenure faculty members meet monthly to share teaching practices and resources. Another example, at Gustavus Adolphus College, provides mini-grants for mid-career faculty who are “changing directions” in their teaching. These mini-grants are used to support faculty projects or development that will result in improved teaching and student learning.

### **Research support**

Several initiatives focus on supporting mid-career faculty as they pursue their research interests. Some programs specifically reserve a portion of research funding for faculty at mid-career, recognizing that mid-career can be a challenging time to compete for research support. The Kellett Mid-Career Award at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, is one example of research funding that is reserved for professors in the middle phase of their careers. Although some funding programs for mid-career professors do not impose restrictions, others

restrict their financial support to mid-career faculty who are pursuing a new direction in their research. “Bridge funding,” a related form of support we identified, assists mid-career faculty between research grants. For example, Florida State University offers a limited number of “bridge-funding” awards for mid-career faculty who have lost research funds. The program is intended to “establish connections to find some new productive avenues in a new research area.”

### **Awards and recognition**

Several institutions provide awards for mid-career professors as a form of recognition and reinforcement. We found mid-career awards for service, research, and teaching. These awards may or may not provide monetary compensation to the recipient; in any case, the awards recognize major accomplishments or contributions by professors in the middle years of academic life. For example, Iowa State University offers the Mid-Career Award in Excellence in Research/Artistic Creativity. The University of Virginia offers the Cavaliers’ Distinguished Teaching Professorship award



College of the Holy Cross

only to tenured faculty at the associate or full professor rank. Indiana University offers a Distinguished Service Award to mid-career faculty for exceptional service to the institution.

#### ***Mid-career faculty support at different organizational levels***

Determining how best to support mid-career professors is a challenging task, especially in a time of constrained resources. Our national search revealed that mid-career faculty issues are being addressed at several levels—by individual institutions, by consortia of several institutions, and by national organizations and associations. Most of the initiatives we identified were tailor-made to comply with the circumstances and needs of mid-career faculty at a specific higher education institution. However, we also identified projects and programs for mid-career faculty that several institutions sponsor jointly. These types of initiatives offer the benefit of resource and cost sharing. A modest institutional investment can yield more service and support to mid-career faculty when colleges and universities work together. Of course, compromises are necessary when a team approach is used, and programs cannot focus on a specific institution's needs quite so directly.

In addition, we learned that some national organizations are offering services and growth opportunities for mid-career professors. One example is the Institute for Experiential Learning Faculty Fellows Internship Program offered in cooperation with AAC&U. This program brings mid-career faculty to Washington, DC, to utilize their expertise in a different venue, acquire new knowledge and insights, and experience the professional renewal that comes with a change of scene and challenging new work experiences. Opportunities for mid-career faculty sponsored by national organizations supplement the support provided by individual institutions or small groups of institutions and greatly increase available opportunities for professors' growth during the middle years.

The programs described above show that higher education has begun to focus some attention on faculty at mid-career. The programs provide assistance designed specifically for professors in the middle phase of academic life in order to enhance their professional performance and promote their career development. These initiatives recognize that the middle

part of the career is a distinctive phase of academic life. They acknowledge that mid-career faculty are important to the well-being of colleges and universities and the vitality of the educational enterprise. These programs send a loud and clear message: mid-career faculty are valued by their institutions and critical to the institutions' continuing success.

#### **A model for mid-career faculty development**

Our search identified a variety of ways institutions are supporting mid-career faculty and encouraging their continued professional development. Some initiatives help mid-career professors to reflect on their professional achievements and growth needs. Some support short- and long-term career planning that will energize and direct faculty work in the post-probationary years. Some provide opportunities for faculty to experiment with new roles and responsibilities, prepare for leadership positions, or move into different teaching or research areas. Several provide the resources and reinforcement essential to continued professional growth in the lengthy post-probationary years. However, only a few of the initiatives we identified address mid-career faculty issues in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.

Each of the types of faculty assistance discussed above could be an important element of a system designed to support mid-career faculty development. We have integrated these varied elements into a comprehensive model of the mid-career faculty development process (fig. 1). This model can guide any dean, department chair, or faculty development committee that wishes to design a support system for faculty in the middle years of academic life. The model can also help institutions to assess and identify gaps in their services to mid-career faculty. The model presents key steps in the mid-career faculty development process along with important forms of support needed to sustain this process. We briefly discuss the elements of the model below.

#### ***Career reflection and assessment***

To continue growing professionally during the middle years, faculty members need opportunities to reflect on their careers and assess their professional strengths, weaknesses, and development needs. Annual faculty activity reports, post-tenure review processes, and periodic faculty retreats present natural opportunities

for mid-career reflection. Structuring these events in the academic life cycle to be more developmental than evaluative can stimulate the type of active career reflection that can promote renewal in the mid-career years.

**Career planning**

When mid-career faculty engage in systematic career reflection, they are better prepared to develop strategies that will keep them moving professionally and align their professional growth with the direction in which their institution is moving. Structured opportunities to develop both short-term (one to three year) and long-term (five to ten year) career plans can help mid-career professors identify concrete goals to energize and direct their professional efforts during the years no longer structured by the quest for tenure or promotion.

**Career action/implementation**

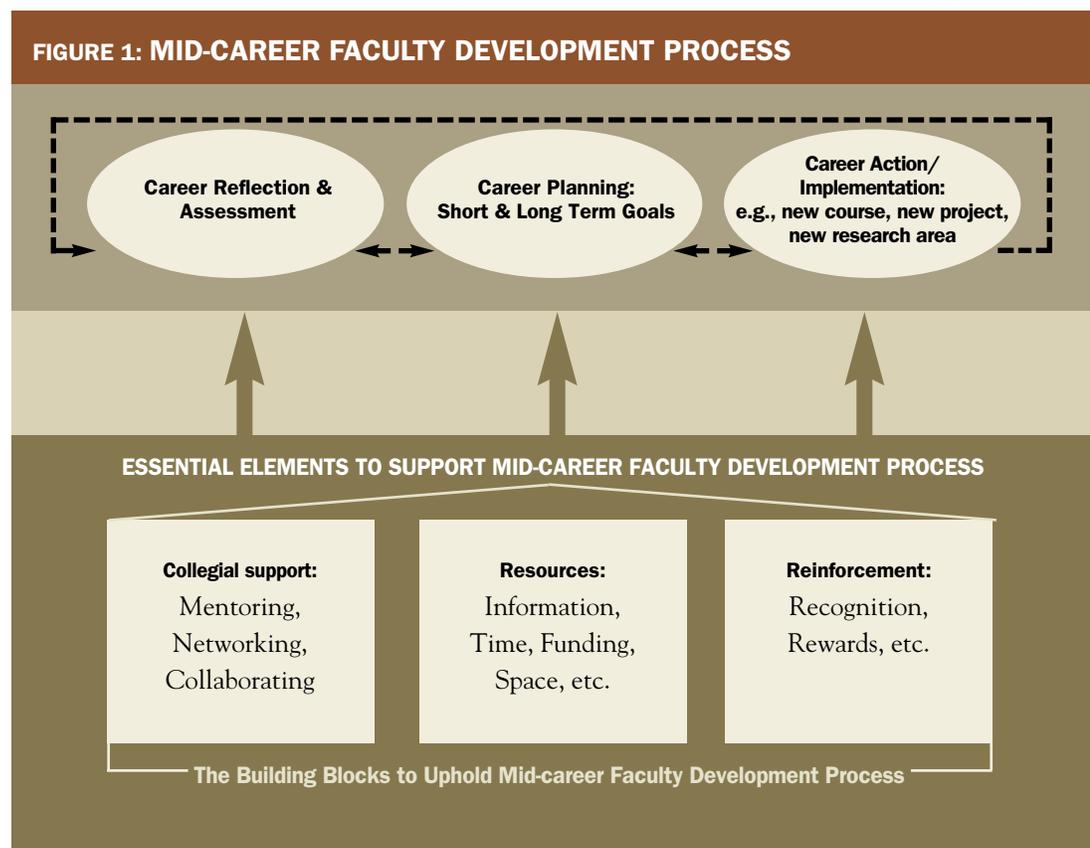
Opportunities to test or implement carefully developed career plans should be an important part of any systematic effort to encourage professional growth and career advancement during the middle years of academic life. In the career action/implementation stage,

growth opportunities should be aligned with professors’ distinctive interests, situations, and development needs. For example, while a history professor may benefit from an opportunity to incorporate new technologies into his or her classroom teaching, a biology professor may need to take courses in computer science in order to do research in the interdisciplinary field of bioinformatics.

Reflection and assessment, career planning, and opportunities for implementing carefully crafted plans are each important components of a comprehensive approach to supporting mid-career faculty development. Ideally, this growth cycle will continue as new professional challenges and opportunities restart the reflection–assessment stage. Nevertheless, the steps in this process are not sufficient to guarantee vital mid-career faculty.

**A foundation to support mid-career faculty development**

The lower portion of figure 1 suggests that a solid foundation is necessary to support the mid-career faculty development process. Mid-career faculty need collegial and organizational assistance in order to keep growing and



adapting while they assume challenging administrative, leadership, and mentoring responsibilities at their institutions. We saw varied forms of this support in the diverse mid-career faculty initiatives and programs we identified.

### ***Collegial support***

We located numerous programs that provide collegial support for mid-career professors. Some programs promote collaborative research or team teaching. Some build networks to help mid-career professors pursue new subject interests and branch out in new research directions. Others set up formal or informal co-mentoring partnerships designed to help junior and veteran colleagues learn from and support one another's professional development. Each of these techniques provides collegial support that can be as influential at mid-career as it is in the early-career years.

### ***Resources***

Resources are essential to facilitate mid-career faculty growth. In some cases, funding is required to permit a professor to attend a

workshop on a new instructional or research technique or to meet with a collaborator at another institution. Sometimes a modest amount of release time or creative scheduling is needed to permit a mid-career professor to engage in an exciting service project or prepare to teach a new interdisciplinary course. Occasionally, information about an off-campus summer institute or foundation grant opportunity can encourage a mid-career professor to take on a new career challenge. Carefully targeted resources, even when modest, can motivate and enable mid-career professors to keep growing in the service of their students and their institutions.

### ***Reinforcement***

It is easy to take mid-career faculty for granted and to overlook their achievements and contributions to their institutions. This inadvertent practice violates basic psychology. Rewards and recognition are essential elements of a coordinated system to promote mid-career faculty development. The mid-career faculty awards for teaching, research, and service that



Michigan State  
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we identified recognize and reinforce continuing growth and achievement by mid-career faculty. Something as simple as a citation presented at a faculty meeting or a personal note from a dean can reinforce efforts of mid-career professors who experiment with new teaching strategies or branch out into emerging new subject fields. Institutions that want a flexible, adaptive faculty must recognize and reward mid-career professors who disrupt comfortable work routines in order to adapt to a changing educational environment.

### Conclusion

The model presented in figure 1 provides a flexible guide for planning initiatives to support mid-career faculty. To serve and get the most benefit from their mid-career professors, colleges and universities should provide opportunities for career reflection and assessment, career planning (short-term and long-term), and the implementation of career plans. In addition,

### Only a few of the initiatives we identified address mid-career faculty issues in a coordinated and comprehensive manner

colleges and universities should build a solid foundation for continuing mid-career faculty development through collegial support, access to necessary resources, and recognition and rewards for mid-career faculty

who continue to grow professionally in the post-probationary years.

Many colleges and universities have recognized the need to help their new faculty members adjust to the multiple demands of academic life. Consciously promoting mid-career faculty development is another step institutions must take to ensure that their “keystone” faculty adjust to changing conditions and fulfill their potential to serve the academic community. Higher education today requires continuous learning and renewal. Our institutions of higher learning will not succeed in a competitive environment if their veteran team members do not work to stay in shape professionally and adapt to changing rules of the academic enterprise. By systematically supporting their mid-career faculty, colleges and universities are actually supporting themselves. □

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# Liberal Arts Scholarship Competition



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as one of training students in their respective areas of inquiry, however, the emphasis should instead lie upon giving students broad tools of analysis and interpretation that enable them to function effectively across disciplines, regardless of what they happen to study while attending the university.

The economic competitiveness of the United States in the twenty-first century will greatly depend upon the ability of the secondary and higher education institutions of our country to produce citizens with the ability to observe, reason, analyze, criticize, understand, and act upon information from increasingly diverse sources, using integrated methods of quantitative and qualitative analysis reaching across the social and natural sciences and the humanities. The demands of the twenty-first century require the colleges and universities of our country to strive toward the development of globally minded, fluid, analytical citizens able to effectively function in the context of an increasingly complex, pluralistic world order.

Since the onset of industrial methods of production in Western Europe over two hundred years ago, technology has worked to weave human societies closer and closer together, for better or for worse. These technologies have enabled astounding leaps in human progress as well as numerous unspeakable horrors from which we do not stand far removed. Modern technology has enabled Western society to feed, clothe, house, and provide for more and more of its citizens, yet such improvements have also been produced through incredible denigrations of human life, including the displacement and extermination of indigenous American peoples, the institution of African chattel slavery in the United States, and the Euro-American colonization of Africa, Asia, South America, and the Pacific. Can the current level of material and technological prosperity enjoyed by so

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many serve as justification for such atrocities? Can our societies somehow work in the future to bring the nations of the “third world” into the material prosperity of the global marketplace? In order to work as students, citizens, and professionals to solve these and other questions of the new century, the educational institutions of this country must gear themselves to train citizens across a wide span of intellectual disciplines in order to answer these questions in the most comprehensive manner possible.

The same scientific revolution that brought about the onset of industrialization at the beginning of the nineteenth century has confronted modern society with changes that are reshaping it more quickly and fundamentally than is easily understandable. Information and communications technologies, such as laptop computers, cellular phones, ocean-spanning fiber-optic lines, satellites, and the Internet, have resulted in the decline in influence of even the nation-state, which once stood as the primary social institution on the global level, second only to perhaps the family. Multinational corporations now operate across national boundaries, increasing the difficulty of the state’s regulation of economic activity; the rise of global terror networks has redefined our enemies as well-equipped individuals not linked to any single country. These two developments represent examples of how technology is reshaping the world in profound ways; these changes demand citizens equipped with the ability to meet and respond effectively to these challenges.

By providing a broad, empowering liberal arts education pulling from many diverse areas of social, scientific, and humanistic inquiry, colleges and universities can give students the





**The ability of the United States to adapt to the dynamic globalism of the twenty-first century greatly depends on the capacity of our populace to understand and adapt to the fluid context in which they live**

breadth of knowledge necessary for understanding the increasing complexity of our world. By developing the ability of students to analyze problems on both qualitative and quantitative bases, to continually test and re-examine what they know, colleges and universities can give students the tools to apply their knowledge to the world around them. By teaching students how to communicate—to discuss, to argue, to write, to debate—colleges and universities can arm them with the crucial capacity of being able to take action based upon their knowledge.

The goal of a liberal arts education in the twenty-first century must be to empower all citizens to make observations, draw conclusions, test those conclusions against the ideas of others, and use their knowledge to make an impact upon the world. From the beginnings of the European scientific revolution onward, this system of liberal scientific inquiry has revolutionized the process of truth seeking. A broad, liberal arts education represents the key to the richness of this tradition. By providing individuals with these fundamental capacities, a liberal education empowers individuals to act as fully effective citizens within the context of American democracy. The ability of the United States to adapt to the dynamic globalism of the twenty-first century greatly depends on the capacity of our populace to understand and adapt to the fluid context in which they live.

In addition to the social change brought about by the development of new, faster technologies, demographic and cultural changes also demand that individuals be equipped with the ability to respond to these changes. At the onset of the twenty-first century, our society has begun finally to listen to voices that have been silenced throughout our history, the voices of millions of African Americans, women, immigrants, LGBT individuals, and others. Overall, our country has worked continually to broaden the rights and privileges enjoyed by its citizens. Although some may claim that this has to do with some inherent quality of the American people, it only

takes place due to the concerted efforts of individuals to understand difference in the face of bigoted adversity. A desire for simple, easy answers to social questions continues to lead too many citizens into the trap of single-minded rigidity that prevents the synthesis of innovative interpretations of social questions leading to social change.

In order for this diversity to serve as a source of national strength and social greatness, and in order for individuals to gain a fuller understanding of the richness of manifold human experience, citizens must be exposed to the diversity of individuals and their lives. Racism, bigotry, sexism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and homophobia represent forces inimical to the maintenance of a healthy, functional society. Educated citizens must strive to understand the differences that exist between themselves and others in order for the expansion of individual freedom implicit in American ideals to continue. Only through the inculcation of tolerance for diverse peoples can we hope to build the bridges of understanding necessary for successful, meaningful citizenship in an era of increasing national diversity and global integration.

Toward the end of the twentieth century and at the dawn of the twenty-first, the establishment of global communication networks has worked to radically alter the nature of physical space on this planet through the progression of globalization. To face the challenge posed by this information revolution, American educational institutions must maximally strive to provide citizens with the skills they need to face these challenges and triumph over them. The challenge posed to our country in this century is not only to produce highly-educated doctors, lawyers, and college professors. The challenge, rather, is to empower the bulk of the American public with the tools of a liberal arts education. By empowering all people, professional and non-professional alike, we can work to ensure the continued economic competitiveness of the United States in the global economy of the twenty-first century. □





**By double-majoring in  
two liberal arts I am still  
taking an intentional risk  
with my future**

with fighting our own causes. We the American working population hate the nine to five day in day out while we'd rather be supporting ourselves by being paid to perfect the pastimes we have harbored based solely on the fact that it makes us smile.

Imagine a world where we got paid for our interests, not stigmatized for studying whatever our passion may be. Imagine a world where we lived primarily for our minds and spirits and not just merely for the security of material wealth. In an economy dominated by the greater good of the employer instead of the individual, preserving the liberal arts is that much more vital.

Fortunately, some in the business world view the liberal arts as important in developing individuals. In a paper subtitled "The Most Practical and Professional Education for the Twenty-first Century," author Richard Hersh (1997) states that CEOs and human resource managers are looking for three things: intellectual flexibility, skills in self expression, and a universal understanding of diversity. A degree in liberal arts would certainly guarantee the above qualities. Success in the world depends upon more than an understanding of how "things" work; it requires an understanding of how people work. Gadgets and whistles will change, but the ability to understand and connect with people will not. In fact, Philip Lewis and Rosemary Liegler claim that liberal arts "reflect the breadth of human culture," which is considered "the foundation of the American democracy" (1998, 47). With the very basis of our government rooted in the liberal arts, society ought to be praising the liberal arts instead of eliminating them. However, this is sadly not the case.

Apparently, our current education system feels that if the budget needs to be cut, liberal arts are the first areas to be neglected. Schools all over the country have been "trimming" their music classes, art classes, and even the gym classes where dance is taught. Ms. April Swick, principal of Clement Avenue Elementary School in the Milwaukee Public School District, states that the full-time staff of art, gym, music, and library has been decreasing steadily

over the past ten years. As a result of the budget, she explains, "we can't cut regular classes, so we had to cut everything else . . . our librarian left, and we have not been able to replace her." It is now the teacher's responsibility to integrate the humanities into the curriculum. However, teachers are preoccupied by teaching mandatory "subject matter" that will no doubt be measured by standardized testing, allowing little extra attention to be spent focusing on the liberal arts. At the elementary schooling age a child's unique creative genius should be celebrated and cultivated, not repressed. A child's ingenuity is precious and should not have to be sacrificed to school budgeting.

As we know, once the core of a system is eradicated, the entire structure is bound to collapse. If, instead of being taught global responsibility, social awareness, and self-development, we are taught materialism and careerism, we will lose the very essence of our humanity. □

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JAMES V. SCHALL, SJ

# Liberal Education

PERSPECTIVES

*The free man ought not to learn any study slavishly. Forced labors performed by the body don't make the body any worse, but no forced study abides in a soul.*

—PLATO, *THE REPUBLIC*

*Liberal education is concerned with the souls of men and therefore has little or no use for machines. . . . Liberal education consists in learning to listen to still and small voices.*

—LEO STRAUSS, "LIBERAL EDUCATION AND RESPONSIBILITY"

*We are told that Alexander the Great took around with him a great number of authors engaged in writing about his achievements. And yet, as he stood beside the tomb of Achilles at Sigeum, he uttered these words: "Fortunate youth, who found*

*Homer to proclaim your valour!" He was right;*

*for, if the Iliad had never existed, the tomb where Achilles' body was buried would have buried his memory as well.*

—CICERO, "IN DEFENCE OF THE POET AULUS LICINIUS ARCHIAS"

**The classical notion of justice is not the modern idea of "social justice." Indeed, the latter may be inimical to the former**

VERY FEW, IF ANY, "IVY-CLAD TOWERS" REMAIN in academia today. 'Tis a pity. The physical towers remain, no doubt. We can still see them against the skies. But gone is the spirit that caused them to be pilloried and laughed at as useless enclaves devoted, like Socrates in the view of the comic poet, to floating spaced-out among the clouds of vague knowing. We are, I think, in desperate need of a few genuine "ivy-clad towers." Few students can matriculate through college or university today without spending considerable time concocting a "resume." On this parchment, the student solemnly records the amount of "well-rounded" time that he or she has spent in community service, or economic, or political, or ecological, or social, or other such do-good and be-good activities. The poor almost seem to exist so that academics can study them or so that university students can elevate their own consciousness by serving them for a short period.

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Ever sensitive to the ancient criticism that the privileged student is so separated from ordinary life that he or she cannot talk its language or understand its works, universities have, in recent years, responded with "community help" programs of every description. "Volunteering" has become, ironically, an obligation for graduation. The university, it is said, is to prepare for "life," as it is called. No

# & “Social Justice”



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glowingly into articulated “experience” either of work or of service. Gone are the days when the college years were conceived to be set aside, to be protected from the town precisely so that what students were supposed to be about could take place. To pass these years as an active preparation for work or politics meant, in the older view, neglecting what the university was for in the first place. Indeed, it was thought that the best preparation for practical life consisted in studying the higher things, the life of the mind. Someone thus prepared would have little trouble with practical things. But someone who spent his or her time largely with practical things would forever be mostly closed off from the higher things.

## **Justice**

A liberal education is not an education whose primary concern is to prepare its graduates to live in the actual city, even when they do eventually live in that city and appreciate it. They really do not need academia for this “practical” preparation. Rather, the university is primarily an enclave wherein one is free to teach the truth, no matter in what city a university might exist. The “city” that the university looked to was one “in speech” or “in mind,” as Plato said. It alone enabled everyone in every culture to talk to everyone. Such an occupation is, as we know from Socrates, often enough a dangerous business, and, lest we forget, many of its most serious dangers come from within itself, within the souls of the dons themselves, not from the city. The city, like the parents of the potential philosophers in *The Apology*, does not like to hear that a conflict can exist between polity and philosophy. It does not enjoy being reminded that it has killed philosophers and prophets. Philosophy does not particularly like to hear it either.

One of the perplexing things philosophers study is justice, particularly justice as a virtue of individuals, who, in their relations with one another, learn to render what is due and to tell the truth. What is now called “social justice,” however, can be studied, but it inhabits

longer do we find any barriers between town and gown. The purpose of the gown is the town, almost with a vengeance. One begins to wonder, with such orientations and implicit priorities, whether students learn anything but the town.

Students work five, ten, twenty hours a week, often on something that does not pay or pays poorly. They learn to translate such activities

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no soul. This latter is a theory of modernity, largely a product of Rousseau and Max Weber. It seeks to remove justice from the soul and relocate it in the relationships that constitute the polity. It is a last effort to prove Socrates wrong and actually to construct the best regime among us. Thus “social justice” and “democracy” are inexorably linked.

“[Social justice] thus takes for granted that social reform is at least as important as personal reform and that the just social order depends as such on institutions as on moral character,” Ernest Fortin wrote.

It calls for a radical redistribution of material resources or, short of that, the establishment of a system that reduces as much as possible the distance separating the social classes. Its immediate goal, in short, is to produce happy rather than good human beings. [It is claimed] that all human beings had a right to happiness, and not just to the pursuit of virtue. In the final analysis, there is one and only one just social order, whose broad outlines are prescribed in advance and therefore are not a proper object of deliberation on the part of wise and prudent legislators. (1997, 273–74)

The essence of classical political thought was precisely to deliberate on what actual regime is most suited to these people in their particular polity. It was not to force all people into the same regime in order to make them happy.

Men become good, it is claimed, not because of chosen acts and acquired personal habits, but because of “structures.” To change the soul we must change the “structures” through which the soul presumably acts. Aristotle had said, conversely, that the differing kinds of regime reflect the differing kinds of souls that inhabit it. He thought, like Plato, that changes in regime followed changes in soul. “Social justice” puts this orientation aside. The essential dynamism of society comes not from persons with souls but from the almost automatic workings of the laws and institutions. “Reform” becomes a political cry, not a steady effort to change our souls from within.

**Liberal education**

The word “liberal” in the phrase “liberal education” means to be free, especially to be free of oneself, to be free of those passions and habits within us that might deflect us from grasping what is there. It also means to be free



to pursue the highest things in all their variety. It means to live in and participate in a polity that allows us, encourages us to pursue the truth, and to be free to live it when found. Moreover, “education” is not itself a subject of study. Strictly speaking, one cannot study “education.” To be educated does not mean to learn about learning, but to learn something, to learn *what is*. Education means the “bringing forth” from within us; it means the ability to address, in a proper manner, each reality before us. Philosophy is the quest for the whole. The very word “university” means this very whole. But it means that, at some time in our lives, we have an intellectual beginning so that we might later spend our lives in this pursuit, whatever else we do that is practical.

When we put the two words, “liberal” and “education,” together, we mean that we, each in our individual souls, are free to learn what is to be learned. It means that we are prepared to learn it, and having learned it, to accept it. In the beginning, we just have a mind, a capacity to know, but we know nothing until we use our knowing faculties. What is to be learned, however, is *all that is*. *All that is* includes ourselves learning what there is to learn. And it includes the various stages in our lives, as Plato said, in which we are most prepared to learn what is to be learned. We are to be free even of “ourselves,” as Yves Simon (1980) intimated. That is, our own vices and choices can prevent us from knowing what is there to be known. So to be “free” to learn includes

the capacity to rule ourselves so that we are free to direct our fears or pleasures or interests in such a way that we can really see what is there.

Does justice, especially what is now called “social justice,” have any place in liberal education? The classical notion of justice is not the modern idea of “social justice.” Indeed, the latter may be inimical to the former. What justice is itself comes under the discipline of what it is. That is, it is to be itself, not something else, not friendship, not charity, not obedience. Justice is a virtue, one of the classical moral virtues along with temperance, fortitude, and prudence, plus the minor virtues, as it were, of ruling our wealth, our temper, our wit, our social relation, our telling the truth.

Justice as a virtue refers immediately “to others.” In this sense, it is “political” in that it implies an order, including a legal order, in which relations to others can take place. As such, like all virtues, we have to acquire it by individual acts of justice. A just man is someone who freely rules himself in such a manner that, when he sees a situation demanding a just act of his in relation to others, he will be free to perform it and choose to do so. He will “render what is due” and he will “tell the truth” of the relationship in which he is involved, be it of paying a debt, of fulfilling an obligation, or of repairing damage he has caused.

The question “what is something for?” is a utility question. The question “*what is something?*” is a philosophical question, which includes the “for-what-the-thing-is.” Until we know what a thing is, we cannot know what it is for. But we know what it is, by following what it does. *Actio sequitur esse*.

Eric Voegelin (1957) says that at the execution of Socrates, the souls of those who sought the truth had to flee from the city to the academy. The Platonic academy itself was closed under the Emperor Justinian, the same year, 529 AD, as Josef Pieper (1960) said, that the first monastery was founded in Italy by St. Benedict. It was out of the monastery and the monastery schools that the medieval university was eventually formed. The university was to be a place where “everything” was to be freely addressed, but after the manner of mind.

The university was also a student place. It was to be protected from the polity. It did not have the same purpose as either the church or the civil society or the economy. The relationship is always tenuous both in the Socratic sense that

the politician can always kill the philosopher and in the Augustinian sense that the philosopher himself, full of pride, may betray the truth.

But the college or university was to be a place wherein great things could be known and studied in the souls of young men and women so that they could see what was noble, what was delightful, what was true. This wonder at what they beheld is what really prepared them to go into practical things out of which, when they were older, they could return to the issues that were of highest moment to human beings.

As Leo Strauss said, “liberal education consists in listening to still and small voices” (1968, 25). If drama and tragedy once fled from the city to the academy, thence to the monastery, thence to the university, the question finally must be asked, when the university itself flees back to the city, whether the highest things do not again have to find another place in which our souls are free to seek *what is*.

How few of us there are who can, with Alexander, stand at the tomb of Achilles at Sigeum. We have not had time, in our busy university life, to thank Homer for showing us what valor really is before we needed it in our practical lives. “No forced study abides in the soul.” We must strive, that our memories do not bury the body of Achilles because we had, in our studies, no time for the likes of the *Iliad*, which even a young emperor, concerned with his own fame, had read with admiration. □

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ANTHONY MANSUETO

# A Question-Centered Approach to Liberal Education

PERSPECTIVES

**How do colleges and universities provide an education that is both rigorous and accessible, and that helps students understand the liberal arts tradition and the larger global context in which they will live and work?**

THE PRESENT PERIOD is characterized by an unprecedented degree of global integration at the economic, political, and cultural levels. Economically, this has created a situation in which, as Robert Reich (1992) has argued, only creative problem solvers and innovators will be able to compete globally. Politically, it has begun to break down the nation-state and challenged us to rethink the meaning of democracy in what has become a global public arena dominated by powerful corporations, a single superpower, and international organizations. Culturally, the implications of global integration remain uncertain. Some observers, such as Francis Fukuyama (1989), have argued that we have, in effect, reached the “end of history”: capitalism, democracy, and a modern secular worldview have won the day, and future global interactions are likely to be dominated by technological and economic issues rather than ideological and cultural struggles. Others, such as Samuel Huntington (1993), have argued that we face a “clash of civilizations” as irreconcilably different societies vie for global power.

What does this mean for liberal education? There is, on the one hand, a broad consensus that liberal education is more important than ever. Strong quantitative and linguistic skills and the ability to analyze and solve problems are fundamental to economic competitiveness; the ability to make and evaluate arguments about public policy—and about

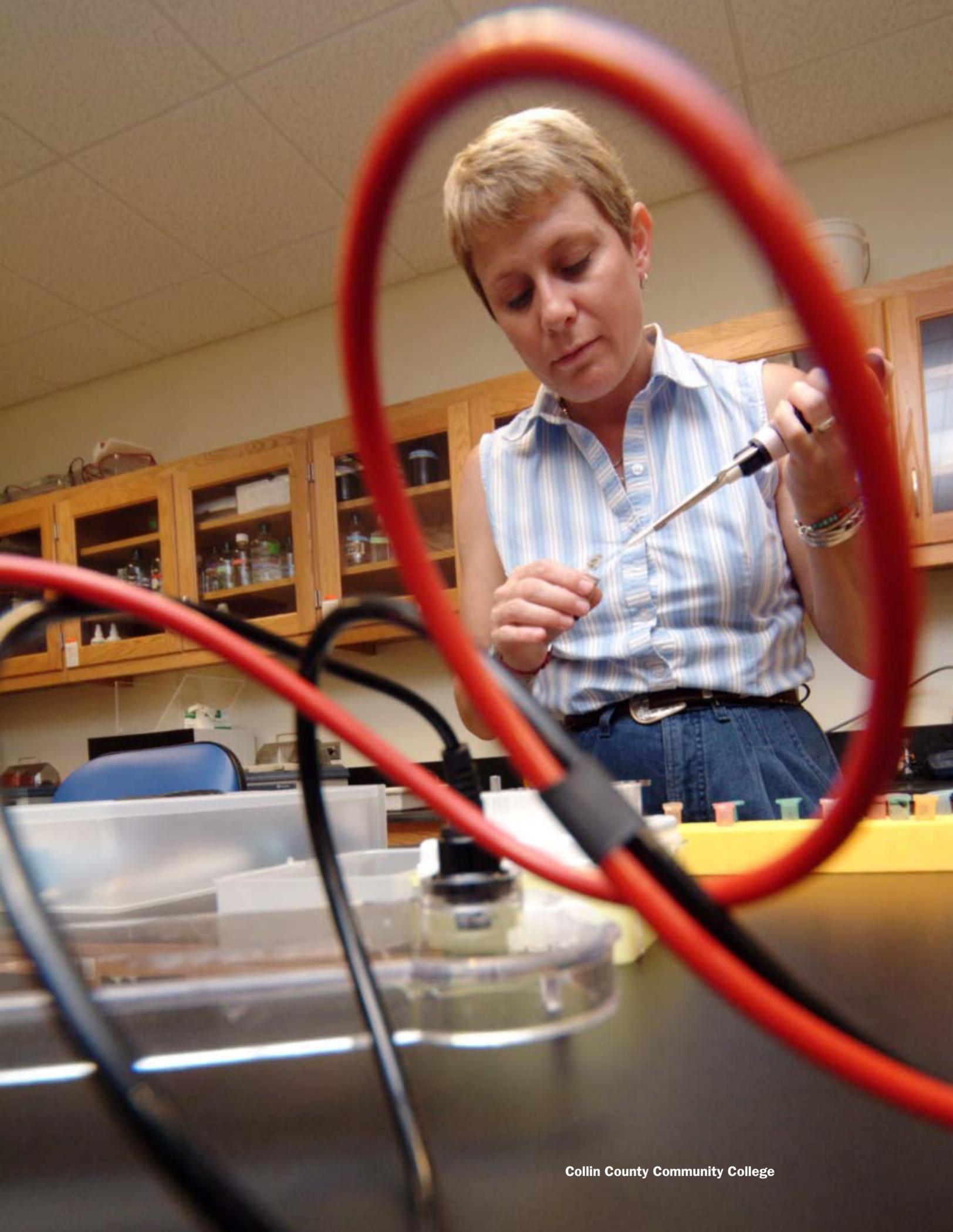
underlying questions of meaning and value—is essential in a democratic public arena and a complex global cultural landscape. And yet most curricula seem poorly designed to foster these abilities. A handful of extremely conservative institutions insist that students master a canon that looks increasingly narrow in a world in which China and India are fast becoming great powers, while most other institutions simply ask that undergraduates sample, generally in watered-down form, the work of humanistic and scientific disciplines that have become focused on narrow, specialized research. Only our most effective colleges and universities are teaching students to analyze and solve problems in a way that draws on the full range of humanity’s intellectual disciplines; almost none are cultivating the capacity to reflect on fundamental questions of meaning and value.

This essay will argue for an alternative, question-based approach to liberal education. Situating liberal education in historical context, it will ask how we got where we are, and will show how the earliest organization of liberal education—the medieval *quaestio* form—remains the best. It will conclude with some practical suggestions for restoring this approach.

**The liberal arts in historical perspective** Perhaps we should begin by defining the liberal arts. The term “art” translates the Latin *ars*, which in turn translates the Greek *techne*. There are, generally speaking, three different sorts of art or *techne*. The **instrumental arts** involve making things that are useful—things that are a means to some other end. The **fine arts** involve making things that are ends in

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themselves—hence “fine,” from the Latin *fine* or end. The liberal arts are those that make a human being free. The question is just what one can make that, in the course of the making itself, sets one free. The answer is simple: an argument. The liberal arts train us to make arguments and to evaluate arguments made by others, and thus put us in a position to make decisions for ourselves.

In medieval Europe, the liberal arts were based upon the trivium and the quadrivium. The trivium included grammar, which teaches us to use language correctly; rhetoric, which teaches us to make persuasive arguments; and logic, which teaches us to make arguments that are consistent and complete and in which each term follows necessarily from the others. The quadrivium included pure and applied mathematics: arithmetic, geometry, harmonics, and astronomy. These disciplines were regarded as preparatory to the study of physics or natural philosophy (the term was used to describe both the physical and the biological sciences), and of metaphysics, ethics (including politics), theology, medicine, and the law, all of which depended on a finely tuned ability to make and evaluate arguments.

The Renaissance, the Reformation, and the scientific revolution changed liberal arts education in three ways. First, a revival of interest

**The liberal arts train us to make arguments and to evaluate arguments made by others, and thus put us in a position to make decisions for ourselves**

in classical and scriptural texts accelerated development of the hermeneutic disciplines and focused attention, in what came to be called the humanities, on the meaning of those texts, as opposed to the fundamen-

tal questions of meaning and value that the texts addressed. Second, the scientific revolution marked a profound change in the way we do science. Where medieval science sought to *explain* the physical universe teleologically and thus terminated in metaphysics, modern science *describes* the universe using rigorous mathematical models. Third, philosophy was reduced to the status of one discipline among many and pushed to the margins of the academy. By the middle of the twentieth century, schools and departments of theology were the only places within the academy where a significant number of professors still addressed fundamental questions.

This transformation of liberal arts education had a rather paradoxical relationship to the democratic revolutions. Classical caution about extending participation in the public arena was based on the conviction that unless one can make and evaluate arguments regarding fundamental questions of meaning and value, and thus regarding the ends of human life, one cannot decide freely what ends to pursue and will inevitably follow ends presented



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by others, whether coercively or by persuasive means. Nor will one be able to participate freely and fully in debates regarding our common ends as a species and as a civilization. Conversely, the idea that it might be possible to extend participation in the public arena to a wider circle of citizens was always bound up with the conviction that it must be accompanied by an extension of education in the liberal arts tradition. Those among the American founders who were most committed to broad democratic participation—such as Jefferson—were also most insistent that it be accompanied by a broad extension of education. And yet as democracy advanced, the academy evolved in a way that made it less and less adequate to this task.

Indeed, most expansions of higher education and extensions of educational access in the modern era have been driven by economic considerations. This was true of the establishment of the land-grant universities in the nineteenth century, which provided the research and development that was necessary to an advanced industrial economy. It was also true of the enormous expansion of educational access after the Second World War, which met the country's economic need for people who could carry out the complex but subaltern and not especially creative work involved in applying existing scientific and technological innovations and administering state and corporate bureaucracies. In neither case was there a real effort to provide those granted access to colleges and universities an education that would transform them into real innovators—much less the kind of education that might allow them to engage fundamental questions, or to question existing social structures.

The current expansion of higher education is also economically driven, but with a difference. As Robert Reich has demonstrated in *The Work of Nations* (1992), globalization has created a situation in which not only industrial production but also highly skilled intellectual services are being traded on the global market. Today, essentially anything that anyone in the United States can be trained to do can be done just as well and far more cheaply by workers in India or China. This includes most routine software engineering and even such traditionally elite services such as legal advice. Indeed, the only services that cannot

be traded globally are those that must be performed in person.

The implication, Reich argues, is that in the future only highly creative innovators and problem solvers will be able to demand anything above third-world wages. This means that people must be educated both to understand existing ideas and techniques and to develop new ones. Successful innovators thus need not merely to master a certain structure, but also to be able to reason from a structure to its purpose and back again—to develop new structures that serve the purpose in question better, and, at the highest levels, to reason regarding ends themselves. And that is what a traditional education in the liberal arts trained people to do.

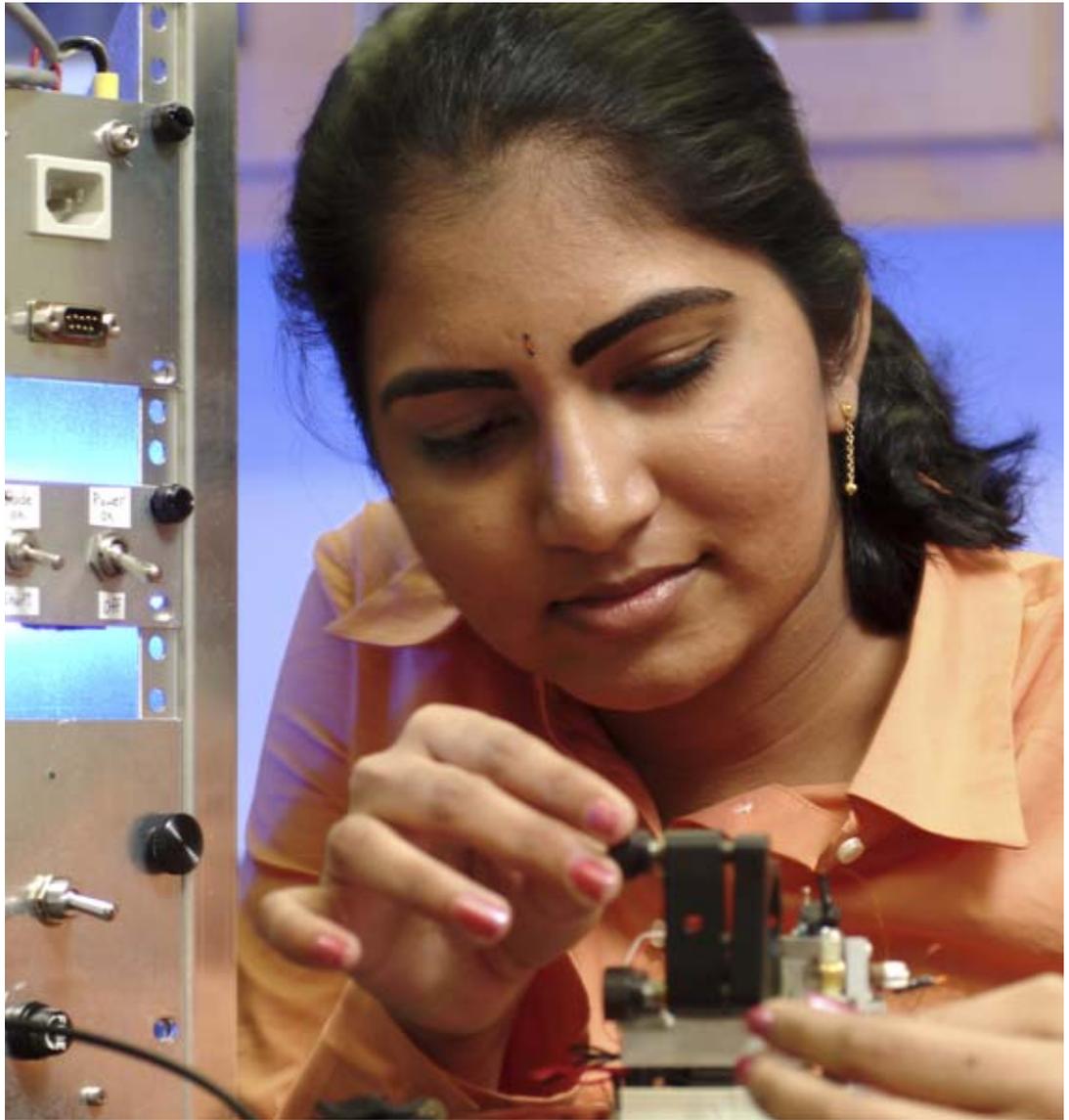
This said, it must be noted that today's students need much more such a traditional education in the liberal arts. It is no longer enough for students to be able to make and evaluate arguments in their own language, across disciplines but within a single civilizational tradition. Nor is it sufficient for them to be humanists with a general knowledge of the sciences, or scientists with a bit of broadening humanistic perspective. They must, rather, be able to analyze problems using a complex combination of disciplines, and be able to do so in as many different languages and with respect to as many different civilizational traditions as possible.

#### **A question-centered approach**

How do colleges and universities provide an education that is both rigorous and accessible, and that helps students understand the liberal arts tradition and the larger global context in which they will live and work? I would like to suggest an approach that is actually quite ancient—it was the approach used in the medieval universities of Europe, but it is uniquely adaptable to the new global context. It is the *quaestio* method, or, if one prefers an English name, a question-centered approach to liberal education.

In the medieval universities where this method was used, each class session was organized around a question, such as “Does God exist?” or “What is a law?” Students would “study” by repairing to the local tavern and developing clever objections to the professor's position on the question, which they would present in class next day. The professor would

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then present the dominant position on the question, citing a major authority, as well as his own (which was not necessarily the same), backed by an extensive argument. Bachelors of Arts—the medieval equivalent of teaching assistants—responded to the objections presented by the undergraduates.

Just how would such a model be adapted to the current situation? First, it presupposes a rigorous prior training in the trivium and the quadrivium—i.e., in languages and mathematics. Students preparing for college should be expected to master at least a few world languages. They should also come able to do algebra (which is the mark of rigorous, formal, abstract reasoning), calculus (which is necessary for even a rudimentary grasp of most physical sciences and economics), and perhaps statistics, and should have a good grasp of the formal foundations of mathematics (philosophy of mathematics, set theory, formal logic, etc.) of the sort now rarely acquired except by advanced students in mathematics.

This sort of intellectual “basic training” should replace what we now understand by high school. It is well established that languages are more easily learned at a young age, and students in their teens should be polishing off their training in several languages by learning to read literary, historical, scientific, and philosophical texts in those languages, and should be regularly consulting newspapers and journals of public opinion from around the world. Most developmental psychologists, furthermore, believe that the capacity for formal abstraction begins to develop around the age of eleven or twelve (Piaget 1972; 1990). As students show evidence of this breakthrough, they should be introduced to abstract mathematics and to mathematical treatments of the physical and biological sciences.

Second, the range of questions and texts examined needs to be global. This is less of a modification than critics of Eurocentrism might imagine. Medieval education was “global” and “multicultural” from the very beginning.

### Medieval education was “global” and “multicultural” from the very beginning

The arguments addressed came not only from the traditions of Hellenic and Roman antiquity, the Hebrew Scriptures, and the New Testament, but also and especially from Jewish and Islamic philosophers. Today, of course, we would want to include questions and perspectives from all of humanity’s civilizational traditions.

Third, we need to split the difference between the still semi-oral culture of the Middle Ages and the textual culture of modernity. Medieval education did not rely heavily on texts. The advent of the printing press radically increased the importance of textual scholarship and probably led to the emergence of text-based approaches to the liberal arts. Today, however, there are simply too many texts that can make a reasonable claim to be part of the global canon to organize undergraduate education around complete mastery of all of them. What we can do is to use carefully selected excerpts from these texts to “represent” questions and answers to questions from humanity’s various civilizational traditions. In engaging these texts, students will also engage the differing linguistic patterns and forms of thinking characteristic of those traditions.

Finally, we need to ensure that students have the basis in experience for this kind of study to make sense. Alexandr Luria’s work on cognitive development (1974) shows that the development of formal abstraction depends not only on age but also on social context. People who are actively engaged in making decisions develop the cognitive capacities they need in order to do so. This is why civic engagement is so critical to liberal education.

There are, to be sure, disciplines that are probably not easily adaptable to the *quaestio* format, and where excerpts from texts simply won’t do—the fine arts (including literature) come to mind. Here, the best approach seems to be simply to expand the canon as much as possible so that students engage great literature and other artistic works from around the world.

#### Where do we begin?

The approach that I have suggested is a real departure, not only from current patterns at the community colleges and state universities where most students receive their education, but also from the way students are being educated in elite liberal arts colleges and research universities.

It will require changes in the curriculum, in scholarly agendas, and in the way institutions are organized.

The best way to promote a vision is to show that it works. And the sort of approach I am proposing could easily be piloted within existing institutional structures. The logical place to start is in honors and preparatory programs. Students in honors programs often already follow an alternate curriculum and could be exempted from existing core requirements in order to pilot the *quaestio* approach suggested here. Students who come unprepared for college-level work should, meanwhile, be directed into preparatory programs that help them understand the importance of the liberal arts while introducing them to reading and interpreting texts, using scientific method, and debating fundamental questions of meaning and value. Preparatory programs might also be used to recruit students from working class and ethnic minority communities into honors programs.

Piloting this approach in special programs can produce the sort of results that will prepare the way for broader structural changes in colleges and universities. It will be a difficult battle. But too much is at stake not to try. Only a question-centered approach to education will allow people both to have a shot at survival in a competitive global economy and to transcend the narrow consumerism that such an economy promotes, enabling them to live full, free, creative, and meaningful lives. □

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TODD S. HUTTON

# The Conflation of Liberal Pipedream, Aspiration, or Nascent Reality?

PERSPECTIVES

WHEN I ADDRESS prospective students and their parents each year during our fall open house, I like to talk about how Utica College brings together professional preparation and liberal education so that students are prepared for the first step in their careers, for lifelong learning and career adaptability, and for community leadership and global citizenship. And every year, I see the eyes of seventeen-year-olds glaze over and the heads of parents nod in hesitant agreement. I suspect there are a number of reasons for the glaze and hesitation. Most students and parents really do not understand what it means to integrate liberal

and professional learning. We at Utica

College don't yet fully understand it ourselves, after all, and we are spending considerable time working on it. So it is asking a lot to expect students and parents to comprehend the advantages in a few short minutes.

Students and parents arrive at our open house having heard different messages from high school counselors, teachers, and family friends about the relative merits of professional programs and liberal arts programs. For many, a college education is the road to a better life. It is, first and foremost, about preparing for a good job. Few would deny that a college education will impart other important benefits, but the sacrifices that so many students and their families make to pay for a college education are substantially about financial return and, more generally, personal welfare. How often do academic advisers on campuses across America hear (and, I fear, sometimes say) that it is important to get core courses out of the way early?

Liberal learning, often synonymous with general education, is too frequently seen as part of the rite of passage. It is not regarded as having intrinsic value or as contributing to personal welfare and career preparation (at

least at a comprehensive college like my own institution). Many parents believe that the liberal arts are for those who can afford such luxury. They do not want their son or daughter tragically imitating the cartoon that shows a college graduate standing on a street corner with a sign that reads, "Liberal arts graduate. Will think for food."

Part of the confusion is also the result of students and parents thinking of Utica College as a liberal arts college, based solely on the fact that it is a small, private college. This confusion, which is even shared by some of Utica's faculty and staff, is not uncommon in the world of higher education. The idea of a liberal arts college is confounded by the imprecise and evolving classifications we have for colleges and universities, as well as by the market decisions that determine the use of the word "college" or "university."

Take, for example, the classifications defined by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Prior to 1994, the foundation classified baccalaureate institutions that awarded more than half of their degrees in the arts and sciences as "Liberal Arts Colleges I & II," with the distinction between the two based upon the selectivity of admissions standards. In 1994, the foundation changed the name of the classifications to "Baccalaureate (Liberal Arts) Colleges I" and "Baccalaureate Colleges II." Institutions included in the Baccalaureate I classification had to award 40 percent or more of their baccalaureate degrees in liberal arts fields and had to be "restrictive" in admissions. In other words, an institution could conceivably award 60 percent of its undergraduate degrees in professional fields but still be classified as a liberal arts college.

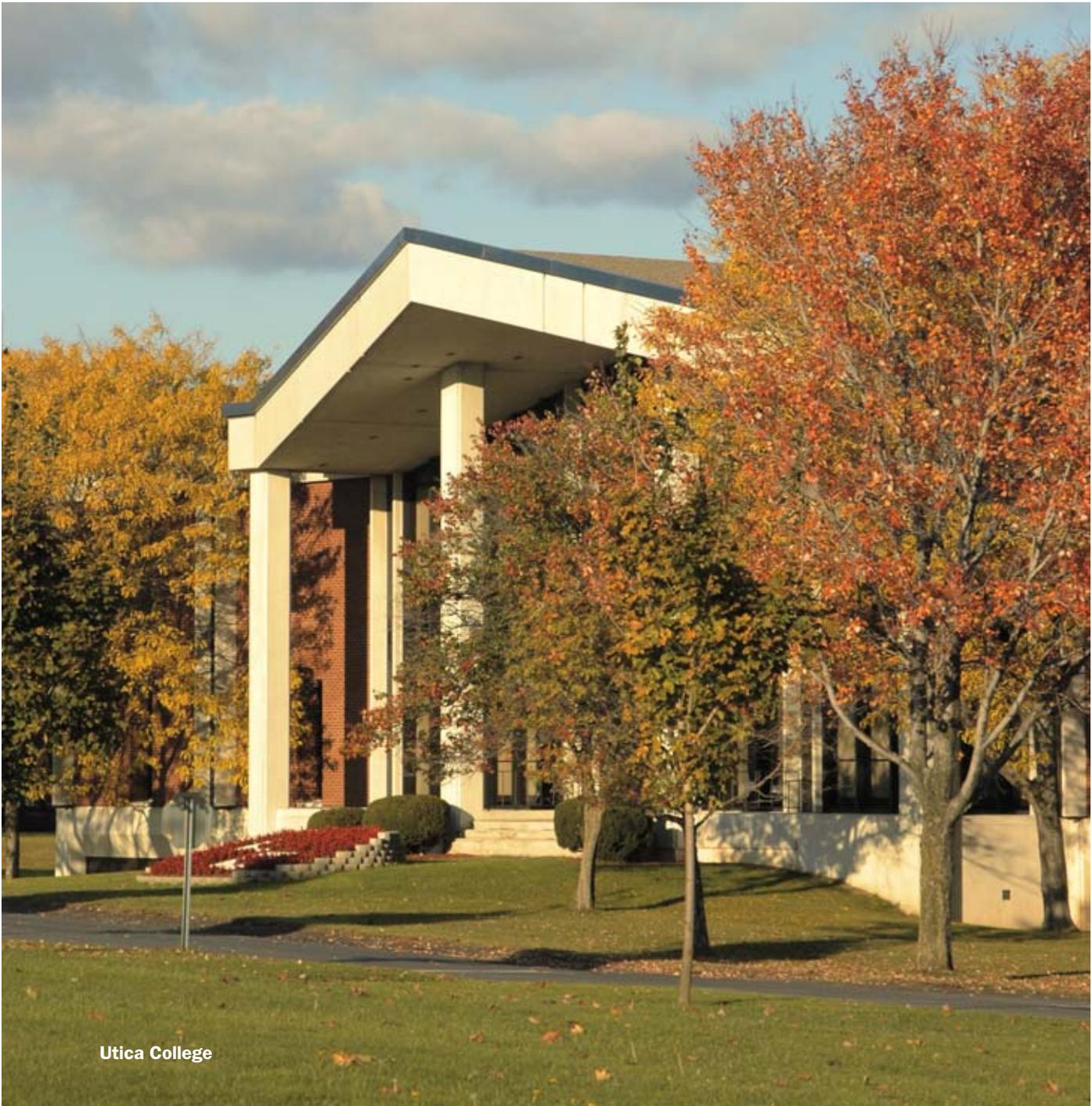
With the most recent revision in 2001, Carnegie returned to the 50 percent threshold and revised the classifications to "Baccalaureate Colleges—Liberal Arts" and "Baccalaureate Colleges—General." Add to the equation the fact that a liberal arts college with a traditional

**Increasingly, the professions are appropriating the language and intellectual goals of the liberal arts**

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# & Professional Education



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arts and science curriculum, one master's degree, and 1,200 students can call itself a university; a college with a medical school can call itself a college; a college with twelve master's degrees and two first-professional doctorates cannot legally (at least in one state) call itself a university; and a community college in some states can drop "community" from its name. Is it any wonder there is confusion, and there are even qualms, among the general public about what defines a liberal arts college and liberal arts education?

This confusion over what is liberal and what is professional, over what is a liberal arts college and what is not, provides an interesting backdrop to the question about the conflation of liberal and professional education.

#### **Integration of liberal learning objectives into professional curricula**

When I talk with prospective students and their parents—and also alumni—about the integration of professional preparation and liberal learning, I have in mind two characteristics of this curricular and pedagogical phenomenon. The first is the mutual integration of liberal and professional learning objectives. With greater emphasis placed on general education during the last couple of decades, one should not be surprised to see the integration of liberal learning objectives into professional curricula. However, the reverse is not true. It is much more surprising to see professional or career-related goals integrated into a liberal arts curriculum.

Second, a core curriculum is frequently the foundation for both liberal and professional programs—a foundation that resembles the intellectual skills and breadth dimensions of liberal learning. Unfortunately, we less frequently see career goals as part of the foundation for liberal learning programs. By career goals, I mean goals related to the application of knowledge, understandings, and intellectual skills learned in a liberal program of study (such as history) to the skills and knowledge requirements; economic, political, and social challenges; and practical problems of a particular career field or related fields.

Almost twenty years ago, Joan Stark and Malcolm Lowther (1988) insisted that the two domains of study need not be mutually exclusive, that the demands of the world in which we live today require new ways of

thinking about old divisions between the liberal arts and professional programs. Progress has been made in bringing the two together, although it appears that the professions have reached farther across the aisle to bridge the old divisions. As I have learned more about particular professional programs, I have been surprised to find learning goals that incorporate characteristics of liberal learning.

The business curriculum at Utica College, for example, has been restructured within the past three years. In describing the revision of the program, the business faculty emphasized



that “the focus will be on students developing effective skills in research, analysis, critical thinking, and problem solving. Issues of diversity, globalism, and ethics will be integrated in every part of the curriculum.” The new “Strategic Charter” for the Department of Business and Economics includes the following language in describing the department’s mission: “Our strong foundation in liberal arts strengthens a student’s writing, speaking, analytical, and interpersonal skills. Technology, ethics, leadership, and a global perspective are integrated in both foundation courses and in advanced study of business and economics.” The statement of values in the charter stresses that the department is “dedicated to the promotion of freedom of expression and to diversity of perspective, background, and experience.” If I did not know that this was written by business faculty, I could easily mistake it for a description of goals in a liberal arts major.

The importance of liberal learning for business education is also reflected in specialized accreditation standards. For example, the accounting standards of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business include a number of requirements related to liberal learning. One of these states that “the general education component should focus on developing student capacities essential to a broad education.” The interpretation section of this requirement goes on to say that

essential capacities should include: the development of written and oral communication competencies; critical thinking skills (including their application to unstructured problems); an appreciation for the arts, literature, history, and science; and an understanding of and ability to effectively utilize computer-based technology, value systems, and the legal, international, and multicultural environment of society.

Within the standards for an accounting curriculum per se, language such as the following can be found: “Coursework in accounting should emphasize theory, concepts, principles, problem solving and research techniques, and should prepare students to solve complex and unstructured problems. It should also prepare students for life-long learning” (AACSB 2000, 44).

The need for students enrolled in professional programs to be liberally educated was acknowledged by a group of accreditors who participated

in the Association of American Colleges and Universities’ Project on Accreditation and Assessment (PAA). The PAA project report, *Taking Responsibility for the Quality of the Baccalaureate Degree*, describes the consensus.

It is noteworthy that representatives from the four specialized accrediting agencies in PAA—business, education, engineering, and nursing—are unanimous in declaring that a strong liberal education is essential to success in each of their professions.

Whereas some in the general public may see liberal education as impractical, as an unnecessary luxury, or as unrelated to their intended career, these leaders see it as a central aspect of educational quality in their fields. Further, their agencies have established standards and procedures that place a high priority on liberal education in the accreditation of these specialized programs. (AAC&U 2004, 2–3)

Indeed, when I examine the goals of other professional programs, I see a similar trend toward infusing professional “training” with goals traditionally associated with intellectual skills of liberal learning.

Majors such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, and economic crime investigation (which at Utica College is an interdisciplinary major that combines criminal justice, accounting, and computer science) expect students to develop a capacity for critical thinking. They expect them to develop the ability to think broadly, to work outside the confines of the customary, and to master skills of analysis and synthesis through research. They expect them to understand and respond positively to diversity, to understand and apply ethical principles and tenets of social responsibility, and to demonstrate competency in verbal and written communication.

Increasingly, the professions are appropriating the language and intellectual goals of the liberal arts. It might be said that where professional study was once about learning how to “do” and liberal arts was once about learning how to “think,” the professions have made a concerted effort to bring “doing” and “thinking” closer together within their own curricula. And like the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, the professions are more explicitly acknowledging that professional preparation must include a grounding in general education. Education for profession and

career is more often seen as a continuum that includes the liberal arts as well as specific knowledge and skills in a professional field.

**Conflation of liberal and professional education**

If institutions are to realize a conflation of liberal and professional education, then the liberal arts must also participate in the mutual integration of liberal and professional learning objectives. I have suggested that the professions have reached farther across the aisle to bridge the old divisions between liberal arts and professional programs. This is not to say, however, that the liberal arts are not extending their hands. At Utica College, for instance, I see majors like English endeavoring to bridge the divide between “thinking” and “doing,” between the theoretical and practical, and between intrinsic and extrinsic value. In describing the English

**If institutions are to realize a conflation of liberal and professional education, then the liberal arts must also participate in the mutual integration of liberal and professional learning objectives**

program, our English faculty assert that students who complete a major in English will be prepared “to teach, do graduate work, or enter any occupation that requires critical thinking, good writing, and a broad perspective.” Detailed advising outlines prepared by the department will help students “prepare for careers in business, civil service, law, or publishing and for graduate work in English language, English as a second language, linguistics, literature, or writing.”

English faculty at institutions similar to my own describe such English and humanities-related learning outcomes as the ability to ask questions, analyze data, synthesize information, communicate effectively, and learn new concepts as particularly relevant for success in a variety of professions. Too often, however, the curricula of liberal arts majors do not take that next step. They do not incorporate learning



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objectives related specifically to career or professional preparation, even though they allude to preparing students for careers in business, law, public service, and the like. The reasons for this are many and varied. The challenge is to overcome the reticence and to achieve an authentic mutual integration of liberal and professional learning objectives.

As liberal study in the form of general education becomes more pervasive and rigorous for all fields of study—professional and liberal arts majors alike—I predict that the primary differentiator between professional and liberal study will increasingly become the knowledge base of the major field itself. Both will be about “doing,” “thinking,” and “knowing.” As this transpires, the lines between liberal and professional or career programs will blur even more.

It is in this light, and in the face of the professions’ appropriation of liberal arts—like intellectual goals, that a redefinition of liberal education becomes more urgent.

The Association of American Colleges and Universities’ clarion call for a more pragmatic

liberal education resonates strongly in this regard. Carol Geary Schneider has pointed to the need to redefine liberal education to “embrace and address the way knowledge is actually used in the world, including the world of work and civil society.” She further asserts that we must make liberal education more “consciously, intentionally pragmatic, while it remains conceptually rigorous,” and we must make the various themes and practices of liberal education more “intentional, connected, and cumulatively powerful frameworks for *all students’ learning*” (2004, 5).

Calls for accountability are all around us. America’s leaders are looking to colleges and universities to educate the next generation of scientists, engineers, mathematicians, and leaders. They are looking to us to do our part in making America competitive in a global marketplace where new giants are emerging. They are looking to us to produce the thinkers, ethicists, and philosophers who can grapple with complex moral issues. Joan Stark and Malcolm Lowther’s twenty-year-old warning could not be more relevant today: liberal and professional study need not be mutually exclusive. Indeed, the demands of the world in which we live today more than ever require new ways of thinking about old divisions between liberal arts and professional studies. □

To respond to this article, e-mail [liberaled@aacu.org](mailto:liberaled@aacu.org), with the author’s name on the subject line.

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MICHAEL C. MCFARLAND, SJ

# “Other Ways of Knowing” and Liberal Education

POLLSTER and social commentator Daniel Yankelovich recently identified five trends that he claims will challenge higher education in the coming years. The fifth trend, which he calls “public support for other ways of knowing,” highlights the divide between the systematic, specialized, logical, evidence-based scientific method enshrined in academic culture, and other ways of knowing valued in “popular culture,” especially those with a religious basis. Yankelovich explains the notion this way:

At the heart of this fifth trend is the public’s growing suspicion that the nation has lost its way and must now rediscover the path of truth. For all its power and cogency, there is little that science and conventional academic knowledge can do to light this path. . . . Americans hunger for religious ways of truth seeking, especially with regard to moral values. By seeming to oppose or even ridicule that yearning, higher education pits itself against mainstream America. Unless it takes a less cocksure and more open-minded approach to the issue of multiple ways of knowing, higher education could easily become more embattled, more isolated, and more polarized. (2005, B6)

As Yankelovich recognizes, correctly I think, this is not simply a political conflict between clear-sighted and objective knowledge, on the one hand, and bias and superstition, on the other. Any institution genuinely dedicated to education has an obligation to battle ignorance and prejudice, no matter what the political consequences. Rather, he is identifying the legitimate yearning that our students have for wisdom, for a deeper sense of the meaning and significance of their lives and the world in which they live. In fact, as Alexander Astin and his colleagues have found, undergraduates have high expectations about the role that their colleges will play in their spiritual development (Astin et al. 2005).

Among the many things a liberal arts institution offers students is an environment in which to develop or refine a set of convictions, preferably shared with others, that can ground their decisions and commitments. Many colleges and universities with no particular religious commitments of their own are responding to this need in new ways—adding courses in religion, hiring chaplains, and starting or recognizing student organizations with a religious interest (as long as there is no religious test for membership). These accommodations to students’ search for a deeper truth have been helpful and much appreciated.

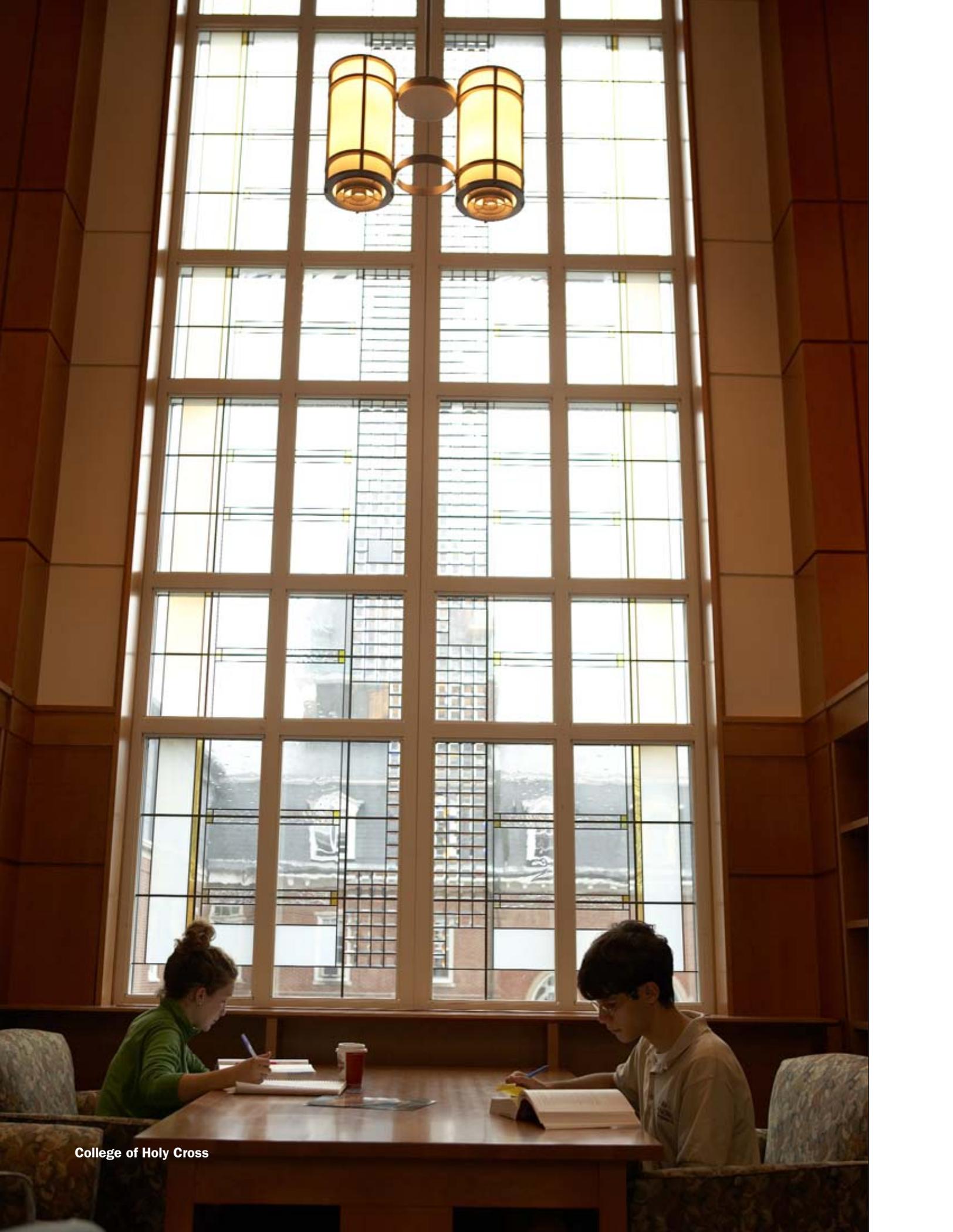
However, studying belief as a cultural phenomenon is different from experiencing it as part of a shared culture and a living tradition. And that is what colleges with a vital connection with their religious traditions have to offer.

## The contribution of faith-based colleges

It is not that such schools try to substitute faith for scientific objectivity, authoritative pronouncements for critical inquiry, or uniformity of thought for genuine dialogue among diverse experiences, beliefs, and points of view. Unfortunately, critics—and even some supposed supporters—of faith-based colleges maintain and sometimes promote this impression. The fact is that colleges with a religious tradition view scientific inquiry—including inquiry about philosophical, ethical, and religious issues—and the development of a system of religious beliefs as complementary dimensions of the search for a richer, more complete truth than either could provide on its own. They also understand that this process can

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only be carried out in its fullness within a supportive community and drawing on a tradition of lived faith, reflection, and commitment.

Bringing together these disparate elements means grappling with some very difficult problems. The seemingly contradictory claims of science and faith must be distinguished and reconciled; free and open inquiry must be promoted, even as we recognize an authority that transcends questioning; virtue must be promoted, even as we acknowledge compromise, sinfulness, and failure; and, around a set of shared values, a community must be built that is welcoming to those who are different. Many institutions avoid these problems by focusing on a much narrower academic mission. Nevertheless, these are the very issues our own society is struggling with as it yearns for a deeper sense of coherence and meaning in a highly technological and pluralistic context. It is important to engage these problems in a serious way within a thoughtful, reflective environment that can call on some of our best intellectual and spiritual resources.

In the West, academic culture originally arose within a religious context; and the two still have much to teach each other. I offer my own experience as an example. As a Jesuit, a member of a Catholic religious order, I received a PhD in electrical and computer engineering at Carnegie Mellon University. As unusual as this might seem, it is consistent with the long Jesuit history of involvement in the sciences, technology, and in general, the leading edge of the culture. I taught and conducted research for many years in computer science and engineering but, because of my broader interests and background, I also became involved in teaching, writing, and lecturing about ethics and computer technology to engineers as well as a broader audience.

In my work on ethics, I drew from many common philosophical resources; but I also emphasized the social dimensions of information and technology and their relation to the common good, an insight I arrived at through my study of Catholic social ethics. Though this analysis originated in my own faith tradition, I was able to present it in a way that was credible to those who did not share the same background. This added an important dimension to discussions that tended to be based on individual rights or on utilitarian economic arguments.

Institutions committed to liberal education cannot shy away from the fundamental questions students are bringing with them about faith and the intellectual life, about the source and content of our ethical obligations, about the nature and meaning of the world and their place in it. Addressing these questions in a meaningful way will continue to require our best efforts. The experience, scholarship, and reflection of colleges that maintain a religious dimension in their missions are valuable resources and need to be part of the wider dialogue as the academic community explores questions that challenge us all. □

To respond to this article, e-mail [liberaled@aacu.org](mailto:liberaled@aacu.org), with the author's name on the subject line.

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