

# HIGHER EDUCATION EXCHANGE



2022

## Anti-Elitism and the Civic Purposes of Higher Education

### Articles

Maria Farland

Scott Peters

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### Afterword

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I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education.

In the tradition of Jefferson, the *Higher Education Exchange* agrees that a central goal of higher education is to help make democracy possible by preparing citizens for public life. *The Higher Education Exchange* is part of a movement to strengthen higher education's democratic mission and foster a more democratic culture throughout American society. Working in this tradition, the *Higher Education Exchange* publishes case studies, analyses, news, and ideas about efforts within higher education to develop more democratic societies.

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# Anti-Elitism and the Civic Purposes of Higher Education

Derek W. M. Barker and Alex Lovit

The first issue of *Higher Education Exchange* (*HEX*) was published in 1994, a much different time for our democracy as well as for higher education. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall and collapse of communism, many believed that democracy was ascendant. Francis Fukuyama famously declared the “end of history,” meaning that Western liberal democracy no longer had any meaningful rivals.<sup>1</sup> A “civil society” concept emerged to recognize the role of culture and norms in sustaining a form of democracy that could be independent from government institutions and the state. If not quite flourishing, democracy and public life seemed to be at least in relatively good shape, historically speaking.

However, *HEX* was picking up something different. Under the leadership of founding editor, David W. Brown (with coeditor Deborah Witte), *HEX* was describing a growing “disconnect” between experts, who were focused on technical knowledge, and the citizenry, who wanted to be served by people to whom they could relate. *HEX* speculated that as the institution responsible for educating, socializing, and credentialing new professionals, higher education might be doing a disservice in failing to educate professionals with civic skills to match their technical expertise. Over the course of its 28 years of publication, *HEX* has included a wide range of authors and topics. But the growing divide between experts and citizens has remained a consistent theme in these pages. Over the decades, this once relatively unrecognized problem has risen in the consciousness of higher education. Even before the pandemic, there were troubling signs of growing public distrust in higher education, with the share of Americans proclaiming confidence in higher education dropping from 57 percent to 48 percent between 2015 and 2018.<sup>2</sup> These changes have occurred in a larger context in which “facts” have become subject to political contestation and authoritative institutions in general have suffered a loss of trust. Nearly 30 years ago, it was relatively easy for many in colleges and universities to ignore *HEX*’s quiet voice of warning; now, the issue is widely acknowledged.

Unfortunately, *HEX*’s insight has proved remarkably predictive of changes in our democracy and public life, as well as in public attitudes toward higher education and the professional classes. Over the last three decades, political polarization has grown steadily while citizen confidence in public institutions

has continued to decline. Robert Putnam's landmark *Bowling Alone*, published in 2000, represented an early warning of our fraying social fabric.<sup>3</sup> More recently, following efforts to question the legitimacy of the 2020 election, the United States was recently categorized as a "backsliding" democracy.<sup>4</sup> Some commentators have now begun speaking of a "democratic deconsolidation," with evidence suggesting growing public discontent with democracy and support for authoritarian leaders around the world.<sup>5</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic has brought these trends to the surface, revealing a lack of public trust in experts and authoritative institutions and the inability of a divided citizenry to work together even when facing a major public health crisis. The growing sense of anger and discontent culminated in the insurrection of January 6, 2021, as violent protesters stormed the US Capitol in an attempt to overturn the election. In contrast to the triumphalism of the 1990s, democracy is now widely regarded as being in the midst of a crisis, with its long-term survival no longer accepted as given.

Despite its best attempts to keep itself apolitical, higher education has not been immune to these changes. It has struggled with declining public funding, questions about its value proposition, and growing debate over student debt. Across a range of controversial issues, campuses are thought to be inhospitable to conservative ideas, and academics are perceived, with some justification, as politically biased.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, higher education bears responsibility for educating "elites," the professional classes that dominate numerous public institutions that have become the target of much public anger and resentment. While the professional classes see themselves as using their expertise to serve the public, those outside of these professional classes view them as aloof and out of touch, perhaps even as threats to their way of life. The result is a profound cultural and economic divide that shapes our politics and public life and reinforces the growing polarization and distrust that are, in turn, threatening to unravel our democracy. While higher education may not be directly to blame for these changes, it is at the center of them.

While *HEX* could not have predicted the precise trajectory of the disconnect between professionals and the public, it was remarkably perceptive in diagnosing the critical challenges facing our democracy. The journal gave voice to concerns about the separation of academic from public life and the need for professionals to be educated with civic and relational skills as much as technical expertise. If anything, *HEX* seems to have underestimated the level of the disconnect between citizens and the professionals serving them. Rather than a disconnect, something more troubling appears to be happening, what David Brooks has described as a "backlash," a growing sense of resentment and anger

toward highly educated professionals for their disproportionate share of economic, cultural, and political power.<sup>7</sup> While experts may have previously been misunderstood or seen as irrelevant, Brooks suggests that some citizens now view these professional classes as harmful to society. The disconnect originally described in the pages of *HEX* appears to have reached a new stage.

In this issue of *HEX*, we are taking a look back at a few of the most prescient and relevant writings from the journal's early years, together with a fresh interview with three leading scholars in Kettering's network on the civic mission of higher education at a critical time. The reprinted pieces in this volume are representative of *HEX*'s longstanding interest in examining the causes, conditions, and consequences of the widening divide between academic institutions and the broader American public. Although the problems described in these pages are serious, *HEX* has remained optimistic, also chronicling promising innovations in how higher education institutions relate to their students and communities. The previously published articles contain a few dated details, but we hope our readers will agree that each of the articles in this volume identifies issues and trends that remain relevant today and, in most cases, have only grown in importance. In order to update and contextualize the previously published material, each of these older articles is presented with a short new introduction by a scholar who has studied similar topics.

We begin the volume with an article by Maria Farland, originally published in 1996. A quarter-century ago, Farland recognized a growing trend of higher education turning outward and seeking to reconnect with the public. Already then, academic traditions of narrow disciplinary specialization were facing both internal and external pressures, with increasing numbers of faculty and other academic professionals seeking to define themselves as civic professionals serving public purposes.

The following three articles provide examples of the civic turn Farland recognized, encompassing universities' core practices of research, teaching, and service. An article by Scott Peters, originally published in 2001, illustrates a new civic mindset in the community-facing functions of the university. Rather than merely disseminating expert knowledge to a passive community, Peters describes how university extension researchers can play a variety of public or political roles, framing issues and assisting the community in coming to judgment before experts can design solutions.

Similarly, Katy J. Harriger and Jill J. McMillan, in an article from 2005, show how civic professionalism might look in the civic education of college students. In a four-year experiment at Wake Forest University, rather than

focusing purely on academic content, they designed a curriculum to engage a cohort of students in deliberations about complex moral and political issues with no right or wrong answers. As faculty, they were acting not only as experts in their fields but also as civic professionals framing and moderating these deliberations in order to provide their students with an experience in democratic politics.

By 2006, the so-called civic engagement movement had gained prominence in higher education, and Derek W. M. Barker provided a framework and taxonomy for understanding the multiple meanings of “democracy” it represented. Although Barker recognized divergent practices, he hoped that over time they would evolve into a coherent movement—in retrospect, perhaps an overly optimistic projection.

We conclude the volume with a pairing of an article and an interview that illustrates the enduring challenges facing higher education as a civic institution and perhaps some ways forward. The last reprinted article here, by *HEX*'s cofounding editor, David W. Brown, is among the earliest. In 1995, Brown diagnosed a problem: Academics were turning inward, focusing purely on their disciplines and intentionally removing themselves from democratic politics, resulting in the loss of purpose, relevance, and public standing of their institutions. However, Brown was hopeful that universities might see opportunity in the moment and refocus on training professionals in civic skills to complement their technical knowledge.

This early piece is followed by a new interview in which we asked Joseph Scanlon, B. Da'Vida Plummer, and Kara Lindaman to reflect on the civic purposes of higher education in light of the current relationship between citizens and professionals. Despite the emergence of a civic engagement movement in academia along the lines Brown envisioned, they suggest that the disconnect he described nearly 30 years ago persists and has in some ways intensified. In order to confront the anger and distrust currently being directed toward higher education, they propose that institutions of higher education make a more visible and concerted effort to address political polarization on their campuses and in their communities. This would include engaging with those who are most skeptical and critical of higher education and the professionals whom it trains and credentials.

Finally, David Mathews concludes the volume by arguing that any effort to confront the climate of distrust around higher education will need to involve more than internal change within institutions. He proposes that colleges and universities (along with similarly distrusted professions) engage in ongoing

dialogue with skeptical audiences and critics to build mutual understanding and, eventually, support. As public divides intensify, such dialogue is needed now more than ever for the civic mission of higher education and the future of our democracy. Mathews has recently stepped down from his role as the Kettering Foundation's president and CEO and now serves as president emeritus. In addition to his contribution to this volume, we wish to extend our deepest gratitude to Dr. Mathews for his role in incubating *Higher Education Exchange*, his thought leadership in higher education, and his commitment to citizen-centered democracy.



## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).
- <sup>2</sup> Kim Parker, "The Growing Partisan Divide in Views of Higher Education," Pew Research Center, August 19, 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2019/08/19/the-growing-partisan-divide-in-views-of-higher-education-2/>.
- <sup>3</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000).
- <sup>4</sup> International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, *The Global State of Democracy 2021* (Stockholm, Sweden, 2021). <https://www.idea.int/gsod/>.
- <sup>5</sup> Robert Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk, "The Signs of Deconsolidation," *Journal of Democracy*, 28, no. 1 (January, 2017): 5-15.
- <sup>6</sup> "Out of the Academy: How Did a Loose Set of Radical Ideas Leap from Campus to American Life?" *The Economist*, September 4, 2021, 15.
- <sup>7</sup> David Brooks, "How the Bobos Broke America," *The Atlantic*, September 2021, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2021/09/blame-the-bobos-creative-class/619492/>.

# ACADEMIC PROFESSIONALISM AND THE NEW PUBLIC- MINDEDNESS

Maria Farland

In her call for a “fundamental rethinking” of the role of academics in public life, Maria Farland anticipated what is now called citizen, civic, or democratic professionalism. In the essay that follows, she describes how scholars first focused on the history and culture of the public sphere and then on public issues and problems. Each was an “object of study,” framed within a particular disciplinary perspective and divorced from the everyday life of citizens and communities. Farland imagines a “new public-mindedness” that can liberate academics from these professional constraints. Working directly on public problems with the intention of developing solutions, Farland believes, would allow academic expertise to be used in ways that “restore intellectual and public life to their proper relationship.” Farland argues that civic-minded academics must move beyond “the specialized languages and frameworks of their disciplinary knowledge” and engage in “a more fundamental rethinking of their professional orientation.” While some movement has occurred, Farland’s vision of a public-minded academy has not been realized.

Twenty-five years later, the relationship between academia and the public is more strained than ever. Academic professionalism and its focus on specialization continue to foster a culture of isolation that blocks faculty’s meaningful participation in public life. One consequence is that citizens question the relevance of the type of knowledge that is so highly valued by scholars. While many institutions invoke their historical civic mission, and organizations such as the Association of American Colleges & Universities have generated an array of civic engagement initiatives, most are directed toward students. At the same time, faculty are guided by academic norms that prevent them from recognizing the value of developing and maintaining productive working relationships with citizens.

While many faculty believe it is important to educate students to be responsible citizens, too often they do not set aside time in their own lives to do the same. Civic professionalism is a relatively new way of describing how professionals, including academics, can work with people from all walks of life for the common good. It goes beyond applying one’s expertise to a problem of public concern. Civic professionals need to cultivate the commitment and skills to work collaboratively with others in their communities and to make decisions deliberatively and inclusively about how to address public problems. Although this work is often conflated with service learning or civic engagement initiatives that are student-oriented, the work of being a civic professional is also a faculty responsibility.

Working with others enhances our ability to address shared problems and builds relationships based on mutual trust, which in turn strengthens democracy. A quarter-century ago, Farland imagined what might happen if academics applied their expertise to solving public problems. These questions remain relevant today as we consider how academics and institutions of higher education might reconstruct their relationship with the public. This can be done not by convincing others of the value of higher educational institutions and the research produced by scholars but by a commitment to work with citizens for the common good. How might higher educational professionals learn to recognize the knowledge, insights, and assets possessed by citizens? How might working together in ways that further the common good breach the imaginary divide separating the ivory tower from the public sphere?

— Joni Doherty

In 1995, my department at Johns Hopkins University conducted a job search for an open-rank, interdisciplinary position in the humanities. Because the position was broadly defined, we received nearly 700 applications in fields that ranged from the history of medicine to sociology and from persons as diverse as department chairs at UC Berkeley to insurance adjusters in Florida. The sheer number and diversity of these applications was staggering. To some readers, the plethora of applications was evidence of a stagnant job market. As professional organizations such as the Modern Language Association and the American Historical Association convened special forums on the crisis in the job market, and many educators called for a reduction in graduate programs, job searches in which there were five, six, even seven hundred applicants were no longer unusual.

But as a reader of these applications, what impressed me most was the overwhelming number of applicants who stressed their interest in the public as a category. For example, one applicant, who was completing a PhD in history, wrote, “My commitment to liberal education in public life is evident in my participation in a new group of scholars, Educators for the Public Sector. Our work stresses the importance of the public sphere for educators involved in higher education.” He enthusiastically described the group’s work in New York City, raising awareness about the public in area colleges and universities. Another applicant, a PhD candidate in philosophy, wrote of her involvement in convening public forums and emphasized the importance of her involvement with the public to her role as a scholar and teacher. Viewing her professional

scholarship and her role as a citizen as compatible pursuits, this young woman cited the importance of preparing undergraduates for their future roles in public life. Across a wide range of disciplines, young scholars in particular had embraced a renewed interest in the public mission of both universities and academic scholarship.

The notion that higher education has a civic or public purpose is not new. Most college and university mission statements continue to include the goal

***Across a wide range of disciplines, young scholars in particular had embraced a renewed interest in the public mission of both universities and academic scholarship.***

of preparing their students for citizenship. Despite the fact that policies and curricular initiatives aimed at fostering civic education are rare, many would agree that it is in college that most young people will learn their most

decisive lessons about public life. Young academic professionals seem to have heeded Derek Bok's 1990 exhortation that we must ensure "our universities [are] strong enough to build . . . a strong sense of civic responsibility."<sup>1</sup>

The view that institutions of higher education have a public purpose has a long history, as historian Thomas Bender has shown. According to Bender, the earliest US institutions of higher learning were viewed as civic and public in character. Even the first US professional and graduate schools were founded to "reform our public life, our civic life, our politics," as Bender argues. The founding committee of the Columbia University graduate school declared its intention to train men for "the duties of public life," believing that intellectual and civic leadership were synonymous. Likewise, Bender recalls that John Dewey urged early 20th century educators to "bring their intelligence and their findings into the public realm," and argued that democracy would be realized only when "inquiry" and the "art of full and moving communication" were brought together.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, earlier generations of academic professionals saw their disciplines as vehicles for participation in public life, a conception of their professional identity that Bender calls "civic professionalism." Gradually, academic professionals grew to see the purpose of their knowledge exclusively in terms of their disciplines and the goal of furthering specialized knowledge, resulting in the "disciplinary professionalism" that dominates much of today's academic and

professional culture. But earlier, community-based conceptions of the role of the intellectual placed academic professionals squarely within the public sphere. As Bender shows, the idea that academic professionals have a public or civic role to play is a venerable one.<sup>3</sup>

Today's renewed interest in the public involves not only young scholars' views of themselves as professionals but also the content of their scholarship. In recent years, a number of groundbreaking works of scholarship have analyzed the public from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. In fields such as political science, where the interest in the public has so often been reduced to empirical devices such as polling, debates about the nature of the public sphere are resurgent. Such prominent scholars as Nancy Rosenblum and Iris Marion Young, taking their cue from Jürgen Habermas' trailblazing analysis, have produced important new analyses of the structure and composition of the public sphere.<sup>4</sup> In literary studies, Michael Warner's important study *Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere* discusses the literature of the early American republic from the Declaration of Independence to Benjamin Franklin's autobiography in terms of the emergence of the public sphere.<sup>5</sup> In the field of history, Kenneth Cmiel has shown the gradual waning of the importance of the public, deliberative side of oral and written expression in a variety of academic fields, including rhetoric, in his 1990 monograph *Democratic Eloquence*. Examining the history of teaching grammar and oratory in the 19th century, Cmiel shows that intellectuals gradually became less concerned with the public, deliberative aspects of rhetoric as they increasingly focused on the private, individual learner in isolation.<sup>6</sup> Even architecture and engineering schools such as Michigan's School of Architecture, which convened a major public lecture titled "The Making of Public Space," have joined the critical conversation around "the public" as a topic for analysis.<sup>7</sup> And with the publication of Bruce Robbins' anthology *The Phantom Public Sphere*, scholars initiated a vibrant debate concerning the public sphere among themselves and across the disciplines.<sup>8</sup> They have also founded journals with such titles as *Public Culture*, which in 1995 convened a summit for humanities academics titled "Public Culture and Civil Society."<sup>9</sup>

What does it mean for a space—a building, a city, an exhibition, or an institution—to be "public"? In the years preceding 1995, interest in this question also prompted vigorous debate in art, architecture, and urban studies. Widespread interest in the question of "the public," as one architectural historian put it, was inspired by the "desire felt by many artists and critics to intervene in the massive economic privatization of art production and circulation" that had transformed the art world to challenge the "attacks on public funding and

growing corporate influence on exhibition policies and to interrupt the legitimating rhetoric of ‘the public good’ or ‘public protection’ that surrounded these events”<sup>10</sup> Developments in the public sphere have sparked a new, interdisciplinary consideration of what it means for spaces to be “public” in fields such as geography and architecture in which the primary object of inquiry is space. Invocations of “the public” and “the public sphere” have been used to support a wide array of theories and critiques not only in the humanities but in professional fields whose practitioners consider themselves engineers.

Among colleagues of my generation who completed PhDs in the mid-1990s, there has been overwhelming interest in the public as a topic of scholarship. One young scholar of American literature and culture, Michael Szalay, has examined the transformation of the role of the public in the arts, focusing on the period of the New Deal and the Federal Arts Project. In response to the economic crisis of the Depression, Szalay argues compellingly, the US government took an active role in supporting the arts, thereby making the role of the artist or writer a more “public” one.<sup>11</sup> Another scholar, Sharon Marcus, traces the emergence of the apartment building in the 19th century and argues that this new form of housing meant a reconfiguration of the relationship between public and private. Combining public and private space, the apartment was a hybrid form whose emergence influenced the way we think about the relationship between the public and private in the 20th century.<sup>12</sup> For many emerging scholars in the 1990s, movements for democratization in Eastern Europe and Latin America have led to a rethinking of how civil society and publics around the world work. One scholar’s new research on ancient Greek culture has brought these concerns back to the context of fourth- and fifth-century Athens, observing that “Athenians supposed that the democratic *politeia* would imbue future citizens with its values through exemplary decisions by its deliberative . . . institutions,” and stressing the “Athenian emphasis . . . on equal access to deliberative assemblies.”<sup>13</sup> And finally, feminist scholarship has continued to show how spaces, occupations, and identities often considered private actually impact the public sphere. For example, Gillian Brown, in *Domestic Individualism* (1992) has argued that values such as order, enclosure, and interiority, associated with the home, came to define the model citizen in the public sphere.<sup>14</sup>

Amidst the enormous diversity of approaches that characterize the new public-mindedness among today’s academic professionals, there is ample evidence that “the public” has emerged as a common concern in fields as diverse as urban planning and English literature. Academic professionals who align

themselves with a variety of disciplines—history, literary criticism, the social sciences, architecture—share a common interest in ways that public spaces and cultures have evolved, emerged, and transformed in a variety of places, times, and societies. Perhaps the new public-mindedness marks a kind of new common ground where today’s academic professionals, despite the predominance of the culture of specialization and disciplinary professionalism, can escape their specific professional affiliations and begin to examine what it means to be public and to create public spaces. That examination brings the opportunity for a resurgence of civic professionalism. As academic professionals come together to examine the history and nature of the public sphere, they inevitably begin to involve themselves in the issues and problems that the public faces.

But even as today’s scholars have turned increasingly toward the public as a focus of intellectual debate and inquiry, the public image of their institutions has come under attack. As the 1990s decade opened, story after story depicted the shortcomings of higher education; as one *New York Times* article summarized, “the splendid seclusion of the university has been shattered by a barrage of criticism.”<sup>15</sup> The Carnegie Foundation warned that “acts of incivility weaken the integrity of many institutions”<sup>16</sup> of higher learning. The debate over the purpose and function of higher education in American society has made higher education the center of a number of larger societal controversies about issues such as cultural pluralism, and the university has emerged as the focus of noisy and often heated debate about public problems.

Like it or not, the university has gone public, becoming the focal point for a number of questions of broader interest to the public. But by making the university the subject of such debates, the wider public was also pointing out that US college and university campuses were themselves spheres of public activity. The public and the media complained that public life itself had broken down at US college and university campuses, and many scholars seemed to agree that lack of civility had become a problem at their institutions. Prominent scholars such as Harvard’s Henry Louis Gates urged academic professionals to renew their attention to the public, “to forge, for once, a civic culture that respects both difference and commonalities.”<sup>17</sup> The public has looked to universities for solutions to public problems and has found academic communities to be dysfunctional public spheres. Many have become convinced that higher education is inattentive to public problem-solving and to the issues and concerns that shape public life and debate. Even worse, academic professionals seem unable to address the problems plaguing their own academic and campus communities.

Many academic professionals, heeding the call to reassert their relevance and to recapture their public function, seemed to respond with a new public-mindedness as I have argued here. Unfortunately, much of that new public-mindedness has taken place largely within the disciplines, remaining within the framework of the old disciplinary professionalism. Academic professionals have made the public an object of study, examining its history, its

***Ironically, the academic turn toward the public has taken precisely the form of the hyperspecialized, disciplinary mode of inquiry that first disconnected academic professionals from their public mission.***

relation to other categories and its unending diversity and multiplicity. They have made the public an object for intellectual analysis and, as I have suggested, *public* has become a keyword for academic journals and conferences: an academic buzzword with all the prestige and cache of traditional aca-

ademic theories. Where the public, the news media, and politicians have demanded that academic professionals be more responsive to their public function, intellectuals have responded by making publicness yet another opportunity for academic business-as-usual. Rather than reexamining their disciplinary or professional affiliations to consider in what sense their work might engage questions and concerns that are public in nature, they have often continued in the mode of specialization, bringing the expertise of their disciplines to bear on the abstract concept of “the public.” At a moment when the public itself is less and less satisfied with what is going on in universities and more and more convinced that academic scholarship is irrelevant to the problems most people face, the recent academic turn toward the public hardly represents the fundamental rethinking of academic professionalism that the occasion seems to demand. As their profession suffers from what might be called a severe crisis of legitimacy, most humanities academics are continuing to operate according to assumptions about their own professional identity that seem increasingly inadequate. Ironically, the academic turn toward the public has taken precisely the form of the hyperspecialized, disciplinary mode of inquiry that first disconnected academic professionals from their public mission. Even as the public recaptures attention in current intellectual debates, intellectuals remain largely disconnected from the very public that captivates them,

insulated within the specialized languages and frameworks of their disciplinary knowledge.

If the new public-mindedness is to be anything more than an academic fad and if intellectuals are to resecure their legitimacy in the eyes of the public on whose support they will continue to depend, their turn toward the public must involve a more fundamental rethinking of their professional orientation. Recognizing that the institutions that organize intellectual and cultural life in the United States have origins that are civic and public in character, they must redirect themselves away from rarefied, specialized segments of society toward the broader public realm. As recent debates about higher education have demonstrated, the public sphere is a vital context in which intellectual knowledge can be brought to bear. When the culture of academic life and its professional practitioners are brought into contact with the problems and issues that confront the public, and when intellectuals themselves are based not only in their disciplines but in a vibrant relation to the public realm and its problems, only then will the new public-mindedness restore intellectual and public life to their proper relationship.



## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Derek Bok, *Universities and the Future of America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 7.
- <sup>2</sup> Thomas Bender, *Intellect and Public Life: Essays on the Social History of Academic Intellectuals in the United States* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 130, 137.
- <sup>3</sup> Bender, *Intellect and Public Life*, 3-15.
- <sup>4</sup> Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990); Nancy L. Rosenblum, *Another Liberalism: Romanticism and the Reconstruction of Liberal Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987); Nancy Rosenblum, "Civil Societies: Liberalism and the Moral Uses of Pluralism," *Social Research* 61, no. 3 (Fall 1994): 539-562.
- <sup>5</sup> Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).
- <sup>6</sup> Kenneth Cmiel, *Democratic Eloquence: The Fight over Popular Speech in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1990).
- <sup>7</sup> Rafael Viñoly, *The Making of Public Space* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996).
- <sup>8</sup> Bruce Robbins, ed., *The Phantom Public Sphere* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).
- <sup>9</sup> "Public Culture and Civil Society" (editorial retreat of *Public Culture*, Blue Mountain Lake, NY, June 8-11, 1995). The *Public Culture* initiative was the precursor of the later *Public Books* initiative; see [www.publicbooks.org](http://www.publicbooks.org).

- <sup>10</sup> Rosalyn Deutsche, "Art and Public Space: Questions of Democracy," *Social Text* 33 (1992): 34-53, 41.
- <sup>11</sup> This research later appeared in print as Michael Szalay, *New Deal Modernism: American Literature and the Invention of the Welfare State* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000).
- <sup>12</sup> This research later appeared in print as Sharon Marcus, *Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth Century Paris and London* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999).
- <sup>13</sup> Josiah Ober, *The Athenian Revolution: Essays on Ancient Greek Democracy and Political Theory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 180, 185.
- <sup>14</sup> Gillian Brown, *Domestic Individualism: Imagining Self in Nineteenth Century America* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992).
- <sup>15</sup> Anthony Depalma, "Clash of '91; Higher Education Feels the Heat," *New York Times*, June 2, 1991.
- <sup>16</sup> Quoted in Robert D. Reason, Ezekiel W. Kimball, and Jessica Bennett, "Crisis in Student Community," in *Ernest L. Boyer: Hope for Today's Universities*, eds. Todd C. Ream and John M. Braxton (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2015).
- <sup>17</sup> Henry Louis Gates, *Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), xv.

*Reprinted from Maria Farland, "Academic Professionalism and the New Public-Mindedness," Higher Education Exchange, 1996: 51-57. This text has been lightly edited by the author and updated to conform to current Kettering Foundation style and citation guidelines.*

# THE CIVIC MISSION QUESTION IN LAND-GRANT EDUCATION

Scott Peters

In 2009, I began a doctoral program at Cornell University. I wanted to study and work with Scott Peters to understand and explore the role of higher education in democracy. It's not an exaggeration to say that Peters' scholarship has been a leading influence informing how I approach questions about the relationship between institutions and communities, expertise and democracy, and the role of education and communication within such settings.

During the early stages of my program at Cornell, I came to truly appreciate the scholarly attention Peters has long given to what might otherwise be forgotten annals of the land-grant story. While browsing the bookshelf in his office, I discovered my own interest in current challenges and opportunities regarding the civic mission of land-grant universities by exploring and understanding the past. In the 1940 USDA Yearbook of Agriculture, titled *Farmers in a Changing World*, M. L. Wilson, an agricultural economist and champion of extension's role in communities, published a chapter titled "Beyond Economics." In that chapter, Wilson wrote, "We only admit the truth when we recognize that our economic problems are moral problems." I recall sitting with Peters in his office, reading that essay, and being drawn to the nuance and tensions that existed in other eras that also spoke to our own. Like Liberty Hyde Bailey and W. H. Jordan, whom Peters references in his article, Wilson's commitments highlight the importance of learning from those Peters calls "modern-day prophets."

Of particular relevance, the following article by Peters explores "the civic challenges and issues we face in this nation [that] reach well beyond economics." The economy is important, but it is only one aspect of what we should consider when we think about our shared civic life. Writing about how land grants have a "special commitment not just to economics but also to *democracy*," Peters draws from the rich history and contemporary practice of universities and individuals committing to public scholarship and seeking to articulate its practical application. He asks how "a scholar's work of constructing and communicating knowledge might contribute to community building, to public problem-solving, to public creation, and to the process of coming to public judgment on what ought to be done (not just what can or might be done) to address important public issues and problems." In a rich way, Peters invites us to think about higher education's multifaceted and nuanced role in public decision-making—especially if, as he argues, issues "must not simply be viewed as a technical or economic matter, but as a political and/or ethical matter involving rights, power, justice, and moral principles."

— Timothy J. Shaffer

In his groundbreaking book, *Scholarship Reconsidered*, Ernest Boyer asked: “Can America’s colleges and universities, with all the richness of their resources, be of greater service to the nation and the world? Can we define scholarship in ways that respond more adequately to the urgent new realities both within the academy and beyond?”<sup>1</sup>

While these questions are relevant for all sectors of American higher education, they hold an especially deep significance for the nationwide system of land-grant colleges and universities.

Created through the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, the land-grant system is composed of 106 institutions, located in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia and several US territories.<sup>2</sup>

It includes many of the nation’s top research universities, 17 historically Black institutions, and 30 Tribal colleges that were given land-grant status in 1994. It also includes the federal Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES). With a budget of almost \$1 billion for fiscal year 2001, CSREES works to “advance a global system of research, extension, and higher education in the food and agricultural sciences and related environmental and human sciences to benefit people, communities, and the nation.”<sup>3</sup>

CSREES involves more than 9,600 local extension agents working in 3,150 counties, 3 million volunteers, 5.6 million youth involved in 4-H projects and programs, and more than 9,500 scientists conducting research at 59 state agricultural experiment stations.<sup>4</sup>

Here is a system with an amazing wealth of resources, a strong public mission, and a tradition of scholarship that responds to realities outside the academy. But here also is a system that could, in Boyer’s words, be of greater service to the nation and world. The need to be of greater service was a central theme of a series of six reports published from 1997 to 2000 by the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land Grant Universities.<sup>5</sup>

In the final report in the series, the commission wrote:

We believe that our institutions serve not only as agents of this democracy, but also as its architects—providing bridges between the aims and aspirations of individuals and the public work of the larger world. To that end, we commit our institutions to wide-ranging examinations of our civic and democratic purposes through curricula and extracurricular activities, socially engaged scholarship, civic partnerships, and community-based learning and research.<sup>6</sup>

Taken together, Boyer’s challenge and the Kellogg Commission’s reports bring a new level of attention to the civic mission question in land-grant

education. The question is not whether or not land-grant institutions have a civic mission. No one would argue that they don't. Rather, the question is, What exactly is this mission, and how—through what kinds of work—should it be pursued?

In recent decades, the dominant answer to this question has often been framed almost exclusively in terms of economics. As I discovered while I was living in Minnesota

during the 1990s, politicians from both parties used the same image when proclaiming their support for the University of Minnesota, a world-class research university that also serves as the state's land-grant institution. The university

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is important, they all agreed, because it functions as the “economic engine” of the state.

Economics is important, but the civic challenges and issues we face in this nation reach well beyond economics. Our civic aspirations reach beyond economics as well. However materialistic and individualistic this nation has become, the ideas (and ideals) of democracy and citizenship have not yet been abandoned. We still aspire to be citizens in a democracy, not just consumers in the marketplace. If land-grant institutions are to be of “greater service” not only in addressing our civic challenges but also in contributing to the realization of our civic aspirations, their civic mission and work will need to involve more than economics.

In constructing an answer to the civic mission question in land-grant education that includes but reaches beyond economics, we need to do two things. First, we need to gain some historical perspective in order to give us a better appreciation of how central the connection between democracy and land-grant education has been. Second, we need to shift the discussion of civic mission away from abstract generalizations that float above and apart from the complex realities of our lives and communities. A broader view of our civic mission and the work it will take to pursue it can't be found apart from these realities. It can be found only by immersing ourselves in them.

## Democracy and Land-Grant Education

The civic mission question in land-grant education is linked to the long-standing view that land-grant institutions have a special commitment not just to economics but also to democracy, expressed in terms of the institutions' approaches to education and the ends they aim to achieve. From the late 19th century through the World War II period, a robust civic rhetoric in the speeches and writings of administrators articulated this commitment. For example, at the 45th annual convention of the Association of Land Grant Colleges and Universities held in 1931, W. J. Kerr, president of Oregon State Agricultural College, declared that it was the "ideal of democratized education in the United States that led to the founding of the land-grant institutions." Kerr argued that while land-grant institutions might have helped to advance individual opportunity for social and economic mobility, and while they might have made contributions to increasing the material wealth of the nation through the application of science to agriculture and other fields of work, in his view there were "other values, even more important [which had resulted] from the work of these institutions." These were the "intangible benefits that enter into the thought and ideals of the people, leavening the whole lump of civic and social life." Kerr declared that these benefits were "undoubtedly the larger and loftier contribution of the land-grant institutions to the states and the nation."<sup>7</sup>

The historical literature is filled with speeches and papers that echo Kerr's view of the connection between democracy and land-grant education. A review of this literature is important, but to bring the civic mission question

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in land-grant education to life in today's world, we need to view it in relation to specific public challenges and issues. Although we can look in any number of areas of work for specific examples, it's especially fitting to look to agriculture since agriculture is (and always has been) a key area of focus in land-grant education. In looking to agriculture, we can ask: What public issues and challenges does agriculture involve that might help us see and understand the civic mission and work of land-grant education? Furthermore, is there a way of framing such challenges so that faculty, staff, and students from the full range of disciplines and

departments of land-grant universities—not just the agricultural sciences—might find a role in addressing them?

## **The Challenge of Sustainability**

The central challenge in agriculture today is the challenge of facilitating sustainability (or “sustainable development” as it is often termed). While sustainability is a contested concept, there is a fair amount of agreement that it includes some balanced or integrated attention to economic, environmental, and social concerns. An example of a concise definition of sustainable development that incorporates all three of these concerns can be found in Minnesota state law. In 1996, the Minnesota legislature passed a statute that defined sustainable development as “development that maintains or enhances economic opportunity and community well-being while protecting and restoring the natural environment upon which people and economies depend.”<sup>8</sup>

While statements such as these enjoy wide support, the difficulty comes in figuring out how to pursue them in specific places, in relation to specific things. As Jules Pretty writes in his superb book on the sustainability challenge in agriculture, “In any discussion of sustainability, it is important to clarify what is being sustained, for how long, for whose benefit and at what cost, over what area and measured by what criteria.”<sup>9</sup>

Pretty adds that answering these questions is difficult not only because it’s difficult to determine what the relevant “facts” are but also because it involves “assessing and trading off values and beliefs.” In other words, the sustainability challenge in agriculture is not merely a technical challenge; it’s also a political and cultural challenge.

In order to understand what the sustainability challenge in agriculture might suggest for the civic mission and work of land-grant institutions, we need to look at a specific, real-world example. Let’s consider an example from Rice County, Minnesota.

Over an eight-year period (1989 to 1997), this rural county located about 40 miles south of the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area was embroiled in a highly contentious battle over whether and how it should regulate feedlots, which are buildings designed for the confined feeding, breeding, raising, and holding of animals. In the Rice County case, the animals in question were hogs.

The battle over the regulation of feedlots in Rice County began in February of 1989, when Kent Holden, a Rice County area landowner and part-owner of a family farm corporation called Holden Farms, applied to the

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for a permit to construct and operate a 4,730 hog commercial feedlot on 438 acres of farmland. Existing state and local regulations and zoning laws at the time did not require public notification of or input into the construction of facilities like Holden's. Residents of the Circle and Fox Lake area of Rice County, located one mile southwest of the site of the new feedlot, learned of Holden's plans only after construction began. Several of them were alarmed and angered by the project. They formed a group called the "Forest Township Agri-Lakes Association" in order to "preserve and enhance the quality of life in Forest Township." They declared themselves in opposition to the construction of the Holden facility, spoke out against the lack of public input and notification, and vowed to take legal action to stop the new feedlot from being built. They held public meetings to discuss the situation, which attracted as many as 150 area residents.

In a letter to the editor of the *Northfield News*, a spokesperson for the Agri-Lakes Association declared that they were opposed to the construction of Holden's feedlot because they believed that "this operation, located 80 to 100 feet in elevation above two nearby recreational lakes with minimal land area for waste disposal, poses serious threats to surface water quality due to run-off and to groundwater quality due to leaching. At risk are Circle and Fox Lakes, Wolf Creek and other streams, wetlands, springs, and residential wells." The group sent petitions to Rice County commissioners requesting changes in county zoning ordinances to restrict large-scale commercial feedlot operations. They wanted the county to require new or expanding feedlot operations to obtain conditional use permits, and they wanted local residents to be informed in advance of such operations and to be allowed a formal channel for voicing their concerns.

Meanwhile, the *Northfield News* weighed in with its views on the issue. In an editorial titled "Tolerance Needed," the editors described the conflict over the Holden feedlot as a "classic clash of farm and rural nonfarm interests. It speaks to the increasing influence of the metro area and the slow shift in the county's identity." They noted that while agriculture no longer received a "united front" support in the county, it was still the county's biggest industry. They pointed to the fact that Rice County produced more than \$70 million in agricultural products in 1987, almost two-thirds of which were livestock or livestock related. Expressing confidence in the judgment of state officials that Holden's plan posed no threat to lake quality, they declared that "nonfarm rural resident and lakeshore dwellers" should "exhibit some tolerance and understanding" for their neighbors who have a "right to farm."

After many twists and turns in the story and years of public debate and study, the Rice County Board voted in August of 1996 to adopt a restrictive feedlot ordinance that was described in the press as “one of the most aggressive steps yet taken by a local Minnesota government in the effort to curb corporate farm growth and feedlot development.” Depending on which side of the issue a member of the county stood, the ordinance was viewed as either “anti-agriculture,” a “social experiment,” which was “not justified on any economic or scientific basis,” or as a prudent, “well-researched and well-documented” measure that will help protect the environment while allowing for “sustainable” economic growth and development.

No other issue in Rice County during these years generated anything close to the controversy and attention as this did. Nearly 400 news articles, editorials, opinion pieces, and letters to the editor related to the issue were published in the county’s two local newspapers over the course of the battle. Numerous public hearings were also held, many of which were contentious, attracting large numbers of concerned and often angry citizens. Citizens’ groups on both sides of the battle were formed, lawsuits were filed or threatened, and piles of data and studies were collected and produced to support each side’s views. The battle ended or harmed lifelong friendships, split families, polarized county government, and heightened tensions, disagreements, and uncertainties over the direction of development in the county.

The story of the battle over the regulation of feedlots in Rice County raises a host of complex, interrelated issues and questions not only for the citizens of the county and the rest of the state of Minnesota but also for the nation as a whole.

Everywhere communities are being faced with similar challenges: how to engage citizens with conflicting values and beliefs in the public policymaking process; how to respond to shifts in demographics; how to protect the environment while also pursuing economic growth and development; and how to respond to the growing pressures, anxieties, and changes brought about by an increasingly competitive global economy.

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Several times during the course of the public debate over regulating feedlots, the idea was put forward that the responsibility for making a decision should be turned over to scientific experts who were thought to be able to objectively determine what the “facts” were with respect to the issues involved. In one opinion piece published in the *Northfield News*, a farmer who opposed the county’s desire to limit feedlots argued that the whole debate really just boiled down to a “technical question.” Therefore, he wrote, the correct solution could come from only “unbiased people with technical expertise.”<sup>10</sup>

This view was put forward at various times by people on both sides of the conflict. It stood at odds with a different view, also put forward by persons on both sides, that stressed the idea that the regulation of feedlots must not be viewed as simply a technical or economic matter, but as a political and/or ethical matter involving rights, power, justice, and moral principles.

## **The Civic Mission Question**

With this brief sketch of a real-world example in mind, let’s return to the civic mission question in land-grant education. For the University of Minnesota in particular, what might the Rice County example suggest? The work that needed to be done in this case was the work of coming to public judgment about what ought to be done with respect to the regulation of feedlots. How could or should University of Minnesota faculty, staff, and students contribute to this work?

Here is where we can begin to see the value of an idea that has been discussed in past issues of this journal: the idea of “public scholarship.” Introducing the idea of public scholarship encourages us to ask how a scholar’s work of constructing and communicating knowledge might contribute to community building, to public problem-solving, to public creation, and to the process of coming to public judgment on what ought to be done (not just what can or might be done) to address important public issues and problems. At the broadest level, we can ask: Is there a practice of scholarship that stands scholars with the public in addressing matters of public importance and, if so, what are its dimensions, dynamics, challenges, and promise?

In the Rice County case, there was an incredibly complex mix of issues embedded in the feedlot regulation challenge that provided opportunities for public scholarship across a broad range of disciplines. In the short term, there was a need for knowledge about the economic, technical, environmental, health, civic, and ethical dimensions and implications of feedlots, along with a need for a workable process that would help people with sharply different

perspectives and interests come to public judgment about what regulation, if any, should be adopted. But the feedlot challenge also raised or revealed a host of long-term issues and questions involving the future of agriculture, the nature of development, and the health and vitality of the county's public life.

Was there any public scholarship that was done in this case that proved useful in addressing these short- and long-term issues and questions? My answer to this question is short and simple: I don't know. In this case, and hundreds like it across the country, no one has intentionally asked the civic mission and work question, or else it hasn't been asked in such a way as to give us insight into the public dimensions of the scholarship that may have taken place. Because of this, what we "know" about civic mission and work in land-grant education is, for the most part, undocumented and untheorized. This leaves us with a flat and somewhat vague answer to the question about how land-grant faculty, staff, and students might contribute to cases such as the one in Rice County. This answer is roughly as follows: Research faculty and graduate students contribute through conducting scientific studies on specific issues or questions, and extension educators contribute by translating the findings of these studies into understandable language and bringing them to the decision-making table, along with occasionally playing a "neutral" facilitating role at public forums.

There are many problems with this answer. First, it encourages us to frame the solutions to situations like the one in Rice County in only technical terms. But the case in Rice County involved far more than narrow technical questions, as important as those were. It also involved a host of civic and cultural issues and questions. A larger framing of this case would help capture these dimensions and thus put it in the context of the challenge of sustainability. And this would have the additional benefit of inviting faculty and students from nonagricultural departments and disciplines—for example, the arts and humanities—to imagine a role for themselves in the work, something that is not encouraged with a narrow technical framing.

A second problem with the answer is that it doesn't say anything about how faculty and graduate students should focus and conduct their technical research: for example, how they should construct and pursue their research questions or what measures or standards or criteria they should employ for evaluating the policy implications of their results. Another related problem is that it sharply limits the role of extension educators, viewing them mainly as neutral information providers and meeting facilitators. These roles are important, but insufficient. Extension also has a key role to play in the complex political

negotiation and organizing work that is inescapably embedded in situations like the one in Rice County. This work must be placed inside our view of what extension work should involve, as it was, with much success, in the early decades of extension's history.

In addition to these problems, the default answer to the civic mission and work question is silent about the deeply important matter of what, if anything, faculty, students, and extension educators should stand for or be committed to as they engage with others in addressing public issues. Should they be committed to the "facts," as science reveals them to us? Should they be committed to advancing the economic bottom line? Should they stand for the environment? Should they stand for the principle of democracy and for the civility, integrity, and vitality of the democratic process? Or is their real challenge to somehow stand for all of these together?

This line of questioning eventually leads to a broad, overarching question: What is the central aim or purpose of land-grant education? While the answer to this question is and always has been a matter of debate, a perspective has run throughout the history of land-grant institutions that sees it as having something to do with democracy. To understand the essence of this perspective, I want to turn to a few passages from the old civic rhetoric of administrators that are particularly instructive in relation to the Rice County case.

In his presidential address at the 25th annual convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations in 1911, W. H. Jordan, who served as director of the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station from 1896 to 1921, said the following:

It has been reported, though I do not credit the statement, that a member of an agricultural college faculty once declared that the business of his institution was to bring about the production of more hogs at greater profit. If this remark was made, what a spectacle it pictures! It places the hog at the pinnacle of educational aspiration, with the man as a lesser figure.<sup>11</sup>

A few years later, Liberty Hyde Bailey, who served as dean of the New York State College of Agriculture at Cornell University from 1903 to 1913, clarified the core principle behind Jordan's statement. In his classic book published in 1915, *The Holy Earth*, Bailey wrote:

It is not sufficient to train technically in the trades and crafts and arts to the end of securing greater economic efficiency—this may be accomplished in a despotism and result in no self-action on the part of the people. Every democracy must reach far beyond what is commonly known as economic efficiency and do everything it can to enable those

in the backgrounds to maintain their standing and their pride and to partake in the making of political affairs.<sup>12</sup>

Bailey's words from 1915 help us see the inadequacy of an answer to the civic mission question that is framed exclusively around economics. It also helps us see the historical roots of the call put forward in 2000 by the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land Grant Universities. The commission's call for land-grant institutions to "serve not only as agents of this democracy, but also as its architects," is a call for the renewal of a civic mission that is not just about enhancing economic growth and efficiency, but also about the enhancement of the political "standing and pride" of the common people. This mission can't be achieved solely through the delivery of neutral technical services. It must be pursued through public work efforts that join together the talents, intelligence, wisdom, and creative energies of a broad range of people acting as citizens of a vibrant democracy committed to the commonwealth. To see land-grant education not as a neutral service but as public work is to see it in light of its best tradition. The renewal of this tradition is one of the most important tasks we face.

## **Approaches to Renewal**

There will be many avenues for pursuing the civic renewal process in land-grant education. I want to briefly point to three of them. First, it is important and useful to create a vehicle at specific institutions that provides visibility to the civic mission question and a meaningful way for faculty, staff, students, and others to engage in exploring it. Such a vehicle has been created at the University of Minnesota, where a Civic Engagement Task Force has been established by the Office of the Provost. The task force is charged with strengthening the university's civic mission across the full range of its activities and making practical proposals for institutionalizing civic engagement as a continuing priority. Through public forums, working groups, and seed grants for new initiatives, the task force is helping to dramatically increase the seriousness and scope of the university's intentional commitment to civic engagement. This approach can, and should, inspire similar efforts at other institutions.

There is another approach to the renewal process that should not be overlooked. Following one of the key organizing principles that civil rights leader Ella Baker promoted, we must find, learn from, and support those who are already working, in this case, those who are already doing the work of public scholarship.<sup>13</sup> We must do this not merely to celebrate or acknowledge those who are doing this work, but to learn from them the lessons that will help us deepen and expand it.

Fortunately, there are some good models to draw from that will help us follow Baker's principle. In my own work, I am drawing heavily from an approach developed by John Forester, chair of the Department of City and Regional Planning at Cornell.

Forester and his students have spent much of the past decade developing hundreds of richly detailed "practitioner profiles" of planners in an effort to

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understand and encourage participatory planning processes. His recent book, *The Deliberative Practitioner*, is a masterful analysis of the lessons gleaned from these pro-

files. In several different projects, I am adapting Forester's approach and applying it to the work of land-grant faculty and extension educators.

For example, recently I had graduate students in a course I teach on community education and development create practitioner profiles of Cornell Cooperative Extension educators, focusing on specific examples of their work. These profiles, which are edited transcripts of tape-recorded interviews, gave the class a window into the fine-grained nuances of extension educators' civic work. They also gave extension educators, extension administration, and campus faculty a previously unavailable window into Cornell's civic practice. I have hopes that the profiles we develop over the next few years might provide lessons for improving and expanding this practice.

In another project, supported by the Kettering Foundation, I'm working with a team of colleagues to build a practical theory of public scholarship in land-grant education, drawn from a close analysis of practitioner profiles and case studies from seven land-grant institutions. [This study was later published in 2005 by the Kettering Foundation.]<sup>14</sup> We will use what we learn as a resource for the ongoing work of organizing faculty, staff, students, and community members in new public work initiatives.

Finally, in the face of the fact that the task of civic renewal in land-grant education is something of a long shot, cutting as it does against the grain of an academic culture that leans heavily in another direction, there is a need to take a prophetic stance, that is, a stance that draws inspiration and authority from the best vision of what land-grant institutions have stood for, while being mindful of why this vision has never been fully achieved. One thing we will need for this task is new historical research devoted to developing a deeper

understanding of our civic heritage. I suspect that a deeper understanding of this heritage will teach us that the pursuit of a civic mission in land-grant education has always been difficult, that there have always been abundant reasons to doubt its prospects. But it will also reveal to us our prophetic figures, the Liberty Hyde Baileys of our history, who stood firmly for the land-grant idea's democratic aims and took a leap of faith in what might be accomplished, despite the odds.

If the contemporary movement for civic renewal in land-grant education is to grow and bear fruit, it will do so because of the faith and works of our modern-day prophets. We needn't wait long for them to appear. They're already at work, in small and large ways here and there, all across the country. Let's support and learn from them.

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Ernest L. Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1990/1997), 3.
- <sup>2</sup> Land-grant institutions are members of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities. See the association's website <https://www.aplu.org> for more information.
- <sup>3</sup> "About CSREES," <http://www.reeusda.gov/1700/about/csreesa2.htm#is> (accessed on November 8, 2001).
- <sup>4</sup> Statistics drawn from the CSREES website, <http://www.reeusda.gov/1700/about/csreesa2.htm#is> (accessed on November 8, 2001).
- <sup>5</sup> The commission's reports are posted at <https://www.aplu.org/projects-and-initiatives/economic-development-and-community-engagement/past-projects/Kellogg%20Commission%20on%20the%20Future%20of%20State%20and%20Land-Grant%20Universities>.
- <sup>6</sup> Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land Grant Universities, *Renewing the Covenant: Learning, Discovery, and Engagement in a New Age and Different World* (Washington, DC: National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, 2000), 24. In this passage the commission is drawing from Harry C. Boyte and Elizabeth Hollander, *Wingspread Declaration on Renewing the Civic Mission of the American Research University* (Racine, WI: The Johnson Foundation, 1999).
- <sup>7</sup> W. J. Kerr, "The Spirit of Land Grant Institutions," in *Proceedings of the Forty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Association of Land Grant Colleges and Universities* (Burlington, VT: Free Press Printing Co., 1932), 90, 101.
- <sup>8</sup> Minnesota Statutes, Section 4A.07.
- <sup>9</sup> Jules N. Pretty, *Regenerating Agriculture: Policies and Practice for Sustainability and Self-Reliance* (Washington, D.C.: Joseph Henry Press, 1995), 11.

- <sup>10</sup> Vern Koester, "Farm-Environmental Issues Demand 'We' Approach," opinion piece, *Northfield News*, October 7, 1994.
- <sup>11</sup> W. H. Jordan, "Presidential Address" in *Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations, 1911* (Montpelier, VT: Capital City Press, 1912), 47.
- <sup>12</sup> Liberty Hyde Bailey, *The Holy Earth* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), 41.
- <sup>13</sup> Ella Baker was one of the most important leaders in the American Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. For excellent discussions of her work, see Charles Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Joanne Grant, *Ella Baker, Freedom Bound* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1998); and Mary Field Belenky, Lynne A. Bond, and Jacqueline S. Weinstock, *A Tradition That Has No Name: Nurturing the Development of People, Families, and Communities* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).
- <sup>14</sup> Scott Peters et al., *Engaging Campus and Community: The Practice of Public Scholarship in the State and Land-Grant University System* (Dayton, OH: Kettering Foundation Press, 2005).

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# PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP AND FACULTY ROLE CONFLICT

Katy J. Harriger and Jill J. McMillan

This 2005 piece by Katy J. Harriger and Jill J. McMillan documents one of the early, systematic experiments using deliberative pedagogy and public scholarship in higher education. Their narrative of the successes and challenges highlights tensions of pedagogy, including how to balance the learning process, practice ethical research design, and above all, promote productive communication that comes from well-designed (and well-supported) deliberation.

Today, we can trace how Harriger and McMillan's efforts have been emulated and adapted by a myriad of higher education institutions, including land-grant universities, community colleges, small liberal arts colleges, and state teaching institutions. In the last 17 years, a generation of public-focused academics has followed this innovative pathway. Many deliberation programs involve the elements mentioned in this essay, including training students in facilitation and forum moderation, teaching theories of deliberative democracy, and embarking on applied learning in campus or community engagement projects. The academics who teach these courses and run these programs continue to navigate similar "role tensions" as articulated by Harriger and McMillan. Happily, one notable difference is the advancement of the academic field of deliberative pedagogy, including several books and numerous journal articles that demonstrate the fruits of faculty and student engagement efforts. Still, many challenges identified in this piece endure in our work, such as how to create space for students to deliberate together through difficult issues without overpowering or over-leading and how to negotiate the roles of researcher and community member. Deliberative work in higher education must continue to embrace, rather than eliminate, such tensions to encourage critical, engaged reflection that brings forth innovations in practice.

— Sara A. Mehlretter Drury

For the last five years, we have been engaged in a public scholarship project that examines the experiences of college students with deliberation. While we have each been mindful in the past of the public relevance of our research agendas, we have found in this project new challenges to the comfortable accommodation we had made between our "traditional" research personas and our concern for public life. In the past, that accommodation involved separating what we did as

“objective” social science researchers in political science and communication, and what we did in the classroom or in our engagement with the larger community. This research project challenges the boundaries we had erected among the roles of teacher, researcher, and citizen of campus, community, and nation. In this essay, we consider the role tensions that we have encountered in public scholarship, and we discuss the challenges of reconciling them.

## **The Project**

In the fall of 2001, we launched the Democracy Fellows project at Wake Forest University. The project was designed to teach college students about the theory and practice of deliberation and to conduct a longitudinal study of their experiences during their four years of college in order to assess the effect of sustained exposure to deliberative experiences. From the entering class, we recruited 30 students, and they were enrolled in two sections of a first-year seminar titled *Deliberative Democracy*. In the course, the students were exposed to debate in democratic theory, particularly the literature on deliberative democracy, and to communication literature about democratic talk and effective group process. Then, the students learned to deliberate through three National Issues Forums (NIF). After each deliberation, we “debriefed,” analyzing what had gone well, what had not worked, and why. Finally, students studied the campus to discover major issues facing the campus community and, through a deliberative process, chose one issue—building campus community—upon which to focus.

In the spring of their first year, the Democracy Fellows conducted further research on the issue, conducting a framing exercise, and wrote an issue guide for use in a deliberation. The guide focused on building campus community through changes in social life, academic culture, and service to the wider community. In the fall of their sophomore year, the Democracy Fellows were trained in moderation skills and planned and executed the campus deliberation. In the spring of that year, they studied the Winston-Salem community, identified key issues facing the city, and chose the issue of urban sprawl for a community deliberation. They then researched the issue and adapted a National Issues Forums Institute-Public Agenda guide on the issue to the Winston-Salem setting. During the fall of their junior year, the students planned and conducted the community deliberation at a local science museum.

During this teaching and advising process, we were also engaged in conducting research on the impact of the three “deliberative interventions” outlined above. In the first semester, we conducted individual entry interviews with the

Democracy Fellows and focus groups with an equal number of freshmen randomly selected from the class. In the sophomore year, we conducted focus groups with the Democracy Fellows, a sophomore class cohort, and a group of students from across classes who had participated in the campus deliberation. Following the community deliberation in their junior year, we conducted focus groups with the Democracy Fellows and a group of their junior cohorts. Finally, in the spring of their fourth year, we will conduct exit interviews with each of the Democracy Fellows and focus groups with a senior cohort.

In addition to the qualitative interview data, we gathered some quantitative data by including questions about civic engagement in the freshman survey given to the entire entering class in 2001 and in the senior survey given to a sample

of the graduating class of 2005. We also asked all the students interviewed each year to fill out a participation survey that recorded their activities on campus and off that year and asked them a few questions about their political activism and their involvement on campus.

## **The Challenges**

We were actively engaged with our Democracy Fellows students in the learning enterprise and two community engagement efforts during this time. But in addition, we were researchers gathering data, getting permission from the Institutional Review Board to conduct “human subject” research, and attempting, as social scientists, to analyze objectively those data and draw conclusions that might be of value to higher education. We discovered, much to our surprise, that the comfort level we had developed over our combined 50 years of teaching and researching was constantly challenged. We learned that “public”

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or “engaged” scholarship of this type was enormously more challenging than we had grown used to because it put into tension the faculty roles of teacher, researcher, and citizen that we had learned to keep separate.

### ***Teacher v. Moderator***

One of the first challenges we encountered as we conducted forums in the classroom was the uncomfortable difference between moderating a forum and our traditional role of leading a discussion about readings and ideas introduced in class. While we have both striven over the years to create free spaces for students to think and develop their own opinions, we have also seen our role as teachers as requiring a certain, and sometimes substantial, amount of guidance in steering students to wrestle with hard questions in our disciplines. Given that we had more substantive knowledge of the subject area, we felt free as these discussions unfolded to provide additional information, steer them away from overgeneralizing from their own experiences, and steer them toward larger abstract conclusions about the subject matter. In fact, we prided ourselves on our reputations as professors who encouraged and effectively guided discussions in the classroom. While we always tried, and usually succeeded, in keeping our personal views about issues out of the mix, we believed and acted on the belief that discussions would lead to particular conclusions corresponding to the theories of the disciplines we studied.

After we were trained in moderating deliberations and began moderating the classroom NIF deliberations, we found ourselves chafing under the

***We felt as though we were abandoning our teaching personas and responsibilities for this strange new role as “neutral” moderators. How very strange it felt.***

requirements for effective moderation, particularly the neutrality requirement and the need to fade into the background. Good moderators disappear, we learned. And yet we also believed that we knew from years of classroom teaching that the teacher

matters to the quality of the discussion. The push and pull between the roles of teacher and moderator proved especially difficult as our students floundered in the complex and challenging issues of racial and ethnic tensions. We felt as though we were abandoning our teaching personas and responsibilities for this strange new role as “neutral” moderators. There was no substantive outcome

toward which to guide them, just a process to manage while they provided the substance. How very strange it felt.

### ***Teacher v. Researcher***

We encountered even greater conflicts between our roles as teachers and researchers. The notion that these roles are in tension is certainly not a new one in academia; some schools call themselves “teaching colleges” and others “research universities,” and there is much discussion among junior faculty in particular about how one knows whether they are doing “too much” of one or the other given the culture of their institution. We have always seen this as a false dichotomy; being researchers enhances our teaching by keeping us engaged and up to date with the scholarship of our fields while teaching in an interactive way generates new questions for research.

The tension we encountered between these roles in “engaged” scholarship was a different one. Our students were also our “subjects.” At the same time that we were teaching and mentoring them about how to deliberate, how to moderate, and how to organize a deliberation, we were also studying them. We were both engaging and observing, and the role conflict was very real. The “human subjects” model of traditional social science research has addressed the ethical dilemmas posed in studying human beings by creating an elaborate protocol involving informed consent. Getting signatures on a form buys researchers the distance they need from their subjects in order to conduct objective social science research. But in the kind of engaged research in which we were involved, this makes no sense. In fact, it raises a whole new set of ethical challenges. Teachers do not, or at least should not, treat their students as “subjects” with whom they are experimenting. Advisors who have brought together a group of students to organize a campus and community deliberation strive to mentor and to help them develop the skills they need to succeed, not stand apart at a distance and watch them fail. But as traditionally trained social science researchers, we felt constantly challenged with these tensions, worrying that if we kept our distance, we were not fulfilling our understanding of the teacher or mentor roles, but that if we intervened actively, we could violate our understanding of what it means to objectively gather as opposed to create data.

### ***Faculty v. Citizen***

Our comfortable faculty identity as teachers and researchers was challenged on campus in our teaching and our work with the campus deliberation. But the

greatest challenge came for us, and our students, as we moved into the larger community of Winston-Salem. Here the role tensions were even greater as our teacher and researcher roles bumped up against our roles as citizens of this community. In our traditional faculty roles, we felt the obligation to make certain that our students came away from the experience having learned

***The conflicts, rather than being problems to solve, provide a creative tension for our work that strikes us as the fundamental value of public scholarship for the higher education enterprise.***

more about deliberation and about how it might work in a large, diverse, political community. Consequently, we believed it was important for them to be responsible for organizing the event, recruiting the participants, and preparing the materials to be used.

Our role tension came into sharp relief when we watched the students underestimate the timing and complexity of advertising and recruiting for this event. If they did not do an effective job in these tasks, our teaching and research interests told us that it was best to let them “fail,” given our belief that most learning comes from trial and error, and often, failure. But as citizens of the community, we felt an ethical obligation not to treat our neighbors as “subjects” to be experimented with for our pedagogical and research purposes. We also believed it was important for the students to see that this “detachment” was inappropriate. It would be wrong to invite community members into a public dialogue about making Winston-Salem a better place to live without doing our best to make sure that the experience was a positive one, at least in its execution, if not in its outcomes. When the community becomes part of the learning environment, responsible citizenship requires us to value and respect the new members of our learning community. This dilemma had multiple implications for future efforts at community engagement and connection between the university and the city and for the long-standing tensions between town and gown that exist in so many communities with institutions of higher education.

## **Reconciling the Conflicts**

The multiple role conflicts we encountered in this work have the potential to be paralyzing. At least at first glance, they felt nearly irreconcilable. But we have learned as we have worked together through these challenges that the

conflicts, rather than being problems to solve, provide a creative tension for our work that strikes us as the fundamental value of public scholarship for the higher education enterprise. Our experience forced us to examine our comfortable patterns of behavior as academics and ask ourselves what it meant for the democratic enterprise that so many of us negotiate the world of higher education by separating our various

roles and keeping them distinct from each other. The detachment characteristic of the research enterprise seems a dangerous and undesirable practice in the classroom, on our campus, and in the wider community.

But so, too, does it seem at least undesirable, and at worst dangerous, to throw ourselves deeply into engagement with students and community members without being reflective—and yes, to some extent, detached enough to be reflective—about what we are doing, why we are doing it, and whether it is making any difference.

The ultimate goal of public scholarship is to contribute in some positive way to the health of the democratic community. The stakes are large, not small. In seeking to make a difference at this level, it seems inevitable that we will be forced to reconsider what it is that we do within the institutions we inhabit. For us, it has meant embracing the creative role tension and learning to live and work in that space rather than resisting or ignoring it. But it also means looking for and finding what it is of value that academics bring to public work. In doing public work, we are forced to ask: What is the meaning and value of our work to democracy? As trained social scientists, we are encouraged to have a healthy skepticism about models and to distance ourselves enough to ask whether we are simply finding what we want to find because we want democratic practices to work or whether something positive is actually happening. To see that something does not work is not to conclude that democracy cannot work, only that it is hard, continuous, trial-and-error work imbued with all the complexities of human behavior.

In the end, we see that public scholarship is about bridging the gap between the reflection that occurs in the “ivory tower” and the engagement that occurs in the democratic classroom and community. Reflection without

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engagement has a sterility to it that presents little of value to the democratic enterprise. But engagement without reflection seems equally problematic and bound, ultimately, to accomplish little.



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# FIVE EMERGING PRACTICES IN THE SCHOLARSHIP OF ENGAGEMENT

Derek W. M. Barker

The Carnegie Foundation, where I lead the Classification for Community Engagement, describes community engagement as the “collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.” For Carnegie, the purpose of community engagement is the “partnership of [academic] knowledge and resources with those [nonacademic] sectors to prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.”

Derek W. M. Barker’s essay “Five Emerging Practices in the Scholarship of Engagement” was originally published in 2006, the same year that Carnegie issued its first list of institutions of higher education that demonstrated extraordinary commitment to their public purposes. Barker’s five emerging practices reflect some but not all of Carnegie’s definitions, and 16 years later, we can better assess which of these practices have emerged, blossomed, and borne fruit. In particular, in this brief introduction, I would like to offer an addition to Barker’s analysis, focusing on a topic that I believe received insufficient attention in the literature at that time and which has, in the years since, become central to Carnegie’s and my own definition of community engagement: coproduction of knowledge. Partnership and reciprocity grounded in this principle are at the core of community engagement. It decenters academic knowledge and resources by positioning it on an equal footing with nonacademic sectors, problematizing the power dynamic central to the knowledge production and enterprise of the academy.

In contrast, *public scholarship* and *participatory research*, Barker writes, stress “the active role citizens can play in the production of academic knowledge.” *Public information networks* establish databases administered by the academy to “help communities identify resources and assets.” *Civic literacy scholarship* describes scholars within the academy working to “enhance democratic processes by ensuring that their disciplines are supplying publics with the knowledge necessary for reflective judgments on public issues.”

These definitions do not fully acknowledge systems of knowledge and knowledge production outside of the academy as equal and necessary contributors to the enterprise of community engagement as a form of engaged scholarship. While *participatory research* does center marginalized groups or communities in defining problems, it often absorbs the scholarship of marginalized or oppressed groups into the academy without truly considering the power dynamic present.

Perhaps the closest to the Carnegie Foundation's definition of community engagement is *community partnership*. Barker argues that "in contrast to other forms of engaged scholarship, community partnerships are especially concerned with power, resources, and building social movements." Yet, this doesn't describe coproduction of knowledge. While the practice will "often overlap with public scholarship and participatory research practices, this approach tends to emphasize the end result of social transformation over the process and its political qualities."

If *participatory research* succeeds in producing knowledge in a collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities, albeit within a power dynamic that favors institutions, and *community partnership* succeeds in building reciprocal relationships that lead to social transformation, *community engagement* sits on the boundary between these two. It describes a scholarly collaboration that prioritizes systems of knowledge production from outside of the academy, drawing on resources and practices from both groups equitably to coproduce knowledge and action.

Genuine community engagement by institutions of higher education must avoid preserving the established epistemology of the academy and reinforcing systems of knowledge built on colonial values and ideals at the expense of indigenous, intersectional, and alternative systems of knowledge production. While there is particular and powerful value in the forms, processes, and methods of knowledge generation that come from within the academy, knowledge creation systems and processes outside the academy are essential for democratic processes to take root and thrive.

— Mathew Johnson

More than ever, higher education professionals are starting to describe their work using the words "participatory research," "public scholarship," and "community partnerships." In fact, words like these are being used in the titles and mission statements of centers, programs, and other initiatives to broaden the idea of scholarship and deepen the connection between higher education institutions and the public realm. For the past few years, I have been tracking these projects, as well as the work of independent scholars who have similar approaches. I see an exciting group of academics trying to make the case that civic work makes for good politics and good scholarship. Civic work helps scholars generate more practical research questions, enables them to collect more data, and allows them to see their ideas working in practice. Engaged scholars are finding that their practices are not something they do on the side in addition to their academic research. They embrace different methods and emphasize varying

aspects of democratic politics, but their work can be understood and assessed as a “scholarship of engagement.”

Five emerging practices are showing how higher education professionals can expand the idea of scholarship and enrich the political life of their communities. Each one is animated by a specific theory of democracy, and as a result, each one uses its own methods to address a specific set of public problems. What distinguishes these

practices is the intent of the scholars, not the methods they employ. While academic scholarship is often driven by the training and expertise of the scholar, engaged scholars are driven by what they

***Civic work helps scholars generate more practical research questions, enables them to collect more data, and allows them to see their ideas working in practice.***

intend to accomplish. By thinking about the scholarship of engagement along these dimensions, my intention is to provide a clear and systematic framework through which to understand and assess the work that makes up this movement while also recognizing its diversity.

The scholarship of engagement concept was first stated in the work of the late Ernest Boyer, who served as president of the Carnegie Academy for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning. Boyer’s work was dedicated to expanding the idea of scholarship beyond research published in peer-reviewed journals in order to recognize and value all the things that academics actually do. One of Boyer’s later works took a further step to argue that the idea of scholarship could be broadened to include the scholarship of engagement: practices that overlap with the traditional areas of scholarship but also incorporate practices of collaboration with public entities.

So what does civic work have to do with scholarship? What is “scholarly” about the scholarship of engagement? By linking civic work to scholarship, this terminology reflects a growing awareness that civic work can further academic as well as political goals. On the research side, scholars are making contributions to their field by using methods that incorporate civic work. Rather, civic work is woven into the research process itself, a critical component of the scholar’s methodology.

Practices of civic work can also make a difference in what Boyer calls the “scholarship of teaching.” For a long time, the service learning and experiential

learning movements have been showing that students can benefit from seeing the ideas discussed in the classroom applied practically in the outside world. What the scholarship of engagement adds to these pedagogies is a conscious effort at building deeper relationships with communities beyond the idea of “service,” which does not always lead to more enduring forms of engagement. The scholarship of engagement attempts to provide students with greater insight into the nature of public problems by asking them to practice more intense forms of democratic citizenship. Although these practices are often present implicitly in service and experiential learning programs, they are explicitly and consciously cultivated by the scholarship of engagement. In these ways, far from compromising their seriousness and rigor, engaged scholars are making the case that their work meets or even exceeds traditional norms for assessing scholarship.

### **The Scholarship of Engagement: Five Emerging Practices**

So what do engaged scholars do? How does their work contribute to democracy? The scholarship of engagement is distinct from traditional approaches because it integrates practices of civic work into the production of knowledge. It is different, for example, from traditional academic scholarship that simply has to do with civic work. The scholarship of engagement is also distinct from public intellectual scholarship, which takes traditional academic literature and attempts to give it greater visibility in the media. Rather, the scholarship of engagement means finding creative ways to communicate to public audiences, work for the public good, and, most important, generate knowledge with public participation.

To accomplish these goals, engaged scholars are embracing a number of methods and the terminologies that go with them. Unfortunately, such diversity can make for a daunting task when it comes to understanding and assessing these practices. In order to make sense of these approaches, I decided to proceed inductively to find out how scholars are describing their own work and to see whether any patterns can be identified. I found five emerging practices (see table 1).

First, *public scholarship* is most often used to describe academic work that incorporates practices of deliberative politics to enhance scholarship. Public scholars are usually informed by some combination of the “deliberative” or “participatory” theories of democracy developed by thinkers such as John Dewey and Jürgen Habermas. In contrast to “participatory research” and “action research,” however, public scholarship generally emphasizes deliberation over participation—the quality of the discourse rather than the quantity

**Table 1. The Scholarship of Engagement: Five Practices**

Practice	Theory	Problems Addressed	Methods
<b>Public scholarship</b>	Deliberative democracy	Complex “public” problems requiring deliberation	Face-to-face, open forums
<b>Participatory research</b>	Participatory democracy	Inclusion of specific groups	Face-to-face collaboration with specific publics
<b>Community partnership</b>	Social democracy	Social change, structural transformation	Collaboration with intermediary groups
<b>Public information networks</b>	Democracy (broadly understood)	Networking, communication	Databases of public resources
<b>Civic literacy scholarship</b>	Democracy (broadly understood)	Enhancing public discourse	Communication with general public

of participants. A common public scholarship practice is the open public forum. Forums typically address issues of wide concern, and, in particular, they address complex issues that require actual public discussion rather than simply voting or taking a public opinion poll. Dewey refers to these sorts of problems as “public problems.”

Several examples illustrate the ways in which deliberative politics can enhance scholarship. National organizations such as the Study Circles Resource Center and the National Issues Forums use deliberative methods, often in association with civic work centers on college campuses. As Keith Morton and Sandra Enos tell us, these forums are often linked to coursework in fields such as political science and public policy, providing student participants with a powerful learning experience. Similarly, regional studies scholars at the University of Kentucky Center for Participatory Research and Democratic Planning used forums to draw citizens into the research process on issues ranging from local economic development to the folk traditions of their community. One of their programs, for example, used an innovative blend of forums, films, and humanities scholarship to bring awareness to the long-term impacts of highway development on the local economy. These scholars found that the level of public knowledge on this issue increased as a result of civic work and public deliberation. A group of environmental health scientists, including

John Sullivan, recently found that by using community outreach and public forums, they could collaborate with citizens to monitor local environmental problems. As a result, the researchers gained access to new data sources, and their work was communicated more effectively to the community. Similarly, Nick Jordan and a group of sustainable development scientists recently found that their research on weed science is more effective when the farmers who use their research are involved in the process. By collaborating with actual practitioners in the process of the research, these scientists found themselves addressing more urgent research questions with greater effectiveness. In all of these instances, scholars and students are finding new ways to enrich the scholarship process, generating new research questions and gaining access to new data sources through innovative practices of deliberative democracy.

The second emerging practice, very closely related to public scholarship, is *participatory research*, also referred to as “action research” or “participatory action research.” Like public scholarship, participatory research stresses the active role citizens can play in the production of academic knowledge. The main difference I see between the two stems from the relative emphasis on participation versus deliberation. While public scholars are more concerned with enhancing the quality of public participation in research, for participatory research, the emphasis tends to be on promoting participation itself. Participatory research tends to respond to problems of exclusion by reaching out to a marginalized

***Scholars and students are finding new ways to enrich the scholarship process, generating new research questions and gaining access to new data sources through innovative practices of deliberative democracy.***

or previously excluded group. For example, Kathy Mordock and Marianne Krasny define action research as “a process of research in which an oppressed group of people or a community identifies a problem, collects information, analyzes, and acts upon the problem in order to

solve it and to promote public transformation.” These practices have developed alongside “activist” criticisms of deliberative democracy like those of Iris Marion Young. These critics argue that deliberative practices tend to force marginalized groups to compromise, preventing radical solutions from emerging. Since the emphasis is on including a specific group in research to solve a

specific problem, the deliberative methods of public scholarship, such as open public forums on universal issues, are less appropriate. Despite their differences of emphasis, however, public scholarship and participatory research often overlap and can supplement each other, depending on the nature of the problem being addressed.

Like public scholarship, participatory research is showing that good politics can make for good scholarship. The weed scientists mentioned above described their work using the public scholarship terminology but also drew heavily from participatory research scholarship as well as from the concept of “public work.” Similarly, participatory research is the preferred paradigm used by the scholars at the Center for Participatory Research and Democratic Planning at the University of Kentucky, cited above, although their methods overlap significantly with public scholarship. Participatory research and public scholarship are not so much opposed as they are responding to different problems in democratic politics. Situations may call for building bridges to specific groups to bring more participants into the process, or they may call for improving the quality of discourse of existing groups. Engaged scholars are finding innovative ways to blend these approaches in response to specific problems.

Third, the scholarship of engagement includes practices referred to as *community partnerships*. Public participation and deliberation may be key components of community partnerships, but the primary emphasis in this field tends to be on cultural transformation. As a result, one might say that community partnerships are animated primarily by a conception of democracy. In contrast to other forms of engaged scholarship, community partnerships are especially concerned with power, resources, and building social movements. While community partnerships often overlap with public scholarship and participatory research practices, this approach tends to emphasize the end result of social transformation over the process and its political qualities.

Harry C. Boyte, of the University of Minnesota’s Center for Democracy and Citizenship, describes his community partnership practices as “public work.” Scholars there engage in a range of community projects and, through their experiences, contribute to scholarly literature in fields such as political theory, public policy, and sociology. Ira Harkavy, a leader in this field and director of the Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania, describes his work as a conscious effort at “going beyond service learning” by accomplishing structural transformation through comprehensive institutional commitments linked to teaching and research, a goal that is only sometimes

explicitly stated in service-learning practices. Again, other scholars use a combination of community partnership methods and practices drawn from other forms of engagement. For example, the weed scientists mentioned above also describe their public scholarship as a form of public work, showing that deliberative politics can be a crucial component of social transformation.

Fourth, many of the scholarship of engagement centers are creating *public information networks*. These networks typically help communities identify resources and assets by providing comprehensive databases of local activists, advocacy groups, and available services. While these programs do not always stress the iterative and deliberative quality of the forms of engaged scholarship, they use university resources to better inform public judgments and enrich the quality of discourse. Public information programs are best suited to dealing with situations in which the resources already exist in a community to solve a problem, but they are not being utilized effectively because of a lack of organization or communication. Examples of this approach include the Seattle Political Information Network of the Center for Communication and Civic Work at the University of Washington and the Democracy Collaborative's Information Commons at the University of Maryland.

A final approach to the scholarship of engagement emphasizes *civic skills* and *civic literacy*. Regardless of one's specific conception of democracy, any healthy democracy requires at least a minimal competence in knowledge of political institutions, economics, and science and technology to make educated and informed decisions. Scholarship conceived as an expert practice reserved for a few specialists further undermines the public's capacity for effective participation. Engaged scholars in this field are helping to enhance democratic processes by ensuring that their disciplines are supplying publics with the knowledge necessary for reflective judgments on public issues. This approach again aims to deepen the practices of engagement by reducing the separation between expert specialists and the lay public, as well as by its specific emphasis on skills that are relevant to political participation and democratic decision-making. At the same time, civic-literacy approaches differ from other forms of engaged scholarship by targeting relatively broad and long-term trends in general public knowledge rather than specific and immediate problems. Project Pericles at Macalester College is one exemplary service-learning program with a specific focus on civic learning. Natural scientists, like Stuart Lee and Wolff-Michael Roth, have also been increasingly concerned with ensuring that the public has an adequate understanding of science and technology so as to reach reflective judgments on those issues.

One sign that these practices are catching on as both good politics and good scholarship is the development of specific criteria for the assessment of engaged scholarship. Lorilee Sandmann and the National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement, for example, have been working in this field, serving as peer evaluators in promotion and tenure decisions. They try to identify practices of engagement with real scholarly value, not just “service” that is done on the side. Assessment work may impose challenging standards for the scholarship of engagement movement, but it helps make the case to promotion and tenure committees that practices of engagement are central to the research and teaching goals of the profession. Although assessment is not itself engagement (and I do not include it among the five practices), this work is a critical component of the engaged scholarship universe.

## Conclusion

The reality of the scholarship of engagement universe is, of course, fluid and complex, and cannot be easily reduced into boxes. The terms I have identified do not have settled definitions. They are closely related and easily confused with one another, and at times, they are even used interchangeably. Moreover, these practices are by their very nature—and by the nature of democracy itself—experimental and in constant flux. Engaged scholars are not trying to set up a universal rule for the “best” method of engagement, but rather to respond to particular problems

in democratic politics. All engaged scholarship addresses problems that are broadly “public” in nature, but some of them may be short-term and particular in nature while others may contribute to the common good in broad or long-term ways.

Engaged scholarship can emphasize the processes of democratic decision-making or the substantive results of social transformation. Complete standardization would be neither possible nor desirable.

Still, a degree of clarity can help other scholars replicate these emerging practices, and shared meanings would help the field establish both intellectual

***The scholarship of engagement recognizes that teaching, research, and any of the scholarly functions can be broadened to incorporate practices of democratic politics.***

and political legitimacy. In tracking the activities of higher education civic work centers, I have been finding that the concept of the scholarship of engagement has been catching on. On the one hand, it is focused enough to capture the distinct qualities and contributions of engaged scholarship. The scholarship of engagement is not something that academics do on the side as opposed to “serious” scholarship. Rather, the scholarship of engagement has developed specific methods and criteria for assessment, and it is making identifiable contributions to academic disciplines on their own terms. On the other hand, the scholarship of engagement is an inclusive concept that reflects the great diversity in the theory and practice of this growing movement. The scholarship of engagement includes an exciting array of theoretical approaches toward the renewal of democratic politics, and it recognizes that teaching, research, and any of the traditional scholarly functions can be broadened to incorporate practices of democratic politics. Most of all, the concept is catching on because it is both scholarly and political, capturing both aspects of a distinct, growing, and exciting movement.



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# THE PUBLIC/ACADEMIC DISCONNECT

David W. Brown

In 1995, David W. Brown argued that higher education had become detached from democratic culture. He observed detachment shifting faculty identities and described how academics felt pressured to seek approval of their peers rather than pursue public value. Their concepts of what counted as knowledge had changed. He foresaw looming problems that resonated with our experience at the University of Minnesota. When our Center for Democracy and Citizenship interviewed faculty members in 1997, most described a loss of public purpose in research, an erosion of teaching, and demoralization.

Higher education is an upstream institution that prepares future professionals, educators, and curricular frameworks. Thus, detachment also reshaped K-12 schools, which became increasingly governed in top-down, bureaucratic ways. Parents, who once played significant roles in schools, felt pushed aside, and PTA membership plummeted. The idea of “common schools,” both in K-12 and higher education, largely disappeared.

Long-simmering anger in local communities has exploded at schools and school boards across the country. Today’s fights over K-12 schools and higher education reflect not only curriculum and ideology but also an undercurrent of anger at the loss of popular ownership and agency in education at every level. Brown anticipated much of this. He proposed “civic training centers” to educate future professionals and to reeducate faculty in “arts of collaboration.” He presaged today’s movement of citizen professionals who work “*with* citizens, not *for* them.” Beyond the market view of education as consumer choice and the state-centered view of education as expert delivery, we need a movement, again, for schools and colleges to be the new commons in which whole communities have a role to play and a stake in their future.

— Harry C. Boyte

The much talked about crisis in higher education is, superficially, one of dollars—more competition for research funds, downsizing of both academic and staff functions, trying to cope with the financial aid needs of students, and the deferred maintenance costs of the physical plant—in a political climate that offers no prospect of a bailout with larger public subsidies or dramatic tuition increases.

No doubt the crisis is financial, but it arises, in substantial part, from legislators and taxpayers having second thoughts about the kind of returns they are getting on their investment. Many institutions of higher learning are being forced to reexamine their relations to a public that can no longer be counted on to support them as they have in the past.

For most Americans, higher education has always been a very pragmatic investment—used both for personal advancement and for civic purposes too.

Personal advancement still rides high in the saddle. Short of rhetorical flourish, serious civic purpose has not been seen for some time. Each of our more than 3,000 colleges and universities is left to articulate and pursue

***Many institutions of higher learning are being forced to reexamine their relations to a public that can no longer be counted on to support them as they have in the past.***

whatever mission fits its circumstance, and what they do now is serve as necessary vehicles for faculty and student ambitions. Most colleges and universities, however, have no coherent agenda of their own that serves larger public interests. Ernest Boyer, executive director of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, says, “Increasingly, the campus is seen as a place where students get credentialed and faculty get tenured, while the overall work of the academy does not seem particularly relevant to the nation’s most pressing civic, social, economic, and moral problems.”<sup>1</sup>

Where once we educated a small class of relatively privileged young men to serve and govern their communities, now we educate a much larger and heterogeneous cohort with hardly a thought given to their preparation for such civic work. Civic purpose is, at best, a university’s mission to educate for professional employment by which its graduates distinguish and distance themselves from a lay public and then serve that public according to certified knowledge, skills, and self-regulated codes of ethics.

The chasm is especially wide between academics and citizens—too wide for anyone to leap without risking serious injury. Perhaps no other professional world is more removed now from democratic culture than the hierarchies within and among academic departments, in which opinion, anyone’s, is valued only to the extent that it has first been certified by an elaborate credentialing process. If citizens are heard, they certainly are not listened to. Thomas Bender

concludes that “academic truth” and “political knowledge” are now worlds apart and make it difficult for “academic intellect” to be involved in “democratic culture.”<sup>2</sup>

Even those professors who see “politics” and “power” in every text and institution nonetheless pursue their critiques in very orthodox academic fashion. They deconstruct, but they do not communicate with the larger public. They labor for the approval of their peers but not for the sake of that public. There are clearly rewards for their academic performance but very little of it benefits the real-world constituencies that inspire their scholarship.

The marginality that Boyer speaks of, and the chasm described by Bender, underlies the supposed crisis that presidents, deans, department chairs, and faculty now must deal with, whether they acknowledge it or not. It is not just their budgets that are precarious but also their public standing.

On the assumption that a good teacher uses any problem that arises in the classroom as an opportunity to learn, perhaps the crisis in higher education is an opportunity for universities to learn how they can better serve those who have become hostile or indifferent to their interests, or become more relevant to the nation’s challenges, as Boyer suggested. Conceivably, the pressures on many universities may result in some attention being paid to strategies that reconnect them to the broader jurisdictions in which they are located or that underwrite a large portion of their costs. For Thomas Bender, “The agenda for the next decade . . . ought to be the opening up of the disciplines, the ventilating of professional communities . . . that have become too self-referential.”<sup>3</sup>

A good way to begin is by encouraging academics to do work that has

***The chasm is especially wide between academics and citizens—too wide for anyone to leap without risking serious injury.***

practical consequence for public problem-solving and to do such work *with* citizens, not *for* them. Universities alone or in a regional consortium might establish “civic training centers” to educate graduate students and

to reeducate faculty members as to the arts of collaboration with the numerous publics whose participation is essential if pressing social problems are to be solved.

Most problem-solving in most organizations and communities is a shared enterprise that some people think of as “politics.” If I found myself

alone on a desert island, there would be no politics. To be political is to be engaged in a process of analysis and interaction with other people. Independent grounds for judgment surely exist, such as the norms of a methodology or an ideology, but there is rarely any feasible way to enforce them in the political life of organizations and communities. In such venues, academics, and those who study with them, are called upon to help make decisions rather than discover answers. Whatever their technical skills or ideology, they must be prepared to adjust to public circumstances over which they have little or no control.

***Perhaps the crisis in higher education is an opportunity for universities to learn how they can better serve those who have become hostile or indifferent to their interests.***

A civic training center would be the place to develop “interrogating practices” that help citizens break down and break through the proprietary languages of academics so that their specialized vocabularies can be made intelligible, be reflected on, and used without license by nonspecialists. A civic training center would also be the place to promote the equally important practice, so often neglected by academics, of learning to ask, “What is it that members of the public know that I need to know if I am to be of any help?”

Two existing university centers are working examples of how new civic training centers might be organized. The Center for Democracy and Citizenship at the University of Minnesota, and more particularly its Project Public Life, develops and teaches ways “to reengage citizens in the public world.” The project’s work includes action research, teaching methods, organizing, and outreach, which combine theory, language, and skills that help citizens be participants in the everyday politics of problem-solving. One significant initiative under way is the project’s recent work with service, health, and professional organizations and their staff development programs. Harry C. Boyte, a codirector of the project, believes that “professional identities,” without reform and civic enrichment, are not only unequal to public problems but also present serious obstacles to their resolution.

The Center for Community Partnership at the University of Pennsylvania is an important partner working with the West Philadelphia Improvement Corp., a decade’s effort to create and sustain comprehensive community schools. The university does not contribute financial support but instead, through the

center, offers the talent of its students and faculty members to work with children, parents, and others in West Philadelphia. The goal is to create viable “community schools,” as social hubs for the entire community. Since those at Penn do not assume that they know how to do that for the residents of West Philadelphia, their center pursues a “Deweyan” strategy that emphasizes “a mutually beneficial, democratic relationship between academics and nonacademics.” The center is as much learning oriented as it is service oriented. Participation is not one-way, but two-way partnerships of faculty members, students, staff, and alumni, with residents—all learning from one another as they share problems and produce better outcomes than would otherwise happen if any one of them tried to do it alone.

Professional reputation is, and will remain, the reference point for those in the academy. That is why they must find a professional reason for being more attentive to civic culture. There is nothing like the experience of academics in real-world problem-solving to remind them that they still have much to learn or learn anew. It is possible that civic training centers would help to facilitate such learning and, thereby, influence the nature of reforms in graduate education and the research agenda of young scholars.

Whatever civic training centers might do to reconnect faculties and graduate students to the larger public world and its problems, the learning that took place could also be plowed back into teaching and problem-solving on campus.

Not only do many academic professionals refuse or fail to connect with real-world constituencies, they also set a terrible example in their academic

***A good way to begin is by encouraging academics to do work that has practical consequence for public problem-solving and to do such work with citizens, not for them.***

hierarchies on campus and the expert-novice distance maintained in lecture halls and classrooms. That is not how people come together in the real world to solve problems. Although “civic education” is not acknowledged on most campuses, it is, nonetheless, implicit in campus rituals and routines

that are conspicuously undemocratic. To experience public life and the politics that govern its outcomes means learning to reject the notion that the answers are “out there” in the custody of professionals. Neither are the answers “in here”—the radical subjectivity promoted by well-meaning teachers and facilitators.

Civic training centers might help teaching faculty to offer students learning structures in the classroom that resemble the complex organizations and diverse communities that await them. Treating students as consumers of higher education makes each of them feel important but also makes them ill equipped for influencing events or solving collective problems.

In normal times, the problems of a campus are usually addressed from the top down. Students are transient, some faculty find it hard to collaborate with others as equals, and professional staff is expected to administer the place for those who think that they have better things to do. But one might imagine another approach where the campus works to piece together whatever civic culture exists at any university going through the difficult transition of downsizing or experiencing other problems that disturb and divide the various constituencies. Such constituencies now find it hard to talk about their differences constructively, finding some group, other than their own, to blame. A civic training center might explore ways in which students, administrators, and faculty members can initiate and sustain a way of talking about the public life and problems that they share. Finding and practicing a democratic language—neither professionalized nor shrill—might help them get on with problem-solving together.

Moreover, a public needs problems to work on, not just to talk about. Diversity on any campus enlarges the circle, but each member of the circle needs a public role rather than merely having his or her “identity” acknowledged. If those in a circle are really to learn how to live with their differences, they need something to do together. Perhaps civic training centers could be places that help campuses move from the rhetoric of multiculturalism to real civic work.



## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Ernest Boyer, “The Scholarship of Engagement,” *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* 1, no. 1 (1996): 19.
- <sup>2</sup> Thomas Bender, *Intellect and Public Life: Essays on the Social History of Academic Intellectuals in the United States* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).
- <sup>3</sup> Bender, *Intellect and Public Life*, 143.

*Reprinted from David W. Brown, “The Public/Academic Disconnect,” Higher Education Exchange 1995, 38-42. This text has been lightly edited to conform with current Kettering Foundation style and citation guidelines.*

# IVORY TOWER OR TOWN SQUARE? Anti-Elitism and the Civic Purposes of Higher Education

An Interview with Derek W. M. Barker, Kara Lindaman,  
B. Da’Vida Plummer, and Joseph Scanlon

*Throughout its nearly 30 years of publication, Higher Education Exchange (HEX) has highlighted examples of civic work in institutions of higher education and has raised concerns about the troubling disconnect between citizens and the institutions purporting to serve them. Decades later, these concerns have become realities as public faith in higher education has declined and universities have found themselves swept up in increasingly polarized political discourse. Derek W. M. Barker, coeditor of HEX, interviews three educational professionals to reflect on these trends and discuss what might be done about them. All three interviewees have participated in Kettering’s research about higher education and represent diverse disciplines and institutions: Joseph Scanlon, assistant professor of political science at Monroe Community College; B. Da’Vida Plummer, former dean of the School of Journalism and Communications at Hampton University and current coexecutive director of Fellowships at Auschwitz for the Study of Professional Ethics; and Kara Lindaman, professor of political science and public administration at Winona State University. In the pages that follow, the interviewees make a compelling case that higher education institutions can reclaim their public purpose only by reaffirming their commitments to preparing students for democratic life and to promoting deliberative democracy in their local communities.*

**Barker:** Early issues of *HEX* were concerned with higher education’s role in contributing to a “disconnect” between the citizenry and institutions by emphasizing technical knowledge in the education of future professionals rather than skills needed to participate in democratic public life. How would you characterize the current relationship between citizens and professionals?

**Scanlon:** Skepticism surrounds much of the current relationship between citizens and professionals, especially those professionals responsible for managing aspects of community life. Skepticism can certainly be healthy, but it undermines confidence in public institutions when it manifests into outright distrust. While identifying the sources of this skepticism is a complex task, a contributing factor is civic education’s shrinking presence in higher education. Arguably, the current political climate reflects the decreasing emphasis on civics at all levels of education. However, there is a particular underrepresentation of civic education in professional education. Professional education often focuses solely on the skills relevant to growing individual prosperity.

However, professionals must acquire both occupational skills and the skills required to exercise community stewardship in cooperation with others.

As it stands, stewardship and cooperation are often missing from our communities. Cooperation gaps between public-facing professionals and citizens can easily result in the former comfortably operating without public input. At the same time, citizens grow increasingly skeptical and eventually distrustful of democratic life. Pro-

professionals can strengthen democratic life by contributing to a more robust civic culture.

For example, education, health care, and policing

professionals regularly create space for citizens to exchange divergent views on related topics. This provides public-facing professionals with public input, gives agency to the public's voice, and invigorates a sense of community stewardship and cooperation.

***In the end, an “education for life” is overshadowed by what one might consider an “education for placement.”***

**Plummer:** The divide deepens between citizens and professionals primarily because the education of the professional is insidiously separatist. University-prepared professionals commence careers to succeed, often without motivation to give and exchange as members of the communities in which they earn their salaries. They drive or rail through the public with citizen encounters that are often meaningless and transactional.

Institutions within the realm of higher education are transitioning into consortiums of professional schools tasked with preparing students for entry-level jobs within the discipline's industry. That shift in emphasis forces curriculum adjustments to prioritize skills-based learning and ultimately de-prioritize core theoretical exploration and study. In the end, an “education for life” is overshadowed by what one might consider an “education for placement” as accrediting bodies fuel assessment measures to codify impressive career placement statistics for member institutions.

Within the “education for life” academic descriptor, there's an emphasis on learning outcomes that encourage behavior essential to collectivism: character, integrity, ethics, and yes, the role and responsibility of the citizen. A dear friend of mine is preparing for her naturalization evaluation. She is required to learn more about the role of a citizen of the United States than a child who is born here, a child who has progressed through every step of our educational system, including the higher echelons of famed institutions

of learning. What our students and early career professionals have learned prepares them to be upwardly mobile individuals who cyber-celebrate every career achievement via social media. The solution is not to prioritize one educational goal over the other but to understand that the human being pursuing higher education is forever a citizen with responsibility to family, village, and the greater community, and a worker/executive for just a season within that lifespan.

**Lindaman:** Over the last decade, higher education has lost the public's confidence or trust at an alarming rate, reflecting the decline in public confidence in many public institutions, public employees, and civil servants. Combined with the enrollment cliff, COVID-19, and insurmountable student debt and costs of higher education, there is a new sense of urgency as colleges and universities must weigh their value and place, internally and externally, in the context of public distrust, economic insecurity, and the culture wars of freedom of speech and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The marketized or politicized framing of higher education has misrepresented its civic identity and purpose and has mistakenly legitimized technical expertise and specialization (credentialing) as neutral competency and apolitical behavior. Enrollment pressures and budgetary constraints encourage colleges and universities to recruit students (and their families) as consumers or customers, with large multimedia recruitment campaigns and an "arms race" of commodified attractions and services to attract as many tuition paying students as possible.

The focus on elected officials to control colleges and universities through declines in state budgetary support reflects the devolution of partisan polarization and dysfunctional politics from the federal level. Colleges and universities are trapped in the misaligned legislative framing over workforce preparedness, academic freedom, and the fight over free speech and identity politics, while state legislators are less willing to acquiesce to (or trust) academicians and trustees.

Higher education needs to demonstrate its ability to learn through an urgent sense of humility, vulnerability, and openness to reform. In connecting with community and the workforce, colleges and universities need to connect internally with their own workforce and treat faculty as its front line of citizen professionals. Rather than chasing accreditation, rankings, and reputation, college administrators need to focus on relationships with citizens and communities. Economics and education are not polarizing concepts. Citizens and professionals do not inhabit separate and distinct spheres.

Lived student experience should be considered the center of the higher education experience. We must rise above the distraction of politics and polar-

ization and return to the core commitments of higher education: educating students as citizens for personal and social responsibility. Educating students as citizens reframes higher education from data-driven paternalism to democratic engagement and intentional investment in relationships, community development, and accessible dialogue to take seriously the perspectives and experiences of others.

**Barker:** Beyond the tensions you all describe, what do you make of what seems to be a rising level of anger directed toward highly educated professionals and “elites”? To what extent is higher education responsible for or contributing to this public anger?

**Scanlon:** The anger directed toward elites is real. A visible strain of anti-elitism within American political culture has ebbed and flowed throughout history, but this feels different. To some extent, this new anti-elitism centers on change. Some see a complete absence of change. The same problems persist without the promise of resolution. It becomes harder and harder to accept the status quo and the legitimacy of our political managers. Others see our political managers disrupting an otherwise beneficial status quo. Whether embracing or rejecting change, there is a prevailing feeling of underrepresentation. Many citizens do not feel represented, and they believe their voices are weakening relative to elite voices in and out of government.

Fueling this wave of anti-elitism has been populist rhetoric directing citizen frustration and anger at perceived elites who allegedly manage politics for personal gain. Overall, this wave of anti-elitism is not unique to the United States but is an emerging political force in many of the world’s oldest consolidated democracies.

Higher education shares *some* responsibility for the current political climate. B. Da’Vida Plummer’s comments about “education for life” versus “education for placement” are incredibly relevant here. Higher education’s laser-like focus on providing technical and professional skills needed for career placement comes at the expense of critical civic skills. Far too often, students graduate without understanding the systems and structures of power they interact with daily, the necessity of creating space for productive dialogue between people with differing political preferences, or how to leverage the power of voice in a democracy effectively. Professional education comes at the expense of values associated with community and cooperation. Our institutions champion this individualism and motivate citizens to pursue individual preferences in isolation from one another. In time, people come to see one another as rivals and even enemies instead of problem-solving partners. This speaks to Benjamin Barber’s “thin theory of democracy”

in which political participation serves “individualistic and private ends.”<sup>1</sup> It is no wonder that people feel underrepresented and thus frustrated and angry.

Kara Lindaman’s reference to public officials is also relevant here. Lawmakers contribute to an operating environment where technical and professional skills are privileged over civic skills. It is common to hear lawmakers deride disciplines that contribute to civic skills, and undermining these disciplines is dangerous. If we treat those disciplines as luxury studies, a smaller, more exclusive group owns civic skills. This does not help citizens feel better represented or connected to the government but, instead, increases already rising levels of frustration and anger.

**Lindaman:** The anger toward highly educated professionals and elites is well founded and contextualized in the growing economic, social, and cultural inequality fueled by resentment and exacerbated by the disconnect between institutions and citizens. The erosion of the American Dream for millennials and Generation Z has led to a decline of trust in the process and a lack of faith in the results. As Joseph Scanlon suggests, there is a sense of urgency for change and a renewed demand for voice and agency.

There is an undeniable human need for a sense of value, belonging, and connectedness. Through the celebratory conferring of degrees, colleges and universities have marketized and sold one of the most coveted memberships in our society. However, the working class feels invisible and disrespected, and recent college graduates and their families are experiencing buyer’s remorse. For public institutions, this is unsustainable.

Higher education does bear some responsibility, but it is not theirs alone. After the deterioration of institutions strained by the global pandemic, communities mobilized to address the pressing needs of their families and neighbors. Civil society organizations still bearing the imprint of the Wilsonian Progressive movement, which fostered the science of administration and the meritocracy of work, seemed unresponsive and outdated to address the current contextual challenges. In this toxic political environment, public managers and bureaucrats were unable to remain politically unscathed, and institutions of higher education were forced to shutter their doors, send students home, and deliver their expensive product remotely, making their social contract with the public untenable. The so-called best and the brightest were unable to fix the problems, to tame the politics, or to preserve the faith in public institutions and public servants.

Facing internal and external threats indicative of many public institutions, higher education needs to be repurposed and redesigned by community and for community. Universities need to learn their value as vital members in their

communities, where multiple and different perspectives and experiences are welcomed, town-gown issues are tackled, and inequities are addressed. The necessary cultural shift comes from within the university. Trust and relationships must be fostered internally throughout the university community by empowering faculty, students, and staff to address administrative control and hierarchies and challenge existing practices, rules, and norms. This gives intellectuals and academics the opportunity to engage and exercise their espoused values of inclusion, equity, and change as citizens in their professions.

Externally, higher education institutions can do better to respond and adapt to their evolving campus and local communities, through acknowledging and accepting the experiences and assets of these communities. Rather than lecturing to the public, colleges and universities, as stewards of place, have the opportunity to listen and to learn from members of the community through innovative investment in public engagement and civics education. For example, they may listen to how people cared for their families and neighbors when campuses were closed and student life was disrupted due to COVID-19. This helps higher education become more relevant and responsive, restoring faith in its civic mission and public purpose. There is plenty of responsibility and opportunity to share, and egos should be checked at the door.

**Barker:** When this hostility is directed toward higher education, there seems to also be a partisan dimension to it, such as fears that campuses are centers for liberal indoctrination or inhospitable to conservative ideas. Could higher education be doing more to counter these perceptions?

**Plummer:** From the first day of freshman orientation, an entering college student begins a journey of self-discovery that transcends the classroom. Essential to that journey is the student's freedom to openly challenge politics held sacred in the family home under parental control and within the surrounding community of influencers. It is a natural, organic maturation process. So, it isn't that college campuses are centers for liberal indoctrination or that they are inhospitable to conservative or progressive ideas for that matter. It is, however, true that college campuses are wide open for exposure to diverse and often extreme voices raised in spirited political debate. The exposure shifts, redirects, alters, and, in some cases, reveals a whole new way of seeing the world. The key to avoiding indoctrination is recurrent exposure to a multitude of diverse thoughts and ideas. It is naïve and unrealistic to expect any community to remain apolitical or centrist. There is simply too much media that are just one key stroke or swipe away every moment of each day. That said, academic leaders in higher education must remain ever vigilant and intentional in providing

fertile ground for rival political voices. Faculty, on the front lines within all areas of study, must exercise restraint and caution not to amplify right- or left-leaning points of view to the exclusion of countering opinions. And yes, higher education should be doing more to keep the ground fertile for this robust diversity of voices across the political landscape. From the highest office of the institution to all points campuswide, politically driven initiatives must be identified for what they are, a detriment to academe, and discontinued.

**Scanlon:** The “liberal indoctrination” of college students is an overstated problem. Often, it is a media-driven problem or a strategic effort to mobilize support against a perceived elite class. Indoctrination implies imposing beliefs, which is more than simply possessing beliefs. While it can and likely does occur, it is essential to ask whether it is systemic. It is also worth noting that higher education’s focus on providing technical and professional skills makes indoctrination less likely. It is simply inconsistent with the curricular direction of higher education in the United States today.

As B. Da’Vida Plummer suggested above, college is a space for the critical exploration of intellectual curiosities. It is a perilous mistake to think of this as indoctrination as opposed to the acts of thinking and learning. The more we undermine the idea that college is such a space, the more divided and dangerous society becomes.

With that said, higher education can and should rethink how it interacts with the public. Doing so would make it harder to label college campuses as indoctrination factories.

***College campuses are wide open for exposure to diverse and often extreme voices raised in spirited political debate. The exposure shifts, redirects, alters, and, in some cases, reveals a whole new way of seeing the world.***

For example, higher education can take the lead in facilitating inclusive public conversations, especially conversations deeply connected to their local communities. Rather than imagining itself as a consultant with solutions to community

problems, higher education can enhance the quality of democratic life in a community by creating more opportunities for citizens to interact with one another meaningfully. Higher education also needs to reward its faculty for public-facing activities. Overall, reducing the distance between higher education and the public is a step in the right direction. Bringing people together

means greater transparency and trust between community members and its institutions of higher education.

**Lindaman:** The value of a liberal education is often misrepresented and may be polarized as a partisan perspective. Rather, a liberal education challenges students to be lifelong learners across diverse disciplines and areas of expertise. In order to make these connections toward learning and shared understanding, higher education is committed to intellectual curiosity and critical thinking. Exposure to new and different ideas and lived experiences challenges students to grow developmentally and intellectually, to think critically, and to engage authentically.

Of course, there are tensions in trying to provide a safe and inclusive space for the development of students, especially traditionally marginalized and underrepresented students, and to preserve academic freedom, free speech, and the marketplace of ideas. However, it is difficult to imagine a more conducive space than a college campus for individuals to learn how to adjust, respond, and work through these tensions with others.

The diversity of the higher education experience and its multiple points of view, institutional cultures, and identities create challenges for higher education to speak and to advocate as a single unitary actor or voice. Between and within public and private universities, the rich diversity, differentiation, and choices for students and their families often encourage colleges and universities to seek a comparative or competitive advantage rather than to speak with a shared voice. Perhaps professional organizations, state college and university system offices, and philanthropy should accept the tall task of cutting through all the noise and criticism so colleges and universities may do what they do best: prepare students as citizens in their communities. Or better yet, let students' success speak for the transformational difference of higher education in their lives. If we listen carefully, rarely do their lived experiences have a partisan or liberal bias.

**Barker:** As we think about what higher education can do as it interacts with the public, I'd like to pick up on Joseph Scanlon's remark about "facilitating inclusive public conversations." Can you share any experiences in which doing so has made a positive difference?

**Lindaman:** In many places, colleges and universities hold an important place in their communities—economically, culturally, and academically. Critics of higher education often exacerbate the town-gown divide to fuel further institutional distrust. However, members of the campus community—faculty, students, staff, and administrators—are also valuable citizens of the communities where they parent, worship, and live together with their neighbors. Relationships cultivated within community transcend these town-gown divides. Public

institutions such as libraries, colleges, and universities provide democratic spaces with captive audiences of curious minds, who are eager to learn about complex moral and political issues from diverse points of view and lived experiences.

Winona State University, the public regional comprehensive institution where I teach, epitomizes the interdependent and essential relationship between institution and community. There is certainly room for disagreement and

***Let students' success speak for the transformational difference of higher education in their lives. If we listen carefully, rarely do their lived experiences have a partisan or liberal bias.***

distrust, but there is also plenty of opportunity for agreement, common ground, and shared understanding in order to grow and develop continuously. The relationships are necessary and authentic, and the sparsely populated space

creates a shared and interdependent identity. These shared values and sense of place and solidarity are best actualized when the campus and community spaces are seamless and public deliberation is facilitated in a way that acknowledges their shared lived experiences and equal value in their self-determination and success.

For example, the campus has invited the community into its public space for difficult conversations and deliberation on issues such as immigration, free speech, election integrity, and the purpose of higher education. More specifically, in 2012, the university held its first deliberation on the purpose of higher education when the president of Winona State University retired and hosted a democratic deliberation as her retirement party. The invitation to the larger community included business members, elected officials, trustees, community leaders, students, faculty, and staff. The inclusive invitation and tone set by the president facilitated a valuable experience to share and better understand the purpose of higher education by exposing the false assumption of the town-gown divide and revealing shared values of caring for the Winona community despite generational and experiential differences.

This favorable experience led to the facilitation of larger community discussions, which were named and framed by secondary students, who were mentored by college students, and acknowledged in the mission of the university in southeastern Minnesota by supporting the progress toward matriculation for graduating high school seniors. In 2017, one of those former high school students graduated from Winona State University and celebrated by moderating

a democratic deliberation on safety and justice for the American Democracy Project's annual Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement meeting in Baltimore, Maryland.

Since 2012, the repeated and sustained practice of facilitating difficult conversations and hosting democratic deliberations on campus has supported other student engagement efforts in the classroom and in the community, for example, student voter engagement efforts and numerous community partnerships. Simply put, as soon as the university formed relationships with the community with intellectual humility and inclusion, good things happened.

**Scanlon:** We continue to grow our campus deliberations. We went from one deliberation per year to two or three deliberations per semester. Participating in deliberations makes a positive difference for students in three pivotal ways. Young people's inclusion in conversations about pressing public issues is not the norm. Deliberation is a platform through which they have an opportunity to share their values, lived experiences, and unique perspectives with others. The more inclusive the deliberations—drawing from the campus community as a whole—the more representative they are of citizen sentiment. Deliberation also contradicts the partisan and often unproductive political discourse students normally witness. Deliberation is a meaningful democratic practice that emphasizes both critical thinking and collaboration. Regular participation in deliberations leads to healthier civic habits rooted in mutual respect and trust. Lastly, student moderators are important to successful campus deliberations. Moderating deliberations contributes to essential communication skills and is both empowering and emancipating for young people. Just like participating in a deliberation, an invitation to moderate a conversation about a pressing public issue is outside the norm for young people.

As we close this discussion, it is important to mention that many of our institutions are not adequately protecting democracy. While some institutions are incentivized to act against our democratic well-being, others remain on the sideline. We must do the work to sustain and protect democracy and our shared democratic values. We need our institutions to accept the challenge of protecting democracy, which includes creating opportunities for citizens to engage one another in inclusive and trust-building conversations.



## NOTE

<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Barber, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), 4.

*Afterword*

# MORE THAN ACADEMICS TALKING TO ACADEMICS ABOUT ACADEME

David Mathews

Academics in colleges and universities don't just talk to other academics about what is happening on their campuses. They also talk to legislators about politics, to business executives about business, and to journalists about the news. They serve on community boards and belong to all kinds of associations and leagues. And everybody lives in a community with other citizens. Academics aren't cloistered.

That recognized, this article notes that in their professional lives, academics tend to focus on issues inside academe. While normal, these discussions aren't enough to counter the significant loss of public confidence and trust that institutions of higher learning are facing. Explaining the benefits of colleges and universities, and the many services they provide, isn't restoring confidence among the public. Using civic language to reach the citizenry isn't working. Documenting the monetary benefits of higher education to individuals and the economy hasn't increased funding. (To the contrary, funding has declined.) Even touting the value of the factual information coming from expert professionals hasn't countered the rejection of academic "facts." Adding evidence on top of evidence didn't stop the rejection of COVID-19 vaccinations.

In the past, *Higher Education Exchange* has given historical accounts of how colleges and universities came to gain public legitimacy. Institutions of higher learning couldn't give themselves a public mandate. This had to come from the public. And once it did—in the interest of democracy. An example of democracy's influence can be seen as early as the founding of state universities to provide the leadership for a new nation that had rejected a monarchy. Agricultural and technical institutions were created to serve those who wanted access to higher learning. Extending citizenship was the public purpose of women's colleges, tribal colleges, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Those outside academe who championed these causes collaborated with like-minded academics to bring about the changes.

Today, many institutions, from those in journalism to those in public administration and science, suffer from the same loss of public trust and

confidence. And small groups of professionals in many of these fields are frustrated because what is being done to rebuild trust and confidence isn't working. They are trying to develop strategies for changing their relationship to the citizenry. Similar groups of reform-minded academics have emerged on many campuses.

These academics include presidents who are leading the way in exploring what higher education owes democracy. This is more urgent than ever given the multiple threats to democracy in the US and around the globe. Others in academe have reached the point where they feel that the estrangement from the public is too serious to ignore and that the efforts to respond have been ineffective. Many of them are especially worried about the divisiveness sweeping across the political landscape and into their institutions. Whatever cause they champion, they are mindful of their academic obligations to reason and reasonableness, which are critical for democracy to prevail. Many of these academics may be ready to reach outside higher education to make common cause with others championing democracy.

It has been the foundation's good fortune to get to know some of these academics. They teach or administer community outreach programs, which may be housed in various kinds of centers for civic life. If they are in student affairs, they see a need to prepare undergraduates for a citizenship that goes beyond service. Those in professional schools or who teach preprofessional courses are experimenting with ways to apply the research that is calling for more democratic professionalism, which has been the subject of past issues of *Higher Education Exchange*. What support these ventures are getting outside of academe isn't clear. But such support is essential if the reforms are to last.

The similarities in the challenges facing most all professions and institutions, academic and nonacademic, create an opportunity for the reform-minded parties to cooperate in the interest of democracy. They have much to learn from one another, and I propose a way of facilitating such learning. I don't have in mind a big meeting on democracy, but rather what Hal Saunders, Kettering's late director of international affairs and an authority on both governmental and nongovernmental diplomacy, called "Sustained Dialogue." This has been the subject of the foundation's research for some time: through joint ventures with Russia for more than 60 years, with China for 50 years, and with Cuba for 25 years. These dialogues build on one another, which allows them to develop joint projects. A sustained dialogue between those outside and inside higher education might lead to joint initiatives that could help higher education gain essential outside support and revalidate its public mission.

The participants in a sustained dialogue set their own agenda. I can't and shouldn't. That said, I try to imagine what such an agenda might look like. There are already a multitude of collaborative projects between higher education and other institutions—those with the federal government for example. There are also joint ventures with engineering firms, foundations, and state agencies. The list is long. What I am suggesting would be focused on democracy's problems, which often begin in communities. Maybe some of these joint ventures could be with associations of citizens who feel alienated and unable to make a difference. The neighborhood groups that John McKnight works with and writes about might be interested. Community outreach programs may offer other opportunities.

A sustained dialogue comes to mind because the loss of public confidence and trust is so severe that one conference isn't going to be enough. As I said last year, Kettering's report, *With: A Strategy for Renewing Our Democracy*, suggests that all professionals, their institutions, and elected officials consider working not just *for* the public but also *with* the citizenry. The suggestion has generated a mixture of curiosity and uncertainty because what this idea means in practice has to be invented. And this is what a sustained dialogue can provide—an encouraging environment for invention. The public's loss of confidence and trust in institutions began growing decades ago. The roots go deep. There aren't likely to be any quick fixes.

I'm not suggesting that we literally copy what happens in international, nongovernmental sustained dialogue. The parties there are often hostile to one another, and there has to be a focus on ways to avoid violent conflict, such as the one in Ukraine. I have in mind, instead, what these dialogues have done to help launch mutually beneficial projects, like the one that groups in the United States began with groups in Cuba to protect the environment along our shared gulf. This protection requires efforts by what our colleagues in Cuba call "active citizens." Higher education might restore some of its public mandate with similar joint ventures.

The future of higher education has often been determined by what goes on outside campus gates. It's time to open the gates wider.



# CONTRIBUTORS

DEREK W. M. BARKER is a program officer at the Kettering Foundation and coeditor (with Alex Lovit) of the *Higher Education Exchange*. With a background in political theory, his research focuses on the democratic role of higher education institutions, philanthropy and nonprofit organizations, journalism, and the professions. Barker is the author of *Tragedy and Citizenship: Conflict, Reconciliation, and Democracy from Haemon to Hegel* and articles appearing in the academic journals *Political Theory*, *New Political Science*, *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, and *The Good Society*.

HARRY C. BOYTE is a public intellectual and organizer. He founded Public Achievement and, with Trygve Throntveit and Marie Ström, the Institute for Public Life and Work. He holds the title of Senior Scholar in Public Work Philosophy at Augsburg University. Boyte is the author of 11 books, including *Awakening Democracy through Public Work*. His articles have appeared in more than 150 publications, including the *New York Times*, *Political Theory*, and the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. In the 1960s, Boyte was a field secretary for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s organization, and subsequently did community organizing among low-income White residents in Durham, North Carolina.

DAVID W. BROWN (1937-2020) was coeditor of the *Higher Education Exchange* from 1994 through 2017 and coedited two recent Kettering publications: *Agent of Democracy* and *A Different Kind of Politics*. He taught at Yale's School of Management and the New School's Milano Graduate School. Brown is the author of *Organization Smarts*; *The Real Change-Makers: Why Government Is Not the Problem or the Solution*; *America's Culture of Professionalism: Past, Present, and Prospects*; and *Assumptions of the Tea Party Movement: A World of Their Own*.

JONI DOHERTY is a program officer at the Kettering Foundation. She conducts collaborative research with professionals working in cultural and educational institutions. These initiatives explore how to foster the disposition and skills needed for making decisions about public problems, both contemporary and historical, using deliberation. Doherty's essays have been published in *Deliberative Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning for Democratic Engagement*; *Deliberation and the Work of Higher Education: Innovations for the Classroom, the Campus and the Community*; and the *Higher Education Exchange*. Before coming to Kettering, she taught in the American Studies program at Franklin Pierce University and directed the New England Center for Civic Life. She holds a PhD in philosophy from the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts.

SARA A. MEHLTRETTER DRURY is associate professor and chair of rhetoric at Wabash College and serves as the director of Wabash Democracy and Public Discourse. Drury's research and practice focus on the intersection of rhetoric and deliberative democracy, with attention to deliberative pedagogy, argumentation, and political communication. She has received grants from Indiana Humanities and the National Science Foundation and has been a visiting research fellow at the University of Edinburgh Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and an Indiana Humanities Action fellow. Drury received her BA *summa cum laude* from Boston College and her MA and PhD from Pennsylvania State University.

MARIA FARLAND has taught at Johns Hopkins, Wesleyan, and Columbia universities and is currently an associate professor at Fordham University. She has published numerous scholarly essays on links between institutions of higher education and disciplinary expertise in relationship to literary writers such as Gertrude Stein, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Robert Frost. She is currently finishing a monograph on images of rural backwardness in US literature and culture and is coeditor of *Studies in American Fiction* (JHUP/ProjectMuse).

KATY J. HARRIGER is a professor in the Department of Politics and International Affairs at Wake Forest University, where she holds the F. Michael Crowley Distinguished Faculty Fellowship and is faculty director of the Wake Washington program in DC. She teaches courses on American politics, law, and courts. In addition to her research on deliberation and the civic engagement of young people, she publishes generally in the area of American constitutional law. At Wake Forest she has been the recipient of the Reid Doyle Prize for Excellence in Teaching, the John Reinhart Award for Distinguished Teaching, and the College Board of Visitors Faculty Leadership Award.

MATHEW JOHNSON directs the Commission on Public Purpose in Higher Education. He cofounded and codirects the National Assessment of Service and Community Engagement. He also sits on the editorial board of *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement* and has been recognized as an Ashoka Change Leader by the Ashoka Foundation. Johnson formerly served as president of Albion College, as a Carnegie visiting fellow at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and as a fellow at the Doerr Institute for New Leaders at Rice University. Prior to his tenure at Albion College, Johnson served as associate dean of the College for Engaged Scholarship, as well as senior fellow and executive director of the Howard R. Swearer Center for Public Service at Brown University. Johnson led the development of a transformational strategic plan and oversaw the growth and development of curricular and cocurricular programs, including Brown in Washington, the Engaged Scholars Program, the Bonner Community Fellowship, the Brown University AmeriCorps VISTA Fellowship, Community Corps, and the Royce Fellowship.

KARA LINDAMAN is a professor of political science and public administration at Winona State University. Having earned her PhD from the University of Kansas, she studies the policy process and citizen engagement in wicked problems and primarily teaches courses in public administration. She is fortunate to have advised many student-citizens in public service. Since 2009, she has been the campus coordinator of the Association of American State Colleges and Universities American Democracy Project, where she is a civic fellow and has embraced numerous opportunities to work with colleagues and students as moderators and in democratic deliberation.

ALEX LOVIT is a program officer with the Kettering Foundation. He holds a PhD in history from the University of Michigan, where he studied 19th-century political history. He helps manage the foundation's research into democratic education both in K-12 schools and in higher education, coordinates research into democratic innovation in the judicial system, and is the coeditor (with Derek W. M. Barker) of the *Higher Education Exchange*.

DAVID MATHEWS served as president of the Kettering Foundation from 1981 to 2022. He is now president emeritus. He was secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare in the Ford administration and, before that, president of the University of Alabama. Mathews has written extensively on Southern history, public policy, education, and international problem-solving. His books include *Politics for People: Finding a Responsible Public Voice; Reclaiming Public Education by Reclaiming Our Democracy; The Ecology of Democracy: Finding Ways to Have a Stronger Hand in Shaping Our Future; With the People: An Introduction to an Idea; Together: Building Better, Stronger Communities; and With: A Strategy for Renewing Our Democracy*.

JILL J. MCMILLAN is professor emerita and research professor at Wake Forest University. Her early work centered on organizational and institutional rhetoric and communication. Since 2000, she has been involved with a team of Wake Forest colleagues who study deliberative democracy in higher education and have published their work in *Speaking of Politics* and *The Long-Term Impact of Learning to Deliberate*. Articles connected to this work have appeared

in *Communication Education, Diversity and Democracy, Beyond Politics as Usual: Paths for Engaging College Students in Politics*, and the *Higher Education Exchange*. The team is currently assessing the degree to which deliberative democracy principles may have diffused into their institution over the past two decades.

SCOTT PETERS is a professor in the Department of Global Development at Cornell University. From 2012 to 2017, he served as faculty codirector of a national consortium, *Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life*, which is devoted to supporting engaged learning and research in the arts, humanities, and design fields. He currently serves as coeditor of a new Cornell University Press book series, *Publicly Engaged Scholars: Identities, Purposes, and Practices*. As a historical sociologist positioned in the newly emerging field of civic studies, Peters uses narrative inquiry and analysis tools to study the public purposes and work of academic professionals and institutions. His latest book, coauthored with Daniel J. O’Connell, is *In the Struggle: Scholars and the Fight Against Industrial Agribusiness in California*. Peters received a BS from the University of Illinois and an MA and PhD from the University of Minnesota.

B. DAVIDA PLUMMER is a six-time Emmy award-winning news industry executive who joined Fellowships at Auschwitz for the Study of Professional Ethics as coexecutive director focusing on advancement and operations. She previously served in the dual capacity of assistant vice president for marketing/media and dean of the Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communication at Hampton University. During her nine-year tenure with the prestigious HBCU, she served as an associate professor of broadcast journalism and the director of the William R. Harvey Leadership Institute while providing marketing leadership for the Hampton University Proton Therapy Institute. Plummer is a native of Nansemond County, Virginia, where she was introduced to the importance of community service through a global faith-based organization led by generations of her paternal lineage. She received her BS in journalism and MA in communications from Ohio University.

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