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Institutions, Professions, and the Public: Focus on the Public-Academy Relationship
Exploring the Public-Academy Relationship

By David Mathews

Kettering research is rooted in three perennial issues of democracy: one is the responsibilities of citizens and their capacity for self-government; another is the functioning of communities, which have been the bedrock of American democracy; and a third is the legitimacy of governments and other authoritative institutions, such as schools, institutions of higher education, and the press. Studying democracy without encountering these three issues would be impossible. They provide a framework for Kettering’s efforts but do not inhibit the foundation’s work. The framework is sustained by a rich literature on citizenship, communities, and institutions, which stretches from contemporary sources back to antiquity. This literature not only provides the grounding required for good research, but also allows — actually compels — the foundation to enter into a dialogue with other research organizations and scholars who are also grappling with the challenges of self-rule.

Good research has to have a focus, or an integrity, which in Kettering’s case keeps the foundation from bouncing all over the broad landscape of democracy. Kettering’s focus is, and has been for some time, on the public — the citizenry as a whole, the sovereign in our political system. “We, the People” are the most obscure, ambiguous, hotly debated element of a democracy, and “We” have been since Plato voiced doubts about humans’ capacity for virtuous self-rule. This central focus as well as the obvious interrelationship of citizens, communities, and institutions enables each research project both to draw from and contribute to every other project.

Having a consistent focus doesn’t mean that Kettering research is static any more than research at the National Institutes of Health is static because it has always centered on making people healthy. “Making democracy work” is an ever-changing challenge because of ever-changing circumstances. Each year, Kettering’s strategic plan for research describes what the foundation has learned from the previous 12 months of research and the new questions that have to be addressed.

The foundation’s strengths are in what it has learned about citizens, communities, and governing institutions. We have spent decades delving deeper and deeper into how a democratic public comes to exist and how a citizenry decides and acts wisely and justly. We have explored what the public sector in a community must do, as well as the democratic practices that put the public into the public’s business. And for 15 years, we have been tracking the way “The People” establish productive relationships with the institutions they created to serve them in the maintenance of a democratic society.

One generation of research builds on another, and Kettering owes a great debt to staff, associates, and trustees who developed our institutional capacities. For example, George Gallup, who served on our board from 1964 to 1973, encouraged what is now an extensive repository of studies on public attitudes. Later, Daniel Yankelovich helped refine this research when he introduced concepts such as “public judgment.” Kettering now has 20 years of records on how the citizenry moves from first opinions to more shared and reflective judgments. We are just beginning to do studies using these unique archives.

The focus in this issue of Connections is on the foundation’s research into the relationship between the public and America’s colleges and universities. Our studies...
of higher education have relied on what we are learning about citizens and collective decision making, what we have found out about the role of the public in addressing community problems, and what we are discovering about the tensions between the public and the major institutions of the country. Kettering’s findings on the relationship between the public and the academy have been reported in studies such as College Students Talk Politics, which was done by the Harwood Group, and in all ten issues of the Higher Education Exchange.

Because the foundation always starts its research with “the public and its problems,” studies of the public-academy relationship are done from a public perspective. Frankly, we are not experts on American higher education any more than we can claim to be knowledgeable about what goes on inside public schools, governments, the media, or any of the institutions that have obligations to democracy. Hundreds of research centers and think tanks are better prepared to study these institutions.

Starting with the public and its concerns about higher education, Kettering’s findings (though not Kettering’s alone) can be summarized in the following statements:

**What Is Known**

1. Since this country was founded, citizens have been able to count on America’s institutions of higher learning to play a crucial role in making self-rule possible. Now, however, academic institutions have other priorities, especially since universities have become major sources of research for the federal government and large corporations. In addition, colleges and universities are undergoing financial pressure as costs rise. Consequently, institutions are caught in a grinding tension. On the one hand, they are expected to be efficiently managed businesses and, on the other, they are to serve the civic purposes that they were chartered to serve.

2. The academy also has been responsible for the production of socially relevant knowledge, which has served the common good, broadly defined. The production of knowledge is primarily the job of the faculty.
3. One of the most important roles of colleges and universities in the service of democracy has been to prepare young people to be good citizens, a role that is still acknowledged in most charters and mission statements.

**What Isn’t Known**

1. How important are the historical mandates to serve the larger public good when institutions of higher education today are faced with pressures from individual consumers — parents and students — who see the institutions as the gateway to personal success, both economically and professionally? Some analyses (Brint/Levy, Wolfe, Jencks/Riesman) suggest that the civic mission of colleges and universities has fallen far down on the list of priorities. The engaged university movement indicates otherwise, yet it isn’t certain that this movement has any relationship to the public’s concerns about democracy. Will trustees and other key institutional actors make public engagement more than a new public relations gambit?

2. Most everyone has benefited in some way from the expert knowledge that comes from faculty scholarship: medical breakthroughs, new computer technologies, better designs for highways and buildings. Yet when it comes to the knowledge people need to solve the problems that plague their communities or the wisdom required to make sound decisions on hotly debated moral issues (questions that can have more than one answer), the role of experts isn’t as obvious. In fact, in a democracy there are no experts for questions of what should be done. Citizens have to make those decisions. What kind of knowledge must citizens have in order to govern themselves wisely and justly? Can academe provide that knowledge?

3. These days, many students volunteer to serve others, yet they are averse to participating in the political system. They don’t believe the system can solve the problems they care about. That attitude may be changing, but the evidence isn’t conclusive. Other data suggest students still believe there is little place for them in the partisan political system, an attitude reflected in low participation in elections. What would show students how they can make a difference in politics?

**Why the Issues Are Important**

**Students:** College students mirror the cynicism other Americans feel about the political system. Americans are particularly concerned when college campuses appear to be modeling the worst kind of citizenship. People are taken aback by reports showing that at least 1,400 students die every year because of binge drinking or by stories of racial conflicts erupting on campuses.

**Scholars:** Some faculty are unhappy with the narrow, highly technical, elite character of academic research. Numerous attempts are being made to introduce a more public form of scholarship, but this is an embryonic effort facing considerable opposition because of fears that academic excellence will suffer. Public scholarship will not win many federal grants nor, in most cases, count toward tenure. Unless this type of scholarship finds support in other quarters (perhaps from trustees), its potential may never be realized.

**Institutions:** At various times in its history, the academy has encountered an aroused polity — a citizenry determined to rule itself. These encounters have led to higher education’s public mandates. Such an exchange took place around the time of the American Revolution, and it changed both the focuses and the curricula of colleges (see L.L. Tucker’s Connecticut’s Seminary of Sedition: Yale College). Another encounter occurred in the early years of the republic when state legislatures chartered colleges to prepare leaders for the new nation. Still another took place in the nineteenth century and resulted in the founding of land-grant institutions intended to serve America’s
working citizens — its farmers and mechanics. The mandates of historically black institutions and community colleges have emerged from similar encounters. Is something like this happening today? Does it need to?

Conversations among people in higher education are filled with talk of “the engaged university.” Yet in their study “Professions and Civic Engagement,” Steven Brint and Charles Levy found that “references to broad sociocultural purposes” in both professional associations and higher education had “declined over time” in the rhetoric of institutional leaders. They were “replaced by discussions of internal affairs and to a lesser extent by discussions of the instrumental and technical achievements of members.” While there have been notable exceptions, this trend suggests that academe may have lost touch with the historical forces that have been its principal source of legitimacy. Unfortunately, boards of trustees, which are in the most logical position to connect the academy and the public, don’t appear to have that task high on their agendas. Some books (e.g., Jacques Barzun’s The American University) portray board members as engrossed in internal matters, such as financial accountability. Only a few trustees, such as William Hubbard, former chair of the University of South Carolina’s board, have talked about civic accountability.

What Kind of New Research Would Be Useful?

1. One option would be to pursue the question of how institutions understand their obligations to democracy today and, more importantly, how they understand what it takes for self-government to be effective. On the surface, it would seem that these obligations are a priority. Mission statements, for example, suggest that the academy is well aware of its responsibilities to serve the public good. What isn’t so clear is how the institutions see “the public” and what they think of as the “public good.” Some academic leaders have taken the position that their institutions are themselves a public good; their very existence meets any obligations to democracy. Benefits from teaching, research, and service are cited in support of this claim. Academe won’t get beyond such self-referential justification until more attention is given to the nature of the work a sovereign public must do and what institutions of higher education can do to assist in that work. “What public?” and “What good?” may be the real issues in the relationship, and they may be the best subjects for future research.

2. A second option for research would be to look more closely at public scholarship. Is it possible to recognize the difference between academic knowledge and public knowledge and find a way to relate the two?
Or might it be more productive to follow up on cases where faculties have been less concerned about providing knowledge and more concerned about creating opportunities for a democratic public to take shape? Consider the example set by The Ohio State University, among other institutions. In 2002, the university’s Civic Life Institute was called to Cincinnati to help in dealing with racially charged issues. The institute did not offer professional or expert knowledge; instead, it helped frame the issue of race relations so that it would be easier for citizens to weigh options for actions that might reduce conflict and restore justice. Cincinnati’s citizens have had more than 150 deliberative forums involving nearly 2,000 people. Some folks just talked; others began to act. Have all racial problems been overcome? No. Yet, according to the Cincinnati Enquirer, the community has developed a stronger sense of its civic capacity to deal with its problems, which is reflected in the slogan “Cincinnati Can.” In addition, a new grassroots movement called Neighbor to Neighbor has emerged to follow up on the forums.

3. A third option would be to delve more deeply into the question of the civic education of students. Indications that institutions are getting at the problem behind the problem would be evidence that students see ways, other than just voting, to be effective political actors. The research would have to test whether or not students develop an appreciation for what scholars call “strong democracy,” where citizens are engaged with other citizens in the kind of public work that can affect the issues young people care about.

The attention now being given to “civic engagement,” “public scholarship,” “public work,” and similar concepts is, according to a recent study by Susan Ostrander, “unprecedented.” Or, as David Brown, coeditor of Kettering’s Higher Education Exchange, suggests, something is happening in higher education that has to do with democracy, and we need to understand what it is. The role colleges and universities play — or don’t play — is crucial to whether or not democracy works as it should.

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Institutions of higher education are critical to the common work of democratic self-governance. Put simply, if students are to acquire a civic education that results in the understandings, skills, and habits of self-rule, they need to be educated in institutions that actually value civic education. If college and university professionals are to produce the kinds of knowledge that best contribute to making self-rule possible, they, too, need to work in institutions that recognize their public-making work.

Civic education and public work cannot be relegated to extracurricular activities. They must be integral to the mission, work routines, and reward structure of institutions of higher learning.

Today an increasing number of colleges and universities are attempting to reclaim their civic purposes. They are promoting “engagement” and emphasizing the “civic” in their missions. Although it is not certain that this movement has any relationship to the public’s concerns about self-governance, there is some evidence that, at least at some institutions, this civic work is much more than a rhetorical flourish.

For example, over the last four years more than 100 university presidents have signed the “Wingspread Declaration on the Civic Mission of the American Research University.” At the University of Minnesota, President Robert Bruininks has appointed a task force charged with making civic engagement central to the way the university does its work. And a new American Association of State Colleges and Universities effort, called the American Democracy Project, is focusing on civic engagement and serves to bring together civic efforts at many of the nation’s state colleges and universities.

What might the newly found focus on civic mission really suggest for the practice of self-governance? Does this turn suggest the possibility of a reorientation of higher education in relationship to democracy? Where are the opportunities and risks for Kettering’s research?

A mapping of “civic mission” and “public engagement” efforts to identify how they define citizenship in practice would make visible the aspects of the civic mission work that tend to support self-rule and those that do not. This work would be useful to the foundation in assessing the potential of these efforts, and to practitioners who are making a case for public work.

The opportunities may lie in collaborative action-based research efforts with associations that are champions for civic mission and engagement work such as Phi Theta Kappa or the National Forum on Higher Education and the Public Good. Some of these efforts propose to engage the public directly over questions related to the civic purposes of higher education. These projects take public engagement as central to defining the civic mission of higher education.

At the same time, we need to be aware that civic mission work, especially when it is focused at the institutional level may underestimate the power of the disciplines, faculty, and students to bring about change or to block it. These efforts may misunderstand the logic of change within higher education. The current focus on
“civic mission” or “engagement” may only be today’s attempt to counteract the longer-term reorientation of higher education to serving largely private, instrumental, and economic purposes. We must also be wary of concentrating more attention on higher education itself than on the public. The foundation’s focus must remain the public and its responsibilities for making democracy work.

Practice lags behind vision. The typical approach frequently involves implementation of high-profile committees or projects. This approach can best be described as a state of “antergism” — a term coined by two University of Minnesota colleagues to describe a situation in which the whole is less than the sum of the parts!

The challenge is to move beyond rhetoric to build a culture that values and rewards civic engagement. This means sustained, institutional, and systematic engagements. As John Muir put it, “When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find that it is hitched to everything else in the universe.”

Revitalizing the University of Minnesota’s civic mission has been a principal area of focus during my five years as provost and my two years as president. In my view, a systematic approach to public engagement involves a number of elements:

- We need to implement a systemic institutional commitment that links the promises of research and education to the needs of communities.
We need to create a broad and deep understanding of critical philosophical principles and values involved in public engagement.

- We need cultural celebration and recognition.
- We need alignment of civic commitment with institutional planning and resources.
- We need new high-level initiatives that link the human resources of higher education to community issues such as the needs of children, youth, and families and support for arts and culture and sustainable development.
- We need to incorporate the commitment and strategies of civic engagement into institutional systems of governance and accountability.

This has meant a systemic approach to building a deeply rooted culture of engagement. In the fall of 2000 — on the eve of the university’s 150th anniversary — I appointed a high-level Civic Engagement Task Force, charged with clarifying the meaning of civic engagement in a new century and recommending practical ways of incorporating the values of civic engagement across the university. The task force, along with parallel groups among the Board of Regents and the deans, recommended a high-level Council on Public Engagement, which carries on its mission.

Three new examples demonstrate what public engagement means in institutional terms: catalyzing new initiatives, highlighting outstanding examples, and creating new institutional structures.

New Initiatives

Each fall there is a universitywide Request for Proposals for innovative projects that will strengthen civic engagement, especially projects that are multidisciplinary, sustainable, combine different aspects of engagement, and include students and community partners. In the first year alone, the task force received 134 proposals and funded 17 of them, with awards ranging up to $7,500 each. These came from a wide range of departments and disciplines. They also involved a wide range of new and creative ideas. For instance, the history department at the University of Minnesota Duluth developed a project called “Students as Citizens, Not Merely Residents.” The Center for Spirituality and Healing in the Academic Health Center created a project entitled “Hmong Medicinal Plants in Minnesota,” an initiative to enhance the care of Hmong patients. The Bell Museum designed a research project called “Under the Fig Leaf: Revealing University Research Through Community Interpreters.”

New universitywide President’s Interdisciplinary Initiatives and the President’s 21st Century Interdisciplinary Conference Series are being developed with civic engagement on the agenda.
from the early planning stages. Through the President’s Initiative on Children, Youth, and Families, for example, the university is convening and connecting its considerable intellectual resources with the work being done with youth and families in the community. Last year, the university held a children’s summit to bring child advocates and academics together. We have also launched a commission on out-of-school time to examine how Minnesota’s children spend their time and how they are supervised during the many hours they spend outside of school. We have begun a Center for Excellence in Children’s Mental Health. Finally, we are planning a second children’s summit this year.

The President’s 21st Century Interdisciplinary Conference Series also provides resources for promising areas in which the university’s dynamic base of knowledge can be applied to enrich our society. Planned conference topics include Design of Medical Devices; Environmental Threats to Children’s Health: Legal and Policy Challenges; Healthy Foods, Healthy Lives; an Annual Symposium on Small Towns; and Intellectual Property Rights for the Public Good.

Outstanding Examples

Culture change efforts have also included the creation of an annual award that recognizes five or six outstanding examples of faculty, staff, and community members who have made substantial contributions to the community. Recent winners include a public historian who has taken history into the community to relate it to current events and the real world; an English professor who established the Minnesota Writing Project to improve the writing of all students; the founder of CitySongs, a youth development program that promotes competence, respect, and self-esteem in inner-city youth; the cofounder of the Jane Addams School for Democracy, a learning and public work network that works with new immigrant communities of Hmong, East African, and Latino residents on St. Paul’s West Side; and the translator and interpreter in the Richfield Public Schools and Hennepin County Libraries. For university personnel, we back up the celebration with a more tangible reward: salary augmentation each year the recipients remain at the university.

New Institutional Structures

Finally, in institutional terms, the university has moved to align priorities with deeper levels of public commitment. Noteworthy is a system of public agreements, or compacts, between the administration and each of the campuses and colleges, as well as many of the university’s support units. Compacts delineate directions and actions, respective responsibilities, investments, outcomes, and mutual expectations for accountability within the university’s and the unit’s long-range plan. The compacts contain specific measures and indicators of progress linked to the university’s critical measures and emphasize specific outcomes (e.g., quality, impact, efficiency, effectiveness, and service). The agreements are developed and written annually and jointly by the unit and the administration. The process governs the flow of new resources through an all-university investment pool.

During the past several years, the compact planning and budget process has emphasized the integration and alignment of important public engagement initiatives with the university’s research and education priorities. This process has led to an academic audit of the public engagement initiatives of all colleges and campuses.

Overall, these civic engagement efforts amount to the beginnings of sustained, long-term, deep, and comprehensive conversations and action strategies to renew the land-grant tradition of public purpose and public work. No one imagines that the process of culture change and public engagement will be easy or quick. But there is once again emerging the vision of a university, in the words of former president Lotus Coffman, “of the commonwealth, by the commonwealth, and for the commonwealth.”

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The challenge is to move beyond rhetoric to build a culture that values and rewards civic engagement.
The Role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Building Civic Responsibility

By Beverly W. Hogan

It is no longer news that, in recent years, citizens seem to have lost the zeal for active participation in the problem-solving and decision-making processes essential to the proper working of democratic politics. Less than a third of eligible voters participate in the electoral process. Political participation is viewed by many Americans as futile. And a profound sense of cynicism and lack of trust toward political leaders and the political process permeates our society.

It is in this context that many institutions of higher learning are revisiting the roles they might play in rebuilding the foundations of American civil life. Perhaps nowhere has this educational goal been so deeply embedded as in the missions of historically black colleges and universities. These schools have traditionally played a key role in building and promoting citizenship and civic responsibility through their active involvement in community problem solving. Located as they were, in communities beset by social ills, these institutions were compelled, in a sense, to improve the quality of life in the neighborhoods of which they were a part. It was a role driven in many ways by the need to balance the scales of justice and equality through the production of educated, informed, and concerned citizens.

For African Americans, education was the pathway to freedom and a more level playing field, thus, education was connected with citizenship and the uplifting of one’s people. As a result, students left those institutions imbued with the understanding that they were responsible for lending their skills to the development of a more vibrant and sustained democracy, not just for themselves but for the larger community.

A recent research project examined the missions, historical trends, and civic practices of five black colleges and universities in Mississippi: Alcorn State University, Jackson State University, Mississippi Valley State University, Rust College, and Tougaloo College. The study reveals that, institutionally, the dedication to educating students to become responsible, active citizens has not flagged.

All of these colleges and universities have formed partnerships with community organizations in a variety of fields, including health, literacy, economic development, recreation, education, housing, and many others.

Among the many public service programs sponsored by Alcorn State, for example, are the Saturday Science Academy, the Environmental Education and Stewardship Program, and the Housing Partnership Agreement, created to increase the availability of low-income housing units. All of these activities have faculty leadership and student involvement and are integrated into the academic components of the university.

A part of the mission statement of Jackson State University is to “provide educational services, including technical assistance, workshops, training programs, both degree and nondegree offerings, which allow the university to extend its human, cultural and physical resources into the surrounding urban community.” Administrators
here believe that, for an urban university to be viable, it has to be a part of the community.

Tougaloo College, the cradle of the civil rights movement in Mississippi, has a rich history of community engagement. Its students have traditionally been involved with social issues, voter education, political campaigns, and policy development. Because of its history, Tougaloo College serves a dual role in Mississippi both as an educational institution and as a social and community development center. It is an increasingly important resource for the social, economic, civic, and cultural development not only of African Americans but also of the state as a whole.

Without exception, administrators at all five schools believe firmly that there is a role for higher education in building and promoting citizenship and civic responsibility.

But what do students think? Like their fellow collegians around the country — and, indeed, like adults of all ages — students from black colleges and universities have a distinctly jaundiced view of politics. They do not believe there is much chance of their voices being heard. They do not believe that political participation will make much difference. And they share the widespread disinterest in the political life of the country that infects our society at large.

And what do they view as the role of colleges in building and promoting civic responsibility?

To gain some perspective on this question, students from Jackson State University and Tougaloo College were recruited to attend a deliberative forum on the subject of “Politics for the Twenty-first Century: What Should Be Done on Campus?” The group was made up of young African American men and women, ranging from first- through fourth-year students.

Students generally agreed that preparing students for jobs and contributing to economic development through basic and applied research are higher education’s essential purposes. Their views support the studies that say most students enroll in college primarily to get a good job and have a better life. They do not see the connection between contributing to the civic good and their individual quest for a better quality of life, although older students are more open to the view that becoming a member of a larger community brings with it some responsibility to improve the community.

Black colleges and universities have historically maintained working partnerships with their communities. These partnerships and involvement were shared in the classrooms and students were engaged in the process. At one time, this led many students to leave school firmly committed to making a contribution to the betterment of society.

But the stakes are not as high for African American students today as they were a generation ago, and so citizenship and civic responsibility are not meaningful terms to them. In this, they resemble students throughout the nation. Recent studies show that even though more and more colleges are requiring that their students become involved in “service learning” and “community service,” such experiences are not leading students to make the connection to the active duties of citizenship and civic responsibility.

Despite the discouraging findings, however, black colleges and universities should not retreat from their historical roles. Indeed, they might provide models for American higher education across the board. Engagement with their communities is as critical today as it ever was — if not more so.

As was so eloquently stated in proceedings from the Presidents’ Leadership Colloquium Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education, “This country cannot afford to educate a generation that acquires knowledge without ever understanding how that knowledge can benefit society or how to influence democratic decision making.”

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The New Engagement: From Community Relations to Community Partnerships

By Byron P. White

The former F&W Publications building, which sits across the street from Xavier University’s main campus in Cincinnati, is an architectural marvel. The art deco structure, with its curving, marble stairways, terrazzo-tile floors, and two-story mural, is on the National Register of Historic Places. So it made perfect sense for Xavier University to purchase the building in 2001 after F&W announced plans to vacate. It would provide the university with much-needed space for its alumni relations and marketing functions and guarantee the historic structure’s preservation in an urban community already suffering from blight and disinvestment.

At least that was the perspective that Xavier officials shared proudly with leaders in the Evanston community, where the building is located, when the university announced the purchase. However, the news was not met favorably by local residents. At the community meeting I attended, the prevailing sentiment ran more along these lines: “Wow, you can purchase that building? What else can you buy in our community?” The more cynical interpretation went this way: “Ah ha! I knew you had a master plan to take over our neighborhood. This is just the beginning!”

The meeting was further evidence that
despite our best intentions, Xavier University is not a peer of the communities around us. That is true for most universities, particularly those like Xavier, which find themselves landlocked in an urban, residential setting among struggling communities. What residents suspect about most of us is true: the university possesses the resources, the clout, and the expertise to win conflicts and, when it suits its purpose, to exploit its neighbors.

Increasingly, universities have realized that such engagement is not a winning proposition at all. Overpowering vulnerable communities does not lead to sustainable improvement for either the university or the community. Rather, it guarantees ongoing entanglements that hinder any long-term progress. For Xavier, this realization has meant a transformation in the very way we think about community engagement from a focus on community relations to one aimed at community partnerships. It has affected the way we serve, the way we learn, and the way we invest in the communities around us.

Over the past few years, thanks largely to the hard work of Dr. Eugene Beaupré, the university’s director of government and community relations, we have made great progress in strengthening relations with the three communities that border the university, particularly Evanston, a predominantly African American neighborhood of about 8,000 citizens. Evanston is one of those teetering urban neighborhoods whose condition ranges from run-down poverty areas to tidy middle-class enclaves. Beaupré has served on many neighborhood committees and is greeted by most folks in Evanston with a warm handshake or hug.

But that goodwill does not necessarily create partnerships or collaboration. That requires not only friendly talk and good feelings, but a more deliberate sharing of responsibility, accountability, and authority. It requires that the university view the community not merely as a place in need of help, but as a treasure chest of assets and lessons that students, faculty, administrators, and staff can draw from to advance the university’s strategic objectives, whether developing curriculum or attracting students. It requires a transparent exposure of self-interests, along with well-defined goals and roles.

In his inaugural speech in September 2001, Xavier President Fr. Michael J. Graham, S.J., identified community engagement as a hallmark of his administration. His speech, entitled “Scholars, Saints, and Citizen-Servants,” focused on the integration of the intellectual, moral and ethical, and civic obligations of a Catholic Jesuit university. In his address, Graham posed this challenge concerning the neighborhoods surrounding campus:

What is the great conversation that might occur between us if we found ourselves around a common table, got past our initial awkwardness and silence, leveled with one another the way friends do, [and] decided that it would not be our last talk but only part of a conversation to which we would stay committed? How would we look differently at who we are and what we do as a result? What might we study then, teach then, learn then, research, report, and write about then?

Graham’s commitment to deepening the connection between the university and surrounding communities led to the creation of the Community Building Collaborative@Xavier, which operates out of the president’s office to bring strategic focus and coordination to the university’s community engagement efforts. The work has led to several new approaches.

**A New Approach to Service**

The voice mail from the president of Xavier’s Phi Alpha Theta chapter made me grimace. The history fraternity had decided to tutor junior high school students as a community service project and wanted me to suggest a school with whom they could work in the nearby Norwood community. It sounded like another generic service project that positions
hearts and minds of Norwood’s elderly residents. Armed with this new thinking, the campus organization revamped its tutoring project. In the end, members worked with a newspaper club at Norwood Middle School to conduct interviews of elderly residents at a senior center. The oral history project served the group’s objectives, while affirming the role of seniors in the community. Meanwhile, the Xavier students gained a new appreciation for Norwood, which had been a flash point for town-and-gown friction.

A New Approach to Learning

Faculty members are often full of great ideas about what they or their students might learn from a community, although these ideas frequently do not coincide with what the community wants to learn. More importantly, it did not seem to capitalize on the imagination and creativity of our students. These young people could tutor and do a terrific job. But what else might they do that would generate greater excitement and benefit?

After some prodding, the organization’s president conceded that what the group really wanted to do was to get children fired up about history, a far more exciting proposition. We also considered that interest in history might already exist in Norwood, a blue-collar community with a rich Appalachian heritage. Perhaps the most useful role for Xavier would be to identify an indigenous source of enthusiasm and elevate it. After some discussion, we concluded that a love of history probably already existed in the Norwood population. Aided with this new thinking, the organization conceived an oral history project. In the end, members worked with a newspaper club at Norwood Middle School to conduct interviews of elderly residents as part of a community-based history project. Meanwhile, the Xavier students gained a new appreciation for Norwood, which had been a flash point for town-and-gown friction.

It requires that the university view the community not merely as a place in need of help, but as a treasure chest of assets and lessons that students, faculty, administrators, and staff can draw from...
about itself. However, one need only talk to Sharon Muyaya, president of the Evanston Community Council, to understand that the community’s initiative is at the heart of an ongoing public relations project that a Xavier PR management class has been conducting over the past two years.

“I came down and told the class what I was looking for, about the history of Evanston, and what we’re doing here,” Muyaya said in an interview in the student newspaper. “And through that history, we came up with a plan.” The community’s primary goal was to increase involvement and membership in the community council and to find new sources of revenue. About 30 students from the senior seminar, led by communication arts professor Tom Schick, have worked on the project.

As a result, membership has increased in the council, with about 60 new members coming from among university employees. The class has helped the community produce a newsletter, an awards banquet, and an annual “Taste of Evanston” fundraiser. Students remain involved in the project even after their class concludes, with many serving as volunteers. And in the ultimate gesture of collaboration, Evanston residents recently elected Schick treasurer of the community council.

A New Approach to Community Investment

Community relations efforts typically do not encourage universities to divulge their institutional goals to the surrounding community. The fear is that they might be misinterpreted or, worse yet, that the community might interfere. However, self-interest is an essential motive for collaboration. Besides, since the community knows full well that the university has selfish motives, residents get suspicious when they don’t hear them articulated. Thus, the well-intentioned purchase of a building appears to be the initial move in a plot to take over the neighborhood.

At Xavier, we have realized that when it comes to collaboration around community investment and revitalization, the work must be rooted in a plan, with measurable outcomes and clear mutual benefits. We have developed such a plan with Evanston. It involves four focused objectives: re-creating a public elementary school; developing a section of the neighborhood business district; implementing a retention and recruitment home ownership strategy; and enhancing neighborhood leadership. Each of these areas grows out of the stated self-interests of both the university and the community.

The community, for instance, wants a new school to better educate its children and attract young home owners. The university is looking for a facility to institutionalize its early childhood education curriculum and provide day care for children of staff members. The plan calls for clear expectations of what the university and the community will deliver — and gain.

For the past several years, universities have focused on getting along better with the communities that impact their campuses. Today, the focus is on achieving specific outcomes that aid both the university and the community. For the university, it means providing practical opportunities for academic learning as well as creating a campus environment that is safe and attractive. For communities, it means tapping into a source of expertise and economic resources that have long been considered off limits outside the academy’s gates. Achieving these outcomes requires strategic partnerships, in which both university and community are looked to for expertise and leadership. Those are the only conditions under which unequal players can begin to operate as peers.

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The Public Practice of Scholarship and the Production of Knowledge

By Deborah Witte

For more than a decade, the Kettering Foundation has been at the forefront of research on the role of higher education in the practice of public scholarship, the creation of public knowledge, and the public role of scholars.

Traditionally, the production of knowledge (and its corollary, truth) has been the bailiwick solely of scholars in the academy. Kettering has long wrestled with questions of “knowledge for whom” and “knowledge for what” in light of the foundation’s focus on self-rule. Most would acknowledge that the production of knowledge for self-rule requires that citizens be at the forefront. While scholars are indispensable for technical or empirical knowledge, only citizens can create the knowledge required for self-rule. But this does not preclude scholars from playing an important role. They do not, after all, forfeit their citizenship on entry into academia.

There are numerous examples of scholars who have embraced a public practice of their craft and who seek a different relationship with the public. Among them is Alejandro Sanz de Santamaria. In his essay “Political Life,” Sanz suggests that the scholar is usually alienated from the very community that knowledge is designed to help. There is a need, then, for a scholar, a public scholar, who can stand on equal footing with the public.

The public, in the work of forming itself, grapples with questions that no expert can provide, questions about how we are to live and prosper together. These questions do not lend themselves to expert-provided answers. And so a public scholar brings necessary, but not sufficient, knowledge to public decision making. The production of knowledge for self-rule is the work of the public. The job of a public scholar, as sociologist C. Wright Mills defined it, is “to help build and strengthen self-cultivating publics.”

There are many barriers for a scholar seeking to become a public scholar, not the least of which are the tenure-granting process and superspecialization. Nonetheless, as Peter Levine of the University of Maryland reminds us, “to avoid participation because one holds an advanced degree is to dodge one’s civic responsibility. There is even an insidious kind of arrogance implicit in claiming that one is not an ‘ordinary citizen.’ Intellectuals are entitled to participate, not as professionals, but as citizens with personal opinions and interests, just like everyone else.”

Public scholarship, according to research conducted by Scott Peters and his colleagues at Cornell University, is not limited to problem solving or decision making. It can also include problem setting whereby citizens name, frame, and come to deliberate on civic and...
be done about them in pursuit of public values and interests.”

What, if anything significant, America’s colleges and universities can do to revitalize this nation’s civic life presents a complex challenge to a foundation whose mission is to help make democracy work as it should. Kettering trustees and staff are currently examining the foundation’s agenda in this area with a view toward setting its research priorities for the coming year.

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**Apple IPM in Massachusetts: Public Scholarship in Action**

*By Daniel R. Cooley*

This brief account of public scholarship in action describes one of eight field studies conducted by a team of scholars from five land-grant universities. The research was supported by the Kettering Foundation, the Kellogg Foundation, and the Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station’s federal formula funds.

On the surface of it, this is an account of a research and teaching program intended to reduce or even eliminate the use of pesticides in New England apple production, using a general approach called integrated pest management, or IPM. IPM is an amalgam of biology and ecology, as well as economics and politics, and a different history of the program might emphasize its technical evolution. This story, however, suggests that scholarship in the arena of a public issue, in this case agricultural pesticides, must be public scholarship if it is to truly succeed.

Several characteristics make apple IPM public scholarship. For one, the teaching and research reach well beyond the campus. The labs extend beyond brick and ivy to the orchards of New England, the libraries go beyond journals and papers to include the experience of people who seldom set foot on university grounds, and the lecture halls include cold barns and hotel conference rooms.

Perhaps because public scholarship, like IPM, engages nonacademics, it is viewed as less scholarly. In reality, public scholars must produce typically scholarly publications, teach advanced courses, and then, unlike many of their colleagues, engage people outside academia in the scholarly process. For example, ecologists and entomologists around the world know Dr. Ron Prokopy as an innovative researcher in insect behavior ecology and evolution, while most New England apple growers know him as Ron, the apple bug guy.

While his students and technicians perform experiments on the insect colonies in the basement lab of Fernald Hall, Prokopy himself might be knee-deep in dew-covered grass chatting with a grower about the family or the price of apples. Faculty who engage in public scholar-
dew-covered grass chatting with a grower about the family or the price of apples. Faculty who engage in public scholarship serve two masters, in this case, apple growers and the academy. For Prokopy to succeed academically, that is, get tenure and be promoted, he had to obtain grants, publish in well-regarded journals, and teach graduate and undergraduate classes on campus.

To succeed in his public (Extension) role, he had to satisfy the apple growers of Massachusetts that he would help them keep apple maggots out of their fruit. Like many who engage in public research, Prokopy views this public interaction as an opportunity, not as an added burden. He never considered ignoring the growers so that he might focus on less-applied aspects of his work. Just as important, and less obvious, he knows that application often informs discovery in his more theoretical work.

An impressive number of microbes and insects try to take advantage of the rich food resources in cultivated apples. In an attempt to stop their attacks, the first broad use of insecticides and fungicides began in earnest in the mid-twentieth century. As soon became evident, however, when we attempt to control nature without fully understanding it, our victories may be short-lived. It became clear that with overuse, some pesticides generated resistant insects and environmental pollution problems.

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, a few scientists at land-grant universities began to look at an alternative that would reduce pesticide use but still adequately protect crops. As IPM concepts emerged in the 1970s, they particularly captured the imagination of the young Ron Prokopy. Prokopy had been raised on his uncle’s orchard in Connecticut. He grew up with the land-grant system, from Extension meetings featuring scientists from the Connecticut Experiment Station to matriculating at Cornell University where he received his Ph.D. in entomology. He inherited the philosophy and methods of public scholarship and learned the new ecological concepts behind IPM. He brought these with him when he came to

Dr. Prokopy explains the apple maggot’s predilection for round red objects. Placing them in trees help growers determine whether they need to apply an insecticide.

Perhaps because public scholarship, like IPM, engages nonacademics, it is viewed as less scholarly.
Prokopy views this public interaction as an opportunity, not as an added burden…. He knows that application often informs discovery in his more theoretical work.

Dr. Prokopy says that teaching growers how to manage apple pests teaches him how best to apply his theories and makes his classroom more relevant to his other students.

Prokopy and his colored cardboards, were inclined to agree.

But Prokopy, having grown up on a fruit farm, was not an ivory tower scientist. He may have been an idealist, but he understood growing apples. And after talking with him, a few influential growers recognized that. Prokopy worked tirelessly and asked the field crews to work just as hard. Technical specialists and students drove the state daily, visiting orchards at least once a week, climbing trees, inspecting thousands of fruit and leaves and, most importantly, talking with growers about what they saw. This regular communication with growers usually kept IPM researchers grounded in the realities of what producers were facing on an almost daily basis.

By 1983, apple IPM had shown that an ecological approach offered a potential solution to pesticide problems and drew an infusion of new state dollars, which eased the grant-hunting job that had supported much of the earlier research. But the steady pesticide reductions of the first five years of the project had stalled. Further reductions would mean moving...
to what Prokopy termed “second-level IPM,” which either relied on nonpesticide management tools or, when pesticides were needed, used environmentally benign chemicals. And this would mean major new research.

Prokopy launched second-level IPM work in earnest in 1991. Results were generally positive, but after four years they were not as clear as they had been in the first-level work. A host of other technical and financial problems arose as well.

It was in this climate that the team first decided to invite the growers to an advisory meeting. The idea was that, if engaged in a more detailed discussion of the research, growers would remain enthusiastic about participation. The growers could also tell the researchers, before the growing season started, what they thought were the most pressing problems, what looked to them like it would work, and what sounded stupid. The grower advisory group proved invaluable in moving the research along. Over the decade, members from retail stores, environmental nonprofits, and other academic institutions were added, helping to move the IPM effort toward yet another IPM goal — community involvement.

Prokopy has always insisted that the best research was informed by real-world outreach and teaching. Certainly, aspects of the research should contribute to fundamental science and be favorably reviewed by researchers who had no interest in its application. Still, aspects of the research also needed to interest producers, so people doing apple IPM had to work in both the theoretical and applied worlds.

Interestingly, public scholarship, like IPM, works at several levels. Just as an IPM program may move from a level that involves simply a few growers and an entomologist to a level that adds pathologists, horticulturists, economists, store managers, consumers, conservationists, politicians, and deans, public scholarship may involve a small slice of the public or attempt to involve whole communities or regions. In apple IPM, the circles of involvement have widened from a fairly small set of growers and researchers in Massachusetts to involve programs in virtually every northeastern state as well as many other parts of the world.

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By Maxine S. Thomas

One of the key assumptions in Kettering Foundation research is that democracies require institutions that enjoy the confidence of citizens and serve to strengthen civil society. Unfortunately, many of our major institutions do not enjoy the public’s confidence. Higher education is one of such major institutions. There is a disconnect between higher education and the public that goes beyond the institutions and extends to the students as well. Since Kettering focuses on putting an engaged citizenry back into our communities, we are particularly interested in learning about the way students carry out their citizenship roles. It is important, then, that we develop research focused on institutions of higher education and their efforts to encourage students to become political actors.

Current research at the foundation explores the effects of experiences with public-politics ideas and practices on students and on college campuses. Our work on the effects of deliberation on college students’ attitudes toward politics includes issue framing and deliberation work with faculty and student leaders at Miami University (Ohio) and Wake Forest University.

Denny Roberts at Miami University has brought students together to frame an issue of concern to fraternities and sororities. The research will result in an issue booklet, a narrative report on the forums, and a report on efforts to introduce public deliberation into Greek organizations on other campuses.

Katy Harriger and her colleagues at Wake Forest University recruited 30 to 40 first-year Wake Forest students to participate in a four-year study of the effects of public deliberation on college students. Now in their third year, students participate in deliberative forums in classrooms, on campus, and in the local community. Students were interviewed at the beginning of the study and will be interviewed again at the end. Each year, following deliberations, study participants take part in focus groups. Comparison groups of students who are not involved in the study are also convened each year. Annual reports document the project’s progress and share interim findings. A final monograph-length report will be issued upon conclusion of the study next year.

In 1993, the foundation commissioned Rich Harwood to talk with college students about politics. Now, more than 10 years later, it is high time to revisit these conversations. An update of that work is currently under way.

It is this kind of effort, and more, that is needed to ensure that students are prepared to carry out their democratic roles on campus and, more importantly, in their communities after they leave school. But there are downsides as well.

Clearly, it is important to know what students think and to examine how best to prepare them to participate in our democracy. But focusing the foundation’s research on college students considerably narrows the scope of the research to higher education and civic engagement. For one thing, most Americans are not college graduates. And, for another, such research bypasses more fundamental questions concerning the changing role of the academy itself in the larger life of the community.

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With the founding of the first social fraternity in 1825, college students were offered a home away from home, a social outlet, high academic and behavioral expectations, and a way to get involved in the community. Since that time, millions of men and women have entered into Greek organizations, which pride themselves on attracting the best of the best of college populations, and fraternity and sorority members often have higher grade-point averages than nonaffiliated students, higher graduation averages and perform considerable community and philanthropic service. In recent years, however, the number of students interested in joining these organizations has significantly declined. While the exact cause of this decline is not clear, it is obvious that fraternity and sorority members need to be actively involved in protecting their future if the survival of Greek organizations is to be certain in the years to come.

There are both significant advantages and disadvantages to affiliation with fraternal organizations. The disadvantages are often so detrimental to members, organizations, and host institutions that the international headquarters personnel and campus administrators who oversee them take them over in exasperation. However, without student involvement, lasting and deep change is unlikely to take place.

Fundamental change is the only way to resolve the persistent problems that have plagued fraternal organizations. Members have to be drawn from passivity to action and they have to engage in critical and informed analyses in order to secure a promising future.

Recognizing the problems of traditional methods of change, Miami University, Ohio, requested the assistance of the Kettering Foundation, two years ago, to approach the problem from a grassroots level. Since that time, undergraduate students have helped develop “Fraternal Futures” based on the National Issues Forums model. Querying students, both affiliated and nonaffiliated, parents, faculty, community members, headquarters staff, and campus administrators, students at Miami researched the presumed advantages and disadvantages of fraternity life. Emerging
from this research, students found, were three possible directions for fraternal organizations.

First, undergraduate members could make their organizations more accessible. Opening themselves up to a more diverse membership, new recruitment techniques, and positive public relations, would ensure that fraternal organizations would survive and thrive in the future.

A second approach suggests that undergraduate students examine the founding values of fraternal organizations and the accountability practices for which they hold their members responsible. By establishing standards that members should uphold, and enforcing these expectations, fraternity and sorority members can ensure the survival of their organizations.

The final approach asks affiliated students to examine fraternities and sororities as the campus health and safety hazards they have often become. By making fraternal organizations safer and educating the entire campus community on health and safety issues, these organizations would become invaluable to campus communities, and thus ensure their survival.

Since finalizing the Fraternal Futures model a year ago, approximately 400 undergraduate students have participated in forums to deliberate on the future of fraternal organizations. Undergraduate members of these organizations were trained by the Kettering Foundation and have led deliberations at Miami University, Jacksonville State University of Jacksonville, Alabama, Westminster College of Fulton, Missouri, and Kutztown University of Kutztown, Pennsylvania. Each campus has been remarkably different, some with high percentages of students affiliated with these groups, some with Greek populations of less than 1 percent, highly traditional campuses, large campuses, a campus with less than 1,000 students, and commuter campuses. Outcomes of forums on these campuses have varied widely. Despite the difference, however, each deliberation has demonstrated that students value hearing from others about concerns that affect a system that has become such an integral part of their college experience.

To measure the impact of the Fraternal Futures deliberation, we have utilized pre- and post-forum surveys to analyze the differences in responses elicited before and after the forums. Using a change model based on the writings of educator/consultant A.D. Berkowitz, we ask students to give rated responses to four questions:
(1) Do you see a problem? (2) Do you feel you have a role in fixing the problem? (3) Do you believe you have the skills to help solve the problem? (4) Are you committed enough to take action to effect real change? We also ask students to indicate what approach(es) they value, and what tradeoffs they would be willing to accept in realizing positive change for their organizations.

Finally, students comment on how their perspectives on fraternal life and citizen participation have changed. On all four campuses, students indicated higher ratings on all four components of Berkowitz’s model after deliberating. Additionally, most students were willing to accept tradeoffs entailing longer hours spent with their chapters, but did not want to see the tight brother- or sisterhood bonds they have developed decreased.

As we continue our work at Miami University with the project, we will be reporting results to students, campus staff, and headquarters so that the student voice may be represented in change initiatives on all levels. We are also embarking on a project that uses the “Fraternal Futures” deliberations as a starting point for increased civic engagement on our campus. Through using the concept of deliberation and active citizen involvement, we believe that the Miami community can engage in respectful and important dialogue, preparing students to be more actively involved in the larger community throughout life.

The support provided by the Kettering Foundation in establishing the “Fraternal Futures” initiative provides a way to foster shared leadership for the kind of changes
Increasing Student Civic Engagement through Balanced Democratic Dialogue

By Allison Crawford

While colleges and universities are rediscovering their role in preparing the young for civic life, few studies suggest how they might best go about this. Two forms of democratic dialogue are in common use on many college campuses: the National Issues Forums (NIF) and study circles sponsored by the Study Circles Resource Center (SCRC).

The central purpose of NIF and study circles is to engage citizens with their communities. Both use deliberation as an approach to decision making in which individuals, through conversation, gain a better appreciation of others’ opinions. Both provide background information and training. NIF gatherings make use of “issue books” — on health care, race relations, and other topics. Study circle participants receive guides posing questions for each of four sessions.

Still, differences exist. While NIF gatherings generally involve a large group that meets once, study circles involve multiple small-group sessions, ending in a larger, shared meeting. While both provide training for organizers, the SCRC uses a “facilitator,” who is instructed to help the group talk respectfully and productively. NIF uses a “moderator,” who, with more responsibility for the outcome, is charged with tracking time, asking probing questions, and providing an overview.

Within each model, participants initially identify themselves and their relationship to the issue. Commonly with NIF, 15 percent of the 150-minute...
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meeting is devoted to this; with the SCRC study circles, the entire first session (usually two hours) is spent in this way. The additional sessions focus on relating the problem to the community, discussing preferred futures, and formulating a plan. NIF and SCRC both avoid pushing participants in a set direction. The NIF process is called “choice work,” with participants weighing the costs and consequences of various options. Here, wrestling with conflicts is important; otherwise, participants might simply have what an NIF curriculum guide refers to as “a nice discussion and then say, ‘Let’s do all of the above.’” Study circles are more open-ended, with facilitators eliciting alternatives from the meeting.

Exposing College Students to Public Talk

Clearly, a call has emerged for a new civic-minded education that produces students prepared to practice democracy. Clearly as well, NIF and SCRC have an on-campus role to play — a role I believe would be strengthened by a more complete understanding of college students, their developmental stages, and learning styles.

Today’s college students may be industrious and goal oriented, but they are not fully mature. This reflects Robert Kegan’s model of self-evolution. According to Kegan, “second order” individuals do not readily reason abstractly, discern patterns, or simultaneously value their own and others’ viewpoints. “Third order” individuals have learned abstract reasoning, view relations as reciprocal, and acknowledge that shared feelings can override individual interests.

The transition from second to third order, Kegan believes, occurs between ages 12 and 20. Kegan’s theory suggests the limitations of classroom behavior. Commonly, such behavior is passive, with students taking notes from a professor regarded as an expert. It is not behavior likely to produce civic-minded adults.

While college students say they learn best through group discussion, their classroom experiences are typically limited to lectures and note taking.

The merits of the NIF and SCRC approaches can be assessed within Kegan’s framework. Worth noting is that the latter’s nonhierarchical structure and its emphases on bonding and on communication skills are well matched to Kegan’s description of the student personality.

The study circle puts considerable responsibility in the hands of the participants. Commonly, this promotes an exchange of ideas. One student remarked, “I was particularly impressed by my study circle’s conclusion that ‘resources’ should be defined to include more than financial capital.” Students commented that study circles helped build such social capital, through the formation of bonds, and allowed them to make a connection with the world outside their campus “bubble.” In this, the “getting to know you” component is key. The Topsfield Foundation’s work on study circles suggests that the single most effective way to overcome people’s initial hesitancy to discuss public issues is to have them talk about how the issues affect their everyday lives.

Overall, study circle participants spoke well of their experience. Still, shortcomings were identified. The most common was a lack of diversity — a low representation of nonstudents, low-income persons, and minorities. Diversity is important. In a discussion, opinions not expressed by persons present are not likely to be discussed. Second, some said a lack of “active leadership” could lead to participants becoming entrenched in their positions or could allow discussion to drift away from unpopular viewpoints.

NIF gatherings are more structured, which also has advantages. For example, by supplying “the skills and the voice,” they allay student concerns of being uninformed, provide academically challenging choice work, and contribute to understanding of what citizenship entails. Further, students who doubt they have enough information for informed participation benefit from the...
“issue book” made available prior to the session. One student wrote, “It is difficult to deliberate about issues of which you have no knowledge.”

Though most students spoke highly of their participation, they did recognize drawbacks: What would happen if common ground were not reached? How could all voices be included in a consensus? Voices, they thought, went unheard: “Our speaking styles and levels of understanding were obviously different, which may be why we had difficulty coming up with a public judgement on our issues.”

Maintaining a Balance for the College Student

Kegan and others urge that, to be aided in their cognitive and civic development, students should be met where they are. Classroom practice of deliberative discussion, therefore, is valuable and should be encouraged. Still, choice work alone may not build the empathy needed. Since identity is a focal point among students, such deliberation should aim at moving students from a self-based orientation to a more community-minded one. This can be a natural connection. One student wrote, “Just the act of deliberation fosters the ideas of cooperation among individuals, problem solving, and tolerance.”

Students value deliberative exercise but also express a need for more process in their conversations. Beale and Schoem refer to the need for a “content/process balance.” Literature, theory, and empirical content help participants to form their ideas and comments, while the interactive process of discussion allows for the expression of ideas, insights, and personal experiences.

Some may argue that students are getting all they can out of NIF deliberations and that an adjustment of the balance between process and content is not needed. I believe, however, that if NIF added opportunities for personal sharing to the necessary choice work, students would not only be community leaders, but would be better listeners, more able to bring understanding and concern to their daily decision making.

Deliberation is a starting point that can move a student from mere “fact gatherer” to one who can process information and form opinions on new and different ideas. For the experience to be comprehensive, students must also be taught to learn with their hearts. Students who are passionate and engaged in critical thinking can benefit the larger community.

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June Board Summary

The Kettering Foundation’s board meeting this past June focused on the relationship between the public and the academy, discussing avenues for new research. A number of promising approaches were outlined. Studies from multiple perspectives are possible: not just students and faculty members, but also college administrators, including university presidents and board members. Each offers its own unique advantages.

The link between civic engagement and students, for example, is perhaps far more complex than commonly suggested. While student voting rates are dismal, today’s college students are actively involved in a wide range of volunteer activities both on campus and in their communities. Why, then, do they seem so disengaged from the political process? Other dimensions of their public lives are also troubling. Alcohol abuse, for example, takes the lives of too many students on college campuses. For other students, safety and violent crime are a top worry. Where and how might students learn the skills and habits of self-rule that will better enable them to meet the challenges facing their campuses and the nation? One of the articles in this month’s Connections, for example, explores the civic engagement of fraternities and sororities at Ohio’s Miami University. More studies like these with a broader focus might prove invaluable.

When it comes to understanding the connection between higher education and the public, the work of the faculty, their practices and attitudes, is also important. One promising possibility is public scholarship — work and research that engages the public in the coproduction of new knowledge. While this kind of engagement with the public can give faculty members new insights and a new approach to their work, does it actually help build civic capacity on campus and in the surrounding community?

Another possible focus is the culture of professionalism. With its emphasis on expertise and specialized knowledge and detachment, how does the concept of professionalism affect the ability of faculty members to engage their communities — both in their research and in their daily lives? Perhaps describing the struggles of scholars and faculty members who are making public work part of their professional lives might open a door to new opportunities for learning.

Just as individual faculty members seem drawn to this kind of public work, so too are college and university administrators. Civic engagement efforts and service-learning projects are spreading across campuses nationwide as deans and college officials look for ways to reshape and revitalize their institutions. If the foundation could better understand what is prompting those movements, we could gain some valuable insights into the links between higher education and democratic life. As public funding for public universities shrinks, an increasing number of college presidents and board members are interested in finding ways to reconnect with the public. Perhaps this increasing financial pressure might focus new attention on the possibilities of civic engagement, civic education, and public scholarship.

Finally, outreach programs present a potentially important research opportunity of their own. Because this work connects members of the university community with the larger public community around them, they might provide a fruitful avenue for further research in the link between the public and the academy. The extracurricular, in short, can provide insight into the curricular, at all levels of college life — not just for students, but also for faculty members, staff, and administrators.
Why should we care about press coverage of Iraq? That simple question is the entryway into an exploration of journalism’s relationship to democracy by Kettering associate Peter Levine and his colleagues at the University of Maryland working on a research project for the foundation. Two doctoral students, Matt King of philosophy and Nasim Moalem of journalism, constructed a special Web site on “The War, the Press, and Democracy” (http://www.puaf.umd.edu/IPPP/iraq). The students are working under the guidance of Professor Judith Lichtenberg of the Department of Philosophy and the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy, and Professor Christopher Hanson of the Merrill College of Journalism. Much of the material posted on the site reflects traditional media critiques, with commentary by press critics, war correspondents, and others analyzing coverage of the war, weapons of mass destruction, and the history of wartime coverage and censorship. The site also links to philosophical treatises on war, the military, and the press. Levine is using this initial conversation as the threshold into a deeper engagement with the underlying suppositions about democracy that frame contributions to the conversation.
Thirty

What kinds of information do citizens need in order to participate politically? What kinds of information are they obliged to obtain?

Thus far he has identified the following five frames:

◆ A citizen’s main responsibility is to decide whether the Bush administration has done a good job so far and to vote accordingly this November.
◆ We are morally complicit in what our government does, so we should understand the results and feel appropriate emotions.
◆ Policymakers will respond to polls, so poll results should reflect good judgment.
◆ The press is a watchdog or whistleblower.
◆ Citizens can do more than vote. (This frame, of course, reflects the public politics/public work perspective that Levine shares with the foundation.)

Levine’s report on this research includes a summary of a roundtable discussion held in early May on journalism and the Iraq war. The roundtable, which included political scientists, political philosophers, journalism school professors from the University of Maryland, and members of the University of Maryland community, explored a number of topics: (1) What is the role of the press in a democracy at war? (2) By what standards should we judge coverage of the Iraq war and its aftermath? (3) What were the advantages and disadvantages of specific policies, such as “embedding” reporters with military units? (4) What kinds of information do citizens need in order to participate politically? What kinds of information are they obliged to obtain? (5) How differently do political scientists, philosophers, and journalists think about these issues? Could they learn more from one another?

Meanwhile, in other Kettering-related activities, Leland “Buck” Ryan, director of the First Amendment Center at the University of Kentucky, is organizing a conference of journalism practitioners and scholars to be held this November in Lexington, Kentucky. The foundation plans to tap such annual conferences for research insights into the current state of journalistic practice and scholarship as they relate to journalism and democracy in general and the state of public journalism in particular.

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The Footbridge Forum

By Denise Dowling

The Clark Fork River separates the north side of the University of Montana from Missoula. The river is both a literal and symbolic division between the campus and the town. Despite this natural and cultural barrier, students and citizens often make their way between the two, thanks to a wooden footbridge.

This bridge, which connects the university with the larger community in which it is located, suggested a name for a series of four community forums produced and aired by students at KBGA College Radio. We called it the Footbridge Forum. In partnership with the Kettering Foundation and with other units of the university, we set out to explore the potential for broadcasting public deliberation on the radio.

The format called for assembling participants in the studio to discuss among themselves a pressing community issue and to field phone calls and e-mails from listeners. Our goal was to include the university community as well as the greater Missoula community. Historically, these two groups, though often polarized, share many common problems.

We began by brainstorming possible topics for the first program, set to air in December 2003. This discussion yielded so many subjects — from gender issues to underage drinking, from education funding to growth issues and the economy — that no reasoned conclusion was possible. So, we decided to allow the first forum participants to determine the issues to be discussed at the subsequent forums.

Perhaps the most difficult part of preparing for the show was identifying participants to take part in the forum. The student producers wanted to include people with diverse viewpoints, but finding people to pair with those viewpoints turned out to be more difficult than they had imagined. They called on friends, family, classmates, and professors to help them find participants. Clearly, guest...
selection was not going to be a scientific process.

Despite these difficulties, a rich group of participants filled the seats for the first show. Students, business owners, minorities, single parents, men, and women were all represented. The panel had more men than women, more students than nonstudents, and too many people. Three scheduled panel members did not show up, leading to the first two of these problems, but ameliorating the third. It was one of the many learning experiences that led to the steady improvement of subsequent forums.

In the months that followed, we produced three more forums: “Whose Missoula Is This?” a discussion of town/gown relationships; “Shelter Shock,” in which participants explored the high cost of housing in the Missoula area; and “Wage Rage,” a search for ways to keep young people in the state in the face of prevailing low wages.

On the whole, the Footbridge Forum was a success. Although we had still not worked out all the problems after four forums, we did nevertheless learn so much along the way that we can safely say we got appreciably closer with each broadcast to genuine deliberation on the air.

By Catalina Arango

Although Colombian journalists are die-hard traditionalists and remain attached to old journalistic routines, the time has come for them to face their fear of change and begin the job of creating new visions for their audiences.

For many years, public life in my country has been seen as the exclusive province of political parties, traditional organizations, and government officials. And, on the whole, Colombian citizens have long been disinclined to involve themselves in politics and public life. But some Colombian citizens are tired of being treated as ignorant or as victims of the events that sweep over them; they want to be seen as participants and intelligent members of the public life. They are ready to make connections; they are learning the importance of deliberation; and, step-by-step, they are losing their fear of participating in public affairs.

Moreover, citizen audiences no longer see TV news reports as isolated dots in an empty space. Rather, they perceive them as threads in a complex net — connected, intersected, and superimposed. Events in Colombia have a past and a future, causes and consequences. They have visible and invisible faces.

Television journalists in Colombia should take an active role in this process. They must begin thinking of their audiences as citizens in order to help convince

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them that they are citizens. Narratives and news reports should begin making the important connections, help create a better environment for public discussion, and reflect the agendas of the citizens they serve.

If journalism sees citizens as participants in public affairs, it can see them as participants in a bilateral communication process as well. In fact, citizens are participants from the beginning: they turn off their television sets, switch channels, and make choices about the programs they watch.

As a consequence, journalists should begin incorporating and promoting public deliberation in their own practices and in the affairs of the community. Although skeptics may ask whether Colombians are ready to deliberate, in fact, Colombian culture is full of discussions, conversations, and meetings. Colombians love to get together to converse with friends, coworkers, or neighbors. They have a great sense of local community. Colombians love to debate. They are, however, quick to impose their views on others and have difficulty with tolerance and respect for other people’s points of view.

These exchanges, however, take place in private. Colombian citizens are extremely wary of participating publicly because they believe that politics is reserved for government officials; street protests are for revolutionaries; and they, as common people, are too ignorant to take any public action.

It is here that journalism has a role — to help citizens acquire the skills of public deliberation and to provide spaces to make visible and audible their local conversations, concerns, and initiatives.

Television journalism should be full of images and voices that are connected with citizens’ lives and narratives that give citizens the sense of having something to say.

In short, to think of their audiences as citizens, TV journalism in Colombia must pay more attention to what the public is thinking. Colombian television should use its images and sound bites to promote public judgment among Colombians. It must give Colombians ways to prioritize their problems, suggest alternatives for solving them, and create new visions for the country. The solution to the country’s crisis can come from this effort.

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This book paints an evocative picture of the meaningful change that can occur within communities when citizens are prepared to make tough decisions based on “vision and persistence.” Suzanne Morse leads us through a myriad of communities' change processes, using the language of possibility, hope, and optimism. The narrative of these 14 communities captures the real and complex challenges, experienced over a decade, as they sought to envision new ways of working together.

Morse charges that it is the “divisiveness of partisan politics and the bureaucratic maze of public policy implementation [that] have made Americans leery of entering the arena of community problem solving.” Consequently, her book creates a conceptual map of “the strategic elements that every community needs to make decisions that create a better future for everyone.” She concedes that too many communities function in non-strategic ways and fall into a future shaped by little more than happenstance.

The author's concept of community change as a calculated and deliberated process uses, to great effect, Peter Senge’s notion of “high leverage points.” In his book *The Fifth Discipline*, Senge (1990) suggests “tackling a difficult problem is often a matter of seeing where the high leverage lies, a change which — with minimum effort — would lead to lasting, significant improvement.” Morse's book presents many wonderful examples of what high leverage points offer when integrated into the strategic thinking and planning of communities. The positive results experienced by “communities that were having success” pointed to seven key high leverage points: (1) investing right the first time, (2) working together, (3) building on community strengths, (4) practicing democracy, (5) preserving the past, (6) growing leaders, and (7) inventing a brighter future. Though seemingly simplistic in nature, they are significant for communities to think and act strategically.

The book is “organized for action,” with a chapter devoted to each of the key leverage points. Appropriate research is used to frame the discussion, and examples of how communities successfully applied each leverage point are included at the end of every chapter. Lest potential readers think that the book is proffered as simply a “how to” in the process of making smart decisions, Morse cautions her readers that “the illustrations are less about good programs than about the insights that influenced the decision-making process.” In many respects, this is the strength of the book. She draws from the real-life practices of communities over a ten-year period, and though these communities experienced failure as well as success, she concerns herself with the “actions that resulted in successful outcomes.” In other words, she is characterizing meaningful civic change as hopeful, possible, and a process that can (and perhaps ought) to be met with optimism.

*Smart Communities* appeals to a broad readership from public administrators to elected community officials to ordinary citizens. Building on community strength is vital to the endeavor of making changes, and this book shines the light on the practices of the principal actors — that is, citizens — and their need to “want to” change as opposed to simply knowing “how to” change.

— Marian Glancy
 Scholars, commentators, and citizens have long noted a dramatic change in the nature and tone of American politics and culture since the 1960s, but it has been notoriously difficult to put one’s finger on the proper diagnosis, to separate fact from fancy, nostalgia, and jeremiad. Theda Skocpol’s study settles important questions of fact and reveals surprising historical trends in a judicious, unsentimental light. A historian and social scientist with impeccable credentials as an advocate of the liberal welfare state, Skocpol set out to counter the anti-statist, communitarian influence of work done by her Harvard colleague Robert Putnam, author of the controversial bestseller *Bowling Alone*. Many of her findings do unsettle the proverbial small-is-beautiful, government-is-the-problem wisdom that some have distilled from Putnam’s work. But careful readers will find, as they have with Putnam, that Skocpol transcends many common ideological polarities and delivers a fresh, illuminating perspective on changes in the American political community.

Skocpol documents the “civic transformation” of the latter twentieth century as the decline of cross-class mass membership federations and the rise of professionally managed elite advocacy groups. What surprises Skocpol is how these federations crossed boundaries of economic class, facilitating the massive citizen coalitions that powered major social welfare legislation such as the GI Bill and Social Security. Many of these federations are defunct or in decline today, too often ritualistic, segregated, or otherwise incompatible with the cosmopolitan culture fostered by their own success. Meanwhile, the professionalization of courts, legislatures, and bureaucracies required ever-increasing expertise from groups seeking influence in government. Amateur members were replaced by professional managers. Alternative funding sources, such as direct mail solicitation and foundation grants, supplanted the old “interact or die” model, which required a federal structure, myriad local chapters, membership dues, and personal contact.

Although for Skocpol it would be unthinkable to return to a discriminatory, gratuitously patriotic culture, she says “optimists [about the replacement of old civics with new forms] are surely overlooking the downsides to our recently reorganized civic life. Too many valuable aspects of the old civic America are not being reproduced or reinvented in the new public world largely run by professional trustees and memberless organizations.” The book identifies several dismaying trends, including a decline in the affiliations of politicians with broad-based associations and the failure of “upwardly tilted” professionalized associations to mobilize wide, representative sectors of the population. Here, Putnam and Skocpol very much agree: today’s advocacy groups require political interest before joining and do not offer the supplemental social and recreational motivations that draw citizens into political life. Democracy is “diminished” because there remains little organizational infrastructure to support broad public consensus on specific policies.

Skocpol’s tentative recommendations for “reinventing American civic democracy” warn of the unintended consequences of the usual reform efforts. Attempts to make public life more civil through depoliticization will continue to backfire. Barring nonprofits from partisan activity, crippling political parties, and punishing politicians for any engagement with organizations constitute a century-old “Mugwump” formula for disconnecting citizens and governments, leaving a small, educated, wealthy elite in control. Instead, Skocpol encourages associations, the media, and the government to take steps to embrace political conflict, treat internal associational politics as news, and “unfetter” associations in political fundraising and public policy-making. For civic health, the size and scope of government is not nearly so important as how it is politically connected to its citizens.

— Neil Carlson
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