HIGHER EDUCATION EXCHANGE
The Higher Education Exchange is founded on a thought articulated by Thomas Jefferson in 1820: I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education.

In the tradition of Jefferson, the Higher Education Exchange agrees that a central goal of higher education is to help make democracy possible by preparing citizens for public life. The Higher Education Exchange is part of a movement to strengthen higher education’s democratic mission and foster a more democratic culture throughout American society. Working in this tradition, the Higher Education Exchange publishes case studies, analyses, news, and ideas about efforts within higher education to develop more democratic societies.
in 1927, that does not make grants but welcomes partnerships with other institutions (or groups of institutions) and individuals who are actively working on problems of communities, governing, politics, and education. The interpretations and conclusions contained in the Higher Education Exchange, unless expressly stated to the contrary, represent the views of the author or authors and not necessarily those of the foundation, Kettering Foundation. Copyright © 2012 by the Kettering Foundation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/Series</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deborah Witte</td>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry Boyte</td>
<td>Higher Education and the American Commonwealth Partnership: An Interview</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire Snyder-Hall</td>
<td>Tales from Anti-Civic U</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Minnich</td>
<td>Educating Democratically: An Interview</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Wilson and Nan Fairley</td>
<td>Living Democracy: A Project for Students and Citizens</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen M. Knutson and Dan A. Lewis</td>
<td>Civic Engagement and Doctoral Education</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin Hoecker</td>
<td>Public Scholarship at the Graduate Student Level</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wynne Wright</td>
<td>Wicked Bedfellows: Can Science and Democracy Coexist in the Land Grant?</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Hudson</td>
<td>What Is College For? The Public Purpose of Higher Education</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edited by Ellen Condliffe Lagemann and Harry Lewis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Mathews</td>
<td>Higher Education and Har Megiddo</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
David Brown, coeditor of the Higher Education Exchange, spoke with Harry Boyte. Boyte is the national coordinator of the new American Commonwealth Partnership, which hopes to develop a “new stage” of colleges’ and universities’ engagement. He is also the cofounder, with the late Elinor Ostrom, Peter Levine, and several others, of what is called “the new civic field” or “civic studies,” which focuses centrally on the citizen as cocreator, agency, and a different kind of politics.

Brown: Much of your work assumes culture change but culture change does not come easily and usually comes slowly. Learned behavior, the essence of any culture, cannot be summoned.

Boyte: Generally, I agree about the challenges of culture change—“habits” of a culture are long-developing, and specifically, people adjust their sights fatalistically to “the world as it is.” This dynamic is conveyed by Pierre Bourdieu with his concept of habitus, in Acts of Resistance: “By making the whole future uncertain, it prevents all rational anticipation and, in particular, the basic belief and hope in the future that one needs in order to rebel, especially collectively, against present conditions, even the most intolerable.” Bourdieu is deeply pessimistic about the capacities of “the people” to develop capacities for free action, individually and collectively—what we call civic agency.

I would add another dimension here—citizens in the United States, this most supposedly revelatory and therapeutic of cultures, where people are encouraged to post their secrets on Facebook, have very few “public experiences.” I mean public in the sense of discussions and collaborative work in a sustained way with people who are quite different in ideology, culture, and ways of looking at the world.

We’ve seen a sharp erosion of public experiences, as “mediating institutions” like local schools, neighborhood businesses, unions, congregations with diverse memberships, civic groups, and the
like have declined or turned into service operations, and people have become more clients and consumers than productive citizens.

In contrast, the late Hubert Humphrey, Vice President of the United States, said he learned politics in his father’s drug store in Doland, South Dakota, which his father—one of a handful of Democrats in a town of hundreds of Republicans—made into the civic center of the community. It was full of argument, music, discussions, and a launching pad for what we would call public work experiences. Now drug stores have mainly turned into CVS chain stores.

Brown: What, then, are your grounds for hope?

Boyte: There is immense hunger for empowering public experiences, mingled with fatalism. Even our dysfunctional politics may reflect this hunger. Let me give an example.

Grant Stevensen directs faith-based organizing for Minnesotans United for All Families, a coalition fighting an anti-gay marriage amendment to be voted on in November. He has a background in what is called broad-based community organizing, which intentionally cultivates skills and habits of public interactions across differences. Minnesotans United has consciously adopted an approach different than the 30 state fights, which have been built on the polarizing formula that now dominates in civic and political campaigns—find an enemy to demonize, develop a good versus evil script that removes complexities, seek to inflame emotions, and appeal to people’s sense of victimization. All these earlier campaigns have ended in failure for the pro-gay-marriage side, by the way. The organizing framework of Stevensen’s coalition has similarities to the Obama campaign of 2008. They talked to people on the other side, they developed what they call a “conversation-al approach,” not trying to beat the other side in arguments, but rather engaging people in discussions and using stories. It’s a shift to a different kind of politics, a citizen politics of public work.

It faces challenges, since people aren’t used to listening deeply to people on other sides of issues. Grant said he thinks people hang on so strongly to rigid public identities like partisan labels, or identification with an issue cause, because they haven’t had much public experience in the sense we mean it.

For all the ways their approach cuts against the grain, Minnesotans United is finding responsiveness to such citizen
politics. Volunteers are filling the offices of Minnesotans United across the state; they’ve created a diverse coalition, ranging from businesses like General Mills to unions, churches, local towns. And their message is different than earlier fights, emphasizing the importance of love and relationships, the freedom of people to love whom they choose. This speaks to deep worries, widespread among conservatives, that the social fabric is unraveling.

This kind of public experience is rare in higher education where politics is highly ideological. It is often very hard for young people who have been active in groups using the polarizing formula of campus activist groups to work well in public spaces full of ambiguity, diversity, open-endedness, where simplified good versus evil scripts are highly ineffective.

Brown: What are your grounds for hope in higher education?  
Boyte: I don’t want to minimize challenges. For many faculty members, norms of detachment seem set in stone. When Ed Fogelman, then chair of the Political Science Department at the University of Minnesota, and I did one-on-one interviews with senior faculty in the late 1990s, we heard poignant stories about what can be described as the disappearance of public life (see www.publicpolicy-educouncil.org/pdf/Public_Engagement.pdf). Most couldn’t even imagine conversations on the topic. As Fogelman put it, “almost everyone has public motivations for going into their field. Almost no one admits it.”

When Liz Hollander and I coauthored *The Wing-spread Declaration on Renewing the Civic Mission of the Research University* for a group of higher education leaders in 1999, I thought a lot about the cartoon strip “Dilbert,” in which people are trapped in little separated, private cubicles. It came to mind as a way to describe higher education’s culture. The declaration borrows from Jane Addams. Renewing the democratic purposes of higher education means “freeing the powers.”
We also found strong desires to make work more public and empowering. As a literary scholar and chair of her department put it, everyone felt “cloistered”—detached from the city—and wanted change.

Institutional self-interests—the need for revived public support—as well as student and faculty desires to impact and engage the world, create an opening for new approaches. There are also new theoretical and practical resources.

**Brown:** What are they?

**Boyte:** Change in higher education to create more empowering public experience is closely tied to the effort to develop a third paradigm for civic engagement called the new civic field or “civic studies,” beyond the liberal-communitarian debate that has roiled political and social thought for a generation. The late Elinor Ostrom was a key figure in helping define this field. She won the 2009 Nobel Prize in economics for theory-building, which shows that citizen-centered governance is far more effective in sustaining common pool resources like forests or fisheries than either states or markets. The civic field integrates strands of work from a number of fields, including complexity, public work theory, common pool resource governance, pragmatism, social movement theory and history, popular education, and others.

Seven of us, including Ostrom, met several years ago to write a framing statement for the civic field that emphasizes agency and citizens as cocreators of their environments. Each year there is a Civic Studies Institute at Tufts, organized by Peter Levine and Karol Soltan. We had a session at the recent American Political Science Association on the civic field. *The Good Society* journal is an important intellectual space for this discussion. Bringing Theory to Practice, the think tank for innovation in teaching and learning tied to the Association of American Colleges and Universities, has commissioned a volume on the implications of the civic field for pedagogy.

There are also related practical resources for making change, such as a growing body of experience in translating organizing approaches into varied settings—the huge scale of community organizing methods in the Obama campaign shows some of the possibilities, which we have also seen in colleges and universities.
There are also important practical alternatives to the managerial fixation on narrow definitions of “accountability” and “outcomes,” which Elizabeth Minnich decries in this volume. I draw attention to the rich methods and concepts of “developmental evaluation,” developing ways to assess change in open, complex, highly dynamic situations where the point is large change, rather than narrowly framed, linear, predictable results. Michael Patton’s recent book, *Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use* is a splendid treatment of these.

**Brown:** Where does this all lead?

**Boyte:** The new civic field and some of these practical resources formed the basis for the Civic Agency Initiative, which we organized with the American Democracy Project in 2008, involving a number of colleges and universities that wanted to experiment with incorporating concepts and practices of civic agency. This was the background for the American Commonwealth Partnership (ACP) of colleges and universities launched at the White House on January 10th. The overall objective is “education for the public good”—taking the public engagement efforts to another stage of innovations with a civic agency character.

In higher education, the civic agency stage of engagement builds on the “liberal” stage, which focused on higher education’s expertise in addressing issues of injustice; and the “communitarian” stage, which focused on service, service learning, social capital, and related themes. The civic agency stage calls for shifting from scattered “activities,” like centers, courses, and discrete community partnerships, to deep civic identity as empowering, engaged institutions.

*One basic change is from “partnering with communities” to becoming “part of” communities.* This requires a lens larger than institutions, focused on what can be called “empowering local ecologies” with many interacting institutions. Civic innovators outside of higher education will provide key leadership.

**Brown:** What, then, do you see as the role of ACP?

**Boyte:** ACP seeks to instill sober hope that people can change our institutional
cultures to become more open, empowering, and part of the life of communities. There are significant civic agency innovations, including new ones to build on, like the Citizen Alum effort, led by Julie Ellison, which reconceives alumni as partners in connections with communities and in teaching and learning, not only as donors.

Students will also be key innovators. For instance, at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County students have reconstructed the Student Government Association, shifting from a service delivery model to a center of student empowerment that facilitates constructive work. “Civic agency” can sound academic to groups that haven’t worked with the language, but at UMBC and elsewhere, students really like this language, which is tied to ideas like “being an agent of change.” Students have significantly impacted the culture at UMBC, and the process has larger implications. Student leaders had to argue down a move among many students at UMBC to change the name of the SGA because the general view of “government” is so negative. Led by Kaylesh Ramu, the student president, they argued that rather than reject “government,” the point is to transform it to “us” not “them.”

ACP locates higher education’s engagement efforts as part of the larger movement to address the crises in democracy. This is the great challenge of our time, all around the world.

Brown: What does it require?

Boyte: Partly, it requires a process of retrieval. The White House meeting on January 10th, “For Democracy’s Future—Education Reclaims Our Civic Mission,” marked the beginning of the 150th anniversary year of the Morrill Act. The Act, signed by Lincoln in the Civil War, initiated democratization in higher education by opening colleges and universities, the preserve of the wealthy, to “the industrial and working classes.” Land grants deepened this democratization for decades, in complex, often contradictory but also sometimes dramatic ways. They changed the curriculum, combining practical and vocational subjects with liberal arts. They were infused with public purpose. These elements deepened through the 1930s, when students and faculty in large numbers were active in the public life of the nation. They helped to organize movements for a more inclusive and just society, such as union organizing and struggles against racism. Often they
participated in what I would call “commons building” movements, in which people solve problems and create public things together, across partisan and other divisions. These involved things like rural cooperatives, soil conservation, rural electrification, and the “Little Country Theater Movement.” All this history animated the Truman Commission’s report on higher education in 1948, which declared “the first and most essential charge upon higher education is that at all levels and in all fields of specialization, it shall be the carrier of democratic values, ideals, and processes.” Today, this history is largely unknown, despite the great scholarship of Scott Peters.

Brown: That’s Scott Peters at Cornell and his work in rediscovering the land grant history.

Boyte: Yes. The most basic idea to retrieve from this history is about democracy itself: democracy is a society, not a government-centered system of elections. Citizens are cocreators of such a society. Professionals are not outside “partnering with citizens”—a language that pervades the engagement movement. They are citizens themselves, working with fellow citizens.

To advance this alternative view requires a multidimensional focus on agency, but this also is an insurgent theme. Today’s intellectual trends give detailed attention to structures of oppression, but have little to say about how “the people” develop public capacities to refashion the world around them.

ACP seeks to bring back a public and empowering understanding of higher education’s democracy purposes and mission, a vision of “democracy’s colleges for the 21st century.”

Brown: Currently, which are some of “democracy’s colleges”?

Boyte: At the White House and since then, we have highlighted a mix of different institutions where civic agency innovations have occurred. These include Syracuse University, where Nancy Cantor has found broad support for the idea of “Scholarship in Action,” even though she has also taken heat for getting the university too involved in the life of the city. I’ve mentioned UMBC. I would note Northern Arizona University as a pioneer in curricular innovation that introduces thousands of students to public work experiences. Augsburg College, our new institutional home for the Center for Democracy and Citizenship, is full of civic
innovation. Colleges like Lone Star in Houston, Texas, University of Washington-Bothell, DeAnza College, and Maricopa Community College in Phoenix have become centers for experiments in public work and civic agency, adapting initiatives like Public Achievement, the youth empowerment and civic learning effort now operating in 23 countries.

We want to see ACP develop as a network of robust “communities of practice” through which people have multiple ways of exchanging lessons and learning together about civic agency innovations.

The largest initiative now is Shaping Our Future, with the National Issues Forums, kicked off officially on September 4th with a press conference at the National Press Club. Shaping Our Future aims to have hundreds of communities and campuses discuss the public purposes of higher education—to make this discussion owned by the people, not simply by insiders and specialists.

Brown: What are you and others looking for in “civic science,” another of ACP’s priorities?

Boyte: Again, the focus is on bringing a political and civic agency lens into the ways people conceive the relationship between science and society. Usually, discussion of science and society today focuses on the roles of scientists and lay people in governance and policy. The question here is where everyone fits in a state-centered system. The goal of civic science is to change the framing itself. In civic science, roles depend on the particular task at hand, but identities are constituted by the concept of a democratic society in which citizens are cocreators. Scientists don’t work with citizens. They are citizens. The question is how citizen scientists and lay citizens bring their diverse kinds of knowledge and talents to the table to do public work that solves problems, better our communities, and builds a sustainable democratic society.

Civic science advances science as a tool of empowerment and a resource for human freedom, action in the world not simply description of the world.

This framework grows out of years of collaboration between the Center for Democracy and Citizenship and the Delta Center at the University of Iowa, leaders in the science of how infants develop. The idea is that early childhood education requires scientific
knowledge of infant development, yes, but also the empowered participation of many other actors, including parents, day care providers, legislators, schools, science museums, community organizers.

Brown: Could you tell us about the “Get Ready Iowa” project of the Delta Center?

Boyte: The Delta Center launched a civic science effort in June called Get Ready Iowa, bringing together diverse stakeholders in early childhood education. Get Ready Iowa, emphasizing the skills of public work, has been gathering support across the political spectrum in the state.

I believe that civic science holds potential to change the culture of detachment in higher education, as well as to address polarization in society.

Higher education is changing rapidly. We will either be the architects and agents of that change in ways that deepen democracy—and this requires substantial cultural change to create sustainable foundations for civic agency—or change will happen to us, leaving us more powerless, weakening our collective ability to shape the future.
CONTRIBUTORS

Harry Boyte is the director of the Center for Democracy and Citizenship, now at Augsburg College, which develops theory and practice of civic agency and public work, and a senior fellow at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs. He serves as national coordinator of the American Commonwealth Partnerships.

David W. Brown is coeditor of the Higher Education Exchange and coedited two recent Kettering publications, Agent of Democracy and A Different Kind of Politics. He taught at Yale’s School of Management and New School’s Milano Graduate School. He is the author of When Strangers Cooperate, Organization Smarts, and The Real Change-Makers: Why Government Is Not the Problem or the Solution.

Nan Fairley is an associate professor of journalism at Auburn University. She is the recipient of the 2011 Auburn University Award for Excellence in Faculty Outreach. Many of the journalism projects she has developed during her 20 years of teaching at Auburn are designed to engage students deeply in community. Her primary research interest is civic journalism.

Robin Hoecker is a third-year PhD student in the Media, Technology and Society program at Northwestern University, where she studies the role of visual communication in conflict resolution. She has a masters degree in photojournalism from the University of Missouri and a bachelors degree in international development from Penn State. She began working with the Center for Civic Engagement in the spring of 2011.

Elizabeth Hudson is a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at the University of Michigan and a Kettering predoctoral research fellow. She is currently writing her dissertation about the politics and process of an urban coalition to improve higher education access. Her research explores the challenges and opportunities of upholding higher education’s historically civic mission in an increasingly diverse democracy.

Ellen M. Knutson is the program director for Graduate Engagement Opportunities at the Center for Civic Engagement at Northwestern University. Ellen is also a research associate at the Kettering Foundation, where she works with college and university faculty members who want to include elements of civic engagement in their teaching and research. Ellen received her PhD in library and information science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Dan A. Lewis is the director of the Center for Civic Engagement, a professor of Human Development and Social Policy, as well as a faculty fellow in the Institute for Policy Research (IPR) at Northwestern University. Recently, he conducted evaluations of the homelessness problem in the Chicago suburbs and headed a consortium to study welfare reform efforts in Illinois for the state legislature and interested citizens.

David Mathews, president of the Kettering Foundation, was secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare in the Ford administration and, before that, president of the University of Alabama. Mathews has written extensively on Southern history, public policy, education, and international problem solving. His books include Politics for People: Finding a Responsible Public Voice and Reclaiming Public Education by Reclaiming Our Democracy.
Elizabeth Minnich is a senior scholar with the Association of American Colleges & Universities, and professor of philosophy at Queens University. She has worked as an administrator, faculty member, consultant, speaker, author, board and national panel member focusing on the mutual relations of education and democratic ideals, equity, and excellence. Most recently, she collaborated with AAC&U and the Democracy Commitment on a summer institute funded by NEH’s “Bridging Cultures to Form a Nation” grants.

Claire Snyder-Hall writes popular and scholarly texts on issues related to democratic theory and practice. She holds a PhD in political theory from Rutgers University and a BA cum laude from Smith College.

Mark Wilson is director of Civic Learning Initiatives in the College of Liberal Arts at Auburn University. He is also an Appalachian Teaching Fellow with the Appalachian Regional Commission and the author of several articles and the book *William Owen Carver’s Controversies in the Baptist South*. In addition, Wilson serves as the secretary of the Alabama Historical Association.

Deborah Witte is a program officer for the Kettering Foundation and coeditor of the *Higher Education Exchange*.

Wynne Wright is associate professor of Community, Food, and Agriculture at Michigan State University. Her research explores the contested terrain of food, agriculture, and rural culture. Much of this work is devoted to democraticizing the agrifood system as a key element of sustainability.
Democratizing Deliberation
A Political Theory Anthology
Edited by Derek W. M. Barker, Noëlle McAfee, and David W. McIvor

Democratizing Deliberation brings together recent and cutting-edge political theory scholarship on deliberative democracy. The collection reframes deliberative democracy to be sensitive to the deep conflicts, multiple forms of communication, and aspirations for civic agency that characterize real public deliberation. In so doing, the book addresses many of the most common challenges to the theory and practice of deliberative democracy.

Kettering Foundation Press | 2012
$15.95 • 184 pages

To read excerpts and purchase this book, visit www.kettering.org.
Are you concerned about the rising cost of higher education? Are the nation’s colleges and universities doing a good job preparing students for the future? How does higher education benefit society as a whole?

The diverse system of US higher education—including public and private universities, smaller four-year independent colleges, two-year community colleges, for-profit schools, and others—already serves a number of important social purposes. But this guide focuses on the future. It takes up this fundamental question:

How should higher education help us create the society we want?

To learn more about participating in or holding a forum, and to download your free copy of Shaping Our Future: How Should Higher Education Help Us Create the Society We Want? Please visit

http://kettering.org/nif/shaping-our-future/