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Liberal Education

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES



2017 ANNUAL MEETING

**Building Public Trust in the Promise of
Liberal Education and Inclusive Excellence**

Barriers to Women's Leadership in the Academy

The Contours of Free Expression on Campus

How the Obsession with Smartness Shortchanges Students

Assessing Students' Global Experiences

New Data on Incoming Transgender College Students

Promoting the Success of Students of Color
by Promoting the Success of Faculty of Color

2017 ANNUAL MEETING
Building Public Trust in the Promise of Liberal Education and Inclusive Excellence

If we are to counter the widespread perception that colleges and universities are out of touch with mainstream America, we must interrogate the extent to which existing institutional structures, policies, and practices have perpetuated this misconception.

—Lynn Pasquerella





Liberal Education

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Rebuilding Public Trust in an Age of Anti-Intellectualism

SOCIOBIOLOGIST E. O. WILSON'S COGENT OBSERVATION that contemporary society is "drowning in information, while starving for wisdom" is accompanied by his prediction that "the world henceforth will be run by synthesizers, people able to put together the right information at the right time, think critically about it, and make important choices wisely."¹ Wilson's comments highlight both the value of a liberal education and the ideal of an educated citizenry in an age when the democratization of information through the Internet has given rise to a new wave of anti-intellectualism—one grounded in the denial of reason and the distrust and disdain of experts. The result has been an increasing polarization of American society and an entrenched refusal to countenance opposing points of view, contributing to a marketplace of ideas at risk of falling

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

prey to those who have the resources to control the shaping of public opinion and policies. In this arena, asserted claims be-

come orthodoxy despite the absence of evidence and in the face of enduring questions. Indeed, nearly a century and a half after her death, there is an ostensibly burgeoning allegiance to the advice given by the poet Emily Dickinson: "Tell all the Truth but tell it slant—/Success in Circuit lies."²

During the opening plenary of AAC&U's 2017 annual meeting, "Rebuilding Public Trust in the Promise of Liberal Education and Inclusive Excellence," I argued that leaders in the academy must reaffirm and demonstrate the critical role that liberal education plays in discerning the truth. At the same time, if we are to counter the widespread perception that colleges and universities are out of touch with mainstream America, we must interrogate the extent to which existing institutional structures, policies, and practices have perpetuated this misconception. It is a point echoed by Catherine Liu, author of *The American Idyll: Academic Anti-Elitism as Cultural Critique*. In an interview with Saffron Huang, Liu notes that the current anti-intellectualism is, in part, "a reaction against an increasingly organized educational institution that was once supposed to democratize knowledge, but is now becoming more like a cartel." As Huang observes, the fact that many of the most high-profile educational institutions "operate on the basis of exclusion, by test scores or family income," has led to a growing sense of resentment and suspicion by those denied access to the halls of academia.³

Beyond the destructive, disparate impact on underserved students of a national obsession with standardized tests and the persistent myth of meritocracy, structural impediments continue to marginalize the crucial work of faculty dedicated to providing the broadest access to excellence in higher education through humanistic practice. Such practice reaches beyond the gates, recognizing the value of connecting with those beyond the narrow confines of the ivory tower, and refuses to exalt knowledge disseminated in peer-reviewed journal articles above all else. It contravenes the assumptions underlying this moment in the history of the academy when the professional structures of academic scholarship, with its tendency to neglect teaching excellence, outreach, civic engagement, and public intellectualism, are alienated from a more widespread humanistic

comportment to life. These barriers fuel the prevailing rhetoric that reduces the value of higher education solely to job training and positions liberal education not only as a self-indulgent luxury, reserved for the privileged elite, but also as stigmatizing those who question its worth. If American colleges and universities are to make progress in redressing the growing economic segregation in higher education that threatens to destabilize our democracy, we need to expand our modes of engagement to connect the work being done on our campuses with people's everyday lives.

Restoring public trust in higher education and destabilizing the cultural attitudes at the basis of proposals that devalue liberal education will require demonstrating in a more compelling way the extent to which we actually are teaching students twenty-first-century skills, preparing them to solve our most pressing global, national, and local problems within the context of the workforce, not apart from it. But to do so, our institutions of higher education must come together to engage in an honest assessment of our effectiveness and undertake a collaborative exchange of best practices. Indeed, this was one of the primary purposes of our annual meeting. For those of us who believe that higher education is inextricably linked to our nation's historic mission of educating for democracy, it served as a collective call to action to contest accusations of irrelevancy and illegitimacy leveled against higher education.

The articles in this issue, drawn from presentations at the annual meeting, allow us to take stock of the many ways in which our colleagues across the country have taken up this charge. Just days after the inauguration of President Trump and the Women's March of 2017, and amidst reaction by leaders of higher education to the first executive travel ban, escalating controversy around the limits of free expression on college campuses, and unprecedented levels of bias-related incidents being reported by the Southern Poverty Law Center, AAC&U members confronted head-on the most pressing issues of the day. In every case, the authors illuminate why our organization's mission of making liberal education and inclusive excellence the foundation of institutional purpose and educational practice is more crucial than ever. And while Wilson posits that "the real problem of humanity is the following: we have paleolithic emotions; medieval institutions; and god-like technology," he also reminds us that we can solve the crisis of the next hundred years if we are "honest and smart."⁴

—LYNN PASQUERELLA

If American colleges and universities are to make progress in redressing the growing economic segregation in higher education that threatens to destabilize our democracy, we need to expand our modes of engagement to connect the work being done on our campuses with people's everyday lives

NOTES

1. Edward O. Wilson, *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* (New York: Vintage, 1998), 294.
2. Emily Dickinson, "Tell all the Truth but tell it slant," *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Thomas H. Johnson (New York: Little, Brown, 1961), 506.
3. Saffron Huang, "A Departure from Truth," *Harvard Political Review*, October 9, 2016, <http://harvardpolitics.com/world/anti-intellectualism>.
4. "An Intellectual Entente," *Harvard Magazine*, September 10, 2009, <http://harvardmagazine.com/breaking-news/james-watson-edward-o-wilson-intellectual-entente>.

Recently, while browsing back issues of *Liberal Education*, I was struck (and amused) by how often my predecessor, Bridget Puzon, and I have alluded in this space to the difficulty of the task we both have had to face in editing issues focused on the annual meeting. In 2003, for example, Bridget observed wistfully that “the photographs and the articles are only a sample, captured to fit within the covers of the journal” and, in 2004, that, of the various and vital sessions, “(regrettably) only a few can be represented here.” In 1996, Paula Brownlee even began her spring President’s Message by acknowledging that, “From the rich array of presentations . . . it was no easy task for our editor to select articles for this issue of *Liberal Education*.” Yet, what also struck me was the enduring value of maintaining even a (necessarily) partial record of the proceedings.

FROM THE EDITOR

I hope you will agree after reading this year’s selection.

It occurs to me that the annual meeting issues are not so exceptional, really. Every issue offers a window on the work of a remarkably passionate and committed community of educators; one of the benefits of editing this journal is getting to take in a far wider view—reading the manuscripts that cannot be fit into just four issues per year, learning about the innovations we do not have the space here to highlight. Editing *Liberal Education* is itself a liberal education.

So it is with deep gratitude and an abiding admiration for the work of our members that, with this issue, I conclude just over a dozen years as editor of *Liberal Education*. It has been my great pleasure and privilege to assist, learn from, and collaborate with authors across higher education and so many wonderful colleagues at AAC&U. In preparing next year’s annual meeting issue, a new editor will have to face what I described in 2006 as “the unhappy task of selecting for publication a mere handful from among a superabundance of presentations deserving of a wider audience.”

I look forward to reading it.—DAVID TRITELLI

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NEWS AND INFORMATION

New Centers for Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation has awarded AAC&U a grant to support the creation of Centers for Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT) at ten higher education institutions. The purpose is to engage and empower campus and community stakeholders to break down racial hierarchies, create positive narratives about all members of the community, and prepare the next generation of leaders to carry this work forward. Later in 2017, AAC&U will issue a call for proposals from institutions interested in hosting the TRHT Centers. For more information about AAC&U's partnering role in the Kellogg Foundation's TRHT enterprise, visit www.aacu.org/trht.

2017 Ness Book Award Winner

The winner of the 2017 Frederic W. Ness Book Award is *The Aims of Higher Education: Problems of Morality and Justice* (University of Chicago Press, 2015), a collection of philosophical essays that explore some of the most fundamental questions facing higher education. The award was presented to the book's editors, philosopher Harry Brighouse and

Spencer Foundation president Michael McPherson, at the AAC&U annual meeting.

Established in 1979 to honor AAC&U President Emeritus Frederic W. Ness, the annual award recognizes books that make outstanding contributions to the understanding and improvement of liberal education. More information about the award, including a list of past winners, is available online at www.aacu.org/about/ness-award.

New AAC&U Directors and Officers

At the annual meeting in January, the AAC&U membership voted to appoint six new directors and a new slate of officers. Elsa Núñez, president of Eastern Connecticut State University, became chair of the board of directors, succeeding James P. Collins, Virginia M. Ullman Professor of Natural History and the Environment at Arizona State University. As past chair, Collins will continue to serve on the executive committee of the board. Richard Guarasci, president of Wagner College, was appointed vice chair of the board, and Royce Engstrom, professor of chemistry at the University of Montana, was appointed treasurer. In addition, six new directors were

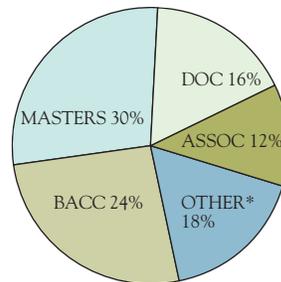
Upcoming Meetings

- October 12–14, 2017
Global Engagement and Social Responsibility: Higher Education's Role in Addressing Global Crises
New Orleans, Louisiana
- November 2–4, 2017
Transforming STEM Higher Education: Discovery, Innovation, and the Value of Evidence
San Francisco, California
- January 24–27, 2018
Annual Meeting: Can Higher Education Recapture the Elusive American Dream?
Washington, DC

appointed: Marjorie Hass, president of Austin College; Tuajuanda Jordan, president of St. Mary's College of Maryland; Carol A. Leary, president of Bay Path University; Laurie Leshin, president of Worcester Polytechnic Institute; Mary Papazian, president of San Jose State University; and Robert L. Pura, president of Greenfield Community College.

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LYNN PASQUERELLA AND CAROLINE S. CLAUSS-EHLERS

Glass Cliffs, Queen Bees, and

Persistent Barriers to Women's Leadership in the Academy

FEATURED TOPIC

THE DAY OF THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, *Slate* magazine published an article by Laura Wagner titled “How Do You Shatter a Glass Ceiling? With a Steel Spike or Diamond Drill.”¹ The article was reminiscent of an episode of the television show *MythBusters*, going into the physics of breaking through the Viracon triple-layer insulated glass ceiling of the Javits Center in Manhattan, where Hillary Clinton was widely expected to deliver a victory speech after shattering the “highest, hardest glass ceiling.” Even with a steel-tipped LifeHammer or a diamond drill, Wagner suggested, it would take long and require determination. But our thought was, “We have already been working at it for 240 years.”

The hardening of the glass ceiling and the solidifying of the frames holding it up, coinciding with the nomination of the first woman candidate for president by a major

We will never make real progress in advancing women's leadership in higher education until we address the macro issues in our society that keep us from shattering the increasingly thick glass ceiling

US political party, parallel the hardening of the white racial frame during Barack Obama's candidacy. As hip-hop scholar Jeff Chang demonstrates in his recent book, *We Gon' Be Alright: Notes on Race and Resegregation*, the dominant culture presents images of racial progress even as there is a burgeoning movement toward resegregation and inequality. Asserting that there has never truly been a “post-racial moment” in our nation's history, Chang explores how the culture was “continue through justificatory innocence and willed inaction” to “allow the structures that produce inequality and segregation to persist.”² The result is a cycle of crises: an emergent crisis is followed by a reaction to trauma that, in turn, catalyzes a backlash

of outrage, justification, and denial that leads, ultimately, to a level of exhaustion, complacency, and paralysis that spawns further crises.

Given the pervasiveness of misogynistic rhetoric in the 2016 presidential campaign, it is nearly impossible to resist drawing comparisons between the ways in which implicit bias, stereotype threat, and the empathy gap undermine equity for communities of color, despite legislative reform, and how they manifest themselves and act as generative forces in shaping and reshaping the narrative around the role of women in the public sphere. In case anyone doubted it, the election made it clear that, in the United States, we are not in a post-feminist era any more than we are in a post-racial era. The political landscape for women has been discouraging this past year, to say the least—and not simply because of the gendered media reporting throughout the presidential campaign and the egregious surge of sexual intimidation that followed the election. The fact that, although more than half of the US population is female, the representation

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the Snow-Woman Effect



of women in Congress has stalled at 20–25 percent reflects a persistent lack of progress.

And despite conservative critics charging that colleges and universities are bastions of liberal progressivism, progress for women in the upper administrative ranks of academia has been just as stagnant. The proportion of women serving as college and university presidents is at odds with student demographics. According to research conducted by the American Council on Education, women have earned more than half of all baccalaureate degrees awarded since 1981 and half of all doctorates awarded since 2006.³ While the percentage of female college presidents more than doubled between 1986 and 2006, increasing from 9.5 percent to 23 percent, it increased to just 26.4 percent by 2011. During the most recent five-year period, the proportion has remained essentially unchanged: just one in four presidents are women.⁴

Moreover, a narrow focus on the overall percentage obscures that fact that many of the gains have been at community colleges, where 33.6 percent of the presidents are women, as compared to 22.6 percent at baccalaureate colleges, 23.7 percent at master's colleges and universities, and 21.6 percent at doctoral universities.⁵ Insofar as these variations among institutional types are perceived as correlating with power, money, and status, they are a reminder that cultural equity is not reducible solely to representation and that organizational and institutional cultures often destabilize policies and programs designed to foster diversity.

By outlining some of the familiar and persistent barriers to women's leadership at the highest administrative levels within colleges and universities, we want to open a conversation about how to accelerate the type of change embodied by Ronald Takaki's notion of a "different mirror." Developing this notion, Takaki asks, "What happens, to borrow the words of Adrienne Rich, 'when someone with the authority of a teacher' describes our society, and 'you are not in it'? Such an experience can be disorientating—a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing."⁶

Leaky pipelines, sticky floors, and hidden biases

We all know that within the academy there has been a leaky pipeline. Women are less likely than men to attain the rank of full professor, which is often a requirement for service as department

chair. The significance of the absence of ladders for women within higher education administration is revealed by the statistic that approximately 70 percent of college presidents have been faculty members.⁷ Although 44 percent of all full-time faculty are women, only one-third are in tenured or tenure-line positions; a mere quarter of all full professors are women.⁸ The absence of leadership opportunities for women at the earliest stages of their careers contributes to what Kate Berheide has called the "sticky floor," miring women in low-paying jobs with limited opportunities for moving sideways or for upward mobility.⁹ The dearth of female role models in leadership positions at all levels and the adjunctification of the faculty further exacerbate the problem of "the sticky floor," at times preventing women from embarking on pathways to the presidency.

One especially well-documented factor that limits leadership opportunities for women is hidden bias. In 2012, McKinsey reported on research conducted for the *Wall Street Journal* Executive Task Force for Women in the Economy.¹⁰ Demonstrating how hidden bias inhibits women's advancement in the workplace, the report found that while men are judged on their potential, women are evaluated based on past performance. Hidden bias was also cited as a factor in a Yale study of science professors at American universities.¹¹ The researchers invited professors from the biology, chemistry, and physics departments at three private and three public research universities to evaluate applications from a recent graduate seeking a position as a lab manager. Each of the professors received the same single-page summary, but in half of the cases, the applicant was identified as "John," while in the other half, the applicant was identified as "Jennifer." The study revealed that science professors, male and female alike, are less likely to offer mentoring or employment to women candidates. Indeed, there was no significant difference in the bias exhibited by male and female professors. Further, when female candidates *were* offered positions, it was at a lower salary. This study underscores the complex ways in which women are often denied access to informal networking that can help advance career opportunities.

The relationship between hidden bias and women's leadership opportunities was also revealed in a study that applied gender mapping to approximately 14 million reviews from



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RateMyProfessors.com.¹² The study showed that gender is repeatedly constructed through the use of language and, because the authority and historical contributions of men are normalized, women are more likely to be judged on their personality traits and appearance. Unless identified, these types of biases can have a disparately negative impact on rates of tenure and promotion for women, undermining women's confidence, despite a demonstrated record of excellence.

Nearly a decade ago, Mary Ann Mason highlighted the many maneuvers in which women, but not men, must engage to secure and retain leadership roles.¹³ Women aspiring to leadership positions in academia “must adhere to a narrow band of behavior in order to be effective in mostly male settings.” Women must be careful not to speak too quickly, too assertively, or in too shrill a manner, while being friendly but not sexual. The stylishness of one's hair, makeup, nails, and dress, along

with weight and body type, all appear to be fair game when it comes to assessing women's leadership potential. According to Mason, “It is usually an accumulation of small and large incidents that marginalize female administrators.” She calls this phenomenon the “snow-woman effect,” observing that “the layers of missed opportunity, family obligations, and small and large slights build up over the years, slowing their career progress compared with men.”

Still other forms of bias in the academy prevent women from competing with men on an even playing field. A recent study of gender distribution across a range of academic disciplines—from science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields to philosophy—found that women are most likely to be underrepresented in those fields in which “sheer brilliance” and a spark of intellect, rather than perseverance and hard work, are regarded as the key to success.¹⁴ The researchers attribute this particular

gender bias to a reflection of stereotypes based on the sexist presumption that women lack innate genius.

Given that early leadership experience, encouragement, and support are factors that reduce barriers for women, these studies raise serious cause for concern. Hidden biases that result in a lack of opportunity for women to move up the ladder into leadership roles, the active discouragement of women, and differing expectations imposed on men and women within academia take a toll on efforts to increase the number of women presidents.

Even when women do break free from the sticky floor and break through the glass ceiling, the barriers to success may become even more substantial than those they had faced in the climb up the ladder

Of course, these hidden biases are not exclusive to academics. In a study of gender bias in performance reviews, Kieran Snyder examined whether “review tone or content differed based on the employee’s gender” and how the “perception of female abrasiveness undermines women’s careers in technology.”¹⁵ Snyder found that, while negative feedback was provided in 71 percent of all performance reviews, women were more likely than men to get negative comments (87.9 percent as compared to 58.9 percent) and that the tone of the reviews differed significantly with respect to gender. Snyder also found that “negative personality

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criticism—watch your tone! step back! stop being so judgmental!—shows up twice in the 83 critical reviews received by men. It shows up in 71 of the 94 critical reviews received by women.” Inappropriate personal interaction, shaming, and overreactive criticism can be more difficult for women due to social conditioning around being likeable and pleasing others.

Societal norms also include the expectation that women leaders will build consensus and focus on both interpersonal relations and work satisfaction. By contrast, the expectation of male leaders is that they will focus on task achievement and performance outcomes.¹⁶ When individuals act counter to these stereotypical expectations, they are deemed to be less effective leaders. The masculine ideal of the good leader as a competitive agent—an ideal that reinforces sexism—creates a double bind for women. As Crystal Hoyt and Jim Blascovich have illustrated, the agentic qualities of confidence, control, assertiveness, emotional toughness, and achievement-oriented aggressiveness posited as necessary for effective leadership are considered incompatible with the communal characteristics associated with women and women’s leadership.¹⁷ Here, too, hidden bias comes into play as a factor in gender-based leadership evaluations. Applying the theory of role congruity with respect to the appropriateness of male and female behavior, researchers have demonstrated a disparately negative impact on assessments of women in leadership roles when there is incongruity between group stereotypes and the social role in which members of the group are engaged.¹⁸

Hence, the myth of “queen bee syndrome.” The antithesis of those women like Madeline Albright who understand that “there’s a special place in hell for women who don’t help each other,”¹⁹ the queen bee pushes the ladder away just as other women are getting to the top. The notion that powerful women are the biggest enemy of other women seeking advancement has been debunked by a number of studies demonstrating that women in leadership roles engage in lower levels of discriminatory and harassing behavior, offer more personal support to female employees, and oversee offices with smaller pay gaps between men and women than those run by male bosses.²⁰ These findings bolster Sheryl Sandberg’s assertion that “women aren’t any meaner to women than men are to one another. Women are just expected to be nicer.”²¹

Every one of these biases contributes to demand-side and institutional barriers in the form of sticky floors and glass ceilings that block women's access to high-level male-dominated networks and to women mentors in administrative positions that facilitate advancement to higher education leadership. Yet, even when women do break free from the sticky floor and break through the glass ceiling, the barriers to success may become even more substantial than those they had faced in the climb up the ladder. When an organization with a history of male leadership brings in a woman to manage a crisis, the woman often finds herself on the "glass cliff." Research on this phenomenon indicates that leaders with male agentic properties are most likely to be chosen to run successful organizations, while leaders with stereotypically female interpersonal attributes are most likely to be selected to lead an organization in crisis.²² Not only are women more likely than men to accept and occupy positions that have a higher risk of failure, they are less likely to be given second chances after a failure.

A new approach

In her article "Two Steps Forward, One Step Back? Strengthening the Foundations of Women's Leadership in Higher Education," Lynne Ford discusses the impact of replacing overt biases—frequently addressed by policy or law, such as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972—with subtler biases embedded in normative institutional rules and practices. Ford details the extent to which ostensibly gender-neutral, universally applicable rules regarding hiring, tenure, promotion, salary negotiation, and leadership opportunity are expressions of the gendered university, grounded in the anachronistic model of the male as the primary breadwinner supported by a full-time caregiver at home.

This is consistent with the findings presented in the American Council on Education's 2012 report, *The American College President*.²³ The typical college or university president is a sixty-one-year-old, married, white male with a doctorate in education. Unlike their male counterparts, 89 percent of whom are married, only 63 percent of women presidents are married; 24 percent, excluding those in religious orders, are either divorced or have never married. In 2006, this was true of only 7 percent of similarly situated male leaders. Though the percentage of women

college presidents who are married has increased to 72 percent, and while the percentage who are divorced, widowed, or separated dropped from 19 percent in 2006 to 16 percent in 2011, women college presidents are much less likely than male college presidents to have children (72 percent versus 90 percent). Nonetheless, 10 percent of women presidents reported stepping back from their careers to provide caregiving, as compared to 3 percent of male presidents; 21 percent of women, but only 9.5 percent of men, reported adapting their career plans to accommodate a partner or spouse. These data confirm what we already know: "In the university world as well as other professions, marriage and children appear to boost the careers of men and slow or stop those of women."²⁴

Interestingly, among women who indicate that they are not interested in a leadership role because it exacts too high a price, many either fail to identify the gender discrimination in their own experiences or consider acts of discrimination to be individual events, rather than a function of institutional structures of gender discrimination.²⁵ We need to consider these findings in the context of Ford's contention that we will not make real progress until we embark on structural changes that align the academy with the lived experience of a diversified faculty, as opposed to reward systems that privilege masculine behavior and reify the separation of the public and private

Lynne Pasquerella,
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**Women's March,
January 2017**



spheres in which women continue to do the majority of unpaid domestic work. Ford points to Making Excellence Inclusive, the initiative of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), as a model.²⁶ Beyond institutional change, she also encourages women to actively pursue social efficacy, social modeling, and mentoring in order to attain leadership positions and serve as change agents.²⁷

As a means of confronting hidden biases, we also need to validate authentic forms of leadership that involve self-awareness, balanced processing, internalized moral perspective, and relational transparency. Rather than personalizing environmental assumptions, we must understand structural limitations that reflect hidden biases and promote organizational understanding from the viewpoint of structural, rather than internal, dynamics.

If we hope to make meaningful strides in promoting women's leadership in higher education, we must be prepared for a shift that reflects a valuing of authentic leadership—including a reassessment of what is rewarded in the tenure and promotion process. But, this brand of leadership cannot make a difference unless structural change is coupled with cultural change. Social justice champion, author, and television host Wes Moore reveals the inextricable link between the two in his commentary on Freddie

Gray's death. In April 2015, Gray, a twenty-five-year-old black man, was arrested in Baltimore, Maryland, and died a week later from injuries sustained while being transported in a police van. As a Baltimore native, Moore was deeply affected by the tragedy. After talking about the injustice he saw embedded in the case, a friend made him watch the tape of the incident leading to Gray's death through a different lens—without looking at the officers or Gray. What Moore saw for the first time was the number of people on the street in the middle of the morning with no jobs, nowhere to go, no way out. He realized that Gray's whole life in that neighborhood had been leading to that moment, and that his fate could have been that of any one of the people there. Without looking at the macro issues, protesting the injustice of Gray's death is futile. In the same way, we will never make real progress in advancing women's leadership in higher education until we address the macro issues in our society that keep us from shattering the increasingly thick glass ceiling or, in the case of women of color, breaking through what was referred to in the *Wall Street Journal* recently as the "concrete ceiling."²⁸

One of the most gratifying aspects of participating in the women's marches on January 20, 2017, was the sense of optimism and empowerment that comes from joining together in

community with those who have shared objectives and values. We have that same sense of optimism and empowerment in working with the AAC&U community in leading the way for transformative change. □

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

NOTES

1. Laura Wagner, "How Do You Shatter a Glass Ceiling? With a Steel Spike or Diamond Drill," *Slate*, November 8, 2016, http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/explainer/2016/11/how_to_shatter_a_glass_ceiling.html.
2. Jeff Chang, *We Gon' Be Alright: Notes on Race and Resegregation* (New York: Picador, 2016), 7.
3. Heather L. Johnson, *Pipelines, Pathways, and Institutional Leadership: An Update on the Status of Women in Higher Education* (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 2016), 18–19, figs. 1A, 1C.
4. Audrey Williams June, "Despite Progress, Only 1 in 4 College Presidents Are Women," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 16, 2015, <http://www.chronicle.com/article/despite-progress-only-1-in-4/228473>.
5. Johnson, *Pipelines*, 21, table 3.
6. Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (New York: Little, Brown, 2008), 19.
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FREDERICK M. LAWRENCE

The Contours of Free Expression on Campus

Free Speech, Academic Freedom, and Civility

FEATURED TOPIC

A TENSION EXISTS on college and university campuses across America today concerning how to pursue liberal, rational, open learning and, at the same time, celebrate a spirit of academic community—in short, how to exercise free expression and maintain civility.

In exploring the contours of free expression on campuses, I begin with an exploration of

the boundaries of free speech, especially in the troubling context of hate speech. This boundary must be expansive; difficult,

challenging, and, yes, even hateful speech ought to be protected under our system of free expression. This view, largely consonant with accepted First Amendment doctrine, applies to campuses generally, both public and private. This is not a “First Amendment analysis” per se. Rather, our concern is the nature and limits of expression on all campuses.

I will address two issues. First, where is the limit on expression? Where does protected, hateful speech cross over into being a prohibited hate crime? On campuses, this question is not typically about criminal behavior per se. But the question is the same: when does behavior cross over from being protected, however hateful, and become the proper subject of disciplinary action or even expulsion?

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The second issue concerns the proper response to hateful speech that is, in fact, protected. To say that it is protected is a threshold issue, not the end of the discussion. This will bring us to the compelling topic with which America generally, and academia particularly, is preoccupied today: the relationship between free expression and civility in the public square.

Two stories to set the context

I begin with two stories to set the context. The first story took place at Williams College, where I was a trustee. A Jewish student complained that a faux eviction notice had been placed on her dorm room door: “If you do not vacate the premises by tomorrow at 6PM, we reserve the right to demolish your premises without delay. We cannot be held responsible for property or persons remaining inside. Charges for demolition will be applied to your student account.” The student understandably felt terrible. The president wanted my opinion on what should be done to those responsible.

The second story occurred on the Brandeis University campus in December 2014, when I was president of the university. It occurred right after the murder of two police officers in “revenge” for the deaths of Eric Garner and Michael Brown. A prominent student member of the campus Black Lives Matter movement tweeted that she had no sympathy with the police officers. Knowing this student, I believe that what she meant was that she was deeply frustrated and troubled that, in her view, vastly more attention had been paid to the deaths of Officers Wenjian Liu and Raphael Ramos in the broader community than was given to the deaths of Garner and Brown. But alas, that is not what she said. And, with “help,” if that is the right word, from

How should we respond to hateful speech on campus?



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one of the sixty or so students who received the tweet and who posted it on what can best be described as an extremist website, her tweet went viral. Not unexpectedly, I received enormous pressure from all sides on this set of events. Some urged that the student be thrown out of school or, at least, lose her financial aid package. Others argued that I should issue a short statement supporting free speech and the right of all members of the community to say what they wish. I will return to the Williams and Brandeis stories later in my remarks.

As we begin, it should be noted that the discussion is fundamentally different from what it would be like in most, if not all, other advanced democracies, which punish pure hate speech. Consider the following definitions of punishable speech excerpted from the statutes of other nations:

- statements “by which a group of people are threatened, derided or degraded because of their race, colour of skin, national or ethnic background” (Denmark)
- attacks on “the human dignity of others by insulting, maliciously maligning or defaming segments of the population” (Germany)
- “threatening, abusive or insulting words, or behavior” intended to “stir up racial hatred” or when “having regard to all the circumstances racial hatred is likely to be stirred up thereby” (the United Kingdom)

Why is this so different for us in the United States?

The context of hate speech and hate crimes is at the intersection of three sets of significant individual and societal rights and interests: (1) freedom of expression, (2) personal safety, and (3) personal dignity. How do we define something as amorphous as “personal dignity”? Consider the concept as developed by Jeremy Waldron in his important book, *The Harm in Hate Speech*. For Waldron, dignity is concerned with a person’s basic social standing and the interest in being recognized as “proper objects of society’s protection and concern.”¹ If the right to one’s safety is inherently individualistic and about liberty, the right to one’s dignity is inherently comparative and about equality—to have one’s dignity respected is to be accorded the same basic social standing as any other member of the society. As Lyndon Johnson is said to have answered a question concerning the moral necessity for the Civil Rights Act of 1964, “A man has the right not be insulted in front of his children.”

Free expression as a core value, which extends to most hate speech

Analysis of hate speech and hate crimes is concerned with legitimate and significant rights on all sides, including the rights of both the speaker and the listener. We must proceed with great caution, protecting rights where we can and limiting rights only where we must.

Campuses are replete with competing interests. Colleges and universities cover a wide range of models and identities. But I believe that most, if not all, schools share a similar mission—to discover and create knowledge, and to transmit that knowledge through teaching and scholarship for the betterment of our local, national, and even international communities. For this mission, free expression and free inquiry are essential.

I thus start from the position that all speech, including hateful speech, is presumed to be protected. By hateful speech I mean that which offends or insults a group along racial, ethnic, national, religious, gender, or sexual identity lines. The definition of the German statute puts it well—attacks on “the human dignity of others by insulting, maliciously maligning or defaming segments of the population.”

I ally myself here with the arguments presented by such scholars as the late Professor Edwin Baker and Dean Robert Post. Baker based his understanding of free expression on a fundamental concept of autonomy. In his essay “Autonomy and Hate Speech,” he wrote, “Law’s purposeful restrictions on [the speaker’s] racist or hate speech violate [that person’s] formal autonomy.”² Post, in *Constitutional Domains* and elsewhere, has recognized the harm inflicted by hate speech, but also argued persuasively that the fundamental societal interests of public discourse will almost always outweigh this harm. In America, Post believes “public discourse is an arena for the competition of many distinct communities, each trying to capture the law to impose its own particular norms.” He adds that public discourse in our democracy thus has the “extraordinarily difficult task of ensuring democratic legitimacy in a climate of comparatively severe suspicion and distrust.”³

The right to hold opinions that are offensive to many or most

The normative arguments of Post, Baker, and others find deep resonance in American free expression jurisprudence, which largely protects hate speech. This begins with the underlying

premise that a state may not punish a person for holding an opinion, regardless of how obnoxious the opinion may be to the public or even how good a predictor it might be for future anti-social conduct. It is striking that in 1951, Chief Justice Fred Vinson, not a strong advocate of a robust view of the First Amendment, saw no need to provide any support for his assertion that “one may not be imprisoned or executed because he holds particular beliefs.”⁴

Consider the context of flag burning, which continues to press the limits of the right to express unpopular views. The Supreme Court, even as it has become more conservative over the past three to four decades in its approach to numerous areas of the law, has repeatedly upheld the right to burn an American flag. In 1989, in *Texas v. Johnson*, striking down the Texas flag burning prohibition, the court held that “if there is a bedrock principle underlying the First Amendment, it is that the government may not prohibit the expression of an idea simply because society finds the idea itself offensive or disagreeable.”⁵

Similarly, hate speech has generally been held to be constitutionally protected. Beginning in the 1980s, many colleges and universities, concerned over the increase in racial tensions on campuses, adopted speech codes proscribing the expression of bigotry. None of these codes has survived First Amendment challenge. Campus speech codes at public universities have been viewed as prohibitions of speech based solely on the content of that speech. Although sympathetic with the goals of the campus speech codes, the district courts

that struck down such regulations as those adopted by the University of Michigan and the University of Wisconsin did so on First Amendment grounds.⁶

This broad protection of speech on campus, both under the First Amendment and under basic principles of free expression and free inquiry as integral to the academic mission, still permits universities to protect students from being threatened and to protect classes from being disrupted. Where is the line to be drawn?

The flawed “speech vs. conduct” distinction

It is tempting to draw the line as a distinction between speech and conduct: speech is protected, whereas conduct may be regulated or prohibited. This is the distinction that a unanimous Supreme Court relied upon in *Wisconsin v. Mitchell*, the 1993 case in which the court upheld a Wisconsin bias crime law, the constitutionality of which had been challenged on the grounds that it punished thought or expression. The court held that bias crimes are conduct and may be punished, whereas hate speech is expression and is protected.

The speech-conduct distinction is tempting because it promises a predictable and logical way to draw lines: once we can differentiate speech from conduct, we can effectively protect the former and regulate or even punish the latter. The promise, however, is ephemeral because the speech-conduct dichotomy is far too brittle to work.

Speech and conduct are not merely intermingled; they are inextricable. Thus, the dialectic encompassing speech and conduct precludes not only a neat separation of the two, but also even efforts to determine whether “act” or “expression” is the predominant element in certain behavior. Consider two examples: flag burning, which, as we have already briefly discussed, is constitutionally protected, and draft card burning, which the Supreme Court has held may be punished.⁷ The court considered the burning of a flag to be expression, whereas the burning of a draft card is conduct.

The slipperiness of the speech-conduct distinction is apparent. Flag burning is surely an expression of political views, but is it not also an act? And what is the conduct in burning a draft card? The conduct of burning? It is at least plausible that, both in terms of the actor’s own understanding of the card burning and in

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terms of the state's concern with punishing this behavior, the "conduct" of no longer having a draft card predominates in the act. As Professor John Hart Ely wrote in his classic article on the draft card-burning case, "burning a draft card to express opposition to the draft is an undifferentiated whole, 100 percent action and 100 percent expression. It involves no conduct that is not at the same time communication, and no communication that does not result from conduct."⁸ We could say the same of flag burning. And yet one is protected, and one is not.

The point here is that the purported distinction between speech and conduct will not add rigor to any attempt to distinguish protected from proscribable behavior. The flying of a swastika flag or a Confederate flag from one's dorm room or home cannot be objectively

Even pure speech may, in some cases, cross the line between protected expression and that which may be sanctioned or punished

described as expression alone. It is action as well. Distinguishing between conduct and expression ultimately assumes its own conclusions. That which

we wish to punish, we will term "conduct" with expressive value; that which we wish to protect, we will call "expression" that requires conduct as its means of communication. The critical decision—which behavior may be punished, and which should be protected—is wholly extrinsic to this process. If a meaningful distinction exists, we must find it elsewhere.

Replacing speech-conduct with focus on the actor's intent

My proposed distinction looks to basic criminal law doctrine, and the distinction between the criminal act (*actus reus*) and intent (*mens rea*). This distinction differs from the speech-conduct distinction because an "act" may include physical activity or verbal activity. Speaking itself is a kind of act. Our focus is on intent—the actor's *mens rea*. Is the actor intending to cause harm to a particular victim, or is the actor intending to communicate views, however hateful or unpleasant? This is not to suggest that the speaker's act of expressing himself or herself is purely deontological; expression has ramifications. Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. said, "every idea is an incitement."⁹ But the expression we should protect does not seek to cause injury.

Several examples illustrate the point. The first two, drawn from *Virginia v. Black*,¹⁰ involve a

Virginia cross-burning statute that was struck down by the Supreme Court. The third example is the case I described earlier that occurred at Williams.

The Virginia cross-burning statute began by making it a crime for anyone, "with the intent of intimidating any person or group of persons, to burn, or cause to be burned, a cross on the property of another, a highway or other public place." The court would have upheld that part of the law. Justice O'Connor wrote that "the First Amendment permits Virginia to outlaw cross burnings done with the intent to intimidate because burning a cross is a particularly virulent form of intimidation."¹¹ The Court struck down the statute because of what followed: "Any such burning of a cross shall be prima facie evidence of an intent to intimidate a person or group of persons."¹²

Not every cross burning is intended to intimidate a victim, and the two cases before the court in *Virginia v. Black* made the point. These two cases represented the two poles of cross burnings—domestic terrorism and expression of white supremacy. In one case, Barry Black led a Ku Klux Klan rally on private property, after which a twenty-five- to thirty-foot cross was burned. In the other case, Richard Elliott and Jonathan O'Mara were prosecuted for attempting to burn a cross on the lawn of an African American, James Jubilee, who had recently moved next door. Elliott and O'Mara were trying to "get back" at Jubilee because, among other things, he had complained when they used their back yard as a firing range.¹³

The "prima facie evidence" clause of the cross-burning statute impermissibly blurred the lines between the two meanings of burning a cross. As Justice Souter wrote in his separate opinion, "its primary effect is to skew jury deliberations toward conviction in cases where the evidence of intent to intimidate is relatively weak and arguably consistent with a solely ideological reason for burning."¹⁴ To be constitutional, the statute would have to require proof of an intent to intimidate; proof of a cross burning alone is insufficient.

We may now return to the case at Williams College involving the faux eviction notice that had been placed on a student's dorm room, in imitation of the notices placed on Palestinian homes that are to be demolished by Israeli authorities due to the connection between residents and acts of terrorism. The college

president asked what I thought should be done to those responsible for the notice. “This,” he said to me, “is not just speech. This is actual conduct. Can we sanction these students?”

We talked about *Virginia v. Black* and the role of intent. When he asked how we would know the student’s intent, I suggested looking into the way the notices were posted. Were only the leaders of a Jewish student organization targeted? For that matter, were only Jewish students targeted? As it turned out, every student in that dorm, regardless of affiliation, received one. That the complaining student honestly felt intimidated is not the issue. The issue is the actual intent of those who posted the notices—to intimidate and threaten individual Jewish students or to make a dramatic statement about their views concerning the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Verbal assaults

We may apply a similar analysis to cases of pure speech. Words alone can be harmful, and their use can even constitute a crime. Behavior designed to instill serious fear may be criminalized, and it does not matter whether it involves spoken words, physical conduct, or some combination of the two. Many states have some form of assault law that proscribes the creation of fear or terror in a victim.¹⁵ These laws—variously enacted as “menacing,” “intimidation,” and “threatening” statutes—may be violated through the defendant’s use of words alone.¹⁶ Reviewing courts have upheld various forms of verbal assault statutes, if sufficiently narrow in focus. For example, “intimidation” statutes that criminalize words used to coerce others through fear of serious harm are constitutional, so long as they clearly apply only when the words are purposely or knowingly used by the accused to produce fear and the threat is real.¹⁷

Thus, even pure speech may, in some cases, cross the line between protected expression and that which may be sanctioned or punished. But punishment is only appropriate, whether verbal or physical behavior is involved, when the purpose of the behavior is to instill fear of imminent serious harm. A racial epithet, when screamed at another student in a menacing manner, or a Confederate flag, when brandished on the lawn of a black student fraternity to terrorize them, is no longer protected expression; it has crossed over into that which may be punished by the university.

Responding to protected hateful speech

To say that we ought to protect most hateful verbal activity as free expression is not the end of the matter. How should we respond to hateful speech on campus?

Robert Hughes, writing about the controversial exhibition of photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe in the early 1990s in Cincinnati, Ohio, provides an instructive approach.¹⁸ Hughes observed that the questions concerning the photographs had become largely constitutionalized, focusing on whether, as a matter of a constitutional right, a museum may exhibit this work, or whether a city may, as Cincinnati did, shut down such an exhibition.¹⁹ Hughes wrote that the focus on questions of constitutional limits precluded the discussion of an arguably more important question: as a matter of art criticism and aesthetics, is this art any good?

The constitutional and jurisprudential questions that have occupied us thus far are critically important. But they are best seen as threshold issues, not as the ultimate societal issue. To address them, there must be a context for a moral response to constitutionally protected hate speech, just as there must be room for aesthetic questions as to the merits of constitutionally protected art. This is especially true of residential campuses, where the very mission of the institution includes building a community and preparing future citizens.

The required response to hateful speech is to describe it as such and to criticize it directly. Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis wrote in *Whitney v. California* that, except in those rare cases in which the harm from speech is real and imminent, the answer to harmful or hateful speech is not “enforced silence” but, rather, “more speech.”²⁰

The required response to hateful speech is to describe it as such and to criticize it directly

This allows us to return to the story I shared at the outset from my own campus at the time. Recall the student tweet of “no sympathy” with the murdered New York City police officers. Strictly speaking this is not hate speech, but the case remains relevant. I rejected the idea of expelling the student from the university, or of pursuing any student disciplinary charges or other sanctions, such as terminating financial aid. That would have been to engage in “enforced silence.” I believed her tweet to be protected speech. But I also believed that this was a case that called for more than a mere statement confirming her

rights. In the same statement that defended her freedom of expression and her academic freedom, I added a criticism of my own, saying that, in my view, her comments were contrary to the highest values of the university and that I found them to be abhorrent.

Consider now the case that occurred at the University of Oklahoma in March 2015. Members of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity, on their way to a fraternity “Founders Day” event, engaged in horrific racist chanting that included the use of the n-word and celebrations of violence. Two student leaders of the fraternity were expelled from the university. I am highly sympathetic to the impulse for this expulsion and

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In the face of hate speech, the call for more speech is not merely an option; it is a professional or even moral obligation

share in full the sentiment expressed by the university’s president, who said in a statement that he was “sickened” by the event. But I question the case for the expulsion. Had the context been different, had this occurred outside of a predominately African American fraternity house, for example, this could have been a case of verbal assault, warranting full punishment. But with the actors chanting on a chartered bus in the presence solely of their own members, this was an instance of protected hate speech—vulgar, disgraceful, and indeed sickening, but also protected. There was no intent to threaten or cause direct harm to anyone. The well-intended impulse to punish the leaders stems, in large part, from a correct sense that this behavior required the strongest possible condemnation, but also from an incorrect assessment of the possible responses.

We bind ourselves to an impoverished choice set if we believe that we can either punish speech or validate it. There is a middle position, expressed in Brandeis’s dictum of “more speech,” that allows us to respond without punishing. In the face of hate speech, the call for more speech is not merely an option; it is a professional or even moral obligation.

When I criticized the student tweet, and on one similar occasion when I protected but

criticized a faculty listserv that included vulgar and disgusting language directed at, among others, my predecessor and the State of Israel, I was accused by some of creating a “chilling effect” on their right and ability to express themselves. My response will be surprising to some: not all “chilling effects” are bad. Some are cases of the type of enforced silence of which Justice Brandeis spoke; this is classically what we mean by a chilling effect, and these are pernicious and contrary to our system of free expression. But then there are those that are cases in which we influence each other for the good, when we are touched, as Lincoln said in his first inaugural address, “by the better angels of our nature.” We should seek that effect on each other. Having that kind of effect on each other, especially through the ways in which we discuss and disagree, is at the heart of the academic enterprise.

Campus leaders must search for respectful ways to disagree, whether we debate and discuss in person or virtually. I would advance three principles for respectful disagreement:

- We should look for common ground, even when we disagree, and articulate that common ground as part of the discussion.
- We should assume the best in each other, and not suspect the motives of those with whom we disagree.
- We should disagree without attacking each other personally—dispute, without delegitimizing.

Charles Black was a legendary figure in constitutional law at the Yale Law School. He was one of the architects of the legal arguments attacking segregation and an advocate of judicial activism. His colleague, the equally legendary Alexander Bickel, argued for judicial restraint. When Bickel passed away, Black wrote in tribute that they had “agreed in everything but our opinions.”²¹ It is as powerful a statement of respectful, even loving, disagreement as I know. If we have lost the ability to say to those with whom we disagree that we “agree in everything but our opinions,” we have lost something very precious and, perhaps, irreplaceable. But if we can strive to do so, we will be building the most important kind of community there is—and one worthy of the great shared mission America’s colleges and universities. □

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

NOTES

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2. C. Edwin Baker, "Autonomy and Hate Speech," in *Extreme Speech and Democracy*, ed. Ivan Hare and James Weinstein (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 143.
3. Robert Post, "Hate Speech," in *Extreme Speech and Democracy*, ed. Ivan Hare and James Weinstein (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 133, 137. See also Robert C. Post, *Constitutional Domains: Democracy, Community, Management* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).
4. *American Communications Associate v. Douds*, 339 U.S. 382, 408 (1950). This is the same Justice Vinson who applied the "clear and present danger" standard to permit the prosecution of leaders of the Communist Party in *Dennis v. United States* (341 U.S. 495 [1951] [Vinson, C. J., plurality opinion]).
5. *Texas v. Johnson*, 491 U.S. 397, 414 (1989).
6. See *Doe v. University of Michigan*, 721 F. Supp. 852 (E. D. Mich. 1989); *UWM Post, Inc. v. Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin*, 774 F. Supp. 1163, (E.D. Wis. 1991).
7. See *United States v. O'Brien*, 391 U.S. 367 (1968) (upholding conviction for burning of a draft card); *Watts v. United States*, 394 U.S. 705 (1969) (upholding facial validity of 18 U.S.C. §871, which criminalizes threats of violence against the president of the United States; specific threat in *Watts* held to be insufficient to satisfy requirements of section 871).
8. John Hart Ely, "Flag Desecration: A Case Study in the Roles of Categorization and Balancing in First Amendment Analysis," *Harvard Law Review* 88, no. 7 (1975): 1495.
9. *Gitlow v. New York*, 268 U.S. 652, 673 (1925) (Holmes, J., dissenting).
10. 538 U.S. 343 (2003).
11. 123 Sup. Ct. at 1549.
12. Va. Code. Ann. §18.2-423 (Michie 1991) (enacted in 1950). The prima facie provision was added to the statute in 1968.
13. *Id.* at 1543.
14. *Id.* at 1561 (Souter, J.).
15. See, for example, Model Penal Code §211.1(1)(c) (Official Draft 1985) ("A person is guilty of assault if he . . . attempts by physical menace to put another in fear of imminent serious bodily injury"); *ibid.*, §211.3 (one is guilty of a "terroristic" threat if one "threatens to commit any crime of violence with the purpose to terrorize another"); *ibid.*, §250.4(2) (one is guilty of harassment if one taunts another in a manner likely to provoke a violence response). For additional examples, see Iowa Code §708.1(2) (West 1989); Fla. Stat. §784.011 (West 1992).
16. See Kent Greenawalt, *Speech, Crime, and the Uses of Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 90–104 (generally), 298 (speech that is intended primarily to hurt the listener has limited expressive value and may properly subject the speaker to criminal punishment); Rodney A. Smolla, *Free Speech in an Open Society* (New York: Knopf, 1992): 48–50 (government interest in restricting speech is highest where that speech threatens physical harm).
17. See, for example, Mont. Code Ann. 45-5-203 (1991); the Montana Intimidation Statute, for example, provides as follows: "(1) A person commits the offense of intimidation when, with the purpose to cause another to perform or to omit the performance of any act, he communicates to another, under circumstances which reasonably tend to produce a fear that it will be carried out, a threat to perform without lawful authority any of the following acts: (a) inflict physical harm on the person threatened or any other person; (b) subject any person to physical confinement or restraint; or (c) commit any felony. (2) A person commits the offense of intimidation if he knowingly communicates a threat or false report of a pending fire, explosion, or disaster which would endanger life or property." An earlier version of this statute required only a threat without any requirement that there be a reasonable tendency that the threat would produce fear. This earlier version was held to violate the First Amendment in a federal habeas corpus proceeding. See *Wurtz v. Risley*, 719 F. 2d 1438 (10th Cir. 1983). The statute was amended to conform with the court's decision and has not been challenged since. See also *State v. Lance*, 721 P. 2d 1258 (Mont. 1986) (upholding section (1)(b) of the un-amended statute).
18. Robert Hughes, "Art, Morals, and Politics," *The New York Review of Books*, April 23, 1992, 21–27.
19. See Eric Harrison, "Mapplethorpe Display Brings Smut Charges," *Los Angeles Times*, April 8, 1990, http://articles.latimes.com/1990-04-08/news/mn-1692_1_mapplethorpe-photographs; Isabel Wilkerson, "Cincinnati Gallery Indicted In Mapplethorpe Furor," *New York Times*, April 8, 1990, <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/04/08/us/cincinnati-gallery-indicted-in-mapplethorpe-furor.html>; Isabel Wilkerson, "Cincinnati Jury Acquits Museum In Mapplethorpe Obscenity Case," *New York Times*, October 6, 1990, <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/10/06/us/cincinnati-jury-acquits-museum-in-mapplethorpe-obscenity-case.html>.
20. *Whitney v. California*, 274 U.S., 357 (1927).
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ALEXANDER W. ASTIN

Are You Smart Enough?

How Colleges' Obsession with Smartness Shortchanges Students

FEATURED TOPIC

THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INEQUITIES in America's K-12 education system are well known, what with a rapidly expanding system of expensive private schools and the striking contrasts between urban and suburban public schools. America's higher education system, on the other hand, is generally regarded as far more

equitable, given that each of the fifty states attempts to provide low-cost higher education opportunities for almost any high school graduate. Nevertheless,

these "open-access" state systems mask an important truth about American postsecondary education: the opportunities available to students with differing levels of academic preparation are far from equivalent. Our system invests the most in those students with the highest levels of academic preparation, and the least in those with the poorest preparation. As long as postsecondary educational opportunities remain so unequal for students with differing levels of preparation, higher education will continue to be handicapped in its efforts to contribute to a more just and equitable society.

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"Smartness"

The unequal educational treatment of college students stems largely from the fact that American higher education is designed to favor its "smartest" students, that relatively small number who get the top grades in school and earn the highest scores on standardized admissions tests. You might prefer terms like *intelligence*, *ability*, *brilliance*, or whatever, but for simplicity I've settled on *smartness*. The most prestigious colleges limit their admissions to such students, which means that all the other students must attend colleges with fewer resources that are staffed by faculty members who, according to national surveys, would rather be teaching "smarter" students.

Every fall, faculty members in selective colleges and universities watch closely to see how well their new freshmen have scored on admissions tests. The "smarter" the students, as reflected by their average test scores, the better. And once students enroll, most professors rely on course grades to assess student progress. Grades may be useful in identifying the "smartest" students for purposes of awarding honors, but they don't tell us much about what each student is *learning*.

Given that learning is the main business of any college or university, this lack of information on what is being learned is regrettable, since it deprives college students and their teachers of valuable feedback that could strengthen the learning process among students at all levels of preparation.

In short, faculty seem content with assessment methods that are of little use in measuring what students are learning, as long as these methods allow them to rate and rank students in terms of relative smartness.

College faculties need to focus more on cultivating and developing smartness than on merely identifying and celebrating it



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Assessment in our public schools falls prey to the same problems. Instead of revealing to teachers what each student is learning, standardized tests are used merely to compare schools, to identify the “best” and “worst” ones. To be of any use in improving teaching and learning, tests should be repeated with the same students over time to measure growth and improvement. And the tests would have to be scored differently: rather than merely comparing

When SATs and ACTs are used to screen and select, they put poor students, first-generation students, and underrepresented students of color at a competitive disadvantage

students with each other—“You scored better than 30 percent of test takers”—test scores would also have to reflect what students actually *know*, what their specific strengths and weaknesses are. The fact that college and university admissions offices rely so heavily on norm-referenced tests “gives permission,” in effect, to the lower schools to do the same.

This preoccupation with being smart has affected many of the faculty’s most important functions, to the point where it has compromised our most basic missions of educating our students and serving the society that supports us. What are some of the things about higher education that this preoccupation with smartness has affected?

Equity

When SATs and ACTs are used to screen and select, they put poor students, first-generation students, and underrepresented students of color at a competitive disadvantage. If colleges were equivalent in terms of the opportunities they provide, this wouldn’t be a problem, but they are far from equivalent. In public higher education, which enrolls 80 percent of all college students, the four-year colleges spend more than *twice* as much per full-time undergraduate student on instruction as the community colleges do. If we were to compare the community colleges with just the flagship universities, the instructional expenditure ratio would be well over three-to-one. Also, whereas most of the full-time freshman enrolling at four-year public colleges live on the campus—an experience that research has repeatedly shown to enhance the learning process—most community colleges have no residential facilities.¹

Standardized testing

We test because we want to identify the smartest students. And we go along with the testing companies’ longstanding practice of normative scoring. Note that normed scores—standard scores and percentiles—don’t reveal much of anything about what a student knows or what that student’s particular strengths and weaknesses



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are. Instead, they merely order students from the smartest to the least smart. But then that's mainly what institutions are after: to identify the smartest students.

Schools at the K-12 level have also come to rely heavily on standardized tests, in part because we at the collegiate level are such heavy users. Since the “smartest” students account for only a small minority of those who are tested, the truly insidious aspect of normative testing at the K-12 level is that it sends powerful negative messages to the average and underprepared students: you're not “college material,” you're dumb, you're lazy, you're a loser. Since most school students receive such messages year after year, it's no wonder that so many young people lose interest in education before they ever reach college age.

Another serious limitation of these tests is their narrowness of content. If you consult college mission statements to find out what student outcomes are most valued by institutions, you're most likely to find qualities like leadership skills, social responsibility, creativity, and citizenship—none of which has much relevance to what standardized tests measure.

In other words, to equate student “smartness” with scores on standardized tests like the SAT or ACT greatly oversimplifies the remarkable diversity of human talent.

College admissions

Another practice that reflects our obsession with smartness is selective admissions. We faculty seek to admit only the smartest students because it reflects well on us: if our students are so smart, surely *we* must be pretty smart. This heavy reliance on SATs and ACTs has helped spawn an annual “admissions madness,” where affluent students and their parents pull out all the stops to get the student admitted to the most selective institutions.

Institutional competition for smart students is intimately tied into the pecking order of American colleges and universities that *US News and World Report* attempts to document every year in what has proved to be its most profitable enterprise. We faculty prefer to work in the highest-ranked institutions, in part because it feeds our egos. The more selective and exclusive and elite our institution, the better.

Some of our less elite universities have actually resorted to *purchasing* smart students by “sponsoring” National Merit Scholarships, just to elevate

their prestige and enhance their *US News* rankings. If Merit Finalists name a sponsoring college as their first choice, their chances of winning a Merit Scholarship can be substantially enhanced. Virtually none of the most elite colleges engage in this practice, however, since they can get their very smart students for free.

In the fall of 2013, the Southeastern Athletic Conference (SEC), a consortium of fourteen universities known mainly for their formidable football teams, enrolled more Merit Scholars (1,046) even than the eight Ivy League colleges did (1,014). However, more than 80 percent of the scholars enrolling at SEC universities were sponsored, while *none* of the scholars enrolling at Ivy League institutions was sponsored.²

Publish or perish

Still another aspect of university life that's heavily influenced by our obsession with smartness is the faculty reward system.

American higher education has struggled for decades with the problem of “research versus teaching.” This conflict is especially severe in the major research universities, but the “publish or perish” mandate affects faculty in many smaller universities and liberal arts colleges as well. Once again, it's the faculty's preoccupation with smartness that fuels this imbalance. Most faculty value research because they believe that writing and publishing require a good deal of intelligence and smartness. There is little agreement, however, on what it takes to be a good classroom teacher and advisor. Moreover, whereas there is a clearly established performance standard for demonstrating your smartness through research and scholarship—and that's publication—there is no agreed-upon way to know for sure how good a colleague is at teaching and advising.

The relative importance assigned to research versus teaching is revealed in the terminology that college professors use. Practically all faculty members, at one time or another, have probably made reference to their teaching “load.” And when a university is trying to recruit a new faculty member, one of the perks that is sometimes offered is a “reduced teaching load.” Such language implies that, for at least some faculty members, teaching is regarded as a burden. By contrast, one never hears university faculty members refer to their research “load.”

To equate student “smartness” with scores on standardized tests like the SAT or ACT greatly oversimplifies the remarkable diversity of human talent

Here, in a nutshell, is the crux of the “research versus teaching” dilemma: *college professors attach great importance to research and scholarship because they have created a culture that venerates smartness, but they happen to be employed in institutions where their main responsibility is to educate students.*

Their reverence for smartness also influences how faculty view different disciplines. Why do the hard sciences have so much status and prestige on university campuses, and why are fields like nursing, social work, and education often looked down upon? Because professors in the hard sciences are regarded as very smart, whereas professors of nursing, social work, and education are suspected of being not so smart.

Perhaps the most telling evidence of how academics’ obsession with smartness affects their relations with students comes from national surveys. Fully half of college faculty are *not* satisfied with the “quality” of their students, and *more* than half report that working with under-prepared students is a “source of stress.”³ Clearly, *in a culture that venerates smartness, working with the less-than-smartest students is not a valued activity.*

Grades tell us virtually nothing about student learning

Grading

Our obsession with smartness also helps perpetuate the dubious practice of course grading. If faculty members really wanted to assess the

effectiveness of their pedagogy and document what students are actually *learning*, they could hardly pick a worse assessment method than course grades.

A student who already knows most of the material before enrolling in a course can get an A without having to learn much, but among students who begin the course with little knowledge of the material, a B might mean that they’ve learned a lot. To know what individual students are actually learning, then, faculty need to employ metrics that reflect what the students actually know and use these measures longitudinally in order to measure growth or change, practices that very few college teachers employ.

So why do so many institutions persist in giving course grades? Because grades can be useful in differentiating students in terms of their relative smartness. Students with the best grades are awarded honors, and those with the poorest grades are placed on probation or dismissed. Moreover, graduate and professional schools and employers like to use undergraduate grades because they believe that grades help them identify the smartest applicants. But grades tell us virtually nothing about student learning.

Alternatives to grading

A potentially powerful tool for broadening our conception of “smartness” or “talent” is the narrative evaluation. Narrative evaluations can deal with students’ performance in individual courses, as well as with their overall growth and development. In contrast to traditional letter grades, the narrative evaluation enables the professor to make reference to anything in the student’s performance that might be relevant to the learning process: knowledge of the subject matter, strong and weak points, motivation, study habits, writing, logic, originality, and so on. Such evaluations also make it possible to provide feedback concerning almost any other developmental quality—leadership, creativity, self-understanding, citizenship, etc.—that might be relevant to the learning goals of the professor, the student, or the institution.

Narrative evaluations have tremendous potential to enhance the learning process. Students are given specific feedback about subject areas where they need to do more work, or about specific learning skills (e.g., writing) that they may need to strengthen. Moreover, the very act of preparing the narratives helps the professor and the graduate teaching assistant enhance their



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understanding of possible adjustments that might strengthen their pedagogical approach.

Besides inertia, there are several reasons why the faculties of most colleges and universities have so far shown little interest in replacing traditional letter grading with narrative evaluations. Perhaps the most obvious reason is the extra work involved—not only in writing the evaluation but also in getting to know the student well enough to write a meaningful evaluation. This latter problem is especially relevant for faculty who teach large lecture sections, where it's possible for students to remain anonymous throughout the academic term. Depending upon the course and the subject matter, it might be possible for graduate teaching assistants to write narrative evaluations, with guidance from the professor. In fact, the quality of the narrative evaluation is likely to be improved significantly if the professor and the graduate teaching assistant were first to discuss each individual student's progress. At the same time, such discussions could well enhance the ability of the professor and the graduate student to provide useful advice and guidance to the student.

The other major form of resistance to narrative evaluations stems from the fact that they

fail to yield information that can readily be used to rank and rate students—that is, to identify the “smartest” students. Graduate schools and employers, in particular, are likely to raise this objection, because instead of being provided with a handy quantitative measure—the college GPA—they are forced to read a qualitative account of the candidate's knowledge, skills, and accomplishments. Notwithstanding this minor inconvenience, it would seem that such narrative information could be of substantial value in evaluating any student's potential as an employee or graduate student. Moreover, if a graduate or professional school wants a quantitative indicator to rank and rate their applicants, they always have their usual admissions tests—the GRE, LSAT, GMAT, or MCAT—to rely on.

Not having a traditional GPA for each student might also cause some inconvenience to institutions that like to award various sorts of academic “honors” or that want to select the “smartest” students for participation in special “honors” programs. The tradeoff here, of course, is between a simplistic quantitative measure like the GPA and a much richer resource of qualitative information that would almost surely serve to diversify the performance criteria used to



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award honors and to assign students to special educational programs.

In short, the potential power of narrative evaluations to enhance the teaching-learning process and to diversify the criteria used to evaluate student learning and growth would appear to far outweigh the extra work of preparing the evaluations and the inconvenience of not having a simple numerical indicator for judging a student's relative "smartness." Colleges can, of course, have it both ways by introducing narrative evaluations while at the same time retaining course grades and the GPA, although such an approach might dilute the value of the narrative evaluation by offering an "easy way out" for those who are content to have a simple way to rank students in terms of their relative smartness.

An ongoing national effort to find alternatives to traditional course grading is the Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative of the Association of American Colleges and Universities. One purpose of LEAP, which as of fall 2015 involved more than three hundred institutional participants, is to help all students

"acquire the broad knowledge, higher-order capacities, and real-world experience they need to thrive both in the economy and in a globally engaged democracy."⁴ In recognition of the limitations of traditional student assessment practices, LEAP strives to "develop authentic assessment frameworks and practices . . . —keyed to student learning outcomes—that elicit and document learning through students' own work."⁵

Alternatives to traditional testing practices

College faculty obviously cannot remedy all the problems associated with the use of standardized tests, but there is at least one important action they can take that would enhance the educational development of all students: *cease using norm-referenced tests, and encourage teachers and administrators in the lower schools to do the same.* Implementing this recommendation does not necessarily mean that testing would have to be eliminated. What it does mean is that our method of scoring tests and reporting test results would be revised, so that normative percentiles, which tell students only where they stand in

relation to other students, would be replaced by “raw” scores, such as the number or percentage of questions answered correctly. With raw scores, the built-in competitiveness of normed scores is alleviated, since each student competes with herself: “I’m going to work hard to see how much better I can do next time.”

Perhaps the main advantage of raw scores over normed scores is that they make it possible to assess growth and learning over time: “You answered fifteen more questions correctly this time,” or “This time you answered 70 percent correctly rather than only 60 percent.”⁶ In this way, students are being provided with concrete evidence of their learning. Being able to measure change or improvement over time also better enables schools and colleges to assess the effectiveness of their educational programs. Colleges that insist on continuing to use standardized tests to identify their “smartest” applicants can still pick those with the highest raw scores. The point is simply this: if the consumers of standardized tests—the schools and the colleges—insist that normed scores be replaced by raw scores, the testing agencies will (grudgingly) have to do it.

Replacing normed scores with raw scores suggests an entirely new use for testing: instead of using tests merely to make invidious comparisons—to sort out the “smart” from the “not-so-smart” students—why not start using them instead to *strengthen the educational process*? With raw scores, it becomes possible to assess *changes* over time, so that each student’s growth and development can be tracked. In this way, college teachers have a way of determining whether, and how much, their students are learning and whether their basic skills are improving. At the same time, students are provided with objective feedback about their own growth and improvement. Such feedback enables both the professor and the student to capitalize on one of the well-established principles of effective learning: *knowledge of results*.

Conclusion

This discussion brings us back to my central theme, the fact that college faculties need to focus more on *cultivating* and *developing* smartness than on merely *identifying* and *celebrating* it. Having regular access to information concerning how their students are *changing* and *developing* over time should help shift the attention of college faculties more in the direction of the

learning process. The same would be true of narrative evaluations, which—in contrast to traditional course grades—necessarily deal with how much *progress* students are making in their studies.

If college professors could manage to make this shift in attention—from traditional grading, which merely compares different students’ performance at one point in time, to monitoring each student’s growth and improvement over time—some of the stigma associated with teaching average or underprepared students might well dissipate. The job of an educator, after all, is to *add* to the student’s development, and in many respects it is at least as important for average and underprepared students to show growth as it is for the best-prepared students to do so. □

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

NOTES

1. While it is true that community colleges enroll many adult and part-time students who may have no need for residential facilities, they also enroll at least one in three of the full-time freshmen enrolling in college directly out of high school in pursuit of a baccalaureate degree.
2. National Merit Scholarship Corporation, *Beyond Academic Excellence: National Merit Scholarship Corporation Annual Report, 2012–2013* (Evanston, IL: National Merit Scholarship Corporation, 2014).
3. K. Eagan, E. B. Stolzenberg, J. B. Lozano, M. C. Aragon, M. R. Suchard, and S. Hurtado, *Undergraduate Teaching Faculty: The 2013–2014 HERI Faculty Survey* (Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, University of California, Los Angeles, 2014).
4. “About LEAP,” Association of American Colleges and Universities, accessed March 2, 2017, <https://www.aacu.org/leap>.
5. “What Does It Mean to Be a LEAP Institution?,” Association of American Colleges and Universities, accessed March 2, 2017, <https://www.aacu.org/leap/can/what-does-it-mean-to-be-a-leap-institution>.
6. If your percentile changes from one time to the next, there’s no way to tell for sure whether, or by how much, your actual level of performance has really changed.

JILLIAN KINZIE, ROBIN MATROSS HELMS, AND JAMES COLE

A Glimpse of Global Learning

Assessing Student Experiences and Institutional Commitments

P E R S P E C T I V E S

Our findings suggest that colleges and universities still have some way to go in terms of internationalizing the curriculum and ensuring students become global learners

OUR RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD demands that undergraduate students develop global and intercultural competencies and that US colleges and universities embrace internationalization as an institutional priority. And indeed, over the past twenty years, global learning opportunities have become a feature of undergraduate education

at an increasing number of institutions. Moreover, the growing number of international students on US campuses has enhanced the global “feel” of undergraduate education. In terms of the goals for institutional

internationalization, student learning is now front and center. Many institutions have defined globally focused student learning outcomes, specifying the international and intercultural knowledge and skills that students are expected to acquire through their educational programs.

Amid this global fervor, we must, as Carol Geary Schneider admonished, find ways to ensure that *global* is being implemented effectively as a

framing theme for student learning.¹ What do we know about the extent to which institutions are designing international activities, providing students with direct experience of different cultures and courses on global topics, and ensuring that graduates acquire global learning outcomes? To date, little comparable, cross-institutional information has been available about institutional goals and perspectives on internationalization, students’ perceptions of global learning, and the extent to which students participate in activities associated with global learning gains.

To provide this information, the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Center for Postsecondary Research at the Indiana University School of Education collaborated on a study that takes advantage of national surveys administered by each organization. The ACE Mapping Internationalization on US Campuses survey assesses the state of internationalization at colleges and universities, analyzes progress and trends over time, and identifies future priorities. It includes questions about institutional commitment and reasons for internationalizing, curricular and cocurricular international offerings, and global learning outcomes. Administered every five years, the survey is the only comprehensive source of data and analysis on internationalization in US higher education.

The Center for Postsecondary Research’s National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) provides bachelor’s degree-granting institutions with information about the extent to which first-year and senior students engage in research-based educational practices related to learning and development. Administered annually, NSSE offers institutional participants the option of

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appending to the core survey one or more topical modules, short sets of questions on specific topics. One such module, the NSSE Global Learning Module, was developed in partnership with ACE to complement the Mapping Internationalization survey and is used to assess student experiences and coursework that emphasize global affairs, world cultures, nationalities, religions, and other international topics.

In this article, we discuss preliminary findings from a study of combined results from the 2016 administration of the ACE Mapping survey and the NSSE Global Learning Module. Taken together, these surveys provide a unique opportunity to examine student and institutional perspectives based on responses to similar questions about global learning. The ACE Mapping survey results include responses from 1,164 institutions. The NSSE data are derived from the sixty-one institutions that opted to include the Global Learning

Students are noticing institutional efforts on internationalization

Module. Given that these institutions chose to append the module, and are presumably interested in making efforts to enhance global learning, the results may not be representative of students at institutions that did not opt to include the module. The final NSSE sample includes about fifteen thousand first-year students and twenty thousand seniors. Because some of the content in both surveys is analogous, we consider results from these two surveys in tandem. A final report on the study will include extensive analysis of results from the more than seventy-five institutions with paired data from both surveys.

Student and institutional perspectives on global learning

Approaches to internationalizing the undergraduate curriculum and helping students develop global learning outcomes vary widely across colleges and universities, often involving an increase in the international student population; the addition of global courses and study abroad, internship, and service abroad opportunities; and sponsorship of speakers, events, and other cocurricular activities.² The results from the ACE Mapping survey indicate that about 56 percent of institutions are engaged in initiatives to internationalize the curriculum. Interestingly, about the same percentage (54 percent) of seniors responding to the NSSE Global Learning Module perceived a strong



emphasis (“very much” or “quite a bit”) on global learning in terms of the provision of courses, activities, and experiences focused on global and international topics. These results suggest that students are noticing institutional efforts on internationalization.

Many colleges and universities claim to be accelerating efforts to infuse global learning–focused courses into the undergraduate curriculum.³ This emphasis also came through in institutional responses to the Mapping survey. For example, the general education requirements at 49 percent of institutions include international or global components. The NSSE Global Learning Module results evince the emphasis on completing global courses: about half of all seniors have completed a course that focuses on global trends or issues (e.g., human rights, international relations, world health, and climate) or that focuses either on religion or cultural groups or on perspectives, issues, or events from countries or regions outside the United States. Although first-year students may not yet have had much time to take globally focused courses, their expectations for completing such courses suggest something about the beliefs of new students as well as institutional transparency about international curricular requirements and opportunities. Results in this regard are a bit dismaying. Although a little over one-third of first-year students “plan to” complete a global course, one in five “do not plan to” do so. These concerning first-year student intentions might suggest a need to be more explicit about global course requirements and opportunities and to communicate the value of such courses more effectively.



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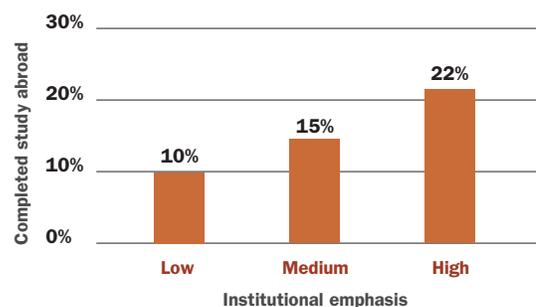
Ideally, colleges and universities that have articulated global learning goals at the institutional level should ensure that activities in the cocurriculum align with those goals. Strategies for cocurricular internationalization may vary depending on the size and type of the institution, but they usually include intentional programming to expose students to international perspectives. Cocurricular experiences may provide formal opportunities for students to participate in, or work on, events and activities with a global focus, as well as informal occasions to encounter cultural “others,” discuss global topics, and manage conflict resulting from cultural differences. When compared to the results from the 2011 ACE Mapping survey, the 2016 results show an increase in all types of international cocurricular activities, including international festivals or events, language partner programs, residence hall programs, and the designation of meeting places for students interested in international topics. In 2016, for example, 71 percent of institutions reported hosting international festivals or events, an increase of 19 percentage points over 2011.

Results from the NSSE Global Learning Module affirm that students are aware of the international offerings in the cocurriculum. More than half of all seniors reported a strong emphasis (“very much” or “quite a bit”) on activities and experiences focused on global and international topics. In addition, about 40 percent of seniors reported working on cocurricular events with an international or global focus through campus programming committees and student groups during the current school year.

However, a substantial proportion of students have never attended events or activities that promote the understanding of different world cultures, nationalities, or religions. In fact, almost two in five first-year students and nearly half of all seniors have never attended such events. Of course, there are many activities competing for students’ attention during the academic year; yet, a minimal level of participation in international programming should not be unattainable. On a positive note, most students talk with others about international and global topics, with about 85 percent having discussed international topics with others at least “sometimes.”

Participation in transformative, “high-impact” practices such as study abroad, international service or internships, and field study or research abroad is highly desirable. Although study abroad is widely touted as a way to develop a global perspective and improve global learning outcomes,⁴ the 2016 NSSE results show that the percentage of first-year students who “plan to do” study abroad (40 percent) far exceeds the percentage of seniors who actually do it (14 percent). Although study abroad participation rates are influenced by many factors, including cost and curricular structure, we wondered about the relationship between perception of institutional emphasis on global and international topics and study abroad. As figure 1 shows, greater perceived emphasis is correlated with higher proportions of student participation. In fact, at institutions with the highest levels of student perception of emphasis on global and international topics, nearly one-quarter of all seniors had participated in study abroad. These results point to the power of study abroad as a marker of a globally focused institution. Another factor influencing the

Figure 1. Level of institutional emphasis and percentage of seniors studying abroad



likelihood of participation in study abroad and other international experiences concerns whether a student has an encouraging conversation about such an opportunity with a faculty member or advisor. Only about half of the students who responded to the NSSE Global Learning Module had had such a conversation. Taken together, these findings suggest potential influences on study abroad participation rates, and they clearly demonstrate a need for more discussions between students and faculty or advisors about participation in study abroad and other transformative global learning experiences.

The explication of global learning goals and outcomes varies among institutions, ranging from vague references to the importance of exposure to international issues to specific definitions of global citizenship or expected levels of achievement of intercultural competence.⁵ The top three goals for internationalization reported in the 2016 Mapping survey are (1) to improve student preparedness for a global era; (2) to diversify the students, faculty, and staff at the home campus; and (3) to become more attractive to prospective students at home and overseas. One item on the NSSE Global Learning Module is a reasonable match to the goal related to preparedness for a global era. About 44 percent of seniors perceived that their institutions contributed “substantially” (“very much” or “quite a bit”) to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in preparing for life and work in an increasingly global era. This result, along with other educational gains items, provides useful evidence of students’ educational experiences



**Jillian Kinzie,
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Table 1.
Perceived global learning gains among seniors

Perceived gains (sorted highest to lowest)	Seniors responding “very much” or “quite a bit”
Encouraging your sense of global responsibility	45%
Being informed about current international and global issues	44%
Preparing for life and work in an increasingly globalized era	44%
Understanding how your actions affect global communities	37%
Seeking international or global opportunities out of your comfort zone	25%
Speaking a second language	20%

and offers a broader sense of their perceived global learning gains.

Seniors’ perceptions of the extent to which their undergraduate experiences have contributed to their knowledge, skills, and development can also provide insights about the clarity of institutional claims about global learning outcomes. The results from the NSSE Global Learning Module indicate that, among six identified gains for global learning, seniors perceive the most gains in “encouraging a sense of global responsibility,” followed by “being informed about current international and global issues” (see table 1). The smallest gains were associated with “speaking a second language” and “seeking international or global opportunities outside of one’s comfort zone.” These results indicate a rather basic level of achievement of global learning outcomes.

To identify the kinds of experiences that are related to global learning gains, we analyzed their relationship with other items on the module. Results show that all global experience items are positively associated with global gains; however, only one set of items has a moderately positive linear relationship. The measure of global engagement—which includes five items related to discussing international topics, attending global events, and planning programs—has the strongest positive relationship with the composite measure of global gains. This finding suggests the value of global experiences in bolstering students’ perception of educational gains.

Higher levels of global learning gains are positively related to the depth of global learning coursework (with depth measured as zero courses = none, one course = narrow, two courses

= medium, and three courses = broad). In other words, the more global courses students complete, the more likely they are to report that their experiences at the institution have contributed to all the global gains items listed in table 1. We were interested in examining the combined effect of the depth of global learning coursework and participation in study abroad. Figure 2 compares the global learning gains of students who participated in study abroad and those who did not. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the overall gains scores are highest for those students who took several globally focused courses and participated in study abroad. Yet the results also show significant gains for students who did not participate in study abroad but who had more depth of global course work (three courses). The global gains scores for these students were nearly identical to those of students who had participated in study abroad and had at least two global courses.

Implications of global learning assessment results

The acceleration toward internationalization in colleges and universities shows no evidence of slowing. In fact, the 2016 results from the ACE Mapping survey demonstrate that efforts have expanded in terms of specifying global learning outcomes, investing in curricular and cocurricular initiatives, and requiring courses with global components. Correspondingly, students are recognizing institutional emphases on global and international topics.

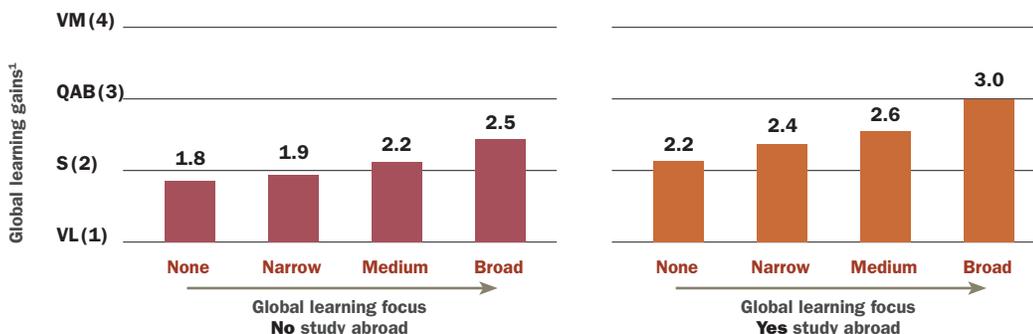
Although students are broadly aware of the international emphasis at the institutional level, first-year students may be getting mixed signals about the value of global learning courses.

The results from the NSSE Global Learning Module reveal that first-year students have low expectations with respect to completing a global learning course, which suggests that institutions are not sufficiently explicit with new students regarding curricular options intended to foster global learning. Curricular emphasis may have been more apparent many years ago, when widespread foreign language requirements made it critical for new students to get right into their language coursework.

It is exciting to see greater institutional emphasis on global learning, particularly the increase in cocurricular initiatives that promote understanding other cultures and religions. The NSSE Global Learning Module results show that students are generally interacting more about global issues. However, there remains a gap between informal discussions and formal opportunities to talk with a faculty member or advisor and to work intentionally on out-of-class events and planning committees with a global or international focus. Academic and student affairs educators should increase their collaborative efforts to examine the quality and scope of global programming and devise approaches to deepen student involvement. If students have little prior exposure to global events or cultures, even a one-time festival may take them outside of their comfort zones. To reduce barriers to participation and attract the maximum number of students to international programs, it would be useful to require collaboration between student activities programs and academic departments on events and speakers; hold international events

The results also show significant gains for students who did not participate in study abroad but who had more depth of global course work

Figure 2. Comparing “no study abroad” vs. “study abroad” to depth of global learning focus and global learning gains



¹ VL(1) = Very little; S(2) = Some; QAB(3) = Quite a bit; VM(4) = Very much



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in locations and at times that ensure high visibility; and reorient existing, popular events to include a global dimension.

Study abroad is a high-profile global learning practice, yet only 15 percent of all US students studying for a bachelor's degree participate.⁶ It is, therefore, vital that institutions create global opportunities in which all students can participate. Certainly, more students could be encouraged to consider participation in study abroad, and more faculty and advisors should be introducing this opportunity to students early in their educational journeys in order to facilitate participation. However, other options exist for creating global opportunities, such as adding explicit global dimensions to the curriculum and cocurriculum. Our finding about the power of multiple globally focused courses to positively influence global learning gains indicates an effective option for those students for whom an experience abroad is not feasible. This finding could help institutions make the case for crafting global exposure experiences that do not demand international travel, and it could help demonstrate that global learning is not something that only occurs abroad.

Alongside increased global activity in higher education is a growing interest in student attainment of global learning outcomes. Kevin Hovland provides examples of such student learning outcomes, which include a deep comparative knowledge of the world's peoples and problems, understanding of historical legacies that have created dynamics and tensions in the world, and intercultural competencies that enable one to move across boundaries and unfamiliar territory and see the world from multiple perspectives.⁷ The specification of outcomes, in turn,

creates the need for enhanced institutional assessment practices and resources. Our analysis hints at a need to be more explicit about global learning outcomes as a way to organize globally focused curricular and cocurricular activities and to communicate the value of global experiences to students.

Two recently developed frameworks provide a useful guide for defining and assessing global learning outcomes. The Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP)—a framework that specifies what students should be expected to know and be able to do at the associate's, bachelor's, and master's levels—includes “civic and global learning” as one of five broad categories of learning. The DQP envisions global and domestic settings for civic engagement and outlines proficiencies needed for global inquiry and interaction.⁸ In terms of assessing global learning outcomes, a set of sixteen rubrics developed through the Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) initiative of the Association for American Colleges and Universities includes a rubric specifically designed to assess global learning outcomes. The Global Learning VALUE Rubric specifies that the outcomes are fostered through meaningful opportunities to analyze and explore complex global challenges; collaborate respectfully with diverse others; apply learning to take responsible action in contemporary global contexts; and evaluate the goals, methods, and consequences of that action.⁹ These two learning outcomes frameworks help articulate a vision of the global learner and emphasize the importance of assessing the extent to which students are experiencing, and colleges and universities are enacting, global learning.

Concluding thoughts

Colleges and universities must ensure that graduates are equipped to succeed in the global workforce. Our findings suggest that colleges and universities still have some way to go in terms of internationalizing the curriculum and ensuring students become global learners. Although no regional accreditor has yet emphasized expectations for global learning outcomes, institutions implementing globally focused curricular and cocurricular experiences need indicators of the extent to which their efforts are taking hold. Assessments conducted at the course and institutional levels, along with measures of intercultural competence, are important. Moreover, assessments of student exposure to global experiences are valuable for

guiding institutional efforts to make global experiences more widespread and for ensuring that these experiences result in student learning gains.

Institutional strategy regarding internationalization and global learning can also be furthered by a comparison of institutional goals to broader trends related to internationalization in higher education. Most importantly, institutions must act on assessment data to address the gaps in students' participation in desirable global learning experiences—including study abroad, global learning courses, and cocurricular experiences—and demonstrate that global learning is assured. □

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

NOTES

1. Carol Geary Schneider, "Flying Blind into America's Global Headwinds?," *Liberal Education* 101, no. 3 (2015): 2–3.

2. See Kristin Wobbe and Richard Vaz, "Engaging Students with Global Challenges across the Curriculum," *Diversity and Democracy* 18, no. 3 (2015): 15–17.

3. See American Council on Education, *Mapping Internationalization on US Campuses: 2012 Edition* (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 2012).

4. See, for example, Institute of International Education, *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange* (New York: Institute of International Education, 2016).

5. See Dawn M. Whitehead, "Global Learning: Key to Making Excellence Inclusive," *Liberal Education* 101, no. 3 (2015): 6–13.

6. Institute of International Education, *Open Doors*.

7. Kevin Hovland, *Global Learning: Defining, Designing, Demonstrating* (Washington, DC: NAFSA: Association of International Educators and American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2014).

8. The full text of the DQP and related resources are available online at <http://www.luminafoundation.org/resources/dqp>.

9. The Global Learning VALUE Rubric is available online at <http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/global>.

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ELLEN BARA STOLZENBERG AND BRYCE HUGHES

The Experiences of Incoming Transgender College Students

New Data on Gender Identity

P E R S P E C T I V E S

ACCORDING TO the National Transgender Discrimination Survey, transgender students in K-12 settings experience high rates of harassment (78 percent), physical assault (35 percent), and even sexual violence (12 percent).¹ It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, to learn from a separate study of transgender youth that “attending school was reported to be the most traumatic aspect of growing up.”² (Encouragingly, studies of transgender youth have also found that supportive adults, especially teachers, play an

important role in providing a sense of safety in school.)³ In response to the mounting evidence of discrimination, the Obama administration in May 2016 issued a “Dear Colleague” letter,

authored jointly by the Departments of Justice and Education, extending sex discrimination protections to transgender students—an interpretation of Title IX that was reversed by the Trump administration in February 2017.

Many of these transgender students matriculate at colleges and universities across the country. What do we know about their background, experiences, and expectations? To explore this question, we conducted an analysis of data from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey,⁴ which was

modified in 2015 to allow students to indicate whether they identify as transgender. That change enabled us to disaggregate data for a sample of incoming first-year students consisting of 678 transgender students from 209 colleges and universities.⁵ We compared these data to the national norms for all incoming first-time, full-time college students—including the transgender students, who comprise less than one half of one percent of the total. To develop a holistic picture and to avoid a deficit framing, we took care in our analysis to present examples of experiences that demonstrate how transgender students exercise agency over their needs and their lives, in addition to examples of areas where these students fare worse than incoming students overall.

Student finances

We examined the extent to which students may have financial concerns. Transgender individuals are more likely than the general population to be unemployed or homeless, and they face a great deal of discrimination in employment and housing.⁶ In addition, transgender people face unique expenses pertaining to health care—for example, costs associated with hormone treatments or gender confirmation surgeries—such that finances are likely to be a much greater concern for them than for the general population. Our data confirmed this higher concern for finances: nearly 19 percent of transgender students reported major concerns about financing their college education, as compared to 12 percent of the national sample overall, and some were unsure they would have enough funds to complete college. The proportion of transgender students facing major financial concerns was more than 50 percent higher than the nationally normed sample.

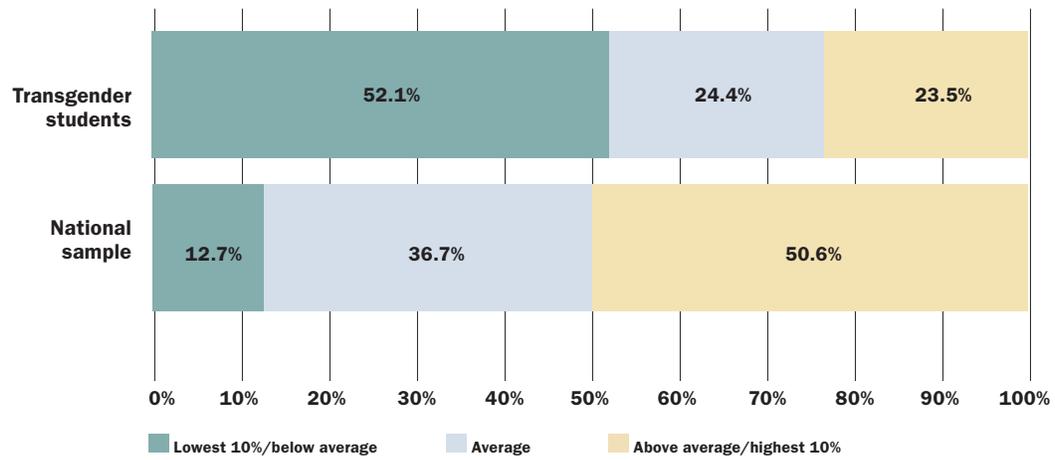
Two other variables reinforce these financial concerns. First, transgender students come from

At institutions of higher education that are committed to diversity and social justice, several steps should be taken to support the success of transgender students

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Figure 1. Students' self-rated emotional health

families with lower annual parental income. Whereas 56.3 percent of the nationally normed sample reported parental incomes of at least \$75,000 annually, only 47.2 percent of transgender students did—a difference of about 9 percentage points. In addition, many transgender students may not be able to count on parental financial support for college if their parents take issue with their gender identity.⁷ Indeed, the proportion of transgender students (34.9 percent) who reported they will likely need to work full time during college was about 6 percentage points higher than that of the national sample (28.5 percent).

Second, transgender students receive financial aid at a higher rate than the national sample. More transgender students reported receiving Pell grants (32.8 percent versus 26.6 percent), need-based grants or scholarships (47.8 percent versus 36.6 percent), and work-study funding (35.4 percent versus 20.9 percent). More transgender students also received merit-based aid (60.7 percent versus 51.6 percent), which is especially encouraging given that the average high school academic performance of transgender students was slightly outpaced by the national average; 53.9 percent of transgender students had a high school grade point average of A- or higher, as compared to 58.7 percent of the national sample. Although these figures indicate that transgender students face a more challenging financial situation than their peers, the data also indicate that transgender students are somewhat more savvy in securing resources to make up for any gaps in funding.

Emotional health

One of the starkest findings from our analysis involves students' self-rated emotional health (see fig. 1). Slightly more than half (50.6 percent) of the national sample reported being either above average or in the top 10 percent relative to their peers in terms of self-rated emotional health. By contrast, 52.1 percent of incoming transgender college students reported their emotional health as either below average or in the lowest 10 percent relative to their peers. Given the data reported earlier about their experiences in school before college, this difference does not come as a surprise—though it should be sobering for any academic leader concerned about student success. One of the major contributing factors appears to be a much higher rate of depression: 47.2 percent of transgender students reported feeling depressed frequently, as compared to 9.5 percent of the national sample. A significantly greater percentage of transgender students reported feeling overwhelmed in the year prior to college (54.9 percent versus 34.1 percent).

Our analysis of the CIRP data confirms the finding of other studies that transgender college students tend actively to seek resources and construct support networks in order to address their emotional and social needs.⁸ While less than half of the students in the CIRP national sample anticipated seeking counseling while in college (47.7 percent), nearly three-quarters of transgender students reported a good chance they would seek counseling (74.6 percent). One reason for this difference is that evaluation and referral by a mental health professional is typically

recommended to those seeking or undergoing hormone therapy or gender confirmation procedures.⁹ Nonetheless, academic leaders should expect transgender students to be able to identify their needs and to expect trans-friendly resources to be available on campus.

Transgender students also spend more time engaging with social networks than the national average. They are about 14 percentage points more likely than first-year students overall to socialize with friends frequently (60.1 percent versus 45.9 percent), and about 13 percentage points more likely to participate in online social networks for six or more hours per week (39.7 percent versus 26.3 percent). This latter finding is especially important because transgender students infrequently have access to supportive transgender networks on campus.¹⁰ Even membership in LGBTQ student organizations tends to be predominantly cisgender, so transgender students often have a difficult time meeting other transgender people on campus. Unfortunately, this unmet need for social and emotional support may take a toll on transgender students' ability to succeed; only about a third of transgender students rated their time management skills as a strength (33.4 percent), whereas 51.8 percent of the national sample considers time management a strength.

Political and social activism

Although transgender students reported greater financial concerns and lower emotional health than the national average, the CIRP data suggest that these incoming students exercise a great deal

of agency in meeting their individual needs. They are more likely than their peers to take action in order to overcome the barriers they face. Nearly half of the transgender student sample reported having engaged in some type of activism within the year prior to college entry (47.4 percent), which is more than double the percentage of students in the national sample who reported having done so (20.8 percent). Further, more than two-thirds of incoming transgender college students indicated they were likely to participate in protests on campus (68.7 percent), as compared to about one-third of the national sample (33.1 percent). Transgender students are also more likely to discuss politics and share their views on issues; 52.1 percent reported that they discuss politics frequently (as compared to 32.4 percent of the overall sample), and 43 percent reported that they frequently share their opinions on important causes (as compared to 14.5 percent of the national sample). These views are more liberal than the national average; nearly 70 percent of incoming transgender students reported their political beliefs to be liberal or far left, as compared to 33.5 percent of the overall sample.

Transgender students scored higher than the overall national average on survey constructs measuring social agency and civic engagement

Due in part to their relatively high propensity for political involvement, transgender students scored higher than the overall national average on survey constructs measuring social agency and civic engagement. As shown in figure 2, more than four in ten (42.3 percent) incoming transgender students scored high on the survey instrument's social agency construct (more than

Figure 2. Students' social agency as shown by percentages scoring above or below a one-half standard deviation from the national average

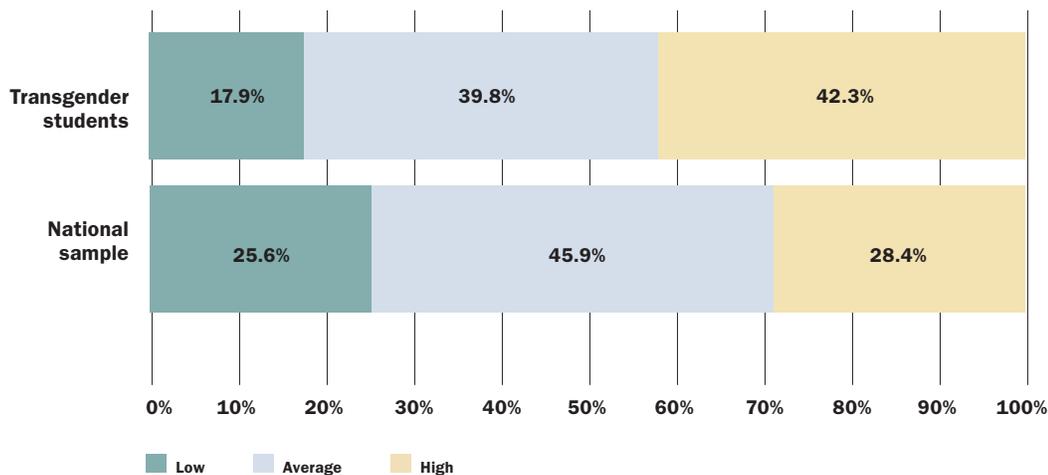
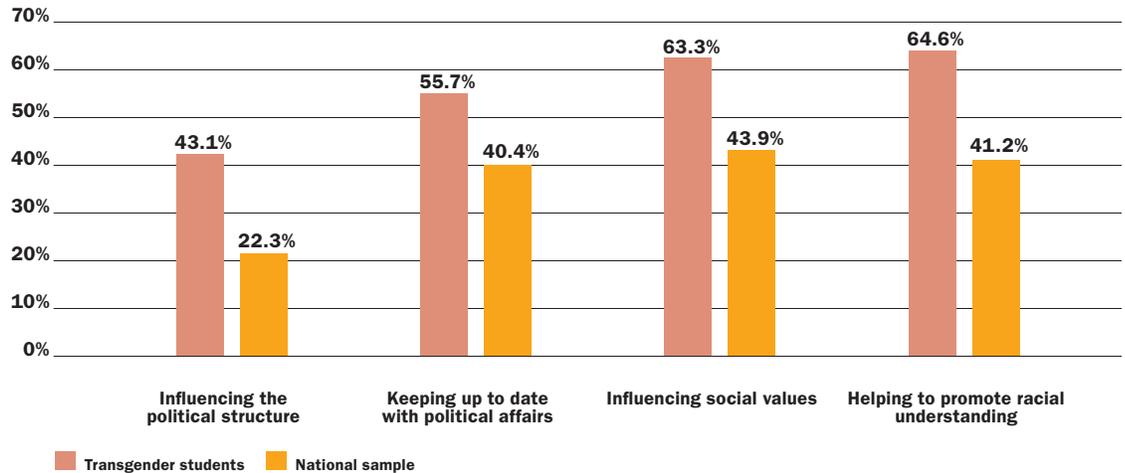


Figure 3. Students' personal goals as shown by percentages indicating "very important" or "essential" for each

half a standard deviation above the national mean score), as compared to 28.4 percent of the overall sample. Nearly half (47.5 percent) of transgender students also scored high on civic engagement, as compared to 23.4 percent of the national sample overall. Moreover, transgender students reported a higher likelihood of committing to social change after college, which

may be due to ongoing public debates affecting transgender individuals and communities.

As shown in figure 3, over half (55.7 percent) of all transgender students regard it as very important or essential to keep up to date with political affairs, as compared to 40.4 percent of all students. Transgender students also

plan to influence politics and values; 43.1 percent regard influencing the political structure as a goal that is either important or essential, and 63.3 percent regard influencing social values as important or essential (for the overall sample of students, these figures were 22.3 percent and 43.9 percent, respectively). Incoming transgender college students are committed to social justice in a broader sense as well; transgender students were significantly more likely than the national average to identify helping to promote racial understanding as an important or essential goal (64.6 percent versus 41.2 percent).

Colleges and universities should provide professional development opportunities designed specifically to enable faculty and staff to more competently and effectively support the needs of transgender students

Recommendations

Transgender students lack important legal protections that would ensure their full participation in our nation's educational system—an omission that has real consequences for their ability to succeed academically as well as for their overall well-being. At the federal level and in most states, nondiscrimination law does not protect transgender people. At institutions of higher education that are committed to diversity and social justice, several steps should be taken to support the success of transgender students. In response to a climate marked by harassment and discrimination, which negatively affects the mental health outcomes of transgender students, and to validate gender nonconformity in the academy, college and university nondiscrimination policies should specifically include gender identity and expression.

To protect students' privacy, colleges and universities should adopt procedures that allow students to use their preferred names and pronouns when interacting with institutional agents, including faculty and student services professionals. This typically involves adding a field to student records and prioritizing students' preferred names over their legal names when the information is accessed by an institutional representative. Moreover, colleges and universities should adopt policies that protect the right of students to access the locker, changing, or restroom facilities designated for their gender identity and ensure that all campus buildings

include a gender-inclusive facility that gender nonconforming students can access. Many colleges and universities have adopted a policy to ensure that all new construction includes at least one gender-neutral facility.

The analysis presented above demonstrates that transgender students are likely to seek out the social support they need through opportunities on and off campus. At many institutions, the number of transgender students who are open about their gender identities is small, and LGBTQ student organizations tend to center on sexual orientation to the exclusion of gender identity and expression. For these reasons, transgender students often have a difficult time building support networks on campus. While campus leaders should work to create an environment in which students are comfortable enough to be open about who they are, they also should understand when transgender students need to seek community and support off campus; indeed, they might even help transgender students identify and access these resources in the surrounding community.

Most importantly, colleges and universities should provide professional development opportunities designed specifically to enable faculty and staff to more competently and effectively support the needs of transgender students. The college experience of these students is very different from that of their cisgender peers, but they are not assured that the campus they encounter is ready to address their needs and respond to transphobia and cissexism. Transgender students come to college anticipating the need to resist a hostile climate, and our analysis shows they are ready to do so. College and university leaders should, thus, work to empower faculty and staff to resist this climate

alongside transgender students and to co-construct a diverse learning environment that enables the full participation of all students. □

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

NOTES

1. Jaime M. Grant, Lisa A. Mottet, Justin Tanis, Jack Harrison, Jody L. Herman, and Mara Keisling, *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey* (Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011), 36.
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3. Ibid. See also Jenifer K. McGuire, Charles R. Anderson, Russell B. Toomey, Stephen T. Russell, "School Climate for Transgender Youth: A Mixed Method Investigation of Student Experiences and School Responses," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 39, no. 10 (2010): 1175–88.
4. Housed at the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California–Los Angeles, the CIRP Freshmen Survey provides data on the background characteristics, high school experiences, attitudes, behaviors, and expectations for college of first-year students. For more information about the survey, see <http://heri.ucla.edu/cirp-freshman-survey>.
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7. See Grossman and D'Augelli, "Transgender Youth."
8. See, for example, Z. Nicolazzo, "Just Go in Looking Good: The Resilience, Resistance, and Kinship-building of Trans* College Students," *Journal of College Student Development* 57, no. 5 (2016): 538–56.
9. See E. Coleman, W. Bockting, M. Botzer, P. Cohen-Kettenis, G. DeCuypere, J. Feldman, L. Fraser, J. Green, G. Knudson, W. J. Meyer, S. Monstrey, R. K. Adler, G. R. Brown, A. H. Devor, R. Ehrbar, R. Ettner, E. Eyler, R. Garofalo, D. H. Karasic, A. I. Lev, G. Mayer, H. Meyer-Bahlburg, B. P. Hall, F. Pfaefflin, K. Rachlin, B. Robinson, L. S. Schechter, V. Tangpricha, M. van Trotsenburg, A. Vitale, S. Winter, S. Whittle, K. R. Wylie, and K. Zucker, "Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender-Nonconforming People," *International Journal of Transgenderism* 13, no. 4 (2012): 165–232.
10. See Nicolazzo, "Just Go in Looking Good."



RICHARD J. PRYSTOWSKY, JORDAN HERRERA,
CARA CROWLEY, RUSSELL LOWERY-HART,
AND SHERRI FANNON

Grabbing Third Rails

Courageous Responses to Persistent Equity Gaps

PERSPECTIVES

STUDENT SUCCESS EFFORTS often focus on issues related to students' college-readiness. But the authors of a recent book, *Becoming a Student-Ready College: A New Culture of Leadership for Student Success*, challenge higher education professionals to take a different approach. "Just imagine," they suggest, "if . . . instead of seeking the ideal student, we became the ideal college."¹ The admission of increasingly greater numbers of students from groups traditionally underserved

Even third-rail challenges such as implicit bias, student poverty, and ineffective pedagogy can be overcome

by higher education underscores the urgency of this call to refocus on the readiness of the college or university, rather than on the readiness of the student. Having already faced various academic and nonacademic impediments, underrepresented students come to us for help in fulfilling their educational aspirations. Unfortunately, far too often, a disheartening disjunction persists between our promise to these underrepresented students and our ability to deliver on this promise.²

In response to the call to remake our institutions as student-ready colleges, we focus in this article on three particularly egregious challenges that must be confronted and overcome if equity gaps affecting underserved students are to be

closed. Invoking the metaphor of the "third rail," which refers to the danger inherent to touching the line that supplies electricity to a subway, we refer to the three as "third-rail" challenges. To be sure, no one (we hope) will die as a result of grappling with the challenges we discuss here; however, the educational dreams of many students have died in institutions where educators were unwilling to face, or unable to overcome, them.

Presented interrogatively, the three "third-rail" challenges are as follows: First, in a world where our sincere commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion do not consistently eventuate in results that match our commitments, how might we honestly confront our own implicit biases? Second, in a world where many students' socioeconomic struggles impede their academic success, how might we work to eradicate student poverty? Third, in a world where faculty enjoy a great deal of autonomy and teaching is not always a high priority, how might we confront forms of pedagogy that adversely affect students, especially those from underserved populations?

The challenge of implicit bias

As even a cursory review of the outcomes of many common institutional practices would reveal, a sincere commitment to diversity often does not yield hoped-for results. Consider, for example, how often our hiring practices result in the appointment of persons who look, think, or otherwise seem like the faculty and staff already employed by our institutions—despite the diversity training received by search committee members, and despite a professed institutional commitment to diversifying the faculty and staff. Or reflect honestly on the extent to which, in meetings, we are less than open to hearing opinions that differ from our own, especially those that might challenge our core

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beliefs or positions. The message often sent by the practical results of our thinking and behavior can be summed up as follows: “It’s okay to be different, as long as you’re not.”³

This problem can adversely affect our students, too, especially those from traditionally underserved populations. Indeed, despite decades of diversity efforts across higher education, many marginalized students still do not feel welcome on our campuses, do not see themselves reflected in our curricula (or staffing), and lack a sense of well-being. These are hardly conditions of possibility conducive to academic success. Though we need to be careful not to draw facile or reductive conclusions about causality, we should nonetheless consider two potential correlations: first, the extent to which these sorts of “non-academic” factors are, or could be, correlated to persistent equity gaps in course-level success and degree completion for students from underserved populations; and, second, the extent to which *this* correlation might relate to our own thinking and behavior.

At Lansing Community College (LCC), this problem threatens to undermine a major student success initiative whose goal is nothing short of 100 percent completion for students in certificate, degree, or transfer pathways and whose vision is “100 percent success through

100 percent inclusion.”⁴ Achieving this goal and realizing this vision will require addressing disparities that affect student success at the course level, as well as disparities in completion rates. This effort, in turn, will require an understanding that, notwithstanding *conscious* commitments to helping underserved students feel welcome and succeed, the same or similar *unconscious* attitudes and behaviors that impede efforts to create and sustain a welcoming acceptance of, and respect for, difference among faculty and staff are likely also to play a role in sustaining the equity gaps such initiatives are designed to ameliorate. Thus, it is essential to recognize the extent to which implicit biases might be undermining efforts to help ensure that all students succeed.

Confronting the third-rail challenge of implicit bias is sometimes uncomfortable.⁵ To help ourselves move beyond this discomfort, we might begin by acknowledging that our nation has long struggled with a history marked by racism, sexism, homophobia, and similar societal ills and that it thus would be nigh impossible for anyone living in the United States to escape the influences and consequences of this history. In short, despite our best intentions and efforts, none of us is immune to implicit bias. For those of us

engaged in the initiative at LCC, this crucial acknowledgment has led to the establishment of three key, interrelated agreements: we will not blame and shame each other for our implicit bias vulnerabilities; we commit to lessening the extent to which our own individual implicit biases could adversely affect student success; and, we will support each other in our collective efforts to attenuate these adverse consequences. With these agreements grounding our work, we can keep our eyes on the prize, which is to strengthen inclusion by delivering quality educational experiences to *all* our students.

To reduce the potential for anxiety among colleagues and, at the same time, obtain expert assistance, LCC brought to campus an impartial and nonjudgmental consultant from Project Implicit, an organization that supports research on implicit social cognition and promotes public education about hidden biases.⁶ To assist in the establishment of the “train-the-trainer” model

at LCC, the consultant held two workshops on campus. The first involved those leading LLC’s participation in the Association of American Colleges and Universities’ Committing

to Equity and Inclusive Excellence project;⁷ the second involved advisors, support personnel, and other frontline staff of the college. To prepare for the workshops, individual participants took the Implicit Association Test, which is central to the research in the field.⁸ Then, during each workshop, the participants took the test as a group, which helped minimize embarrassment and defensiveness. This activity allowed participants to see that they were not alone in having implicit biases, and it reinforced the message that no one is immune to these unconscious and potentially dangerous thoughts and perceptions.

A key lesson of the workshops is that, under pressure, even otherwise fair-minded persons might revert to thoughts and behaviors influenced by their implicit biases. To help us combat this problem, the consultant provided strategies for keeping implicit bias at bay. (It’s unclear whether such biases can ever be eliminated.) These strategies include reducing the “wobble room” in decision-making processes (those affecting the hiring and promotion of faculty and staff, for example); slowing down one’s thinking; keeping in mind the subtle bias of

favoritism, which often results in the hiring or otherwise favoring of those who are similar to oneself; and being humble about one’s biases.

To continue this work, LCC is offering trainings geared specifically to faculty needs and trainings aimed at meeting the needs of other employees. One particularly promising faculty-oriented activity addresses challenges to enrolling students from underserved populations in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses and majors. LCC science instructors have begun working with their K-12 colleagues to create a stronger school-to-college pipeline for underrepresented STEM students and to enhance collaboration among faculty at the school and college levels.

One of the most salient points made by the authors of *Becoming a Student-Ready College* is that, to be student-ready, a college must embrace the idea that all employees are both educators and leaders. The implicit bias awareness training sessions with support staff at LCC are grounded in this view, and the results have not disappointed. Indeed, these sessions have demonstrated the strong commitment of many staff members to student success and the significant contributions they can make to efforts to promote this goal. They want to be asked to help; they want, dare we say it, to be included.

The highest enrollments at LCC are in the Arts and Sciences Division, which means that the division’s frontline staff regularly interact with large numbers of students. For this reason, follow-up trainings were held for these staff members. (Similar sessions will also be held for frontline staff in other areas.) In these non-judgmental, supportive training sessions, staff explore their own possible implicit biases and then identify ways to address them. For example, after examining possible biases with respect to students’ disabilities, staff requested training to help them better understand mental illness so that, rather than close off to these students, they can help find on-campus counseling assistance for them. In addition, realizing that implicit biases might surface when they work too fast under pressure, several frontline support staff display personal messages at their workstations reminding them to slow down. Staff also display creative messages supporting diversity and respect. They have agreed to serve as a support group for one another, and they have asked to attend (and will be supported to attend) diversity-related conferences

Under pressure, even otherwise fair-minded persons might revert to thoughts and behaviors influenced by their implicit biases



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to help them learn more about the issues at stake in both implicit and explicit bias. To help ensure that this work continues smoothly and that problems are addressed immediately, a staff member in the Arts and Sciences Division acts as liaison to the provost's office and is supported to attend relevant national meetings.

Ultimately, the ongoing trainings and concomitant actions meant to attenuate the impact of implicit bias are in the service of both improving institutional policies and practices at LCC and strengthening efforts to close equity gaps for students from underserved populations. With respect to student success, the goal is to move from implicit bias interference to equity-minded practice.

The challenge of student poverty

Amarillo College is strongly committed to student success, and implicit bias is confronted and addressed there at the individual and institutional levels. In 2011, this commitment led to the creation of a systemic effort to address poverty and reduce the barriers it creates for the college's predominately low-income, first-generation, minority, and part-time students. The mission, values, and goals of the institution were adapted to meet the needs of these students, and the No Excuses Poverty Initiative was launched to connect campus programs, services, and projects designed to support

students, boost graduation and transfer, and increase student persistence. As President Lyndon Johnson said, "Poverty must not be a bar to learning, and learning must offer an escape from poverty."⁹ These words are the foundation of Amarillo College's approach to poverty.

Amarillo's poverty initiative began with the creation of a data profile of its students and community, which showed that both were burdened by debilitating poverty. The profile also revealed a decrease in educational attainment and a significant increase in the number of students living in poverty. This research led to the creation of the No Excuses Poverty Initiative, which was initially focused on removing life barriers to student degree attainment. Today, the initiative underlies a systemic approach to removing poverty-related barriers that hinder students from achieving their educational goals—an approach that relies on the strong commitment of the college's administration, faculty, and staff, as well as that of community partners and leaders.

Rooted in the belief that the commitment to removing poverty-related barriers to student success must be translated into concrete actions with results at scale, the college launched several culture-changing initiatives. Most significantly, the Advocacy and Resource Center (ARC) was built in the center of the campus to serve as the hub of the poverty initiative. Directed by a

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master's level social worker, the ARC is home to the college's social services case management program, which includes coaching, career guidance, counseling, poverty training (for faculty and staff), social service intervention, a 100 percent donation-driven food pantry and clothing closet, early alert, and a field practicum site for a local university's social work program.

The ARC staff assist students as they navigate campus and community resources, including

transportation, childcare, housing, and utility assistance. The staff intentionally guide students who have life barriers preventing their success in and out of the classroom. The ARC

is making a significant difference in students' lives. The three-year graduation rate for the college's 2012–13 cohort was 31 percent, which marked a remarkable increase from the previous rate of 16.7 percent.

Initially, the food pantries and clothing closets were located in literal closets and in the corners of buildings at the edges of campus. After the initial success of these services became apparent, students were asked for suggestions on how to improve them. One clear theme that emerged from the student feedback concerned the need to unify these services with the college's broader poverty initiative. In response, the food pantry and clothing closet were pulled out of the shadows and relocated at the heart of the main campus in the most high-profile building. Initially, faculty and staff were concerned that such a public presence might "expose" students who leveraged the services. Yet, the number of students accessing ARC services quadrupled in one semester. As one student said, moving the ARC to a more prominent, central location "took the shame away." The students knew they struggled to meet their needs; it was the college staff, not the students, who felt shame about those needs.

Linking programs designed to eradicate poverty-related barriers to college completion is critical, as is the involvement of community partners

In addition to the ARC, Amarillo College connects students to services through two other centers and a mentoring program. The college career center connects students with money management guidance, career assessment, and employment counseling. Most notably, to connect students to local job opportunities, the career center partners with a local workforce agency, which places an employee within the center at no cost to the college. The college counseling center, led by a psychology faculty member, helps students cope with the pressures of college, life, and family by providing free group and individual counseling services. The Coaches and Champions program connects graduates of low socioeconomic status high schools with faculty and staff mentors. Students with a "coach" have a persistence rate of 74 percent—fully 25 percent higher than the college average. Finally, using early alert and predictive modeling technology, faculty members connect students who live in the "warzone of poverty" to tutoring services and other campus and community resources.

Linking programs designed to eradicate poverty-related barriers to college completion is critical, as is the involvement of community partners. Amarillo College's systemic approach to poverty is low cost and high reward. Between 2012 and 2016, the college's developmental education success rate increased by 20 percent, and the fall-to-fall retention increased by 13 percent. The No Excuses Poverty Initiative is working.

The challenge of ineffective pedagogy

When asked to describe a favorite or especially influential teacher, most students point to the teacher's human qualities, not his or her subject knowledge. Typically, it is a teachers' personal investment—caring, compassion, inspiration—that enhances a student's educational experience. Indeed, unless balanced by such investment, a student's perception of a teacher as a "finished product," an expert in the field, can create a barrier between teacher and student, ultimately hindering the student's learning and success.

In *The Pedagogy of Real Talk: Engaging, Teaching, and Connecting with Students at Risk*, Paul Hernandez recommends "real talk" as a strategy for overcoming this barrier to teacher-student engagement.¹⁰ Real talk involves the use of one's own personal experience to encourage, inspire, engage, and create a sense of belonging. It requires that teachers be honest

with their students about their own past experiences of pain, hardship, and feelings of uncertainty. In sharing their own journeys, teachers enable students to view them as “real” and relatable. As the following example shows, real talk fosters trust and builds connections that lead to increased teacher-student engagement.

As part of a first-semester nursing course at Lansing Community College, students had the option of attending support sessions that were specifically tailored to the course content. In designing the sessions, the instructor had focused exclusively on learning outcomes, without also taking into account the needs of at-risk students or those whose first language was not English. Assuming most, if not all, of the students would take advantage of the optional sessions, the instructor was mystified that many struggling students did not.

When the instructor sought help from Hernandez, the college’s chief diversity officer, he responded by asking, “How do you think your students perceive you as their teacher?” In considering this simple question, the instructor immediately became aware of the barrier she had unintentionally created and the urgent need to remove it. The question also led the instructor to reflect on her own educational experience. She realized that, like her students, she had been beset by fears, feelings of inadequacy, and self-doubt.

The following semester, the instructor piloted a “real talk” during the nursing student orientation. In an effort to connect with the students, she told them that, when she was herself a new nursing student, she had experienced overwhelming feelings of uncertainty about her future and could not then have imagined she would one day be a nursing instructor. She concluded the real talk by linking her experience to her understanding of how to help them succeed. That semester, student attendance at the support sessions nearly doubled, student retention rates increased significantly, and a record number of students received a final grade of A for the course.

Conclusion

If we are to live up to our commitment to provide a quality education to *all* students, then we must find effective ways to close persistent equity gaps. Because the root causes underlying these gaps are endemic and systemic, however, they are especially difficult to confront within higher education institutions. Nonetheless, as

the examples presented above show, even third-rail challenges such as implicit bias, student poverty, and ineffective pedagogy can be overcome. Indeed, if we are to live up to our promise to help all our students become highly educated, civically engaged citizens, we have no choice but to make the effort. □

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

NOTES

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6. For more information about Project Implicit, see <http://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit>.
7. Launched in 2015 and involving twelve participating institutions, Committing to Equity and Inclusive Excellence: Campus-Based Strategies for Student Success is a two-year project designed to expand the research on equity in student achievement and to identify promising evidence-based interventions for improving student learning and success. For more information about the project, see <http://www.aacu.org/committing-to-equity>.
8. See <http://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>.
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MICHAEL BENITEZ, MARY JAMES, KAZI JOSHUA,
LISA PERFETTI, AND S. BROOKE VICK

“Someone Who Looks

Promoting the Success of Students of Color

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IN RECENT YEARS, students have been making very public and impassioned demands for improvements in their educational experience, calling on college and university administrators to address issues ranging from financial aid to curricular content. Chief among these demands is an increase in the racial and ethnic diversity of the faculty.¹ Yet, despite focused efforts by many colleges and universities, the racial and ethnic composition of college faculty has not increased significantly in more than twenty years.² Factors affecting this outcome include the loss of underrepresented minority (URM) scholars along the academic pipeline and outdated recruitment and hiring practices.³ Less well known is the fact that URM faculty are retained at much lower rates than majority faculty.⁴ Thus, it behooves colleges and universities to invest more resources in retaining URM faculty members who

are already committed to their institutions.

Students of color understand on the level of lived experience that the paucity of faculty of color diminishes their sense of belonging on predominantly white campuses, eroding their resilience and resolve over time. Academic motivation and persistence among URM students is often undermined by feelings of self-doubt, lack of belongingness, and stereotype threat in classrooms where they are significantly outnumbered by majority students. The presence of faculty of color mitigates against these effects by signaling to students that they need not represent their race in the classroom and that the professor is an embodied counterexample to negative stereotypes about their

racial group. As a result, students perform better on tests of ability when a faculty member of color is present.⁵ Furthermore, faculty of color are more likely to include topics related to race and ethnicity in their courses, more likely to employ active and collaborative learning techniques in the classroom, and more likely to attend to peer interactions during class—all of which contribute positively to an inclusive climate for both minority and majority students.⁶ A positive correlation exists between the number of faculty of color and the persistence rate for students of color.⁷

To provide an educational environment that promotes the success of students of color, it is imperative to develop structures that promote the

To provide an educational environment that promotes the success of students of color, it is imperative to develop structures that promote the retention and success of faculty of color

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Like Me”

by Promoting the Success of Faculty of Color



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retention and success of faculty of color. Research demonstrates that the experiences of faculty of color differ significantly from those of majority faculty. Faculty of color more often encounter unwelcoming or isolating campus climates, carry a greater burden of service to the institution, and invest more time in mentoring URM students—all of which distract from activities more highly valued in promotion and tenure processes.⁸ Increasing the retention of URM faculty requires not only providing them with resources to cope with these challenges, but also developing structures and programs that alter these campus dynamics.

A consortial approach

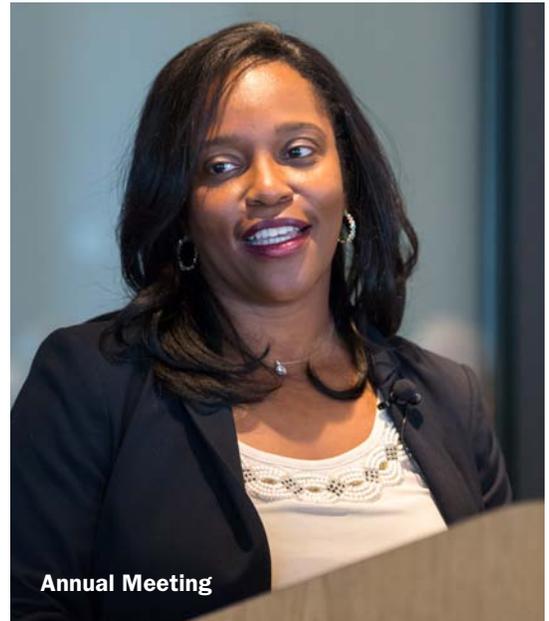
In 2014, under the auspices of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, five liberal arts colleges in the Pacific Northwest (Lewis and Clark College, Reed College, Whitman College, Willamette University, and the University of Puget Sound) formed a consortium to create opportunities for faculty and administrators to work across campuses on challenges of mutual interest. Along with other leaders from the five small, predominantly

Simply to bring faculty of color together and provide them with tools to individually navigate the existing cultures of their home institutions would be to provide a Band-Aid solution to a systemic problem

white colleges, we decided to work collectively to increase support for faculty of color, who made up from 10–15 percent of full-time faculty members on each of our campuses. We decided to invite faculty of color from the five campuses to a multiday workshop both to

foster a sense of community and mutual support and to better understand and address the challenges they faced from their own perspectives.

We recognized that simply to bring faculty of color together and provide them with tools to individually navigate the existing cultures of their home institutions would be to provide a Band-Aid solution to a systemic problem in higher education. We therefore also invited chief diversity officers, administrators charged with faculty development, and faculty leaders to join the workshop to envision and promote more inclusive environments and more equitable faculty hiring and reward structures on each campus. Our annual workshops address not only how faculty of color might individually navigate isolated or systemic incidents of bias, but also how faculty and administrators in positions of influence (members of search, promotion,



and tenure committees; department chairs; etc.) might work to change the structures that allow those forms of bias to thrive. The workshops have also served as forums for faculty, chief diversity officers, and faculty development professionals from the five campuses to compare approaches and learn new strategies that are working well on the other campuses.

Our first workshop, held in the summer of 2014, consisted principally of faculty of color from the five campuses and a few administrators. The focus was on understanding the challenges and barriers to success experienced by the faculty of color and what they felt they needed to thrive in their careers. This inaugural workshop was instrumental in the foundation and success of subsequent workshops, and we have since relied on the faculty voices and needs expressed there to guide the work of the consortium.

Designing the workshops

We recognize that “faculty of color” does not have a precise definition in academic circles or in general usage. One might choose to focus narrowly on members of domestic racial and ethnic groups persistently underrepresented in academia.⁹ Given that all consortium members have large majorities of white faculty, we chose to interpret “faculty of color” more broadly as representing a range of faculty members who share similar minoritizing and culturally marginalizing experiences, including African American, Latinx, Arab American, Asian American, and international faculty from Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. We were also mindful that our goal was to build communities of solidarity on and among the member campuses, and employing a rigid definition that might alienate marginalized faculty would be counterproductive.

At the inaugural workshop, faculty of color made it clear that inviting white allies to future workshops was essential. Faculty of color often pay a “cultural tax,” serving on a disproportionate number of search and other committees, participating in a broad range of “diversity” work, and supporting students of color at higher rates than their white counterparts.¹⁰ Enabling informed and committed white colleagues to share in some of this work can alleviate the burden of this tax and cultivate a shared sense of ownership. Moreover, white faculty are often in positions of power or leadership and, thus, able to help effect cultural change. As we design each year’s workshop, we aim for a mix of about one-third (mostly tenured) white faculty and two-thirds faculty of color. We have found that the work of white allies can be beneficial in reducing the sense of isolation that many faculty members of color experience and in normalizing a culture in which all faculty can see themselves as partners in fostering equity and inclusion.

The number of participants in each workshop ranges from twenty-five to forty, and the location alternates among the member campuses. In addition to providing concrete skills for individuals and “next steps” for institutions, the workshops include time and space for informal networking and community building. Each workshop typically begins with a reception and dinner on the first day, which is followed by a full day of plenary and breakout sessions on topics such as

- confronting microaggressions;
- the white ally in supporting faculty of color;
- searching for excellence: faculty diversity in the tenure-track hiring process;
- surviving and thriving throughout a career;
- the politics of campus change around faculty diversity;
- what every academic leader needs to know about equity and inclusion work;
- navigating requests for campus service;
- the role of department climate in retaining faculty of color.

Most sessions are designed and led by faculty from consortium campuses. The third day, a half day, is devoted to informal networking over breakfast and conversations about what the teams might bring back to their home campuses. We also distribute a comprehensive list of scholarly resources illustrating the urgency and value of diversifying our faculty and how that might be accomplished.

The consortium institutions cover the cost of travel and campus lodging for all participants and hotel accommodations for families. The total cost for the 2016 workshop for forty people (including compensation for five faculty facilitators) was about \$13,000. The Mellon Foundation grant funded the first three workshops. Persuaded by the value of this work, the deans of all five consortium campuses committed internal funding for the 2017 workshop.

Assessing the impact and looking to the future

After each workshop, we email participants a survey asking them to rate the usefulness of each session, provide specific feedback for presenters, comment on the workshop as a whole, and indicate their interest in returning the following year. A sampling of participant comments clearly indicates the advantages of doing this work through a consortium or partnership among institutions:

- “There was a sense that we were not simply laboring in the wilderness by ourselves, that there were others who were also struggling and working on the same issues.”
- “Somehow I think that everyone is more open and receptive when participants come from many campuses. We’re less likely to get mired in the minutiae of our own campus politics and think on a slightly more strategic level.”
- “It is powerful to hear the same experiences and issues are present across the campuses. This puts our issues into a broader perspective. For example, it is strangely comforting to see parallel issues and concerns echoed at a sister school. This shows that our own college is not uniquely troubled, but that all the schools are working toward a greater expression of justice despite setbacks.”

These comments testify to the effectiveness of the workshops in creating a sense of community among faculty of color and in increasing the institutional capacity to shift campus culture and better foster their success and well-being. Some of our faculty facilitators have subsequently been invited to speak at the other campuses or even nationally, which has enhanced their own professional development and, in some cases, helped clarify their career aspirations and commitments. Finally, the increased number of tenure-track hires of faculty of color at consortium campuses over the past year suggests an increased understanding among our colleagues of the



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critical role efforts to diversify the faculty can play in striving for inclusive excellence.

As we look to the future, we have questions and challenges to address. How can we continue momentum throughout the academic year when some of our campuses are geographically isolated? How might we do a better job of acknowledging our intersectional identities and the tensions that they can provoke in conversations? Given

To recruit but fail to retain faculty of color amounts to leaving a promise unfulfilled

that the needs of tenured, pre-tenure, and non-tenure-track faculty are not always the same, how can the workshop sessions meet a broader range of needs? Is there a way to include staff or students without losing sight of the particularities of the work of faculty? And of course, those of us organizing the workshop and facilitating sessions do this on top of our already long list of job responsibilities, and collaboration across campuses can prove logistically challenging. How can we make this work sustainable to ensure that it endures?

Adapting our framework for your institution

We encourage other institutions of higher education to build consortia to promote the success of faculty of color. We believe our model would be

appropriate for consortia of other predominantly white institutions in reasonably close geographic proximity with similar missions. The best way to begin is by identifying key faculty of color, white faculty allies, and administrators at your home institution who might join a planning group to organize the consortium. Then, have the planning group identify three of the most important challenges they hope the consortium will address. Examples might include

- improving the recruitment and hiring of faculty of color;
- providing appropriate formal and informal mentoring for junior faculty members of color;
- improving the department climate for faculty, staff, and students of color;
- training reviewers and tenure committees in the legitimacy of scholarship centered on diversity, inclusion, and groups historically marginalized or underrepresented in academic discourse;
- broadening the curriculum to include subject matter, scholarship, and critical lenses by and about people of color;
- disseminating best practices around inclusive pedagogical practices, especially as they relate to race and ethnicity.

Next, identify colleges (or units within universities) with similar missions and profiles that might become part of your consortium. Examples include several small colleges, several community colleges, similar schools across several universities (STEM fields, schools of education, health fields, etc.). Then identify key faculty and administrators at each institution who might help organize the consortium. (A single contact at another institution can get you started.) Enlist the cooperation of individuals at your institution who can help secure funding for an initial planning meeting. At the meeting, have representatives of each institution identify allies who could help them write grants for internal or external funding for the consortium.

Finally, plan an inaugural workshop of modest scale whose purpose is to identify the needs of faculty of color in your consortium through structured explorations around your chosen topics and opportunities for open-ended, first-hand testimonials from faculty of color. Build future workshops based on the ideas and needs expressed at the inaugural workshop.

Conclusion

Throughout our work on this project, we have remained mindful that recruiting faculty of color is a key component in diversifying the professoriate. As Freeman Hrabowski III, president of the University of Maryland Baltimore County, made clear at the 2017 National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education conference, part of the institutional change necessary for inclusive excellence is the diversification of a professoriate that is currently 85 percent white. A professoriate that more accurately reflects America's rich racial and ethnic diversity is needed to propel change in the culture of American higher education to reflect cultural shifts and representation in American society.¹¹

Hiring a more diverse faculty is not enough, however. It is also crucial to create conditions under which faculty members, once recruited, will experience a sense of belonging and to foster intellectual communities and places of nurture that will enable them to thrive. To recruit but fail to retain faculty of color amounts to leaving a promise unfulfilled. It will be possible to serve our increasingly diverse student bodies well only if the composition of our faculty mirrors that diversity. The effort described here is one modest but effective tool that institutions can add to their growing "toolbox" of resources to promote the success of faculty of color. □

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

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An Interview with Recipients of the 2017 K. Patricia Cross Future Leaders Award

SUZANNE HYERS AND L. LEE KNEFELKAMP

Your experience as a student has clearly been a major identity influence in your life. How would you describe the importance of your education to your own sense of identity?

Peter DelNero: This question touches on a transformative moment in my academic journey. As an engineering student, my undergraduate education was largely a process of professional socialization. In graduate school, I began to deconstruct my assumptions about what it means to be an engineer, and this allowed me to achieve a more integrative and authentic identity as a student. I am no longer a passive recipient of knowledge, but rather an active steward of my intellectual development. I am attentive to the patterns of thought and behavior in my academic communities.

Danica Savonick: My work is motivated by an awareness of how much my own life was transformed, radically improved, by the free and incredibly high-quality education I received at a public state university. Everyone deserves this. And this is what I advocate for in classrooms, in institutions, and in my scholarship.

Heather Woods: As a first-generation college student, I know that higher education is both a privilege and a responsibility. For this reason, I work hard to share it with others. I strive to be worthy of my education. Higher education expanded my worldview. My educational experiences introduced me to ideas, concepts, and people that compelled me to reconsider myself and my surroundings. The ideas and concepts that I learned in college gave me a scholarly vocabulary to articulate my experiences and concerns and to theorize about the future. Those very ideas and concepts continue to compel my research, teaching, and service today. My educational experiences have also taught me the power of working with others, which has empowered me to engage collaboratively in my communities, including my academic communities. I write collaboratively, research collaboratively, serve the university collaboratively, and teach collaboratively. For instance, through engaged and organically assessed learning, I use my classroom to “grow” community leaders. I hope my students leave my classrooms compelled to make their spaces and places more just.

Brian Hendrickson: My identity as a teacher and scholar committed to engaged learning has been shaped as much by what I didn’t experience as a student as by what I did. In high school and throughout my undergraduate education, I lacked the confidence to take advantage of cocurricular learning opportunities. It wasn’t until my master’s program that I began to learn from peers what it looked like to take agency over one’s own learning. Years later, when I returned to school for my PhD, I found the learning experiences that were having the greatest impact on me were those my fellow students and I were co-creating outside the bounds of the traditional classroom. My most meaningful coursework integrated my cocurricular learning experiences. More than my intellectual interest in the scholarship of teaching and learning, this personal experience of coming into my own as an active participant in a community of learners stoked my passion for

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MY VIEW

EDITOR’S NOTE: *The K. Patricia Cross Future Leaders Award recognizes graduate students who show exemplary promise as future leaders of higher education, who demonstrate a commitment to developing academic and civic responsibility in themselves and others, and whose work reflects a strong emphasis on teaching and learning. Suzanne Hyers and L. Lee Knepfelkamp, both of whom are actively involved in the administration of the award, interviewed 2017 Cross Award recipients for Liberal Education. The interview was conducted via email in February 2017.*



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exploring ways to integrate engaged learning into the undergraduate curriculum—so that students who might not be ready or able to take advantage of cocurricular learning opportunities don't miss out on a truly transformative experience.

You have spoken about the importance of your intellectual work to your own being, but also the importance of that work to larger issues in our communities. How did you make that connection?

Brian Hendrickson: I hadn't planned on becoming a teacher. It started out as a job I didn't mind, and quickly became the only job I'd ever had that I both enjoyed and was really interested in getting better at. I saw the challenges my students faced when arriving in my first-year writing classroom from high school, factory jobs, tours of duty in Afghanistan and Iraq, war-torn and repressive countries, prison. I knew I could do more to ensure my classes increased the likelihood they would succeed and persist. I also knew the challenge was larger than my classes, that it required creating more effective and equitable pathways to and through college. I committed myself to becoming a steward of campus-community literacy and learning ecologies, and a mentor to my students in the process of becoming stewards themselves—as if trying to become a better writing instructor weren't humbling enough. The truth was, I had to invite my students to

transform me. I had to invite the communities in which I worked to transform my work. If we want to serve as stewards of the intellectual life of our students and communities, then we have to invite our students and communities to transform us. In that respect, my intellectual work hasn't been as important to larger issues in my community as the larger issues in my community have been to my intellectual work, and to that of my students.

Danica Savonick: I came to graduate school to better understand the roles that language, art, and culture play in both sustaining and challenging structures of inequality. Unexpectedly, it has been the classroom—and the experience of coming together in a space where changing our minds and thinking differently is the very goal—that makes me believe social change is possible and is happening all around us. The experience of teaching my own undergraduate classes at Queens College—where the students are working class, immigrants, people of color, and often the first in their families to attend college—firmly grounded my research in the New York City community. In many ways, these students are present in my research on feminist pedagogy: it is for them. They deserve an education that is more responsive to their lived experiences, hopes, and desires. It is a privilege and an absolute joy to think about social justice

If we want to serve as stewards of the intellectual life of our students and communities, then we have to invite our students and communities to transform us

with these students, and I cherish the creativity I get to practice in developing assignments and activities that will encourage them to become more politically involved, help them discover their talents and passions, and prepare them for success in whatever comes next—whether that’s organizing a campus protest or getting into medical school. Inequality in

It is a privilege and an absolute joy to think about social justice with these students

New York City mirrors that of our society as a whole; it structures our geography, education, housing, and access to resources. In my classrooms, we not only study this inequality, but we work to produce structures of equality, starting with pedagogy. Everyone participates and makes crucial decisions about how our classes will be run, what we will study, and how student work will be evaluated.

Peter DelNero: As a cancer researcher-in-training, I spend a lot of time with cells and microscopes, but I rarely interact with individual cancer patients and survivors. Four years ago, I joined a partnership that fosters dialogue between scientists and members of the cancer community. This partnership has revolutionized my role as a researcher. I discovered that conducting experiments is not the only way to reduce the burden of cancer; scientists can also explain the research process, dispel common misconceptions, and provide personal support to individual members of our communities. Because of this partnership, cancer evolved from an intellectual problem into something much more personal. I became increasingly aware of the larger social issues that I never encountered in the lab.

Heather Woods: The connection between intellectual work and community issues, for me, has always been innate. My work is broadly attuned to questions of politics, power, and (in)equity in its various manifestations. I chose a career in higher education because I understand the academy as one space within which it is possible to identify and challenge inequity. For me, that

means working collaboratively, sharing resources, mentoring others, and leveraging my privileged position in higher education toward justice. My teaching and research center on challenging structures of inequality; for that reason, I hope students leave my classroom knowing these

structures are durable yet changeable. In my own research, I explore how technologies are political and how they influence people’s everyday lived experiences. But I also hope that my research provides opportunities to intervene, to imagine the future differently. I think that’s what is amazing about education: it gives you the capacities and tools necessary to think differently and to work toward a more just world.

The K. Patricia Cross Future Leaders Award includes financial support to attend the annual meeting of the Association of American Colleges and Universities. Did your attendance at the meeting give you a view of higher education that you have not gotten from your graduate training?

Heather Woods: Yes, I am so grateful for the experience. My graduate training has benefited from many wonderful resources at the University of North Carolina, including the Center for Faculty Excellence Future Faculty Fellowship Program and the Carolina Digital Humanities Initiative, both of which expanded my view of what academic work can and should look like. However, at the AAC&U meeting, I was introduced to so many new resources and programs to which I would not otherwise have had access. My fellow Cross Scholars have been an invaluable intellectual community; they’ve already taught me so much about what higher education can be. Meeting with leaders of higher education and hearing about leadership training opportunities for women made me feel as though I now have more doors open to me than ever before.

Danica Savonick: Without a doubt, the highlight of the conference was getting to know the other Cross Award recipients—graduate students from different schools and disciplines who are transforming education in order to improve society. Their resumes are impressive, to say the very least, but in person they far exceed what a professional bio can capture. Also, the conference helped me see that it is inadequate and inaccurate simply to blame the administration for all the inequities of higher education. From reading K. Patricia Cross’s 1969 speech “Some Correlates of Student Protest” to listening to AAC&U President Lynn Pasquerella’s 2017 address to women faculty and administrators, I have come to realize that many administrators want to support activist students and faculty—and actually meet their demands. Here is my favorite line from Cross’s 1969 speech,

I think that’s what is amazing about education: it gives you the capacities and tools necessary to think differently and to work toward a more just world

a response to student protests occurring on college campuses nationwide: “If we ever wanted student involvement in the learning process, we have it now.” My interpretation? Those of you, today, who believe in student empowerment, engagement, and civic responsibility had better be listening to, advocating for, supporting, and working with the activist students on your campuses.

Brian Hendrickson: Attending the annual meeting contributed to my growing understanding of the range of challenges and affordances relative to various institutional contexts in pursuing a mission of inclusive academic excellence. It was invigorating to learn about all the innovative approaches taken at different scopes and levels at different institutions. It was also heartening to hear so many deans, provosts, and presidents espouse progressive values in alignment with a desire to enact the kind of evidence-based pedagogies that inform my own work. At the same time, it was sobering to recognize how pervasively the same impediments crop up across institutional contexts, rendering the implementation of evidence-based curricular reforms both an uphill battle and an imperfect science. I also got the sense that, as an intellectual community, higher education is reeling a bit from what in hindsight has been a steadily rising tide of ideologies that is toxic to a diverse, pluralistic, and deliberative democracy. I think we’re partly hoping that doing what we do best will be antidote enough, but I’m not so sure it will. Like the work of institutional change, responding to this growing threat to democracy is, it seems, something we’re figuring out as we go. This isn’t a criticism, really. If there’s one thing I’ve learned during my graduate training, it is the importance of attuning oneself to uncertainty. Attending the annual meeting deepened my appreciation for this particular art, while also broadening my apprehension of how others practice it.

Alexandra Mathwig: Attending the annual meeting reinforced my commitment to advocating for more robust graduate student training in both pedagogy and the larger issues facing higher education. As many of the panelists discussed over the course of the conference, higher education is facing a crisis of confidence, and we must come together as a community to find new ways to reengage both our students and the wider public in order to rebuild trust in

K. Patricia Cross Future Leaders Award

The K. Patricia Cross Future Leaders Award recognizes graduate students who show exemplary promise as future leaders of higher education, who demonstrate a commitment to developing academic and civic responsibility in themselves and others, and whose work reflects a strong emphasis on teaching and learning. The award honors the work of K. Patricia Cross, professor emerita of higher education at the University of California–Berkeley, and is administered by the Association of American Colleges and Universities. Following are the recipients of the 2017 award:

Peter F. DelNero, Biomedical Engineering, Cornell University

Mona Eskandari, Mechanical Engineering, Stanford University

Brian Hendrickson, Rhetoric and Composition, University of New Mexico

Alexandra Collins Mathwig, History of Art and Architecture, Brown University

Keri L. Rodgers, Educational Studies—Curriculum, Ball State University

Ileana Cortés Santiago, Literacy and Language Education, Purdue University

Danica Savonick, English, City University of New York Graduate Center

Heather Suzanne Woods, Communication, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Nominations for the 2018 award are due October 2, 2017. (For more information, see www.aacu.org/about/crossaward.) The recipients will be introduced at the 2018 annual meeting, where they will deliver a presentation titled “Faculty of the Future: Voices of the Next Generation.”



Left to right: Heather Woods, Claire Berezowitz (2016 Cross Award recipient), Danica Savonick, Alexandra Mathwig, Keri Rodgers, Ileana Cortés Santiago, Peter DelNero, Mona Eskandari, and L. Lee Knefelkamp

Higher education is facing a crisis of confidence, and we must come together as a community to find new ways to reengage both our students and the wider public in order to rebuild trust in the value of a liberal education

the value of a liberal education. Graduate students have valuable contributions to make to this debate about the future of education, but we must be empowered to become active participants in the conversation by our individual programs and institutions. AAC&U is doing just that by inviting the Cross Scholars to participate in the annual meeting and by encouraging graduate students to make connections between our individual research areas and the issues facing our larger communities.

Peter DelNero: I was surprised by the variety of academic institutions represented at the AAC&U meeting. I found the institutional diversity very refreshing. The meeting was unlike any disciplinary conference that I have attended; the commitment to enhancing the public impact of higher education was very visible. I left with a deeper appreciation for the issues that administrators must grapple with each day.

What is an educational motto you would put on a tee shirt?

Alexandra Mathwig: The motto I would choose to feature is a quote by the painter Robert Motherwell regarding the significance of art, but which I believe is equally applicable to the humanities in general: “Art is much less important than life, but what a poor life without it.” This notion is fundamental to why I choose to teach art history.

Brian Hendrickson: Someone else’s: “Since growth is the characteristic of life, education is all one with growing; it has no end beyond itself” (John Dewey). My own: “No one knows alone.”

K. Patricia Cross Online Archive

More than 250 speeches delivered by K. Patricia Cross between 1963 and 2001, along with seven papers commissioned by the League for Innovation in the Community College, are available online at <http://diva.sfsu.edu/collections/kpcross>. An invaluable resource for researchers and practitioners alike, this searchable archive is organized both chronologically and according to four themes: the Learning Society, Community Colleges, Libraries, and Learning Assessment.

Danica Savonick: Here are two: “The classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy” (bell hooks). “Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (Paulo Freire).

Peter DelNero: “It is only by extracting the full potential of each present moment that we are prepared to do likewise in the future.” The ideal of “maximizing your potential” appeals to me, and I continuously look for ways to remove barriers to student success. This philosophy motivates me to prioritize high-impact teaching practices, rather than high-volume content delivery. Loosely based on something John Dewey wrote, the motto could also be expressed as follows: “Maximize your potential: it is only by taking full advantage of each present opportunity that are we prepared to do likewise in the future.”

Heather Woods: Imagine—and build—the future! □

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

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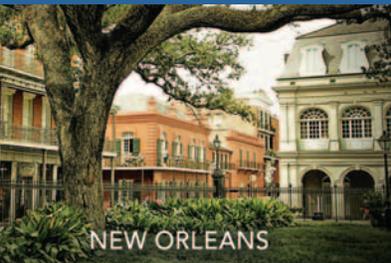
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