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If there is one single artifact that pinpoints the degradation of liberal education, it is the rule-infested, punitive, controlling syllabus that is handed out to students on the first day of class.
AS THIS ISSUE of Liberal Education goes to press, we have just received news that AAC&U was awarded a major grant from the U.S. Department of Education’s Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) to support a collaborative project on student learning assessment. The FIPSE grant will fund Rising to the Challenge: Meaningful Assessment of Student Learning, a project that establishes a consortium among AAC&U, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges to build campus leadership and capacity to implement meaningful approaches to student learning assessment and use assessment results to raise the level and quality of student achievement.

This development comes at a pivotal moment in the history of American higher education. As we all know, our society has been exceptionally well served by the varied, accessible, and intellectually self-directed colleges and universities in our country—and by the vitality and creativity of our faculty. As a result of their work, the American system of higher education is envied—and emulated—throughout the world. However, as the LEAP report, College Learning for the New Global Century, makes plain, we have entered a new era. It is now more urgent than ever before for higher education to overcome four fundamental challenges. Each of these challenges calls, first and foremost, for new forms of creativity and collaborative leadership on the part of college faculty. And each calls on faculty and other academic leaders to use assessment far more creatively, as a way to both focus and strengthen the quality of student learning.

What are these challenges?

First, we need to raise the level of degree completion. Most Americans will certainly need education beyond high school to prosper economically. But with degree attainment holding steady for over a generation at about one-third of the population, we must find ways to help a much higher percentage of Americans prepare for college and actually complete their degrees—two-year degrees and four-year degrees. We must do this to help Americans fulfill their own hopes for the future and to maintain our global leadership.

Second, we must ensure that the college degree represents high levels of educational challenge and accomplishment. To stay competitive in the global knowledge economy, employers now actively seek graduates who possess broad knowledge in areas such as science, the global context, and diverse cultures. They also look for graduates with sophisticated analytical, quantitative, and technological skills; excellent communication and intercultural capacities; and the ability to apply their knowledge creatively to real-world challenges and settings. Sixty-three percent of employers report that many college graduates fall short on these expectations. The world itself is demanding more of college graduates than ever before, and we, as a community, must use our creativity to help all our students meet these high expectations.
Third, we must help the public and our students recognize that higher education has an obligation to democracy as well as to the economy. As Benjamin Franklin famously remarked following the Constitutional Convention of 1787, the founders gave us “a republic—if you can keep it.” Today, our republic faces daunting challenges at home as well as abroad. A college degree should ensure that graduates are knowledgeable about their democratic, cultural, and global heritage and well prepared to contribute, as engaged and active citizens, to the work of renewing the public square and helping to solve life-threatening problems at home and around the globe.

Finally, postsecondary education will need to foster these high levels of college attainment for students and communities that, historically, have been underserved at all levels of the American educational system. College access and degree completion are still sharply stratified by income and ethnicity. But with the demographic composition of American society now changing very rapidly, the United States can maintain its economic and civic vitality only if it reverses these inherited inequities. We must make a new commitment to help the millions of students from traditionally underserved communities both enroll in college and graduate well prepared—for creative and successful careers, for civic participation, and for fulfilling lives.

These four challenges place the national debates about assessment and accountability, which have gained such steam over the past year, in their appropriate context. As AAC&U has affirmed before, assessment is a crucial tool for helping colleges and universities set educational goals in the context of these social obligations; examine and report their own progress; and make needed improvements in their educational programs. It is also a crucial tool for helping students take active responsibility for adopting high standards and assessing their own educational progress.

The danger, however, is that assessment of student learning will remain an underdeveloped resource for all these purposes. The crucial question is whether we can develop forms of assessment that are led by faculty, useful to faculty, reflective of scholarly values, and above all, a positive resource both for faculty members’ work and for students’ deeper learning. As AAC&U moves forward with the Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) initiative, with the new assessment initiative, and with our continuing work on linking assessment to the aims and outcomes of an empowering liberal education, we will hold these commitments centrally in mind. Our intention is to collaborate with faculty across the country and to draw from the many centers of creative, faculty-led assessment that have already developed.

There is only one useful way forward for assessment. And that is to adopt assessment practices that build from and reinforce the sources of higher education’s historic strengths, especially the root strengths of faculty leadership, intellectual freedom, diversity, and creativity. —CAROL GEARY SCHNEIDER
Institutions whose mission it is to prepare students to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century are not always well served by the persistence of traditional boundaries among disciplines and departments or between the curriculum and the cocurriculum, academic affairs and student affairs, or the liberal arts and the professional fields. In fact, the primarily vertical organization of colleges and universities can create structural impediments to achieving the goals of a twenty-first-century liberal education.

Interdisciplinary programs, learning communities, diversity initiatives, service learning, and other effective educational innovations have arisen out of the need for greater horizontality. The writing across the curriculum movement, for example, is based upon the recognition that students are more likely to become proficient in writing when they are given opportunities to practice their developing skills in a variety of disciplines and settings. Similarly, as the articles in the ongoing Bonner Series on Student Civic Engagement demonstrate, efforts to foster personal and social responsibility are far more effective when they are intentionally designed to maximize curricular and cocurricular coordination.

Leadership and organizational support are required to sustain and expand innovations that integrate teaching and learning across organizational units, however, and as Jerry Gaff points out in this issue, those involved with institutional initiatives that span departments “routinely discover that nobody is in charge of important educational programs. They realize that they must invent structures, design processes, and create leadership positions.” Frustration over the functional disconnect between the vertical organization of colleges and universities and the horizontal forces driving successful educational innovation is expressed through what Richard Keeling, Ric Underhile, and Andrew Wall call “the frequent and increasingly predictable accusation that institutions of higher education operate in ‘silos.’”

Notwithstanding its usefulness as a shorthand description of the problem, the metaphor of the silo is somewhat less helpful for conceptualizing solutions. Whether they’re designed to store grain or missiles, silos are self-contained and sealed for very good reasons. If silos are the problem, if they represent an unsuitable organizational model for institutions of higher education, then their elimination in favor of more integrated, or more horizontal, units of organization would seem to be the solution. But the likely result of such a radical solution would be, to mix the metaphor, to throw out the baby with the bathwater. And in truth, it’s not really the structures that need to change so much as the roles and behaviors of those who inhabit them.

In the business world, where the silo metaphor originated, a corresponding buzzword has been coined to identify a different solution: “unsiloing.” As Carol Hymowitz recently explained in the Wall Street Journal, “‘unsiloing’ mangles the noun silo to make an important but simple point: Managers must cooperate across departments and functions, share resources and cross-sell products to boost the bottom line.” Or, to paraphrase, faculty, staff, and administrators must cooperate across departments and functions, share resources, and assume collective responsibility for helping students achieve the outcomes of a liberal education. And it is with this goal in mind that the recommendations for strengthening faculty leadership are offered in the Featured Topic section of this issue.—DAVID TRITELLI
**New Assessment Initiative**

With support from the State Farm Companies Foundation, AAC&U is working with key researchers, educational leaders, campus presidents, other administrative leaders, and faculty members to conduct a new research and campus-based assessment initiative. Called Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE), the initiative is designed to build campus capacity to articulate the importance of the essential learning outcomes recommended by the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America’s Promise; intentionally foster their achievement across the curriculum; and use cumulative assessments to both measure student progress and improve practices for achieving these outcomes. The VALUE initiative will generate leadership, recommendations, examples of best practices and curricular designs, and an assessment framework. More information is available online at www.aacu.org/value.

**AAC&U Television**

AAC&U-TV, a daily television news program, will be broadcast on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday evenings during the 2008 annual meeting. Each program will include interviews with speakers and educational leaders at the meeting, as well as news and views from the conference floor. The program will also include brief segments—filmed at AAC&U member campuses—on innovative educational practices.

AAC&U-TV was developed to help champion the value of a liberal education, shine a spotlight on how AAC&U members are advancing liberal education in local contexts, and provide a wider forum for the work featured at the annual meeting.

AAC&U-TV will be broadcast on a dedicated television channel in hotel rooms at the Grand Hyatt Hotel. The programs will also be webcast on the Internet.

**New Leadership for the Campus Action Network**

Alma Clayton-Pedersen, AAC&U’s vice president for education and institutional renewal, has assumed responsibility for the LEAP Campus Action Network. The network is comprised of institutions that are committed to the broad vision for liberal education spelled out through the Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) initiative and that are actively engaged in efforts to strengthen some aspect of their undergraduate programs. The LEAP Campus Action Network seeks to make these efforts more visible and influential, as well as to connect faculty and administrative leaders who are working on campuses across the country to develop new approaches to liberal education. More information is available online at www.aacu.org/advocacy/leap.

**Upcoming Meetings**

The governance of most colleges and universities is shared among the board of trustees, the administration, and the faculty. Most four-year institutions endorse the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities (1966), which asserts that the faculty has primary authority over the academic area, including such matters as the curriculum, standards of faculty competence, and standards of student achievement. In this area, the governing board and administration should “concur with the faculty judgment except in rare instances and for compelling reasons which should be stated in detail.” The board and administration, the statement says, should have primary authority over mission, strategic direction, physical plant, and fiscal resources. In these areas, the faculty has secondary authority and should be consulted and informed about major decisions.

Oddly, the AAUP statement is largely silent about faculty responsibility for programs of study and the learning of students. Faculty members are hired to implement programs of study, not just to conduct their own research or to teach their own courses, and such programs are intended to lead to student learning. Both of these factors change the dynamics of shared governance in ways that were not envisioned during the early and mid-twentieth century, when basic governance agreements were devised.

With regard to the area over which faculty have primary authority, the educational program, there are two problems that need urgently to be addressed. The first concerns the apparent disconnect between authority and accountability. It is generally agreed that the faculty, those with expert authority, should be the ones to make academic decisions rather than administrators or trustees, who have bureaucratic authority. Yet while the faculty are generally responsible for academic decisions, they are seldom held accountable either for student learning or for the fiscal results of their decisions. And while administrators are held accountable for student learning by accrediting agencies, they have no legitimate authority to intervene in the academic programs that are designed to produce student learning; while they are responsible for financial prudence, they again have little authority to “meddle” in the curriculum or to alter academic decisions made by the faculty.

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However defined, a program of study is necessarily a corporate responsibility. It is designed and approved by the governance system of an institution and/or by one of its units. By definition, the educational program imposes expectations on faculty members; each individual has the responsibility to contribute to the success of the program as a whole, regardless of his or her own personal or professional preferences. Although faculty members absolutely need freedom and autonomy, their autonomy is not absolute. It is constrained, minimally, by their obligation to contribute to the educational program(s) for which they are hired (or as they have evolved).

The current paradigm shift “from teaching to learning” (Barr and Tagg 1995; Braskamp, Trautvetter, and Ward 2006) signifies a new emphasis on student learning. Indeed, accrediting agencies now require evidence of student learning as a condition for accreditation. This shift has necessitated a change in focus from the faculty member and his or her teaching to the students and their learning. For today’s faculty, responsibility for oversight of the instructional program also increasingly includes responsibility for planning educational activities in such a way that students actually learn the material, achieve at the expected level, and document that achievement through assessment. Collectively, faculty need to be more purposeful in designing and implementing programs of study to achieve high levels of student learning.

The second problem concerns the tendency of faculty and administrators to invent faculty governance over a wide array of programs on an ad hoc basis. Over the years, hundreds of campuses have worked through projects of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) to identify educational problems and devise strategies for making improvements. These projects have covered a wide variety of topics, including general education, academic majors and preprofessional programs, interdisciplinary studies, and special initiatives involving diversity, global studies, and student transfer practices. Typically, an institution assembles a task group or committee consisting of faculty members from various disciplines and an academic administrator; occasionally, students and student affairs staff members are also included. This group is then charged by the institution to review an area of study and to recommend improvements.

When they work on institutional initiatives that span departments, such groups routinely discover that nobody is in charge of important educational programs. They realize that they must invent structures, design processes, and create leadership positions that allow the faculty as a whole to be more attentive to important educational agendas. Over and over, we at AAC&U have watched faculty groups struggle to invent specific governance arrangements for particular areas of study on an ad hoc basis. For example, groups may not only recommend a more rigorous general education program but also create a leadership position, such as dean or director of general education, to direct the program with the advice of a newly created campus-wide committee. Other leadership positions may also be included for specific components of the curriculum, such as a director of a first-year program or an associate dean for diversity.

Recommendations for strengthening faculty governance

Traditional governance arrangements assume a “one-size-fits-all” stance that has been regarded as appropriate for research universities, liberal arts colleges, and community colleges and for large and small institutions alike. Yet institutions differ in terms of their missions, instructional programs, student bodies, and relative emphases on research, teaching, and service. Accordingly, an institution should design programs of instruction, and appropriate structures to support them, in ways that are in keeping with its individual mission, heritage, and culture.

In order to advance thinking about how the faculty can provide more effective oversight for the educational program and improve student learning, I offer below five recommendations for strengthening faculty governance, which institutions can modify in light of their particular missions and circumstances.

1. **Link departments with institutional issues.** One of the primary ways the faculty has been organized to conduct its oversight of the academic program is through departments and schools. In many respects, this organization does ensure that academic programs are sound, that professors in the disciplines are
qualified, and that students meet accepted standards. Moreover, departments and other units have been created to advance research and to organize the education of students in their fields, and by and large they have succeeded in these tasks.

Departments were created when the map of knowledge was far simpler, however. With the dynamic growth of new knowledge, the subdivision of old disciplines, and the combinations of formerly disparate areas to create new specializations—and with faculty networked with colleagues in other disciplines and even across continents—the contemporary academy is not well served by the persistent reification of disciplines into fixed organizational units (Klein 1998).

Even the best departments too often function like silos; members attend to their own interests without consideration of other departments or institutional priorities. Of course, departments should support education and scholarship in their respective disciplines. But departments are units of an institution, and they should be expected to advance institution-wide educational programs that advance institutional priorities. In theory, chairs are aware of institutional issues and initiatives, and they link departments with institutional matters. But in reality, chairs are often selected to advance departmental interests and to protect faculty members from institutional intrusions. Chairs often lack managerial expertise or skill in communicating between their faculty colleagues and administrators. Departments need to function more like a matrix in which departmental planning and operations are linked with institutional agendas. Even when chairs are disinterested or incapable, other faculty members would welcome the opportunity to link their departments with institutional discussions and initiatives concerning, for example, general education, diversity, the use of instructional technology, or the assessment of student learning.

There have been too few efforts among administrators to bring faculty members into the national dialogue about improving the quality of education; to inform them of innovations that promote more active, collaborative, and experiential approaches to teaching and learning; and to define institutional priorities about such matters. Many faculty members see their roles and rewards only through disciplinary lenses. As a vision for the academic profession, that is not wrong; but it is insufficient. Many faculty members do not recognize opportunities to couple their specialized expertise to larger interests that can expand their own horizons, engage students, and advance their institutions.

Modern management processes keep structures from hardening and promote new strategies to increase effectiveness and productivity. For example, corporations are creating new businesses that are more focused and nimble—for example, forging closer partnerships with suppliers and customers, devising faster means of communicating with clients, utilizing the Internet to make purchasing faster and cheaper, and employing just-in-time inventory. By comparison, the structure and culture of the academic department is inflexible and badly out of date. This is not to endorse the often wrong-headed call by trustees to apply business practices in the academy; it is, instead, merely a suggestion for how departments could become more vital and contemporary in supporting both students and faculty.

2. Provide academic leadership for important programs that transcend departments.

Many important educational goals can only be achieved across departments. Critical thinking, say, or quantitative reasoning is not developed in a single course; both are practiced, refined, and perfected in multiple courses and contexts. “Writing across the curriculum” programs, for example, are based on the simple idea that writing skills can be strengthened if practiced repeatedly in different courses and disciplines.

Institutions with writing across the curriculum programs have learned that they need to appoint a director of writing to achieve their purposes. The director performs several tasks: he or she recruits faculty from all sectors of the institution to design courses that include writing; provides training to faculty in giving assignments and providing useful feedback to students; approves courses that meet the spirit of the program; and advises students about the reasons for “writing-intensive” courses; serves as a spokesperson for the writing program; assesses the program; hears appeals from students;
and prepares reports on the progress of the program. Without the leadership enabled by the director of writing position, a writing across the curriculum program cannot achieve its full potential.

Similarly, institutions are creating a variety of first-year, civic engagement, and interdisciplinary studies programs. Each requires academic leadership that goes beyond the usual college dean or department chair. Some recently created leadership positions that help faculty assume responsibility for important programs include director of general education, dean of experiential learning, director of service learning, coordinator of undergraduate research, vice chancellor for student success, associate dean for diversity, and director of academic assessment. Although these new positions are created to “administer” important programs, the individuals appointed to them are typically faculty members who enjoy widespread respect for their academic leadership in these areas. These new leaders are passionate about the educational agendas they oversee, and their positions allow them to work with their faculty colleagues and their students to advance important educational purposes.

As Donald Farmer, the late vice president for academic affairs, has said of King’s College, “we are well organized vertically. But all of our new strategic educational initiatives are horizontal. We are not organized to address them” (pers. comm.). The creation of new leadership positions that span academic departments and schools is a good place to start.

3. Streamline the committee system. Committees are commonly established to support faculty supervision of the instructional program. Faculty exercise their collective responsibilities through, for example, committees for the curriculum, academic standards, and personnel. The committee structure is a classical bureaucratic way to differentiate a task into its various parts, providing for both specialization of function and division of labor.

In practice, however, the committee system does not work well. Many faculty committees are organized around matters that are not very important; faculty who serve often do not see that their contribution makes much difference; members are recruited who have little interest or expertise in the area of committee responsibility; discussions that have been worked through to a decision often are rehashed or overruled by the faculty as a whole; some chairs are not effective in running meetings; and the list goes on. Faculty themselves are not satisfied with the operation of the committee system. In a survey of private liberal arts colleges, which a prior national survey found to be the institutions where faculty are most satisfied with academic governance, Berberet (1999) reports that 60 percent of the faculty say they are required to spend too much time on committee work.

The most serious limitations of the committee system are typical of bureaucratic structures in general. Faculty committees are focused on some particular aspect of the instructional program, but often there is no formal relationship among different committees. For example, the curriculum and faculty personnel committees usually work independently, although the work of each has significance for the work of the other. The university curriculum committee at an institution involved in a recent AAC&U project was developing a plan to staff a newly approved general education program, while the personnel committee was simultaneously devising a plan to reduce the faculty workload by one course per year. The resulting workload reduction presented a serious challenge to the implementation of the newly approved curriculum.

Often, the decisions of different faculty committees are linked only by an academic administrator who works with each, which, curiously, makes the coordination of faculty decision making the responsibility of the administration. This might be fine, but it should be the result of an explicit agreement about coordinating faculty work, rather than an accident. Even a meeting of the key committee chairs once per term, perhaps in concert with the provost or dean, to share anticipated agendas in each area and to make arrangements for sharing progress among the chairs of other committees and departments would constitute a major improvement on many campuses.

Further, while some committee is attending to each specific area, the educational program as a whole often has no single committee charged to look after it. In the words of the seminal report *Integrity in the College Curriculum* (Association of American Colleges 1985, 9), it is important to “revive the responsibility of the faculty as a whole for the curriculum as a
"Even the best departments too often function like silos.

Unlike even the smallest department, the general education program—the largest academic program in most institutions—usually has no chair, no faculty, and no budget. For this reason, many of the institutions that have revised their general education programs to be more purposeful and coherent have created an administrative position so that someone, typically a faculty leader respected for his or her work in general education and passionate about its value, can provide academic leadership for the program. For the same reason, many institutions also create a general education committee of faculty members (and sometimes students) to advise the general administrator about the core curriculum.

4. Develop constructive working relationships with administrators. It is an intellectual mistake to hold that faculty do not need the support of administrators in order really to have authority and responsibility for the instructional program. Virtually all of the decisions made by faculty have to be approved by administrators, and often trustees as well, before they can become institutional policy. Faculty exercise more effective control over the instructional program when they cultivate good relationships with various kinds of administrators who can assist them in realizing their goals.

Academic administrators are hired to provide leadership and oversight of the academic program, promote the professional development of the faculty, and ensure the achievement of students. Thus, we have a curious circumstance in which both the faculty and academic administrators are responsible for the academic program. Yet, the AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities provides no guidance about how to navigate this state of affairs.

The reality is that faculty members and academic administrators share responsibility—and authority—for the educational program. They need to utilize both the subject matter content knowledge of the faculty and the institution-wide perspective, institutional knowledge, and resources of the provost, vice president for academic affairs, or dean. Faculty members and academic administrators work best when they have trust and respect for one another and when they collaborate for the benefit of students.

It is a truism that much student learning occurs outside the classroom, and institutions have large staffs to promote learning in residence halls as well as through internships, community service, study abroad, etc. These professionals are committed to students and their learning. By working collaboratively with student affairs staff, faculty can extend their educational reach beyond the classroom. Today, both faculty members and student affairs professionals are refocusing their work on student learning.
By and large, finance officers assume a hands-off stance toward the instructional program. This practice contributes to the fiction that the faculty is “in control” of the academic program, but how much control would the faculty have without money? The fact of the matter is that most faculty members, even experienced faculty leaders, have little knowledge about the basic financial realities of their institutions and instructional programs. This may be because the administration does not share pertinent information about finances with the faculty, or because faculty regard finance as outside their responsibilities. Nonetheless, the faculty cannot have much real control without knowledge of the cost of various curricula, reliable information about the financial condition of the institution, and access to financial modeling for alternatives to common instructional practices. Rather than accepting isolation from the finance office, faculty would be better served by working jointly with the best available financial minds to develop policies, programs, and budgets that are both educationally and fiscally sound.

A few years ago, AAC&U worked with the National Association of College and University Business Officers to address the need to both improve quality and control costs in undergraduate education. This initiative brought chief academic officers and faculty leaders into dialogue with chief financial officers in order to develop more collaborative relationships and to generate specific ideas for addressing these twin agendas. Faculty members and academic administrators reported that it was an eye-opening experience for them to examine the financial implications of instructional practices and learn about the educational benefits that can be created by thoughtful reallocations of resources. To the pleasant surprise of faculty, financial officers are interested in supporting educational quality. Ferren and Slavings (2000) have developed economic models to show the financial benefits of several initiatives designed to improve the quality of education by reducing attrition rates through a first-year seminar, providing supplemental instruction to help “at-risk” students succeed, and supporting students’ success in courses with high failure rates, as well as through better curriculum management and steps to enhance institutional productivity. They demonstrate the compatibility of improving quality and gaining efficiency. If faculty and finance officers investigate the actual costs of various curricular or instructional practices and are willing to consider alternatives, they may be able to reallocate dollars to invest in quality.

5. Name the work faculty do, recognize and reward it. The work faculty do in assuming responsibility for significant portions of the educational program and for leading educational innovations lacks a name that has academic currency. Among other activities, institutions of all types are working to devise new frameworks for general education, developing first-year programs, creating learning communities, conducting assessments of student learning, and incorporating diversity into courses and programs. But the important work faculty do to launch these initiatives is often not recognized. “In the midst of [a] campus visit,” Carol Schneider observes, “it dawned on me that the ‘work’ these campuses want faculty to perform for such initiatives has no name.” She continues by explaining her observation:

It is not teaching, even though the initiatives focus on learning. It is not scholarship, even in the expanded meanings of scholarship that the late Ernest Boyer and Eugene Rice have helpfully provided (i.e., the scholarships of discovery, integration, application, and teaching). The desired activity also is not service, as that ambiguously defined tail of the academic dog is currently understood. But it is demanding intellectual work, and it is not something that faculty members can accomplish satisfactorily in a few extra hours of committee time. (1998, 1)

Schneider suggests the term “stewardship” to describe this special kind of faculty leadership that is desperately needed but seldom recognized. If the faculty are actually to provide stewardship for the instructional program, they need to conceptualize this kind of work, and they also need to honor and support their colleagues who labor to provide this form of academic leadership.
Richard Miller (1998) argues that the assumed distinction between intellectual and bureaucratic labor complicates the task of the faculty member who wants to be an effective teacher or researcher or to make improvements in educational programs. The reality is that faculty members are employed to do their intellectual work within the context of particular institutions, which both permit education and constrain it. In cases where a faculty member cannot escape the constraints of the institution, Miller advocates becoming sophisticated in the ways of organizations so that the faculty member can navigate and negotiate support for his or her research, teaching, and students. Miller concludes that “the best strategy available to anyone preparing to enter the profession may well involve fabricating for oneself and for the academic community at large some inhabitable version of the intellectual bureaucrat” (1998, 216, italics added). Although Miller acknowledges that this is an inelegant phrase, it does capture the idea that in order to be an effective teacher, researcher, or advocate for quality education or for one’s students, the best avenue is not to reject institutional entanglements but to become expert in them—to become, in other words, engaged and effective academic citizens.

Conclusion
The evidence is widespread that the governance of colleges and universities is in need of reform. Jack Schuster and Martin Finkelstein (2006, 358) declare that “almost no one is pleased with the way campuses are governed: not faculty, not administrators, not governing boards, not external observers.” This observation is supported by Tierney (2001); Scott (1997); Kezar, Lester, and Anderson (2006); McMillan and Berberet (2002); and Mortimer and Sathre (2007).

Faculty members, administrators, and trustees have an opportunity to reinforce traditional academic and educational values by revising the traditional structures and processes that once supported those values, but that now interfere with them. The recommendations offered above can give faculty even greater control of the instructional program through mutual and collaborative relations with other authorities. As McMillan and Berberet (2002, 5), calling for a “new academic compact,” put it, “at its core this compact serves mission best . . . when institution and faculty alike nurture the effectiveness of the other.” The benefits to faculty and administrations, as well as to students, promise to exceed their risk and effort.

To respond to this article, e-mail liberaled@aacu.org, with the author’s name on the subject line.

REFERENCES
FACULTY MEMBERS who work directly to advance the institutional mission of teaching, learning, and at some institutions, research, represent the core human resource of higher education. They are the stewards of campus leadership and decision making. While the faculty role has changed over time, leadership has remained critical to innovation in teaching, advances in knowledge, and alteration to many campus policies and practices. But as several recent publications attest, this leadership role is threatened by a number of current trends. Most notably, Schuster and Finkelstein (2006) decry the rise in part-time and non-tenure-track appointments, increasing standards for tenure and promotion, the rise of academic capitalism, and heavy service roles for women and people of color. Wergin (2007) argues that these new factors further hinder faculty leadership by adding to the challenges posed by the faculty socialization process and the tenure system.

"Academic capitalism" refers to the growing trend whereby individual faculty members derive supplementary income from grants and outside contracts. This trend increases faculty autonomy and leads to the partial privatization of faculty work and research (Fairweather 1996; Slaughter and Rhoades 2004). While it is more prevalent in the sciences and in research universities, this trend is present in various disciplines and across all institutional sectors. Increasingly, new faculty members are being socialized to view involvement in external activities as more important than campus involvement.

At most institutions—excepting community colleges and some liberal arts institutions—far greater weight is placed on publication than on virtually any other criteria used to make tenure and promotion decisions. The current publication standards for tenure are more than triple what they were in the 1970s (Schuster and Finkelstein 2006). Service and leadership are being given short shrift, and assistant and associate level faculty members are being encouraged to focus exclusively on publication.

The sharp rise in the number of part-time and non-tenure-track appointments also negatively affects faculty leadership. Faculty in these non-traditional appointments often have other full-time jobs, may work at several different universities, are generally not compensated for service or governance—and, indeed, are often actively excluded from these processes (Schuster and Finkelstein 2006). For these reasons, it is difficult for these faculty members to become invested and involved in campus-specific issues and organizational leadership. Less than half of today’s faculty hold tenure-track appointments, and the majority are not expected to undertake leadership roles; the long-term impact on higher education is certain to be dramatic.

The tenure system itself negatively affects faculty leadership in the early years. Tenure-track faculty may exercise leadership before they are awarded tenure, but they do so at great

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Where Are the Faculty Leaders?

The challenges to faculty leadership are significant, but they are not insurmountable.

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Strategies and Advice for Reversing Current Trends
They are often afraid to discuss their work, and they have to create partnerships with senior faculty in order to evade resistance and create protection. The lack of participation in leadership activities during the pre-tenure years may inhibit faculty participation later, as these faculty members will not have formed the habits or developed the skills. Faculty socialization also tends not to facilitate leadership development. In graduate school, students work independently in the library or the laboratory. After years of training and working independently and autonomously, faculty may find it difficult to engage in the types of activities that are required of grassroots leaders, such as creating a vision, developing networks, and organizing multiple people.

The challenges to faculty leadership posed by these trends are significant, but they are not insurmountable. Recently, we conducted a study of bottom-up faculty leadership across all sectors of higher education. We interviewed approximately seventy-five faculty members at institutions that do not have national reputations for faculty activism, but where faculty members play significant leadership roles. The purpose was to learn about the kinds of environments that foster faculty leadership, especially in the face of the often daunting threats to bottom-up or grassroots leadership. The results demonstrate that certain campus practices and policies can reverse or slow the trends impeding faculty leadership.

Supportive individuals
Almost every successful faculty leader who participated in our study mentioned a supportive department chair, senior faculty member, or administrator who had worked with them to understand their scholarly interests as well as their leadership potential. This supportive individual is more than a mentor; he or she is someone who can actually change working conditions to support faculty leadership. These supporters meet with faculty on an annual basis to help them think about and plan their future careers, and they also occasionally meet informally to check in and offer support. A host of practices is available to the department chair who seeks to help faculty play a leadership role. These practices include legitimizing activities through public acknowledgement; providing resources, including course releases or credit for service; and acting as an institutional advocate.

Supportive department chairs are uncommon, however. Chairs are often overwhelmed by bureaucracy, untrained for the role, apathetically waiting out their rotations, lacking in sensitivity, or have forgotten what it was like to be an early career faculty member. Thus, faculty must look to other supportive figures if their department chairs cannot, or choose not to, play this role. Institutions need to examine the structures that inhibit department chairs from playing a role in fostering faculty members as organizational citizens, and to consider the guidance and priorities provided to chairs.

Leadership as service
One of the key strategies for assisting faculty in pursuing leadership opportunities is to find ways for leadership to count as institutional service. In the pre-tenure years, it would be extremely difficult to both exercise leadership for organizational change and meet service requirements by serving on assigned committees. In the course of our study, we repeatedly heard stories of department chairs or deans who
found ways to count leadership toward tenure and promotion requirements. While substituting leadership for service seems intuitive, department chairs often went further; some substituted leadership for teaching. In the end, such creative solutions for fostering faculty leadership help the institution as well as the individual faculty member and address some of the challenges posed by the tenure system.

**Collegiality and campus networks**

Another way administrators can help foster faculty leadership is by creating connections among people. Some centers for teaching and learning offer symposia and workshops, and some colleges provide money for faculty to organize events and bring in outside speakers. The faculty professional development center at one of the institutions in our study, for example, sponsors faculty learning communities to cultivate faculty networks and promote collaboration on different themes each year (e.g., teaching and learning with technology, civic engagement, or creating a learning-centered campus). Faculty selected for participation in the program meet several times throughout the academic year to discuss the topic and to identify relevant individual and collaborative projects. They receive funding to travel to conferences related to the learning community theme, and they present their projects to the campus community at an end-of-the-year forum.

Administrators tend to rely on the same few faculty members within a small network, however. This is a convenient strategy, but it burdens a particular set of individuals. Instead, network building needs to be ongoing and involve new people. Another way to create connections is by building faculty offices near each other and creating common spaces on campus where people can meet.

**Dysfunctional departments**

A sense of community within departments can lead to innovation and ongoing change, but some departments are dysfunctional. One faculty member in chemistry described the creation of a series of new courses to help women and people of color succeed in introductory courses. Because many students were not succeeding well enough in math to major in science, mathematics faculty also joined the effort. Establishing these types of curricular changes is not easy; a similar effort in biology and physics had failed because of personal and territorial issues. Too often, administrators (and other faculty members) hesitate to address dysfunctional interpersonal dynamics within departments. In such cases, collective leadership to improve the teaching and learning environment is unlikely to develop.

Faculty members are more likely to undertake leadership roles if they feel they can be effective. Since time is limited by the pressures to publish, secure grants, and so on, faculty appreciate administrators who help address dysfunctional dynamics rather than ignore them. This can be accomplished by bringing in mediators, moving faculty to different departments, splitting or restructuring departments, setting up systems of accountability for the department, and reassigning people in positions of authority.

**Role models and mentors**

Because faculty are generally not socialized to be effective leaders of institutional change, role models and mentors can serve a pivotal role in helping foster leadership. On campuses with a great deal of faculty leadership, senior faculty provide informal mentoring to new faculty, teaching them political skills as well as strategies and tactics that are effective on their particular campus. They also teach or model ways to overcome resistance and obstacles.

Some campuses establish formal networks that include a mentoring function—groups for women faculty in the sciences, for example, or groups for faculty of color, gay and lesbian faculty, faculty committed to sustainability, etc. In addition, by ensuring that professional development opportunities include both senior and junior faculty, campuses can maximize opportunities for cross-generational mentoring and contact.

The value of role models and mentors cannot be underestimated. Mentoring often emerges organically, but there must already be significant faculty leadership on campus for this to happen. On campuses where there is little faculty leadership, it may be helpful to bring in leadership training coaches. This strategy is especially important when faculty have not been socialized to learn leadership skills.

**Openness to questioning**

Many faculty members fear being labeled as troublemakers, which can affect their tenure and promotion—or, for contract faculty, their
continued employment. For this reason, faculty leadership is much more likely on campuses where questioning is encouraged. To determine whether their campuses are truly open to questioning, faculty look for indicators such as the way administrators respond to student requests and community concerns.

In order to create an environment where questioning is regarded as healthy, administrators should positively acknowledge activist efforts that occur both inside and outside the institution. They should view activism as engagement in leadership, be open to addressing concerns, and ask for input and feedback on an ongoing basis.

**Autonomy and flexibility**
Faculty leadership is unlikely to occur on campuses where faculty roles are tightly prescribed and where there is little freedom. While this might be more typical in a unionized environment, we did find unionized campuses with the autonomy and flexibility that allow faculty leadership to flourish. On campuses where faculty are expected to serve on a certain number of committees, bring in a certain number of grants, teach a heavy load of courses, or participate in specific meetings, the ability of faculty members to pursue leadership in an area they care about is limited.

**Inclusion of non-tenure-track faculty**
Contracts for non-tenure-track faculty usually address teaching only. When service is mentioned at all, very little detail is provided. As a result, faculty are unclear about how to meet the service requirement and whether leadership will count. Typically, non-tenure-track faculty receive little mentoring, little substantive feedback, and no annual reviews (Baldwin and Chronister 2002). Capitalizing on the leadership potential of this very large and growing population requires more specific guidelines, policies, and amended practices for their inclusion.

First, faculty contracts need to be altered to include specific information about service and leadership. Second, non-tenure-track faculty should be included in faculty senates, on committees, in department meetings, and on other governing bodies. While some institutions may choose not to grant them equal voting rights—a choice we strongly discourage—it is important to ensure some form of meaningful participation for non-tenure-track faculty.

Non-tenure-track faculty members are often excluded from professional development opportunities where leadership is developed. This practice should be changed so that full faculty participation in professional development is actively encouraged.

**Advice from successful faculty leaders**
In addition to campus-level changes that facilitate faculty leadership, there are strategies individual faculty members can employ to help them succeed as leaders. Based on specific advice from the experienced faculty leaders in our study, we offer the following recommendations.

**Build a foundation of success and legitimacy.** Assistant professors at research-oriented colleges and universities should build a publication record and become known as scholars before investing too much in institutional leadership efforts. At teaching-oriented institutions, faculty should focus on developing courses and obtaining strong student evaluations before branching out to pursue other issues they care about.

**Never lose your vision, and stay focused on your purpose.** After building a foundation, faculty can and should pursue organizational change. Plenty of faculty come to an institution with hopes and dreams, but then lose sight of their vision while busily working on publications or teaching. We recommend that faculty write down the issues they care about and, every six months, remind themselves of their purpose.

**Create networks of support early on.** One of the most important facilitators of faculty leadership is a network of like-minded people. Not only does the group help remind faculty of their purpose, but it also becomes a source of support and resiliency over the course of a career. If it involves senior faculty, this same network can also help individual members get tenure. There are many types of faculty networks, and successful faculty identify which types meet their specific leadership needs. Some join formal networks such as unions, faculty affinity groups, structured professional development opportunities, or learning communities; others joined informal, self-initiated networks that offer support and feedback during tough times.

**Seek out mentors and role models.** Mentors can help newer faculty understand the culture of the campus and learn how change happens—through students, through shared governance,
through key influential people, etc. Successful change strategies vary by campus, so learning the ropes from experienced individuals who have already created change helps faculty avoid failure, running into roadblocks, and becoming paralyzed by obstacles.

**Build leadership skills off campus.** Trying to exercise leadership on campus can be extremely dangerous, particularly for pre-tenure faculty. A failed leadership effort might make people question your competence and abilities. Successful faculty leaders often test their wings first in environments where the stakes are lower, and then try to lead an effort on campus once they are more confident.

**Get students involved.** Connecting leadership to teaching and work with students is not only meaningful, but it also expands faculty networks. Students are a great source of energy and enthusiasm and can often provide support for a leadership initiative. Also, because students are a key constituency, raising awareness among students is a key strategy for creating change.

At one campus we studied, for example, students in a course on environmentalism and sustainability examined ways their institution

One effective strategy is to develop leadership skills through participation in community organizations, and then to apply these skills on campus.

**Non-tenure-track faculty should be included in faculty senates, on committees, in department meetings, and on other governing bodies**
could become more green and sustainable. The student recommendations were forwarded to the provost and president and used to develop a new campus policy. Many faculty members discuss issues of concern with students in their courses, and some offer extra credit assignments to attend relevant campus events or forums that provide a means to foster student support and engagement. Some encourage students to write their doctoral dissertations or master’s theses on topics related to campus change.

Try to reach the ideal of bottom-up/top-down leadership. Faculty leaders are far more successful when their efforts are supported or adopted by the administration. This ideal combination of bottom-up and top-down leadership does not happen very often, but when it does, it is powerful. It can be difficult to predict, however, so faculty need to be open to opportunities as they arise. A new board of trustees might champion environmentalism, for example; a new president might make diversity the top agenda item, or new faculty hires might create opportunities for greater interdisciplinary work in grant-funded areas that the administration is interested in fostering. While some faculty may be offended when the administration “steals their ideas,” successful faculty leaders view this as a compliment rather than a threat. It is possible that the administration may co-opt an idea and temper or change its intent, but faculty should be open to top-down support for their grassroots leadership.

In addition, many faculty members try to influence top-down leadership efforts. At one campus that had an ongoing diversity effort, for example, several faculty members felt that the efforts to recruit faculty of color were unsuccessful. This group of faculty worked to get leaders from their group onto relevant committees so that they could influence the process and change the administration’s strategy. Bottom-up leaders created a place for themselves among the top-down leaders, and in the end, this strategy helped actually meet the goal of increasing faculty diversity.

Don’t fear the work, and don’t make it a second job. For many faculty members, the fear of losing their jobs hampers them from undertaking leadership roles. If they follow the advice given in this article, however, they have little to fear. In addition, faculty leaders need to integrate their leadership efforts into their jobs rather than adding activism as a second job. Savvy and experienced activists find ways to integrate activism into their teaching, service, or research so that there is a natural synergy and it does not become another job.

Be willing to work behind the scenes. Leadership efforts cannot always be out in the open. Many faculty members work behind the scenes with students who protest or take direct action. Faculty members might also tip off the newspaper, work informally with a community agency, or participate in an undisclosed network. Often, faculty feel called to participate in leadership efforts for which they cannot receive formal credit and of which most people are not aware. Leadership on controversial issues needs to be thought through carefully in the pre-tenure years. While some faculty members choose to participate less in “invisible” leadership until after tenure so that their pre-tenure efforts are credited, others make the opposite argument: participation behind the scenes protects faculty during the pre-tenure years.

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Avoid situations where administrators can or must pull rank. For grassroots faculty leaders to survive, it is critical that they learn political skills and monitor the environment for resistance. Some faculty members simply cannot be bothered to understand the political environment. Some operate unprofessionally by going immediately outside institutional channels without ever trying to push issues through the shared governance process. These faculty are almost always unsuccessful at creating change, and they often suffer intimidation from administrators. So not only do they fail to meet their goals, but they also encounter a great deal of stress and sometimes even lose their jobs.

When faculty act in uncivil ways and ignore institutional processes, they jeopardize the issues they care about. The more successful faculty leaders act professionally and begin with formal channels. Administrators understand that faculty will seek other avenues if going through the formal channels does not work. But when these channels are not tried first, administrators regard it as a sign that a faculty member is unwilling to work with others who do not share his or her perspective.

Discover what makes you resilient. One of the most important pieces of advice offered by successful faculty leaders is to identify what helps make you resilient in the face of obstacles and resistance. Not all faculty leaders find themselves frustrated or impatient with the pace of change, but others have been working for many years on institutional change processes or have encountered great resistance. In these instances, faculty need to rely on coping mechanisms. There are a variety of activities that can help maintain resiliency, such as ensuring off-campus support (from family or community groups), attending conferences and getting time away from campus, establishing networks of like-minded people, maintaining enriching personal relationships, seeing the positive impact on students, or focusing on the underlying passion.

Develop personal relationships as part of the leadership journey. The most important lesson longtime faculty leaders learn concerns the significance of developing personal relationships. Although it takes a long time to develop and foster them, personal relationships ultimately make the most difference to change.

Conclusion

On some campuses, the demise of faculty leadership may be greeted with a measure of relief. Administrators are now free to make decisions unhampered by pesky faculty questions and critique. The conditions that are coalescing right now provide more power for administrators and broaden their influence. So why would any college administrator try to facilitate and foster faculty leadership? That is the sixty-four-million-dollar question. The answer that emerges from our study is that faculty leadership is necessary for high-quality teaching, innovative curriculum, cutting-edge research, intellectual enrichment, student engagement, improved student outcomes, greater faculty citizenship, a more democratic environment, a campus more responsive to community needs, and other important outcomes.

It is easy to stereotype faculty leadership as merely a thorn in the side of administrators, but faculty leadership has a rich tradition that has helped create innovative and intellectually challenging environments. We are convinced that campuses, students, and learning environments will suffer if the current trends affecting faculty leadership are not addressed. We hope that courageous administrators will attempt to reverse these trends rather than take the convenient path of allowing current conditions to snuff out faculty voice and participation.

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REFERENCES


The organization of institutions of higher education has been seen as operating with ambiguous purposes in vertically oriented structures that are only loosely connected (Cohen and March 1986; Weick 1976; Mintzberg 1979). The rationale for this ambiguity is twofold: (1) to allow for creative thinking, and (2) to respect—and even encourage—the autonomy of different disciplines. But ambiguity of purpose and vertical organization are at odds with thinking and expectations in an era of accountability and assessment, in which cross-institutional, or horizontal, reporting and measurement of institutional performance are highly regarded and increasingly demanded (Callan et al. 2006). Student affairs divisions are particularly challenged, given their ambiguous purpose (to support holistic student learning and development); the perception that they are support services, rather than core academic functions; and their primarily historically and traditionally framed organizational structures (Fenske 1990). Student affairs divisions are appropriately scrutinized to display how their ambiguous purpose is manifested in practice via organizational effectiveness and responsiveness to institutional needs, and through documented contributions to the development and achievement of desired student outcomes (Bresciani, Zelna, and Anderson 2004; Upcraft and Schuh 1996). The ability of student affairs functional areas to document and demonstrate value provides a pertinent opportunity to reconsider the organizational nature of student affairs programs, services, activities, and systems of support (Keeling 2004).

The frequent and increasingly predictable accusation that institutions of higher education operate in “silos” is based on the primarily vertical organization of those institutions; their various schools, colleges, business operations, student support services, real estate and economic development arms, foundations, and athletic programs operate in parallel with one another, more focused on promoting their own internal goals and objectives than on adhering to, elucidating, or accomplishing broader institutional purposes (Kuh 1996). It is a common observation that professors in any discipline have a greater sense of community and connection with professors in that same discipline in other institutions than with professors in other disciplines in their own institution (Clark 1963; Schroeder 1999). Similarly, student affairs professionals who find career contentment in residence life are more likely to collaborate locally, regionally, and regionally.
nationally with others who do the same work rather than to seek interdisciplinary opportunities on their home campuses.

This vertical organizational structure is reinforced by centrifugal forces that create decentralization and locate governance, responsibility, and resources peripherally, rather than centrally; funding models in many institutions base the allocation of resources on credit hours, which drives money into individual schools based on student enrollments in courses (Ehrenberg 2000). Schools within larger institutions compete with each other for scarce resources and almost inevitably, and often by necessity, promote their own interests rather than those of the university at large. Centralized components of the institution—such as most student affairs offices, programs, and services—may struggle for resources in this context.

In these vertically organized institutions, there are important (and essential) horizontal forces; similarly, given the centrifugal, decentralized nature of decision making and resource allocation, there are nonetheless certain centripetal forces that pull some decision making, governance, and control to the center of the institution (Bourgault and Lapierre 2000; Kuh 1996; Mintzberg 1979). Notable horizontal forces include, of course, central administration (which may or may not have significant power; the extent to which power is centralized is directly related to how resources are allocated and managed), institutional accreditation, overall financial management, and certain levels of policy. But development, alumni relations, communications and marketing, enrollment management, and other core institutional functions are often performed to a greater or lesser extent by individual schools as well as by the institution as a whole. Similarly, central funding and policy development are centripetal forces—but the strength of those forces varies by institutional type, history, culture, and perceptions of the need for public accountability.

The inherent and necessary tensions between these horizontal and vertical elements generate and sustain complexity in institutions of higher education. Because each institution is of a particular type and exists in its own context (i.e., public, private, rural, urban, etc.), the vertical and horizontal structures vary in number and dimensions from institution to institution; but because they are fundamental parts of postsecondary infrastructure, they each exist in some form at every institution (see fig. 1).

Student affairs programs have a strong centripetal pull and are, of necessity, horizontal; since they (theoretically, at least) address the needs of all students in all schools, optimally they work across—and have an integrative role in relation to—the vertical structures, or silos (Dungy 2000; Kuh et al. 2005). The horizontal nature of student services is easy to see: student health and counseling programs, recreation centers, student health insurance plans, unions and student centers, and dining services are good examples; any would be difficult (and inefficient and duplicative) to implement separately in individual schools.

Similarly, student policy (especially, academic and non-academic conduct) must be horizontal. First-year experience and transition programs, general education courses, student government, and lower division academic advising are other horizontal programs and services; providing them often requires collaboration between academic and student affairs (Kuh et al. 1991).

The identification of desired student learning outcomes creates a new horizontal force—accountability for producing a group of

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**Figure 1. Horizontal and Vertical Structures in Higher Education**

- **Desired Student Outcomes**
  - Operations
  - Administration
  - Disciplines
  - Divisions
  - Schools
  - College
- **Student Engagement and Success**
- **TIGHT COUPLING**
- **Institutional Policy**
- **First-Year Experience/Transition**
- **Lower Division Advising**
- **Experiential & Service Learning**
- **Student Development**
- **Student Services**
- **Learning Outcomes**

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outcomes for all students, regardless of their major, year in school, division, or school of enrollment within the institution. This horizontal force, finding its roots in accountability, challenges student affairs leadership to adopt a curricular approach to the assessment, conceptualization, planning, implementation, and evaluation of programmatic and student learning outcomes.

From individual and programmatic action to organizational realignment

Student affairs efforts to function horizontally have been highlighted in actions to develop learning communities, promote positive and developmentally sound transitions into and out of the institution, foster academic partnerships, and respond to calls for movement away from vertical (silo) functioning (Ewell and Wellman 2007; Kuh 1996; Smith et al. 2004). An examination of these efforts reveals strong individual commitments to horizontal functioning in spite of organizational constraints (Smith et al. 2004). Individual efforts and resource-intensive programs illustrate the opportunities of implementing horizontally oriented functions and developing a more horizontal institutional orientation, but do not normally instigate or sustain organic organizational change that spurs the systematic breaking or weakening of vertical barriers and forces. Organizationally speaking, efforts to support greater horizontal functioning are often based upon the exercise of astute political savvy by inspired leaders and key influencers of opinion and through the force of strong human relations, rather than through policy-driven, mission-centered, or otherwise explicit expectations for transdivisional collaboration or systematic change in the structure, beliefs, or culture of the organization (Schroeder 1999). While student affairs alone cannot reasonably be expected to alter the vertical and disciplinary structure of the academy (and cannot impose such a restructuring on academic or other divisions), much can be done through engagement in the organic and systematic realignment of programs and services that support student learning and success, including, but not limited to, traditional student affairs programs and services. Such organizational realignment can be fostered by a curricular approach to supporting the student experience through programs, services, and policy.

A curricular approach to supporting the student experience helps to generate a scope and sequence of programmatic activities centered upon desired student learning outcomes. For example, student affairs officers can determine the desired learning of students at different developmental levels and connect those desired learning goals to programmatic and organizational elements. The aim would be to have a vertical force for organizational functioning that guides the extent to which each program should contribute to the acquisition of learning objectives, and a horizontal force that pushes programs to best meet the evolving developmental and learning needs of students as they progress through the institution (see fig. 2, next page).
Figure 2. **Scope and Sequence Matrix for Undergraduate Students Based on Selected Developmental Vectors**

| Ability to access student learning support resources; Evidence of basic critical thinking skills. | Describes benefits of student learning resources to first-year students; Ability to act as a campus advocate. |
| Ability to demonstrate proficiency in physical education, athletics, dance, or other activity that documents translation of abstract concepts into tangible products. | Active member of student recreation, intramural, or athletic activities; Engagement with campus or community fine arts efforts. |
| Actively engages in programs or service learning efforts that offer skills-based education in conflict mediation, respect for differences, or participation in community dialogue. | Through formal or ad hoc participation, serves as a peer mentor in housing/residential life programs, judicial programs, alcohol and other drug education programs, peer counseling programs, or women, LGBT, or other minority student programs. |
| Demonstrates adherence to personal beliefs and values through engagement in peer dialogues, individuation from parents or other familial caretakers, and ability to take ownership for one's circumstances. | Engages in programs or service learning activities that contribute to an ethical and respectful living environment; Advances a respectful community of student citizenship on and off campus; Demonstrates evidence of reasonable financial competencies. |
| Ability to engage in productive and respectful relationships with roommates or peers. | Contribution as an active member of student mentoring or leadership group. |
| Ability to reflect on the impact of peer pressure as it pertains to one's sense of self, sense of culture, gender, race, and sexual orientation. | Engages in learning activities and programs that allow students to explore diversity, equity, and human rights. Gains comfort individuating from organizations or cliques that prescribe standards based on socioeconomic class, gender, or body image. |
| Ability to access and proactively use personal counseling, professional or faculty advising, and career counseling services. | Full commitment to a major course of study; Ability to describe one's career goals and differentiate career from job; Development of a portfolio or other document that illustrates links between personal, academic, service or experiential learning and career goals. |
| Engages in programs and courses of study that allow for examination personal values on a range of issues. Works with an adviser to register for a balance of courses that includes the arts, sciences, religion, and international issues. | Demonstrates social competencies that include ability to contrast personal beliefs with those of other and differing beliefs; Ability to engage in thoughtful discourse on social issues; Demonstrates empathy. |

### Third Year

| Contributes as a leader to supplemental instruction, tutoring, peer education, or other student support services. |
|---|---|
| Engages in program conceptualization and planning for recreation, athletic, intramural, or fine arts activities. |
| Assesses the need for, plans, and implements student-led peer education, housing/residential life, peer counseling, or service learning efforts that seek to engage undergraduate students in skills-based education that results in civility and community engagement. |
| Provides leadership to campus and community housing efforts; Through formal and ad hoc activities provides community mentorship to peers in-classroom and out-of-classroom activities; Manages finances effectively and acts as a resource to peers. |
| Engages in student and community leadership opportunities that support positive youth development, healthy parenting, and human rights. |
| Active engagement in internship, study abroad, or comprehensive service learning activities; Provides peer leadership in chosen fields of interest and formal study. |

### Fourth Year

| Through assessment and evaluation activities acts as an adviser to the senior student affairs officer in matters pertinent to the quality of student support services. |
|---|---|
| Acts as an advocate to the institution about the benefits to the community of quality recreation and fine arts activities. |
| Synthesizes program and student learning outcomes data from relevant programs; makes recommendations to senior student affairs officers about the quality and productivity of programs relevant to this area of student development. |
| Acts as an adviser to senior campus leadership; Assesses quality and productivity of campus efforts that seek to build students’ capacity to develop healthy interdependence from peers and family. |
| Works closely with the institution’s senior leadership to link service or experiential learning to general education programs and specific courses of study; acts as a peer adviser to senior capstone projects. |
| Acts as adviser to the institution’s leadership on matters related to equality, supporting first year students as they transition into the institution, and contributes to evaluation of current programs to ensure access and equity. |
| Has a plan for post-bachelors work (e.g., graduate school application process, job interviews, etc); Adheres to high quality of academic and campus standards that promote the brand identity of the institution; Develops relationships with alumni and seeks opportunities to advance the institution. Knows who he or she is. |

**The identification of desired student learning outcomes creates a new horizontal force**
A curricular approach to supporting the student experience within student affairs allows for appropriate vertical activity while insisting on balanced horizontal functioning. The former occurs when each department within the division is held to its respective discipline-specific standards. The latter, however, gains durability through imposing a common set of expectations across departments and then, through assessment of learning outcomes, accruing a body of evidence to gauge accountability. The centrifugal forces of traditional departmental functioning, such as budgeting and tradition, are balanced by the centripetal force of common learning objectives owned collectively by student affairs—which, in turn, is embedded within overall institutional accountability for desired student outcomes. A similar analysis—and approach—would, of course, apply more generally to the institution’s overall support for student success, which depends upon the integration of learning experiences as much as depth of learning in a discipline or major (Ewell and Wellman 2007; Kuh et al. 2006).

Student affairs organizational realignment, then, is based upon the centripetal force of common learning outcome objectives. As an example, rather than the developmental competency of ability to manage conflict being the primary responsibility of those specially trained in conflict management, outcomes associated with conflict management are shared across a system horizontally. Staff members own collectively the outcome of assisting students with managing conflict. The vertically organized units that direct service delivery must realign themselves to work together to meet the student learning outcome of conflict management skills. In curricular thinking, the modules, or service delivery units, must both share a common outcome and array their curriculum to be appropriately developmental and sequential. This is not the same thing as saying that every conflict resolution effort must be the same; instead, it says that conflict resolution programs and activities must be conscious of one another’s existence, coordinated in a sound way that demonstrates integrity of purpose, and designed, delivered, and assessed collaboratively.

Achieving horizontal integration is the primary functional characteristic of an institution for which the entire campus has become a learning community (Keeling 2004); it is that integration that permits learning to occur, as Whitt (1999) has said, in “every nook and cranny” of the institution. Horizontal integration supports the coupling of programs, services, and activities in time, space, and geography. Research on the antecedents and correlates of student success (defined as the acquisition of key learning and developmental outcomes) reveals that the tightness of coupling of programs, services, and activities is linked to levels of achievement (Hearn 2006). The degree to which tight coupling occurs (and is possible) is related to both policy and institutional culture.

Horizontal programmatic and curricular organization is expressed in a myriad of tangible ways. The change from focus on workforce development to lifelong career skills in community colleges over the past thirty years offers many examples of how horizontal linkages enhance higher education practice. In a recent New York Times article (Frerking 2007), community colleges that are considered successful list the following attributes that intentionally and actively support student development: articulation agreements with colleges and universities that students are most likely to transfer into, thereby supporting students as they progress from year one to four-year degree completion; access to local arts, recreational, or vocational options that offer local, regional, or international internships, service learning, or other experiential learning for credit opportunities; learning communities that synthesize an array of life skills (e.g., time management) with content (e.g., English) courses; professors working and teaching in teams, including buildings and offices that allow professors and staff from multiple
disciplines to share work space; required orientation and one-on-one advising, including a clear expectation that students develop and document career goals; on-campus programs devoted to providing students exposure to renowned artists, poets, scientists, and scholars; an environment that is aesthetically conducive to learning; academic programs that teach across disciplines (e.g., Great Books programs); expectations that students work to develop their own slate of honors classes; student involvement in professional honoraries or associations; and a focus on self-exploration of personal values via journaling. Many of these same programs have been shown to be factors in supporting and enhancing student success more generally (Hearn 2006). Moreover, enhancing student success means that these programs share the common thread of requiring horizontal institutional functioning to operate effectively.

While many universities may have some or even many of the programs and courses listed above, it seems that the main difference is the intentionality and expectations of community colleges. That is, many community colleges seem actively to engage in horizontality free from the four-year institutional pressures that result in unbalanced verticality (such as faculty promotion and tenure criteria that privilege research and publishing over teaching and close engagement with students). On the other hand, the demands on faculty—and institutional purposes—in four-year institutions are different from the demands in most community colleges; expectations of disciplinary excellence demonstrated by scholarly achievement, original research, and peer-reviewed presentations and publications are higher, and those expectations drive verticality. Verticality is also reinforced by the very nature of comprehensive universities; their component schools, faculties, and centers often compete for funds and power. All of which is to say that the exercise of significant institutional will—and challenge to traditional structures and policies—are required for most four-year institutions, especially research-intensive comprehensive universities, to create greater horizontal energy. Institutions can develop a greater focus on horizontal functioning—which is necessary to enhancing student success—without sacrificing disciplinary excellence; this is especially true, and equally essential, in undergraduate studies.

In order for universities to create a comprehensive culture of evidence that actively supports outcome-oriented learning by the whole student, programs and systems of support must be developed across disciplines (Braxton 2006). That practice must include and integrate services and learning opportunities traditionally located in divisions of student affairs with courses of study traditionally in academic affairs. No longer can “full learning” be offered only to those students who request it or have the instincts to search it out. If institutions of higher education are to create and provide to the public a body of evidence that documents student learning and development across the academy, then they must intentionally develop and implement comprehensive learning opportunities that link faculty to staff and courses to out-of-classroom learning activities. Developing these linkages is an interdependent, energy-requiring process that results in tighter coupling; once tighter coupling is achieved, additional energy (monitoring, assessment, leadership) is necessary to maintain and strengthen it (Ewell and Wellman 2007).

These changes resonate with the principles of student development illustrated in figure 2. That is, they illustrate strategies for supporting not only student engagement with content, but also the more comprehensive effort to create a purposeful learning environment—a topography of learning—that expects learning to happen everywhere and all the time. That sort of learning results in learners who know more than “what,” they know “why, when, and under what circumstances”; they are intellectually curious and are more likely to transfer that set of competencies across their life spans.

It is in respect to policy and culture that colleges and universities do or do not embrace the opportunity that assessment provides to link high standards with daily practice and student outcomes. Assessment, as a strong horizontal force and tool, both reflects and demands closer coupling in the interest of producing and documenting desired student outcomes. Achieving such coupling requires the exercise of significant institutional will, which in itself is a combined force of variable capacity, will, and strength—what may be considered institutional purpose. Institutional purpose is generated and sustained in direct proportion to elements of institutional culture.
and policy. If there is focused and powerful institutional purpose, assessment can become a strong force to bring disparate elements of the campus together in the interest of common goals; absent such strong purpose, though, assessment can seem incidental, suspicious, and annoying. Without the continuous application of energy and institutional will, coupling weakens, linkages dissolve, and, through a kind of organizational entropy, the centrifugal overcomes what is centripetal and vertical structures dominate horizontal ones.

**Institutional action steps**

Ensuring transformative institutional environments where learning happens everywhere and all the time, then, requires intentionality. Intentionality can be articulated through a process of organizational reinvigoration and strategic realignment. Organic transformation often begins with institutional self-assessment, a process that engages practitioners' critical self-reflection as to current practices, cultural expectations, and existing communication and collaborative pathways. Identification of current practices is a precursor to the development, or affirmation, of commonly held student learning outcomes and programs associated with those outcomes. Overall student learning outcomes derive from the institution's mission, vision, and values—and from its commitments to students—not from a restatement of existing programs; that is, desired outcomes represent what should be, not necessarily what has been or what is. So it is the process of developing, instituting, and assessing student learning outcomes that leads necessarily to institutional review at every level—and, often, to reallocation of resources. The process through which these outcomes are developed, then, is not the usual incremental form of strategic planning that more often lionizes the past than prepares for the future. Instead, it focuses on the way that the institution's work is, or is not, aligned with its vision; that examination leads inevitably to questions of structure and organization.

The ability to do good work within one's discipline or program area must include both competence in a specific area of knowledge or function and commitment to horizontally defined and broadly held student outcomes. Just as a career counselor cannot focus exclusively on career content and counseling, but must also address the development of cognitive complexity and citizenship skills, so a physicist must devote some of her attention to supporting student engagement, understanding and addressing student learning, and assessing the contributions of her courses to critical thinking and problem-solving capacities.

Both because of greater internal and external scrutiny and in support of the desire of ethical professionals to do their best work, the articulation of desired learning outcomes and the creation of a strong rationale for how programs and services address those outcomes are essential to telling a convincing performance story. The process of developing commonly held student learning outcomes requires a strong centripetal force along horizontal lines. Common planning time, dialogue on beliefs, respect for disciplinary and other differences, and a commitment to follow through a process to identify learning outcomes are necessary components of this process. Collaboration and common purpose are further challenged, but ultimately strengthened, when programs, services, and indeed all vertically organized units are then asked to define how their programs specifically address the identified learning outcomes. The process of creating common outcomes and then connecting programs, services, and units will likely identify areas of strong coupling between current activities and desired learning, along with areas of weak coupling. Of course not all programs, services, or units will address each outcome in the same ways or with the same emphasis, but the collective impact of the work in all programs, services, and units should be aimed at supporting and advancing every desired outcome.
Conclusion

The traditional structures of most colleges and universities do not naturally support the integration of learning experiences, the establishment of institution-wide desired learning outcomes that define the overall, transformative goals of engagement with higher education, or the assessment of the institution’s effectiveness in achieving those goals. A curricular approach to learning, student development, assessment, and retention depends on creating horizontal structures, forces, and dynamics that intersect with vertical systems and structures; institutional effectiveness requires the tighter coupling of horizontal and vertical activities in ways that promote student learning and sustain an engaged student experience. Implementing such an approach will require the development and exercise of significant institutional will to support a substantial transformation of assumptions, attitudes, values, and systems within post-secondary institutions.

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IN FEBRUARY 2007, CNN viewers watched as thousands of turkeys were herded to slaughter in England. The flocks were destroyed to stop an outbreak of avian flu. The same day brought news of disastrous flooding in Indonesia, where nearly three-quarters of Jakarta was under water. A week or two later, devastating tornados hit Florida and then ripped through the Mississippi Delta. New York City announced plans for a system to detect dirty bombs and bioterror devices. The popular blog Daily Kos posted a story on the threat of pandemics to the Internet, a posting that had nothing to do with software viruses: if disease closes schools and businesses for extended periods, students will have to learn and employees will have to work at home—and the Internet may collapse. A recent listserv posting to the American Council of Academic Deans asked, in the naturalizing tone of such inquiries, about campus plans for pandemics. This is our new reality. And with each successive report of the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), terrible prospects loom larger and make stronger claims on our attention.

There is a common feature to these reports: each presents a threat to public health; most present a threat on a global scale. Informed citizens are unlikely to miss the sober news or ignore the need for action. Global Internet communications enhance the immediacy of crisis by spreading information so quickly that it is difficult to separate imminence from potential and to discriminate between appearance and reality. How to handle the flow of information—let alone the emotional demands—find practical responses, and begin systemic intervention will be the great challenge of our times.

In this century, there is no reason to think we will face fewer disasters, dislocations, crises, emergencies, and chronic threats to the environment—to global human health, social well-being, and human sustainability—than we have faced over the past few years. The IPCC tells us we are going to face more.

**Toward an educated citizenry**

Given the magnitude of the challenges to public health confronting the world in the twenty-first century, many of us are wondering anew how to prepare our students for citizenship. If there is power in learning, it finds expression in practice and enables the practitioner to live well. Confident in the pillars of liberal education, we believe that learning shapes and guides our lives. We stand for the transformative power of education, and we trust that we are producing effects on society through our teaching, no matter how hard it may be to document outcomes or to know how and when our courses have been instrumental. But with such grim facts before us, what, we ask, do we teach? What and how do we teach when the need for an educated citizenry appears never to have been greater? How do we teach sustainably, enabling people to think ethically, systemically, and systematically about the health of humanity? How to think beyond the crises of the moment or the alarmism and panic that prompt short-term and misguided responses?

We believe that colleges and universities ought to heed the National Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Medicine’s (IOM) call for an
of Undergraduate Education
educated citizenry. In 2003, IOM recommended that all undergraduates be given “access to education in public health” (Gebbie, Rosenstock, and Hernandez 2003, 144). An educated citizenry, they reasoned, is essential to a healthy society. We need citizens who possess an ability to think about the big picture, beyond the individual or constituency. We need citizens who can help as individuals to change social behavior and who are aware of the need for systemic health care, good nutrition, decent housing, and sustainable urban centers. We need to rely on leaders who are able to consider benefits and harms to groups, minority as well as majority, and to engage in systems thinking, understanding how multiple factors interact. These are abilities essential to citizenship for the health of the world.

It is time for higher education to lead in this new integrative field of learning. Academics have an opportunity to identify what is pertinent to our best work amid the chaos of news and information, and return to what we know best—the curriculum. There is a tremendous need to concentrate attention on public health within and through the curriculum, beyond the campus critical incident plan and the development of clean environmental practices and beyond the health professions. The world urges us back to the realm we know best, the arena of our strongest work. Through the curriculum, higher education can advance knowledge, practical skills, and attitudinal framing that human sustainability and world health now demand.

We argue in favor of teaching and learning about public health—emphasis on lowercase p and h—holding up the lens of population study, or population science, and taking a look through it at the disciplines of the arts and sciences and then inviting the arts and sciences to take up that lens themselves and see what they discover. We argue in favor of partnership in this work between the arts and sciences and professional schools in the specific field of epidemiology and in public health as an interdisciplinary field. We are not emphasizing preprofessional education, welcome and needed as that education is. In the long run, health professional education will surely benefit from a new emphasis on undergraduate public health education within and across disciplines. We are talking about the education of every undergraduate. Integrative public health programs in the liberal arts and within a liberal education can produce an informed citizenry capable of living—and one hopes living well—in the world that is becoming.

The question of utility

In 2005, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) launched its campaign for the new century as a pragmatic call for action on behalf of all students. The Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) campaign emphasizes application,
direct experience, and civic engagement as ways to achieve “economic creativity and democratic vitality” for the United States.

The LEAP National Leadership Council recommends, in sum, an education that intentionally fosters, across multiple fields of study, wide-ranging knowledge of science, cultures, and society; high-level intellectual and practical skills; an active commitment to personal and social responsibility; and the demonstrated ability to apply learning to complex problems and challenges. (AAC&U 2007, 14)

A population that is economically creative and democratic in its participation in the world will be a healthy population and will promote global public health. If we position the greatest threats to human health amid the LEAP goals—amid the best we can imagine, that is, for liberal education—there is no doubt what ought to follow (see sidebar). What better approach to human health and sustainability than through what David W. Fraser, M.D. (1987), former president of Swarthmore College, identified presciently in *The New England Journal of Medicine* as “epidemiology as a liberal art”?

Also in 2005, the Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences (CCAS), a national organization for liberal arts deans, joined a project launched by deans and faculty of public health schools and programs and an array of allied health professions. Responding to the IOM call for an educated citizenry and inspired by David Fraser’s concept, leaders in the health professions sought to engage the arts and sciences in planning a large-scale campaign. The launch was a historic first, a consensus conference on the future of undergraduate public health education held in November 2006 at the Boston University School of Public Health. Funded by the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, the conference brought deans of arts and sciences together with deans of public health, nursing, medicine, dentistry, allied health, and pharmacy. The meeting was cosponsored by the Association of Schools of Public Health and the Association for Prevention Teaching and Research. The conference included participants from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and AAC&U.

The two-day conference generated extraordinary energy and achieved a high degree of consensus. Many participants in the arts and sciences recognized something of a conversion experience to belief in the power of epidemiology and global public health within the disciplines of the liberal arts. Many in the health professions had a similar conversion to belief in the power of liberal education to address the urgent health needs of our era. We found common ground in agreement that we cannot address the health needs of this country, let alone the interrelated needs of the world, solely through the preparation of health professionals. On a much larger scale, this single-expedient approach would be as effective as trying to stop gridlock by building more highways. We converged on the idea of an educated citizenry and found significant common ground.

We also faced the risks. The arts and sciences cannot enter the realm of public health without making changes within and across disciplines and without embracing applied knowledge. Disciplinary boundaries and enrollments may shift—an often disturbing prospect. Within the health professions, the project entails a move across and beyond the defined professions into the strangely

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**Connecting Undergraduate Public Health Education with the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes**

**Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural Worlds**
Recognize and integrate the contribution of arts and sciences’ disciplines into public health: Public Health 101.

**Intellectual and Practical Skills**
Teach epidemiology as a way of thinking based on the scientific method and develop critical thinking and quantitative literacy skills: Epidemiology 101.

**Personal and Social Responsibility**
Incorporate experiential learning, e.g., service-learning, community-based research, capstone projects, or global experiential learning.

**Integrative Learning and Complex Problem Solving**
Provide global perspective on learning and develop internationalist or world views; understand concept of interdependence; apply learning to global health challenges: Global Health 101.
unregulated regions of the arts and sciences—
turf on which a sociologist without a degree in
public health teaches Public Health 101 and a
biologist teaches epidemiology. Or a baccalaureate
nursing professor teaches general education
community health together with a Spanish
professor. The interdisciplinary potential is,
of course, far easier to imagine than to realize.
Yet the urgency of the need and the potential
benefit to human health, human rights, and
social justice overcame the fear of risk.

An integrative curriculum
Beyond the ferment of the plenary sessions—
full of people who rarely attend conferences
together, let alone attempt to reach consen-
sus—the conferees revised and endorsed for
circulation the reports of three pre-conference
working groups.* Honoring a commitment to
applied knowledge, the conference produced
the core of an integrative curriculum for un-
dergraduates through general or liberal educa-
tion and then moved the project into the
dissemination phase. One working group
composed a rationale and framework for a
course entitled Public Health 101. This
course provides an overview of public health
and epidemiological principles, with learning
outcomes that emphasize a population per-
spective or a “big picture” population health
framework and systemic thinking. Public
Health 101 may be designed to meet learning
goals of general education or liberal learning
in the social sciences. It introduces public
health as a cross-cutting interdisciplinary
field, founded on knowledge of current
events, the social sciences, history, philoso-
phy, literature, ethics, public policy, and law.

The second group produced the rationale
and framework for Epidemiology 101. This
course emphasizes the history, philosophy, and
uses of epidemiology and develops under-
standing of statistics and applied basic and
clinical sciences. It teaches descriptive and
analytical epidemiology and presents such
concepts as association and causation. It in-
troduces evidence-based study and explores
applications to policy. It is, in short, in intro-
duction to epidemiology as a way of thinking.
An introductory course in epidemiology, Epi-
demiology 101, may be organized using a cur-
ricular framework designed to achieve critical
High-quality integrative minors in public health may be designed for institutions with and without schools or programs in public health. The course is readily structured to fulfill a science general education requirement and may be structured as a laboratory science course.

The third group addressed the rationale for and structure of integrative minors in public health and began to identify the administrative challenges to such comprehensive interdisciplinary work. High-quality integrative minors in public health may be designed for institutions with and without schools or programs in public health. Strategies for and design of the minor will differ across institutions, but learning goals will readily converge. The consensus conference report recommends that minor programs in public health require Public Health 101, Epidemiology 101, and Global Public Health 101, together with an experiential learning component and a capstone course. The many possible variations on this plan will address institutional differences (see sidebar).

A closer look at two courses will illustrate what we mean by an integrative approach to public health within the arts and sciences and throughout liberal education. A faculty member in American literature may catch on to the concepts of epidemiology and begin to appreciate and adopt a population perspective. It is analogous to catching on to the power of formalism and close reading or historiography—a new conceptual framework and associated method. The literature professor among us taught a course on industrialization and the literary imagination in the United States, beginning with the first uses of steam power for industrial production and ending with the mass generation and distribution of electricity. The class read fiction, poetry, and nonfiction, looking for evidence of change in felt experience and expression—not just in descriptive language but also in perception. Did railroad time feel different from time before standardization? Did wine taste different when the banquet was illuminated by electric lights? If human experience changed, then surely expression would change. And it did—manifestly and astonishingly. The more one paid attention, the more one saw.

Teaching the seminar while preparing for the consensus conference, the professor began to read public health and epidemiology into her phenomenological narrative of the period. On the most basic level, she traced the appearance of machinery driven first by water, then by steam, and then by electricity, and considered what changed in health by reading human expression. Her attention shifted perceptibly. In Lucy Larcom’s *A New England Girlhood*, the change in perception is inescapable as child laborers recall the smell of roses to “make us forget the oily smell of the machinery” (163). Then came the coal smoke. Smoke is everywhere, affecting people and their world. Mark Twain travels down the Mississippi River after the Civil War and cannot believe the aged appearance of buildings in St. Louis—aged prematurely by clouds of smoke. Dining outdoors meant eating soot-specked butter on the bread.

The class discovered industrial melanism in moths—darker moths survive in a polluted environment, and the species evolves from white to black. Moving on to Jane Addams’s Chicago, the class discovered the complete lack of municipal sanitation in immigrant neighborhoods and began to pay attention to garbage, sewage, horrific odors, the source of public water, food production and distribution—and illness and life expectancy. When

### Potential Structure of a Minor in Public Health

**Interdisciplinary Core (Required)**
- Public Health 101
- Epidemiology 101
- Global Health 101

**Discipline-specific Courses:** Selected by the institution and the student. Departmental public health-related courses based on the interests and strengths of each institution. Some institutions require biostatistics.

**Experiential Learning:**
- Service learning or internship
- Capstone or synthesis project
- Structured research, service, or study abroad
the class arrived at *The Jungle*, the book seemed a work of straightforward realism, the resultant Food and Drug Acts clearly related to imperiled national health. The professor had taught these books before, but never pulling into the foreground the evidence of people’s health in that unregulated period of industrial development. Realism and naturalism as literary styles or modes of expression took on new meaning.

A public health professor and former dean among us developed an integrative undergraduate course, part of a public health minor. She became acutely aware of the impact that literature and film can have on the study of public health. The course she conceived, *From Cholera to Cancer: History, Achievements, and Future Challenges in Public Health*, was designed to introduce the student to the history and philosophy of public health. She intended to expose students, through a variety of media, to the impact people and politics can have on health. Readings in public health accompanied plays, novels, and films. For instance, studying environmental health and the case of Love Canal, the students also read a biography of John Snow, the father of public health epidemiology, along with the play *An Enemy of the People* by Henrik Ibsen. Students recognized that the problems confronted by the health director of a small town in Scandinavia in the 1800s differed more in degree than in kind from the pressures of an environmental crisis such as radioactive materials dumped in a community, the levels of polychlorinated biphenyls in the river, or homes built on a dump site.

A CDC article, “Plagues, Public Health, and Politics,” supplemented biography, fiction, and drama. Studying infectious diseases, students viewed *A Paralyzing Fear: The Story of Polio* in America, a film produced by a historian, not a public health professional. The students attended lectures on infectious diseases and discussed the strides the world has taken to eradicate certain diseases even as we witness an increase in the number of new and emerging infectious diseases. A unit on sexually transmitted diseases followed, in which the students read Tracy Kidder’s *Mountains Beyond Mountains*. Kidder follows Paul Farmer’s remarkable life from his days in a trailer with his family to his arrival at Harvard Medical School. Kidder narrates Farmer’s commitment to fighting HIV/AIDS, beginning as a medical student in Haiti. Through his doctoral study of anthropology and medicine, Farmer addressed the AIDS epidemic first by understanding the culture of the country. Kidder’s book allowed the instructor to discuss how economics, environment, politics, and culture all affect global health. Students learned to see public health problems in a global context and to work from a population perspective. They could understand Farmer’s achievements as the work of an educated citizen who made an impact on the world. Students then viewed *And the Band Played On*, the story of the discovery of HIV/AIDS in the United States and the personal and political struggles of both the scientists and the gay community affected by this epidemic. A lecture by an international AIDS expert prompted active discussion of the disease.

Also integrated into the course were self-teaching activities in public health and “grand rounds” broadcasts students can download from the Internet, along with lectures by public health school faculty and state Department of Health staff. The course presented sessions on cancer and chronic illness, mental health and addiction, automobile safety, guns and firearms, and access to health care. A wealth of readings and films are applicable to an integrated course in the liberal arts and public health: articles from the New Yorker magazine; films such as *Outbreak*, *Civil Action*, and *Erin Brockovich*; and an array of biographies, novels, and plays. By the time they completed the course, students began to read and see things differently. They recognized how public health shapes our experience and how they as educated citizens can make a difference.

**Back to the pump handle**

In 1855, pioneering epidemiologist John Snow traced the emergence of cholera in London to the public water supply. He persuaded authorities to remove the pump handle on the Broad Street well and thereby slowed and then stopped an outbreak of cholera. It was a revolutionary advance in knowledge of disease emergence, and it became a story—perhaps the ur-narrative of epidemiology—that every public health professional can tell. For faculty in the arts and sciences who have never heard of Snow or only vaguely remember, the narrative has an arresting explanatory power.
In view of threats to worldwide human health and the critical need for applied knowledge, academic leaders might return again to the venerable and often vexing question of utility—and consider what it means to go back to that pump handle. An enduring value of liberal education arises from its impracticality, its freedom from the demands of usefulness. As anyone who has wrestled with John Henry Newman’s *The Idea of a University* knows, knowledge is its own end. Academics stand passionately for Newman’s claim. But to hold such a belief is not to express the absolute truth or contrive a moral imperative for inaction.

Frank H. T. Rhodes, former president of Cornell University, approaches the question of utility from another angle, with a different sense of urgency. Rhodes observes that the ancient Greeks revered grammar and logic for their practicality, and that we ought to do the same. He does not ask what a university should be—Newman’s nineteenth-century question about the education of gentlemen in the context of industrial modernity—but instead poses a twenty-first-century question: how can humanity endure? He contends that human sustainability may depend on the practicality of the liberal arts and sciences: “the development of freethinking men and women for the current age . . . the effort to frame social and economic policy so as to preserve with minimum disturbance earth’s bounty” (Rhodes 2006, B24). Earth’s bounty surely should concern us.

There is something in this work for every discipline of the arts and sciences, and indeed for all professional schools. Population science or population study shapes disciplinary activity across many disciplines and fields, including the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. It works as well in engineering and the fine arts. Applied research in sociology and anthropology can address public health in an array of subfields and support global learning in all undergraduate majors. Psychologists know what it means to practice within a given population. Political science can direct attention to health policy. A philosopher can address bioethics and questions of human rights and social justice. Statistics faculty can ask their students to solve biostatistical problems. The challenge of pandemics such as AIDS and avian flu, environmental and climate change, dangers to the global food supply, disasters of the magnitude of Hurricane Katrina, (bio)terrorism preparedness, threats of widespread state and civil warfare, and needs of aging populations demand far more than humanity can handle through the education of health professionals alone. Responsible education for citizenship and the well-being of the world will depend on population-based understandings of human sustainability and convergent thinking drawn from the best achievements of the arts and sciences. Through our work, we hope to prompt new thinking about program development for an educated citizenry and to encourage networking for this new national initiative.

To respond to this article, e-mail liberaled@aacu.org, with the authors’ names on the subject line.

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NOTE:
Conference drafts of the reports are available online at www.aacu.org/public_health. The revised reports are published at www.ccas.net, under “Publications.” A summary of findings appears in the CDC’s *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Reports*, October 19, 2007, at www.cdc.gov/mmwr. The reports are designed for use at all institutions—two-year, four-year, public, private, small, large—whether or not the campus has a program or school in public health or allied health, whether or not the faculty employs anyone with a public health degree.
The key to educational excellence lies not in the memorization of vast amounts of information, but rather in fostering habits of mind that enable students to continue their learning, engage new questions, and reach informed judgments. —ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN COLLEGES and UNIVERSITIES, College Learning for the New Global Century

Through its Liberal Education and America’s Promise initiative, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) boldly declares that, in the twenty-first century, all students must master the arts of inquiry and innovation. Essential to this task are faculty members who work with students to help them acquire such requisite skills and competencies as identifying and analyzing problems, finding and evaluating evidence, and developing and weighing competing interpretations and conclusions. Toward this end, AAC&U recommends that institutions increase the number of opportunities for students to work with faculty members and others on research. When they collaborate with faculty on research, students learn firsthand how experts think about and solve practical problems; their teachers become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, lifelong learning. The model for such collaboration has long been the teacher-scholar (American Council of Learned Societies 2007).

Teacher-scholars are committed to high-quality undergraduate education, pursue an active program of research and scholarship, and are presumed to enliven and enrich their teaching and the student experience by incorporating insights from their own research into their instructional activities, student advising, and related work. Teacher-scholars are also expected to promote deep approaches to learning through activities that encourage students to process information in ways that help them make qualitative distinctions about the merits of data-based claims or the persuasiveness of logic-based arguments. Contrasted with “surface-level processing,” which emphasizes rote learning and memorization techniques, “deep-level processing” focuses on both substance and the underlying meaning of the information (Biggs 1989; Marton and Säljö 1976; Ramsden 2003). Also characteristic of deep learning are the integration and synthesis of information with prior learning in ways that become part of one’s thinking and approaching new phenomena and efforts to see things from different perspectives. As Tagg (2003, 70) puts it, “deep learning is learning that takes root in our apparatus of understanding, in the embedded meanings that define us and that we use to define the world.”

The teacher-scholar model is conceptually appealing. But does the presence of such faculty match the rhetoric of the model? That is, at institutions where faculty members report participating in activities characteristic of the teacher-scholar model, are students more engaged overall, do they more frequently work with faculty members on research, and are they more involved in educationally purposeful activities? Or is such thinking primarily a
widely held article of faith that lacks an empirical foundation? We sought to answer these questions by analyzing information from faculty members and students about relevant activities and experiences.

The study: Data sources, guiding questions, and analysis

The data come from 29,444 faculty members and 65,633 randomly sampled senior students at the 209 four-year colleges and universities in the United States that administered both the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in either 2005 or 2006. In addition to student reports about the time and energy they devote to educationally purposeful activities measured by the annual survey, NSSE also includes a set of items that serve as a proxy for deep learning. Introduced in 2004, FSSE helps us better understand the role faculty members play in fostering student engagement through the teaching approaches they use. Taken together, the results from the two surveys demonstrate positive relationships between faculty emphasis on educationally purposeful activities and student engagement in those activities as well as between student engagement and such desired outcomes as critical thinking, grades, and deep learning (Kuh, Nelson Laird, and Umbach 2004; Nelson Laird, Shoup, and Kuh 2006; Pike 2006; Umbach and Wawrzynski 2005). Most important to this study, FSSE and NSSE data from the same schools allow us to estimate whether student engagement at institutions where faculty reported behaviors consistent with the teacher-scholar model differ from those of their counterparts at other schools.

In addition to descriptive statistics, the primary analytical method used in this study was Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM), which allows for the appropriate control of student background characteristics and institutional factors while protecting against problems of correlated error terms associated with using a conventional regression model for analyzing multi-level data (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002).

Three questions guided our analysis. First, what institutional factors and faculty characteristics are associated with faculty members spending time on research and valuing undergraduate research? To answer this question, three FSSE items were used as dependent variables:

- How important is it to you that undergraduates at your institution work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements?
- About how many hours do you spend in a typical seven-day week doing research and scholarly activities?
- About how many hours do you spend in a typical seven-day week working with undergraduates on research?

In addition, our analysis was guided by a second question: what institutional factors and student characteristics are associated with student participation with faculty in research? In particular, does the amount of time faculty spend on research affect the likelihood that undergraduate students participate in research? Again using HLM, the dependent variable this time was senior student responses to the NSSE question, Have you worked on a research project with a faculty member outside of a course or program requirements?

Finally, our analysis was guided by a third question: do those faculty who do research and involve students in research exhibit different patterns of instructional activities and—if so—what are the effects (if any) on student engagement and self-reported outcomes? Two separate HLM analyses were needed to answer this question. The first determined whether the emphasis faculty members place on using effective educational practices in their classes varies by the amount of time they devote to research and scholarly activities and work with students on research. The dependent variable was faculty members’ emphasis on deep learning activities. In the second HLM analysis, three student self-reported gains associated with college attendance were the dependent variables: gains in general education, gains in personal and social development, and gains in practical competence.

When reviewing the results, keep in mind that the data are aggregated at the institutional level and do not link the responses of faculty members with students they have taught or worked with directly on research projects. It also is possible that the findings are biased in some ways by, for example, faculty members who are actively engaged in research, teaching, and working with undergraduates on research projects being too busy to respond to the survey. Accordingly, some caution is advised when interpreting the findings.
Results

On average, faculty members spend nine hours per week on research and scholarly activities and about 2.5 hours per week working with undergraduates on research. Faculty members at doctorate-granting universities devote about twice as much time to research activities as their counterparts at baccalaureate colleges and master’s colleges and universities. But even though they spend more time doing research, the amount of time faculty at doctorate-granting universities spend working with undergraduates on research is about the same as faculty at other types of institutions (see fig. 1).

Although full professors spend more time on research than their colleagues at the assistant or associate rank, the extent to which faculty value undergraduate engagement in research and the amount of time faculty spend working with undergraduates on research are unrelated to professorial rank. After controlling for discipline, we found that male faculty members and those with fewer years of teaching experience devote more time to research. Faculty members in the biological sciences, in contrast with business and other fields, are more involved with undergraduates on research and more likely to value its importance. These faculty characteristics show similar patterns in terms of working with undergraduates on research and valuing the importance of undergraduates doing research, though the strength of the relationships is not as strong.

Overall, about one in five senior students (19 percent) works on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements at some point during his or her undergraduate studies. Male students (21 percent) are more likely than female students (19 percent) to do research with a faculty member; students majoring in biological sciences, physical sciences, social sciences, and engineering are more likely than students in other disciplines to do research with a faculty member. For example, 39 percent of seniors in biological sciences work on a research project with a faculty member, which contrasts with much lower percentages of seniors in business, education, and professional fields.

Faculty practices also affect undergraduates’ participation in research. The average amount of time faculty spend working on research with undergraduates, and the average consensus among faculty members regarding the

Figure 1. Average Weekly Research Hours by Institutional Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Type</th>
<th>Hours in a typical week doing research and scholarly activities</th>
<th>Hours in a typical week working with undergraduates on research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Univ</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bac–Diverse Fields</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bac–Liberal Arts</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At institutions where faculty do not place much emphasis on deep learning, the effect of participating in research is actually negative.
importance of undergraduates working on research, are two institutional factors that have a positive effect on student research (see figs. 2 and 3). In contrast, the average amount of time faculty members spend on research and scholarship has no apparent effect on students’ participation in research.

**Teacher-scholar behavior and student development**

Our study also sought to discover the effects on student engagement and self-reported outcomes of faculty who do research, involve students in research, and employ different patterns of instructional activities. All three faculty research measures are associated with the emphasis faculty place on deep approaches to learning (listed below in order of the strength of their relationship):

- faculty views about the importance of undergraduates’ participation in faculty research
- the amount of time faculty spend in working with undergraduates on research
- the amount of time faculty spend on research and scholarship

This pattern of findings is an empirical profile of the teacher-scholar model—faculty who are actively engaged in research, place value on undergraduates doing research, and take a “deeper” approach to their teaching.

At the institutional level, the average value faculty place on research with undergraduates is also a critical factor for student outcomes. At institutions where faculty value undergraduate participation in research, students tend to report greater gains across various areas. That is, when faculty believe it is important for students at their institution to engage in research as part of their undergraduate program, it is more likely that students at those schools do so and report making progress in desired areas.

On the other hand, after controlling for the effect of the average value faculty place on undergraduate research, the average amount of time faculty spend on research and scholarship has small but statistically significant negative effects on students’ self-reported general education and personal and social development outcomes. Finally, at institutions where faculty emphasize doing research with students and use effective educational practices in their classes, students are more likely to make greater progress in key learning outcomes, especially in the area of general education.

This study confirms that student participation in research has an overall positive effect on student outcomes. Of special note is the finding that at institutions where faculty do not place much emphasis on deep learning, the effect of participating in research is actually negative, while it is positive at institutions where deep learning is emphasized a great deal.

**What to make of this**

Undergraduate involvement in research is sometimes thought to be a byproduct of institutions where faculty members are actively...
involved in research. The results of this study suggest, however, that it is not enough for faculty members to spend time on research and scholarly activities or simply to encourage faculty to do more research. In order for students to get involved in research, the faculty members on a campus must make a conscious effort to involve undergraduates in their research activities and believe that such involvement is important. They also must take the time to work with undergraduates directly and emphasize deep approaches to learning in the classroom.

Interestingly, the amount of time faculty members spend on research activities with undergraduates does not vary much by institutional type, even though the total amount of time spent on research does. Faculty members at baccalaureate institutions spend a greater proportion of their research time with undergraduates than faculty at master’s or doctoral institutions. While this result matches the undergraduate focus of baccalaureate institutions, it is also the case that these institutions have few if any graduate students to assist faculty with research activities. Thus, the pool of potential research assistants is essentially made up of undergraduates. This provides an additional incentive at baccalaureate institutions to get students involved in research. Increasing the number of undergraduates doing research at doctoral and master’s institutions will require incentives that go beyond arguing for the educational benefits derived by undergraduates through their participation in research. Certainly, hiring faculty members who are predisposed to such collaborations is a good first step.

Of course, the institutional and educational benefits of the teacher-scholar model are not limited to involving students in research activities. It is encouraging that there is a positive relationship between the amount of time faculty spend on research, particularly research with undergraduates, and the emphasis on deep approaches to learning in their courses. In fact, the strongest positive relationship is between the importance faculty place on research with undergraduates and the emphasis on deep learning. This latter result suggests that it is critical to promote among faculty members the value of connecting research and teaching, especially since—at the institutional level, at least—this will have an impact on student outcomes.

FSSE and NSSE data do not allow us to connect student information to the faculty members from which those students took classes, which would allow us to examine whether students with greater exposure to teacherscholars learn more and derive greater educational benefits compared to students with less exposure. At the same time, the findings suggest that increasing the value placed and the time spent on research with undergraduates, and increasing faculty emphasis on deep approaches to learning, result in increases in the amount students feel they gain from their college experience—particularly with regard to general educational skills and knowledge.

To respond to this article, e-mail liberaled@aacu.org, with the authors’ names on the subject line.

REFERENCES
A Focus on Poverty
The Shepherd Program at Washington and Lee University

HARLAN BECKLEY

“I DON’T THINK very many students know that.” Assaba Massougodji spoke these words after learning that the United States was ranked by the United Nations Development Programme as having a higher poverty rate than any developed nation. (Italy and Ireland, for different reasons, have subsequently slipped in the rankings and are now measured as having a higher percentage of their population in poverty than the United States does.) Assaba, an immigrant from Togo and a college junior at the time, was not aware that her adopted nation has a greater poverty problem than most developed nations. She did not know that, according to the income measurement of poverty established by the federal government, nearly 13 percent of U.S. residents and almost 18 percent of U.S. children live in poor households; that the U.S. infant mortality rate is higher than that of all other developed nations, including Slovenia and South Korea; or that the percentage of citizens expected to live past 65 years of age is lower in the United States than in Costa Rica. Assaba is socially concerned and not atypical; few of her peers at Washington and Lee and other colleges and universities in the United States are better informed about poverty. Although they realize that poverty, malnutrition, and morbidity are rampant in parts of the developing world, they have little understanding of the causes and are largely ignorant of both the magnitude and the causes of poverty in the United States.

The Shepherd Program for the Interdisciplinary Study of Poverty and Human Capability at Washington and Lee University was established in 1997 to educate the faculty and our relatively wealthy students about a social problem of which they had very little knowledge and even less firsthand experience. At the time, we did not know that there were no other interdisciplinary undergraduate programs for the sustained study of poverty in the United States. We were unaware that undergraduates at other colleges and universities also had only limited opportunities to learn about poverty and human development.

Although the goals of the Shepherd Program have evolved, two shine more brightly than they did when the program began ten years ago: (1) to inform a significant percentage of students about poverty, its causes, and plausible remedies; and (2) to offer twenty to twenty-five students per year a sustained and integrated curricular and cocurricular education that enriches their majors and shapes their understanding of their vocations. The idea of vocation, employed here, is informed by the religious conception of calling, which emphasizes service to neighbor and society in multiple life endeavors ranging from parenting to work in almost any field. We intend for graduates who integrate several courses on poverty and human capability with an internship in their field of professional interest to understand differently two of these vocations: as citizens engaged in civic affairs and as professionals engaged in business, education, healthcare, law, public policy, human services, and so forth.

The Shepherd Program
To ensure the program is viewed as credible by discipline-based faculty throughout the university, a senior faculty member serves as director and the program is grounded in rigorous academic courses. It starts not with service or experiential learning but, instead, with an interdisciplinary course on either domestic poverty or poverty in the developing world. Although students have an opportunity to participate in a pre-orientation volunteer and educational project and may become involved
early in their college experience with a variety of service projects, they do not become part of the program until they complete one of these two introductory courses.

A course on poverty can be informative. We are pleased that nearly one-fifth of our students know how the official U.S. poverty rate is calculated, can discuss various views of the causes of poverty, know that the Earned Income Tax Credit is popular with both conservatives and liberals for its support of low-wage work, and can debate the strengths and weaknesses of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. They will be better citizens as a result of what they learn in the introductory course, but no one course can shape an understanding of vocation. Moreover, academic study alone is not likely to produce a new understanding of civic or professional life.

Students who enroll in the introductory course may apply for an eight-week summer internship working to package small business loans, promote better healthcare, expand opportunities for education, provide improved legal services, organize community projects, advocate for the needs of poor persons and communities, or augment social services. These internships take place in a variety of urban and rural locations in the United States, Latin America, and Africa. They are full time, and we collaborate with agencies to ensure that they and their clients receive valuable assistance and that our students learn from their experiences. Berea, Spelman, and Morehouse
colleges have joined us to offer these summer internship opportunities to their students. Because Washington and Lee interns have previously learned about the complexity and seriousness of poverty as a threat to both individual flourishing and the common good, the internships teach students more than how to serve others. They deepen their understanding of poverty and the role of civic and political action in overcoming it. The interns also observe how their future professions can exacerbate or diminish poverty. The internships begin with an orientation to prepare students for the work ahead, and they conclude with a closing conference at which the students report what they have learned. They discuss, for example, problems of credit or housing in depressed communities or the causes and remedies for low weight at birth and improving resilience in the face of it. Students from diverse colleges and backgrounds learn from working, living, and socializing together during the internships and from conversations and structured discussions at the conferences. This cocurricular education, managed and monitored by a full-time coordinator for the sixty interns, constitutes an essential element for achieving our program goals.

Washington and Lee students who successfully complete the internship receive transcript recognition for a non-credit bearing course and become eligible for a concentration in the study of poverty and human capability. They are invited to enroll in discipline-based courses on topics ranging from the economics of education to journalism and reporting on poverty. Ten years ago, Washington and Lee offered three discipline-based courses that seriously addressed poverty. Today, students select from among at least twenty courses that enable them to enrich their majors with a deeper understanding of the various dimensions of poverty. We advise them to select courses relevant to their intended professions. A student of...
health care, for example, may take courses on developmental psychology and poverty or the economics of health care, and a student anticipating a career in education may take literary approaches to poverty and the economics of education.

Junior and senior undergraduates who have completed coursework and the summer internship, along with second- and third-year law students, are eligible to enroll in a poverty research seminar. After discussing readings from three or four current authors, students in the seminar write research papers on a topic that combines skills learned in their major, their internship experience, and a prospective examination of an issue that they are likely to confront in their professional lives. (These papers appear on the Shepherd Program website at http://shepherdapps.wlu.edu.) For example, Emily, a recent neuroscience major who interned at the Codman Square Health Center in Boston, wrote her capstone paper on “Asthma and the Impoverished: How Poor Children’s Environments Impair Their Health.” After graduation, she spent a year working with children from low-income families in New York and Washington, DC, and now attends medical school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Emily writes that during her postgraduate work, “[I] caught myself—a quiet, very unflappable woman—yelling arguments at colleagues that refer to the poor as ‘lazy.’” She further reports that, “on major holidays, I now request poverty-related nonfiction books over gifts of shoes or CDs” and that “I intend to one day use [my medical degree] to work as a physician for low-income, urban populations.” Emily’s journey represents that of dozens of others who have found in the Shepherd Program a way to define their professional vocations without changing their career choices.

Although a variety of courses and opportunities for learning through focused civic engagement has existed for ten years, Shepherd Program participation in a Civic Engagement Initiative funded by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education under the auspices of the Bonner Foundation has enabled us to improve and expand these offerings. Largely as a result of conversations with partner schools in this initiative, Washington and Lee, beginning in 2005, offers an interdisciplinary concentration in poverty and human capability.

Graduates who complete the introductory course, the internship, the poverty research seminar, and four additional discipline-based courses that address poverty in a way that is relevant to their majors and vocational interests receive transcript recognition. Fifteen to twenty students graduate each year with this recognition. However, transcript recognition is only instrumentally important; numerous other students who complete part of the concentration testify to its profound influence on their lives.

Students may, for example, find ways to become involved in community-based research or other civic engagement opportunities during the academic year as a reasonable substitute for a summer internship. The Bonner Foundation has assisted us in developing these opportunities for civic engagement, which include a Bonner Leader Program. Opportunities for learning through service to disadvantaged persons in the local community have expanded exponentially at Washington and Lee during the decade the Shepherd Program has existed. Our most recent addition is a “Campus Kitchen” that serves unused food from the campus dining hall to local residents. Students dine with those to whom they deliver meals. We have also initiated successful alternative break projects during academic holidays. Alumni collaborate by arranging suitable service-learning placements in their local communities. Nearly all the students in the Shepherd Program have found in the Shepherd Program a way to define their professional vocations without changing their career choices.

Other students never complete all of the academic requirements for the recognized concentration but find their vocational intentions...
transformed by a mixture of the summer internship, coursework, and service during the academic year. The goal, after all, is not to maximize resume credentials but to influence vocations. The key to achieving this goal is to structure the curricular and cocurricular offerings so that the students can integrate them and incorporate what they learn into their own lives. A current student who heads the student leadership team for the Campus Kitchen wrote her paper for the capstone seminar on “The Invisible Problem: Malnutrition in the U.S.” She is a junior. There is no way to know what she will do with that topic, but she has a passion informed and focused by rigorous research and thought. She intends a career in public policy.

Each student has maximum latitude to choose both course and service opportunities in accordance with their academic and professional interests. The Shepherd Program aims to enrich all majors; it does not seek to enforce or even encourage a particular professional trajectory or to instill a particular political or policy viewpoint. We try to stimulate lively discussion of professional responsibility and of politics and policy. We welcome advocacy. We compel students to deliberate by giving reasons for their opinions. However, students are responsible for shaping their own vocational self-understanding and their own political and policy conclusions.

Expanding the program
The Shepherd Program has recently been extended into the postgraduate years through a fellowship that places graduates in public interest jobs that address the needs of disadvantaged populations. This fellowship program, named after our late president, John W. Elrod, and his wife, Mimi, helps memorialize his contributions to a program that he nurtured during his presidency. No interdisciplinary program flourishes absent administrative support. As Emily’s story attests, students attracted to the Shepherd Program often embark on a year or two of community service prior to beginning their graduate education or their careers. Assaba Massougodji, for example, is currently an Elrod Fellow in Washington, DC. The fellowship program also provides structured occasions for alumni to discuss the fellows’ jobs as well as to discuss readings about poverty and human capability. We intend for the Shepherd Program to become a seamless component in an education that begins before the entering students’ orientation and extends through their postgraduate years.

We are now on the brink of obtaining funding for an eleven-school demonstration project to introduce the sustained curricular and cocurricular study of poverty and human capability into undergraduate and legal education. Other schools are also starting or contemplating similar programs of study. Interdisciplinary and cocurricular education to address poverty has not received the same attention from higher education as environmental studies, women’s studies, or racial and ethnic studies. This omission is acutely conspicuous because these social problems are often intertwined. We hope that thousands of graduates like Emily will collaborate with poor citizens to produce the professional, civic, and policy initiatives needed to diminish dramatically the number of persons unable to flourish and contribute meaningfully to society. We hope that, someday, students like Assaba will be pleasantly surprised to learn that poverty in the United States has been reduced and that malnutrition is no longer a palpable problem in the developing world. Undergraduate and legal education both have significant roles to play in achieving those goals.

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Death to the Syllabus!

IT IS TIME to declare war on the traditional course syllabus. If there is one single artifact that pinpoints the degradation of liberal education, it is the rule-infested, punitive, controlling syllabus that is handed out to students on the first day of class.

I have seen long and highly detailed syllabi that carefully lay out rules for attendance, punctuality, extra credit, grades, and penalties for missing deadlines, as well as detailed writing assignment requirements that specify page and word length, spacing, margins, and even font style and size. The syllabi use boldface, underlining, italics, and exclamation points for added emphasis; the net effect is that of the teacher yelling at the student.

What such syllabi often omit is any mention of learning. They list the assigned readings but not reasons why the subject is worth studying or important or interesting or deep, or the learning strategies that will be used in the course. The typical syllabus gives little indication that the students and teacher are embarking on an exciting learning adventure together, and its tone is more akin to something that might be handed to a prisoner on the first day of incarceration.

The implicit message of the modern course syllabus is that the student will not do anything unless bribed by grades or forced by threats. Students coming to class unprepared? Start each class with a quiz based on the readings. Students missing classes or coming late? Take off points for absence and tardiness. Students missing due dates for assignments? Take off points for lateness. Students not participating in discussions? Assign points to whoever speaks and, if you want to get really fancy, adjust the number of points to reflect the quality of the contributions. And so on.

Here’s an idea: why not try to overcome those problems by making the topics and readings interesting, the discussions cordial yet lively, and the assignments challenging but meaningful?

The controlling syllabus

I recently attended a conference of college teachers. One of the sessions, which had an overflow crowd, promised to provide a stress-free method for “managing” students—an odd word choice that presumes students are like employees and we their bosses. Soon into the session, it became clear...
that the presenter's idea of being “stress-free” was to create a set of rules so detailed that everything about assessing students could be quantified on a micro level. The presenter advocated an intricate structure of points and penalties to ensure that every possible excuse a student might present for not meeting a requirement could be dealt with by invoking the appropriate rule, thus avoiding having to make judgments that might be challenged by a student.

The speaker justified her approach by asserting that the syllabus is a “legally enforceable contract” (something one hears often these days) and so the instructor is almost obliged to make sure that it includes everything expected of the student and not to deviate from it. The speaker seemed unaware that a detailed legalistic syllabus is diametrically opposed to what makes students want to learn. There is a vast research literature on the topic of motivation to learn, and one finding screams out
loud and clear: controlling environments have been shown consistently to reduce people's interest in whatever they are doing, even when they are doing things that would be highly motivating in other contexts.

Making judgments is time-consuming. A rigid, rule-infested, watertight syllabus might appeal to administrators whose preferred response to any situation is to invoke a rule. But why should teachers want one? The teacher–student relationship is a mentoring one. We should be modeling for them the exhilaration of the life of the mind. What does it say about us if we lay out rules and force students to obey? And what makes us think that we can make general rules to deal with every contingency?

I suspect that we have gotten into a vicious negative spiral, a kind of “syllabus creep” whereby faculty keep adding new rules to combat each student excuse for not meeting existing rules. Although faculty sometimes justify this by saying that students want to know exactly what is required to be done in order to get a particular grade and that they are merely responding to that need, college faculty (and administrators) also seem to be driven by the fear that students will take legal action over a grade dispute. But courts have traditionally shown great deference for the faculty’s professional judgment, intervening only if they feel the teacher or institution has been arbitrary, capricious, acting in bad faith, or violating accepted academic norms. It is sad that many teachers are willing to forego their autonomy and the privilege of making professional judgments about academic competence and, instead, transform themselves into rule-enforcing tyrants.

It is true that by the time students come to the college classroom, they have had over twelve years of education. They have been treated, except by a few exceptional teachers, as if tests and grades and points are the most important things and that learning, like medicine, is good for you but not enjoyable. Faculty may feel that students are so deeply conditioned to view learning negatively that resistance is futile, that we cannot hope to reverse it and must respond accordingly. It is assumed that we have to teach in an authoritarian manner because of the way students are. However, all the literature on student motivation has convinced me that the opposite is likely to be true: students act the way they do because we treat them the way we do.

An experiment
To test this, I abandoned the controlling syllabus. I now go to the first class with only a tentative timeline of readings and writing assignments. A few weeks into the semester, when students have a better sense of what kind of person I am and what the course is about, we discuss what might be the best way
of assigning meaningful grades. We collectively decide what goes into a good paper or talk, what good participation means, and together create rubrics to assess them. While I make the judgments about performance, I give the students maximum flexibility and choice in what we do and how we do it—within the broad constraint that the course has to have integrity and coherence and that the grades have to be good measures of the level of student performance in the course.

I have done this for four years now, and it has been a wonderful experience. It is what I thought teaching should be like when I entered the profession. What is interesting is that the more I delegate decision making about course structure and rules to the students, the more discretion and leeway they give me to make judgments about their performance. For example, they consistently reject creating detailed marking schemes for things like participation (of the kind found on authoritarian syllabi), saying that they trust me to make a fair holistic judgment.

Faculty are often skeptical when I tell them about my experiment. They are quick to claim that it would not work for them because their particular situation is special: their students are different, their subject is different, their institution is different, and so on. No empirical justification is ever provided for these objections, and I suspect that they are grasped at because we have become deeply conditioned to think of the controlling syllabus as the only way to do things and are nervous about giving it up.

Completely abandoning a syllabus may not be possible for everyone. What replaces the controlling syllabus will undoubtedly depend on the subject matter, size of the class, nature of the institution, and the like, and there can be no universally prescriptive solutions. What should be universal, however, is the goal of moving away from an authoritarian classroom. In doing so, we need to be mindful that students have become accustomed to the controlling syllabus. Taking it away suddenly can disconcert them unless they are reassured that they can trust us, that our assessments measure important learning, that we have the competence to make judgments about their performance and meaningful criteria for doing so, and that we have the impartiality to be honest and fair. Accordingly, I spend a great deal of time and effort building such trust and creating a sense of community in the classroom among the students and between them and me. This is a harder but more pleasant task than creating a watertight syllabus, but it results in a much more rewarding experience for both the students and the teacher.

College faculty are fortunate in that we still have some level of autonomy in teaching. We should use that freedom to show our students how wonderfully rewarding true learning can be. Aristotle said that “all men by nature desire to know,” but we seem to assume that today’s students do not want to learn and have to be bludgeoned into doing so. The club we teachers use is the controlling syllabus. It is time to throw it away.

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