LEADING CHANGE FROM THE CLASSROOM
Faculty Designs for Curricular Reform

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At the heart of teaching and learning is the curriculum, the autobiography of the faculty declaring what, at this particular time, it believes students ought to know and do in order to be certified as educated people. —Bobby Fong

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Toward That Second Century: Making Liberal Education Inclusive

As AAC&U’s centennial year approaches, AAC&U leaders have been looking backward to the root commitments that have guided this association for nearly a century and planning forward to the next generation of work to make liberal education more empowering and more inclusive.

To my mind, the most consequential development for AAC&U and the entire higher education enterprise is the tectonic shift that has made postsecondary learning the necessary portal for virtually anyone who seeks expanded economic opportunity and a purchase on middle-class life. The current policy effort to send 60 percent of Americans to postsecondary education within this decade is, or at least ought to be, an extraordinary opportunity to build new capacity both for individual graduates and for our society as a whole.

But are we prepared to seize fully the potential of this new policy determination to send the better part of a generation to higher education? Will history show that we invested successfully in the development of new talent from all parts of our society? Will we be able to look back and say that higher learning built new capacity for democracy’s future as well as for the economy? Or will it turn out that we delivered more college credentials but a significantly less empowering education to a very large fraction of this generation of students?

On this score, there is real reason for deep concern. Proposals abound for having students, especially low-income students, move through college on their own, with generic “coaches” rather than high-quality faculty and with automated bubble tests rather than the engaged learning projects that actually build high-level capability. Even educators who ought to know better are now busily “innovating” to further fragment the curriculum, with entirely predictable consequences for the degradation of learning. All of this may indeed save money. But in a world crying out for innovation and creative change, the routinization of shallow learning is most certainly the wrong choice for our future.

Narrow instrumentalism and anti-intellectualism have long been powerful forces both in US society at large and in many of the headlined proposals to make higher education less costly and more accessible. And today, strikingly, even as students young and older flock to college, instrumentalism and anti-intellectualism are driving efforts to steer learners, especially low-income learners, toward narrow forms of training that may carry the label of “college” but that, in fact, exclude by design the most important aspects of a high-quality education: broad, big-picture learning; cutting-edge scholarly inquiry; deep engagement with hard questions; evidence-based reasoning; and, the crucial key to all the above, a full complement of accomplished faculty who are themselves well supported by their institutions.

The United States is coming, in sum, to a quality and equity crossroads. Will we continue the US pattern—already deeply entrenched at all levels of schooling—of offering high-quality learning to the few, while providing only narrow training or shallow, fragmented learning to the many? Or will we mobilize once and for all to make high-quality and liberating education our priority for all students and democracy’s first obligation to those from historically underserved groups?

With these crucial choices in view, AAC&U will focus intensively during the upcoming centennial year on the kind of learning that builds new social capital, both for individuals and for society, and on effective strategies for providing an empowering education across all sectors of higher education—not just in honors programs, not just in the most honored institutions. We invite you, our members, to join in active partnership with us in an all-hands-on-deck effort to make high-quality learning truly inclusive—with a special focus on first-generation students of all
backgrounds who are likely to benefit most from a great education, but who must look to educators rather than families to help them determine what a great education really is.

The needed dialogue about quality and equity can’t just be held “in-house,” however. We need proactive public outreach and will building to persuade policy and thought leaders alike that America’s best hope for the future lies in the expansion of access to high-quality learning and in creative curricular redesigns that make complex learning the norm rather than the exception.

The good news is that we begin our work on quality and equity with tools in hand that educators simply did not have even a decade ago. The LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes, vetted and strongly endorsed by educators and employers alike, provide a touchstone for what all students need to accomplish in college. They describe learning goals (or proficiencies) that are just as important for career and technical students as they are for students in the liberal arts and sciences. Moreover, we have important research on the educational effectiveness of a set of high-impact practices as well as a rapidly burgeoning body of definitive evidence that guided learning pathways are crucial catalysts for student success. The research also shows that mapping those pathways intentionally and unavoidably with high-effort assignments—writing, research, problem solving, practicums, major projects, integrative portfolios—yields increased rates of achievement, persistence, and graduation.

The next critical step, we believe, will be an intelligent redesign of curricular pathways. It is high time to break free entirely of the old “breadth first, depth second” model for college learning, which is underperforming and badly outdated. Instead, we need to create what may best be described as guided pathways to integrative and adaptive learning. The core design principle—whose implementation will necessarily require the combination of high-tech and “high-touch” approaches—should be to ensure that students are given opportunities to tackle complex questions at every step of the way, from first to final year. And as students build their proficiencies, they must be helped to demonstrate, to themselves and others, what they can actually do with their learning.*

To help educators with the needed redesign, Lumina Foundation has just released the “first edition” of the Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP), which makes full use of both the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes and of the powerful empirical evidence on the benefits of high-effort, high-impact practices. The DQP has been field-tested at over four hundred institutions, and this 2014 “first edition” is informed by feedback and recommendations from the field. Aimed at programs rather than courses, the DQP shows educators how to build high-impact learning unavoidably into degree programs, both general and specialized, so that students reliably practice the integration of knowledge, skill, and application at all levels of study and from first to final year. The DQP makes it clear that higher education is supposed to build civic capability and experience as well as major-field capability and experience. Most importantly, it shows us how.

Narrow instrumentalism and anti-intellectualism may be at high tide in this moment of recession-fueled economic anxiety. But an empowering and liberating education is what Americans urgently need. And we now have the tools in hand to help all our students achieve it. Together, let’s use the coming year to make the case, advance the cause, and put these new tools to work toward a learning-centered and equity-intentional redesign of college learning—and let’s ensure that digital innovations and investments build rather than deplete higher education’s capacity to move big-picture, inquiry-centered liberal learning to scale.—CAROL GEARY SCHNEIDER

*Watch for more on this in 2015 from AAC&U’s GEMs initiative: General Education Maps and Markers.
Educational innovation is very often born in the classroom, as individual educators adapt otherwise familiar curricular elements or mandates to suit the particular requirements of their courses and students or to accommodate their own values, interests, styles, and disciplines. The Featured Topic section below offers a window on this process.

The lead article describes an innovative approach to the evaluation of courses and instructors, which at most colleges and universities is a perfunctory affair: students are given a standard evaluation form at the end of a course and asked to respond to a series of summative questions. Despite its many obvious shortcomings, this system remains firmly entrenched across American higher education, and its often dubious results can be highly consequential—not least for faculty facing tenure and promotion reviews or instructors awaiting contract renewal decisions. The inadequacy of the prevailing system became especially clear to Lee Hansen after he had developed a new, proficiency-based approach to teaching general economics. If his new approach was to succeed, he realized, he would need to customize the student evaluation, making it into a tool for student engagement and making sure its results could be used to refine the course.

The second article focuses on the practical implications of the widespread recognition that global perspective is an essential ingredient in the education of today’s students. What exactly does the term “global perspective” mean, and what can be done at the level of the curriculum or even the individual course to help students develop it? These are questions to which Frank Rusciano has given careful consideration. His proposals for including global perspectives across the curriculum are rooted in the expertise he has developed not only as a teacher who has successfully “globalized” his own courses, but also as a faculty leader who has helped others do the same through campus workshops and conference presentations—including a recent presentation at the AAC&U Network for Academic Renewal conference on global learning.

Finally, the third article presents an innovative approach to the first-year orientation course. While at a humanities symposium, Ivan Fuller had an “ah-hah moment” as he listened to a fellow professor express her regret and frustration at the course limitations and time constraints that prevent her from engaging her students deeply in critical thinking. He, too, felt hemmed in by the demands of breadth over depth and regretted that he could not “dig deeply” with students. But why does depth have to wait for specialization, he wondered, when the intellectual skills it develops and the joy of learning it ignites are, in fact, more essential to success in and after college than are the “freshman survival skills” and other objectives of the standard first-year orientation course? After returning to campus, he developed and successfully piloted a more ambitious, deep-learning alternative to the first-year seminar for theatre majors.

As this issue goes to press, we mourn the sudden death of Bobby Fong. Among his many lasting contributions to American higher education—and, indeed, to this association—Bobby was closely and actively involved with this journal. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, he served two terms on the editorial advisory board; in January, he had generously begun a fresh term. He was also a frequent writer for Liberal Education over the past quarter century or so. This issue carries his final article, a visionary and deeply humane appeal for attention to students’ souls, a call to “educate your communities in love.” It was a pleasure and a privilege to know and work with Bobby Fong. He will be greatly missed.—DAVID TRITELLI
**New Initiative to Increase Diversity and Equity in STEM**

Twenty institutions have been selected to participate in AAC&U’s Teaching to Increase Diversity and Equity in STEM (TIDES) initiative. Funded by the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust, this new three-year initiative will support curricular and faculty development activities to develop models for broad institutional changes that promote the advancement of evidence-based and culturally competent teaching in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—with particular focus on computer and information science domains. For more information, see www.aacu.org/pkal/tides.

**AAC&U Joins National Coalition to Support K-12 Standards**

AAC&U has joined Higher Education for Higher Standards, a national coalition of college and university leaders that advocates for effective implementation of college- and career-ready standards, including the Common Core State Standards, in K-12 schools. The goal of this broad-based effort is to mobilize higher education leaders to participate in the debates about standards that are playing out in state capitals and in the media and, thereby, to refocus the conversations on the important role standards can play in improving students’ preparation for success in college, life, and work. For more information, see www.higheredforhigherstandards.org.

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**In Memoriam: Bobby Fong**

AAC&U notes with deep sadness and profound regret the death on September 8, 2014, of Bobby Fong, president of Ursinus College. He was president of Butler University from 2001 to 2011, dean of the faculty at Hamilton College from 1995 to 2001, and dean of arts and humanities at Hope College from 1989 to 1995. Yet he remained at heart a dedicated and gifted teacher for whom the privilege of helping students learn was always the highest calling. He began his academic career teaching English at Berea College in Kentucky and was a world authority on Oscar Wilde.

Bobby Fong gave unstintingly to AAC&U throughout his career, helping shape the values and work of the association. He is the only person to have served twice as chair of the AAC&U Board of Directors—first in 1994, when this was still the Association of American Colleges, and then again in 2012. He served as a member of the board for thirteen years in all, spanning the presidencies of John Chandler, Paula Brownlee, and Carol Schneider. At the time of his death, Bobby Fong was a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of Liberal Education and a key leader in AAC&U’s long-term initiative, Liberal Education and America’s Promise, or LEAP.

A beloved educator and a tireless champion of liberal education, Bobby Fong will be sorely missed.

**Upcoming Meetings**

- **October 16–18, 2014**
  *Global Learning in College: Cross-Cutting Capacities for 21st-Century Students*
  *Minneapolis, Minnesota*

- **November 6–8, 2014**
  *Transforming STEM Higher Education*
  *Atlanta, Georgia*

- **January 21–24, 2015**
  *The Centennial Annual Meeting: Liberal Education, Global Flourishing, and the Equity Imperative*
  *Washington, DC*

- **February 19–21, 2015**
  *From Mission to Action to Evidence: Empowering and Inclusive General Education Programs*
  *Kansas City, Missouri*

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**AAC&U Membership 2014**

1,340 members

- **MASTERS 31%**
- **BACC 24%**
- **ASSOC 12%**
- **DOC 17%**
- **OTHER* 16%**

*Specialized schools, state systems and agencies, international affiliates, and organizational affiliates*
By taking a teaching/learning approach to evaluation, faculty members can obtain helpful feedback to use in altering course design, objectives, and pedagogy.
complete the forms or do so carelessly. Even more important, because the forms lack a formative dimension, they yield little information that can help interested faculty members improve their teaching. At the very least, any useful evaluation system should be both summative and formative.

A proficiencies-based course

When it became clear a decade before retiring that I would be teaching regularly, among other courses, a moderately sized (40–110 students) general economics course, I decided to take a proficiencies-based approach. I first developed this approach to teaching economics in the early 1980s, after having experimented with its various components during the previous decade. The idea underlying this approach can be framed by the following question: how do we want our economics majors to be able to demonstrate what they learned the day after they graduate, when they are no longer disciplined by class attendance, reading assignments, homework exercises, examinations, and course grades? Based on extensive contacts with officials in government, private sector leaders, colleagues, and recently graduated economics majors, I devised a set of seven proficiencies expected of economics majors:

• accessing and organizing existing knowledge
• displaying command of existing knowledge
• interpreting existing knowledge
• interpreting and manipulating quantitative data
• applying existing knowledge
• creating new knowledge
• questing for knowledge and understanding

The challenge came in figuring out how to begin developing these proficiencies in what would be the first and perhaps only economics course many students would take. Clearly, not enough time would be available in this single introductory course to master all the proficiencies expected of graduating economics majors. Instead, emphasis was placed on the importance of nurturing these proficiencies sufficiently to help students, largely freshmen and sophomores, succeed in this course and at the same time begin to acquire proficiencies that would be of value to them no matter what major they might choose.

As a start, students needed to understand the proficiencies and be actively involved in their own learning; thus, the course packet included an assigned reading that describes these proficiencies. The texts selected and the contents of the reading packet were designed to highlight and reinforce the key concepts and principles being taught within the context of a course that emphasized contemporary economic issues and policies. Consistent with this objective, considerable attention was given to enhancing economic literacy, by linking the concepts being studied to current newspaper articles that illustrate how these economic concepts are being applied in the outside world. To reinforce the importance of the proficiencies, I tried to model them in lectures and also in weekly discussion sections that were structured to involve students and challenge them in new ways.

The design of the course encompassed the following major components: setting out the course objectives, the content knowledge to be learned, and the proficiencies to be developed; deciding on the appropriate instructional materials; selecting the pedagogies to be used in the course; giving students practice in applying what they were learning; requiring students to demonstrate not only what they learned (the economics content knowledge) but also their ability to use that knowledge (the proficiencies); and encouraging students to reflect more actively on their learning.

The importance of gaining practice in the proficiencies was emphasized by teaching the course as a writing-intensive course. The importance of students being able to apply their learning to current economic issues was emphasized by several major writing assignments; these assignments required students to select recent newspapers articles and analyze them for the economic concepts and principles embedded in them. To prepare for the discussion sections, students had to write a summary or précis for each of the assigned readings or three types of questions to guide these discussions. Finally, students were challenged to submit two questions (and their own answers to them) suitable for inclusion in each of the three exams, including the final exam. In short, the course was designed to help students develop the proficiencies by engaging them in a wide array of learning activities.

Officially, this was a three-credit course, but the campus timetable listed three lectures (Monday, Wednesday, Friday) along with four discussion sections (Thursday or Friday). Because I would have to miss several lecture
periods, and because I wanted to teach the discussion sections, these sections did not meet every week. On average, the class met about three and a half times per week. I was careful to explain the heavier workload during the opening session of the course and in the syllabus. I also indicated that I, rather than a teaching assistant, would meet the discussion sections, and consequently I, too, would be working harder than I was required to do. I went on to explain quite candidly that I wanted to work closely with them in a variety of ways to help them enhance both their content knowledge and their proficiencies in economics.

About the course and its evaluation

The most immediate challenge was to figure out how best to describe the proficiencies-oriented course to students during the opening week of classes. I devoted considerable time in each of the first two class meetings to explaining the proficiencies approach and its implementation. I indicated my keen interest in helping students learn more and doing it better and faster by engaging them in a variety of learning activities that would be new to most of them. I made it clear that the course would be demanding and that it would include a larger than usual number of assignments. Finally, I indicated my interest in learning from them how they perceived the course, what advantages it had for them, and what additional costs in time and effort were involved.

Early on, students got the flavor of my interest from an evaluation conducted at the end of the fourth week. The evaluation format was not new. I had always found it useful to get early feedback on the course. To add to its legitimacy, I asked a group of student volunteers to administer the evaluation, tabulate and summarize the results, and discuss with me the evaluation results prior to the next class meeting. After the volunteers conveyed the evaluation results to me, I went to the next class where I summarized these results. Most of the results were familiar to me from past semesters—poor handwriting on the blackboard, talking too fast, requiring too much work, and so on. I told them I would try to deal positively with their suggestions. On some matters, I had to explain the importance of some facet of the course—for example, the writing assignments—and why it was important in helping them learn economics. Students were usually disarmed by my openness, and I did try to overcome my obvious shortcomings.

In conducting this early evaluation, I am trying to enlist students to make a stronger commitment to the course and the challenges of learning. What always surprises me is how little time students say they devote not only to my course but also to their other courses. When the modal response is usually three to four hours per week for my course, I remind them of the old rule of thumb, which is to study two hours outside of class for every hour spent in class. Most students have never heard of the rule; I explain that all freshmen heard this rule in an earlier age when grading standards were much tougher. This gives me a chance to recommend that students devote more time not only to my course but to all their other courses, if they are to make the most of their undergraduate experience.

I also take the occasion to give them a brief economics lesson. They need to be reminded of not only the “sticker price” cost of their education but also the “opportunity cost” of attending college, namely, the earnings they forego while attending college. I close by noting the substantial “tuition subsidy” they receive from state taxpayers, who include their parents, a subsidy that in the last years I taught was still equal to the amount of tuition they paid.

Toward the end of the semester, I explained to my students that I would need their assistance in conducting a more detailed end-of-the-semester evaluation. They were receptive to this idea because by this time it was apparent that they appreciated the course and how it was conducted. Meanwhile, the department agreed to allow me, rather than a department secretary, to administer the evaluation. By being present, I signaled my interest in having students respond thoughtfully to the evaluation questions—not only the standard questions, but also the much more detailed questions specific to course content, design, and pedagogy. Students were given more time to respond (about thirty minutes, rather than the usual ten minutes). When the students completed their evaluation, I designated a student to collect the forms, place them in a sealed envelope, and deliver
them to the department office for later processing. To ensure confidentiality, these forms as well as a summary of the machine-read responses were turned over to me only after I had submitted my course grades.

Creating the new evaluation form

I gave considerable thought to the kinds of student feedback that would be useful in evaluating my efforts to enhance students’ learning in economics, develop their proficiencies, and increase their awareness of what and how they were learning. The newly designed evaluation form sought answers to seven major questions:

1. Did the course deliver what it promised to deliver? The focus here was on the four major content objectives cited in the syllabus.
2. How effective were the instructional materials and pedagogy described in the syllabus and the course reading packet in helping students learn the subject matter? The purpose was to ascertain the perceived effectiveness of each of fifteen different types of instruction-related materials and assignments, including the instructional materials used (texts, reading packet, handouts), pedagogy employed (lectures, class discussions, and structured group discussion), learning activities utilized (preparing questions on readings, writing assignments, preparing study questions for exams), and type of exams employed (essay and short-answer questions). This long list provided useful information to me; in addition, it was included to stimulate student thinking about the usefulness of the proficiencies approach to learning.
3. How effective were the varied learning activities in improving the ability of students to use their content knowledge of economics? The list included ten different kinds of learning activities, all of them related to the proficiencies, though not on a one-to-one basis.
4. Which of fifteen categories of instruction-related materials and assignments were most helpful in learning the subject matter? To sharpen their responses, students were asked to check no more than four of the fifteen items.
5. How much emphasis should be given in the following semester to each of ten different kinds of learning activities in order to help students improve their ability to use their knowledge? Students were asked to respond to each item.
6. How did students evaluate this course or instructor based on the key questions included in the department’s standard evaluation form? These questions ask (a) about the relative difficulty of the course, (b) whether a student would recommend the course to a friend, and (c) how the student would rate the professor’s performance in the course. These questions had to be included so that the evaluation results for this course would be comparable to those for the rest of the department’s courses. I assumed the answers to these mandated questions would be better informed because students had already been asked to respond to a more complex group of questions that pushed them to think more deeply about the distinctive features of the course and what they learned.
7. What additional observations did students offer in the open-ended questions that were an integral part of the evaluation form? Students were asked to elaborate on two sentence-completion statements and to respond to three specific questions. The two sentence-completion statements were (a) “The thing I liked most about this course is. . .” and (b) “The thing I liked least about this course is. . . .” The three specific items were (c) “Please describe how you think your ability to write has been improved as a result of this course,” (d) “What part of the course proved to be most interesting/stimulating?,” and (e) “Should the course materials (books, reading packet, handouts) be changed?” Students also had the option (f) of writing additional comments on the back of the evaluation form.

Interpreting the evaluation results

This teaching/learning approach to evaluation was used regularly over a five-year period. Because the questionnaire evolved as I gained experience using it, I report here on the results for the two most recent semesters, one class with fifty-two students and the other with forty-one students. What did this new approach to evaluation tell me that I needed to know about course content, design, and pedagogy? And, how did I react to the students’ comments?

Overall, students felt the course’s content objectives had been met, and they most valued the student-teacher interaction in the lectures and discussion sections. They appreciated the “active learning” nature of the course, particularly “learning how to relate course concepts to current economic events.” Student interest was most stimulated by the same activities that contributed most to their learning. Those who had already commented favorably on the importance of
“learning how to relate course concepts to current economic issues” and “learning to think more critically” wanted these activities to be even more heavily emphasized in the future. The high ranking given in response to the department’s evaluation question, “how would you rate the professor’s performance in this course?,” occurred despite the “more difficult” nature of the course and a somewhat greater reluctance to recommend the course to others.

The responses to the open-ended questions were positive and constructive. Despite the demanding nature of the course, student comments indicated that they appreciated the course, how the instructor organized and taught it, and what and how they learned.

The major criticism concerned the heavy workload; students regarded it as too great for the three credits they earned. Students objected to the amount of writing required and how it was evaluated, even though the course carried a “writing-intensive” label in the course catalog. Some students also commented that more should have been done to demonstrate how to write an analysis of a news article dealing with an economic issue. Students were not happy with the two question-writing activities, but still gave a high ranking to studying from the student-prepared exam questions that resulted from an activity they did not profess to enjoy. In addition, students not only did not like the book on writing but also objected to buying it in light of the minimal use made of it.

Now, my reactions. Student concerns about the workload had some merit. Yes, the course was much more demanding than most other courses, at least those in the social sciences and humanities. While it would have been easy to reduce the workload and the number of writing assignments, I am not sure that doing so would have been in the best interests of the students; many of them needed to sharpen their learning skills and experience. Yes, the grading was tough, but I attribute student concern in considerable part to often-rampant grade inflation in other disciplines. I viewed the escalating grade inflation as no reason for me to relax my grading standard. Yes, the reading packet should have contained a guide with examples of how to write a news analysis. Though guides were provided to help students develop other skills, such as writing discussion questions, I had failed to develop this particular type of guide. Yes, the question-writing activities were demanding, but students needed to develop this skill. Yes, the writing book was not used...
enough to warrant its purchase, even though every student should possess a writing book for general reference; in future offerings of the course, I would still require a writing book but make greater use of it.

My principal conclusion is that the course accomplished the goals I set for it, but that some fine-tuning was required. Most important was my need to do a better job of explaining to students the importance of what we were doing, why we were doing it, and how the various elements of the course fit together and reinforced each another.

**Lessons learned**

Developing and implementing this new instrument produced useful knowledge about the untapped potential of a teaching/learning approach to student evaluation of courses and instructors. By incorporating required questions from standard evaluation forms, individual faculty members can create evaluation forms that meet their own needs as well as those of their departments.

What most impressed me was the willingness of students to respond to the many questions in this much more detailed end-of-semester evaluation form. Not only did students respond to all fifty-five items, but they devoted considerable time and thought in responding to the open-ended questions. I was also impressed by the willingness of students to indicate through their detailed comments that they really cared about what they were learning and how the course and instructor contributed to their learning. There was no reason to believe these students were special in any sense. The course itself had no special prerequisites; it was one of three options open to students—a small honors course, a large lecture course with discussion sections led by teaching assistants, and this course.

What made the difference? It was the combination of a more challenging course, an evaluation instrument geared explicitly to the course, and an expectation that the responses would be used to improve the course. This experience demonstrates that by taking a teaching/learning approach to evaluation, faculty members can obtain helpful feedback to use in altering course design, objectives, and pedagogy. They

To equip students to practice their learning long after they graduate, individual faculty members must find new ways of combining course content, design, and pedagogy in order to engage students in their own learning more fully.
also can identify barriers to student learning and discover much about what their teaching is doing to enhance student learning.

Beyond this, what else did I learn? Most important, students are willing, even eager, to engage more fully in mastering course content and simultaneously improving their learning skills. They are willing to do so even with a heavier course workload and a tougher grading regime because they perceive positive benefits in terms of both what and how they learned. As the open-ended comments revealed, students felt they mastered the economic content and improved their ability to apply their learning to understanding and interpreting current economic issues and problems. They enhanced their writing and discussion skills through the wide range of learning activities; they increased their ability to think, write, and discuss analytically and critically; and they appreciated the instructor’s efforts to help them learn more and become better learners.

Readers interested in the “bottom line” will ask how the results presented above square with the responses to the three questions from the standard evaluation form. As is apparent from the preceding discussion, this course was perceived as more difficult than comparable entry-level courses in economics—i.e., large lecture courses and small honors courses. Yet compared to other entry-level economics courses, this course received a slightly higher ranking on recommending the course to others and a much more favorable ranking for the professor.

The proficiencies-oriented course was viewed as slightly more difficult than earlier versions of this same course, with its difficulty rating moving up from 3.7 to 3.8 on the five-point scale. The “recommend the course to a friend” rating dropped from 4.0 to 3.6, but was still higher than that for other comparable courses in the department. Finally, the “how would you rank the professor’s performance” rating rose slightly from 4.4 to 4.5, thereby increasing the gap between this course and other comparable courses in the department. These differences underestimate the impact of shifting to a full-fledged proficiencies course, because in the pre-proficiency versions many elements of the proficiencies approach were being gradually implemented and tested.

These additional results can be interpreted as follows. The heavier workload and greater difficulty of the course decreased its attractiveness. The negligible increase with respect to the “rate the professor” question can be attributed in considerable part to the instructor’s already high 4.4 rating in his prior teaching. The drop in the rating on recommending the course to others is probably attributable to the heavier workload. Although these results apply to a single course and a single instructor, they accord with the traditional view that more difficult courses are generally viewed as less attractive notwithstanding a high regard for the professors who teach them.

Conclusion
To equip students to practice their learning long after they graduate, individual faculty members must find new ways of combining course content, design, and pedagogy in order to engage students in their own learning more fully. They must give greater emphasis to what and how students learn, and what they can do with their learning after acquiring it. Above all, this means focusing on what students are learning and how their intellectual development is being stimulated in the process. Instituting a proficiencies-based approach to instruction and learning offers an effective means of accomplishing these objectives. The approach to course evaluation described here is an essential building block in constructing an effective proficiencies-based course.

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

NOTES
2. For more information on the structure of the course evaluation form as well as the detailed student responses for the course described in this article, see W. Lee Hansen, “Creating a Teaching/Learning Evaluation Instrument for Proficiencies-Based Economics Courses,” August 18, 2014, http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~whansen/?p=314.
Globalizing the Curriculum

How to Incorporate a Global Perspective into Your Courses

One often encounters two responses when academics are asked whether their courses could be changed to include a “global perspective.” The first is, “They already do; I discuss international issues along with others in my class.” The second is, “I do not need a global perspective, because my discipline is taught and practiced in the same way all over the world.” The former response tends to come from those in the social sciences and the humanities, while the latter tends to come from those in the physical and biological sciences and mathematics. While sincere and expressed by dedicated teachers, these responses do not address the problem of globalizing a course or a curriculum. The issue here is not that academics are uninterested in such a perspective, but rather that means to include global perspectives across the curriculum have never been adequately articulated.

Defining “globalization” and “global perspective”

The initial step toward articulating such a means involves defining both “globalization” and “global perspective” and describing their pedagogical importance. Globalization is a phenomenon that has several definitions. Irene Langran, Elizabeth Langran, and Kathy Oxment note that “globalization, propelled by technology and the marketplace, creates growing integration and interdependence.” The declining significance of local, national, or regional borders in areas of communication, economics, politics, and cultural exchange is generally perceived as a result of globalization. However, globalization is more than a movement up in scale from traditional relationships. Stephen White notes that “globalization is defined as the compression of the world internationally and the intensification of consciousness globally.” Such a definition involves a change in mindset that accompanies the changes in exchange and commerce. And as Toni Kirkwood notes, “Technical revolutions in transportation and communication systems have resulted in unprecedented cross-cultural and transnational interactions among nations and people. This paradigm shift has raised new consciousness of the roles individuals, institutions, nongovernmental organizations and nations play in the new millennium.”

Finally, Immaculate Namukasa states that globalization “refers to the ideological and structural changes that are directed toward an understanding of the interconnection, especially trading, of people in different parts and eras of the world. The present form of globalization involves a combination of broad cultural, economic, political, and technological forces that are changing the ground rules for human interaction on a worldwide scale.” This definition assumes that globalization is not just a process of interchange, but also a means of understanding the world in the midst of a major paradigm shift. As such, it affects all academic pursuits, since all disciplines are directed, at least in part, toward developing such understanding.

This insight forms the basis for a “global perspective,” a lens through which we examine not only the traditional subject matter of our...
disciplines, but also the manner in which we approach those disciplines. To take a “global perspective” is to go beyond the mere introduction of international issues into a course. Such issues can be studied according to the interactions of nation-states without reference to globalization. Similarly, the exercise goes beyond the mere assumption that one’s linguistic or symbolic languages are universally shared and utilized, and are therefore global by definition. Such assumptions raise the question of how specific conventions came to be generally accepted—especially in such fields as mathematics and the sciences, where a variety of cultures contributed to these conventions historically.

Integrating a “global perspective” into courses necessarily involves examining whether traditional disciplinary assumptions still apply in a global context and, if not, how they need to be translated in order to remain relevant. In what follows, I map out this process by tracing one “intellectual journey” in order to derive some general questions and principles. I start with a concept that is important to several disciplines, including political science, sociology, and psychology: public opinion. The exercise involves attaching the label “global” to the concept, and then attempting to analyze the meaning of the new term. In this case, the concept becomes “global public opinion” or “world opinion,” a concept I have previously explored in relation to traditional notions of public opinion.

Toward a notion of “world opinion”
Public opinion occupies a customary place in social and political analysis, and world opinion has of late infiltrated such analysis. Public opinion has many definitions, and there is general consensus on its overall meaning; world opinion often lacks definition, and its overall meaning remains vague. To address this problem, I performed content analyses of foreign newspapers of record in order to study how the concept of “world opinion” is used. But as with any study, the issues that preceded this analysis were even more important, since they defined the specific questions included in the content studies. For these issues, I am grateful to my students, in both the United States and Germany, who voiced the following questions:

• How can you talk about world opinion, since that implies everyone is in agreement, and we know there are huge variations in cultures and belief systems due to people’s differing values and interests?
• When you discuss world opinion, are you not really just talking about the opinions of major nations? If public opinion involves everyone
in a society, does that mean that world opinion involves everyone in the world?

- If world opinion exists, why do we still have countries?

Does the existence of a “global public opinion” mean that our traditional notions of public opinion within societies are no longer relevant?

The first question assumes that world opinion necessarily implies that all people and nations are in agreement about an issue. Such an interpretation, indeed, imposes upon the concept a restriction that does not apply to public opinion. Indeed, there are clearly individuals who are either not included in, or do not agree with, what we characterize as the “public opinion” on a given issue. Similarly, world opinion has to allow for dissension, and one must consider how to integrate disagreement into the concept.

The second question assumes that virtually everyone in the world must participate in world opinion in some manner; otherwise, either it is not valid or it only refers to the opinions of major nations that are the primary actors in the international arena. Again, however, such a restriction does not apply to public opinion. Clearly, there are individuals who are neither involved nor interested in some public issues, whether they are political, social, or cultural issues. Nonetheless, one does not assume that the major powers in the society, be they individuals or social institutions, define public opinion.

The third question assumes that the global level of world opinion necessarily supersedes all levels of opinion below it. However, public opinion allows for “publics” that exist below the level of the entire society. World opinion, like public opinion in the development of societies, merely adds another layer to the publics in which individuals participate, and from which they may draw their identities. Moreover, even though this global public encompasses more individuals than local or national publics, it is not higher in importance for decision making, identity, or values.

From this analysis, I have derived three interrelated approaches that are necessary for attaining a global perspective on a concept or discipline. First, one must take a *non-utopian approach*, noting that a globalized concept need not apply to or include everyone in the world. And third, one must take a *non-hierarchical approach*, noting that a globalized concept is not more salient to all issues and individuals than other expressions of the concept on the local or societal levels.

It goes without saying that a variety of problems must be addressed on the global level. These include “some of history’s most disparaging inequities among nations, environmental deterioration, ethnic nationalism, decline of the nation-state and the rampage of HIV/AIDS”

- to name but a few. A global perspective is forced upon us, in part, by the universality of the problems that concern us. However, there is another problem underscored by world opinion: different nations or regions of the world conceptualize these problems and their solutions in different ways.

Even an issue as dire as HIV/AIDS must be approached with the idea in mind that different cultures view health and illness—and, therefore, this condition—in different ways. Here, the global perspective is forced upon us by the *problem of universalities*—i.e., the notion that we must understand why and how different cultures have approached these issues in the past and present. The former consideration follows from the need for our disciplines to address the problems foisted upon us by globalization; the latter consideration follows from the contact we have with different societies through globalization—a contact that makes us aware that our disciplines often do not encompass the assumptions and approaches of other cultures. Indeed, there is a symbiotic relationship between the two problems. Global problems require global solutions that will involve peoples of different beliefs and cultures that, in turn, necessarily require us to adjust our disciplinary approaches to these problems. Conversely, different beliefs and cultures can offer insights into new means of approaching these problems that necessarily require one to study other cultures and beliefs in order to discover how they can be integrated into disciplinary approaches.

To attain a global perspective on a discipline or concept, therefore, it is also necessary to acknowledge both the *universality of problems* (a globalized approach is necessary because the problems facing individuals and nations are generally global in scope) and the *problem of*
universalities (a globalized approach is necessary because different cultures have different approaches to problems). One cannot assume automatically that a given disciplinary approach is universal. Instead, one must begin by understanding the history and beliefs of other cultures, and then adjust the approach accordingly.

The analysis of newspaper discourses related to notions of world opinion yielded the following preliminary description: ‘‘world opinion’ refers to the moral judgments of observers which actors must heed in the international arena, or risk isolation as a nation.’’

In terms of the three approaches identified above, world opinion is non-utopian, since it is simply one more consideration leaders must include before taking action; a leader or nation could easily decide to risk isolation by ignoring world opinion. It is non-unitary in that nations may be isolated from the international community due to their actions; hence, nations may exist either inside or outside of the world considered as a unit. It is non-hierarchical in that nations and national image play a role in world opinion, and hence are still important concepts on another level of analysis.

Further, this analysis considers the universality of problems in that the topics on the agenda for world opinion tend to be ones of concern to the international community, however it is defined.

It also considers the problem of universalities in that it does not assume that all nations will necessarily conceptualize the content or form of world opinion in the same manner. Instead, world opinion becomes a process that includes various national perspectives on what it might decree before it goes to completion.

The preliminary rule for introducing a global perspective into a discipline, then, includes approaching global concepts as non-utopian, non-unitary, and non-hierarchical. And it also includes taking into account both the universality of problems and the problem of universalities.

Next, I want to consider the integration of a global perspective into two other disciplines: citizen education and mathematics. This attempt is not meant to be exhaustive or to represent expertise in either field. Rather, the purpose here is to generate a seedbed of hypotheses by which a global perspective might reflect the paradigm shifts globalization entails.

**Approaching citizenship on a global level**

“Citizenship is most commonly discussed in the context of states.” This assertion from Langran, Langran, and Oxment’s essay about “global citizenship” would seem to render their term an oxymoron. However, as the authors discuss global citizenship, it is clear that their notion follows the preliminary rule proposed
But what happens when one leaves the social sciences and moves on to, say, mathematics?

Globalizing math

Mathematics is a discipline that seems to have the strongest claim to universality. It uses a universally understood nomenclature that crosses linguistic and national boundaries. With a commonly accepted symbolic system, mathematicians seem poised to claim that their discipline is global by nature and, therefore, needs no further reflection or alteration. However, mathematics, so conceived, can contain the utopian, hierarchical, and unitary elements that are antithetical to a genuine global perspective.

Namukasa notes that a “non-critical understanding, teaching, and use of mathematics may simply perpetuate oppressive values, pervasive ideologies, and power structures.” Accordingly, she points out, critical theorists argue that mathematics teaching may serve to impose its

experiential learning, noting how “experiential learning can help students . . . make a connection with those who are impacted by their actions.”

These experiences help students understand how global problems such as hunger, pandemics, and environmental degradation have clear ramifications that cross national borders. At the same time, such learning also “requires understanding of the experiences of others.” The authors discuss the work of Grant Cornwell and Eve Walsh Stoddard, who “have written about the challenges of learning about other realities in a world dominated by mainstream culture” and concluded that “learning about global citizenship requires ‘triangulation’ or ‘readings taken from as many locations as possible, especially readings that reflect the knower as viewed from the outside.’” As Cornwell and Stoddard note, when students from the US consider how they and their country are seen by others, the experience can be both ‘very disturbing and very liberating.’” Hence, through exposure to different worldviews regarding global problems, students also understand the problem of universalities.

In many ways, the political notion of citizenship represents the greatest challenge, especially when one looks for means by which individuals can be represented on the global level independently of their states. Here, though, the authors find that individuals can experience multiple levels of citizenship . . . the coexistence of identity with communities on the state and global level is indeed possible.

The psychological notion of citizenship assumes that individuals will develop an identity as members of a global community. However, as the authors note, because “individuals can experience multiple levels of citizenship . . . the coexistence of identity with communities on the state and global level is indeed possible.” The authors thereby recognize the non-hierarchical notion of citizenship. Individuals do not give up their national identities when they take on a global identity; neither does the global identity necessarily supersede national identity for citizens.

These entities do not represent all individuals or all interests; hence, this idea of global citizenship is non-unitary. NGOs can generate a global consciousness about issues that promotes individual participation—by, for instance, adopting the slogan “think globally, act locally.” Further, MNCs can sometimes promote issues such as human rights in different areas of the world. This may occur under pressure, as when threatened boycotts compelled some companies to divest holdings in South Africa during the Apartheid era. It might also make good business sense, as when corporations contribute to the environmental movement by “greening” their activities. Imperfect representation may still imply some representation, and non-unitary global citizenship may still imply partial citizenship.

Langran, Langran, and Oxment illustrate the universality of problems in their discussion of
symbolic language and the dominance of certain groups. Understanding mathematics in this way illustrates how its “universal” symbols are not non-utopian, opening a fresh perspective into this language. Further, post-structuralists argue that “mathematical meaning is determined by signs and a play of difference, and by a silenced, suffocated other.” What is often perceived as a set of skills or knowledge open to all becomes a hierarchical means of separation among groups. Analyzing this problem further illustrates how mathematics, too, must meet the challenge of being non-hierarchical in the face of global forces.

Finally, “situated cognition” analysts argue that one must understand the social, material, and cultural contexts in which mathematics is practiced or created as a “tool for human use and play”; they argue that “learning mathematics should happen in context and as a social and human activity rather than a non-corporeal discipline.” The teaching and practice of mathematics should be “non-corporeal” or non-unitary when understood within a global context. Instead, it integrates the various contexts in which it is practiced in different cultures and regions of the world.

This final issue relates to the problem of the assumed universality of problems in mathematics. It is commonly accepted that mathematics is a critical element in solving problems, social or otherwise. Accordingly, the “problem-solvers” are divided from others according to their relative ability to master the symbols and assumptions of mathematics. As Namukasa observes, the problem here is twofold: “The use of mathematics as a gatekeeper to educational and job opportunities in a society is . . . unjust because mathematics can no longer be considered culturally and socially neutral. Furthermore, an exclusive bias towards formal and abstract mathematics generates an illusion of certainty among the public that is especially unjust. Both the use of mathematics as a sieve and the illusions of validity generated by mathematics users serve to exclude the participation of a majority of lay people in decision making and in comprehension of decisions made.” It follows that such a “weeding out” process also excludes many, if not most, individuals from understanding the universality of problems, and how individual or governmental decisions in one place can have a potentially global impact.

This problem is reflected in the field of “ethno-mathematics,” which illustrates the problem of universalities. Practitioners of ethno-mathematics engage in “studying the mathematical notions and skills of various cultures, [assuming] that mathematical thinking is developed in specific cultural contexts with specific needs and ways of life. They analyze the relationship between culture and mathematics, questioning the predominant view that mainstream mathematics is culture-neutral.” A global perspective on mathematics forces one to confront the non-universality of many of the discipline’s assumptions. Establishing this perspective does not mean abandoning the traditional teaching of mathematics for some version of cultural relativism. Instead, it might mean including within a course, or as a separate course, some of the studies of ethno-mathematicians who “examine the history of mathematics, the cultural anthropology of ancient empires, and the mathematics of traditional societies to understand non-Western mathematical ways of knowing.” Such a perspective is critical for understanding the discipline, Namukasa explains, since “mainstream mathematics continues to mistakenly trace its origin solely to Greece, ignoring its historical bases in Egypt, Babylonia, India, and the Middle East, and the parallel mathematical pursuits of the Chinese, Japanese, and Inca-Aztec cultures.”
Marcus du Sautoy makes the same point in his documentary The Story of Maths, which emphasizes the multiple origins and interpretations of the discipline. Du Sautoy reveals, for example, that not only did the Phoenicians invent the concept of zero, but they also devised the number system with a base of sixty that we still use in marking seconds, minutes, and hours and in the definition of degrees in a circle. Studying mathematics from such a global perspective might easily open new areas of inquiry, based on the contributions from different cultures and questions about why those contributions have been retained or discarded.

Guidelines for creating a global perspective in the curriculum

As the previous three examples demonstrate, my preliminary rule for introducing a global perspective into a discipline can be applied when the appellation “global” is attached to some of the fundamental concepts of a given discipline. It is possible that not all elements of the rule will necessarily apply in each case. Nonetheless, I hope the preceding analyses provide a framework for faculty seeking to add a global perspective to their courses.

All disciplines have key concepts that help define their subject matter—in political science, for example, “power” or “the state”; in sociology, “community”; in medicine, “health” or “illness”; in anthropology, “culture.” The first step toward globalizing a course, I suggest, would involve faculty members gathering together from different disciplines and each choosing one key concept from their own area. Next, they would apply the adjective “global,” as in “global health” or “global culture.” They would then explore ways in which adding “global” changes the concepts, and determine which of their assumptions about the concepts remain valid.

In addition, they would be guided in how to apply my preliminary rule for introducing a global perspective into a discipline. When all are finished, they would present these concepts to the other faculty in their group for critique and comparison. From this basis, faculty members can then research additional materials about the global concept they have discussed, as a means of making the new concept a part of an existing course or the basis of a new course. With sufficient support and guidance, such a project could turn into a college- or university-wide effort in which faculty are supported in the creation of “global-intensive courses” that can be used across the curriculum to add a global component to undergraduate education.

The stakes for such a project are high. It is a truism that we exist in a globalized environment. But the truth behind this truism is that a non-globalized curriculum prepares students for a world that no longer exists—and that is no preparation at all.

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

NOTES
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., 3–4.
11. Ibid., 7.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 219.
18. Ibid., 211.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
In November 2011, I attended a joint symposium of the American Conference of Academic Deans and Phi Beta Kappa that was designed to wrestle with the question of why the humanities matter. At one session, we discussed three educational outcomes that are central to the humanities: critical thinking, empathetic thinking, and creative thinking. As I listened to a history professor lament that she doesn’t have time in her Western civilization class to engage students in any significant, in-depth critical thinking, I had my “ah-hah” moment for this particular conference. Such moments are common enough at conferences, but they typically fizzle under the pressures of job realities awaiting the return to home base. This time, however, I was able to turn that “ah-hah” into an “oh, yeah!”

The history professor’s explanation for not having time to dig deeply with her students rang true to me. As a professor of theatre history, I have faced the same demands of breadth over depth. I’ve also struggled with the fact that most students don’t know how to dig deeply on their own, nor do they have any real desire to do so. Instead, they simply memorize the information for the exams and promptly forget about it thereafter. What would happen, I wondered, if I could get my hands on these students when they first entered as freshmen? What if I could spend time with them in a course focused on the joys of digging deeply, a course where quality trumped quantity? Such a course would, I believed, better prepare them to get more out of the courses they would take in subsequent semesters. And if I could also focus on developing creative and empathetic thinking, as well as freshmen survival skills, perhaps this course could make a significant difference in their academic lives.

After returning from the conference, I was able to garner the support of my department and dean to design and pilot just such a course. The result was “Arthur Miller and Social Drama,” a new first-year orientation course for theatre majors that I taught in the fall 2012 semester.

**Background**

Many students begin their higher education careers poorly prepared to meet the challenge of thinking clearly and critically on their own about academic topics. While they have been trained to be test-takers, there usually has not been a strong focus on training them to be strong and independent thinkers. Additionally, many students lack the confidence, comfort, and courage to engage actively in classroom discussions. Fortunately, however, first-year students are ripe for improvement. In Ernest Pascarella’s study of the cognitive impacts of the first year, he notes that “the net effect of the first year of college on critical thinking skills . . . was nearly
75% of the estimated net effect of the first three years of college.” This statistic clearly indicates that the first year is a critical time in the academic life of students, representing a “substantial part of the total growth . . . attributable to the entire undergraduate experience.”

But more specifically, what sort of challenges should a first-year orientation course be designed to address? In Generation on a Tightrope, Arthur Levine and Diane Dean present a list of characteristics that today’s students bring to the college classroom. College students today tend to be

• weak in face-to-face social skills;
• immature, needy, timid, protected, and tethered to parents;
• pragmatic, career oriented, and determined to do well;
• hard working, but confuse quantity of work with quality of product;
• issue oriented, rather than ideological;
• weak in basic skills and cultural knowledge.

This portrait of today’s students rings true to me, based on my own teaching experience. It was my hope that the challenges represented by these typical characteristics could be more easily met in a first-year orientation course if students had a common interest in the subject matter and were in the same class as their fellow majors. It was my belief that if these challenges were addressed successfully, student satisfaction with the college experience overall would increase and student retention would improve. Students in the course would struggle with difficult material, but it would be material they cared about and they would not be struggling alone; they would have a support group of fellow majors. I also hoped that the preparation provided by such a course would enable them to dig more deeply into the survey-type courses they would take in subsequent semesters. Finally, the kind of orientation course I had in mind would encourage their empathetic understanding and their ability to engage the divergent ideas of their classmates. First-year students should learn to debate each other respectfully, while also learning to embrace multiple perspectives.

But there was one other important aspect of the first-year orientation course I wanted to design that required institutional support. Although I would be taking a discipline-specific approach, I proposed that the students should be excused from taking the university’s standard orientation seminar for new students. This would mean that, in addition to the disciplinary subject matter—in this case, Arthur Miller and his works—the course would need to cover the typical college survival information that has become the mainstay of our first-year program.

**Application**

Ultimately, “Arthur Miller and Social Drama” was approved to run as a pilot course. Scheduled to meet on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, this three-credit course would be the very first college class for these students, the one to welcome them to their new adventure. In all, eighteen students enrolled—an ideal number for what I had in mind. The syllabus included the following explanation of the course objectives:

This is a brand new course specially designed for you, freshmen theatre majors. It is designed to help make you as successful as possible in your academic studies. It is designed to thrill you and excite you by helping you become an expert on all things Arthur Miller. By the end of
the semester, you will know more about Miller and his work than anyone else on campus (well, except for Dean Fuller!). You will understand what is expected in a classroom discussion. You will understand what is expected from a college-level paper. Most importantly, the class will help you understand what it means to be a theatre artist/scholar.

The coursework consisted of reading and discussing five plays and ten essays, watching and discussing two films, and attending our department’s production of *The Crucible*. Students each wrote a paper based on a Miller play that was not read for class, and these papers were presented to the class in a formal symposium at the end of the semester. Scattered throughout the semester was time devoted to the first-year issues related to stress and time management, institutional values, and academic advising.

As I designed and then taught the pilot course, I kept in mind the characteristics of today’s college students listed above. It was my hope that the course would effectively address the challenges they present and, in doing so, have a positive and lasting impact on the students.

**Weak in face-to-face social skills**
A primary goal was to break down barriers that might prevent students from actively engaging in the course. Because the course relied predominantly on class discussion, it was critical that the students should feel comfortable with each other and with me. Therefore, I made sure that the first class meetings provided non-threatening opportunities for everyone in the class to say something. The use of typical ice-breakers allowed us all to learn more about each other. The result was the creation of a “safe zone” where students quickly learned that I valued their contributions and that I would insist on respect and empathy in response to opinions expressed during class discussions.

An exciting example of how this played out occurred toward the end of the semester, when we discussed Miller’s play *The Ride Down Mount Morgan*. This is a play about a polygamist who has kept his two families ignorant of each other’s existence. While there was heated debate, with the dominant opinion being one that condemned his actions, I was happy to see that the majority of the class displayed empathy for the character. This appears to be one of the play's goals, and the class mirrored Miller’s desire to feel empathy for his character while not condoning his behavior. This valuable life lesson had not been displayed earlier in the semester, when the students were much more closed-minded and judgmental about characters in the plays we read.

**Immature, needy, timid, protected**
Understanding who my students were and what internal hurdles they brought to the classroom was important for helping them feel better able to succeed in the often more challenging academic world of higher education. As we worked through the readings, I encouraged them to ask questions when they didn’t fully understand something they had read. I helped them feel comfortable doing so by sharing my own struggles with some of the material. I let them know when I encountered words that were unfamiliar to me, for example, and I struggled along with them to decipher the ideas communicated by particularly challenging passages in Miller’s essays.

I also encouraged the students to stand up for their own opinions when they said they disagreed with a point being made by a classmate (or me). I challenged the depth of their thinking at times, which often meant asking them to consider a broader realm of possibilities, rather than the singular, narrow view they were presenting. We discussed the merits of both depth and breadth of thinking. Throughout the semester, I continued to acknowledge the “fear” they were bringing to this new academic setting and tried to maintain a sense of safety in order to enable them to share their ideas openly with others.

**Pragmatic, career oriented, determined to do well**
A student's perceived need to take only those courses that will help them find employment after graduation could make it difficult to “sell” an in-depth, discipline-specific course such as this one. To focus so narrowly on one playwright for an entire semester is often the work of a graduate course, so why force that upon students just starting their college careers? The rationale I’ve already provided might make sense to those in academia, but a first-year student is not likely to understand. To anticipate this potential concern, I spoke about—and tried to infect the students with—my own thirst for knowledge, my ongoing pursuit to be a lifelong learner. I told them about the “adventure” I set for myself of reading everything published by Miller, the joys of watching an
artist grow and struggle to reach the highest levels of success. Most importantly, I told them that I had become an expert on Arthur Miller and that they would become experts as well.

To stand apart from others in any discipline requires hard work, deep knowledge, and a thirst to know as much as possible. I told the students that there were too many people out there who were competing for their jobs and that one thing they can do in order to rise above that competition is to learn as much as they can, to embrace the academic challenges that come their way, and never to settle for knowing just enough to get by.

**Hard working, but confuse quantity of work with quality of product**

This challenge was not terribly difficult to meet because of the “hard working” aspect. I simply had to redirect their focus from quantity to quality, to help them understand that “more is not always more.” The first hurdle in this redirection came in the form of the class discussions. A number of students had no difficulty speaking up and would easily chew up valuable class time before they said anything of true value. Getting them to speak succinctly was difficult but rewarding work. Being able to get them to see things from an audience’s perspective was one way of helping them get to the point.

I also took advantage of opportunities to point out that simply doing what was required was not good enough. Lots of people can put in the required number of hours or write the required number of pages, but that doesn’t equate to value. A good example to support this idea came from Miller’s play *The Man Who Had All the Luck*. In this early work, Miller gives us a character, David, who works hard and always has great success in any venture he undertakes. David believes that he’s just lucky, unable to accept that there’s anything special about the work he actually does. By the end of the play, he comes to accept that his good fortune is the result of his quality work and the choices he has been making, not the result of simply putting in a lot of hours on his various projects. He comes to this realization when his brother, who has practiced all his life to be a professional baseball pitcher, learns that he just doesn’t have what it takes because he has spent all of his time practicing one aspect of the game. His quantity of work was high, but the quality was lacking.

**Issue oriented, rather than ideological**

I found this characteristic to be only partly reflected in my students, which led to some interesting classroom debates. Some of my students were firmly set in their ideological ways. While that is not necessarily a bad thing, it did give me the opportunity to encourage a more open mindset. It also meant that these particular students had to defend their ideologies. Simply parroting the beliefs of their parents, for example, was not going to work. I believe that while some adjusted their thinking, others learned to strengthen their beliefs through well-supported debate.

Where Arthur Miller proved to be a most effective choice for this class was in his issue-focused writing. As a social dramatist, Miller always took a high moral ground in his attempts to help readers and audiences face societal challenges. Reading *All My Sons*, for example, led us to discuss the serious consequences of actions taken, and *Death of a Salesman* enabled a discussion of personal integrity. *The Crucible* spun its theme of hypocrisy into our discussions, while the essay “Kidnapped” allowed us to talk about the traps of assuming the worst in others. Because many of the students did tend to be issue oriented rather than ideological, these class discussions were especially lively. Indeed, student engagement was higher than I’ve experienced in nearly thirty years of teaching.

**Weak in basic skills and cultural knowledge**

It is hardly news to report that student writing skills are in a sorry state today. Most first-year students are required to take a composition class in their first semester, but these classes are often large and unable to provide individual attention. This is why, for one of the paper assignments in my course, I required the students to turn in a draft and to meet with me about it in an individual conference setting. Even for students fortunate enough to have a good freshman composition class, this writing requirement was, I believe, a valuable addition.

Time management was also addressed. This is certainly a skill that most first-year students lack, and that lack is especially noticeable to them as they are now solely responsible for getting themselves up and moving. We devoted a day to focusing on time-management skills directly related to their current schedule of classes and the syllabi they had collected. We worked together on a system to organize their schedules
With regard to cultural knowledge, our focus on Arthur Miller proved to be helpful in meeting a particular challenge of today’s students. His long career and direct involvement in many cultural touchstones gave me the opportunity to educate students about certain aspects of the Great Depression, the American response to the Second World War, the Holocaust, and the House Un-American Activities Committee.

Results
A course evaluation was administered in the final week of the semester, and I waited anxiously, as most faculty do, for the results. Several weeks later, when I got the evaluations back, I was pleased to discover that they were very positive—so positive, in fact, that I worry about being able to repeat the success with a new class. Following is a sampling of the students’ responses to the question, “In what ways has this class impacted your life?”

• Through this semester I came to better understand what it means to be human and treat other human beings the way you want to be treated.
• I have come to understand what we often discussed in class: the unspoken social contract that we all share with each other.
• I feel that now I have a need and a wish to speak out that I did not have before. I can be very reserved with my opinion when I should not be, and this is a realization that I have come to thanks to this class.
• This class allowed me to develop a new passion, one that I didn’t know I had before.
• We read so many of Miller’s works, and I left wanting to read more. I’ve set a goal for myself to try and read every one of his plays.
• I think one of the biggest lessons I’ve learned because of this class is to respect the opinions of others.

Final thoughts
A discipline-specific approach to the first-year orientation course opens up many possibilities across the campus. The pilot course described here was focused on theatre, but faculty in other disciplines could also pick a narrow topic in which first-year students can dig deeply and wrestle with some of the same thematic issues raised here. It may be easy to imagine such a course for any discipline in the humanities, but what about the sciences or business? Would a focus on ethics work well for an orientation course for first-year students in these fields? I would hope so. It seems that we often wait too long in a student’s college career—and, in some cases, until graduate school—before we start challenging their ethical standards. But why wait? Students are capable of rising to the bars we set for them. And a discipline-specific orientation course for first-year students offers an excellent early opportunity.

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NOTES
If, as I suggest, soul-making is integral to education, then it ought to make itself felt in all areas of academic life.

At the Council of Independent Colleges’ 2014 Presidents Institute, New York Times columnist David Brooks opened his keynote address by recounting the final meeting of a senior seminar that he taught at Yale. On that day, he asked every student to cite what was the most transformative book each had encountered over four years in college. Unexpectedly, several students responded that they had kept so busy networking and participating in activities, including community service, to burnish their resumes that they barely had time to do assigned readings for class, much less read a book through and reflect on it. One student said he was saving favorite texts to read after graduation.

Brooks went on to lament that discourse among his students is dominated by economic concerns, where what graduates might do to gain employment takes precedence over what kind of people they aspire to be, where the emphasis on outcomes has led them to value what they can measure rather than trying to measure what they should value. Privileged is a utilitarian culture of external validation. Too often lost is the sense that college has some stake in developing the internal landscape of students’ lives.

By contrast, for Brooks and for many of us, college was a time for immersing ourselves in texts that formed our sense of ourselves and how we might relate to the world. There was no more important activity than reading, musing, and cultivating alternative narratives of the soul.

What I propose as needful in higher education today is a renewed urgency and commitment to assist our students in forming their souls. And if, as I suggest, soul-making is integral to education at our institutions—whether secular or religious—then it ought to make itself felt in all areas of academic life.

Soul-making

What do I mean by soul-making? In an 1819 letter, the poet John Keats posed the question in this way: “There may be intelligences or sparks of the divinity in millions, but they are not Souls till they acquire identities, till each one is personally itself. . . . How then are Souls to be made? How then are these sparks which are God to have identity given them so as ever to possess a bliss peculiar to each one’s individual existence?” For Keats, the soul is not a “thing.” It is tantamount to the individual identity a person forges in the course of living. It is the self as formed by the narrative circumstances of one’s life.

Keats proceeds in the letter to describe the development of the soul as the interaction of three materials: “the Intelligence, the human heart (as distinguished from intelligence or Mind) and the World or Elemental space suited for the proper action of Mind and Heart on each other for the purpose of forming the Soul.” The world is the staging area, what Keats calls “the vale of Soul-making.” The intelligence refers to the mind, the capacity for apprehension and analysis with which humans are born. But it is the heart that Keats describes as the mediator between the mind and the world, and thus the

Bobby Fong was, until his death in September 2014, president of Ursinus College. This article was adapted from the author’s address to the Council of Independent Colleges’ Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education Chaplaincy Conference, which was held in Chicago, Illinois, on March 29, 2014.
conduit to soul-making. We begin as undifferentiated minds, intelligences without individual identities. But we are capable of learning, and in our ability to apprehend and create knowledge, our eyes are opened, and we can become as gods. We are schooled in the world, a world of circumstance and contingency that the mind struggles to apprehend. It is not the learnings of the mind that make the individual, however. The wisdom of the soul is knowledge of the world filtered through the medium of the heart. And it is a particular aspect of the world to which the heart must respond: the circumstances of a “World of Pains and troubles,” a “Place where the heart must feel and suffer in a thousand diverse ways!”

At this juncture, I want to elaborate on two aspects of Keats’s conception of soul-making in order to offer some thoughts on our educational enterprise. First, for Keats, the cultivation of the mind alone is insufficient to create an individual identity or soul. I suggest that current tendencies to regard education as the accumulation of knowledge and skills for the workplace would have been greeted by him with dismay. Making a living is necessary for subsistence, but in what way does this differentiate humanity from ants in a colony or bees in a hive? Where is aspiration, where is creativity, where is beauty, where is love, where is personal meaning and purpose? Where are the “sparks of the divinity”? Keats might ask, “How can schooling contribute to the process of individualization so that each student is afforded opportunity to develop a sense of self and its relation to the world?”

Let me offer a concrete instance of how schooling might facilitate soul-making. At Ursinus College, all first-year students are required to take a two-semester, common-syllabus course—the Common Intellectual Experience, or CIE—consisting of readings and experiences organized around three perennial questions: What does it mean to be human? How should we live our lives? What is the universe, and how do we fit into it? The questions are perennial because there is no universal agreement as to the answers. Sages and mystics, legislators and poets, philosophers and scientists have posed answers that have served to root individual lives and buttress entire civilizations. The answers over the ages comprise the deepest wells of human meaning from which our students are urged to drink.

The course is integrally experiential. It’s not simply a survey of ideas but a challenge to each student: how would you answer the three questions, and what texts most embody your responses? Because the responses must be the individual student’s, the act of discerning becomes an exercise in defining personal identity, an episode in narrating one’s personhood.
the course, the questions become the organizing frame within which an Ursinus education occurs. The choices of major, courses, activities, residential communities become opportunities to work out one’s answers to the three perennial questions. And our hope is that those questions become touchstones for how our graduates determine to live self-conscious and intentional lives. For many will find their answers changing in the course of encountering circumstances that prove the heart.

Many institutions have courses and experiences that cultivate not only the mind but also the heart. In Hong Kong, a term used interchangeably with liberal learning is “whole person education.” It is this kind of orientation, this aspect of educational mission, that I think Keats’s conception of soul-making would privilege.

Second, I note that what Keats calls “the provings of the heart” are intimately tied to feeling and suffering the pains and troubles of the world. By contrast, for many of our students, pains and troubles, setbacks and failures, accidents and disease, discipline and sanctions are unexpected and even unwarranted deviations from the callow presumption that their lives should be a smooth progression from success to success. Suffering is regarded a consequence of injustice or pathology. If troubles come, then the world should be reformed or the individual medicated. Let me be clear: we should be grateful for the philosophical, political, and social progress that has engendered a more capacious sense of common humanity and universal rights, and we have benefited in body and mind from advances in science and medicine. But there is a difference between a therapeutic outlook, one that regards pains and troubles as encumbrances to be resolved, and a more tragic view of the world that sees as part of being human the “heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks / That flesh is heir to.”

Our identities are expressed in our life narratives, and those narratives necessarily encompass the pains and troubles of our own lives and those of the world. It is through a heart pierced by pain and trouble that we open ourselves to mercy for our own frailties and to compassion for those of others. In pathos we cultivate pity. As educators, we need to guide our students in accommodating themselves to the pains and troubles of the world so as to school their hearts and engender their souls without daunting their courage and hope.

**Cultivating humanity**

I don’t want to ground an appeal for soul-making only in the vision of a nineteenth-century Romantic poet, as generative as I think his musings are. Let me suggest an equivalence between Keats’s conception of soul-making and the defense of contemporary liberal education as enunciated by Martha Nussbaum in her book *Cultivating Humanity.* Nussbaum weaves a complicated skein that combines insights from the classical tradition and multicultural studies. Central to her vision, however, is that she too specifies what we should aspire to engender in our students.

Nussbaum describes three values that should characterize liberal education. First, our graduates should develop the capacity to critically examine themselves and the society that has formed them. Our students come to us with inherited ideas and values inculcated by family, school, religious and civil authorities, and the general culture. The Greeks referred to this as *doxa,* common or received opinion. Tenets of received opinion are not necessarily wrong, but they have not been intentionally examined and adopted by students as their own beliefs rather than the inherited legacy of their forebears. This critical examination of self and society is the essence of Socratic reflection, where the mind is honed for discernment. It is the heart of the examined life.

Second, Nussbaum believes that education should be about exposing students to the unfamiliar, to the variety of the world. We generalize from experience, and too often we assume that our own experience is normative. Education is about confounding previous experience. This ranges from gaining a more nuanced understanding of the natural world to learning to live with human difference. In particular, Nussbaum advocates for encounters with minority voices and non-Western cultures as a way of developing a more capacious sense of the variety of ways in which peoples can express universal needs and aspirations. In our pursuit for what binds us as a common humanity, we can’t forget that we cannot be human in general: we express our humanity in particular culturally mediated ways. Language is a quintessential human capacity, but no one speaks “language,” one speaks English, or Chinese, or Swahili. We must both affirm
the claims of universal humanity and uphold a commitment to cultural diversity. We must affirm equal opportunity and valuing individuals according to their achievement, but we must also strive to give place and voice to different cultures and practices, acknowledging that the very definitions of “success” and “happiness” are culturally mediated. For Nussbaum, engendering a cosmopolitan mindset means balancing how universal human capacities are expressed in culturally specific ways. It does not obviate the need for judgment, but it does call for sensitive, generous, and patient discernment of what constitutes truth and falsehood, right and wrong. We need to encourage our students to appreciate the occasions when they are uncomfortable with the strangeness of the world. Those very moments can be occasions for initiation into the variety of the world, where the intelligence is cultivated and circumstances enable the maturation of the heart.

Third, students need to develop empathy, the capacity to place themselves in the situation of others. For Nussbaum, this can occur in study abroad, in a residential college, in any activity that rouses a sense of human connection. Above all, it can be rooted in the narrative imagination where works of literature enlarge our sense of life’s contingencies. James Baldwin famously said, “You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read. It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me the most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, who had ever been alive.” Whether through a text, an experience, or the model of a life we encounter, we learn to test alternative pathways to how we ourselves might live. Indeed, as teachers, our lives are texts our students read. Our students seek ways in which others’ stories can constitute strands in their own narratives.
For Nussbaum in *Cultivating Humanity*, flourishing is characterized by critical examination, experience in the variety of the world, and empathy for others. But to echo Keats, what is critical examination but the schooling of the mind, and what is experience but encountering the circumstances of the world, and what is empathy but the maturation of the heart?

David Brooks called for renewed attention in college to cultivating the internal landscapes of our students’ lives; Martha Nussbaum vigorously defended a liberal education that would produce a cosmopolitan mindset for citizens of the world; Keats described a process of soul-making that I submit binds the three of them, and us, in a common project. The consequence of my argument is that if soul-making constitutes a proper purpose of education, then it should be present in the language, mission, professional development, curriculum, and cocurriculum of an institution. In discussing each of these areas, I will in some instances divide my remarks into commentary directed to religiously based institutions and observations that pertain to secular, more heterodox places. The challenges can be different in each sphere.

### Language

At the secular college, we are accustomed to a rhetoric of means. We seek to school our students in knowledge and proficiencies that will stand them well as they pursue their career and life goals. But too often we are leery of the language of character and values. We go so far as to raise up academic virtues such as self-discipline, honesty, and tolerance, but sparse is the language of goodness, transcendence, and soul-making. We fear that such invocations either clang of archaism or will be taken as attempts to impose a theistic worldview on the suspicious and unwilling. Nonetheless, if soul-making is a proper purpose of higher education today, we must find the courage and ingenuity to develop a rhetoric of ends, of the purposes of human life.

If soul-making is a proper purpose of higher education today, we must find the courage and ingenuity to develop a rhetoric of ends, of the purposes of human life.

In my disquisition on Keats and Nussbaum, I have sought to enunciate the language of soul-making in terms that can be claimed by theists but do not necessitate a theistic commitment as a prerequisite for developing an individual human identity. Of late, philosophers like Nussbaum have laid claim to both the Greco-Roman Stoic and the Judeo-Christian traditions in formulating a framework of virtue ethics that may be shared across cultural, religious, and political boundaries. Such values include the solidarity of humankind, the efficacy of reason, and the need for self-sacrifice; personal virtues such as integrity, diligence, and self-control; and social virtues such as justice, tolerance, and benevolence. Such virtues and their resulting behaviors are not grounded in a particular dogma, but they are markers of goodness to which people of various faiths, or no faith, can subscribe.

At religious institutions, the challenge with regard to language is different. There the rhetoric of ultimate ends is foundational, sometimes to the point that its use is so customary as to lose potency. And of what good is salt that has lost its savor? The challenge here is to renew the language of faith for a generation for whom it is a legacy but not one personally examined and claimed as one’s own. It is here that perhaps language projects at secular universities and religious colleges might share a common purpose: to find ways of speaking of soul-making that can affirm the adherents of particular traditions while urging those outside a particular faith to consider the purposes of human flourishing.

### Mission

From language we proceed to the matter of institutional mission. At religious institutions, the mission statement is an explicit declaration of education as the working out of a faith vision. But such statements are expressions of what in Christianity is considered special grace: the particular benefits conferred on the company of the committed. It is most encompassing at institutions where all members of the community have subscribed to a common creed. Religious colleges today, however, often serve students from a variety of faith backgrounds. Moreover, one object of religious higher education is to prepare graduates to work and serve in the world, a world of believers and non-believers, a world imbued with common grace where it rains alike on the just and the unjust. In mission, there must be a balance between an education rooted in common grace, knowledge and perspectives...
accessible to all learners, and the encouragement of experiences of special grace, those rooted in faith.

By contrast, at the secular college, statements of mission tend to be couched in utilitarian terms; students are to be equipped with knowledge and skills to earn livings and to be responsible citizens. However, what are the purposes of productive living and responsible citizenship? How we live should give rise to probings as to why we live. Mission statements are periodically reviewed in religious and secular institutions alike, and any review of institutional mission should lead to questions of student purpose and to consideration of the activities, curricular and cocurricular, whereby opportunities are created for exploration of purpose.

**Professional development**

From language and mission, let me turn to the topic of professional development. New faculty come to our institutions educated in their subjects and sometimes in how to teach them, but few have had a formal opportunity to reflect on what it means to join a campus community and to contribute to its mission. They have to learn how to take possession of the curriculum, both to teach within the structures that greet them and to contemplate how those structures can be modified to better advantage the purposes of education at their institution. Most religious colleges have required courses that ask students to learn about their faith tradition and to do spiritual reflection. New faculty need to be oriented and mentored to find their footing in such courses. That opportunity is no different at the secular college. Above, I mentioned Ursinus College’s CIE program, which is staffed by faculty from across the disciplines and is a mandated teaching assignment for all new faculty. Each first-time instructor is partnered with two veteran instructors to form a triad for support, and the CIE faculty meets weekly to examine the text being studied.

But faculty development should not be limited to matters of the curriculum. A residential campus community offers multiple opportunities for encounters with students beyond the classroom. What does it mean for faculty and staff to engage with students when questions of individual identity invariably arise?

Butler University is a secular institution, but it has a Center for Faith and Vocation that has sponsored an annual faculty-staff seminar on vocation, where enrollees meet to discuss how issues of identity and spirituality make themselves felt on campus, for themselves and the students, in the classroom and out. Over the years, a number of enrollees have been agnostics who nonetheless understand that like race or gender, religious roots are significant shapers of student perspectives, and one can’t teach or guide students without an awareness and sensitivity to these dimensions. There is opportunity, even at the secular university, to engage in faculty and staff development if there is an institutional commitment to soul-making.

**The curriculum and the cocurriculum**

At the heart of teaching and learning is the curriculum, the autobiography of the faculty declaring what, at this particular time, it believes students ought to know and do in order to be certified as educated people. What is valued in the academic enterprise finds a place in the curriculum, and what is considered essential becomes a requirement, in some cases for all students. Are occasions for soul-making found in the curriculum? This has to do with not only what is taught but also how subjects are handled.

I taught a general education literature class at Hope College that included Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple*. The discussion one day had to do with the nature of love, and the topic of Celie’s lesbian relationship with Shug came up. One of my students quietly but firmly described her sense of the matter, that while she believed...
homoerosexuality was contrary to God’s order, she understood how Celie, a victim of rape and abuse, might find love and acceptance in a same-sex relationship. My student wasn’t opining on God, sin, or sexuality, although the novel is accessible to these approaches for analysis. She was testifying to an occasion for empathy, an instance of entering into a life, however fictional, of another, and finding a common bond of humanity with someone whose destiny was very unlike hers.

A commitment to soul-making should engender a climate where students are able to find themselves in the subjects they study. And that climate extends far beyond the classroom. The process of soul-making takes place in advising sessions, dormitory talks, interactions at meals, artistic productions and athletic competitions, special interest clubs, off-campus internships, and service projects. There is tremendous opportunity across the cocurriculum.

One aspect of cocurricular life that has grown in prominence in recent years is community service. A mark of the citizen is altruism, and opportunities to serve others fulfill Nussbaum’s dictum that education should expose students to people different from themselves and circumstances different from their own. At its best, community service cultivates empathy, encourages solidarity between students and those they serve, and creates common ground among students of otherwise different persuasions. The lasting benefit of community service to our students lies in the opportunity to reflect on why they do it, both for themselves and in the company of others. Here again we recur to various themes treated above: the call of David Brooks to cultivate the inner landscape of student lives; Martha Nussbaum’s conception of education as preparation of a cosmopolitan citizen equipped to contribute to a world alongside people very different from oneself; and the sense of John Keats that individual identity is forged through experience with the pains and troubles of life.

In a column on ministering to those who suffer, David Brooks wrote, “We have a tendency, especially in an achievement-oriented culture, to want to solve problems and repair brokenness—to propose, plan, fix, interpret, explain and solve. But what seems to be needed here is the art of presence—to perform tasks without trying to control or alter the elemental situation.”7 In trying with all best intentions to do for others, we can end up imposing our sense of rightness on them, in essence violating their personhood, their souls, or we end up frustrated by the intractability of suffering. Our best gift sometimes, to others and to ourselves, is simply to be present, to do what we can without “solving” the problem, at least on that day. Enduring the suffering of others, no less one’s own, calls for a maturity and depth of self that is the essence of soul-making.

**Conclusion**

I have sought here to clarify why soul-making is needful in higher education. Please take what I’ve said not as more burdens to be shouldered but opportunities to educate your communities in love. Our colleges are being inveigled to better prepare our students for the world of work. But in cultivating mind and heart, in enlarging discernment, tolerance, and empathy, what are we about if not teaching students to love wisely? Martha Nussbaum wrote, “It is possible to love one’s neighbor without knowing anything about them, without enriching one’s reason by factual knowledge and one’s imagination through narrative. But it is not very likely that ignorant people will direct their love in adequate practical ways. . . . All universities can and should contribute to the development of citizens who are capable of love of the neighbor . . . believing that love at its best is intelligent and that higher education can enhance its discrimination.”8 May it be so.

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**NOTES**

2. Ibid., 291.
3. Ibid., 290.
4. Ibid., 291.
HIGHER EDUCATION in the United States has been a source of pride but also the target of continuous debates, criticisms, and calls for reform. In the first decade of this century, concerns were focused on the effectiveness of educational practices and the quality of student learning, as well as access and escalating costs. As a consequence, there were increasing demands for accountability. These demands for accountability, however, masked the fact that colleges and universities were being asked not just to perform their traditional functions better and more efficiently, but also to be responsive to a new set of societal needs reflecting the challenges and opportunities of our knowledge-based economy and the pluralistic, globally interconnected world of the twenty-first century.

As costs continue to escalate and confidence that higher education is fulfilling its promise declines, the fundamental purposes, value, and underlying educational model are now being questioned. On the one hand, colleges and universities are being criticized for not engaging the “big questions” that involve ultimate values and standards and there are calls to include moral, civic, and political development and preparation for reflective citizenship as central goals of undergraduate education. On the other hand, colleges and universities are being called on to abandon their commitment to providing a broad, liberal education and instead focus on connecting college education more directly to the needs of the economy.

In Beyond Reason and Tolerance: The Purpose and Practice of Undergraduate Education, I argue that in order to be responsive to twenty-first-century societal needs for civic-minded graduates who have the capacities and dispositions to engage difference and generate knowledge in the service of society, higher education needs to transform its purposes and practices. To meet this challenge, I argue in the book that higher education needs to recommit to providing a formative undergraduate liberal education and adopt a developmental model to guide educational practices. In this article, I argue that just as the shift to make student learning, rather than teaching, central constituted a paradigm shift, adopting a developmental model constitutes a new paradigm for undergraduate education. The impetus for the new paradigm comes from the social contract, higher education’s responsiveness to twenty-first-century societal needs, and advances in developmental science.

The social contract

The dynamic tension between the purposes of an undergraduate education and its guiding model goes to the heart of the social contract for higher education. What does society expect from colleges and universities? How can the multiple expectations be integrated? What are colleges and universities uniquely able to provide?

Simply stated, colleges and universities are afforded a high degree of autonomy in the belief and expectation that they will operate in the service of society. This contract requires that higher education be responsive to societal needs through doing what colleges and universities are uniquely structured to do: generate knowledge in the service of society, and provide

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an educational experience that prepares students to meet societal needs and realize a meaningful and rewarding life.

One distinguishing characteristic of American higher education is that it adapts in response to societal needs for knowledge, expertise, and leadership. American higher education—especially in its most formative moments—has been characterized by a sensitive recognition of its civic role. As Harold Shapiro points out, “Higher education in America, whether public or private, has always drawn its most creative energy from the desire to meet its civic responsibilities.”

Other distinguishing characteristics include fundamental commitment to the value of individual differences and bringing diverse perspectives to bear on major issues and recognition of the importance and power of knowledge in modern life. Louis Menand identifies “the pursuit, production, dissemination, application, and preservation of knowledge” as “the central activities of a civilization” and suggests that the “ability to create knowledge and put it to use is the adaptive characteristic of humans.” This view of knowledge as a form of human capital, along with the recognition that it is unevenly distributed and affords advantages to those who have knowledge or access to it over those who have less, is the basis for another defining characteristic of American higher education that Menand identifies: “As a society, Americans are committed to the principle that the production of knowledge should be uninhibited and access to it should be universal. This is a democratic ideal.”

William Sullivan argues, however, that the view that “the academy exists to research and disseminate knowledge and skills as tools for economic development and the upward mobility of individuals” has resulted in a focus on individualism that leaves “the larger questions of social, political, and moral purpose out of explicit consideration.” Similarly, Donald Harward claims that by allowing higher education to be framed as a commodity and students as customers, “we have reinforced the popular understanding of higher education as a private gain.” When the investment in higher education is perceived as a benefit to the individual rather than to society, funding drops lower on the public’s priority list.

Responsiveness to societal needs is one source of guidance for formulating higher education’s purposes and practices. However, in being adaptive and responsive to societal needs, it is also essential to understand and maintain the special nature and role of the university as a place of inquiry and critique. As Menand observes, “It is the academic’s job in a free society to serve the public culture by asking questions that the public doesn’t want to ask, investigating subjects it cannot or will not investigate, and accommodating voices it fails or refuses to accommodate.”

### Societal needs of the twenty-first century

With this understanding of the social contract, we can consider the particular needs of society in the twenty-first century to which higher education must be responsive. I believe that the major challenge is to improve the quality of undergraduate education so that students are prepared to meet society’s twenty-first-century needs for civic-minded individuals who have the personal skills, dispositions, and intellectual capabilities to work effectively and live together in a more global society with many different kinds of people with tolerance, understanding, and mutual respect. The major problems confronting society exceed the talents of individuals working in isolation and require the collective power of human diversity reflected in the range of individual differences in creativity, problem solving, talents, and experiences.

Problem solving requires the formation and integration of teams of individuals with diverse talents, skills, and knowledge. Effective leadership is no longer a matter of command and control but requires the skills to connect and collaborate and the ability to enable and empower others to maximize their contributions to team functioning. Effective leaders engender support, trust, and confidence and inspire performance by understanding the interests, values, and intentions of others. Effective leadership requires emotional intelligence—which John Mayer, Peter Salovey, and David Caruso define as “the ability to engage in sophisticated information processing about one’s own and others’ emotions and the ability to use this information as a guide to thinking and behavior”—and the capacities for perspective taking and empathy, as well as cognitive skills. These capacities are essential for leadership in a world increasingly characterized by both multicultural engagement and the need for collaborative team functioning. Furthermore, the forces of globalization result in not only increasing engagement of countries, cultures, and markets but also interdependency and heightened potential for conflict among
diverse groups and cultures, along multiple dimensions of difference, around numerous issues. In particular, society has a pressing need for higher education to prepare individuals who have the capabilities to go beyond tolerance and constructively engage political, ethnic, and religious differences.

To be responsive to this societal need and prepare students to engage difference constructively, higher education must adapt by transforming its educational goals and practices. Developing the skills of reasoning, critical thinking, problem solving, and effective oral and written communication have been long-standing goals of higher education. These goals are no less important in the twenty-first century. In fact, students will need to develop the higher-order intellectual skills necessary to discern among competing claims, construct meaning from complex information, and generate and apply knowledge to address complex problems. While necessary, however, these traditional goals are not sufficient.

From my perspective as a psychologist, the ability to engage difference constructively also requires the development of an interrelated set of intellectual and personal capabilities: a personal epistemology that reflects a sophisticated understanding of knowledge, beliefs, and ways of thinking; empathy and the capacity to understand the mental states of others; and an integrated sense of identity that includes values, commitments, and a sense of agency for civic and social responsibility. In Beyond Reason and Tolerance, I address the nature and development of personal epistemology, empathy, and identity and review the evidence regarding effective practices that colleges and universities can employ, such as service learning, to promote the development of these essential capacities.

Society has a pressing need for higher education to prepare individuals who have the capabilities to go beyond tolerance and constructively engage political, ethnic, and religious differences.
Here, the focus shifts to the adoption of a developmental model as a new paradigm for liberal education that is intentionally formative. But first, we will consider the reframing of liberal education for a new era, a process that has been ongoing for some time.

Reframing the liberal arts and sciences model
Beyond transforming its educational goals and practices, adaptation to the societal needs of the twenty-first century requires a reframing of the underlying liberal arts and sciences model of undergraduate education for a new era. The reframing has been an ongoing process fostered by higher education professional associations. For example, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) has maintained a several-decades-long focus on promoting the role of higher education in fostering social responsibility, civic engagement, and practical liberal education as the most empowering form of learning for the twenty-first century. Practical liberal education reflects the intentional integration of the traditional liberal education focus on developing intellectual and personal skills with the traditional professional and technical focus on solving complex problems.

AAC&U also has sustained a multiyear dialogue among colleges, universities, and employers to improve the quality of undergraduate education through formulating learning outcome objectives, identifying and implementing high-impact practices, and adopting an approach to accountability in which assessment is designed to improve learning. These efforts have amounted to a twenty-first-century “re-invention” of liberal education for all students that is characterized by three formative themes: cultivating inquiry skills and intellectual judgment; personal and social responsibility and civic engagement; and integrative and applied learning. More specifically with regard to personal and social responsibility, Robert Reason argues that multiple
objectives are involved, including recognizing and acting on one’s responsibility to the wider society; engaging diverse and competing perspectives; and developing competence in ethical and moral reasoning and action. Reason further contends that, “Even in an era of decreased resources and increased accountability, a comprehensive approach to encouraging the development of personal and social responsibility is needed.”

In “An Education for the Twenty-First Century: Stewardship of the Global Commons,” Douglas Bennett and his colleagues argue that the earth has become a place of global cultures, and increasingly a global commons, with a high level of interdependence. The implication is that higher education must prepare women and men for participation in this commons through developing an array of literacies and, most importantly, the learning of skills that are essential to effective action, skills and dispositions that promote constructive rather than destructive engagement with others: “The common denominator we are seeking has something to do with providing learning experiences for our students that enable them to value, to examine, to struggle with, to negotiate, and ultimately to take joy in the fact of human differences.”

The paradigm shift of situating students in the context of a world held in common promotes expanding the traditional liberal arts focus to include collaboration with others in knowledge generation and decision making and constructively engaging differences.

Recently, a reframing of structural dimensions of undergraduate education has also been proposed. For example, Paul Lingenfelter has proposed a shift in the traditional undergraduate education model that has held time constant with learning the variable. He proposes making learning the constant and time the variable. Relatedly, consideration is being given to moving away from credit hours and toward developing more meaningful evidence of students’ competencies. Similarly, because the traditional undergraduate degree does not indicate specific competencies and proficiencies, and in order to facilitate students studying at more than one institution, clearly defined degree qualifications frameworks have emerged in Europe and the United States. This model establishes specific learning objectives—that is, what students are expected to know, understand, and be able to do—against which to assess students’ learning and development of competencies across their undergraduate years. Such a model enables a finer level of representation of the individual student’s qualifications than a traditional degree or diploma conveys. It will take further consideration to reach agreement on the nature of the competencies and how best to represent student achievement.

Beyond responding to societal needs, higher education also needs to adapt to advances in our understanding of human development and learning that have direct implications for both the purposes and practices of undergraduate education. More importantly for our purposes, it is the adoption of a developmental model to guide the purposes and practices that constitutes the establishment of a new paradigm for undergraduate education.

Developmental science
Major advances in our understanding of human development and learning have implications for educational practices. Key among these are the recognition of “emerging adulthood” as an especially dynamic time of reorganization and development of the brain; the corresponding changes in societal expectations that give rise to developmental tasks that need to be accomplished; understanding of learning as a process of “meaning making”; and the particular importance of reflective or evaluative thinking.

Emerging adulthood. The increasing length of the transition from childhood to adulthood in our postindustrial society has led Jeffrey Arnett to propose a new phase of development—“emerging adulthood”—spanning the period roughly of ages eighteen to twenty-five. This period of life offers the most opportunities for explorations of possible life directions and commitments in the areas of love, education, work, and worldview. It is also marked by changes in physical, cognitive, and emotional development and self-consciousness. Neurocognitive development continues as the brain goes through a remodeling process, particularly with regard to an increase in white matter, which facilitates synaptic connections and transmissions and the development of the prefrontal cortex, which supports executive functions, social cognitions, and self-regulation. Executive functions refer to the capacities involved in the control and
coordination of thoughts and behaviors, including selective attention, decision making, working memory, and voluntary response inhibition. Social cognition includes both self-awareness and perspective taking—that is, the ability to understand others’ minds and infer mental states such as intentions, beliefs, and desires. Self-regulation is an adaptive system that includes both cognitive and affective components and the ability to control one’s attention, emotions, and behavior. Given that the undergraduate experience typically occurs during this period of developmental reorganization and integration, the major implication is that students’ cognitive and personal development not only affects the outcome of educational practices, but that it is worth the effort to formulate educational practices that have the potential to promote students’ cognitive and personal development.

**Developmental tasks.** Emerging adulthood is also characterized by changing societal expectations. The biologically based drive toward growth combined with the expectations, constraints, and opportunities provided by the social environment give rise to the concept of developmental tasks that need to be mastered throughout the life course. The foremost task is identity formation, which is essentially a process of self-authorship. One must come to terms with new potentialities for thinking, feeling, and acting and rearrange one’s self-image accordingly. A second task is developing cognitive and interpersonal competencies, including the capacity for independent thought. A third task is to develop autonomy, not just in terms of independence, but also the capacities for openness to change and self-motivation, self-regulation, and the ability to commit to a point of view. A fourth task is to develop the capacity for intimacy—that is, mutual openness, responsiveness, and a sense of closeness in friendships and other relationships. Beyond promoting cognitive and personal development, colleges and universities have the opportunity to foster the accomplishment of these essential developmental tasks.

**Learning.** There also have been advances in our understanding of learning, from response acquisition to knowledge acquisition to knowledge construction. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, Richard Mayer explains, learning was viewed as involving the processes of “selecting relevant information and interpreting it through one’s existing knowledge.” The focus of instructional practices changed from the curriculum to developing the learner’s metacognitive skills, such as monitoring and evaluating one’s comprehension and learning strategies, and elaborating and integrating new with prior information. Learning was understood as best accomplished through discovery guided by mentoring rather than passive receipt of transmitted knowledge, and instruction was increasingly characterized by an emphasis on active, student-centered, experiential learning.

**Evaluativist thinking.** A personal epistemology that reflects a sophisticated understanding of knowledge is necessary to make meaning of complex information and discern among competing claims. There is a developmental progression in the sophistication of thinking about knowledge, from absolute facts to multiple and relative opinions to evaluative judgments in which knowledge is regarded as continuously evolving and coordinated with justification. Higher education aims to transform students’ ways of thinking, knowing, and understanding in order to assure that students function at the evaluative level. “At the heart of the evaluativist epistemological position,” Deanna Kuhn and Michael Weinstock explain, “is the view that reasoned argument is worthwhile and the most productive path to knowledge and informed understanding, as well as to resolution of human conflict.” However, the evidence indicates that the majority of undergraduates predominately function as “multiplists” in that knowledge is equated with personal opinion, and the commitment to tolerance is equated with nondiscrimination among competing claims. To foster the development of evaluativist thinking, colleges and universities must provide the types of educational experiences that enable students to engage in the processes of inquiry and reasoned argument and to discover for themselves that these processes are empowering and useful for problem solving, discerning among competing claims, and resolving conflicts.

The understanding of emerging adulthood as an active period of reshaping of the brain,

**It is worth the effort to formulate educational practices that have the potential to promote students’ cognitive and personal development.**
the accomplishment of essential developmental tasks, and the development of evaluativist thinking serve to enhance the motivation to determine ways in which undergraduate educational experiences can make a difference in the formative development of our students. To be responsive to this opportunity, colleges and universities must recommit to providing a formative education that is both liberal and practical, and adopt a developmental model to guide, integrate, and evaluate practices.

**A developmental model**

There is no single developmental model, but rather a way of thinking about education that draws on various theories and empirical evidence regarding progressive changes in biopsychosocial development that characterize the late-adolescent and emerging-adulthood periods in our culture. More specifically, a developmental model views undergraduate education as a process of cognitive and personal growth that involves empathy as well as reasoning, values as well as knowledge, and identity as well as competencies. Adopting a developmental model not only focuses attention on the role of particular educational practices in fostering the development of specific skills and dispositions, but it also provides a basis for integrating academic units, student affairs, and athletics around the common task of promoting development of the whole person. A developmental model makes clear that the task of promoting personal development as well as learning is the common task that unites faculty and staff as educators.

A developmental model also makes clear that the goal of higher education is to transform students’ ways of thinking, knowing, and understanding. Often, these changes in understanding involve issues of identity regarding ethnicity, religion, social class, gender, sexuality, values, and commitments. This transformation in the understanding of oneself links the development of the necessary higher-order mental capabilities with the developmental task of identity formation and integration that is central to emerging adulthood. As Jay Brandenberger explains, experiential pedagogies in particular, such as forms of service learning that combine community service with classroom experience, “have strong potentials to unite elements too long
separated in the academy: thinking and feeling, reflection and action, theory and practice.”\textsuperscript{16}

A developmental model also makes clear the importance of academic advising and support services in the common mission of promoting the development of the whole person. Framed through the perspective of a developmental model, advising and academic support services are teaching processes that are accomplished in the context of a caring, affirming relationship. The aim is to help students feel valued and connected to the institution as well as both empowered and responsible for engaging the resources of the college or university for their own education and growth. The specific objectives include the development of students as self-regulated, lifelong learners who have both the ability to make accurate self-appraisals of their strengths and weaknesses and openness to acquiring the new skills they need to be successful.

Finally, a developmental model provides a basis for an integrated and holistic assessment plan to evaluate the effects of pedagogical, curricular, and student-life initiatives that are aimed at multiple dimensions of student development and student learning. Once gathered, the assessment information needs to be analyzed through a collective process of meaning making by faculty and staff in order to identify opportunities and approaches to improve educational practices.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Adopting a developmental model as the new paradigm for liberal education provides a much-needed integrating framework for colleges and universities that unites all components of the academic community in the common mission of empowering students for a life of meaning and purpose. This makes it intentional that the aim is for students to discover that they have developed their own unique personal style; that they have something to say in their own way; that they are responsible for what they say and do; that they are worthy of self-respect and the respect of others; and, ultimately, that they can realize their own humanity as creative, empathetic, and committed people.

\textit{To respond to this article, e-mail liberaled@aacu.org, with the author's name on the subject line.}

\textbf{NOTES}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., 14.
\item Menand, \textit{Marketplace}, 158.
\item John Mayer, Peter Salovey, and David Caruso, “Emotional Intelligence: New Ability or Eclectic Traits?,” \textit{American Psychologist} 63, no. 6 (2008): 503.
\item Richard Mayer, “Cognition and Instruction: Their Historic Meeting within Educational Psychology,” \textit{Journal of Educational Psychology} 84, no. 4 (1992) 407.
\end{enumerate}
O Taste and See
A Commemorative History
ROBERT HOLYER

Each summer, faculty and academic deans from institutions across the country make their way to the Wye River campus of the Aspen Institute on the Eastern Shore of Maryland for a week-long seminar. Described as professional development, it often turns out to be much more. The Wye Seminars have at their core a collection of classic texts—from Plato to the present, from both East and West—that are distributed to the participants in advance and serve as the basis for the morning seminar discussions. Though prompted by the texts, the discussions range widely, from issues of liberal education and its role in American society to questions of fundamental social and political values.

The afternoons and evenings are devoted to recreation in the best sense—reading, thinking, small-group discussion, the arts, exploring the countryside, or engaging in athletic activities. For most participants, the result is a powerful experience of liberal education and intellectual community, which often translates into new perspectives on teaching and learning, new curricula, and new connections with colleagues at home campuses.

The seminar was developed some thirty years ago and was patterned on the Aspen Institute’s Executive Seminar. The founding fathers were Douglass Cater, at that time president of Washington College, and Josiah Bunting III, then president of Hampden-Sydney College. The seminar was first offered in a pilot version in the summer of 1983. Because of its overwhelming success, in 1984, it became, in Cater’s words, “a permanent institution.”

The University of Chicago and the Great Books movement
The history of the Wye Seminars is a chapter in a much larger story that has its beginning not at Wye or even Aspen, but at the University of Chicago with the Great Books movement and the work of Robert Maynard Hutchins, president of the university from 1929 to 1951, and Mortimer Adler, for several years a faculty member at Chicago and for much of his professional life a public intellectual. Hutchins came to the University of Chicago as its president at the age of thirty, having begun his academic career as a faculty member and then dean at Yale Law School. In taking the helm, his intent was to steer the university away from its emphasis on disciplinary specialization and research, and back toward liberal education. In his inaugural lecture, he suggested the need for a reform of general education, but gave no specifics. Those were to be worked out by Adler. What Hutchins would contribute was great enthusiasm for liberal education and the task of reform, the influence and authority that could be exercised by a university president, a love of polemics, a personal flair that could be as much a curse as a blessing, and an unmistakable talent for public relations.

Adler, by contrast, was a teacher, writer, and philosopher. His academic career was by any definition unconventional. Though he learned classical Greek at a very young age and was able to read Plato by age five, he dropped out of high school at age fourteen to become a journalist. He found his way back to higher education by taking evening courses at Columbia University. Even though he had not completed a baccalaureate degree, he was admitted to graduate school at Columbia. In 1928, he was awarded a PhD in psychology and stayed on as a faculty member.

If there is a clear precursor of the Great Books seminars, it is John Erskine’s General Honors Course at Columbia. Erskine developed the idea for the course toward the end of the First World War. His intent was to counteract the growing emphasis on academic specialization, “scientific” scholarship, and the balkanization of the faculty into departments. He sought to accomplish this by reviving the ars liberales tradition of liberal education that focused on developing the whole person by reading, to use Matthew Arnold’s phrase, “the best that has been...
of the Wye Seminars
thought and said.” The two-year-long course titled “The Classics of Western Thought” covered some fifty-two works, ranging from Homer to William James, all read in English and not through the filter of critical scholarship. The course was based on a pedagogy of “highly civilized conversations about important themes and in a spirit of genuine inquiry.” As a student, Adler was a member of the first offering of the course in the fall of 1921; by 1923, he as well as classmate and future colleague Mark Van Doren were leading sections of it.

Adler recognized that this experience was clearly the most formative of his early intellectual influences and foundational to his subsequent life and work. What is more, the General Honors Course at Columbia paired with Contemporary Civilization became the model for general education reform nationally.

Hutchins had come to know Adler during his days at Yale Law School; in fact, the two had collaborated on an article on legal reasoning. In 1930, Hutchins hired him to teach philosophy at the University of Chicago. He found in Adler the person who could articulate his inchoate ideas about the importance of the Great Books. The two became partners not only in the reform of general education at Chicago, but also in many other projects to promote the study of the Great Books.

Hutchins arrived at the university as it was about to embark on a new general education program. The New Plan, as it was called, was largely the work of the Dean Chauncey Boucher; it was adopted by the faculty in 1931 and implemented the following year. To this, Hutchins added his own plan for a structural reorganization of the university into an undergraduate college and four academic divisions, which fit well with the new curriculum. The result was a two-year general education program organized by the college and two years of specialized education, organized by the departments within the four divisions. The first year of the general education curriculum consisted of five yearlong courses, one from each of the four divisions and a writing course. The four divisional courses, biological sciences, physical sciences, social sciences, and humanities, were interdisciplinary and interdepartmental. They were essentially survey courses offered in large lecture sections, with a weekly small group discussion, usually of a major writing.

Class attendance was not mandatory; grades were based on comprehensive exams. The second year of general education consisted of electives that could be either general education courses or departmental offerings. Though Hutchins saw aspects of the New Plan as moving in the right direction, his support was tepid at best, and it became increasingly clear that he preferred something else.

In 1930, with Hutchins’s encouragement, Adler proposed a two-year-long General Honors Course, limited to twenty students, with enrollment by invitation only, that would count as an elective. The course covered classic texts from Homer to Freud. Hutchins volunteered to co-facilitate with Adler. The course was immensely successful; for not only could it count on the appeal of the Great Books to a hand-picked group of undergraduates, but the students also witnessed in Adler and Hutchins two very different intellectual styles, often in friendly conflict, and experienced a different pedagogy. That one of the two facilitators was the president of the university only added to the excitement.

Hutchins and Adler were also particularly interested in articulating the last two years of high school with the first two years of college in a curriculum that emphasized the Great Books. They believed that, properly taught, the Great Books were accessible to high school students and that early education was critical. Always willing to implement their own ideas, in 1933, Adler and Hutchins developed and co-taught a Great Books course at University High School, the university’s lab school, to pilot the new approach. That same year, the university approved a four-year high school/college general education program for University High, which was implemented in 1937.

It became increasingly clear that Hutchins’s real interest was in a four-year Great Books curriculum that was taught in small seminars and began during the last two years of high school. In 1933, he convened a group of faculty under the leadership of Adler and Ronald Crane to discuss informally what that might look like. In 1936, he appointed a Committee on the Liberal Arts that included Adler and others at the university, as well as some specially imported for the task. The latter included Richard McKeon,
who had taught at Columbia with Adler and was offered a visiting professorship at Chicago in 1934; Scott Buchanan, who had been one of Erskine's students and had known Adler at Columbia; and Stringfellow Barr, a friend of Buchanan's from their Oxford days and the editor of the Virginia Quarterly Review. The latter two came from the University of Virginia, where they had developed a Great Books program. The Committee's charge was to develop a curriculum for the four-year college that was based on the trivium and quadrivium and conveyed by the study of the Great Books. By 1937, it was clear that the effort would end in failure: not only was the committee beset by criticism from unsympathetic colleagues who opposed Hutchins's leadership, but it could not finally agree on what books were to be included, how much freedom individual faculty would have in teaching them, and how such things as music education and laboratory science were to be dealt with.

With the failure of curricular reform at Chicago, Stringfellow Barr saw an opportunity at St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland. At the time, St. John's was struggling financially and about to go under. In 1937, Barr seized the opportunity to rescue it and implement there the structures and ideas developed at Virginia and Chicago, with himself as president and Scott Buchanan as dean. Hutchins served as chair of the board. The New Program, as it was called, was a completely prescribed collegiate curriculum with everything taught by means of the Great Books. Though not to the degree found at St. John's, several other colleges and universities throughout the nation adopted portions of what had become known as “the Chicago plan.”

With the appointment of Clarence Faust as dean of the college in 1941, Hutchins's desires for a new curriculum finally prevailed. In 1942, after a major battle in which Hutchins cast the tie-breaking vote, the university created a four-year college, consisting of the last two years of high school and two years of college, with a fully prescribed curriculum devoted solely to general education, and offered in small seminars focused on the Great Books. A committee was appointed to develop a curriculum for it. In 1946, the final arrangements were hammered out and the new curriculum went fully into effect in 1947.

“The plan” always had its critics. In fact, it did not long survive Hutchins's departure from the presidency of Chicago in 1951. However, the university initially flourished under it. Good students were drawn to it, and during the first four years of its existence, the university's undergraduate enrollment grew from 1,700 to 2,700. However, after the war the situation changed; without Hutchins's support and in response to declining enrollments, the university reintroduced greater flexibility into the general education curriculum.

Hutchins and Adler had always intended for the Great Books to have a strong presence outside the university. In the late 1920s, Adler and several of his colleagues at Columbia taught at the People's Institute in New York City, where Great Books courses were offered to an adult, non-degree-seeking population. In the 1930s, he offered Great Books seminars to University of Chicago alumni. And in 1939, University College, the extension division of the University of Chicago, began offering Great Books seminars. In 1940, Adler published How to Read a Book, and as a result, reading and discussing Great Books became more of a grass roots movement. The inspiration for something far more extensive came from Wilbur Munnecke, a vice president of the university and former executive of Marshall Fields. When approached by Hutchins for his advice about an executive training program for the university's business students, Munnecke observed, “what we really need is a program to help people after they become executives... What the businessmen of this town need to learn is not accounting and financing. They're experts in their own businesses already, and they can hire experts in other lines, but they can't hire anybody to read and understand for them.”

Hutchins seized the opportunity and, in 1943, sent out invitations to thirty prominent business executives and their wives for a Great Books seminar, held at the University Club in downtown Chicago.
and moderated by Hutchins and Adler. The seminar met every two weeks and read not excerpts but entire works. The participants loved it!

The success of the seminar strengthened Hutchins and Adler’s conviction that the future of educational reform lay outside of the university and that adult education was “the substantial and major part of the educational process.” The success of their initial efforts provided a template for what they intended to disseminate more widely. Even better, the seminar provided testimonials from recognized and successful business people, which served to make the advertising material for the Great Books seminars persuasive.

With the focus on adult education and the engagement of the community outside of the university in the 1930s and 1940s, the social, cultural, and political rationale for the Great Books seminars came more to the fore. Hutchins and Adler argued that immersion in the Great Books was necessary to counter an increasingly positivist, “value-free” view of science in the West and the abandonment of the essential moral and metaphysic questions necessary for a healthy culture. Moreover, the humanistic values embodied in the Great Books were the foundation of the democratic tradition; their abandonment was the root cause of the decline of culture and the rise of authoritarian political movements. The case could be made even more cogently after the Second World War, when the need to rebuild Western culture and reestablish democratic traditions was even more evident.

Initially, the Great Books seminars were offered through University College, which was largely unprepared for the overwhelming response. Within the first year, there were thirty-four discussion groups throughout the Chicago area. To keep up with the demand, Adler developed a training course for moderators in 1944. By early 1945, there was a national network of some five thousand people involved in Great Book seminars, and by the end of the year that number had risen to twenty thousand. These exploding numbers were clearly more than the university could handle.

In 1947, Hutchins began to make plans to establish the Great Books Foundation, which would handle the rapidly expanding dissemination of the seminars. Put together in February with Hutchins as its president, the foundation began to take over the entire Great Books program from University College. The launch of the foundation also coincided with a post-war resurgence of interest in educational reform. The Harvard Red Book had been published the year before, and a general interest in education was widespread. Within the first year, the foundation added ten thousand participants in the Chicago area alone. In 1948, the city of Chicago officially celebrated “Great Books Week,” and Adler embarked on a national lecture tour to promote interest elsewhere.

A group of scholars at the Modern Language Association suggested that it would be appropriate to give this new spirit a public expression in a bicentennial celebration of the birth of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. But what began in academic circles was quickly appropriated by the cultural entrepreneurs and grew from the usual scholarly event to an international celebration intended to help heal the wounds of war and ameliorate the tensions of the Cold War. The promoters of the celebration agreed that it would not be wise to place it in a major city or national capital. What was needed was some place that was more out of the way. Hutchins suggested Aspen, Colorado.

The Aspen Institute

Though Hutchins played an important advisory role, the task of organizing the Goethe Bicentennial Festival was taken up by Walter A. Paepcke, president of the Container Corporation of America and a wealthy and influential Chicago businessman. Paepcke had long been involved in efforts to promote cultural renewal. Like Hutchins, he was a graduate of Yale, and he became one of Hutchins’s early supporters at Chicago.

To attract the sort of attention the festival needed, the first task was to create a publicity campaign to make “Goethe” more nearly a household word. To give the festival the intellectual heft it needed, Paepcke recruited an array of international intellectual luminaries. The prize catch was Albert Schweitzer, who was lured by a sizable gift to his foundation, and who was portrayed as a sort of “living Goethe.” In addition, Jose Ortega y Gasset played a central role, as did Hutchins’s good friend Thornton Wilder. The Minneapolis Symphony was booked for the occasion, along with several world-renowned soloists.
The events were held outdoors, in the Aspen Opera House or under one of the large tents set up for the occasion.

The festival was held in June of 1949. With its ample offering of speakers, seminars, and musical events, it was very well received by those who attended; it was also a major public relations success. Naturally, this success led to the desire to build on the momentum generated.

Hutchins and Adler proposed the creation of a permanent educational institution, Aspen University, based on the philosophy and programs they developed in Chicago—undergraduate education, adult education, and philosophical conferences. In December of 1949, “Aspen University” took form as the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies with a board composed of Paepcke, Hutchins, Ortega, Wilder, and Erskine, with Schweitzer as an honorary member.

The following summer, a second conference was organized under the new banner of the Aspen Institute and with the tagline “Great Books, Great Men, Great Music.” Paepcke recruited a new group of intellectual luminaries—with an appearance by Dwight Eisenhower. In addition, the Aspen Summer Music Festival and the Aspen Film Classic Program were created, as well as the first photography conference. The speakers and the conversations were intellectually invigorating, and the arts were first rate. But the audience was small—for some events numbering fewer than one hundred—and composed mainly of intellectuals. Henry Luce suggested that the institute would do well to turn its attention to a mix of scholars and businessmen and to set as its goal the reform of business culture. Not only was this a much greater need, but businessmen would be able to pay the hefty fees necessary for the institute to break even.

With this change in purpose, the seminars took on a new focus. After the war, many saw America as the protector of Western civilization. At Aspen, this emphasis was transposed into an attempt to understand and clarify the values and beliefs foundational to American democracy. The seminars were to become less theoretical and more practical and to bring together leaders from all sectors of society, not just businessmen. Through this “cross-fertilization,” misunderstandings were to be dispelled and new ties were to be forged so that leaders could better serve
America and hence the world. Accordingly, the publicity for the seminars became more pragmatic, promising that participants would become better leaders and better businessmen. The revised program was officially launched in 1953 as the Aspen Executive Program.

With the establishment of the Aspen Institute, a campus of permanent buildings was founded in Aspen. The Executive Seminars became routine during the 1950s and continued as the mainstay of the institute. In 1959, the Music Festival was spun off as the Aspen Music School and Festival. Paepcke died in 1960. Subsequent presidents broadened the institute’s horizons, making it an international center of public policy discussion. In 1978, Arthur A. Houghton gave Aspen his Wye River estate on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. As a result of tension with the town of Aspen caused by its desire to limit the institute’s expansion, plans were made in 1980 to move the institute out of Aspen altogether. The institute’s offices were moved first to New York City and then to Washington, DC, and Wye became its chief conference center. However, matters were worked out with the city of Aspen, and the institute maintained a presence there.

Wye Faculty Seminar

Though Aspen’s Executive Seminars did include some college and university faculty and administrators as part of Paepcke’s “cross-fertilization,” this hardly exhausted the potential for Great Books seminars to enrich higher education. Indeed, the need had become greater, for the conditions within American higher education that occasioned the Great Books courses in the 1920s had grown worse.

In 1982, Douglass Cater and Josiah Bunting settled on the idea of developing a version of the Executive Seminar intended to serve faculty at institutions like their own—small liberal arts colleges with enrollments of two thousand students or fewer. Cater had been a journalist, author, political analyst, and Washington insider. He served as a special assistant for educational issues to President Lyndon Johnson, was involved in the creation of several major pieces of education legislation, including the Higher Education Act, and played a major role in the creation of both the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the Teachers Corps. Cater was also heavily involved with the Aspen Institute. He was a founding fellow and trustee, as well as a senior
fellow and director of a special program on communications and society. Bunting was a graduate of Virginia Military Institute and a Rhodes Scholar. He served in the US Army and taught at both West Point and the Naval War College.

In 1982, Cater and Bunting received a grant from Exxon to begin the seminar and hired Sherry Magill as executive director. Magill planned the pilot version and developed the first curriculum. Cater and Bunting called on presidents of fellow institutions to support the seminar by providing faculty. The list of supporting colleges grew to include Hampden-Sydney, Hood, Spelman, Sweet Briar, and Washington; together they provided some twenty faculty for the first seminar. The fiscal and organizational details were handled by Washington College, and the seminar was held at the Wye River facility of the Aspen Institute. Cater and Magill also secured funding from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and from the Charles F. Kettering Foundation. Cater remarked at the opening session of the seminar, “If we are not successful, no one will hear from us again. . . . But if we are, we intend for the Wye Faculty Seminar to become a permanent institution which will involve teachers from small liberal arts colleges in serious and sustained conversation about America’s values and purposes.”

The purposes of the seminar, however, were not fully captured by Cater’s statement. More precisely, the seminar was “to counteract the isolated condition found among professors teaching in the nation’s small liberal arts colleges,” “to address the central purpose of a liberal arts education,” to bring “new purposes and coherence to the curriculum of participating colleges,” “to exchange ideas with other colleges, other disciplines, other professions,” and to “reveal the complementary relationship among the several disciplines.” There was also a focus on the civic dimension of liberal education, the role of liberal arts colleges in developing enlightened citizens, and “the fundamental, persistent questions posed by the American Polity.”

The conditions within American higher education that occasioned the Great Books courses in the 1920s had grown worse...
was the closest approximation to a title that captured all of this.

The pilot version of the seminar followed the format of the Aspen Executive Seminars quite closely. It extended for two weeks and was facilitated by Adam Yarmolinsky, who among other things was a seasoned Aspen moderator. In addition to the faculty participants, there were another dozen “resource persons” and “special guests” from business, government, the media, and private philanthropic foundations. The reading list was close to that of the Aspen Executive Seminars. Reflecting Aspen's commitment to body, mind, and spirit, the afternoons were devoted to outdoor activities, and the evenings included special lectures as well as musical and theatrical performances. The two-week seminar concluded with a roundtable with representatives from the Kettering Foundation and the Association of American Colleges.

Because of the resounding success of the pilot version, a decision was made to make the Wye Faculty Seminar the “permanent institution” Cater hoped for. Washington College continued to take the lead, and assumed organizational and fiscal responsibility. The seminar period was reduced to seven days, and the number of “resource persons” and “special guests” was also reduced. The working definition of “faculty” was rather broad; it included not only teaching faculty, but also deans and librarians. Exxon, Kettering, the Atlantic Richfield Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Aspen Institute all provided funding. A Wye Governing Council was formed with Cater and Bunting as co-chairs.

While clear about the intended audience, the leadership of the Wye Faculty Seminar also had hopes for a broader impact. The faculty who attended the seminar took what they had experienced back to their home campuses. The result was not only revised curricula, but also Wye-inspired Great Books seminars for faculty colleagues. There was also a desire to develop Wye-type programs for high school teachers. In 1985, Magill worked with the Center for the Advancement of Teaching in Cullowhee, North Carolina, to develop a five-day model.
for high school teachers; in 1987, she developed a program at Washington College for high school teachers that was a close replication of the Wye Faculty Seminar. By 1989, the seminar could claim to have inspired significant curricular change at six colleges, three faculty seminar programs, and two seminar programs for high school teachers. And there was more to follow.

In 1990, the leadership and organization began to change. The seminar became a “participating project” of the Aspen Institute. In 1990, Cater retired from the presidency of Washington College; Bunting left Hampden-Sydney for Lawrenceville, and Magill left Washington College to work for the Jessie Ball duPont Fund. Ladell Payne, president of Randolph-Macon College, was elected chair of the governing council. The reorganization included a formal relationship with both the Aspen Institute and the Association of American Colleges (AAC),8 who became its joint sponsors. Aspen was responsible for the fiscal affairs of the seminar and for raising the portion of the expenses not covered by participants’ fees. AAC was responsible for soliciting participation in the seminar and keeping it prominent in the attention of its members. To this end, AAC hosted regular demonstration seminars at its annual meetings.

In the early 1990s, the seminar began to reflect changes in the intellectual climate in America. As the Cold War receded in public importance, some attention to the issues of “multiculturalism” and “diversity” was included in the seminar. Non-Western readings were added. Scholarships were created to help recruit faculty from historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and Native American colleges. The focus on small private liberal arts colleges broadened to include community colleges as well as other public institutions.

Seminars were also created for higher education administrators, several on a pilot basis. Three-day seminars were offered for college and university presidents. In 1998, seminars were offered for student affairs administrators and academic deans. The Deans Seminar was the only one to become a regular offering. Reflecting its commitment to administrators as well as faculty, in 2009, the Wye Faculty Seminar became simply the Wye Seminars.

From the beginning, the appeal of Great Books seminars has been the experience of reading important texts, taking extended time for reflection, and engaging colleagues in thoughtful and rigorous discussion. For those who have not had the experience before, it can be life changing. For those who have, participation offers a powerful renewal in the deeper meaning of liberal education and intellectual community. As participants will testify,9 this experience itself is profoundly persuasive evidence that the seminars are worthwhile and worth continuing.

Gustate et videte.

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

NOTES
7. Wye Faculty Seminar grant proposal to Bell Atlantic, n.d.
8. The name of the Association of American Colleges was changed to the Association of American Colleges and Universities in 1995.
Standing Up to Managerialism

STEPHEN ROWE

“Managerialism” represents a relatively new orientation to college and university administration, one that arises from the coincidence of three distinct features of the contemporary landscape: market rationality, nihilism, and the modern wish for a new beginning. Here I want to offer simple clarification as to the nature of this phenomenon, and take note of its affinity for programs of strategic planning and assessment. My suggestion is that managerialism is a major factor in struggles over the shape and substance of education today, and one that is not friendly to education as the cultivation of the kinds of human beings we so urgently need. But, on the positive side, I also want to suggest that an alternative is available and gradually emerging in our educational communities and practices.

Three features of the educational landscape

In the context of higher education in the United States, market rationality represents the advance of scientific rationality and commodification into areas that previously had been governed by professional judgment and the art of teaching (and also, in the full complexity of our situation, by problematic values associated with race, gender, class, etc.). With this feature, we have what some refer to as the “corporatization” of the university, indicating admiration and adoption of what are taken to be the standards of business in a free market economy. The influence of market rationality is greatly enhanced and lubricated by the incredible advances in computer technology of recent decades, combined with economic insecurity, reduced public confidence in education, and a generalized tendency to see little possibility between the extremes of capitalism and communism. And because market rationality focuses attention on cost-benefit analysis and what is measurable, rather than on more challenging questions of meaning and relationship, it is a powerful temptation in an era characterized by great uncertainty and huge changes that are not well understood. Market rationality offers at least the illusion of order and control.

Nihilism refers to the tacit conclusion that all relationships and transactions in the world can—and should—be understood not only in terms of money, but more generally in terms of interest and power. Ideals, principles, and commitments are not to be trusted; they should be seen as the projection of personal interest. This late modern understanding—sometimes implying that “the common good” and “the invisible hand” were myths all along—means that alliances are grounded in nothing more than temporary alignments of interest, resulting in constant wariness and suspicion, even among those with whom one is allied for the moment. This feature is frequently expressed in aggressive “deconstruction” of those who attempt to maintain “higher” values, competitive social construction to be in possession of the dominant interpretation of any given situation, and in the war of all against all that has become so explicit in late modern society—and that, ironically, was the very condition from which early modernity sought escape.

The third feature, the wish for a new beginning, indicates that quintessentially modern desire to be free from everything that has gone before, in order to wipe the slate clean and start over. Here unwritten understandings, history, and local wisdom count for nothing or, worse, are scorned as projections of someone’s previous domination.

Managerialism

When these three features begin to intertwine and interact, managerialism emerges as the mode of administration. It thrives in environments where universities have adopted models of strategic planning and assessment.
that are informed, strangely enough, by the same traditional Western ways of understanding that many in university life have come to see, through the various forms of postmodernist critique and comparative studies, as deeply problematic. Beginning with Plato and Aristotle, Western thought came to be largely structured by the idea that things of this world are only real insofar as they correspond with or are deduced from abstract and eternal principles that exist outside of the world.

We see this orientation in most contemporary strategic plans with their establishment of first principles of “mission, vision, and values,” followed by deduction and “alignment” of lower principles with the higher. The problematic nature of this epistemology becomes clear once we find that within this frame there is little patience for what some feminists and some champions of democracy call “reflexivity,” the capacity of “lower” practices to trigger refinement of “higher” principle. As a consequence, there is blindness to the emergent design that is integral to genuine inquiry, the capacity to revise in process rather than having everything unfold on schedule from a preset plan. Correspondence epistemologies also effectively prohibit the discovery of something new, which is often taken to be the essential point of distinction between education and training. The tendency is rather
for the strategic plan and its accompanying assessment pro-
gram to push relentlessly downward, through the curriculum and—via objectives, goals, measures, rubrics, and data—into the syllabus, bringing closure, standardization, and almost inevitably the pedagogy famously identified by Paulo
Freire as “the banking model.”

Rene Descartes, usually understood to be the founder of modern philosophy, took the correspondence paradigm one step further. He doubted everything of “body”—like unwritten understandings, history, local wisdom—until he could clear the slate and get to a “clear and distinct idea.” This allowed him to sever any vital connection with the world, thereafter relating to it on the terms of abstraction only, leaving out everything not comprehended by the abstract construction, and accepting no new input from fresh experience. The way of being that issued from this orientation—commonly known as Cartesianism—effectively relegates all perceptions other than those of the abstract ideas to the category of “something else,” something irrelevant or annoying.

Contemporary managers reflect Cartesianism and the mind-body dichotomy as they are increasingly able to insulate themselves from the ambiguities and challenges of the classroom—and, thereby, also from teaching as an art—through the granting of administrative status or “released time” for managerial duties. Annoyance with the unavoidable complexities of genuine teaching and learning is expressed as insistence that educational relationships submit to the scientific paradigm, with an increasingly aggressive response to any who would question or depart from this submission. Meanwhile, the ways in which this insistence distorts, constrains, and even violates our embodied relationships with students are not noticed. It is truly stunning that, after a century of severe self-criticism and deconstruction of traditional and modern Western culture, we do not recognize this Cartesian process at work in our universities as the same colonization that was exported all over the globe with devastating consequences, now applied to our own best practices and cultural dignity. Perhaps managerial colonization of our universities today should be seen as some kind of perverse penance.

The limits of strategic planning, as distinct from the wishful thinking it fuels, are all the more dramatic—and ironic—when we consider the remarkable lack of evidence as to its efficacy

Managerialism signals the next stage in the modern process of the rationalization of everything. It is problematic because, while rationalization brings many good things (e.g., airplanes, surgeries, efficiencies), it also entails mechanization and alienation. The problem with managerialism, as with modernity generally, is that humans are easily seduced by the benefits of mechanization, but they do not thrive within the closed systems that are inherent to it; we wind up with what Martin Luther King Jr. referred to as “guided missiles but misguided men [sic].” Humans need openness, possibility, adventure—all of which are closed down by mechanization.

In order for humans to thrive, we need direct participation in the kind of energy that leads some religionists to speak of us as created “in God’s image,” as creators or co-creators, beings capable of the creativity and innovation that makes Western liberal education so attractive, for example, in China and India. In Hannah Arendt’s more Greek and secular terms, we only become fully human within “the paradoxical plurality of unique beings” and an environment that is friendly to “action,” as revelation of our uniqueness as a “who” rather than a “what.” When this basic human capacity is choked off by mechanization, no matter how wonderful the benefits that might otherwise accrue, humans whither and suffer what T. S. Eliot spoke of as death “not with a bang but with a whimper,” the death of gradual and often pleasant diminution, or “sleep of empire.”

Maybe this humanistic language is too exotic for our time. I can make the same point by reference to an excellent book on the history of American public education and strategic planning. In The Allure of Order, Jal Mehta argues that the failure of American public education arises from the mistaken application of scientific management and the techniques of industry in the attempt to achieve order and control through rationalizing education. This attempt inevitably fails because education is fundamentally relational, a matter of who we are, not as mechanism but, again, as human beings. What is needed, according to Mehta, is a more professional structure where “the emphasis is less on control and regulation than on creating structures in which
talented, frontline practitioners can learn from one another and develop and spread new ideas.\textsuperscript{5} The limits of strategic planning, as distinct from the wishful thinking it fuels, are all the more dramatic—and ironic—when we consider the remarkable lack of evidence as to its efficacy, as Edward Miech and others have pointed out.\textsuperscript{6}

**Two conflicting paradigms**

Really, we are talking about two very different paradigms, two different understandings of articulation, embodiment, and their relation—and maybe even the breakdown of the Cartesian worldview as a new one is beginning to emerge.\textsuperscript{7} In one paradigm, articulation is the prior activity, as it has been in much of the history of Western culture. And because it sees embodiment as only a matter of application, articulation tends to be static, a settled doctrine that then initiates the deductive process of implementation. It has the advantage of simplicity.

The second paradigm is more circular and more relational, welcoming ongoing refinement of both articulation and embodiment, and inclining less toward hierarchy and more toward democratic community. The first favors control and stability, and it moves toward training; the second moves toward discovery, reflexivity, and continuous growth in the cultivation of higher-order human capacities. The first is closed, the second is open. Education in our time has become a focal point for conflict between these two paradigms, a conflict that will likely have profound consequences for the future.

The fundamental distinction between control, order, and production, on the one hand, and practical wisdom or judgment, on the other, brings us to the question of what we can do to moderate overemphasis on the former and to support the latter in our time of constriction and fear. Those of us who are committed to the transformative power of education as necessary to a free society must remain open to the vitality that flows from continuous efforts to articulate and embody our ineffable ideal of the educated person. We need to remember that an ideal can never be reduced to a doctrine; it is an entity about which there is more than one right answer, where each answer is approximate and contingent on the circumstances from which it arises.

In fact, this, in itself, can be seen as a definition of the education, maturity, and worldview we seek: the liberal education of coming to the developed ability to be at home in the dialogical life (or “the examined life”) wherein one becomes capable of engaging with both other and self in relation to entities such as “quality,” “education,” and “democracy,” and enjoying the benefits that flow from the pluralistic environment. We need to teach our students and administrators—and each other, again and again—how to live and move and thrive within the complexity and dynamism that are actual to our situation, honoring the sense in which education is a lifelong function of not only accomplishment but also hygiene.

It helps in this honoring to know that we are not alone, that there are others out there who are advocating and embodying an alternative to managerialism that is consistent with the second paradigm I have been discussing. The Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education (ACMHE) offers one example. Arising from the new interdisciplinary field of cognitive science, and its complementarity with the practical wisdom of the contemplative traditions, the mission of ACMHE is “to educate active citizens who will support a more just and compassionate society.” This is accomplished through “recovery and development of the contemplative dimension of teaching, learning and knowing,” leading to “an ethics of genuine compassion.”\textsuperscript{8}

The YESplus Program and its “Art of Living” course offer another example of this alternative to managerialism.\textsuperscript{9} Arising out of the Hindu tradition and also drawing on the resources of contemporary cognitive science, the YES stands for “Yoga, Empowerment, and Service.” YESplus is distinct in its linkage between meditation and service, working toward a point of merging the two activities into a fully transformed and integrated way of being. Examples of how YESplus has been joined with local programs and initiatives can be seen at Cornell, Stanford, and Brown Universities.
Conclusion
Staying in touch with others who share the alternative paradigm—and who realize that the choice before us today is ultimately at this level—can help us maintain awareness of the fine and utterly crucial line between strategic planning and assessment as the wedge through which managerialism can enter and colonize, on the one hand, and, on the other, as an opportunity for democratic leadership and process. This awareness can help us remain open to the possibility that strategic planning and assessment are not necessarily tied to hierarchy and number, an essential possibility since there is no way we can or should seek exemption from the requirements of accountability and continuous improvement. Faculty protests involving cynical withdrawal only cede power to the managers, confirming them in their disdain for faculty and validating their wish to replace professors with service providers (whether in the form of prepackaged, machine-delivered lectures or contingent faculty).

We must, then, do what we have done in previous eras of challenge: step up and meet a new constraint with the persuasiveness of our ideal, communicating with the public through results that do not always comport with the sometimes crude assessment instruments that are imposed upon us. We must remain faithful to our students and the dignity of practices we know to be conducive to their well-being and best development, turning strategic planning and assessment constraints into ways we can refine and expand our work, and thereby provide “data” more rich than had been hoped for. Along with our students, we need to continue moving—even against strong headwinds—toward a more complete embodiment of our ambitious ideal of the educated citizen as the best hope for the modern experiment with democracy and toward the cultivation of the more developed form of adulthood our era so urgently requires. For the change we seek needs to come not from the top down, but from the bottom up, through the integrity of our encounter with each student.

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

NOTES
2. Martin Luther King Jr., Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community? (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 172.
7. I discuss these themes in greater detail in Overcoming America/America Overcoming: Can We Survive Modernity? (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012).
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