COLLEGE IS A PLACE WHERE OUR STORIES INTERSECT WITH THE STORIES OF OTHERS.

OPENING POSSIBILITIES AS WE GO FORTH AND FIND OUR OWN WAY.

THROUGH THESE ENCOUNTERS, WE GAIN NEW VANTAGE POINTS FROM WHICH TO BETTER UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER AND OURSELVES.

WITHIN HUMANITIES, ARTS, & DESIGN, WE DISCOVER OUR INNATE TOOLS FOR STORYTELLING AND LISTENING, TRANSFORMING SOMETHING WE ONCE ONLY KNEW IN ONE WAY INTO SOMETHING MULTIDIMENSIONAL.

PUBLICLY ENGAGED Scholarship and Teaching
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**About Diversity & Democracy**

Diversity & Democracy supports higher education faculty and leaders as they design and implement programs that advance civic learning and democratic engagement, global learning, and engagement with diversity to prepare students for socially responsible action in today’s interdependent but unequal world. The publication features evidence, research, and exemplary practices to assist practitioners in creating learning opportunities that realize this vision.
FROM THE EDITOR

Publicly Engaged Scholarship and Teaching

“College is a place where our stories intersect with the stories of others.”

So begins this issue of Diversity & Democracy, its cover created in collaboration between Nick Sousanis, Jamie Haft, and Michele Stinson. Appropriately, Nick’s graphic art and illustration, Nick and Jamie’s text, and Michele’s cover design represent an intersection in their own regard: between the complementary talents of three individuals, between academic discourse and public purpose. Their work suggests the generative possibilities of partnership growing out of academic spaces and carried out in service to higher education’s civic mission.

This issue of Diversity & Democracy—created in partnership between the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life (IA)—represents a similar intersection, with similarly generative ends. As members of the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (CLDE) Action Network—a collaborative of thirteen national higher education organizations—IA and AAC&U have committed to advancing the civic purposes of higher education in concert with others across higher education.

“Through these encounters, we gain new vantage points from which to better understand one another and ourselves.”

Members of the CLDE Action Network, launched in response to the 2012 report A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy’s Future (National Task Force 2012), are providing innovative leadership related to civic engagement. (For more information about the CLDE Action Network, see page 31.) The CLDE Action Network’s work focuses in part on aspects of student learning, such as those outlined in A Crucible Moment’s Framework for Twenty-First-Century Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (4). This framework describes the knowledge, skills, values, and collective action that higher education needs to prioritize in order to prepare students for “knowledgeable citizenship” in a “highly diverse and globally engaged democracy” (3).

In focusing on publicly engaged scholarship and teaching, this issue of Diversity & Democracy lifts up the role such endeavors play in supporting the priorities for student learning outlined in A Crucible Moment. It also, importantly, points toward the role higher education can play in building a better world, within academic and beyond. It raises critical questions about the commitment needed to create positive change, and suggests action steps—including some represented by visionary initiatives that are already occurring—that will empower people and communities and promote civic health in a diverse democracy.

“Within humanities, arts, and design, we discover our innate tools for storytelling and listening, transforming something we once knew in one way into something multidimensional…”

In keeping with IA priorities and AAC&U commitments, this issue’s authors attest to the particular role that publicly engaged scholarship and teaching in the arts, humanities, and design fields can play in strengthening higher education’s public purpose and preparing students for civically engaged lives. In telling their own stories, contributing authors point toward the various and complementary—but often contested—ways in which higher education is poised to, as IA Co-Directors Timothy Eatman and Scott Peters write in this issue, create a story that “arcs toward … constructive transformation.”

AAC&U is grateful to IA for inviting Diversity & Democracy to share these stories. Special recognition goes to Timothy Eatman, guest editorial advisor for this issue (and regular member of Diversity & Democracy’s editorial advisory board), for his significant leadership and intellectual contributions. Thanks are also due to the many individuals from both IA and AAC&U who participated, with thoughtfulness and enthusiasm, in planning conversations—and, as always, to the authors who helped create this multidimensional product.

“…opening possibilities as we go forth and find our own way.”

Ideally, the stories in this issue will intersect with those of readers in generative ways. If this issue prompts new thinking and conversation about publicly engaged scholarship and teaching, in the cultural fields and beyond, it will have accomplished its goal. If that thinking and conversation leads to new initiatives that promote student learning and civic well-being, so much the better. We invite readers to consider how their own stories intersect with those told here, opening possibilities in their own contexts across higher education.

—Kathryn Peltier Campbell, editor of Diversity & Democracy

REFERENCE

Cultivating Growth at the Leading Edges: Public Engagement in Higher Education

TIMOTHY K. EATMAN, co-director of Imagining America
SCOTT J. PETERS, co-director of Imagining America

“Out of the box is that magical place where talent—pure talent goes—to live and thrive and breathe.”
—Lionel Richie

In this issue of Diversity & Democracy, David Hoffman, Craig Berger, and Beverly Bickel from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) point to what they call “the visionary’s dilemma.” They ask: “How can a movement gain traction when the dominant culture’s theories, knowledge, politics, and conventional mechanisms for social and institutional change reflect the status quo?” Meanwhile, from their vantage point at the University of Massachusetts Boston, John Saltmarsh and his colleagues wonder: Should relatively young institutions “try to improve their status by conforming to traditional norms that confer prestige on research institutions”? Or should they “place themselves on the cutting edge of academic innovation and thereby risk being devalued by the broader academic establishment?”

These challenging questions suggest two images: an image of being limited or boxed in by the status quo, and an image of a cutting or leading edge that promises to break out of and ultimately transcend current limits. These images are both present in one version of “the story of now” in American higher education, to borrow from Marshall Ganz’s public narrative framework (Ganz 2010, 522–27). In this version of the “story of now,” many scholars and administrators at higher education’s leading edges hold deep commitments to public engagement, seeing it as a way of securing equity, justice, dignity, and reciprocity; of advancing an ethos of full participation (Sturm et al. 2011); and of supporting cultural practices that align with the idea of democracy as a way of life. But while scholars and administrators with such commitments are growing in number, they often find themselves in conflict with various aspects of a powerful status quo that threatens to overwhelm, push out, or co-opt them.

How will this story play out? What should those at the leading edges do? Where should those of us who care about higher education’s future and its role in public life place our bets—and our time and energy—for constructive and sustainable change? How in the face of a powerful status quo might we approach the four interlocking challenges to public engagement in higher education that Robert Weisbuch, writing for this issue of Diversity & Democracy as a member of Imagining America’s Presidents’ Council, identifies in his essay: achieving economic feasibility, championing the applicability of the humanities in particular to the public good, building coherence and permanence, and institutionalizing engaged learning?

The Important Role of Leading Edges

The authors of the essays in this issue of Diversity & Democracy offer insight into how we might answer the questions outlined above. Beyond theories and opinions about what could or should be, they show us how people are already contributing as agents of change, both shaping and living out a “story of now” that arcs toward rather than away from constructive transformation. In sharing the theory and practice that constitutes their work, they offer a new sense of possibility. They bring strategic and imaginative energy to bear on our work of advancing diversity and democracy within and across every discipline and every field of inquiry, on and off our campuses. They both represent and illuminate what is happening today at the academy’s many leading edges.

Leading edges play an important role within every domain of society. The spaces they occupy are precisely those where success and failure meet, where strategically focused risks can lead to advancement. The enterprise of advancing our leading edges is both intense and unending. It cannot be accomplished through complacency and resignation, which far too often mute our awareness and silence our critical impulses. In order to catalyze a culture focused at the leading edges of higher education, innovation must wrestle tradition, elevating purpose and activating ameliorative practice. The risk and enigma that characterize growth of this kind are palpable.

Increasingly, the leading edges of knowledge production (broadly defined) are located, nurtured, and nourished in the “out-of-the-box” environments described in our epigraph. In these environments, ideas enter concrete spaces where not only talent, but also bold and visionary commitment lives and thrives. Publicly engaged scholarship provides an interdisciplinary vehicle within the academy for the creation of leading edge spaces. IA is committed to encouraging and facilitating engaged practices, building on and drawing out the power of the cultural disciplines for knowledge making and social progress.
But what do we mean when we talk about publicly engaged scholarship, teaching, and learning? For IA, publicly engaged scholarship is defined by partnerships that join the knowledge and resources of higher education with those of the public and private sectors to enrich research, creative activity, and public knowledge. Such scholarship is a means for enhancing curricula, teaching, and learning; preparing educated, engaged citizens; and strengthening democratic values and civic responsibility. At its best, it can address and help solve critical social problems in ways that contribute to a larger public good.

This issue’s contributors add their voices to those of many other citizens of academe who are compelled by the possibilities of publicly engaged scholarship as a way of realizing the democratic promise of higher education in twenty-first-century society. We believe that publicly engaged scholarship can serve as a means of not only tapping but also enriching the practices and expertise of every discipline and field. Such scholarship encourages transdisciplinary collaborations for public purposes and ends, not only between scholars and their professional peers, but also with “communities of experts as complex as the challenges we face today” (Cantor, Englot, and Higgins 2013, 21). This perspective on knowledge making facilitates what our colleague and friend Nancy Cantor calls “Scholarship in Action,” “where students can experience the evolution and refinement of theory in practice by encountering the world’s challenges in all their messiness” (Cantor, Englot, and Higgins 2013, 21).

**Imagining Transformation “Outside of the Box”**

The people and ideas at the leading edges of the engagement movement in American higher education are building on pioneering work that has been growing and evolving for several decades. They (and we, as we count ourselves among them) are engaging in an important process of shifting the languages and practices of public purpose and mission in the academy. This ongoing process involves a slow but marked movement away from discourses of service and outreach to and for people as customers or clients, toward discourses of engagement with people as agents working toward our highest ideals and aspirations (Boyte 2015). Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life (IA) was born out of this process of transformation. In the face of their own discontent about the traditional boxes of academe, Founding Director Emerita Julie Ellison, former National Advisory Board Chair David Scobey, and their colleagues embraced an out-of-the-box strategy while exerting an addictive sense of agency. Building on but also reworking traditional professorial roles in the cultural disciplines, these scholars leveraged their networks and organized to bring their larger sense of public purpose and connection to the White House Millennium Council (established under an executive order issued by President Clinton), which in 1999 hosted a series of national meetings under the banner “Honor the Past—Imagine the Future.” Through the leadership of a committed group of university presidents led by Lee Bollinger, then at the helm of the University of Michigan, and with the support of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, IA grew out of these meetings. At the time of its founding, IA’s National Advisory Board designed a model where IA’s central office is itinerant, moving between institutions that seek to deepen their commitments to publicly engaged scholarship with special emphasis on the cultural disciplines. Initially hosted by the University of Michigan, IA’s central office has made its second home at Syracuse University since 2007 and will transition to another home in 2017.

IA supports and advances the civic aspirations of scholars from the cultural disciplines who yearn for a more satisfying and engaged public life. But what are the particular roles of the arts, humanities, and design in the civic engagement movement, and what challenges exist in how these disciplines perceive themselves? What is the “story of now” for these disciplines as it relates to the potential role of higher education institutions in advancing impactful scholarship in our democracy?

The humanities, arts, and design fields have particular power to open up discourses and rebuke the typical academic aversion to deep channels of human interaction and embodiment—channels that tend to activate agency in a range of manifestations. Asserting the power of these fields, IA Assistant Director Jamie Haft writes that “humanities, arts, and design give us the human story in its full complexity, helping us as individuals and as a species understand who we are and where we’ve been” (Haft 2012, 13).

IA’s programs, research groups, and projects are exploring and advancing the roles that arts, humanities, and design fields can play in higher
American colleges and universities play a unique role in socializing students to pursue intellectual sophistication, critical thinking, and social justice as complementary endeavors.

Leadership with our Presidents’ Council, which offers opportunities for leaders of engaged universities to participate in critical discourse about how publicly engaged scholarship that draws on arts, humanities, and design can addresses the key social and economic challenges of our time.

Under the leadership of its second director, Jan Cohen-Cruz, IA developed a vision, mission, values, and goals statement that further clarified our aims. Jan did much to advance IA’s emphasis on community-engaged arts practices, perhaps most notably through the establishment of the DREAM Freedom Revival (DFR), the brainchild of IA Associate Director Kevin Bott (see http://dreamfreedomrevival.org/). The DFR creates original, participatory musical theater to draw citizens of Syracuse, New York, and the surrounding region into conversations about important topics such as hydrofracking, the rights of women, corporate personhood, the closing of a local senior center, and the relationship between the city and local colleges and universities. Each performance engages audience members by seeking their input during topical comedy sketches or by inviting them to “testify” before their neighbors about something happening in their community and share ways to get involved. Also developed by IA director emerita Jan Cohen-Cruz, Brian Lonsway, and Kathleen Brandt, Public: A Journal of Imagining America breaks new ground as a hybrid online multimedia journal and archive, with innovative web interfaces for accessing peer-reviewed multimodal scholarship and creative work.

IA’s current leadership model is yet another out-of-the-box expression, as we are the first faculty co-directors of the consortium. The current moment in IA’s development has called us, as two directors with complementary skills, networks, and vision, to model the collaboration that must be the cornerstone of publicly engaged scholarship in practice. We have sought to extend the momentum of our predecessors by thinking deeply with IA’s staff and National Advisory Board about what it means to move from building an organization to situating that organization within the movement of community engagement and publicly engaged scholarship. We are working with our stakeholders to develop a theory of change that helps us take stock of the consortium’s transformative potential. We have taken a hard look at how we are organized, and we are asking challenging questions and taking the strategic action necessary to accomplish our mission, vision, values, and goals.

Emerging Voices in a Chorus for Democracy

Since its founding, the Imagining America consortium—which now includes over one hundred colleges, universities, and community-based partners—has added meaningfully to the ferment occurring at the nexus of knowledge production and community engagement in higher education. We believe that it is not possible to affirm and bolster the role that humanities, arts, and design fields play in knowledge production and cultural power without our eyes wide open to the nagging and persistent challenges to equality, diversity, and inclusion that are occurring across the United States.

In recent months, these challenges have been on prominent display. Citizens have literally taken to the streets in Ferguson, Missouri, and across the nation to protest what has been understood by so many as the clearest revelation of persistent and deep-rooted social inequality in our system of law enforcement resulting in the loss of precious human life. University students have organized sit-ins for diversity and transparency at our own host institution, Syracuse University. And students have advocated to address sexual assault at the University of Virginia and other institutions.

This publication, Diversity & Democracy, has consistently been a venue for supporting critical conversations and communicating out-of-the-box thinking about diversity and inclusion in higher education. In doing so, it reflects the long-held priorities of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) to ensure inclusive excellence and access to liberal education—including education in the arts, humanities, and design fields—for all students at US colleges and universities. IA celebrates this opportunity to join AAC&U in advocating for the maximum use of higher education spaces...
to strengthen the democratic ethos of our society. Indeed, American colleges and universities play a unique role in socializing students to pursue intellectual sophistication, critical thinking, and social justice as complementary endeavors.

We are placing our bet for the academy’s future on the out-of-the-box leaders who are blazing new courses of learning and ways of knowing while challenging limits on and off their campuses. For example, IA’s Publicly Active Graduate Education (PAGE) scholars, several of whom contributed to this issue of *Diversity & Democracy*, represent the emerging citizenry of academe. These innovative thought leaders and scholars are conceptualizing expanded notions of scholarly artifacts, enhancing collaborative work among community and academic scholars, and forging innovative career pathways. Our confidence in them is not just wishful thinking: evidence from IA research on the aspirations and career decisions of graduate students and early-career publicly engaged scholars demonstrates that our hopes are well founded. Data gathered by Eatman (2012) and members of an IA research team challenge the prevailing view that “publicly engaged scholars are less concerned with the rigors of methodologically grounded, discipline-specific work.” When asked what they hope to accomplish through engaged scholarship, 77 percent of respondents indicated the desire to “expand knowledge, methods and/or scholarship in the discipline”—a percentage not substantially different from that of respondents who expressed a desire to achieve the same “in the public” (40). These data challenge the dichotomy of scholar and activist that is so prevalent in the academy. It is critically important to listen to and learn from these emerging voices as we look forward to the future of transformative colleges and universities.

Our hope for the future is also based on the growing number of colleagues who are committing to the organizing work that publicly engaged scholarship and teaching requires. Colleagues at Emory University, for example, have demonstrated this commitment in profound ways by enhancing a model for institutes focused on “cultural organizing” that was initiated by IA headquarters in 2012. These institutes combine broad-based community organizing strategies, including one-to-one relational meetings and asset mapping, with approaches from the arts, humanities, and design, such as techniques based in public narrative and theatrical movement that mitigate the dominant disembodied ethos of the academy. Several community colleges have joined IA’s ranks, bringing to the conversation about innovative community-engaged scholarship the wealth of knowledge and experience they have gained by conducting such work in an increasingly important sector of higher education.

**Writing a New “Story of Tomorrow”**

As those of us at Imagining America’s headquarters prepare to move IA to its third host institution in 2017, our transition team, led by former IA board chair David Scobey, is seriously considering institutions that will use IA as a tool for advancing institutional engagement through publicly engaged scholarship. We want our next host institution to help us build spaces where the leading edges of transformation in the academy can break through. We are energized by our National Advisory Board’s vision that IA headquarters would be itinerant, and we are excited about considering new models that will allow us to maximize our leverage for creating transformative change in higher education and in the broader community.

IA’s story compels us to write a “story of now” for higher education that, like UMBC’s BreakingGround initiative (described in this issue of *Diversity & Democracy*), will advance the work of “fostering human connections, encouraging new questions, and (re)awakening students, faculty, and staff members to their own hopes that their lives and careers will matter.” (IA is pleased that UMBC will host our fifteenth national conference in October 2015.) UMBC is suggesting answers to the questions raised by Saltmarsh and his colleagues about what should be done—not just for relatively new public institutions, but across all of higher education.

We are committed to strengthening IA’s power by building and expanding coalitions with partners like AAC&U, knowing that this will help us write the “story of tomorrow” that we envision.

**REFERENCES**


European explorers once envisioned the New World as the place where the imagination would become real. In America, the English Puritans in particular sought to merge what even radical Protestants in their home country had seen as distinct and contradictory: the City of God and the City of Man. In keeping with this utopian strain, most private institutions of higher learning were established by religious groups intent on improving the human condition, while the founders of public universities invariably emphasized service in their charters.

Much as these early American institutions advocated a melding of learning and action, so too did many of our major national visionaries. Emerson defined his American Scholar as a public intellectual: “He” (and we would add “she”) “is one who raises himself from private considerations and lives on public and illustrious thoughts” ([1837] 1957, 73). Woodrow Wilson, president of a university and of the nation, wrote, “We are not put into this world to sit still and know; we are put here to act” ([1902] 1905, 228). In specific relation to colleges and universities, John Dewey advised that successful educational methods “give the pupils something to do, not something to learn; and the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking…. learning naturally results” (1916, 181). And speaking from the civic side of this partnership, John F. Kennedy declared, “I look forward to an America which commands respect throughout the world not only for its strength but for its civilization as well” (1963).

By their very insistence, these statements imply a certain resistance to the idea that higher education should play a role in public life. In the Old World model, higher learning was cloistered, hermetic; and in a rapidly industrializing United States, the appeal of college as a pastoral retreat was strong. Thus throughout much of the twentieth century, a utopian model of higher education as a scene of reflection apart from society prevailed, alongside the rapid development of disciplinary knowledge. But reality broke in. Questions of racial and gender equality, entering the university, could not be treated by any one discipline. Interdisciplinary programs such as women’s studies, African American studies, and others arose as scholars and students came to recognize that humanity’s great challenges do not come in packages labeled “physics” or “political science” or “poetry,” but require the totality of the disciplines.

This helpful invasion of the real led to a movement away from the hermetic academic model and toward a rebalancing of the public and private, a move Nancy Cantor and Peter Englot have described as a shift away from the Ivory Tower and toward the Engaged University (2014, 3–4). The move has been, in the words of De Anza College President Brian Murphy, one “to retrieve the civic from the margins” (2014, 24). The renewed emphasis on the public good is not intended as an either/or but a both/and. It does not undercut those aspects of learning that are necessarily at a remove from the noise of the everyday; rather, it requires constant travel between the academic grove and the city of urgent challenges. Reflection and action must collaborate; university and community must be seen as equal partners who mutually benefit. Involving our students in this activity will create not the excellent sheep—brilliant specialists unaware of the ethical consequences of their learning—decried in a recent tome; but rather excellent shepherds, whose flocked and generous expertise creates community.

**Leadership from and for the Arts, Humanities, and Design**

Like the renewed emphasis on civic engagement in higher education, Imagining America (IA): Artists and Scholars in Public Life grew in the interstices between academic disciplines and public sectors. It is significant that the consortium, created in 1999, grew out of a year-long celebration of the arts and humanities at the University of Michigan led by English and American Studies Professor Julie Ellison (Imagining America’s founding director), but also encouraged and funded by the visionary physicist Homer Neal, acting as vice president for research. As the organization developed, its mission expanded to include design, and its Presidents’ Council and leadership came to assert that “publicly engaged humanities, arts, and design … represent ways of knowing that are essential in the public work of naming and framing community problems and designing solutions” (Imagining America 2014, 1). Over one hundred colleges and universities now belong to the organization—representing nearly every aspect of higher education, including community colleges, research universities, urban public universities, and private liberal arts colleges.
The organization—and the ideal of public purpose—got a tremendous boost when the Association of American Colleges and Universities forwarded this same emphasis throughout the arts and sciences as fundamental to the health of both liberal education and the nation’s future. Under President Carol Geary Schneider’s direction, this national advocate for undergraduate liberal education has not only collected key data to support the practical applications of liberal learning, but also has organized a surprising coalition of business, nonprofit, and government leaders to advance this message, thus forging the kind of links it advocates between academia and the social sector. [Editor’s note: See www.aacu.org/leap/ for more information about these efforts.]

Even so, it is fair to ask how a public version of the arts, humanities, and design might be enacted—and one answer has been especially audacious. One of IA’s most ambitious goals is the renewal of cities and rural communities, including by reconceiving material places and spaces. The results of IA’s efforts in this area have been phenomenal, as I can attest after attending IA’s 2013 conference in Syracuse, New York, home to IA and its host institution, Syracuse University. I wasn’t looking forward to visiting the locale, having grown up in nearby Rochester well aware of the challenges that had left so many upstate New York cities depressed and half-abandoned. But the Syracuse of 2013 was a startling and happy surprise. With a run-down warehouse having been reconceived as a new university center for the arts, humanities, and design, and with attendant new restaurants, music venues, and art galleries, downtown Syracuse is newly lively. This liveliness extends to the public schools, which have actively partnered with the university. Similar phenomena have occurred in other locales, such as West Philadelphia through the extraordinary work of the University of Pennsylvania, but rarely with such emphasis on those areas of academia sometimes thought of as most theoretical and unworldly.

**Challenge 1: Economic Feasibility**

Despite the clear successes in Syracuse and elsewhere, the ideal of public engagement faces four interlocking challenges. The first is economic feasibility. Just as any economic recession sees the arts ruthlessly reduced and even eliminated in K–12 education, the setbacks of 2008–09 led some colleges and universities to pull back on civic engagement, as they did not see immediate economic benefits.

Those of us who care deeply about publicly engaged scholarship and teaching can respond to this challenge in two ways. First, colleges and universities can find ways to form communities and share resources with each other and their surrounding civic communities, recognizing that if they fail to do so, many smaller institutions will simply cease to exist. Partnerships addressing shared problems can help higher and K–12 education, cultural institutions, nonprofits, and town and regional governments solve some of their own financial challenges. Lafayette College economics professor Gladstone “Fluney” Hutchinson’s Appalshop project is an attempt to revitalize the arts and bring new investment into Appalachian communities. It serves as a particularly striking example of melding figurative and literal enrichment, an effort in which economists interact with artists, culture-bearers, and public scholars. [Editor’s note: See page 20 of this issue for more about the Appalshop project.]

Second, thought leaders and community-oriented citizens can step up to support community engagement. Under Earl Lewis’s leadership, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation recently placed the renewed emphasis on the public good is not intended as an either/or but a both/and…. Reflection and action must collaborate; university and community must be seen as equal partners who mutually benefit.
always had more of a public life—as Dewey wrote, “art is the most effective mode of communication that exists” ([1934] 2005, 286)—the humanities are often seen as difficult to apply to the world beyond academia. And yet, again and again, the humanities have proven themselves useful in the public sphere. The Clemente Course in the Humanities, originally instituted at Bard College, has developed into a national network where humanities academics work with economically challenged adults as they read and write about great works, with extraordinary results. The chance to develop a cultural understanding of oneself and one’s situation turns out to have far more efficacy in breaking the cycle of poverty than does the opportunity to do menial work.

When I was directing the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, we established a Humanities at Work program that connected over a hundred doctoral students with summer internships, usually at nonprofit organizations. Many of the assignments were surprising: the University of Texas student in cultural anthropology who worked in a program for delinquent girls who had been abused as children, employing storytelling, dance, drawing, and other activities suggested by her discipline to improve the girls’ self-images; the University of Virginia historian who started an African American history summer school for fifth graders in Mississippi; the Columbia University literature student who worked with the Anti-Defamation League in Washington, DC, to combat hate literature; and another University of Texas student who wrote biographies of astronauts for NASA. The foundation also secured over thirty positions for doctoral graduates at nonprofit and for-profit organizations, ranging from Verizon to the American Parks Service. An ongoing program at the American Council of Learned Societies provides Mellon-funded postdocs at a similarly impressive range of nonprofits, and a number of colleges and universities have initiated education programs for prison inmates, again with heartening results.

But beyond these examples, storytelling is endemic to almost all enterprises. We use stories not only to explain our endeavors to others, but also to make sense of them for ourselves. The humanities specialize in telling stories and in analyzing the stories of others, both historical and fictive. But developing the public aspects of storytelling and the creative and critical thinking that accompanies it is an ongoing process, requiring much faculty conversation. Such conversation has occurred, for instance, at Skidmore College, where the college’s identifying concept, “Creative Thought Matters,” has moved all departments to consider how best to exemplify it.

**Challenge 3: Coherence and Permanence**

A third challenge facing us is that of building coherence and permanence. It is all too easy to initiate random and short-lived initiatives and programs, each one worthy but lacking synergy with others and not rooted deeply enough to survive the departure of a particular leader or two. Our engagements need to be totalizing and sustaining.

Sometimes focusing on a specific neighborhood provides an answer, as in the examples of Syracuse and Appalshop described above. Following a similar strategy, several institutions have initiated new collaborations with local K–12 schools, acknowledging that efforts to diversify our college campuses must begin with helping historically underserved students become college ready. The University of Washington’s Bothell campus has created the Lake City Collaboratory, which engages undergraduate volunteers in tutoring low-income and first-generation high school students in areas that include digital media production. Other examples of local outreach are too numerous to list, but include the Sounds of Port Richmond, a college-community theater collaboration between Wagner College and local leaders; Binghamton University’s Neighborhood Project, which grew out of an evolutionary studies program emphasizing cultural as well as genetic perspectives; and Portland State University’s Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative.

Promisingly, those who engage in these projects are giving deeper thought to commitments that meld academia and the community holistically for greater leverage. While some of these synergies are planned in advance, others develop in medias res, so it is especially important to look constantly for links. Current Portland State University President Wim Wiewel rightly emphasizes that campus-community partnerships are constantly evolving, their bases already having moved from notions of service to those of truly equal partnerships, and now to notions of mutual stewardship of place.

In regard to coherence, too, we do not want to forget that our campuses are communities in their own regard, and we need to treat them as such. Brian Murphy argues that “our students deserve more than to be treated as if they have no civic life and do not need to understand how power works” (2014, 14), an idea that informs De Anza College’s Institute of Community and Civic Engagement, as well aspects of the curriculum. Under Devorah Lieberman’s leadership, the University of La Verne engages all first-year students in one of twenty-eight learning communities, all of which incorporate student and faculty experiences with community groups. Similarly, at Drew University, the Civic Scholars program engages selected first-year students in a yearlong seminar in
which groups create their own ambitious community partnerships—working, for instance, with local bankers to offer economic planning to families dealing with the effects of the Great Recession.

**Challenge 4: Institutionalizing Engaged Learning**

Conceiving of campuses as their own communities and rethinking curriculum in a community-minded way is also a step toward addressing a fourth challenge: institutionalizing engaged learning. But to enable institutions to take that step, we must first create consensus about the intellectual gains that are possible through experiential learning. Lee Shulman, president emeritus of the Carnegie Foundation, has noted that applied learning addresses some leading student complaints, such as “I knew it, but I forgot it” (you won’t forget if you apply it), “I thought I knew it, but I didn’t” (experience will be the test for that); or “I know it, but I don’t know what it is good for” (you will find out, by experience) (1999, 10–17).

Effective implementation also involves monitoring attitudes. No one likes the person who considers others as beneath him or her, and it is crucial in college-community partnerships that professors not see themselves as gods carrying grace to undeserving sinners. Wagner President Richard Guarasci rightly emphasizes “mutual respect and reciprocity” as a sine qua non of any partnership (personal communication). Such mutuality will not happen unless there is shared conviction of mutual benefit.

Most crucial to institutionalization is the issue of motivating the faculty, who are the very core of any institution. If assistant professors are discouraged from public engagement on the grounds that it will not qualify as an accomplishment within formal reward systems (most notably, tenured promotion), the resulting cynicism about public engagement will affect everyone in the community, from senior faculty to first-year students. IA addressed this issue in a 2008 study by Julie Ellison and Timothy Eatman, *Scholarship in Public Knowledge Creation and Tenure Policy in the Engaged University*. It is a much admired document, and yet one worries that its recommendations are too infrequently followed. In fact, this fourth challenge of institutionalizing public purpose in higher education may be the most daunting of the four.

**Imagination to Reality**

Dewey wrote that “the path of least resistance and least trouble is a mental rut already made. It requires troublesome work to undertake the alteration of old beliefs” ([1933] 2008, 136). But, as Dewey is frequently said to have written, “If we teach today’s students as we taught yesterday’s, we rob them of tomorrow.”

And about tomorrow, as we have been told by Fleetwood Mac, we should not stop thinking. I would add, we should not stop thinking positively, toward a twenty-first-century renaissance. To quote Kennedy once more: “There is a connection, hard to explain logically but easy to feel, between achievement in public life and progress in the arts….

The age of Lorenzo de Medici was also the age of Leonardo da Vinci. The age of Elizabeth was also the age of Shakespeare. And the New Frontier for which I campaign in public life can be a New Frontier for American Art” (1960, 11). Can we, in the age of Bill Gates and so many other public-spirited patrons, renew that adventurous sense of frontier?

Our students offer us no excuse for failing to do so. They are the best news of all, for this generation of students is extraordinarily civically motivated and active, far more so than my own. Many of today’s students may have engaged in high school only to gain credit for college admission, but in most of them, the spirit took. My biggest surprise as a university president who held open office hours consisted in how many of my student visitors came seeking help with civic projects. Imagining America anticipated this student generation, and its members, as well as those of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, are helping to support it. Now our overall challenge is to do as we say, to move our sayings into action, our best imaginings into reality.

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An increasing number of campuses are working to build systems of incentives and supports for faculty who undertake community-engaged scholarship. Recognizing that the policies and cultures that shape faculty behavior for career advancement have not kept pace with changes in knowledge production and dissemination, many campuses are at some stage in the process of reconsidering and revising their reward structures to provide recognition for new forms of scholarship, including community-engaged, digital, and interdisciplinary scholarship.

Such revisions are necessary to validate faculty work that, although inadequately rewarded, is already occurring. Findings from the 2010–11 Faculty Survey from the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California–Los Angeles demonstrate the scale of community-engaged scholarship now taking place. Among faculty respondents to the survey, 42.5 percent reported that they have “collaborated with the local community in research/teaching” during the past two years (Hurtado et al. 2012). As Tierney and Perkins observe, the professional reward structure needs to shift. Institutions need a diversity of routes to academic excellence and some of them will pertain to being involved outside the ivory tower…. Academic work needs to have an impact in order to provide society’s return on investment…. For that to happen, the reward structure and those practices that socialize faculty need to shift in a way that supports engagement rather than disdains it. (Forthcoming)

Like other institutions around the nation and the globe that feel compelled by such imperatives, the University of Massachusetts Boston (UMass Boston) is examining the need for new and revised structures to reward innovative forms of scholarship. The institutional case study we present here represents one part of a journey spanning several decades as faculty and researchers have sought ways of rewarding community-engaged scholarship—that is, work that connects teaching, research, and service with active engagement in communities. While our journey is in many ways unique to our campus, it echoes the journeys of many higher education institutions.

Institutional Context
UMass Boston is classified by the Carnegie Foundation as both a “Research, High Activity” campus and as a “Community Engaged” campus. It has a rich history of mission-driven commitments that engage campus constituents with local, state, regional, national, and global communities. According to the university’s mission and values statement,

As a campus community, we address critical social issues and contribute to the public good, both local and global…. We forge partnerships with communities, the private sector, government, health care organizations, other colleges and universities, and K–12 public education, and bring the intellectual, technical, and human resources of our faculty, staff, and students to bear on pressing economic and social needs.

This mission is reflected in the actions of our leadership. Our chancellor speaks regularly of the importance of community engagement to the campus, and the institution often publicizes its contributions to the community. Our faculty, too, engage with these values: in a 2009 survey, one-third of our faculty members identified their research as community engaged or publicly engaged. In 2011, the university established an Office of Community Partnerships to better align and support community engagement across the campus and to collect and report data on engagement activities. That office reports that UMass
Boston faculty are involved in over 450 community partnerships. 

While these findings all indicate widespread support for community-engaged scholarship at our institution, our faculty rewards policies, which have not been revised since 1976, do not mention community-engaged scholarship or offer criteria to evaluate and reward it. When faculty involvement in such practices is rewarded, it is recognized primarily as “service” and sometimes as “teaching” (in the form of service-learning pedagogies). Because UMass Boston is a research university, it is particularly important in our context that community-engaged research be considered legitimate scholarship as well. Yet despite the university’s strong commitment to community engagement, community-engaged scholarship is not explicitly rewarded as scholarship—that is, as engaged scholarly work across all the faculty roles.

This disconnect is unfortunate, as faculty who ascribe to practices associated with community-engaged scholarship, such as participatory epistemologies and collaborative knowledge generation, often are inclined to integrate their faculty roles so that their teaching, research, and service complement and reinforce one another. In addition, these faculty often are inclined to enact community-engaged, active, and collaborative pedagogies such as service learning that are considered “high-impact educational practices.” Research indicates that increased opportunities to participate in such high-impact practices enhance the academic success of students who are systematically and traditionally underserved in higher education (Kuh and O’Donnell 2013). Rewarding community-engaged scholarship thus has implications for underserved student success.

**Working Group Investigations**

In fall 2012, UMass Boston’s provost established a nine-member working group (comprised of faculty, center directors, and a graduate student) to report on effective ways of promoting, supporting, evaluating, and rewarding community-based research and engaged scholarship. (The inclusion of a graduate student perspective was important because graduate students face many of the same challenges as junior faculty in finding validation for community-engaged research while establishing their academic identities.) The working group held a series of campus-wide meetings with faculty, staff, graduate students, and community partners to gather information and assess successes and challenges associated with community engagement. As a result of these meetings, the working group concluded that an integrated approach supporting community engagement across faculty roles was necessary in order to advance community-engaged scholarship.

After a year of study, in fall 2013, the provost asked the working group to recommend better ways of evaluating and rewarding faculty for community engagement and community-engaged scholarship. Based on a literature review, a study of best practices at universities nationally, an examination of our university’s policies, and a survey of department and college practices, the working group issued a report in spring 2014 (Warren et al.). In making its recommendations, the working group conceived of “rewards” broadly, with the aim of addressing policies, structures, and practices that would be critical to supporting community engagement and effecting cultural change. The report’s authors argued that the campus has an opportunity to build on its strengths in community engagement and become an international leader in the field.

The report’s recommendations fall into four areas: guidelines for inclusion in tenure and promotion policies; changes to the Annual Faculty Report; a new award for community-engaged scholarship; and continuation and expansion of a public service grant opportunity for faculty who conduct community-engaged research. Recommendations in each of these areas are summarized below.

**Tenure and Promotion Guidelines**

Faculty involvement in community-engaged projects can touch on each of the three categories of work considered in personnel matters concerning tenure and promotion—research, teaching, and service. Community-engaged work in each if these areas should be considered as part of the tenure and promotion review. The idea of rewarding community-engaged research may represent the greatest challenge to traditional faculty reward structures. Therefore, policies should clearly recognize that community-engaged research, although not required of all faculty, is one significant way of contributing to a field. At UMass Boston, after determining that both the university’s tenure and promotion policies and the contract used by the faculty and professional union contained open language that did not preclude valuing community-engaged research, the working group recommended that the provost issue a set of guidelines for the inclusion of community-engaged research in tenure and promotion considerations. In its report, the group offered the following policy language:

Community-engaged research and creative activity results from a partnership between faculty member(s) and community groups or members, broadly conceived. Scholarship is community engaged when it involves reciprocal partnerships and addresses public purposes. It also meets the standards of scholarship when it involves inquiry, advances knowledge, and is open to review and critique by relevant scholar and community or professional peers. Scholarship is community engaged when faculty, students, community-based
organizations, government agencies, policy makers, and/or other actors work together to identify areas of inquiry, design studies and/or creative activities, implement activities that contribute to shared learning and capacity building, disseminate findings and make recommendations or develop initiatives for change. (Warren et al. 2014, 9)

The working group recommended that each department and college take responsibility for determining what forms of community engagement are relevant to its respective fields. While the findings of community-engaged scholarship can be published in traditional academic venues like peer-reviewed journals and university press books, this kind of scholarship often produces other kinds of products, including (but not limited to) published reports, exhibits and multimedia forms of presentation, installations, clinical and other service procedures, programs and events, and court briefings and legislation. Departments and colleges need to identify ways of evaluating the quality and impact of these other research outputs.

To assess the quality and impact of the full range of faculty’s research activity, departments might need to solicit input from parties other than peer academics (although these peers would remain the majority of evaluators). Personnel committees may want to request external evaluation letters from community and professional experts and from community-engaged scholars who are capable of assessing the work of the faculty member under review. The working group recommended that the provost provide guidelines to department and college personnel committees for discussion and implementation.

The Annual Faculty Report
Faculty in the University of Massachusetts system are required to submit an Annual Faculty Report (AFR) that covers the three categories considered in tenure and promotion reviews. This report is used to help assess a faculty member’s eligibility for merit pay and becomes part of each person’s tenure and promotion file. The working group recommended that the AFR include documentation of faculty members’ community engagement in relation to teaching, research and creative activity, and service. The group also recommended that the AFR template reference community engagement using the following language:

To gather better data on faculty collaboration with community partners, for the purpose of the AFR, community engagement is the partnership of university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity and enhance curriculum, teaching and learning. It is community engaged when it involves reciprocal partnerships in research, teaching, and service addressing a broad range of issues in local, regional, national, and global communities. (Warren et al. 2014, 14)

By incorporating community-engaged practices into the AFR, the working group aimed to use an existing structure to provide opportunities for faculty to document and receive recognition for their community engagement activities. To address concerns that including community engagement in the AFR would suggest that faculty are required to conduct community-engaged scholarship, the working group was careful to use language clearly indicating that such scholarship was just one way of fulfilling faculty responsibilities.

Chancellor’s Award
Each year, the university recognizes faculty excellence by celebrating the accomplishments of faculty members who have made exceptional contributions in the three primary areas of faculty responsibility with the Chancellor’s Awards for Distinguished Scholarship, Teaching, and Service. While any of these awards could recognize community engagement, such recognition is typically reserved for the service category. Consequently, community-engaged scholarship remains largely unrecognized as a valued form of scholarship.

The working group recommended that an award for community-engaged scholarship be added to the annual Chancellor’s Awards. The group offered the following articulation for the award:

The University of Massachusetts Boston is an urban research university that seeks to serve its urban, regional, national, and global communities in a number of ways. Vital to this mission is scholarship that addresses the concerns and opportunities of these communities. Such scholarship (1) involves academic projects that engage faculty members and students in a collaborative and sustained manner with community groups; (2) connects university outreach with community organizational goals; (3) furthers mutual productive relationships between the university and the community; (4) entails shared authority in 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 review; (5) results in excellence in engaged scholarship through such products as peer-reviewed publications, collaborative reports, documentation of impact, and external funding; and (6) is often integrated with teaching and/or with service activities. (Warren et al. 2014, 38)
By awarding community-engaged scholarship as its own category of work, the university would recognize its distinct value to the institution and offer a concrete reward to faculty who excelled in this area.

**Public Service Grants**

Community engagement and community-engaged scholarship are advanced when faculty receive recognition and resources for conducting it. UMass Boston currently offers a public service grant opportunity for faculty who conduct community-engaged research. This grant is a good example of how the campus can specifically articulate and reward community-engaged scholarship while also helping faculty build a foundation for applying for external funding.

At present, the public service grants are funded annually at a level of $30,000, with each recipient receiving a maximum award of $10,000. The working group recommended increased funding for this modest grant program as another way of promoting and strengthening community-engaged research at the campus.

**Preliminary Implementation**

In a May 2014 meeting with the provost, members of the working group discussed the report recommendations and (1) asked that the provost make the report public, which he did immediately; (2) offered to work with the Office of Faculty Development to create workshops for senior faculty on how to evaluate community-engaged scholarship in the guidelines for personnel review, the provost opened the door for faculty to present this work in their tenure and promotion cases and for personnel committees to evaluate and reward it. However, by suggesting that community-engaged scholarship receives its legitimacy through the narrow confines of academic peer review and traditional publishing, the statement makes unclear whether the review process will confer value on the full range of research products typically created through community-engaged work. When academia and the community collaborate to combine knowledge created inside and outside of the academy and co-produce new knowledge that addresses social issues, an academic journal may not be the most effective means of disseminating this new knowledge.

**An Ongoing Conversation**

The provost’s new guidelines and the full report of the working group are now part of an ongoing conversation about how UMass Boston addresses the challenges of creating academic cultures that support community-engaged scholarship. Further progress in advancing these cultures at our institution will likely depend on progress in valuing community-engaged scholarship in the broader academic world. Campuses like ours—those that have been in existence for a short time (in our case, only fifty years) and want to establish themselves as prestigious institutions—face a dilemma. Do they try to improve their status by conforming to traditional norms conferring prestige on research institutions, which unfortunately do not always hold community-engaged scholarship in high regard? Or do they place themselves on the cutting edge of academic innovation and thereby risk being devalued by the broader academic establishment? The future of community-engaged scholarship may depend on an increasing number of universities choosing the latter option.

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On college and university campuses nationwide, engaging with “the community” (organizations and individuals unaffiliated with the sponsoring institution) is a common practice. In these collaborations, it is essential that faculty and students apply a critical lens—evaluating why, between whom, and how the engagement is occurring—in an effort to prevent paternalism, an approach that assumes a socioeconomic or intellectual hierarchy between college and community. To build equal ground for all participants, it is important to develop approaches that privilege reciprocity. In this article, we share lessons learned through our own experiences implementing community-engaged pedagogies.

Why? Identifying Shared Goals
When launching any community-engaged project, establish why you are pursuing the project. Set goals about what you want your students to learn, and examine what those goals mean for community partners. Know your purpose: be honest with yourself about why you are engaging in the project. It is important that you be able to articulate a reason that doesn’t create a hierarchy between the university (you and your students) and the community.

Talk to the people whose lived experiences are part of what you want your students to explore, and ask them about their goals for the project. Recognize that the community is not an empty vessel waiting to be filled by your students’ knowledge and expertise. Ask community members what resources they need, listen to their desires for the project, and be open to the exchange of ideas. You will probably learn something you didn’t know before, and the community may not need what you want to provide.

After considering feedback from the community, build on level ground. Create a project in which everyone has shared responsibility and the opportunity to provide their own unique expertise. Consider the information, resources, and intellect your community partners have that you and your students do not, and mobilize those assets so they are beneficial to the project.

Who? Promoting Self-Reflection
When fostering community engagement, consider the biases that you or your students may hold about the communities you are entering. We all have biases, and we need to know what they are in order to prevent them from negatively affecting our work. Be self-reflexive; ask questions of yourself and your students. (For self-reflective activities, see Crum and Hendrick 2014.)

As instructors, we often witness college students from privileged backgrounds entering marginalized communities and conceptualizing themselves as temporal saviors rather than seeing community members as equals. Based on their brief experiences offering their time and abilities to underresourced individuals, students may feel that they have earned license to speak for the community, and may assert their newly acquired expertise as if it were authentic and accurate experiential knowledge. By providing tools for self-critique and creating spaces for students and community members to come together as equals, we can help prevent students from conceiving of their community engagement experiences as cultural safaris and avoid facilitating university-supported paternalism (see example 1).

Reflection about how you and your students are in the world can be essential to maximizing your students’ experiences as well as those of community members. It is important to take into account the way different bodies are (and are not) in various spaces. When working with college students of color, for example, be cognizant of the ways that bodies of color are perceived and often policed in public, and design activities to maximize everyone’s safety—e.g., by holding activities like scavenger hunts during the day instead of at night.

How? Identifying Best Tools
Ensure that the tools you are using are appropriate to the context. When incorporating digital media, be sure to ask, “Will this technology enhance the experience?” (See example 2.)

A techno-fetishist will adopt the most advanced technology, regardless of whether it is appropriate to the context, while a thoughtful educator will adopt whatever combination of media is culturally appropriate (Watson 2012). When evaluating cultural appropriateness, consider the technological tools and practices that are already in use. If project participants already communicate using Facebook, for example, asking them to use an alternate website or platform is likely to reduce the
project’s success. If your students like to take selfies and upload the pictures to Instagram with hashtags, embrace these practices in an educational context. Meeting participants where they are will put them at ease and result in greater success.

**Example 1: Neighborhood Documentary Project**

As an educational consultant, I worked with thirteen eighth graders on a project that involved collaborating with undergraduate students to develop a community resource map. The undergraduates were enrolled in a cartography service-learning class, and they had volunteered to help my students develop a website as one of several possible service projects. This website was to list the location and contact information of local businesses and organizations as a resource for neighborhood residents.

The undergraduates were expected to begin working with the eighth graders immediately after joining the project, but I explained to their professor that it was important that I meet with these students prior to their visit with the middle schoolers. The community where the young students’ school was located was low-income and majority African American, with all the stereotypical elements of an impoverished space: urban blight, low graduation rates, high infant mortality, high crime rates. I knew I needed to prepare the cartography students, who were all white and might not have ever traveled to that side of town.

Rather than explaining the socioeconomic status of my middle school students, I told the undergraduates that they had a lot of information that would be greatly beneficial to this project—and similar, so did my eighth graders. My eighth-grade students knew their neighborhood. They knew what places should and should not be included on the map. They knew where their peers went and where they did not. With the college students acknowledging and respecting the wealth of information my students had, both groups were able to come to the table as worthy and knowledgeable human beings who needed each other to execute the project.

—Melissa Crum

**Example 2: Social Movement History Game**

As part of my dissertation research, I worked with a network for college-age students of color to research, design, and play a transmedia, narrative-based game about the history of social movements in Providence, Rhode Island. The Resisters used an online interface and several social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) to guide game players through real-world scavenger hunts across locations where social justice activism had occurred. The student co-designers and I worked with several community organizations to conduct research in local archives, map out the game’s narrative, and build a website that would serve as the main hub for communication.

The project involved constantly navigating and evaluating the appropriate technological tools, and the need to avoid the trap of techno-fetishism was a key pedagogical lesson. I had originally planned to use a mobile-based GPS interface to lead players through a scavenger hunt, but a student co-designer resisted this idea for two reasons: (1) if players were absorbed in their cell phones, they would be removed from the physical experience of being in the communities; and (2) if the players’ primary interaction were with a mobile phone, the team-building aspect would be diminished.

While the GPS mobile interface was the most advanced technological solution available, it was not the one most appropriate to the project. Instead of developing a phone-based program, we created paper packets that the players needed to pick up at the game office. While we still used Instagram to document students’ visits to the sites, the paper handouts enhanced the experience of being in real-world locations during the scavenger hunts. Remember, technology is the tool, not the lesson; it should enhance the exercise, not become the exercise.

—Alexandrina Agloro

**Conclusion**

Community-engaged projects must allow all participants to serve each other and learn together. By applying a critical lens, we can support people’s ability to operate at their full capacity while respecting the knowledge of those we are attempting to serve.

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Democratic Agency and the Visionary's Dilemma

[David Hoffman,Coordinator of Student Life for Campus and Civic Engagement at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County; Craig Berger,Assistant Director of Student Life for Civic Agency at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County; Beverly Bickel,Clinical Associate Professor in Language, Literacy, and Culture at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County]

People working in the early stages of broad social movements face a common conundrum. Call it the **visionary's dilemma**: How can a movement gain traction when the dominant culture's theories, knowledge, politics, and conventional mechanisms for social and institutional change reflect the status quo? Participants in the US Civil Rights Movement, for example, sought to expand voting rights without having the benefit of the electoral clout that full voting rights would eventually afford them. They faced violence, entrenched privilege, and a widespread sense of powerlessness stemming from the very oppression they were trying to defeat. Among their responses to this dilemma were the Freedom Schools: spaces in which people could imagine otherwise, develop new knowledge together, learn essential academic and organizing skills, and discover their individual and collective capacity to initiate far-reaching change.

Scholars and leaders working to fundamentally refocus American higher education to support democratic renewal also must contend with the visionary's dilemma. In *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future*, the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (2012) asked higher education leaders to imagine and take the first steps toward an ambitious vision of democracy as a core institutional value demonstrated in action. However, structural challenges, entrenched cultural practices, and lack of “full participation” (Sturm et al. 2011) obscure our vision. How can we imagine significant changes in professional roles; in hierarchical conceptions of teaching, learning, assessment, and reward structures; and in exclusionary cultural norms? How might the critical, questioning, student-centered, and action-oriented approach of the Freedom Schools inspire us to lay an intellectual, cultural, and practical foundation for powerful democratic knowledge and practice?

**Democratic Strands**

At the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), we are asking and beginning to answer these challenging questions. With our BreakingGround initiative, formally launched in August 2012, we seek to overcome the visionary's dilemma by fostering human connections, encouraging new questions, and (re)awakening students, faculty, and staff members to their own hopes that their lives and careers will matter. BreakingGround’s programmatic components, including funding opportunities created by Provost Philip Rous to support courses and programs, are the surface layers of a deeper, organic process of relationship-building, imaginative thinking, and experimentation with new forums and incentives for democratic engagement that are now part of the unfolding UMBC story.

The democratic strands in UMBC’s culture run back to the institution’s founding in the mid-1960s as the first public university established in Maryland after *Brown v. Board of Education*. When building the campus, planners waited to lay sidewalks until they saw how people chose to walk across the fields between the original buildings. In the decades that followed, UMBC developed cooperative education programs, internship programs, and service-learning initiatives; opened the Shriver Center in 1993 to support reflective engagement with long-term community partners; launched the Meyerhoff Scholars Program in 1998 to support excellence in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) for students from marginalized populations; and in 2003 received a grant from the National Science Foundation to promote the advancement of women faculty in STEM, prompting conversations that produced a campus-wide faculty diversity program. In 2007 our Student Government Association launched Prove It!, an annual contest that awards grants to teams of students who develop social innovations that benefit the UMBC community. Faculty members have developed courses where students work with community members to address challenges facing Baltimore’s communities, and departments like Gender and Women’s Studies have supported students as advocates for social justice. UMBC President Freeman Hrabowski and others across the campus have launched projects to support and critically assess innovations in teaching and learning that emphasize collaboration.

Despite these deep roots, BreakingGround’s immediate origins are as prosaic as a scene from *The Breakfast Club*: five people with different roles on campus, sitting in a room, having a frank conversation that departed from the usual scripts. In 2010, those five individuals—an academic department chair, a scholarship program manager, the Shriver Center’s director, the student government president, and a student affairs...
professional—met to discuss the deep meaning of their work in supporting students’ and colleagues’ development as co-creators of their communities, having recognized a common philosophy of democratic engagement linking their separate programs and learning spaces. That philosophy emphasized that individuals and collaborative groups are powerful agents of meaningful change, and that students deserve genuine respect as agents in their own lives and as partners in building community.

A Philosophy and Process
Following their initial meeting, the group decided to explore how others on campus thought about their own programs and spaces, focusing on the connections between people’s personal aspirations to make a positive difference and their approaches to their contributions on campus. The resulting discussions were marked by transparency (carrying no hidden agendas) and authenticity (speaking person-to-person, rather than position-to-position, whenever possible). Those initial conversations worked well because they embodied the ideals the original group was seeking to advance: full participation by people collaborating to envision and create the future of their (campus) community. Beyond generating good ideas and good will, the conversations helped sharpen participants’ focus on the importance of cultural practices: the subtleties of daily interactions that could either reduce people to their autonomous roles, or foster a sense of emerging collective power.

Eventually the conversations snowballed, and participants started asking how they could deepen and extend their collective efforts. In the ensuing months, the initiative has taken care to identify BreakingGround not as a distinct program, but as a philosophy and process reflecting a multitude of voices, contributions, stories, and reflections, many of which are gathered on the BreakingGround website (breakingground.umbc.edu).

Thus instead of staking out turf and securing dedicated budgets, we have worked to promote democratic cultural practices and foster democratic agency among people involved in strategic planning and budgeting, research and teaching, speaker series and faculty working groups, student and faculty recruitment, and student organizations. The results are clear in the way UMBC’s people talk about our campus and in the way our work increasingly emphasizes that all campus stakeholders are real human beings with knowledge, skills, and stories that connect us to each other as we engage our communities.

Growing Conversations and Cooperation
BreakingGround’s strategy and spirit are exemplified by The Garden, a student initiative (a Prove It! winner and a BreakingGround grant recipient) that has connected a wide variety of campus partners. Its organizers aspired to establish a place where community members could grow food and talk about food security. They also wanted to foster collective agency, recognizing the deep democratic symbolism of people working together to build and tend to an unfinished space on campus. In addition to vegetables and herbs, The Garden produces conversations and cooperation among people whose campus roles might never have brought them together, yields opportunities for interdisciplinary research and teaching, and nourishes the notion that we all can co-create opportunities to shape the relationships and spaces of our communities.

In The Garden and kindred projects and courses, we can hear a distant echo of the Freedom Schools, and glimpse the possibility of transcending the visionary’s dilemma in higher education. Here we can imagine together, and enact our commitment to a reinvigorated democracy.

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Interdisciplinary Public Scholarship, Economic Empowerment, and Community Development

GLADSTONE “FLUNEY” HUTCHINSON, associate professor of economics and founder of the Economic Empowerment and Global Learning Project at Lafayette College

In the Economic Empowerment and Global Learning Project (EEGLP) at Lafayette College (eeegl.lafayette.edu), interdisciplinary public scholarship (IPS) serves as a pillar for the work of students and faculty as they engage in dynamic and diverse community partnerships. As important forums for teaching, learning, scholarship, and citizenship, these partnerships allow institutions to enact their missions related both to advancing students’ academic, intellectual, and citizenship development, and to contributing to the public good (Cantor 2003). The EEGLP focuses on strengthening community members’ capacity to achieve dignity, agency, and empowerment by collaboratively mapping and awakening the market and social value of their latent assets.

Principles and Frameworks
Interdisciplinary Public Scholarship (IPS) is a way of creating new knowledge through collaborative co-learning about, with, and for diverse publics and communities (Ellison and Eatman 2008). Through IPS, faculty, students, and community members combine their knowledge and human capital while addressing pressing concerns related to economic development and civil society. Students and faculty working on IPS projects gain an appreciation for how interfacing “learned literature” with experiential knowledge can yield new scholarship on these matters. Meanwhile, community residents strengthen their capacity as agents of their own well-being and of their communities’ economic development.

By connecting community voice to economic entrepreneurship and inclusive and socially just development, IPS safeguards against approaches where the welfare of individuals and communities depends on the “generous and wise imagining” of well-meaning and better resourced “others” (paraphrasing Scarry 2002, 99). Instead of playing a mere feedback role, community stakeholders involved in IPS act as key drivers of their own aspirations and pursuits for development and renewal (Hutchinson, Clayton, and Miller 2014). By locating ownership of and agency over collective ideals within an inclusive exchange process, IPS minimizes the risk that projects will commoditize community life at the expense of its social value. Through IPS, stakeholders establish the market value of their capacities and assets while exercising the basic liberty of engaging in socially valuable exchange (Sen 1999).

Building on the principles of IPS, the EEGLP framework consists of three overlapping dimensions:

1. an emphasis on economic development as expanding peoples’ capacity to live with dignity and freedom;
2. a search for a paradigm where individual and community agency and capacity for problem solving provide the foundation for socially just, inclusive, and sustainable development;
3. an interest in a pedagogy that offers useful learning and knowledge-making opportunities to students.

The EEGLP takes a broadly global orientation across these dimensions, following philosopher Martha Nussbaum’s view of liberal education as promoting the ability to “recognize the worth of human life wherever it occurs and [to] see [oneself] as bound by common human abilities and problems to people who lie at great distance from us” (Nussbaum 1997, 9).

EEGLP Projects
Since its founding in 2007, the EEGLP has helped incentivize civically focused business entrepreneurship in several different communities. Three EEGLP projects are summarized below.

Whitesburg, Kentucky. Since spring 2014, the EEGLP has worked with the arts and cultural organization Appalshop to enhance its capacity to sustainably meet the emergent demands of its mission of promoting, celebrating, and preserving the culture of the Appalachian region as a platform for community and regional economic development. Working with local stakeholders, students and faculty have mapped not only Appalshop’s tangible assets (which include a theater company, a media institute, and a radio station), but also its underlying foundational assets (such as humanness, authentic voice, and the capacity for cultural preservation), which contribute to the design of products such as a computer game that teaches antibullying skills. The team has also analyzed Appalshop’s ability to stimulate inclusive and sustainable economic development for the city of Whitesburg and the Appalachian region.

New Orleans, Louisiana. From 2008 to 2011, the EEGLP worked with residents affected by Hurricane Katrina to collaboratively reimagine and rebuild environmentally sustainable
communities. After Katrina exposed the significant extent to which residents in New Orleans’s Lower Ninth Ward (L9W) were voiceless and systemically disadvantaged, the EEGLP focused on facilitating democratic renewal and improving agency among the working class. EEGLP projects, conducted in collaboration with residents, focused on designing an art, culture, and civic engagement center, and conducting a related social and economic impact study; designing a green grocery and lifestyle center; designing a carbon calculator for L9W communities; developing community gardens; and converting a corner grocery store into a self-sufficient urban farm school.

**Lagunitas, Honduras.** In the village of Lagunitas in rural Honduras, a Lafayette College engineering team had collaborated with residents prior to 2007 to build a gravity-based system to deliver potable water to all households and alleviate tension caused by unequal access to water. But the system lacked an economic base for its maintenance. From 2007 to 2012, the EEGLP thus worked with villagers to design a water-based economy that led, in turn, to the construction of a 30,000-plant coffee plantation, a fish farm, a poultry farm, a children’s citrus garden, and a community center. The project focused on developing villagers’ entrepreneurial skills, securing their property rights, and achieving balanced and sustainable stewardship of the built and natural environments.

The logistics of these EEGLP projects vary, but participating student and faculty teams typically spend eight weeks during the summer, two weeks during winter break, and the entirety of spring break researching projects and collaborating with communities and stakeholders. Students and faculty spend up to four weeks per year at the project site. Working under faculty guidance, students generally spend the semester following their on-site engagement participating in directed study or writing honors theses, giving presentations on campus and at academic conferences, and selecting and training a new student cohort. With complex problems that require interdisciplinary approaches, EEGLP projects have drawn faculty and students from architecture, art, computer science, economics, engineering, English, geology, international affairs, policy studies, psychology, and sociology.

**Shared Benefits**

EEGLP projects demonstrate how interdisciplinary teaching and scholarship can meaningfully contribute to strengthening and safeguarding inclusive and socially just economic opportunities and development for communities and civil society, while also benefiting higher education institutions and students. Students’ unique learning experiences reflect these projects’ value. As one student noted in a report on the Honduras project, the team of students had come to appreciate that economic development is not the end, but merely the means to helping a community achieve self-agency…. I felt gratified by how irrelevant we had become in their [community members’] lives. Now that we had collaborated with them … they did not need us in their lives precisely because now they were “rich”: they had undergone a transformation in confidence in self-agency, and they were determined to remain empowered long after we left.

Thus EEGLP projects enhance the community’s dignity and social value, reduce its sense of polarization, and build its capacity for resilience in the face of vulnerability, shocks, and dynamic change. Higher education’s participation in the EEGLP extends the practice of intellectual citizenship and civic-minded scholarship and provides an avenue for students and faculty to contribute meaningfully to the public good.

The EEGLP has received funding from the Robert Hunsicker Entrepreneurship Studies Fund at Lafayette College, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Clinton Foundation, the Walmart Foundation, the William T. Morris Foundation, the Davis Projects for Peace, and the US Environmental Protection Agency.

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After twenty years in an English Department, I recently joined the Department of Gender, Women’s, and Sexuality Studies (GWSS). The move reflected a shift in my scholarship: as my interests had strayed to experiential learning, I had begun working with community partners, and what they taught me profoundly changed my work. How, after all, could I teach a service-learning course on human-animal relationships in art, culture, literature, and the surrounding world without a multidisciplinary ecosystem?

My attraction to an interdisciplinary department was also inspired by my vantage point as director of the University of Iowa’s Obermann Center for Advanced Studies. While our fellowship program supports deep disciplinary research, most of our programs encourage faculty to reach across disciplines and often boundaries between campus and community. These programs serve artists and scholars who share the motivation Jack Tchen describes: “Some public artists and scholars begin with single-discipline framing, and others, like me, start with a problem they are trying to solve. Through a Deweyian learning-by-doing process, I discover my capacities and limits. We do what we must to make something happen, developing new capacities ourselves” (quoted in Cohen-Cruz 2014).

How can institutions best support artists and scholars like Tchen as well as those whose teaching fits comfortably in disciplines and departments? First, colleges and universities can provide imaginative “Switzerland” (often centers) where participants temporarily set aside departmental loyalties to work on shared problems. They can fund faculty collaborations and campus-community experiments; train facilitators and project managers, especially for sustained partnerships; and develop clear guidelines for evaluating the process and outcomes of collaborations. Finally, they can explicitly, publicly express a commitment (backed by procedures) to “counting” engaged, collaborative, and interdisciplinary teaching and scholarship in ways that are meaningful to each participant’s department or organization.

**Intellectual Matchmakers**

My own center is an intellectual matchmaker—for faculty who span two disciplines, for multidisciplinary teams, and for scholars interested in “interdisciplines” (like animal studies) that are struggling to be born. Our most ambitious programs begin with a “town hall” meeting. We invite every potential stakeholder we can identify from the campus and community to brainstorm how they might collaborate on complex issues like “the health humanities” or “human-centered informatics.” Faculty members who co-teach courses with community partners—from a practicum in a nearby women’s prison to literacy studies with local veterans to my literature class with professors in geology and urban planning, they created a new general education course, People and the Environment: Technology, Culture, and Social Justice. Their class was joined by another interdisciplinary course, Origins of Life in the Universe, developed by astronomy, biology, chemistry, and physics faculty. I anticipate that yet another working group will bring together faculty members in the arts, history, and literature as they map out a team-taught course focused on The Global Midwest.

Students in these “constellation” courses use technology to share discoveries with larger audiences, while faculty experiment with publicly engaged pedagogy—despite facing significant...
obstacles. Although some courses have more than eighty students, most departments fail to consider them as part of the regular teaching load. Without better policies to support them, these intellectually rich, inventive, active learning courses will not survive. For now, the faculty members’ delight in working with each other and with diverse students is their chief life support.

Collaborative Models
Advice for sustaining interdisciplinary collaborations is available. A University Leadership Council report provides a succinct list of obstacles to interdisciplinary work that also applies to community-based teaching. The report finds that faculty often perceive interdisciplinary work to be of inferior quality because it doesn’t conform to disciplinary practices; that richly collaborative work defies a focus on individual evaluation; and that faculty insist that they are unable to judge work outside their disciplines (Firedman and Wardell 2010).

As an environmental scientist who works with teams of researchers, activists, public policy organizations, and more, Stephanie Pfirman is especially insightful about cross-disciplinary research and teaching. Research that she has conducted with Diana Rhoten suggests that women and minorities are especially drawn to diverse, messy, complicated collaborations that stretch far from the strongholds of individual disciplines. Rhoten and Pfirman offer pragmatic suggestions to institutions seeking to support not only interdisciplinary work but also vulnerable faculty members (2007).

An Imagining America report, Scholarship in Public: Knowledge Creation and Tenure Policy in the Engaged University, offers terminology, case studies, and guidelines for evaluation. The report’s portfolio approach captures the process of forming interdisciplinary collaborations as well as the myriad results—essential for projects that include community partners, nonacademic experts, faculty, staff, and students (Ellison and Eatman 2008).

Collective Departmental Happiness
When our GWSS department revisited our guidelines for promotion to full professor, we were inspired by both Imagining America and Pfirman’s recommendations (Pfirman 2009). Our new guidelines, which our university’s administrators are citing as a model for other departments, give equal weight to individual and to collaborative, publicly engaged, and interdisciplinary work. Two passages specifically address the concerns outlined in this essay:

The Department encourages faculty members to be innovative and risk-taking, and we recognize the unique challenges a faculty member confronts in a field that values teaching difficult subjects, such as gender and sexual difference and social justice issues; conducting interdisciplinary and/or collaborative work; pursuing publicly engaged scholarship and teaching; and experimenting with new forms such as digital scholarship.

Faculty members may also be recognized for public engagement that encompasses innovative forms of making knowledge “about, for, and with” diverse publics and communities. Publicly engaged creative scholarship often involves complex projects carried out by teams of experts from both the campus and the community. Such projects may result in peer-reviewed articles in scholarly journals, public performances, exhibitions, screenings, readings, community-based public dialogs, and new or revitalized teaching approaches, but may also yield outcomes as varied as policy recommendations for local governments. (University of Iowa Department of GWSS 2012)

At my first faculty meeting with colleagues in GWSS, I was struck by what I can only call collective departmental happiness. What we want from and as faculty members is the very best—the best teaching, research, and service. Helping colleagues excel and acknowledging their success in all of its diverse forms—whether in a department focused on a single discipline, in a center or department of multidisciplinary colleagues, in the crevices between disciplines, or out in communities—should be the mission of every institution.

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Walking the Tightrope of Full Participation

JASMINE TORRES, development associate at the University of Southern California

GEORGE SANCHEZ, vice dean for diversity in the Dornsife College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences at the University of Southern California

Just before graduating from the University of Southern California (USC) in 2014, Jasmine Torres spoke to the university’s Board of Trustees about her experiences as a student.

Good morning. I grew up right in the USC neighborhood, where I went to Weemes Elementary School. My great grandma and I would walk across the USC campus when we went to the grocery store; and because I saw USC almost every day, when my teachers told me that I had to go to college one day, I assumed they meant USC.... [In the fifth grade,] I was selected to be in the USC Neighborhood Academic Initiative (NAI)—a six-year college-prep program for neighborhood students that promises a full scholarship to USC upon completion of high school and admittance into the university. It was then that I realized I held my dream in my little hands and all I had to do was not drop it.

Like many urban universities, USC sits in the middle of one of the most impoverished communities in the state, and has instituted several access programs like NAI to provide tutoring and support to local students. But these programs often cannot account for the various twists and turns that occur in the lives of students from poor and working-class families.

When I was thirteen years old—due to many family issues at home—I became homeless. On Christmas Day of 2006, I found myself riding on a public bus with nowhere to go. It was on that bus that I saw a blue and orange sign that read, “LA [Los Angeles] County Hotline. If you need emergency food or shelter, call 211.” I immediately got off the bus and walked towards the nearest pay phone. The woman on the other line of the phone referred me to a Hollywood youth shelter.... On this day, I entered the LA County foster care system.

At age thirteen, Jasmine was forced to choose between staying in her new group home and remaining in the NAI program, which was limited to residents of the neighborhood immediately surrounding USC.

My safety and stability being my top priority, I decided to stay in the group home I was familiar with and forfeited my spot in the scholarship program … [but] USC gave me the courage to believe in myself ... [knowing that] if I could get a scholarship once, I could do it again.... Throughout my times living in foster care, I had a huge USC banner in my room that reminded me every day to stay focused, telling myself again that the current situation was only temporary. Then one Friday afternoon in March [after having applied for admission], I got a phone call from my case manager [saying] that I had a package from USC. I hurried to the house, slowly opened it, and when I read the word “congratulations,” I fell to my knees and cried. Being accepted to USC is still one of the happiest days of my entire life.

Any program intended to promote students’ full participation—“an affirmative value focused on creating institutions that enable [all] people to thrive, … realize their capabilities, engage meaningfully in institutional life, and contribute to the flourishing of others” (Sturm et.al. 2011, 3)—must take into account the struggles and triumphs that some students experience before ever arriving on campus. These students are the community in our midst, and their success in college is one of the critical measures of any program of civic engagement.

I came to USC at seventeen years old, ambitious, and immediately knew that I wanted to get involved with my community and also become an advocate for other foster youth. As a freshman, I volunteered with the Joint Educational Project (JEP), where I tutored kids at the same elementary school that I went to as a kid and also mentored high school students at an after-school program.... [During] my sophomore year, I was invited to speak on a panel about education at Columbia University, and it was...
To support students’ full participation, we must advance student-led initiatives, especially when those efforts are well-researched and developed as part of a wider strategy of community empowerment.

generation college student, high-impact practices that are critical to student success—practices like undergraduate research and study abroad (Kuh 2008)—must be linked to curricular, cocurricular, and extracurricular opportunities. It is not enough to have a single program supporting full participation; instead, we must provide multiple pathways for students to pursue the interests with which they enter college.

Through my research, my experience, and the education that USC has provided me … I saw a great need for USC to provide support to Trojans who were formerly or are currently in the foster care system. I didn’t want to graduate without turning this idea into a reality so students previously in foster care would have a program to assist them in reaching their own graduation day. I approached Dr. Sanchez with my idea, and in conjunction with the School of Social Work, Dornsife College, and the Rossier School of Education, we were able to officially launch our program [in fall 2013].

To support students’ full participation, we must advance student-led initiatives, especially when those efforts are well-researched and developed as part of a wider strategy of community empowerment. Such empowerment is a fundamental part of USC’s educational mission, and it creates a training ground for action that will extend long after our students have graduated. The program Jasmine envisioned—called Trojan Guardian Scholars—not only has a lasting legacy on the USC campus; it also has launched a future activist for societal change.

Available research on foster youth show[s] that nationally less than 50 percent of foster youth graduate high school, less than 20 percent enroll in any kind of college, and … less than 3 percent graduate with a bachelor’s degree (United Friends of the Children, n.d.).… Our youth deserve a chance. This program began with the shared belief that every USC student should be embraced into the Trojan family…. I envision USC becoming a leader in foster youth educational research and practice…. I know I will one day stand at another podium like this, saying that 100 percent of our foster youth students graduate from the University of Southern California.

Working with Jasmine Torres has been one of the most fulfilling collaborations I have had as an administrator committed to civic engagement. I have learned as much from Jasmine about addressing the real needs of individuals and communities as from any conference I have attended or scholarly work I have done. The practice of walking the tightrope between student needs and institutional cultures is something I have learned to cherish about my work with Trojan Guardian Scholars as I collaborate with working-class students to make a difference in their own communities during and after college.

Together we can change the stereotypes and the statistics that affect foster youth every day. As a university that believes and invests in every one of its students—like USC did with me…. Together we can encourage more youth in the foster care system to pursue higher education and lead successful adult lives.

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Turning the PAGE: Ten Years of Leadership for Engaged Graduate Education

In 2013, Publicly Active Graduate Education (PAGE)—Imagining America’s graduate fellowship program—turned ten years old. In celebration, IA hosted a story circle at its national conference to explore the program’s impact. As recounted by participants in that conversation (many of whom are quoted below), in its first decade, the PAGE program involved almost 150 graduate students actively pursuing engaged paths as scholars, artists, and activists. Run by and for graduate students since the beginning, PAGE continues to reflect the dynamism of the engaged scholars who comprise it.

IA’s Founding Director Julie Ellison had nursed the idea of a graduate network under the IA umbrella since IA’s inception in 1999. In the conversations about graduate education that proliferated at that time, Ellison remembers, there was a lot of “aboutness”—conversations about graduate students but not by and with them. Meanwhile, a handful of programs for engaged graduate students—most notably, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation’s Practicum Grants, Humanities Out There at the University of California–Irvine, and the Public Humanities Institute of the Simpson Center for the Humanities at the University of Washington—were presenting important alternative models for graduate professionalization, funding, and mentorship. Not coincidentally, these programs took shape under the leadership of three early and influential friends of IA: respectively, Robert Weisbuch, Julie Reinhold Lupton, and Kathleen Woodward (IA’s founding board chair). Ellison was eager for IA to focus on civic engagement in a way that included the next generation of leadership.

Agency
IA’s graduate education initiative—already titled, but not yet active—got a jump start in 2003. At that year’s national conference, University of Texas at Austin graduate student Sylvia Gale used her allotted time on a panel intended to highlight graduate student leadership in public culture-making to ask the obvious: Where was the graduate voice in this conversation? What were students actually doing in the field, and what might they have to say about their own professional preparation? Ellison asked Gale to direct the nascent PAGE initiative, and the PAGE fellowship program began soon after. Each year, a cohort of ten to fifteen graduate students selected through a peer-application process attends IA’s national conference and a preconference summit on public scholarship and community engagement. These fellows now also participate in a yearlong working group to promote collaborative art-making, teaching, writing, and research.

At the start of its second decade, PAGE reframed itself as a peer network organized not by an individual director, but instead by a rotating cohort of PAGE alumni who share responsibility for mentoring and designing support structures for the new cohort of fellows. IA supports PAGE with an annual budget, but the co-directors and each year’s fellows determine together how those funds are spent. PAGE has used its funding to host monthly peer-designed webinars and virtual dinner parties, to support fellows as they visit one another’s campuses, and to fund the cocreation of scholarly artifacts. For graduate students being professionalized to value sole authorship and prepare themselves for job talks, these new possibilities for cooperation within the professoriate are important ruptures. The virtual and real environments created as a result of these projects offer, as IA Co-Director Timothy Eatman says, “fresh perspectives on ways to conceptualize the university of the twenty-first century.”

Reciprocity
The story of PAGE is as much a story of reciprocity as one of agency. It is a story that matters for the transformation it has caused within IA as well as for the model it suggests for institutional
transformation writ large. As Kevin Bott, PAGE’s second director and now IA’s associate director, says, not only are PAGE alumni driving many inquiries for IA membership from their new campuses, but they also “are entering the ranks and working to advocate for what we do…. So in terms of developing a future professoriate passionate about, committed to, and willing to speak up about the need to support public scholarship, I think we are seeing many promising fruits from the planting that was begun a decade ago.”

If PAGE is, as IA’s co-directors are fond of saying, “the lifeblood of Imagining America,” it also has incited dialogue leading directly to new growth. For example, PAGE hosted the first conversations at the national conference about both publishing and assessing public scholarship, long before IA’s journal Public and its research group on Assessing the Practices of Public Scholarship were created. As Ellison remembers, even at its start, “[PAGE] was the only group [within IA]—until maybe recently—that actually acted like … a self-organized constituency.” Ellison recalls that after discussing what they wanted from IA at their annual summits, the PAGE fellows “would come to me and say, ‘Well, now we want board representation; now we want to bring back former PAGE fellows.’ Nobody else was that organized; nobody else came with such strategic and heartening requests.”

As Gale remembers in relation to the IA conferences, “I never felt that IA was trying to position PAGE [fellows] … as the acolytes, the apprentices, the young scholars in training. Instead, PAGE was constantly positioning itself, and continues to [position itself], as … the cutting edge of public scholarship, crossing more boundaries, pushing more doors open, and taking more risks than anybody else at the conference…. So, it was reciprocal.” Gale characterizes the PAGE fellows as motivated by the idea that “the conversation that this conference wants to have needs us. And we need that conversation in order to sustain our work over the long term.”

**Vulnerability**

This reciprocal dynamic was possible in part because IA’s leaders were willing from the start to be vulnerable and to acknowledge that, even as heads of a visionary organization committed to the transformation of higher education, they did not know what graduate students knew about their own trajectories. Instead of nurturing a conversation about graduate education with tenured faculty and administrators, IA created a peer space—by which we mean not only a space for graduate students to engage with their peers, but also a space where participants are treated as peers by IA. Navigating this relationship is an ongoing process. As associate director Bott says, the “thinking and imagination of PAGE” are not always “at the forefront of IA’s work.” The capacity for self-critique and vulnerability reflected in this comment is what makes IA such a fitting partner for the PAGE network, and what makes the idea of PAGE and IA continuing to evolve together so exciting.

**Possibility**

The story of PAGE suggests one way of spurring and sustaining the institutional change needed to support the next generation of higher education leadership. Generational shifts are hard, particularly for disciplines and departments that are defined by their own traditions. But IA, as a values-based organization couchèd within higher education and committed to public scholarship across the cultural disciplines, has few of those territorial boundaries. That unboundedness has made IA particularly open to the kinds of changes PAGE has introduced.

That unbounded quality also makes IA—and PAGE—a perfect staging ground for change across higher education. We write this article together as past PAGE fellows who now straddle the roles of faculty, administrator, student services staff, and community liaison in our current institutions. Imagination, vulnerability, reciprocity, and agency are core to our ability to find a home within higher education—and to be comfortable in challenging higher education’s status quo. IA’s partnership with PAGE provides a blueprint for building the version of higher education that we most want to create and inhabit.
Editor’s note: What potential pathways lie ahead for the next generation of civically engaged faculty and students as they work to realize a vision where educating scholar-citizens is central to higher education policy and practice? For perspective on this issue, Diversity & Democracy’s editorial team reached out to two emerging leaders in the civic engagement movement: Brandon W. Kliwer, 2013 recipient of the American Democracy Project’s Saltmarsh Award for Emerging Leaders in Civic Engagement, and Shan Mukhtar, past co-director of Imagining America’s Publicly Active Graduate Education (PAGE) program.

What do contemporary issues facing students and institutions suggest about the challenge of preparing the next generation of engaged scholar-citizens?

BWK: It is impossible to discuss the next generation of engaged scholar-citizens without addressing student debt and public disinvestment of higher education. When paying for college becomes an individual burden, students and families increasingly see learning only through the lens of job preparation. As a result, in the current consumerist context, civic learning often moves to the periphery of undergraduate studies. Higher education needs to respond actively to consumerist understandings of its mission by creating accessible funding and curricular structures that encourage students to participate in rigorous community-engaged teaching and learning.

SM: The pursuit of higher-order learning and civic-mindedness requires that we engage fully with the economic, social, and political power relations in which higher education is implicated, rather than accepting for higher education a wholly symbolic role in contributing to the public good. One place where symbolism is not enough is in the area of diversity in higher education. Diversity on college campuses is sometimes seen as an add-on benefit that enhances what the US Supreme Court has called the “business of [a] university” (2013). But to truly address the sociopolitical identities and inequities present within and produced by educational spaces, institutions will need to make deeper commitments than a focus on “business” might suggest.

BWK: I agree; institutional commitments need to be more than “wholly symbolic.” The funding decisions that institutions make in difficult economic times often reflect their values and commitments more accurately than their institutional missions and visions. This disconnect between aspiration and practice affects the way undergraduate students approach their educational experiences. Colleges and universities need to counter the common perception that undergraduate education is a consumer transaction. Higher education will find its relevance in the twenty-first century by preparing undergraduate students not just for their first job, but for the type of thinking, content knowledge, and civic leadership necessary to address contested ideas and processes. Higher education ought to work with communities to move toward a higher moral, social, political, and economic plain.

What would higher education’s curricular structures look like if they were redesigned with the explicit purpose of cultivating student interest in civic and public work?

BWK: In my experience, undergraduates are already unsatisfied with traditional models of teaching and learning. For many students, teaching and learning often seems disconnected from the issues they encounter outside of the classroom, such as the ever-present threat of financial crisis and economic insecurity, weakened civil rights and liberties, and climate change—all of which inform the student experience in new ways. By creating academic programs that are interdisciplinary, issues-based, and deeply connected to forms of community-engaged scholarship, colleges and universities could cultivate students’ desire to understand and engage with civic society. Instead of participating in episodic opportunities through elective service-learning courses, students ideally would experience community-engaged scholarship at every level of the undergraduate curriculum.

SM: Certainly, colleges and universities have a history of incubating political and social movements globally. What is more, political and legal action—for example, action taken by victims of sexual assault that has prompted federal investigation and legislative oversight of institutional policies and practices—has been a major source of change in higher education. An important part of civic engagement is dissent; it is the antecedent to community-based organizing and systemized reform. Redesigning higher education to support civic and public work would involve teaching and learning about traditions and techniques of social movements and engaging in...
critical forms of education. It would require institutions to recognize that, as Ellison and Eatman have written, “publicly engaged academic work ... contributes to the public good and yields artifacts of public and intellectual value” (2008, 1). How colleges and universities formally evaluate the work of faculty and students shows the extent to which they value public and community service.

Are there places where such designs are already being implemented? What do these changes look like in practice?

BWK: Kansas State University (KSU) and Points of Light (POL) have partnered in an effort to define a vision for community-engaged teaching and learning that advances a higher calling for civic leadership. The KSU/POL Certificate in Community-Engaged Leadership seeks to help students connect their academic interests to robust forms of community-engaged scholarship and leadership. The program, which runs continuously for forty-eight weeks, connects students across the country with Points of Light’s national network through a virtual learning platform. This structure allows students to partner with their local communities to practice co-creating and designing participatory civic and public work through their specific academic interests. The partnership is based on the premise that if students are provided space and infrastructure for rigorous community-engaged scholarship, they will have the freedom to engage in the deeper learning that is necessary to address challenges from a civic leadership lens.

SM: Maria Avila (2010), assistant professor of social work at California State University–Dominguez Hills, has created a model for civic engagement that draws on the philosophies and techniques of broad-based community organizing to advance civic and public goals and radical long-term visions that harness the power of community-based organizing. Models like this represent a canon of knowledge that could both help shape how undergraduates envision civic and public engagement, and give students practicable skills for building a sense of purpose and inspiring action.

What is your vision for future colleges and universities that have taken the necessary steps to advance civic and democratic engagement?

SM: In order to meet students’ needs, colleges and universities will need to develop strategic and sustainable support, incentives, and social spaces for civic and public engagement—not as enhancements, but as lasting structural components. Too often, colleges and universities gain prestige from their institutional missions and visions without making real commitments to supporting community-based and community-focused scholarship, engaged teaching and learning practices, and innovative approaches to programming. In the civically and democratically engaged institutions of the future, those practices will actually follow from the institution’s stated values.

BWK: Undergraduates will demand, and society will require, access to high-quality educational experiences that support continuous work toward a more just and fair society. Higher education professionals need to work with their communities to create and support critical approaches to community-engaged scholarship. With these developments, higher education and community-engaged scholarship will more closely align with movements advancing a more just society.

SM: Most importantly, colleges and universities will need to change the way they conduct “business” if they do not want to see their student populations segregated by income, racial and ethnic identity, gender, and ability, with only the most privileged able to access opportunities for civic and democratic engagement. If higher education institutions are indeed enterprises, they are at heart social enterprises, and should conduct themselves as such.

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Public: A Journal of Imagining America

Public: A Journal of Imagining America is a peer-reviewed, multimedia e-journal focused on humanities, arts, and design in public life. It presents projects, pedagogies, resources, and ideas that reflect rich engagements among diverse participants, organizations, disciplines, and sectors. Public breaks new ground as a hybrid online multimedia journal and archive, with innovative web interfaces to peer-reviewed multi-modal scholarship and creative work. Launched in the fall of 2012, Public produces two issues annually. To date, over seven thousand visitors from ninety-five countries have visited the journal.

Public was developed by three Syracuse University professors—university professor and former Imagining America director Jan Cohen-Cruz, associate professor of architecture Brian Lonsway, and assistant professor of industrial and interaction design Kathleen Brandt—as the first e-journal published by Syracuse Unbound, a joint imprint of Syracuse University Libraries and Syracuse University Press.

Twice each year, Public issues calls for submissions related to upcoming issue themes. For more information, see http://public.imaginingamerica.org/about/, or contact the editor at public@imaginingamerica.org.

Resources and Opportunities Related to Publicly Engaged Scholarship and Teaching

Imagining America Convenings
Imagining America’s annual national conference is a site of collaboration, active dialogue, and problem solving around national issues. Participants explore political, social, cultural, and physical contexts particular to the host city that inform local engagement initiatives and that reflect IA’s goals for the year. In addition, IA advances civic engagement and public scholarship (with particular focus on the contributions of the humanities, arts, and design) through national, regional, and local meetings held throughout the year. For more information, see http://imaginingamerica.org/convenings/.

Imagining America Resources
Imagining America’s website features a range of reports and other resources focused on publicly engaged scholarship and teaching. Research reports, case studies, and other artifacts are available for a variety of initiatives, including the Tenure Team Initiative on Public Scholarship, the Assessing the Practices of Public Scholarship project, the Publicly Engaged Scholarship study, the Engaged Undergraduate Research Group, the Civic Science Initiative, the Commission on Publicly Engaged Design, the Extension Reconsidered Initiative, the Linking Full Participation project, and the Civic Agency Syllabi project. For more information, visit www.imaginingamerica.org.

Civic Learning and Teaching
The Bringing Theory to Practice (BTtoP) Project released Civic Learning and Teaching, the fifth and final monograph in its Civic Series, in September 2014. Edited by Ashley Finley, national evaluator of BTtoP and senior director of assessment and research at the Association of American Colleges and Universities, with an afterword by Timothy K. Eatman, co-director of Imagining America, the volume highlights a range of civic practices currently occurring at colleges and universities. To download the PDF or purchase print copies, visit http://www.bttop.org/resources/publications/civic-learning-and-teaching.

Imagining America Membership
Joining Imagining America signals a commitment to advancing public scholarship and engaged creative practice in higher education and beyond. IA is the only consortium whose primary focus lies in the recognition that humanities, arts, and design are indispensable to realizing the democratic, public, and civic purposes of American higher education. Membership provides the ability to contribute to and access the intellectual and creative capital that is the consortium’s greatest strength. All member affiliates are actively invited to become part of a national effort to shape and frame conversations about enhancing a public culture of democracy on and off campus and alleviating public problems through democratic scholarship. For information about membership benefits, visit http://imaginingamerica.org/consortium/why-join/ or contact associate director Kevin Bott at kbott@syr.edu.
Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Calendar

The following calendar features events on civic learning sponsored by members of the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (CLDE) Action Network and others. For more information, please see the websites featured below, or visit AAC&U’s CLDE Calendar online at http://www.aacu.org/clde/calendar/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>CLDE MEMBER EVENT</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>WEBSITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26–28</td>
<td>AAC&amp;U Diversity, Learning, and Student Success Conference</td>
<td>San Diego, California</td>
<td><a href="http://www.aacu.org/meetings/">www.aacu.org/meetings/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY</td>
<td>13–17</td>
<td>The Social Justice Mediation Institute</td>
<td>Amherst, Massachusetts</td>
<td><a href="http://people.umass.edu/lwing/">http://people.umass.edu/lwing/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27–30</td>
<td>Sixth International Symposium on Service Learning</td>
<td>Indianapolis, Indiana</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uindy.edu/issl2015/about/">http://www.uindy.edu/issl2015/about/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUNE</td>
<td>4–6</td>
<td>ADP/TDC/NASPA Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Meeting</td>
<td>New Orleans, Louisiana</td>
<td><a href="http://www.aascu.org/meetings/clde15/">http://www.aascu.org/meetings/clde15/</a></td>
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AAC&U and the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (CLDE) Action Network

As part of its commitment to preparing all students for civic, ethical, and social responsibility in US and global contexts, and building on the momentum generated by the 2012 White House release of the report *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy’s Future*, AAC&U has formed the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (CLDE) Action Network. Coordinated by Caryn McTighe Musil, AAC&U senior scholar and director of civic learning and democracy initiatives, the network includes thirteen leading civic learning organizations that are committed to making civic inquiry and engagement expected rather than elective for all college students. *Diversity & Democracy* regularly features research and exemplary practices developed and advanced by these partner organizations and their members:

- American Association of State Colleges and Universities
- Anchor Institutions Task Force (AITF)
- Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)
- The Bonner Foundation
- Bringing Theory to Practice (BTtoP)
- Campus Compact
- Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE)
- The Democracy Commitment
- Imagining America
- The Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC)
- Kettering Foundation
- NASPA—Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
- New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE)
Upcoming AAC&U Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEETING</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>DATES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Network for Academic Renewal: General Education and Assessment:</td>
<td>Kansas City, Missouri</td>
<td>FEBRUARY 19–21, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>From Mission to Action to Evidence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessing and Advancing Inclusive Excellence</td>
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About Diversity & Democracy

Diversity & Democracy supports higher education faculty and leaders as they design and implement programs that advance civic learning and democratic engagement, global learning, and engagement with diversity to prepare students for socially responsible action in today’s interdependent but unequal world. According to AAC&U's Statement on Liberal Learning, “By its nature... liberal learning is global and pluralistic. It embraces the diversity of ideas and experiences that characterize the social, natural, and intellectual world. To acknowledge such diversity in all its forms is both an intellectual commitment and a social responsibility, for nothing less will equip us to understand our world and to pursue fruitful lives.” Diversity & Democracy features evidence, research, and exemplary practices to assist practitioners in creating learning opportunities that realize this vision. To access Diversity & Democracy online, visit www.aacu.org/diversitydemocracy/.

About AAC&U

AAC&U is the leading national association concerned with the quality, vitality, and public standing of undergraduate liberal education. Its members are committed to extending the advantages of a liberal education to all students, regardless of academic specialization or intended career. Founded in 1915, AAC&U now comprises more than 1,300 member institutions—including accredited public and private colleges, community colleges, and universities of every type and size. AAC&U functions as a catalyst and facilitator, forging links among presidents, administrators, and faculty members who are engaged in institutional and curricular planning. Information about AAC&U membership, programs, and publications can be found at www.aacu.org.

AAC&U Membership 2015

- Masters: 31%
- Baccalaureate: 24%
- Associates: 12%
- Res & Doc: 17%
- Other*: 16%

*Specialized schools, state systems and agencies, and international affiliates