Global Learning and Inclusive Excellence
The Decline of International Studies
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The Role of Faculty in the Transformation of AAC&U
With Dante in Hell on 9/11
College and Prison Partnerships in Liberal Education
Advancing Engaged Scholarship through Promotion and Tenure
Reevaluating Teaching Evaluations
In addition to the possibility of engagement with the world through the local community, global learning focuses on issues that can be examined by all disciplines and that affect individuals all over the globe.

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From 1818 R Street NW

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Flying Blind into America’s Global Headwinds?

The world grows hourly more interconnected, and the United States’s need for global acumen is expanding exponentially. Are these developments driving a new determination that education ought to include a clear and continuing focus on building Americans’ global sophistication, engagement, and language proficiencies?

At first glance, one might think the signs are positive. Policy leaders, who generally speak in terms of “global competition,” almost uniformly affirm that education is the key to our future and that expectations for learning, especially postsecondary learning, must rise. And as Charles King notes cogently in his highly informative article in these pages, it’s hard to find a college or university president who hasn’t long since declared his or her commitment to the expansion of global partners and learning opportunities for students.

But if we look “under the hood” of contemporary global fervor, we see troubling evidence that “global” is more invoked than ensured as a framing theme for college student learning.

We live in a world that faces daunting challenges—from issues related to sustainability, sustenance, health, poverty, literacy, and human dignity to issues related to self-determination, terrorist movements, displaced populations, and nativist responses. One might imagine, then, that policy leaders would work proactively to ensure that education, from school through college, is well designed to help graduates acquire such global learning outcomes as broad and comparative knowledge of global developments and cultures, language proficiency beyond English, direct experience with different cultures, and competence in working on critically important questions with people whose cultures and worldviews are different from one’s own.

Even to write that, however, is to invite chagrin. Policy leaders are not doing any of those things. Rather, their response to global developments has been to double down on fostering literacy in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), while giving no attention to fostering literacy about the diverse peoples and cultures for which (and with whom) we need to provide STEM-anchored solutions. Adding an “A” for the arts, STEM leaders have coined the term “STEAM” to signal the need for blended inquiry that connects cultural and creative studies with the sciences. But there are few signs that STEAM is gaining policy traction.

Charles King’s sobering analysis in this issue of “The Decline of International Studies” and the disinvestment in fields related to global sophistication puts the right label on the current approach: policy leaders seem to have decided that “flying blind” is both affordable and politically appealing in this latest season of US nativist reaction. He might have pointed out as well the recurring movements in Congress to defund selected social sciences, unless they contribute immediately, rather than over the long term, to “national security.” Federal support for the humanities and arts—disciplines that are absolutely critical to global insight and understanding—has long since been reduced to federal budget dust.

Leaders within the various quality assurance agencies are notably less contentious than our political leaders, but none of the regional accreditors has made a single move toward ensuring that college graduates exhibit knowledge, skills, experiences, and accomplishments related to global learning. Diversity and service learning have made their way into some of the quality frameworks. Expectations that students must be globally literate have not.

The same omissions also are conspicuous in the Common Core school reforms, which are focused on language arts, quantitative skills, and, of course, STEM. The much-touted new Common Core tests will discern whether students can read and analyze texts related to complex issues, including global issues. But there is no expectation anywhere in the Common Core standards that students will actually work analytically, collaboratively, and experientially on significant questions related to global developments. Given the complexity of the global challenges facing the United States, Americans will have to bring far more to the global commons than just reading skills.

By contrast, faculty and administrators in higher education have been way ahead of policy leaders in working to ensure that the curriculum and cocurriculum promote deep engagement with global issues. Dawn Whitehead’s article in this issue, based in part on AAC&U’s work over the past several years with colleges, universities, and community colleges in our ongoing Shared Futures initiative, shows the impressive inventiveness with which different kinds of institutions have made global learning a framing theme for their students.
But if higher education is leading the way, the flight plan is still a work in progress, at best. According to a 2009 survey of AAC&U members, knowledge about world cultures is a degree expectation for 68 percent of the institutions that reported having required learning outcomes for all students. Yet for every institution that has used global themes to frame students’ progress from first to final year, there are hundreds that still settle for the “one goal/one course” approach to global learning. Study abroad also is a widely touted goal but still involves less than 10 percent of all US college students.

Students and employers recognize that these partial strategies are far from enough. When the Higher Educational Research Institute asked graduating seniors whether college had significantly increased their knowledge of global developments, only 28 percent reported that it had. In 2015, when Hart Research Associates asked college students which learning outcomes needed more emphasis, respondents indicated that both global and diversity learning should be more of a priority. Both in 2008 and in 2015, employers reported that college graduates knew less than they needed to know about the world around them.

Student transcripts confirm the shortfall. Using federally gathered transcript evidence, Clifford Adelman reported over a decade ago that somewhere between 5 and 10 percent of college students had put together the kind of curriculum—four or more courses on global topics, language study, and cross-cultural experience—that would likely have made them globally proficient. Yet all college learners, not a mere fraction, will surely need global sophistication both as citizens and as workers in an economy fiercely buffeted by global headwinds.

What then, can college educators do to make global learning and accomplishment more pervasive? The LEAP Challenge, which AAC&U launched earlier this year, provides a potentially powerful way to foster global proficiency. It urges higher education to add a third, integrative strand to a college curriculum that currently requires both general and specialized studies. That third strand will be students’ own effortful work on a significant question that matters to the student and matters to society—an extended project we call “Signature Work.” Students will only be able to successfully complete a substantial applied learning project, of course, if they practice working on complex, cross-disciplinary questions frequently as they progress from their initial to final studies. Today, some 47 percent of college seniors already complete culminating work. AAC&U is calling on higher education to double that number.

Imagine if students’ preparation for Signature Work included a continuing focus on global challenges. First-year courses can be framed by global issues; then, as they progress in their studies, students can be asked—for example, in the context of developing an e-portfolio—to identify global issues that matter to them and show the assignments they completed that are related to them. By their senior year, whatever they choose as their Signature Work projects, students can be expected to place their chosen topics in a larger global and/or comparative societal context.

College alone cannot ensure students’ global orientation and proficiency. The foundations need to be laid in school. But higher education can and should send catalytic signals through the precollegiate pipeline by clarifying the kind of preparation that college applicants ought to have, and by making clear their intention to help all college students develop global sophistication and globally framed applied learning experiences.

In the twenty-first century, global savvy will require a truly cosmopolitan liberal education. None of our students should leave us without it.—CAROL GEARY SCHNEIDER

NOTES
6. National Survey of Student Engagement, Bringing the Institution into Focus: Annual Results 2014 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, 2014), 41.
In “Second Thoughts on Globalization,” an essay written at the end of the last century, James Schall says that “globalization is when a man with a cell phone on the Metro in Washington talks to a colleague in a skyscraper in Tokyo about opening a branch office in Hamburg.” In this issue of Liberal Education, Charles King, Schall’s Georgetown colleague, observes similarly that “young Americans can play video games with their peers in Cairo, chat online with friends in St. Petersburg, and download music from a punk band based in Beijing.”

To work and play on a worldwide scale is not just possible, it is now commonplace. “But,” as King points out, “consuming the world is not the same as understanding it.”

Understanding the world—especially a world being transformed by the forces of globalization and marked by a host of complex “global” challenges—is certainly important and, if students are to operate successfully and responsibly on a worldwide scale, it is clearly necessary. Liberal education has always been directed outward in this sense, and developing a greater understanding of the world is key to the dimension of liberal learning that we now call “global learning.” But global learning is not only about understanding the world.

Associated terms like “global citizenship” suggest that, as we become ever more globally oriented, we may risk diminishing the importance of the local or downplaying the importance of place in any rooted sense. Put differently, the more we consume the world or allow ourselves to be consumed by what’s going on elsewhere and faraway, the more we risk becoming like Mrs. Jellyby, the “telescopic philanthropist” from Dickens’s Bleak House whose way of addressing what today we would call “global issues” led her to ignore the needs of her own household and neighborhood.

In addition to understanding the world, then—or, indeed, as a part of it—global learning involves developing an understanding of the interaction between the local and the global and the ways in which the issues and challenges students are being educated to address in their working lives, their lives as citizens, and even their personal lives are increasingly implicated in the unavoidable interconnectedness among peoples, places, and cultures.

So, how can all this be accomplished in the context of undergraduate education? Along with exploring in greater detail what is meant by “global learning,” the current standing of its various components, and why it is so essential, the essays collected in the Featured Topic section of this issue present some best practices for developing global learning outcomes and for making global learning accessible to all students.—DAVID TRITELLI
New AAC&U Partnerships in Japan and Qatar

AAC&U has entered into two new international partnerships, one with the Japan Association for College and University Education (JACUE), and one with the Core Curriculum Program of Qatar University. Both partnerships will explore general and liberal education in a global context. Educators in Japan and Qatar are interested in the learning and collaboration developed through AAC&U’s Liberal Education and America’s Progress (LEAP) initiative. The memorandum of understanding with JACUE commits both associations to explore the concept of a program similar to LEAP in Japan. The memorandum with Qatar University signals its intention to form a center for general education serving the Middle East and North Africa. More information about these new partnerships is available online at www.aacu.org/leap/global-partners.

New Staff Appointments

Kathy J. Wolfe has been appointed vice president of the Office of Integrative Liberal Learning and the Global Commons. Before joining the AAC&U staff in August, Wolfe was professor of English at Nebraska Wesleyan University, where she also had served as dean of the College of the Liberal Arts and Sciences. In her new position, Wolfe will work to advance the LEAP Challenge and oversee the General Education Maps and Markers initiative, the new Capstones and Signature Work project, the initiative on Shared Futures: Global Learning and Social Responsibility, and the Scientific Thinking and Integrative Reasoning Skills project.

Kate McConnell has been appointed senior director for research and assessment in the Office of Quality, Curriculum, and Assessment. Before joining the AAC&U staff in August, McConnell served as inaugural director of assessment in the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. She had previously served as director of planning and institutional research at Stonehill College. In her new position, McConnell will oversee various projects, including those related to the Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education initiative, and serve as codirector of AAC&U’s longstanding Institute on General Education and Assessment.

Susan Albertine Receives the 2015 Katz Award

At the fifty-fifth annual meeting of the Association for General and Liberal Studies (AGLS), which was held September 24 to 26 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Susan Albertine, AAC&U vice president for diversity, equity, and student success, was presented with the 2015 Joseph Katz Award for Distinguished Contributions to the Practice and Discourse of General and Liberal Education. Named for Joseph Katz, the influential proponent of general education, the Katz Award is given every other year to someone selected by the AGLS Council in recognition of his or her contribution to the improvement of the educational experience of students and to the understanding of the theory and practice of general and liberal education at the national level.

Upcoming Meetings

October 8–10, 2015
Global Learning in College
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

November 12–14, 2015
Crossing Boundaries: Transforming STEM Education
Seattle, Washington

January 20–23, 2016
Annual Meeting: How Higher Education Can Lead—On Equity, Inclusive Excellence, and Democratic Renewal
Washington, DC

February 18–20, 2016
General Education and Assessment: From My Work to Our Work
New Orleans, Louisiana

March 17–19, 2016
Diversity, Learning, and Student Success
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

AAC&U Membership 2015
1,352 members

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

*Specialized schools, state systems and agencies, international affiliates, and organizational affiliates
Today’s college students must become adept both at interacting, cooperating, and engaging with individuals from diverse backgrounds and at grappling successfully with the kinds of unscripted problems and challenges that characterize life and work in the complex world they will enter upon graduation. Accordingly, global learning is widely recognized as an essential dimension of a liberal education. But what exactly is global learning?

Global learning is a form of learning that prepares students to critically analyze and engage with complex global systems, their implications for the lives of individuals, and the sustainability of the earth. It can be fostered through civic engagement at home or abroad, interactive videoconferencing, study abroad, and other practices. Global learning is also a dimension of liberal learning, and it is a powerful pedagogy that requires students to engage across disciplines to solve complex, real-world, global problems. Global learning is also a “high-impact practice”—an educational practice that benefits all students, particularly those from historically underserved groups, through increased engagement.

And as higher education becomes more equitable, inclusive, and reflective of the American population, it is essential that all students have access to the most powerful forms of learning. The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) is committed by its mission to make excellence inclusive, to bring the benefits of liberal education to all students. Inclusive excellence encompasses what is taught and who is taught, and global learning must be available to all students.

This understanding of global learning has emerged from a growing body of evidence about what students need to be prepared for a future that will be ever more globally interconnected. Over the past twenty years, colleges and universities in the United States have sought to help students develop intercultural competence and a global perspective, promoted international programs of various kinds, launched curricular efforts that focus on the notion of global citizenship, and promoted various other forms of global engagement. Many institutions have incorporated references to global learning into their mission and vision statements. Before examining more closely the relationship between global learning and inclusive excellence, it is helpful to review the various terms associated with global learning.

DAWN MICHELE WHITEHEAD is senior director of global learning and curricular change at the Association of American Colleges and Universities.
A review of terms

International education is a term that has been widely used in the United States since the end of World War II. It indicates an international orientation—attitudes, knowledge, learning from individuals in other parts of the world—with a focus, initially, on peace, international understanding, and international cooperation. Peace education, development education, area studies, and international studies also have their origins in this period and have been considered parts of international education. As international education continued to evolve over time, the emphasis shifted to issues related to student and scholar mobility, transfer of educational ideas, and international curricula.

Intercultural competence is a term that focuses on student capabilities and inherently includes both local and international experiences with difference. It has been used by some institutions to ensure that issues related to domestic diversity and issues related to international diversity are given equal attention, and it has been used to promote opportunities for student engagement in local and international contexts. According to Darla Deardorff, intercultural competence involves “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes.” She argues that intercultural competence cannot be attained through just one experience and that it involves recognition of the interconnectedness of the global system, skills and experiences, and general knowledge of world events. For a student to interact in a culturally appropriate manner in any community or work setting, she or he must have background knowledge of that community and its cultural norms, an understanding of how individuals interact with one another, and an ability to bridge the background and preparatory knowledge with the actual interaction.

Global citizenship is a term that focuses on preparation for civic engagement in increasingly diverse and global contexts. Martha Nussbaum argues that higher education needs to build a rich network of human connections in order to shape future democratic citizens who are poised to make decisions based on their understanding of gender, ethnic, racial, sexual, and religious diversity. Students need to develop an understanding of how interconnected today’s world is, and they need to be able to operate with human understanding. Nussbaum identifies capabilities that are essential to global citizenship: critical self-examination and examination of one’s own traditions, thinking as a citizen of the world, and exercising a “narrative imagination” that allows one to see the world through the eyes of others.

Larry Braskamp has developed the notion of global perspective as a dimension of global learning. In his work, he defines global perspective as the integration of student development and intercultural communication, arguing that students must learn to think and act with those who are different—in terms of background, customs, habits, perspectives, and religious beliefs—on their own campuses in order to prepare for life in a pluralistic world. Braskamp further argues that this global perspective should be fostered throughout the campus and is critical for students, staff, and faculty alike. In this issue of Liberal Education, Braskamp and his colleagues further articulate this dimension of global learning through the lens of “belonging.”

Internationalization is a term that gained popularity in the 1980s and has driven most international initiatives on American campuses ever since, serving to frame action at the campus or institutional level. Jane Knight defines internationalization as the “process of integrating an international dimension into the teaching/learning, research, and service functions of the university or college. An international dimension means a perspective, activity or service which introduces or integrates an international/intercultural/global outlook into the major functions of an institution of higher education.” This definition has guided many institutions as they implement study abroad programs, recruit international students, deliver educational programs in international locations, launch international partnerships and research projects, and integrate international perspectives and intercultural dimensions into teaching and learning across curricula.

Internationalization is a broad notion, and most campuses are pursuing it in comprehensive ways. In 2011, the American Council on Education conducted an institutional survey and found that internationalization typically focuses on agreements, research projects, numbers of courses with a global focus and number related to student mobility (study abroad students going out, and international students coming in), international partnerships, faculty policies, and language requirements. In 2015, however, Jane Knight developed a new working definition:
“Internationalization at the national, sector, and institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of postsecondary education.” This definition focuses on the process and integrative nature of internationalization. It also keeps the door open to local opportunities for global engagement.

**Global learning** has emerged as a term that reflects the full scope and substance of engagement with learning in and about the world. By using the term “global,” we deemphasize the nation state and shift attention to a greater focus on issues connecting the United States to the rest of the world. Moreover, in addition to the possibility of engagement with the world through the local community, global learning focuses on issues that can be examined by all disciplines and that affect individuals all over the globe—for example, disease, the environment, food security, healthcare, human rights, migration, and water security. Global learning shifts the focus from a specific location or culture to larger issues that affect many parts of the world in interconnected ways. For example, the transmission of HIV and the realities of living with HIV could be examined in both a sociology course and a biology course. Sociocultural factors such as transmission, stigma, and access to medication, along with the biological aspects of HIV, could be explored locally and in different parts of the world.

**An in-depth examination of global learning**

Through AAC&U’s Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) project, teams of faculty and other educational professionals from more than a hundred higher education institutions have developed a set of rubrics for use in assessing the learning outcomes identified as essential by the broader Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) initiative. In all, sixteen rubrics have been developed; they delineate the most frequently identified characteristics or criteria of demonstrated learning for each of the outcomes. These rubrics have been tested by faculty in hundreds of institutions using samples of authentic student work.

The most recently developed rubric is one for global learning. This rubric defines global learning as “a critical analysis of and engagement with complex, interdependent global systems and legacies (such as natural, physical, social, cultural, economic, and political) and their implications for people’s lives and the earth’s sustainability.” The rubric suggests that students demonstrate achievement of global learning in six dimensions: self-awareness, perspective-taking, understanding cultural diversity, personal and social responsibility, global systems, and knowledge application. These dimensions clearly indicate the connection between global cultural diversity and domestic cultural diversity—aspects of diversity that are not in competition and, indeed, can inform one another.

Efforts to promote global learning must be intentional and well integrated into the institution. While global learning has its roots in global and international studies, area studies, and globally focused courses that typically touch a self-selected group of students, all students need to experience global learning beyond one required course or experience. Global learning should be integrated into educational goals at all levels—institutional, divisional, departmental, programmatic, course, and campus life. Global learning outcomes should be developed, and opportunities for global learning must be mapped to ensure it is situated at the center of all learning—not just those areas with an explicit or obvious global focus.

Global learning outcomes can be developed through many activities, including engagement with international students and scholars, global service learning, globally focused capstones, internships, international interactive video-conferences, and study abroad. Study abroad has long been the face of global learning, but...
there are some challenges to its prominence. Study abroad is the most recognized and easily quantifiable global learning activity, and the benefits of a well-structured study abroad program have been clearly articulated; these include enhanced international understanding, cross-cultural communication, intercultural competence, and language skills.

Study abroad participation by American college students has increased significantly, growing from 174,629 students to 289,408 students between 2002 and 2013. Despite the overall increase in participation, however, there are persistent disparities. In 2012–13, of the approximately 10 percent of American undergraduate students who studied abroad, 65.3 percent were female, and 76.3 percent were white. Although there have been some empirical studies, much of the information on participation in study abroad programs by students of color and low-income students is anecdotal. Among the factors that likely hinder participation by these students are financial concerns, lack of family support, lack of awareness, desire to complete college quickly, a perception that it is unimportant, lack of program sites of interest, and lack of program leadership by faculty of color. More research needs to be done to examine the factors that contribute to the disparities, and additional opportunities for global learning for the nearly 90 percent of students who do not currently study abroad are urgently needed.

A 2014 survey commissioned by the Association of American Colleges and Universities found that 70 percent of employers regard it as “very important” that college graduates have “the ability to analyze and solve complex problems with people from different backgrounds and cultures.” The same percentage of employers describe their companies or organizations as globally connected. Given that the outcomes associated with global learning are widely considered to be essential for all students, and since the majority of students do not study abroad, other opportunities for global learning must be developed.

Service-learning and community-based learning experiences can be opportunities for global learning. Most communities have local and global connections—local immigrant communities either newly arrived or longstanding, diverse communities, corporations with global connections, community-based organizations focused on global issues—and so campus-community collaboration can create additional opportunities for students to engage with difference and to engage in global problem-solving in their home communities. When these types of experiences are coupled with intellectual framing and critical reflection, they become strong global learning experiences. Before working with community partners, students should be well prepared. They should learn about the institutional culture; the culture of clients or users of the site; information about the historical, cultural, and economic background; and the connections to global issues.

Moreover, opportunities to engage students who are underrepresented in study abroad and other global learning activities should be built into all global learning initiatives. Students from diverse racial or ethnic backgrounds and income levels, first-generation students, and older students are participating in American higher education today at much higher rates than in the past, and more are expected to gain access in the next twenty years. These students from groups that have been historically excluded or poorly served by higher education will soon comprise the majority of all undergraduates in American higher education, and indeed they already comprise the majority at some colleges and universities. The authors of the recent AAC&U report America’s Unmet Promise: The Imperative for Equity in Higher Education state that “by 2027, half of the students in US high schools will come from what have long been described as minority groups. Our future as a diverse democracy has arrived. America’s future prosperity, economic and democratic, depends on how we educate our students of color.”

While the Institute of International Education publishes data on student participation in study abroad programs in its annual Open Doors reports, and most institutions have data on their own students’ participation in study abroad, it is more difficult to measure participation in global learning by students who engage other types of experiences. Data on participation in global service learning is often available on campuses that measure service hours, for example, and data on the number of courses with a global title or affiliation with area studies, global/international studies, languages, and/or cultures are also available.
But there is no concrete instrument to measure the number of students engaged in integrated global learning experiences.

**Inclusive excellence and global learning**

To deepen the engagement of “new majority” students—those first-generation or low-income students, students of color, and traditionally underserved students who are emerging as the majority of undergraduates—the five principles for creating equity by design that are outlined in *America’s Unmet Promise* can also be applied constructively to global learning opportunities:

1. Clarity in language, goals, and measures is vital to effective equitable practices.
2. “Equity-mindedness” should be the guiding paradigm for language and action.
3. Equitable practices and policies are designed to accommodate differences in the contexts of students’ learning—not to treat all students the same.
4. Enacting equity requires a continual process of learning, disaggregating data, and questioning assumptions about relevance and effectiveness.
5. Equity must be enacted as a pervasive institution- and system-wide principle. These principles provide guidance in creating equity-minded programs, projects, and courses, and a number of institutions are drawing on them as they create global learning opportunities.

To integrate global learning intentionally across the institution by clearly defining learning goals for all students is one way to ensure that global learning is for all. Florida International University (FIU) is a Miami-based university with a diverse student population. It is a “majority minority” institution with significant international and domestic diversity. As part of FIU’s quality-enhancement plan, all students must take at least two courses that address three global learning outcomes: global awareness, global perspective, and global engagement. There are global learning courses offered in each of FIU’s eleven colleges and schools, and students are assessed using both the Global Perspectives Inventory and a campus-based assessment tool.

Montgomery College, located north of Washington, DC, is a community college with a highly diverse student population—including
students from 169 countries. The college offers an integrated global learning curriculum developed by faculty participants in the Global Humanities Institute, a one-year faculty fellows program that allows faculty members to focus on either the redesign of existing courses or the creation of new courses. The goal is to develop courses with a global focus that are guided by clearly defined learning outcomes.

Study abroad is another area of focus for campuses seeking to increase the participation of new majority students in global learning. Indiana University Bloomington is the flagship campus of the Indiana University system and a research institution with a long history of study abroad and area studies. Approximately 20 percent of the students are students of color, and 19 percent are first-generation students. The student body also includes students from 125 countries. The Office of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Multicultural Affairs has created short-term study abroad programs specifically for “new majority” students in its scholars programs in order to increase their participation in study abroad. These short-term programs have provided experiences in Ghana, Jamaica, and India.

Augsburg College in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is quite diverse for a small liberal arts college: the student body is made up of about 30 percent students of color and about 40 percent Pell-eligible students. In addition to offering more traditional study abroad opportunities, Augsburg College maintains permanent centers for global learning in Mexico, Nicaragua, and Namibia. The centers are staffed by a combination of expatriates and local community members. There are deep-rooted connections to the local communities, and the staff members understand the diverse needs of the Augsburg students. For example, Augsburg has arranged culturally appropriate homestay placements for single parents who needed assistance with childcare, safe home environments for LGBTQ students, sober homestays for students in recovery (in addition to connecting students in Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous programs with sponsors), and access to mosques for Muslim students. This commitment to creating environments for student success is a hallmark of Augsburg’s study abroad programs.

The global service experience—a structured, organized service activity through which students address identified community needs, learn directly from interaction and cross-cultural dialogue with community members, and reflect on the experience in order to deepen their understanding of global and intercultural issues—is another global learning opportunity that’s being made available to all students. Global service experiences occur in local communities and abroad. In domestic global learning programs, for example, students may engage with immigrant community members who have recently arrived in the United States or have been living in the local community for a while. The experience may include some form of community service or service learning associated with coursework related to global learning.

At FIU, students from the Haitian Student Organization developed and led a two-week mentorship program for middle school students of Haitian descent in order to teach them more about Haitian culture, history, and identity. Many of the student mentors also learned more about their own culture, and they have created a model for other student groups. The program will soon be expanded through the academic year and involve pre-service teachers from FIU. At Augsburg College, all students in the first-year experience must complete at least ten hours of service. Many of them work in the local global community within the Minneapolis area. Students have also explored the global aspects of issues such as inequality, race, sustainability, and social justice while engaging in service.

Conclusion

Increased international activity at American institutions of higher education has contributed to the development of global learning—curriculum-based learning that shifts the focus from counting numbers of courses and participants to the examination of global issues from
diverse disciplinary perspectives. The global becomes an integral part of a course's framing due to the adoption of clearly articulated, intentional course outcomes related to global learning. While global learning is a part of campus internationalization, a laser-like focus on student learning has the potential to provide students with perspective-changing, real-world experiences across the curriculum. With more intentional and inclusive course design, more students will have opportunities to engage in global learning at home and away, and this engagement will prepare them for the challenges of today and tomorrow.

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

NOTES
3. The mission of the Association of American Colleges and Universities is to make liberal education and inclusive excellence the foundation for institutional purpose and educational practice in higher education.
11. Launched in 2005 by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) is a national public advocacy and campus action initiative designed to champion the importance of a twenty-first-century liberal education for individual students and for a nation dependent on economic creativity and democratic vitality. Launched in 2007 as part of the LEAP initiative, the Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) project provides the tools needed to assess students’ own authentic work, produced across diverse learning pathways and institutions, in order to determine whether and how well they are progressing toward graduation-level achievement in learning outcomes that both employers and faculty consider essential. More information about LEAP and VALUE is available online at www.aacu.org.
17. For the latest report, see Farrugia and Bhandari, Open Doors 2014.
18. Witham et al., America’s Unmet Promise, 27.
19. The Global Perspective Inventory is a national survey that measures an undergraduate’s ability to take a global perspective by examining cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions of this key attribute of global learning. The survey also probes the frequency of students’ engagement in curricular and cocurricular experiences intended to foster global learning, as well as students’ sense of community and the nature of their interactions with faculty. For more detailed information about the survey, see Larry A. Braskamp, David C. Braskamp, and Mark E. Engberg, Global Perspective Inventory (GPI): Its Purpose, Construction, Potential Uses, and Psychometric Characteristics (Chicago: Global Perspective Institute, 2014), https://gpi.central.edu/supportDocs/manual.pdf.
The Decline of International Studies
Why Flying Blind Is Dangerous

In October 2013, the US Department of State eliminated its funding program for advanced language and cultural training on Russia and the former Soviet Union. Created in 1983 as a special appropriation by Congress, the so-called Title VIII Program had supported generations of specialists working in academia, think tanks, and the US government itself. But as a State Department official told the Russian news service RIA Novosti at the time, “In this fiscal climate, it just didn’t make it.” The program’s shuttering came just a month before the start of a now well-known chain of events: Ukraine’s Euromaidan revolution, Russia’s annexation of Crimea, and the descent of US-Russian relations to their lowest level since the Cold War. The timing was, to say the least, unfortunate.

The end of the United States’ premier federal program for Russian studies saved taxpayers only $3.3 million—the cost of two Tomahawk cruise missiles or about half a day’s sea time for an aircraft carrier strike group. The development was part of a broader trend: the scaling back of a long-term national commitment to education and research focused on international affairs. Two years ago, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences warned of a hidden crisis in the humanities and social sciences. “Now more than ever,” the academy’s report concluded, “the spirit of international cooperation, the promotion of trade and foreign investment, the requirements of international diplomacy, and even the enhancement of national security depend in some measure on an American citizenry trained in humanistic and social scientific disciplines, including languages, transnational studies, moral and political philosophy, global ethics, and international relations.” In response to lobbying by universities and scholarly associations, Title VIII was resuscitated earlier this year, but it came back at less than half its previous funding level and with future appropriations left uncertain. Given the mounting challenges that Washington faces in Russia and eastern Europe, now seems to be an especially odd time to reduce federal support for educating the next cohort of experts.

The rise of the United States as a global power was the product of more than merely economic and military advantages. Where the country was truly hegemonic was in its unmatched knowledge of the hidden interior of other nations: their languages and cultures, their histories and political systems, their local economies and human geographies. Through programs such as Title VIII, the US government created a remarkable community of minutemen of the mind: scholars, graduate students, and undergraduates who possessed the linguistic skills, historical sensitivity, and sheer intellectual curiosity to peer deeply into foreign societies. Policymakers sometimes learned to listen to them, and not infrequently, these scholars even became policymakers themselves.

That knowledge flourished in an environment defined by some of the great innovations of Charles King is professor of international affairs and chair of the Department of Government at Georgetown University. ©2015 Council on Foreign Relations, publisher of Foreign Affairs. All rights reserved. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.
American higher education: unfettered inquiry, the assessment of scholarship via rigorous peer review, the expectation that the value of discovery lies somewhere other than in its immediate usefulness, and the link between original research and innovative teaching. If you want evidence-based expertise on terrorism in Pakistan, environmental degradation in China, or local politics in provincial Russia, there is someone in an American university who can provide it. It is harder to imagine a Pakistani scholar who knows Nebraska, a Chinese researcher who can speak with authority about the revival of Detroit, or a Russian professor who wields original survey data on the next US presidential race.

But things are changing. Shifting priorities at the national level, a misreading of the effects of globalization, and academics’ own drift away from knowing real things about real places have combined to weaken this vital component of the United States’ intellectual capital. Educational institutions and the disciplines they preserve are retreating from the task of cultivating men and women who are comfortable moving around the globe, both literally and figuratively. Government agencies, in turn, are reducing their overall support and narrowing it to fields deemed relevant to US national security—and even to specific research topics within them. Worse, academic research is now subject to the same “culture war” attacks that federal lawmakers used to reserve for profane rap lyrics and blasphemous artwork. Unless Washington stops this downward spiral, these changes will not only weaken national readiness. They will also erode the habit of mind that good international affairs education was always supposed to produce: an appreciation for people, practices, and ideas that are not one’s own.

Lost in translation?
Americans naturally swing between isolation and engagement with the world, but it is government that has usually nudged them in one direction or the other. A century ago, rates of foreign language study in Europe and the United States were about the same, with roughly a third of secondary school students in both places learning a modern foreign language. After the United States entered World War I, however, almost half the US states criminalized the teaching of German or other foreign languages in schools. It took a Supreme Court decision in 1923 to overturn that practice.

During World War II, the US government made attempts to train up linguists and instant area experts, but these initiatives quickly faded. It was not until the onset of the Cold War that private universities such as Columbia and Harvard devoted serious attention to the problem and opened pioneering programs for Russian studies. The Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations launched grants for scholars working specifically on Soviet politics, history, or economics.

Only in the late 1950s did the focus on what is now known as internationalization become a national priority—a response to the Sputnik scare and the sense that the Soviets could soon gain superiority in fields well beyond science and technology. The National Defense Education...
Act of 1958, followed by the Higher Education Act of 1965 and its successors, provided special funding for regional studies and advanced language training for American graduate students. Among other measures, the legislation created a network of National Resource Centers located at major US universities, which in turn ran master's programs and other forms of instruction to train the next generation of specialists. In 2010, the total size of this allocation, known as Title VI, stood at $110 million, distributed across programs for East Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, Russia and Eurasia, and other areas. Along with the Fulbright-Hays scholarships for international academic exchanges, established in 1961, Title VI became one of the principal sources of funding for future political scientists, historians, linguists, anthropologists, and others working on distinct world regions.

On the face of it, that investment seems to have paid off. American universities have emerged as among the world's most globally minded. No US college president can long survive without developing a strategy for further internationalization. New schools for specialized study have sprung up across the United States—for example, the University of Oklahoma's College of International Studies, founded in 2011, and Indiana University's School of Global and International Studies, which opened in 2012. Older centers—including Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, and George Washington University's

An iron law of academia holds that, with time, all disciplines bore even themselves
Scholarly research in global affairs, especially work funded by the National Science Foundation, has come under growing attack.

Elliott School of International Affairs—consistently top world rankings. The US example has become the model for a raft of new institutions around the world, such as the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin and the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy in Singapore, founded in 2003 and 2004, respectively, and the Blavatnik School of Government at Oxford University, founded in 2010.

True, young Americans can play video games with their peers in Cairo, chat online with friends in St. Petersburg, and download music from a punk band based in Beijing. But consuming the world is not the same as understanding it. After a steady expansion over two decades, enrollment in foreign-language courses at US colleges fell by 6.7 percent between 2009 and 2013. Most language programs experienced double-digit losses. Even Spanish—a language chosen by more US students than all other languages combined—has suffered its first decline since the Modern Language Association began keeping count in 1958. Today, the third most studied language in US higher education, behind Spanish and French, is a homegrown one: American Sign Language.

Something similar has happened in the unlikeliest of places: among professional scholars of international relations. According to an annual survey conducted by the College of William and Mary, 30 percent of American researchers in the field say that they have a working knowledge of no language other than English, and more than half say that they rarely or never cite non-English sources in their work. (Forty percent, however, rank Chinese as the most valuable language for their students to know after English.) At least within the United States, the remarkable growth in the study of international relations in recent decades has produced one of the academy’s more parochial disciplines.

Part of the problem lies in the professoriate. An iron law of academia holds that, with time, all disciplines bore even themselves. English professors drift away from novels and toward literary theory. Economists envy mathematicians. Political scientists give up grappling with dilemmas of power and governance—the concerns of thinkers from Aristotle to Max Weber and Hans Morgenthau—and make their own pastiche of the natural sciences with careful hypotheses about minute problems. Being monumentally wrong is less attractive than being unimportantly right. Research questions derive almost exclusively from what has gone unsaid in some previous scholarly conversation. As any graduate student learns early on, one must first “fill a hole in the literature” and only later figure out whether it was worth filling. Doctoral programs also do a criminally poor job of teaching young scholars to write and speak in multiple registers—that is, use jargon with their peers if necessary but then explain their findings to a broader audience with equal zeal and effectiveness.

Still, the cultishness of the American academy can be overstated. Today, younger scholars of Russia and Eurasia, for example, have language skills and local knowledge that are the envy of their older colleagues—in part because of decades of substantial federal investment in the field and in part because many current students actually hail from the region and have chosen to make their careers in American universities. Even the increasing quantification of political science can be a boon when abstract concepts are combined with grass-roots understanding of specific contexts. Statistical modeling, field experiments, and “big data” have revolutionized areas as diverse as development economics, public health, and product marketing. There is no reason that similar techniques shouldn’t enrich the study of international affairs, and the private sector is already forging ahead in that area. Companies such as Dataminr—a start-up that analyzes social-media postings for patterns to detect breaking news—now track everything from environmental crises to armed conflict. Foreign policy experts used to debate the causes of war. Now they can see them unspooling in real time.

The deeper problems are matters of money and partisan politics. In an Internet-connected world infused with global English, private funders have radically scaled back their support for work that requires what the political scientist Richard Fenno called “soaking and poking”: studying difficult languages, living in unfamiliar communities, and making sense of complex histories and cultures. Very few of the major US foundations finance international and regional studies on levels approaching those of two decades ago. Foundation boards, influenced by the modish language of disruption and social entrepreneurship, want projects with actionable
ideas and measurable impact. Over the short term, serious investments in building hard-to-acquire skills are unlikely to yield either. And these developments don’t represent a mere shift from the study of Russia and Eurasia to a focus on the Middle East and East Asia—a pivot that would be reasonable given changes in global politics. The Carnegie Corporation of New York, for example, ended its prestigious senior fellowship program on Muslim societies in 2009 and wound down its wider Islam Initiative shortly thereafter.

The US government has followed suit. The suspension of Title VIII was only the latest in a series of cutbacks. The Foreign Language Assistance Program, created in 1961, provides matching grants from the Department of Education for teaching foreign languages, ended in 2012. The previous year, Title VI funding for university-based regional studies fell by 40 percent and has flattened since. If today’s Title VI appropriation were at the level it was during the Johnson administration, then it would total almost half a billion dollars after adjusting for inflation. Instead, the 2014 number stood at slightly below $64 million.

The same thing has happened with direct funding to undergraduates and graduate students, particularly when it comes to the National Security Education Program (NSEP), which offers students financial assistance for foreign-language study and cultural immersion. NSEP was established in 1991 on the initiative of David Boren, then a Democratic senator from Oklahoma, with the goal of training a new, post–Cold War generation of foreign affairs specialists. The program’s signature elements—Boren Scholarships and Boren Fellowships—offer grants of up to $30,000 to highly qualified undergraduates and graduate students in exchange for at least a year of federal government service in national security after graduation. For all its prestige, however, and despite nominal support among both liberals and conservatives, the Boren program offers fewer such awards today than it did in the mid-1990s.

Another element of NSEP is an innovative initiative for heritage speakers—American citizens who possess native abilities in a foreign language and wish to develop professional-level skills in English—and it, too, has shrunk. The initiative has never been able to fund more than 40 people per year, most of them native speakers of Arabic or Mandarin, and the number has been steadily falling, reaching just 18 in 2014. (This program is now housed at Georgetown University, where I teach.) In a somewhat encouraging sign, enrollment has been growing markedly in NSEP’s Language Flagship program, which gives grants to colleges to field advanced courses in languages deemed important for national security. But the raw numbers reveal just how small the United States’ next generation of linguists actually is. Last year, the total number of students enrolled in NSEP-sponsored courses for all the “critical languages”—Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Korean, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Swahili, Turkish, Urdu, and Yoruba—was under a thousand.

In tandem with these trends, scholarly research in global affairs, especially work funded by the National Science Foundation, has come under growing attack. The annual appropriation for the NSF is around $7.3 billion, of which a fraction—less than $260 million—goes to the behavioral, social, and economic sciences. Of that figure, only about $13 million goes to political scientists, and an even smaller amount goes to those doing research on international affairs. Still, these scholars now receive the kind of lambasting that used to be directed mainly against the National Endowment for the Arts.

As just one example, for the past two years, the NSF has been the particular focus of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, which oversees the foundation along with portions of the Federal Aviation Administration, NASA, and other agencies. The committee intends to subject all NSF-funded projects to a relevance test that would require the foundation to certify that every taxpayer dollar is spent “in the national interest.” In a recent opinion piece for The Hill, Lamar Smith, the Republican representative from Texas who chairs the committee, pilloried NSF-funded researchers working on the environmental history of New Zealand, women and Islam in Turkey, and local politics in India. “How about studying the United States of America?” he wrote. “Federal research agencies have an obligation to explain to American taxpayers why their money is being used to provide free foreign vacations to college professors.” In response to this kind of criticism, academic associations have hired their own lobbyists—a recognition of the fact that education and research are now less national priorities than objects of political
jockeying, on par with items on the wish lists of private corporations and interest groups.

The crusade for relevance is part of a broader development: the growing militarization of government-funded scholarship. Researchers in international and regional studies have always donned a hat to strategic priorities. Even historians and literature professors became accustomed to touting their work’s policy significance when they applied for federal grants and fellowships. But today, a substantial portion of assistance comes directly from the US Department of Defense. The department’s Minerva Initiative provides support for research on “areas of strategic importance to US national security policy” and for “projects addressing specific topic areas determined by the Secretary of Defense,” as the call for applications says. In the current three-year cycle, which runs until 2017, the program expects to disburse $17 million to university-based researchers in the social sciences. Millions more have been allocated since the first round began in 2009.

But there is a substantial difference between research that broadly supports the national interest and work that directly enhances national security. Developing new techniques for teaching Arabic and Chinese, for example, or analyzing EU regulatory policy is the former without necessarily being the latter. When scholars need research money and Washington needs actionable analysis, the danger is that the meaning of the term “national security” can balloon beyond any reasonable definition. Even more worrying, in an era of real transnational threats, knowledge that used to be thought of as the purview of the police—say, how to manage a mass protest and deter crime—can easily slide into matters of surveilling and soldiering.

It was once the case that state-supported research was meant to give the United States an edge in its relations with other countries. Now, with programs such as Minerva, the temptation is to give government an edge over the governed. Recent Minerva projects have focused on the origins of mass political movements, “radicalization” among Somali refugees in Minnesota, and—in the words of one project summary—“the study of Islamic conversion in America,” aimed at providing “options for governments to use for the tasking of surveillance.” Professors funded by Minerva work with project managers at US military research facilities, who in turn report to the secretary of defense, who has by definition found the research topics to be matters of strategic concern. In an incentive structure that rewards an emphasis on countering global threats and securing the homeland, the devil lies in the definitions. In this framework, the Boston Marathon bombing becomes a national security problem, whereas the Sandy Hook massacre remains a matter for the police and psychologists—a distinction that is both absurd as social science and troubling as public policy.

The price of global engagement

Things could be different. Funding for foreign-language study, cultural immersion, and advanced inquiry could be a federal priority, with funding levels restored to what they were in previous years. Research and teaching could be placed at one remove from the national security apparatus, as they are in the Department of Education’s model for Title VI or in a public trust along the lines of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The creation of knowledge and its communication through instruction could be made immune from “gotcha” politics. And congressional staff members could spend their time on things other than trips to the NSF archives to root out recondite research topics for public ridicule.

At the same time, universities have their own part to play. Disciplines can, and do, go haywire. Researchers and graduate students should be judged not by how well they embed themselves in a scholarly mainstream but by how truly original and world-connected they aim to be. Fundable scholarship should not be reduced to a narrow matter of national security. But it is hard to see why anyone would make a career of international affairs—a pursuit that begins with valuing people, cultures, and polities in all their diversity—without some commitment to serving the public interest.

Given that no one can know where the next crisis will erupt, having a broadly competent reserve of experts is the price of global engagement. Yesterday’s apparent irrelevancies—the demographics of eastern Ukraine, for example, or popular attitudes toward public health in West Africa—can suddenly become matters of consequence. Acquiring competence in these
sorts of topics forms the mental disposition that J. William Fulbright called “seeing the world as others see it”—an understanding that people could reasonably view their identities, interests, politics, and leaders in ways that might at first seem bizarre or wrong-headed. It also provides the essential context for distinguishing smart policy-specific questions from misguided ones. Great powers should revel in small data: the granular and culture-specific knowledge that can make the critical difference between really getting a place and getting it profoundly wrong.

International affairs education and research are also part of a country’s domestic life. Democratic societies depend on having a cadre of informed professionals outside government—people in universities, think tanks, museums, and research institutes who cultivate expertise protected from the pressures of the state. Many countries can field missile launchers and float destroyers; only a few have built a Brookings Institution or a Chatham House. Yet the latter is what makes them magnets for people from the very places their institutions study. The University of London’s nearly century-old SOAS, for example, which focuses on Asian and African studies, is a beehive of languages and causes, where Koreans, Nigerians, and Palestinians come to receive world-class instruction on, among other things, North and South Korea, Nigeria, and the Palestinian territories.

All of this points to just how important international and regional studies can be when they are adequately funded, publicly valued, and shielded from the exigencies of national security. Their chief role is not to enable the makers of foreign policy. It is rather to constrain them: to show why things will always be more complicated than they seem, how to foresee unintended consequences, and when to temper ambition with a realistic understanding of what is historically and culturally imaginable. For more than half a century, the world has been shaped by the simple fact that the United States could look at other countries—their pasts and presents, their myths and worldviews—with sympathetic curiosity. Maintaining the ability to do so is not only a great power’s insurance policy against the future. It is also the essence of an open, inquisitive, and critical society.

To respond to this article, e-mail liberaled@aacu.org, with the author’s name on the subject line.
Belonging
The Gateway to Global Learning for All Students

I come from a poor family. The hardest time was during my sophomore year, when my family lost our home and my parents lost their business. I was ready to quit. I said to myself, "Why do I think I belong here? No one in my family has ever belonged here." My academic advisor reassured me that the resources for success were available, if I was willing to keep trying. Guidance and mentorship from faculty and staff go a long way in assisting financially challenged students like me to finish college.
—"Maya," a first-generation college student

"Why do I think I belong here?" This question almost led Maya to quit; however, faculty mentors fostered a sense of belonging that helped her become the first person in her family to graduate from college. Moreover, interactions with peers from diverse backgrounds and faculty who presented issues from different cultural perspectives fostered in Maya a commitment to responsible global citizenship. This commitment included—yet transcended—her small-town roots in rural Virginia. Today, Maya is a graduate student studying international higher education, and she is particularly interested in expanding access to higher education for poor students around the world. Her story is one reason why we believe not only that belonging is the key to student success, but also that it is the gateway to global learning.

For several years, we have been analyzing data from the Global Perspective Inventory (GPI), a national survey that measures undergraduate students’ ability to take a global perspective by examining cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions of this key attribute of global learning. The survey also probes the frequency of students’ engagement in curricular and cocurricular experiences intended to foster global learning, as well as students’ sense of community and the nature of their interactions with faculty. The multi-level framework of the GPI allows us to study connections between the dimensions of student learning and campus environmental influences. Between August 2011 and June 2013, 37,967 undergraduates who were enrolled at more than a hundred four-year institutions completed the Global Perspective Inventory; the empirical evidence presented in this article is based on the results.

An uneven sense of belonging
At its best, the college experience involves quality intercultural interactions that have the potential to pervade everything from classroom discussions to leadership programs and recreational activities. In such a context, the sense of belonging that proved so pivotal in Maya’s story is the gateway to global learning, providing a secure base from which students can begin to engage the cultural variation that characterizes our diverse, interconnected world. Yet our data show that, far too often, first-generation, transfer, and international students lack this crucial sense of belonging. Just as participation in study abroad programs varies across student demographics, the sense of belonging in college is unevenly distributed among today’s students.

The GPI survey was designed to examine six interrelated dimensions of community. Students are asked the extent to which (1) they feel part of a close and supportive community of friends, (2) they believe their institution honors diversity and internationalism, (3) they understand

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The quality of faculty-student interaction has a strong, direct relationship to students’ sense of belonging

Faculty-student interactions foster a sense of belonging
The GPI data clearly demonstrate that the quality of faculty-student interaction has a strong, direct relationship to students’ sense of belonging. We examined four dimensions of faculty-student interaction: (1) discussion of course topics, ideas, or concepts outside of class; (2) discussion of academic performance; (3) faculty challenges to student views and perspectives during class; and (4) faculty presentation of issues and problems from different cultural perspectives. We found that all four dimensions are strongly associated with students’ overall sense of community (see fig. 1).

Not only do faculty members provide critical academic support, but they also can serve as key sources of social support that enhance students’ sense of belonging. Talk of college-level learning often remains abstract without explicitly recognizing what is hidden in plain sight: dedicated faculty members lie at the heart of a quality education. Individual faculty members can leave lasting impressions on students’ lives by modeling habits of mind that help them weigh complex global issues.

Developing the capacity for global perspective-taking—that is, learning to take multiple perspectives into account—can contribute to the formation of a value-based and authentic sense of self. It also can help students relate to others with openness and respect. Rich and meaningful interactions among students and faculty members foster this essential capacity.

Table 1. Average of sense of community items by parents’ education, transfer status, and international status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parents’ Education</th>
<th>Transfer</th>
<th>International</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First-Generation</td>
<td>College Degree</td>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a strong sense of affiliation with my college/university.</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>3.93</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel that my college/university community honors diversity and internationalism.</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>4.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand the mission of my college/university.</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am both challenged and supported at my college/university.</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>4.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been encouraged to develop my strengths and talents at my college/university.</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I am a part of a close and supportive community of colleagues and friends.</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>4.17</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree
Belonging and global perspective-taking

Some may wonder whether a focus on fostering a sense of belonging may conflict with the goal of developing global citizens. After all, the term “global citizenship” evokes images of a cosmopolitan, itinerant lifestyle. The GPI survey results reveal a surprising paradox: the more strongly a student is rooted in his or her local institution, the greater is his or her capacity for global perspective-taking.

The survey item “I see myself as a global citizen” encompasses all three dimensions of global perspective-taking—cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal. We found a strong relationship between social interactions on campus and students’ views of themselves as global citizens (see fig. 2, page 26). Students who engage with faculty members outside of class and take classes in which faculty present issues from multiple perspectives are far more likely to view themselves as global citizens (see fig. 3, page 26). Finally, students who frequently engage with peers from other countries or with peers from racial or ethnic groups different from their own are far more likely to view themselves as global citizens (see fig. 4, page 27).

Taken together, figures 2, 3, and 4 show the relationship between the local and the global, demonstrating that, as the German sociologist Ulrich Beck has put it, “the global and the local are to be conceived, not as cultural polarities, but as interconnected and reciprocally interpenetrating principles.”

Local intercultural
**Figure 2. Relationship between students’ views of themselves as global citizens and their social interactions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Interaction</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Note:** “Social Interaction” is determined by taking the mean of the seven social interaction items in the GPI (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree):

1. Most of my friends are from my own ethnic background;
2. People from other cultures tell me that I am successful at navigating their cultures;
3. I am able to take on various roles as appropriate in different cultures and ethnic settings;
4. I prefer to work with people who have different cultural values from me;
5. I intentionally involve people from many cultural backgrounds in my life;
6. I enjoy when my friends from other cultures teach me about our cultural differences; and
7. I am open to people who strive to live lives very different from my own lifestyle.

**Figure 3. Relationship between students’ views of themselves as global citizens and faculty-student interaction**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty-Student Interaction</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
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<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1</td>
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**Note:** “Faculty-Student Interaction” is determined by taking the mean of the four faculty-student interaction items in the GPI (1 = Never; 5 = Very Often):

1. Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class;
2. Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member;
3. The faculty challenged students’ views and perspectives on a topic during class; and
4. The faculty presented issues and problems in class from different cultural perspectives.
encounters are manifestations of larger global processes. Rooted in daily experience, such encounters engender greater self-awareness of one’s own culture with a growing capacity to relate to others who display one or more kinds of difference. In our research, students’ sense of identity and their sense of social responsibility are the two dimensions that correspond most directly with students’ views of their campus as a supportive, challenging, and encouraging community. These intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions of global learning locate students’ everyday encounters in the broader matrix of global processes.

**Closing the opportunity gap**

In *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*, the renowned scholar of social capital Robert Putnam contrasts the life stories of rich and poor families to draw attention to a growing “opportunity gap” in American society. He argues that inequality in America has two meanings: income and opportunity. That is, not only do first-generation college students bear disproportionate costs of a college education, but they also are consequently shut out from the types of quality learning experiences that make a college education an opportunity for upward mobility. As Vicki Madden observes, “once those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds arrive on campus, it’s often the subtler things, the signifiers of who they are and where they come from, that cause the most trouble, challenging their very identity, comfort and right to be on that campus.” Madden provides a personal example: “I couldn’t read The New York Times—not because the words were too hard, but because I didn’t have enough knowledge of the world to follow the articles.”

A sense of belonging is essential for students when they encounter unfamiliar environments and negotiate the doubts, fears, and tensions associated with the transition to college. Faculty members can allay students’ fears, assuage their doubts, and help them negotiate an often precarious transition. Advisors can assure them that they are capable of mastering the challenges they face in college—and in life.

**Figure 4. Relationship between students’ views of themselves as global citizens and frequency of interaction with people from a different country and racial/ethnic group from their own**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I frequently interact with people from a country different from my own</strong></td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I frequently interact with people from a racial/ethnic group different from my own</strong></td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Old Dominion University
Higher education institutions today exist in a policy environment consumed by a focus on increasing efficiency and cutting costs, which often means cutting corners on quality. A focus on costs and credentials, without discussions about value and quality, creates a mirage of opportunity for first-generation college students. If the opportunity gap is ignored, policymakers should have deep concern about whether a college education will fulfill the promise of upward mobility that it has so faithfully kept to past generations.

The GPI data reveal another striking gap: 40 percent of students do not view themselves as global citizens. Certainly, a handful of these students might take issue with the meaning of the term “citizen” as it is used in the relevant survey item. Nonetheless, the GPI data indicate that a significant number of students do not see a clear connection between their daily lives and larger global processes. It is the sense of belonging developed through quality faculty-student interaction, not an individual student’s background, that fosters a positive shift in a student’s sense of identity and responsibility as a global citizen.

Changing the course of students’ lives
American higher education truly is, as Carol Geary Schneider has observed, at a “quality and equity crossroads.” Access to liberal learning at its best, with its “powerful vision and reflection born of an awareness of a world lived in common with others,” is essential for all of today’s students. Colleges and universities must create environments that optimally and effectively influence and foster global learning. This imperative requires higher education leaders to mobilize and, as part of the national conversation about college-level learning, to draw attention to the growing opportunity gap.

While the gaps in both opportunity and income have widened, they can be bridged for first-generation, transfer, and international students through the development of a sense of belonging. Students develop the capacity for global perspective-taking as a result of faculty mentoring within a broader campus community that promotes belonging. Like thousands of other first-generation students represented in our national surveys, Maya demonstrates that a sense of belonging can result from a supportive campus environment that encourages interaction across cultures and that fosters in students a sense of responsibility to act as global citizens.

First-generation students not only deal with financial pressures, but they also wrestle with doubts and fears. Fortunately, Maya had an academic advisor who heard her cry for help: “Why do I think I belong here? No one in my family has ever belonged here.” Her academic advisor’s reassurance that “resources for success were available if [she] was willing to keep trying” literally changed the course of Maya’s life. Today, ten million first-generation students ask us the same question, and our answers will literally change the course of their lives.

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

NOTES
1. “Maya” is a pseudonym for a participant in the Developmentally Effective Experiences for Global Learning research project, which is led by Chris R. Glass.
If AAC was to achieve its newly focused mission of advancing liberal education, it would have to speak directly to the faculty—and involve faculty members in its programs—far more than it had done previously.

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Transformation of AAC&U

be recounted in an article of this length, I will highlight what I regard as some of the most significant developments.¹

I arrived at AAC in 1975 to direct a project on faculty development and have been intimately involved in the four decades since, during which faculty have played increasingly important roles. For that reason, this article is more of a personal essay than an objective history. I knew the leaders personally and was a participant observer in the changes taking place within the association. Nobody could have envisioned the magnitude of these changes. Indeed, in 1976 the future of AAC looked bleak. But over time a new, more vibrant organization did emerge. The meaning of liberal education was unpacked and redefined to include broad general knowledge, intellectual skills, personal qualities, and the integration and application of learning to help solve real-world problems. Education was more closely tied to serious issues in students’ own lives, showing them the power of ideas. This expanded concept of liberal education was applied to a much more diverse student population. Each of these refinements involved an action agenda the association would embrace, all involving a central role for faculty. It was no coincidence that the refocused association was one in which faculty came to play a major, even crucial and leadership, role.

Major funded projects involving faculty
Over several decades, AAC formed relationships with funding agencies that saw the association as a vehicle for achieving their educational aspirations. Increasingly, the philanthropic community turned its attention to higher education and provided support for projects that included faculty members. There were many funded projects operated over the years, but for the most part they fell into two broad categories: diversity and quality.

Diversity. The first major project of the post-1976 association that was designed to increase the number and diversity of students was the Project on the Status and Education of Women (PSEW), which was created and directed by Bernice “Bunny” Sandler in 1971. The context was that federal law, strengthened in 1972 by the passage of Title IX, disallowed both gender discrimination and sexual harassment. Colleges and universities were vulnerable to lawsuits if they failed to establish new policies to protect and support women, especially as students. Sandler, a lawyer, at first operated the project to aid the management of academic institutions by helping them establish policies that limited their risk. But it soon evolved more directly into the realm of faculty when PSEW published a series of papers on the “chilly climate” that women students faced, first in the classroom and later on campus. The papers rested on a configuration of observations that some teachers made disparaging remarks about women, in general, and about their intellectual abilities.
and academic seriousness, in particular; that in
class men were often called on more frequently
than women, and their comments seem to
count for more; and that women were more
often interrupted by peers and teachers than
men were. These subtle and not-so-subtle
behaviors, often not even recognized by teachers
themselves and often done by both men and
women teachers, constitute a more difficult
learning environment for women. If colleges and
universities were to become more welcoming
places for women, who then were a growing
minority among undergraduates, the faculty
had to do their part by creating a better climate
for their learning. In time, this work also pro-
vided important insights that influenced atten-
tion to the broader “climate for learning” for
all students, especially students from groups
that had traditionally been underserved by
higher education.

Increasing access to higher education became
a major focus of public policy after World War II.
With the expansion of state-supported institu-
tions and the build-out of the community college
systems, higher education came to serve larger
numbers of new students. These came in many
varieties: first-generation students whose families
knew little about the realities of college life, racial
and ethnic minority students, women students,
students with weak preparation for college, and
adult students with a variety of
family and work responsibilities.
New scholarship was focusing on
the lives of people in cultures
outside the academic mainstream,
and new programs of study were
being created in women’s studies,
African-American studies, His-
panic studies, Asian studies, and global studies.
America was becoming more and more aware of
the multiplicity of cultures and the need to
expand the legitimacy of new research and publica-
tions about different peoples. There was a need
for greater knowledge about diversity and more
sophistication in dealing with diverse cultures
throughout the academy.

There was a need for greater knowledge about diversity and more sophistication in dealing with diverse cultures throughout the academy

newly revised core curricula. She secured a
series of grants from the National Endowment
for the Humanities, starting in 1989, for fifty-four
“planning institutions” to work with eleven
“resource institutions” in order to plan and
implement new core courses through a project
called Engaging Cultural Legacies: Shaping
Core Curricula in the Humanities. These grants
launched nearly two decades of AAC&U work
on various aspects of diversity in the curriculum.

Beginning in 1992, Schneider subsequently
worked with Caryn McTighe Musil, another
AAC vice president, to engage hundreds of
institutional teams focused on the professional
development of faculty members. The teams
attended summer institutes where they studied
the “new scholarship,” expanded their knowl-
dge of different cultures, and developed new
courses or modules for inclusion of new material
in their courses. During this decade of work
with the family of projects called American Com-
mitments: Diversity, Democracy, and Liberal
Learning, more—and more diverse—faculty
became involved in the work of AAC.

At the beginning of the new century, the
association’s Greater Expectations initiative, led
by Andrea Leskes, made a significant advance by
promoting social responsibility, which had become
a key element of AAC’s work, as one of the core
purposes of a twenty-first-century education. By
connecting diversity to the basic principles of
democracy and encouraging students to become
more engaged in their local communities, all these
efforts contributed to the emergence of service
learning, community-based learning, internships,
and similar opportunities to connect learning to
practical problems.

Quality. A second major theme of national
projects focused on improving the quality of
undergraduate education. The need to improve
the quality of undergraduate general education
came to national attention in 1977 through the
confluence of three separate events. First, the
Carnegie Foundation for the Improvement of
Teaching published Missions of the College
Curriculum, declaring general education a
“disaster area” that lacks purpose and coherence.4
Second, the US commissioner of education and
his assistant, Ernest L. Boyer and Martin Kaplan,
published Educating for Survival, arguing for
common learning to strengthen the social bonds
among citizens of the country and offering a
specific example of a core curriculum.5 Third,

the Harvard College Task Force on the Core
Curriculum issued a report calling for a new course of undergraduate study. These three events coalesced to create national awareness that general education was in trouble and that it needed to become revitalized at institutions across the country.

From 1978 to 1981, while still housed at AAC and working for the Society for Values in Higher Education, I directed the Project on General Education Models, working with fourteen diverse institutions and their faculties to strengthen their general education programs. We forged a closer relationship with AAC to engage in two collaborative activities that responded to the rising chorus of requests for information about what faculty leadership groups could do on campus. We wrote a resource guide to the literature, issues, and illustrative programs, which AAC published and distributed. In addition, Arthur Levine, who had helped draft Missions of the College Curriculum for Carnegie, and I designed and conducted a popular series of four three-day workshops on general education for faculty members and administrators around the country. AAC cosponsored, marketed, and supported these workshops, which did much to establish the association’s position as a leader on general education. Even as liberal education was losing its appeal amid the growth of new professional and career majors, there was strong support for a broad general education for all students, regardless of major or intended career, and this area was to become a staple for AAC programs for decades to come.

In 1982, AAC developed its own project on educational quality called Redefining the Meaning and Purpose of Baccalaureate Degrees and led by Mark Curtis, then AAC president, and William O’Connell, then AAC executive vice president. Colleges and universities had relaxed curricular requirements as a result of the student protests during the 1960s and 1970s. Student protesters complained that many of their courses, especially required courses in the liberal arts and sciences, were irrelevant, impractical, and poorly taught. The protesters cited the fact that most general education courses were introductions to various disciplines and were taught in large lecture courses to passive students by teaching assistants or low-ranking faculty. When institutions responded to student demands, college degrees in many places were standardized at 120 hours of study that involved both a major and a distribution of courses in...
The ongoing Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) initiative builds on many previous projects on both equity and quality.

During the 1980s, critics expressed concern about the growth in the amount of time that majors consumed in the curriculum and the overemphasis on specialization. AAC commissioned a study of graduating students’ transcripts, and Robert Zemsky found a lack of structure and coherent purpose in many departmental curricula. Moreover, work by the AAC staff and representatives of fifty-four departments at eighteen institutions who reviewed each other’s curricula found a disturbing pattern: departments lacked specific goals for student learning, there was an absence of clear structure, and students experienced fragmented learning. AAC partnered with twelve disciplinary societies across the broad areas of the humanities, sciences, and social sciences to review academic majors in their fields. From 1988 to 1991, project participants analyzed issues in majors and developed guidelines for major programs in several popular fields of specialization. The findings were presented in a three-volume report.

The authors of the first volume argued that the major should serve as a “home” for learning: “a community of peers with whom students can undertake collaborative inquiries and a faculty charged to care about students’ intellectual and personal explorations as well as their maturation.” In other language, each major should be a “learning community” in which each student can find both support and challenge.

Assessment and accountability represent another aspect of the quality theme. Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE), an ongoing project directed by Terrel Rhodes that started in 2007, responds to public skepticism about whether students are learning what they need for the contemporary world. The goal of this multifaceted project is to develop authentic assessments of sixteen of the learning outcomes identified by the association as “essential,” and to do it in a way that focuses on student learning and its improvement. This has meant that the work is done by the faculty and for the faculty. The first step was to recruit teams of faculty members from a variety of institutions to develop and test VALUE rubrics, templates that are transparent enough that groups of faculty from different disciplines can agree on the extent to which students have achieved various outcomes. Eventually, over a hundred institutions arranged for faculty teams to test the VALUE rubrics with their colleagues and students. The rubrics allow faculty members to determine how well their students are progressing. They also are helpful for students, who are better able to understand what they are expected to learn—and, thus, to focus their efforts on desired outcomes. Since the VALUE rubrics were released in 2009, they have been utilized by tens of thousands of teachers and their students in institutions across the country as well as abroad. The VALUE rubrics also are now being used in a large multi-state initiative involving more than sixty institutions in large public systems in several states.

Combining equity and quality. Inevitably, the equity and quality agendas merged. The quality agenda was based on the definition of a well-educated student expressed through both general education and the major. Many efforts were made to provide greater access to a high-quality education; yet critics charged that, in their eagerness to provide greater access to diverse kinds of students, educational leaders had lowered standards and “dumbed down” the content of the curriculum. In response, the association’s Greater Expectations initiative involving more than sixty institutions articulated the importance of both access and quality. This joining of quality and equity proclaimed that diverse ideas, life experiences, and perspectives enriched education for all students.
Eventually, the board of directors approved a revision of the mission statement, incorporating the phrase “inclusive excellence” into the association’s vision for all of higher education.

The ongoing Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) initiative, which was started in 2005, builds on many previous projects on both equity and quality, utilizes nearly all of the association’s resources, pulls together all that has been learned about improving undergraduate education, and addresses several target audiences, including campus leaders, teaching faculty, state systems, business and civic leaders, and national policymakers. Through the LEAP initiative, the association has identified what it calls “essential learning outcomes” for students, summarized a set of “principles of excellence” that include challenging standards and flexible guidance for an era of reform and renewal, publicized “high-impact practices” shown by educational research to be more powerful than traditional classroom lectures as means for students to learn the essentials, emphasized “authentic assessments” that test whether students can apply their learning to “complex problems and real-world challenges,” and promoted “inclusive excellence” to ensure that all students receive the benefits of an engaged liberal education—whatever their major field of study.

LEAP operates on several levels simultaneously. The initiative’s Campus Action Network includes 340 diverse colleges and universities, as well as ten state systems and other groups of institutions. It offers summer institutes during which faculty teams worked for a week or longer workshops conducted by the organization’s ongoing work.

Two other groups of projects also built on the combination of quality and equity. Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) was a series of projects (1993–2003) that sought to improve the preparation of doctoral students desiring to become college professors. A collaboration with the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), PFF developed clusters of institutions that brought the “producers” of PhDs (graduate research universities, represented by CGS) together with the “consumers” (the several diverse types of primarily undergraduate institutions that hire new PhDs, represented by AAC). The clusters created PFF courses to give an overview of the academic profession, mentoring in teaching, and personal experience of teaching in diverse institutions. Over four thousand doctoral students benefited—as have thousands more since the formal collaboration ended in 2003—helping to cement the association’s influence with new generations of faculty members. Since 2006, AAC&U has administered the K. Patricia Cross Future Leaders Award, which recognizes graduate students who show exemplary promise as future leaders of higher education, who demonstrate a commitment to developing academic and civic responsibility in themselves and others, and whose work reflects a strong emphasis on teaching and learning.

In 2010, AAC&U merged with Project Kaleidoscope (PKAL), a premier organization focused on the improvement of teaching and learning in the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). Founded in 1989, PKAL has operated primarily as a grassroots organization run by scientists for scientists. It has operated largely through an extensive group of regional networks that include more than seven thousand faculty members and administrators committed to cutting-edge education in STEM disciplines. It identifies the most effective science-based practices in teaching and learning and promotes the use of them by colleagues. PKAL has enriched the work of AAC&U by bringing natural scientists, mathematicians, and technologists centrally into the organization’s ongoing work.

Through these and many other projects, faculty members and academic administrators have created a great deal of intellectual capital to strengthen the education of American undergraduate students and to strengthen the institutions in which they study.

Summer institutes for teams of faculty
As valuable as the projects have been for faculty at selected institutions, they are not sufficient to change institutional practices. Several members of the AAC board and staff had experience with the longer workshops conducted by the Danforth Foundation and the Lilly Endowment in which faculty teams worked for a week or
more to develop plans to improve the quality of education on their own campuses, and they urged AAC to develop similar programs.

Starting in 1991, the Asheville Institute on General Education was held in partnership with the University of North Carolina at Asheville. It was thought important to locate the institute on a campus in order to signal its academic importance as well as to reduce expenses. The teams were to consist primarily of faculty members and to include an academic administrator to support the work of the team. The Asheville Institute ran through 2003, when it was expanded and renamed the AAC&U Institute on General Education and began rotating to different campus locations; “and Assessment” was added to the title of the institute in 2009. In 2015, this institute held its twenty-fifth session, becoming AAC&U’s longest-running institute.

In addition to the Institute on General Education and Assessment, AAC&U currently offers two other annual team-based institutes: the Institute on High-Impact Practices and Student Success and the Institute on Integrative Learning and the Departments. The PKAL Summer Leadership Institute is offered for individual STEM faculty three times each year.

**Network for Academic Renewal conferences**

When I returned to AAS in 1991 after several years in campus administration to direct the project Strong Foundations for General Education, AAC operated a panoply of impressive national projects that involved faculty members, a new summer institute on general education, and, of course, the annual meeting. But it offered no other occasions between annual meetings that were open to academics. The projects had meetings that were closed to nonparticipants; the summer institute could accommodate only a few institutions on a single topic; and relatively few faculty members attended the annual meeting.

Carol Schneider and I were concerned that the overall AAC program focused too heavily on national projects that typically enjoyed no more than three years of funding, and when the funding ended, so too did the program. Ironically, the end of a project was precisely the time when many campus leaders knew the most about its topic. That was when model programs had been developed on campuses and judged successful.

It was also when several individuals had learned how to secure faculty approval and institutional support for their innovations and were capable of serving as consultants to other institutions. We asked ourselves whether there was a way to bring these resources together and make them available to other academics on a self-supporting basis. Would institutions pay for faculty leaders to attend short “state of the field” conferences on various educational topics? When I asked several provosts and deans what they would like to see in a new series of such “short courses,” the most common response was that they wanted opportunities for their faculty to participate in the national conversation about academic reform and renewal. And, yes, they said they would support travel for their faculty to attend such meetings. Armed with this information, Schneider and I asked AAC’s then president, Paula Brownlee, to support the creation of a series of these open-to-all weekend conferences, and she agreed.

In 1993, the first Network for Academic Renewal conferences were offered and drew small groups of participants. The first conference was on general education and included only a couple of dozen individuals. Other early conferences focused on academic leadership, new approaches to teaching and learning, and strengthening academic majors drew larger numbers of participants. Attendance continued to grow to a total of more than 2,700 in 2013–14. During the last decade, total attendance was more than 20,000, or an average of 2,000 annually. Furthermore, Network conferences have, indeed, drawn large numbers of faculty members as planners, presenters, and participants. And whereas the annual meeting typically draws a minority of participants from the faculty, the Network conferences draws primarily faculty members, in the neighborhood of 50 to 70 percent, depending on the topic.

**Communication vehicles among members**

The annual meeting has been the staple of AAC&U programming, and leaders have taken several steps to increase its attractiveness, particularly to faculty members. A timely and relevant theme is now regularly chosen to be of interest to a broad academic audience, pre- or post-conference workshops give participants hands-on experiences with a particular topic, and a pre-conference symposium is held on some special topic that appeals to particular academic audiences. Proposals from faculty members and other campus leaders are actively...
solicited to increase the range of issues and session leaders.

All these steps have helped build the numbers of faculty members attending the meeting and have increased the overall attendance significantly. In 2002, the total attendance exceeded 1,000 for the first time; in 2008, it exceeded 1,500, and in 2011, it rose above 2,000. As the annual meeting grew, more sessions were needed, and more faculty leaders were chosen, which (being on the program) allowed them to receive financial support from their institutions for their travel expenses. Meetings of related organizations, many of which involve significant numbers of faculty members, were encouraged. On average, between 30 and 40 percent of attendees are faculty members, reaching deep into the pool of faculty members in their various guises—such as assistant deans, directors of general education or writing, staff of teaching-learning centers, as well as teaching faculty.

A growing publication list of books and monographs was published on a range of educational topics. *Liberal Education* had been the flagship quarterly publication, and it progressively published more articles about teaching, learning, and the curriculum and recruited faculty to do more of the writing. Other quarterly periodicals were added to the portfolio including *Peer Review* and *Diversity & Democracy*. As electronic communications became mainstream, the AAC&U web site became a major means of communication, blogs were published, and an electronic newsletter was added to the mix. In all, AAC&U became a rich resource of information about liberal education for large numbers of faculty members on member campuses and beyond.

**Conclusion**

I will end this journey through various highlights of the past four decades of faculty involvement as I began, with a personal observation about the annual meeting. Whereas in the 1970s individuals asked me whether there would be another one, now I hear participants—faculty members and others—comment that this is a “must attend” national conference. I believe that AAC&U has become a major national resource for the professional development of faculty members. Whereas involvement in their disciplinary societies allows faculty members to keep up with the latest research and to make their own contributions, AAC&U provides opportunities for faculty members to broaden their knowledge and perspectives, especially by interacting with a variety of campus administrators, faculty from other fields, system officials, policymakers, philanthropists, and national educational leaders. In this way, they learn to become not only better teachers but also more effective leaders and more complete professionals.

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

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**NOTES**

1. The name of the association was changed to the “Association of American Colleges and Universities” (AAC&U) in 1995.
3. This history is more extensively described in Jerry G. Gaff, “The History of Faculty Roles in AAC&U: A Personal Essay” (unpublished manuscript, December 29, 2014), Microsoft Word file.
“Welcome to hell,” I said

ROY ROSENSTEIN

With Dante in Hell on 9/11

“That Day We Read No Further”

UNTIL “THAT DAY” I thought I had seen everything in the Dante classroom. I had taught Inferno in a windowless underground room at The American University of Paris (AUP) amid stale odors from the street and cafe above. I had quoted Paradiso to Dante della Terza one starry night on the roof of the Harvard observatory. But no Dante gathering, not even the inspired National Endowment for the Humanities Dartmouth Dante Institute, would be as electrifying as the first session of my own class in the fall semester of 2001. And I can’t claim any credit for the pedagogical innovation of that day.

Here is the short version of what happened on the first day of the Dante and Medieval Culture course, as recounted by one student in telegraphic style, a film script with just her raw summary of events:

Italian literature, Day One. We all settle down, get out Dante’s Inferno and you say, “Welcome to hell.” Somebody runs into the room saying, “They’ve bombed New York! They’ve bombed New York!” Shock. Silence. Several people in the class are from New York. Somebody starts crying. We have a television in the room. Somebody turns it on. People outside of our class start trickling in. We watch the smoke and flames in silence. More people cry. We all watch the second plane fly into the side of Tower Two. More crying. We sit in silence for I don’t know how long.

Almost fifteen years later, I’m still writing the long version as I hear from the last few students who had not yet shared their memories of that day. Below, I cite their words in reflecting on what happened to us all that day; live, in real time, in class time. That day had enduring pedagogical and psychological impact. September 11 entailed more than an interruption by the day’s headlines. It meant integrating new media in the classroom. It reworked the semester’s planning and day-to-day dialogues. It changed forever the way I teach Dante. Above all, it affected the lives and careers of the students who were in class that fateful day.

Day one, ground zero

Whenever I teach the upper-level Dante course, I warn my students that they must prepare for a strenuous, stressful semester as we push through the entire Comedy. But nothing prepared their teacher for our debut class session in the fall semester of 2001. To be sure, I always spend the first month with my students in Inferno. But this year, none of us was ready for the global context of our first class. In this case, we felt as though we too were watched, as if our course acquired meaning beyond the curriculum, that the sky might continue to fall and the world crumble about us if we did not read our Dante closely. That day, I, a native New Yorker with British and Lithuanian passports as well, met with my international class in Paris just as the World Trade Center attack began to unfold in Manhattan. Given the time zone shift, our course began that Tuesday at 1:45 p.m. Paris time.

As played by Woody Allen in his Annie Hall, Jewish New Yorker Alvy cannot bear to miss the first minutes of a movie. In Alvy’s spirit, I believe the first day of class is critical, far more so than any anticlimactic wrap-up class.

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All hope abandon, ye who enter here.

Canto III., line 9.
The tone for the entire semester’s work would be established as twenty registered students settled into their seats. Here was a typically eager and diverse group representing a dozen nationalities—American, Italian, Argentine, British, South African, French, German, Dutch, Greek, Swedish, Lebanese, and Canadian. An hour into class, students had identified themselves, and we had spoken a bit about Dante’s subject: how man becomes immortal, “come l’uom s’eterna.” When I asked students about their expectations for the course, one senior uncannily said that she wanted to learn “come l’uom s’eterna o no,” focusing instead on our mortality. By then it was 2:45 p.m., or 8:45 a.m. New York time. “LASCIA TE OGNI SPERANZA, VOI CH’ENTRATE. ABANDON ALL HOPE, YE WHO ENTER.” was inscribed in black on the whiteboard.

“Welcome to hell,” I said. Then all hell broke loose. I responded to an insistent knock: “Avanti!” Faculty, administrators, and students erupted into our classroom. Was I reliving May 1968 at Columbia University from the other side of the lectern? “Something is happening in New York!” They hijacked our wide-screen television, the largest in the building. As Francesca da Rimini says in Inferno, “That day we read it in no further.”

Instead we watched CNN in horror, all the more startled because we in that class, having first been transported back to April 7, 1300, were then teleported forward to September 11, 2001: “It is another path that you must follow,” said Virgil to Dante and to us. The shaken professor felt less himself than like Dante in Canto 1. Students saw how disbelieving and speechless I was, like the Pilgrim at times when visiting Inferno. We watched the second plane crash into the twin tower. This was an attack against America—and, by extension, against The American University of Paris. Or was it some hell-born promotional campaign in favor of Dante? One student reports that her classmates initially had their doubts about whether this was serious: special effects or reality TV?

It was pandemonium in our Paris classroom, not just on New York television. Students were sobbing, while a few were cursing and pounding their fists on their desks or their heads against the wall. Never in all my years of teaching have I seen such Dantesque wailing and anger, such groaning and gnashing of teeth in a Dante class—not even when I return midterms or research papers. Professors have witnessed these sentiments around the Pilgrim in Inferno, but not until then had I seen them in my classroom.

Another student writes, “Since that day I have been in two horrific car accidents as well as a third stint in surgery for what the doctors thought was cancer . . . but I have never felt fear as I did on that horrible day.” He echoes the defining semantic field of Canto 1, in which the key word fear appears four times. Student and Pilgrim became one. The student continues, “My face must have gone pale white. After you dismissed the class I ran into my Shakespeare professor . . . and without my having said a word to him he told me to calm down and not be so nervous, and that, as late as my paper was, I could still manage to get a passing grade if I turned it in by the end of the week!” Beyond our Dante class, no one could understand what we had just lived, as if we had died.

Still another student could not contact her father at the Pentagon or her uncles at the State Department and the Securities and Exchange Commission. By the time she was able to reach her grandmother down on the farm, the student was in such a state that when she asked whether the family was safe, grandma sucked in her breath and said, “Honey, have you been drinking at lunch, like they do over there?” In Paris, reading Dante and watching CNN, we were ahead of most of the United States. The West Coast was not even awake. Among her friends, the same student says she was “the only one who was primed by Dante for what we were about to see.” Ours was a Dantesque response to a Dantesque event. We resembled the Pilgrim in our introduction to new, previously uncharted ground, the twenty-first century. We shared not only his fear but his shock and horror, his disorientation and inability to grasp the unfamiliar new world around him.

Students say that many people don’t remember where they were when they heard the World Trade Center was attacked, but my students certainly do: “in Dante,” they invariably say. They often tell the story of their professor’s “Welcome to hell,” and then BOOM! All were approaching Dante with enthusiasm, not in apprehension, as they would have, given what was to come. Students planned to visit hell from a safe vantage, not personally but secondhand, in translation, through the Pilgrim’s disbelieving, uncomprehending eyes. Now they discovered
it also through my own stupefaction. I was to be their Virgil, yet I was no less appalled than they were. They looked at me and at each other, struggling to make sense of what was happening. But like them I was Dante, not Virgil that day: visitor, not guide. “What the hell is going on?” yelled one panic-stricken student in the hallway. I was still in class trying to calm us all. Others like him found everything incomprehensible. A day like this does not happen; events were at once real and unreal, like Dante’s dream vision. In the choking, ashen smog that covered all on television, Dante students saw a stunning overlap between the worlds of the quick and the dead, followed a bit later by striking images of the final crossing of a river. One student remembers that I said, “We’re really in Inferno now.” In our classroom that day we, too, tasted stifling fumes, witnessed grown men sobbing, visited their dead city in flames, shared their limited visibility and global disorientation. That was not Dante’s Inferno, that was New York City: pungent air, men in tears, their world covered in ash, with zero visibility at ground zero. Here was not Dante under the rain of fire, but in our classroom, not our Italian text with facing English, but in an all-English broadcast. Here’s how one student described it:

"The news broadcast from the streets of New York showed the ashes raining down and everyone holding their faces in their hands and covering their eyes—this was, perhaps, the eeriest resemblance to the version of Inferno that our class cut short to make room for the cathode rays, for the version of Inferno in Manhattan, in real time. In their stumbling and muttering, the impromptu characters in the real version exposed what I guess is one of the primary shams and challenges of literature, that language falls short in its capacity to articulate the truly gut-wrenching. But there was chaos and anguish and the touching disbelief in everyone’s face on the streets, like they just couldn’t fathom that things could be this bad. Among those on screen, one unidentified man was interviewed “live” on the dead streets that were silent but for the shrieking of sirens, motionless except for his fellow lost souls. He became a member of our class through his intrusive presence on television, speaking with terror and conviction to an unlimited audience around the world that included our class in Paris. He found only one descriptor for the swirling devastation around him: “It’s Dante.” As if to say, “this is Dante Alighieri speaking to you from ground zero.” This latter-day Dante looked directly at the camera and therefore at us, into our classroom, as though he were speaking only to our class, for our class.

Then, later, the first and only bodies recovered and seen by the world that day were brought to the tip of lower Manhattan to make their final river crossing. Not only the dead awaited passage by ferry; the living, too, seeking to escape a no longer recognizable Manhattan, congregated on the bank, fleeing the nearby towers, hoping to escape our world on a boat bound for the other shore. Were a few seen falling into the East River in the confusion, as I am told, or were they conflated with those jumping from the Twin Towers? None of us saw those scenes until after class, when I had had enough of Dante television for a lifetime. Here was a contemporary rather than medieval vision, close to home and not foreign, oral and in our spoken language, not in a Tuscan text by a Florentine poet.

The immediate effect on the class was emotionally trying, and the explicit on-screen references to Dante and hell were riveting. Those students who expressed themselves other than with incomprehension or tears or fists voiced their devastation and their empathy that day and in the class that Friday, by which time we had still not recovered, if we ever would. But that day we read no further, said no more, because Dante was swirling all around us, in us, and did not require comment, could find no explanation.

Aftershocks
Counseling is available on campus, but I cannot know how many students availed themselves of our psychological services. When a literature professor from off campus who is also a practicing psychotherapist offered a series of free consultations to any students who were interested, I relayed his offer and three signed on. Those three comparative literature majors are now doing very well. One is working in journalism for the World Association of Newspapers after a not at all traumatic publishing internship in the United States. Another, from Athens, is running an international wine import business
in Greece. And the third went on to take her master's degree in modern languages at Cambridge, did more graduate work at Brown, and is earning her PhD in comparative literature at Harvard, focusing on trauma studies throughout her graduate career. Might her academic orientation have been set that day? Let me survey what other students from our class have been doing since their tour of duty in hell with Dante on 9/11.

That semester two students wrote their research papers on Dante in Seven, a film in which Brad Pitt and Morgan Freeman pursue a serial murderer who is punishing exemplars of the seven deadly sins. A third student went deeper into criminology. She headed directly to the police academy in The Hague, specializing in law enforcement and counterterrorism, then served three years on the force in Holland. Did that career track predate Dante and 9/11? After practical experience in the field, she went to study at Leyden and work in criminal law as a forensic consultant. She expects to continue her career in international crime—not practicing, but teaching. Two other students went to law school, not law enforcement. Not divine law, but human law, which they are practicing in San Francisco and London. One of them, after graduation, worked first as an editor at BBC News, more or less the European CNN.

Concerning divine law, one student was particularly traumatized: “I think about it all the time.” A medieval studies minor, she had run out of the classroom. Her family's company, where she had worked, was at the top of the World Trade Center. “Everyone there perished. It was the largest loss of one single company in both towers, several hundreds,” she wrote. “My family lost so many people on that day, so it was much more personal for us.” Later that semester, she requested my recommendations on divinity schools: I suggested Yale, where she could study with senior Dantista Peter Hawkins. She eventually did her graduate studies in comparative religion elsewhere and now works in Israel. She recently asked, “Are you still teaching the Dante class?” as if guessing I might not. Indeed, for a few years I could not.

Is that a typical list of graduate studies and career orientations for a dozen comparative literature majors? Not one among over two hundred other graduates in comparative literature has gone into trauma studies or criminology or comparative religion or law enforcement. We know that comparative literature alumni are snatching the jobs from the communications, film, and business majors because humanities majors with their language arts, cultural experience, and interpersonal skills are the new meritocracy. But the fields chosen by the 9/11 bumper crop of Dante students remain exceptional. To be sure, in this group there is still the Athens wine merchant. She joined her family business, which explains this reasonable outcome for a survivor of our 9/11 Inferno. The other veterans of our 2001 Dante course have career orientations that make me wonder whether some of their lives were changed, not by Dante, but by one class in Dante that changed our world forever.
Other profoundly affected parties on campus perhaps found no new career orientation as a result of 9/11 but were equally in need of therapy, if not more so. Later in the semester I told my class—still trying to talk about 9/11 and resolve its horror—how three AUP faculty of as many nationalities had been affected. All three—American, French, Iranian—had sons, firstborn or only sons, who worked in the Twin Towers. Miraculously, all three from the next generation survived. I’ve written to the one of the three students I know personally. He, like his father, is an alumnus of AUP. But he has not responded to my query. No doubt he lost too many coworker friends that day to share his feelings, still raw years later. He survived the conflagration of the Twin Towers, without taking Dante, in which he had expressed interest in a previous year. What might have been his thoughts had he taken the course at AUP before graduating to work at the World Trade Center? He might not have lived the connection in New York as we did in Paris.

Those who did attend the Dante class that semester all survived, as I flatter myself to think most students usually do my courses. One student withdrew for health reasons; she was at the first class, but did not come back to the second, like two other students who later resurfaced to complete the course. Thereafter, she had several excused absences until she “withdrew” entirely. The word here takes on more psychological shades of meaning than its purely academic acceptation. She came back to AUP only years later but has not yet accepted to talk to me about her feelings “that day.”

Other students who continued in the course were marked, perhaps not as deeply, by the
experience of Dante in ways previously inconceivable to them and their supposedly all-knowing professor, woefully underprepared for a new context to our old text. Their willing, even eager testimonies bear witness to mixed memories of that fatal day. One who defended her doctoral dissertation in comparative literature and became a university professor was among the first to reply to my query. Others since have echoed her sentiment: she remembers it “as if it were yesterday.” Another student in her own letter writes “I remember” four times, like a refrain, in chronicling her recollections. These students’ unique encounter with Extreme Dante cannot be extrapolated to a new pedagogy or methodology: it is to be hoped that no other Dante class will ever experience what we did that sinister afternoon, vicariously through television but also collectively in our class.

Since 2001, whenever I go into the first Dante class of the semester, it is not without fear and trembling. Just a few years ago, for the tenth anniversary, the first class again was held on September 11, and the penultimate class fell on December 7, the anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. At least I know now what needs
to be done even if every time I read Dante, every time I teach the first class, the fear is renewed in my thoughts. There is also a professional modesty in the aftermath of my experience in reading Dante with students so sensitized to the presence of the Dantesque in the twenty-first century, as present perhaps as the Rabelaisian in the carnivalesque sixteenth century or the Kafkaesque that defined the neurotic twentieth. Dante is all around us, may explode upon us at any moment, as the new tribalisms and renewed fundamentalisms attest. The enduring proximity of Dante is not a rhetorical ploy to highlight his pertinence in our contemporary world. That demonstration has been forcefully made for me and my students, once and for all. No other words would have been so appropriate from the man in the street as “it’s Dante.”

Coda

Only at the end of the course, with the conclusion of the Pilgrim’s Easter journey and the coming of our own Christmas break, came relief with our sense of order and faith partially or fully restored in Paradiso after the traumatic start we had shared with the Pilgrim. After Inferno, Paradiso is always a bit anticlimactic. There are fewer realia and figures, fewer class sessions, fewer students at that busiest time of the semester. Paradiso is by nature more ethereal. But this particular semester, some of us were left behind, still dragging our feet and our feelings in the smoke and ash. If I didn’t abandon students in Purgatory, the biggest no-no in teaching Dante, I hadn’t quite succeeded in pulling them all completely out from our Inferno either. We still had before our eyes the fireworks of the first day. When we had run our course in the last days of the semester and we read together the concluding lines of Paradiso, we felt a sense of relief and accomplishment to have completed our journey of this life.

I began by citing the events of 9/11 as experienced and recounted by one of my students. I close in quoting another, one who wrote me on a recent Easter Monday to express her reactions: “You say “that day we read no further,” but to me, it was the day we were compelled into the work with an urgency to understand and connect the dots that stemmed from the most earnest and human of motives for picking up a book: a turn to “then” for insight into “now.” We did continue on, reading our way through and past hell and a growing happened during that journey with Dante that matters to this day. It was one of those moments we’re rarely “in sync” enough to apprehend but which surely occurs daily, everywhere—a moment when fiction grows real, when inscriptions of the past step off the page and engage us in the immediate interpretation of the present. A concomitance, uncanny as it may seem, that justifies to me the passing down of “knowledge” by demonstrating in an instant how history is never over, how words are part of our toolbox to gauge, reflect, and act on the present. Dante provided that toolbox for us at a moment we desperately needed other words to grapple with images beamed out to us “live” of a destructiveness most students in that class had never witnessed.

I have never found our classroom to be quite so pertinent to our world beyond the classroom as on that day. And vice versa: never were the media events so appropriate, never were the visuals, the teaching aids, so pedagogically on target, even if I certainly did not choose them. I cannot say that here was the high point of my teaching career; it was more like the nadir. Yet this was a moment of crystallization between life and art that has not been matched in this professor’s long experience.

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NOTES
2. Ibid., 1.91
Active Learning and College and Prison Partnerships in Liberal Education

For someone who has never been convicted of a crime, I spend an unusual amount of time in state prisons and youth correctional facilities. I do not work for these criminal justice agencies; instead, I study prison culture, and—in small ways—I have become a part of it. I am a university professor trained in sociology and criminology, and I regularly teach classes inside Oregon’s only maximum-security prison as part of the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program. Inside-Out is a national program, started in 1997 by Lori Pompa of Temple University. Inside-Out classes take college students outside of their familiar campus environments and into prisons and jails to share class for a full term with incarcerated students.1

As a sociology professor, I find it inspiring but also troubling that the transformative power of education has been most vividly illustrated throughout my career within the walls of a maximum-security prison rather than on a college campus. In the current age of mass incarceration, prisons have become a powerful institution of radical inequality in the United States, and students pursuing a liberal education are well served to understand both the scope and the impact of these institutions. America currently holds more than two million people—or approximately one in one hundred of its adult citizens—behind bars.2 US prisons have been described as a surrogate ghetto and as contributing to a new era of Jim Crow.3 For those who have been convicted of a felony and served time in a correctional institution, the stigma of a criminal label can have long-lasting, if not irreparable, effects.

While I am delighted to offer both hope and homework to state prisoners, I regret that we, as a society, did not invest the time, energy, and funding that could have prevented my “inside” students from committing the crimes that led to their incarceration in the first place. After they serve their sentences, they often find that second chances are increasingly hard to come by as their crimes and histories are splashed vividly across social media. With education, however, there is hope and possibility—hope for a better future for those entangled in the criminal justice system, and possibility that the efforts of motivated individuals can improve the larger community.

Learning about social problems and community issues is a fundamental first step in a liberal education that cultivates active learners and engaged citizens, but knowledge by itself is not enough. I use class time and materials to expose students to compelling questions and challenges, but they then have to care enough about the issues to be inspired to dig deeply, to think critically, and to put in the effort to claim their own education. Engagement is key. To cultivate a learning paradigm, it is incredibly helpful to get sociology and criminology students out of the classroom and into the “real world” setting of a correctional facility, where they will come to more vividly know and better understand the problems they are learning about and studying. Similarly, for incarcerated individuals who aspire to further their education and earn college degrees, the chance to share ideas with college students in a classroom environment

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Educated Hope
The most vital aspect of the program develops when students from opposite sides of prison walls learn to recognize the humanity of the previously unknown “other.” Outside students are able to see inside students as full-dimensional people: brothers/sisters, sons/daughters, fathers/mothers, and friends who are paying the price for their worst acts, but who need not be solely defined by those acts. College students who enter the prison environment are able to see beyond the labels, to bear witness and be present, to recognize the pain of others and be cognizant of the humanity residing within systems of mass incarceration. Similarly, in coming to know college students as peers rather than representatives of an elite and judgmental public, inside students are better able to understand their own potential and possibilities. In a sense, all participants recognize they are “outsiders” in some groups and circumstances, and they are given encouragement and space to cultivate empathy for their classmates and their peers. Students from both sides of the razor-wire fence often learn they are capable of more than they had ever imagined.

The Inside-Out model
The Inside-Out model has been developed carefully, and all potential instructors must go through an intensive sixty-hour training before teaching in the program. Students who wish to participate in an Inside-Out class must understand and agree to abide by the national program’s stringent and clearly delineated rules before they can be considered. To engage in the experience, all potential Inside-Out students must sign a contract that specifies the rules they agree to follow. In addition, inside students must have clear conduct—no disciplinary infractions on their prison records—for over a year before they are eligible to participate. Inside and outside students are only ever identified by their first names, and they are not allowed to be in contact with each other outside the confines of the classroom; they may not develop or continue any kind of personal relationship. This is an important but difficult rule, because it means that the kinship and friendships formed between classmates are necessarily and permanently cut off as soon as the class comes to an end. The very fact of these finite relationships, however, provides a real advantage: students make the most of their time together. Their commitment to the class and to each other helps create an honest space where questions are welcomed and controversial perspectives can be shared with impunity.

Inside students may be serving a wide variety of sentences—some are finishing their time and will be released within months of the end of the class, others are serving life without parole and will never return to the community. If the college or university sponsoring the Inside-Out class is willing to waive or greatly reduce tuition for incarcerated students, the inside students may be able to earn college credit for completing the course. When the possibility of scaling tuition to make it affordable on prisoners’ wages is not available, inside students may still choose to take the classes and do the assignments simply to be part of the experience. By participating in college classes, they are able to explore new topics and learn valuable information. They find hope in sharing ideas and a small part of their lives with the outside students, who have the ability to be active citizens, voters, and professionals. Many of the outside students aspire to work in criminal justice, social work, or education; their futures will include interacting with the system and working to prevent others from being incarcerated.

Faculty members teaching in prison settings face extra challenges in creating these classes and facilitating these deep learning experiences. While it can be frustrating to deal with the
double bureaucratic constraints of working within both a college or university and a state, federal, or county correctional facility, those who teach Inside-Out classes generally find it to be worth the extra red tape, time, and effort. Virtually every class session is filled with meaningful interactions, memorable exchanges, and surprising good humor. Working with motivated students is perhaps a professor’s best reward; to have thirty motivated students enthusiastically working together in one class is one of the real joys of teaching in the program.

The benefits to inside students of having access to college classes and programs in prison are substantial and are clearly illustrated in the research. Simply put, education is one of the strongest tools we have to reduce recidivism. College courses in prison are not a panacea, but teaching and encouraging inside students to weigh costs and benefits and to look at the larger impact of their actions on their families and communities goes a long way toward producing better educated, more thoughtful, less criminal citizens. At the institutional level, educational programs help promote a more thoughtful and civil culture within prison walls, and prisoners who participate in college classes often embrace new and positive labels as students and active learners.

For the outside students commuting from campus, Inside-Out classes offer a powerful form of civic engagement and community-based learning. If we take seriously the focus on “high-impact practices” in higher education, sharing class time and working on collaborative
service-learning projects with convicted offenders inside a maximum-security prison is about as “high impact” as learning can get. The inside students’ diligent efforts to complete all assigned reading and carefully dissect the authors’ points in order to come to class ready to engage in debate and discussion with their outside peers raises the level of commitment and work for all the students in the course.

Most prisoners have largely learned what they know—and practice—about citizenship and community engagement while in the institution. In Oregon, my inside students participate in and lead prisoner-run clubs, learning to negotiate with each other and with prison administrators. They also hold a deep commitment to “giving back” to the community through working with at-risk youth and donating money from their small prison salaries to charitable causes. By contrast, while traditional college students have often learned principles of civic engagement on campus, few have felt the drive and passion to put those principles into practice. Classes held inside a state prison with a room full of motivated students can spark new interests and ideas for all participants. Students on both sides of the prison walls learn to think critically, to question the status quo, and to examine their own ability to enact change.

Students in my Inside-Out classes in the prison teach and learn from each other. They learn what it is to know—and to be—the “other” they may have read about and may have feared. They gain perspectives on each other’s lives, opportunities, and choices, and they discover both differences and similarities that go far beyond superficial labels. College courses in prisons are a powerful example of the potential and public life of higher education. They allow for and encourage an ongoing exchange of ideas and a kindling of enthusiasm for learning about the subject matter and larger societal problems. In my classes, students develop a sense of collective efficacy by navigating bureaucratic constraints and working together on service-learning projects to try to make small but tangible improvements in their communities.

Along with a meaningful understanding of the academic material, I have an additional goal for each of my prison classes: public education and outreach on issues of crime, communities, prison, and prevention. College students and prisoners working cooperatively—and investing hearts and minds in the endeavor—brings a whole new meaning to the ideas of civil society and community engagement. As their knowledge and enthusiasm increase, students frequently move beyond the classroom to educate their friends and families through ongoing conversations and debates; they discuss political issues and the importance of voting with their peers; they may write editorials or letters to local politicians that are informed by their own experiences and the latest empirical evidence; they put together workshops on campus and in the larger community to share what they have learned as widely as possible; they pass on course readings to friends and family members; and they recruit students to take future classes. The students truly claim their education and make real efforts to share with others what they have witnessed and learned.

Educated hope
Members of the general public may question the value of providing educational opportunities for prisoners who are serving time behind bars as punishment for their crimes. In my experience, Inside-Out classes are an important opportunity to reframe prisons as places of possibility and as unique learning environments for both inside and outside students. Such programs provide critical hope and inspiration for students on both sides of the prison walls. Furthermore, Inside-Out classes are inexpensive to run: they generally
operate at no cost to the correctional facility or the public, as the instructor's salary is paid by his or her college or university. Yet, they have the potential to offer enormous benefits for the individuals involved as well as the larger institutions and community.

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program has grown exponentially since its inception in 1997, and the program is thriving. Currently, more than six hundred Inside-Out instructors have completed the training, including instructors from Canada, Australia, Norway, Denmark, and the United Kingdom. Hundreds of classes have been offered across the United States, and easily more than ten thousand inside and outside students have participated in at least one Inside-Out class. Many colleges and universities are embracing this form of active learning as part of a true liberal education, empowering students to engage with the complex problems of their communities.

While a growing number of college graduates will have taken part in an Inside-Out class or a similar program during their education, not everyone will be able or willing to do so. Bureaucratic constraints of both colleges and prisons will necessarily limit these classroom slots, so we must ensure that other opportunities for deep learning about our correctional facilities, community alternatives, and systems of justice exist. Colleges and universities generally can do a better job of partnering with practitioners and the larger justice community. Together, we can move beyond isolated individual internships to open chambers, courtrooms, police stations, and correctional facilities in order to show students the inner workings of such places and the realities of day-to-day life in careers in criminal and juvenile justice, education, counseling, and social work.

Henry Giroux highlights the importance of educated hope in enabling students to understand and tap into their own potential as citizens and agents of social change. He explains that “hope makes the leap for us between critical education, which tells us what must be changed; political agency, which gives us the means to make change; and the concrete struggles through which change happens . . . What hope offers is the belief, simply, that different futures are possible.” That different—and better—futures are possible at both the individual level and the community level is an important lesson for students on either side of the prison wall. A liberal education should enable students to grapple with the “wicked problems” of our time; hope can sustain them in their struggles to improve life chances for all.

Once students come to care deeply and personally about social problems and issues, they are imbued with educated hope and inspired to continue learning so that they can act with intent and clear purpose to improve conditions in their communities and the larger society. I believe it is our responsibility as college educators to cultivate educated hope and to give students the necessary tools to succeed. It is then our privilege to watch their passion ignite and fuel lifelong civic engagement, community activism, and pursuit of social justice.

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NOTES
1. For more information about the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, see http://www.insideoutcenter.org.
Despite the precipitous increase in nontenure-track faculty appointments, the promotion and tenure process continues to operate as a central “motivational and cultural force in the academic lives” of many faculty members. As a part of larger reward systems, the promotion and tenure process reflects institutional values, aspirations, privileges, and power structures. Virtually every campus enacting serious change with regard to curricula, technology, globalization, learning, or retention must also face the implications for promotion and tenure. Yet while faculty members want to (and should) be recognized and rewarded for their efforts, many express frustration that promotion and tenure systems have not caught up with institutional priorities, changes in the dynamic nature of scholarship, or the aspirations of the emerging guard of academic citizens.

It often escapes those who complain, however, that the power to change promotion and tenure policy rests to a great degree with the faculty. In 2010, we began collaborating with campus teams interested in reforming their institutions’ promotion and tenure guidelines in order to define, assess, document, and reward engaged scholarship. Although there have been many good definitions of engaged scholarship, we use the one established by the New England Resource Center for Higher Education. “The scholarship of engagement (also known as outreach scholarship, public scholarship, scholarship for the common good, community-based scholarship, and community engaged scholarship) represents an integrated view of the faculty role in which teaching, research, and service overlap and are mutually reinforcing, is characterized by scholarly work tied to a faculty member’s expertise, is of benefit to the external community, is visible and shared with community stakeholders, and reflects the mission of the institution.” Engaged scholars are often faculty, but could also be administrators, students, or staff involved in work that meets these criteria.

Our organizing vehicle since 2010 has been the Faculty Rewards Institute at the annual Eastern Region Campus Compact conference. To date we have hosted 41 campus teams, including 116 individual participants. We designed the daylong institute as an opportunity to share knowledge and tools and to enhance collective critical agency around campus reform related to faculty roles and rewards, with particular attention to how current promotion and tenure policies may exclude engaged scholarship and engaged faculty.

In what follows, we begin by sharing the process we use to engage campus teams and individuals in diagnosing what is wrong within the promotion and tenure system, what they want to change, and how to make that change. Then, we share a template for studying and reforming promotion and tenure policies to ensure that they better reward engaged scholarship.

Our process: knowledge and tool-sharing, peer networks, and critical agency

Social network analysis has shown that “relationships within a system matter to enacting change.” We have found this to be true in our efforts to support promotion and tenure reform. In the next section below, we provide examples of policy language that can be used by any campus team, whether or not they participate in the Faculty Rewards Institute. The policies themselves represent a concrete form of knowledge-sharing; however, we have found that the experience of the institutes adds even greater value. The gathering together of campus teams, physically,
facilitates a deeper level of knowledge-sharing and critical agency.

Campus teams apply and are selected to participate in the Faculty Reward Institute. The ideal team includes both faculty members and administrators, and is often formed at the request of a dean or provost interested in working with the team members to initiate promotion and tenure reform. Some teams focus on departmental promotion and tenure guidelines, while others focus on college or university policies. In some cases, individuals are sent by a campus to explore options for the revision of faculty roles and rewards. Before the institute, we gather information from each team or individual regarding the kinds of reform in which they are most interested. We come together and provide each campus team with an overview of the key challenges faced by engaged scholars and how engaged scholarship fits into the larger landscape of higher education policy reform (e.g., funding agencies, graduate education, and reform in promotion and tenure). This overview is informed by research we have conducted and by visits we have made over the last decade to more than two hundred institutions, providing support for engaged scholars and for efforts to reform promotion and tenure policy.

Perhaps not surprisingly, we have come to understand the reform of promotion and tenure processes as part of a larger effort toward inclusive excellence within colleges and universities. That is, we understand the ways in which organizing practices, such as promotion and tenure, serve to privilege some groups and exclude others. For example, when engaged scholars are told they can only publish in certain disciplinary journals and those journals do not publish engaged work, a form of structural inequality has been set up that disadvantages those scholars. Susan Sturm’s work on the “architecture of inclusion” reminds us that institutional mindfulness is needed in order to identify and address these kinds of inequalities.6

Although the institutes have been focused on engaged scholarship and on promotion and tenure, we also have been involved in efforts related to access and opportunity for women
and academic parents; faculty of color; faculty involved in interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and engaged scholarship; and contingent and professional-track faculty. Taken together, this work has shown us that, typically, the effort to reform the promotion and tenure process in order to recognize the contributions of engaged scholars results in improvements in the work environment for everyone.

A template for reform
Any effort to reform the promotion and tenure process in order to honor engaged scholarship should begin by addressing the following five issues.

1. The need to value, define, describe, and differentiate community-engaged scholarship. When revising promotion and tenure policies to ensure appropriate regard for community-engaged scholarship, the first order of business is to affirm that the institution values engaged scholarship as part of its core mission. Following this affirmation, it is important to articulate clearly the place of engaged scholarship within the broader context of faculty work by answering the following questions: What is engaged scholarship? How is it different from traditional scholarship or community service? Why does this campus value and reward faculty members who are involved in this kind of scholarship?

The following excerpt from the faculty handbook of the University of Memphis responds to these questions, while aligning engaged scholarship with institutional mission:

Scholarship can be divided into five subcategories: application, creative activity, inquiry, integration, and the scholarship of teaching. . . . Engaged scholarship now subsumes the scholarship of application. It adds to existing knowledge in the process of applying intellectual expertise to collaborative problem-solving with urban, regional, state, national and/or global communities and results in a written work shared with others in the discipline or field of study. Engaged scholarship conceptualizes “community groups” as all those outside of academic and requires shared authority at all stages of the research process from defining the research problem, choosing theoretical and methodological approaches, conducting the research, developing the final product(s), to participating in peer evaluation. Departments should refine the definition as appropriate for their disciplines and incorporate evaluation guidelines in departmental tenure and promotion criteria.

The outreach or public service function of The University of Memphis is the University’s outreach to the community and society at large, with major emphasis on the application of knowledge for the solution of problems with which society is confronted. Outreach primarily involves sharing professional expertise and should directly support the goals and mission of the University. A vital component of the University’s mission, public service must be performed at the same high levels of quality that characterize teaching and research.

2. The need to identify criteria for evaluating community-engaged scholarship. After it has been firmly stated that engaged scholarship is a priority, and after the issue of definition has been addressed, it is prudent to consider the criteria that will be used both to differentiate between engaged scholarship and community service and to evaluate the quality of engaged scholarship. On many campuses, some variation of the criteria recommended by Charles Glassick, Mary Taylor Huber, and Gene Maeroff—clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation, and reflective critique—is used to judge the quality and impact of community-engaged scholarship.

Often, the focus is on three key criteria by which engaged scholarship, as well as other forms of scholarship, will be evaluated: peer review, impact, and significance.

The following excerpt from “Guidelines for College Faculty Personnel Reviews,” a set of policy guidelines developed by the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Massachusetts Boston, offers an example of clearly articulated criteria for evaluating scholarship:

The measure of what is productive scholarship is that it is judged to be creative, rigorous, and valuable after being publicly scrutinized by professional peers. . . . Evidence of scholarly work in almost every field will include written documents (articles, chapters, and books as well as evaluation reports, grant proposals, etc.) or other products (computer software, videos, etc.) that show:

- deep theoretical underpinnings relevant to the current state of the discipline and its related fields;
• rich conceptualization of some aspect of the field’s problems/issues/questions and of how particular areas of inquiry and activity might be relevant to addressing them;
• an approach to scholarly inquiry/applied scholarly activity that is well justified, coherent, and appropriate to the goals of such inquiry or activity;
• analysis, synthesis, model-building, or otherwise making sense of what is being learned for this endeavor;
• with whatever has been learned, some sense of its implications and what real difference it might make to the work that goes on in relevant settings.9

3. The need to consider what constitutes documentation and evidence. One of the major challenges faced by engaged scholars concerns how and where to publish their scholarship; not all community-engaged scholarship results in peer-reviewed journal articles. This is similar to the challenge faced by the many artists whose scholarly activity is manifest in performances and exhibitions. Engaged scholars can benefit from policy language that acknowledges a diversity of dissemination mechanisms and that recognizes a range of acceptable scholarly products. In revised promotion and tenure guidelines, potential products of engaged scholarship are named and valued. These may include reports and studies, workshops, broadcasts, artistic and creative exhibits and performances, websites, diagnostic services, technical reports, and site plans.

The following excerpt from the “Guidance for Faculty: Tenure and Promotion” published by the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro demonstrates how policies can be crafted to overcome this challenge:

To be recommended for permanent tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, it is generally expected that a faculty member will have published a combination of eight articles, books, book chapters, knowledge building and dissemination websites, research monographs, and/or technical reports and non-academic reports resulting in implementation or meaningful impact on public policy. The reputation, quality, and impact of the publications are paramount. As a rule, juried articles, books, and book chapters are weighted more heavily. But, other forms of knowledge building and dissemination can rise to the same level with contextualization. Review usually occurs in the sixth year of appointment. Early reviews for the granting of permanent tenure with promotion to Associate Professor are granted only in exceptional circumstances and must be approved by the Department Chair and Dean. Previous publications may be considered with a reduced tenure clock and will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. Because this is a field that builds strength from community engagement, collaboration, and multi-disciplinary work, jointly authored publications and presentations with other academics and external community leaders and partners are highly valued. Peace and conflict studies is multi-disciplinary; therefore, joint publications have equal value to solo publications. On joint publications, order of authorship is not weighted. Faculty may publish in peace and conflict studies journals, journals in related fields that are in line with the faculty member’s area of study, and in multidisciplinary journals, which may reach a wider audience.10

4. The need to make peer review more inclusive. The peer review process presents another struggle for many engaged scholars. Often, the best reviewers of engaged scholarship operate outside the college or university; many are not faculty members. To overcome this challenge to recognizing and rewarding engaged scholarship, it is helpful to consider whether the peer-review process is inclusive of community partners and faculty members with expertise in engaged scholarship. Reform in this area should address the need to include community and public partners from outside academe, along with colleagues within a faculty member’s field who also do engaged scholarship. Policy language should clearly specify how such reviewers are to be chosen as well as what they may review and evaluate.

The promotion and tenure policy of the Morgridge College of Education at the University of Denver exemplifies the desired clarity:

Internal evaluation of the quality and impact of the candidate’s scholarship by the Appointments, Promotion and Tenure Committee is supplemented by letters and critical reviews from nationally recognized experts in the candidate’s discipline, and, when appropriate, nationally recognized leaders in the field of the institutionalization of community engagement, service-learning, professional outreach and service. When appropriate, candidates may select reviewers.
Very few policy guidelines address the unconscious bias known to exist in the evaluation of engaged scholarship and engaged scholars in the process of peer review.

from settings outside the academy. These Community Peer Reviewers may include educators, psychologists, and librarians working in public policy and other applied settings; key community partners who are not academics by training, but who are experienced consumers of applied research and use academic scholarship for policy or organizational ends. Community Peer Review is appropriate to assess: 1) the effectiveness of collaborative research methods; 2) the impact of applied research on publics; and/or 3) the overall professional outreach and service to the community or organization. Such review should be used as part of the overall review of candidates’ work and in conjunction with traditional criteria and reviewers.

While all of the above will be considered in evaluating scholarly activity, inevitably some additional evaluation will occur by the committee and by outside reviewers both as to type, amount, and quality of scholarly activity. The quantity and quality of research and creative activity ought to reflect clearly that the candidate has a recognized area of scholarly expertise that extends across academic, practice, and community settings and a pattern of focused interest, and should be in accordance with negotiated responsibilities.11

5. The need to value local impact. The question of whether impact on the local community is accorded the same credibility as international, regional, and national impact is essential, because the issue of impact is always a major factor in the evaluation of candidates for promotion and tenure. Accordingly, it is important for policy guidelines to articulate the value of local partnership development and to make it clear that local impact is as important as international impact—and at all ranks. Because funding sources are often considered in research-focused institutions and in STEM fields, it is also helpful to signal acceptance of various kinds of funding sources as evidence of impact. Otherwise, faculty members may be disadvantaged for attracting practice-oriented foundation grants, for example, rather than federal research funding.

The call for nominations for Auburn University’s annual Award for Excellence in Faculty Outreach incorporates an inclusive description of impact: “Describe observed impacts and/or explain any unobserved impacts that can be expected based upon other research and theory. Identify direct and indirect beneficiaries. How has the outreach benefited the target clients, the nominee’s department, and discipline? Provide any quantitative statements (program data, comparative indices, economic impact, etc.) illustrating impact.”12

Changing our reward systems: A call for reform
Before conferring the “engaged institution” designation, the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement now requires institutions to provide evidence that engaged scholarship is recognized and rewarded. This represents much progress, and many colleges and universities are currently at some stage in the process of reconsidering faculty roles and rewards. However, persistent factors continue to inhibit the pace of reform.

Research shows that, even at institutions that are among the most engaged in their local communities, reform of tenure and promotion guidelines has not accomplished much more than the incorporation of definitional and valuing language.13 Moreover, reform efforts at most institutions have not addressed the issues of peer review, impact, or documentation, nor have they addressed the need for new arrangements to support interdisciplinary and engaged scholars (e.g., memoranda of understanding). And very few policy guidelines address the unconscious bias known to exist in the evaluation of engaged scholarship and engaged scholars in the process of peer review.14

We need to find ways to overcome the cynicism of those administrators and faculty members who believe that it is simply too hard to reform the tenure and review process or who wonder whether doing so would really make a difference, either because of the increasing number of nontenure-track appointments or because of the difficulties involved in assessing the outcomes of any promotion and tenure reform. There are many natural allies who desire the kind of academic reward system reform that would support engaged scholarship. For example, many chief diversity officers seek reform in promotion and tenure in order to reward faculty work that improves access to their institutions and social justice for underrepresented groups. Many national organizations engaged in science
education and outreach seek new ways to have this work “count” in reward systems. Critics of the metrics used to measure the impact of faculty research are also natural partners for reform. As such, our challenge and call to those who want to reform their reward systems is to find allies and partners locally and nationally. A robust network is needed both to share ideas and concrete examples of reform that are being put in place and to better support engaged scholarship. We very much believe the saying, attributed to the poet June Jordan, “we are the ones we have been waiting for.” And with all the changes occurring in the professoriate and higher education today—the time has never been better for us to show up and make this kind of a difference.

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

NOTES
5. For the purposes of this article, we have limited the number of examples; however, the authors would be glad to provide additional examples upon request.
Reevaluating Teaching

SUSAN D’AGOSTINO AND JAY KOSEGARTEN

College professors are not the only highly educated professionals who debate the value of evaluations from those in the demographic they serve. A nontrivial number of doctors, lawyers, and journalists also take issue with evaluations from, respectively, their patients, law clients, and readers. Indeed, the argument against such ratings is a strong one. That is, these individuals are not, in nearly all cases, qualified to assess teaching, medicine, the law, or journalism. Without knowledge of what constitutes best practice in these fields, unqualified evaluators may not actually be judging skill but rather the “hotness” of a professor, the severity of a doctor’s diagnosis, or even the attire of a lawyer.

A backlash against such reviews has been simmering for some time. The Atlantic has compared most online comment sections to sewers, stating that they are “logistically required, but consistently disgusting, subterranean conduits for what is, technically speaking, waste.” Popular Science abruptly ended online comments from readers, observing that comments not only polarized readers but changed readers’ understandings of the stories. Explaining the Huffington Post’s recent decision no longer to permit anonymous comments, founder and editor-in-chief Arianna Huffington noted that “freedom of expression is given to people who stand up for what they’re saying and who are not hiding behind anonymity.”

Ardis Dee Hoven, president of the American Medical Association, has stated that anonymous online comments about physicians should be “taken with a grain of salt.”

Some of the disgruntled in other professional sectors have attempted to game the system. The New York Times ran a story about a company that offered its customers a ten-dollar rebate for posting online reviews of their products on Amazon. (Spoiler alert: nearly all of this company’s reviews were great!) Come to think of it, the actions of this company are not all that different from college professors offering doughnuts or extra credit to students who complete teaching evaluation surveys, presumably a quid pro quo for favorable evaluations.

What is the modern college or university to do? Do we surrender to the Yelp-ification of a society that suggests a Reddit-like “wisdom of the crowds” mentality should prevail? Or, in a nod to academe’s rebellious roots, do we (in a term coined by the Atlantic) “pull a PopSci” and accept no student comments?

Feedback, not evaluations

The answer is not to ban student comments. Even Popular Science and the Huffington Post continue to accept feedback in the form of letters to the editor. Colleges and universities might take a cue from journalists by encouraging formal written comments from students concerning classroom experiences. Unlike doctors, lawyers, and journalists, professors are actually in the business of teaching students to think critically and write effectively. It would be hypocritical for faculty to discourage students from thinking and writing about any topic, including our ability to reach them as students.
Evaluations
However, given that language shapes how we think, we propose new terminology. Surveys provide students an opportunity for feedback about teachers, not evaluations of teachers. Students, professors, and administrators should not view the surveys as an opportunity to judge a professor, but as an opportunity to provide grist for the faculty member’s mill. Like some writers of letters to the editor, some students may rant, some may be insightful, some may be boring, and some may move us to think in ways that we had never thought before. Our students’ critical thinking and writing abilities will be uneven. Nevertheless, we must take to heart our duty to encourage students to develop—not suppress—these skills.

Of course, any policy that solicits student feedback should have integrity. In order to guard against survey-induced grade inflation, anonymity should be granted to student commenters as long as grades are pending. Once grades are released, however, student commenters should be identifiable to instructors in order to provide a context for the feedback.

Negative feedback from a conscientious student should be interpreted differently from negative feedback from a disengaged student. Positive feedback from a student who rarely showed up to class must be understood differently from positive feedback from an engaged student. Academe has a strong precedent for transparent feedback. That is, identifiable professors assign grades to students. With this context, students are able to interpret, for example, a grade of A. An A from a challenging professor means something entirely different from an A from an easy professor. Faculty should be afforded the same context that is provided for students.

Researchers have written thousands of peer-reviewed articles on student-authored teaching evaluations—we found articles dating as far back as 1929—but virtually all relate to evaluations of college professors rather than educators below the college level. Why suddenly does opinion matter more once a student is in college? We imagine the answer is that colleges feel obligated to justify cost. This may also explain why student evaluations persist in the absence of research attesting to their validity or reliability.

**Survey design and implementation**

Nevertheless, college and university administrators who decide that student feedback surveys must generate quantitative data—a decision that should not be a foregone conclusion—should consult faculty with knowledge of best practices in data collection and analysis, such as statisticians, mathematicians, and psychologists. In particular, they should seek to ensure that statistical analysis includes not just mean scores but margins of error. A recent study argues persuasively that student evaluations of teachers are misunderstood and improperly used by both administrators and faculty precisely because margins of error are not considered. There is a big difference between a rating of 3.0 on a 4-point scale when the margin of error is 0.2 and when the margin is 2.0. Further, in writing the questions that will ultimately generate the quantitative data, administrators should consult with faculty who are knowledgeable about best practices in education, such as education faculty.

To avoid inaccuracies associated with incomplete, nonrandom samples, administrators should solicit feedback from the entire student body. Otherwise, historically marginalized populations on campus, including low-income, minority, and first-generation college students,
may not understand that their feedback is desired. To achieve complete data sets, colleges and universities should withhold grades for students who do not complete surveys, just as they do when students do not meet financial obligations. Of course, students should be allowed to abstain by, for example, checking a box on the survey marked, “I choose to abstain.” Students who formally abstain should not be subject to withheld grades.

The administration—not the faculty—should take responsibility for administering and collecting student feedback surveys. A faculty member’s involvement in administering the surveys presents an inherent conflict of interest—think of the doughnuts and abundant extra-credit points—that could intentionally or unintentionally bias the feedback.

Colleges and universities should never rely on student feedback surveys as their only form of assessment for either full-time or adjunct faculty.

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Colleges and universities should never rely on student feedback surveys as their only form of assessment for either full-time or adjunct faculty. When it comes to faculty assessment, colleges and universities must rely on professionals—deans or department chairs with training in assessment—to conduct class observations. Faculty should also be invited to submit external data—such as student grades on a common final exam, general education assessment scores, or scores on a national exam such as the Praxis—concerning student achievement that are independent of the student’s opinion and dependent on how much the student learned. A faculty member with low ratings on student feedback surveys but excellent results on the students’ common final exams should be valued differently from a faculty member with high ratings on student feedback surveys but poor results on the students’ common final exams. Without incorporating external data into faculty assessment, student feedback surveys will likely induce grade inflation.

BuzzFeed recently analyzed the word choice, sentence length, and other features of comments from various news websites. CNN commenters...
are apparently writing for readers at the seventh-grade level, while New York Times commenters write for readers at the tenth-grade level. The grade level of higher education’s population of undergraduates is educationally homogeneous, by definition. Would our students actually clock in as the undergraduate writers and readers they are? If so, we could count on reading well-supported and thoughtful written comments. If not, we might reflect on whether their inability to write at an undergraduate level is, on its own, a negative statement about our teaching effectiveness.

Ultimately, it is up to the administration to ensure the integrity of data collection methods. And it is up to the faculty to foster students’ abilities to think critically and write effectively every day, including the days they are asked to complete student feedback surveys.

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

NOTES
Excerpt from the introduction:
The Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) project harnessed the expertise of hundreds of faculty and other education professionals across American higher education to identify the most commonly agreed upon criteria and standards of judgment to be used in assessing student work. The use of VALUE rubrics on individual campuses, in cross-institutional projects, and in the large-scale projects described in [this publication] has enabled higher education, rightfully and publicly, to stake its ground. To hold that ground is the challenge that now faces colleges, universities, and other educational providers. The commitment to the VALUE approach to assessment needs to be deepened and broadened until it becomes a core institutional commitment of all campuses, responding both to the internal need to know about student achievement levels and to the need of external stakeholders to know whether students are learning at levels that will enable them to succeed after graduation.

American institutions of higher education should occupy this high ground together.

Excerpt from the conclusion:
The identification of the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes represents a “first” in American higher education. For the first time, faculty and other educational professionals from across representative two-year and four-year colleges and universities collaborated to articulate what contemporary higher education institutions commonly expect students to demonstrate as a result of a liberal education. Of even greater national significance is the collaborative nature of the development of the aligned VALUE rubrics and the “mainstreaming” of their criteria and standards of judgment.

To understand the national significance of the VALUE approach to the assessment of students’ liberal learning, it is necessary to frame this development within a broader context.
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