

HIGHER EDUCATION EXCHANGE



Institutions and the Public: A Troubled Relationship

Articles

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Afterword

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The *Higher Education Exchange* is founded on a thought articulated by Thomas Jefferson in 1820:

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

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

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Institutions and the Public: A Troubled Relationship?

Derek W. M. Barker and Alex Lovit

In this issue of *HEX*, we consider the troubled relationship between higher education and the public. While the causes are complex and contested, one trend is clear: Major institutions across our society are suffering from a loss of public trust. Institutions that claim to serve the public are viewed with skepticism and accused of partisan bias. In the absence of trusted institutions, “facts” become contested and citizens turn to a politically polarized media landscape for information that will help them make sense of current events, which in turn feeds divisions. Frustrated with public resistance to their findings, experts redouble their efforts to present more information, implying that the public is ill informed and uneducated. Is there a way out of this vicious cycle? Instead of “educating,” “informing,” or “serving” the public, is there a better way institutions and professionals might relate to citizens?

Higher education has been at the center of citizen mistrust of public institutions. While public trust in higher education remains fairly high compared to its trust in other institutions, Gallup reported recently that colleges and universities have suffered a significant decline in public confidence, more so in the last few years than any other public institution it studied.¹ In the context of declining public funding and rising costs, having a civic mission recognized by the public is more important than ever for the future of higher education. However, colleges and universities cannot create their own civic mission; it must come from and be reaffirmed by the citizenry.

As one of the key incubators for scientific research, higher education is caught in various debates. Climate change is an obvious issue that has revealed the limits of scientific knowledge in generating political will to lead to action. Moreover, the COVID pandemic that began in 2020 dramatically attests to the fact that many serious problems can be addressed only through a combination of expert knowledge and collective action by citizens. The pandemic demonstrates the costs of public distrust of authoritative institutions; in the absence of popular consensus about the causes, consequences, and prophylactics of COVID-19, collective action was difficult to organize, even in the face of a universally shared problem. Public health measures have been resisted by various constituencies for complex reasons, including not only perceived liberal

bias but also historical inequity and discrimination. It is not clear whether declining public confidence in universities is causing distrust in science or whether the increasing politicization of science is driving this alienation from higher education—or perhaps both. In any case, the downward spiral of public faith in prominent American institutions is a reason for concern both for higher education specifically and for democracy generally.

The partisan debates around science reflect a larger dynamic in which education has become a major fault line in American politics, resulting in what some have called the “diploma divide.”² Whether or not one has a college degree has become increasingly predictive of party affiliation and opinions on a range of cultural and policy issues. As politics becomes more polarized and divisive, institutions of higher education are more frequently attacked as partisan. With the very idea of what constitutes a “common good” in question, the public appears unable to agree on what it might want from higher education. It is no surprise that higher education, like other institutions, is losing its sense of public mission.

Moreover, as the institution responsible for the education of future professional classes, higher education is at some level fundamentally elitist, no matter what efforts are made to enable access. In his recent book on meritocracy, philosopher Michael Sandel suggests that higher education is essentially a sorting mechanism for admitting future elites into the professional classes while shutting others out.³ Rising tuition costs and increasing student indebtedness only compound the perception that higher education is reserved for a particular segment of society. Whether or not populist resentment of elites is justified, higher education must acknowledge its role in contributing to the key social and political divides threatening our democracy.

It is tempting for the professionals, including those in higher education, to see themselves as the antidote to their own woes: If only the public were better educated, citizens would better understand the value of scientific knowledge and place greater trust in universities. To better educate the public about climate change, climate scientists respond with more studies and better data. To improve vaccination rates, public health authorities respond with information campaigns. Such approaches assume that citizens are in need of information and that the role of institutions and professionals is to produce, communicate, and reproduce expert knowledge. But what if citizens do not want to be “educated” on such issues? What if public resistance has more to do with political divides—disagreements about what to do in the face of uncertainty—than with misinformation? If the underlying problem is social and political in

nature, then campaigns to educate or inform the public are likely to be futile, perhaps even counterproductive. What would it look like if higher education were to start focusing on the underlying problem, playing an active role in bridging the divides that currently structure our public discourse?

The articles in this volume attempt to answer that question. Rather than assume that experts have the answers, the solutions here begin with the premise that citizens have important work to do before the work of experts can begin. Instead of ingesting more data or technical knowledge, citizens first need to work through the conflicts and trade-offs that are dividing them. Instead of focusing narrowly on governmental policy or institutional resources, they need to focus on developing civic assets and resources. The articles suggest ways that higher education can work *with*, rather than “on” or “for,” the citizenry. In so doing, they suggest a fundamental change in the relationship between institutions and the citizenry as well as in the civic role of higher education in our democracy.

Drawing upon his previous experience in the journalism profession, Byron White perceives existential threats to higher education’s future, presaged by disruptions to the academic business model and declining public trust. White suggests that for many institutions, the path toward long-term stability lies in strengthening relationships with local communities. In order to survive, colleges and universities must build trust with local communities and build capacity to serve local students. These goals have already been part of many institutions’ civic engagement programs, but White argues that these efforts will become increasingly important to institutional survival in an increasingly precarious environment for higher education.

In view of increasing divisions among the citizenry and declining confidence in institutions, John Theis calls upon higher education to refocus on the civic agency of students, in addition to their academic outcomes. He describes what it looks like when a community college makes a conscious effort to organize across departments and disciplines to focus on civic skills and habits. Rather than telling students what to think or what to do, the approaches he describes help them learn how they might make decisions collectively and work together.

Katie Clark reflects on her experience as a nursing educator and practitioner in Minneapolis during the tumultuous year of 2020. In calmer times, Clark focused her work on nonjudgmental partnerships with citizens, including unhoused people and other marginalized social groups. The COVID-19 pandemic and the widespread social unrest in protest of George Floyd’s murder

by a Minneapolis police officer presented significant disruptions to this work. In this essay, Clark discusses the continued need for institutions to respect diverse citizens and work with them as partners, even (perhaps especially) in times of disruption and insecurity.

As a scientific researcher and educator, Jonathan Garlick is a practitioner of civic science, an approach through which scientists avoid positioning themselves as oracular experts and, instead, promote public deliberation about science-related issues, in which citizens' perspectives, experiences, and values are respected as valid. In his essay, Garlick discusses how civic science shapes the way in which he interacts with students in the classroom and citizens in public dialogues. He also describes how this experience has shaped his plans for dialogues about COVID vaccination and some of the ongoing tensions in this work.

Timothy Shaffer and David Procter focus on transforming a university's relationship with its local community by changing the approach to outreach and engagement. They describe their efforts to expand community engagement efforts across fields, using a deliberative rather than an expert model. Rather than the expert who informs the community with technical knowledge, the role of the scholar, they contend, is to convene and frame public dialogues on divisive issues.

Speaking as a college president concerned with the future of higher education, Chris Gilmer argues that reviving the civic purposes of higher education may be critical to restoring its "value proposition." Drawing upon the history of minority-serving institutions and community colleges, he argues that inclusion in our democracy is more than a matter of finding a good career; it is also a matter of civic and political inclusion. When students learn to become active and engaged citizens, they experience the collective value of higher education as well as its individual value. If higher education is successful in doing what our democracy needs, perhaps it will also help itself in the process.

Finally, echoing the approaches included in this volume, David Mathews concludes with a call for inventiveness in the civic purposes of higher education. While higher education is accustomed to preparing future professionals with technical knowledge to better serve or inform the citizenry, he suggests attending to the civic skills professionals will need in working *with* the public. In so doing, higher education might repair its own relationship with the citizenry and regain the public trust as well as produce the sort of professionals our democracy needs.

Readers of *HEX* will be saddened to know that its founding editor, David W. Brown, passed away on December 1, 2020. In a Note of Appreciation in the 2018 issue, Kettering President David Mathews wrote: “David Brown has not just been an editor of *HEX* since 1994. He is also its co-creator . . . David was ideal as an editor of the journal because he brought to the work an astonishing breadth of experience, both inside and outside the academy.” We are grateful for David’s vision, voice, and many contributions, especially his attention to higher education’s role in shaping future professionals and its implications for the disconnect between institutions and the public. The editors are honored to continue *HEX* in the tradition that David began.



NOTES

- ¹ Stephanie Marken, comment on “A Crisis in Confidence in Higher Ed,” Gallup Blog, comment posted April 12, 2019, <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/248492/crisis-confidence-higher.aspx> (accessed October 7, 2021).
- ² Adam Harris, “America Is Divided by Education,” *The Atlantic*, November 7, 2018.
- ³ Michael Sandel, *The Tyranny of Merit: What’s Become of the Common Good?* (Westminster, UK: Penguin Books, 2020).

TOWARD THE COMMUNITY-CENTRIC UNIVERSITY

Byron P. White

Having spent about half my career as a higher education administrator, the telltale signs that universities and colleges are undergoing a radical transformation are familiar to me. I first recognized them about 20 years ago, before my first job at a university. That's when rumblings began that the *Chicago Tribune* might file for bankruptcy.

At the time, I was senior manager for community relations for what was then the nation's fifth largest newspaper. Having begun my career as a newspaper journalist, I had served as the *Tribune's* urban affairs editor and an editorial writer before switching over to the "business side" of the company. There, I was exposed to many of the realities that were hidden from or largely ignored by those producing news content.

Three trends were shifting the newspaper industry. Similar trends are now asserting pressure on higher education.

First, the public's value proposition toward newspapers was changing. For centuries, newspapers were built on the premise that since citizens could not be everywhere, professional journalists would go in their stead, serving as eyewitnesses to important events, talking to critical actors only they could access, and chronicling the news on the public's behalf. However, technology was making it possible for everyone to see news in the making for themselves, often in a much more timely fashion than journalists could relay it.

Second, the business model was broken. Newspapers make their money not so much from reader subscriptions as from advertising. And advertising was shifting to digital platforms, which were both cheaper and much more precise at targeting specific demographic audiences than mass media were. It is hard to believe that classified ads were once the big money-maker for newspapers. Today, who could imagine selling a car or finding an apartment through any medium other than the internet?

Finally, technology changed the very notion of what constitutes news. This went way beyond the reality that consumers could access news online in real time. The internet meant readers no longer had to peruse a common collection of information, curated by a single organization, to find that which interested them. They could create their own customized selection of the type of information they wanted, solely from the sources they trusted.

That powerful confluence of shifting values, financial turmoil, and technological disruption was too much for even the fabled *Chicago Tribune*, founded in 1847. In 2000, the Tribune Company purchased the Times Mirror Company in the largest newspaper acquisition in history, giving it a triumvirate of powerhouse properties: the *Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *New York Newsday*. Just eight years later, the company filed for bankruptcy.

Those same forces—shifting values, financial strain, and technological disruption—are knocking up against higher education. And while an institution so rooted in the foundation of America’s democracy might seem too formidable to crumble, it is worth noting the lessons from the newspaper industry, whose historic civic footings seemed just as secure.

While an institution so rooted in the foundation of America’s democracy might seem too formidable to crumble, it is worth noting the lessons from the newspaper industry, whose historic civic footings seemed just as secure.

That said, I have more faith that higher education will recover and thrive. Even though there are trends that are disrupting higher education’s long-standing practices, they can be overcome if universities and colleges become more democratic and community-centric in their mission and operations.

Many institutions have gradually moved in this direction in recent years. Yet this incremental progress is not what gives me confidence in higher education’s prospects of survival. It is the fact that such progress has not been truly essential to their success until now.

Engagement as an Operational Imperative

More than a decade ago, higher education historian Ira Harkavy, founding director of the Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania, encouraged universities to assert their position as “anchor institutions.” Referencing Benjamin Franklin, Harkavy wrote:

By focusing on solving universal problems that are manifested in their local communities, institutions of higher learning will be better able to reduce the “ancient customs and habitudes” impeding college and university community engagement, advance research, teaching, learning, and service.¹

Today, what Harkavy posed as an optional endeavor, dependent upon the preferences of academic leadership and the drive of innovative faculty and students, is increasingly a necessity for the survival of most.

The value proposition toward higher education has shifted. A recent survey of 3,000 adults found that only a slim majority of parents—54 percent—prefer a four-year college for their children.² The results reflect a 2012 Carnegie survey of 1,000 American adults and 540 senior-level administrators. It found that while 62 percent of college administrators included “to learn to think critically” as either the most important or second most important reason people should go to college, only 26 percent of the public ranked it as such.³

It is partly for this reason that higher education’s business model is in disarray. Universities are funded largely from three sources of revenue: student tuition and fees; public funding, primarily from state legislatures; and private donors. The mix varies based on the type of institution. However, all these revenue sources are strained.

Public funding as a percentage of university revenues has been declining for several years, which means all institutions are increasingly dependent on tuition. However, the formula of raising tuition to match rising costs is not

Perilous trends for higher education can be addressed by establishing a deeper, tighter interdependence between the purpose of higher education institutions and the economic, social, and cultural well-being of the places where those institutions are located.

sustainable. About two-thirds of college students have to borrow money to pay tuition, according to the Institute for College Access & Success.⁴ Often, the ensuing debt after graduation brings more economic burden than the economic payoff of having a college degree, at least in the short run. The

2012 Carnegie survey found that 80 percent of adults said that at many colleges the education students receive is not worth what they pay for it. Some 41 percent of the administrators agreed with them.⁵

The disruption of technology in higher education goes far deeper than whether classes should be in person or online. The reality is that students have access to learning in formal and informal forms—many of them digital—and they are eager to tap into those multiple sources.

While all these trends are more perilous than many in higher education want to admit, all is not lost. The weakening value proposition, the need to reestablish consistent revenue, and the disruption caused by technology can all be addressed by establishing a deeper, tighter interdependence between the purpose of higher education institutions and the economic, social, and cultural well-being of the places where those institutions are located.

From a mission standpoint, this objective is not new for higher education. For decades, colleges and universities have espoused deeper community engagement both in terms of their institutional outreach and their academic scholarship. The challenge now is to elevate such practices from desirable to essential.

Emergence of Engaged Scholarship and Outreach

For years, researchers have tracked higher education's progression toward a restoration of its historic mission to advance democracy and the public good. For its 30th anniversary in 2015, Campus Compact released an action statement from presidents and chancellors across the country reminiscent of the collective will that launched the organization and accelerated the service learning movement. It stated:

In the mid-1980s, a group of higher education leaders came together based on a shared concern about the future of American democracy. Motivated by their conviction that amidst the pressures toward personal acquisition and personal advancement, their students were not learning to think, speak, and act in the service of the public good, they resolved that higher education must reclaim its historic mission of preparing the next generation of citizens to achieve public goals and solve public problems.⁶

That conviction has fueled several iterations of the so-called community engagement movement. By the 2000s, the principle championed by Campus Compact of aligning academic discipline with public service, largely through curriculum, or service learning, had become embellished with a more deliberate recognition of the value of partnering with community organizations and agents as peers in academic endeavors. The "service" approach of higher education as the dominant driver of solving public problems gave way to inviting communities to bring their assets and join in the university's civic pursuits.

The recent push for inclusion has illuminated the power imbalance between communities and universities, which can dominate even in their efforts to partner. In this latest iteration of engaged scholarship, institutions seek greater parity in the integration of community and institutional expertise.

In a truly equal partnership, solutions must be codesigned whether they are initiated by the university or within the community.

The progression might be viewed as universities moving from setting the tables from which they addressed community issues, to inviting community participants to join their tables, to recognizing the need to earn a seat at the tables that others in the community have set.

While less documented by higher education scholars, a similar progression from a service orientation to a more democratic approach arguably has taken

Increasingly, expressions of more democratic practices are being embedded into the infrastructure of universities and not just developed as programmatic add-ons.

place beyond academic study. Universities possess many assets beyond scholarship, such as land, facilities, political clout, employees, and purchasing power that have been leveraged as part of their civic mission.

For many years, these assets were deployed to benefit the institution with little regard for its community impact beyond the general assumption that what was good for the university was good for the region. Many urban universities, in particular, are located in older areas of cities that saw significant out-migration and economic disinvestment during the 1970s and 1980s. During that time, many urban institutions, including hospitals, adopted a bunker mentality to protect their assets—and students and employees—from the social turmoil of the central city, which was disproportionately populated by Black and Latinx residents. Starting in the 1980s, many of these institutions began to make amends by adopting a strategy of volunteerism and charitable outreach that placed the university in the role of rescuing the community through service, much like the academic counterpart of service learning.

Heading into the 2000s, institutions began to coordinate their own economic and physical development strategies more intentionally around the broader improvement of neighboring communities, seeking mutual benefit with their less affluent neighbors and often softening boundaries that had cordoned off campus from community. This approach, while more collaborative than purely volunteer service, still largely placed the university's interests as the driver, even as it sought to ensure that benefits were realized beyond the campus.

More recently, the notion of an “anchor institution,” much like engaged scholarship, has promoted calls for the university to go beyond its own master

plan to leverage its assets to pursue broader community-defined objectives. Purchasing products from local businesses, deliberately hiring nearby residents, and creating housing that benefits employees as well as long-standing residents are examples of these strategies.

Converging on the Community-Centric University

The convergence of these trends has driven an institutional profile that is better integrated into the well-being of community. As a result, increasingly, expressions of more democratic practices are being embedded into the infrastructure of universities and not just developed as programmatic add-ons. Some practitioners have begun to call this approach “full participation.”⁷

For instance, some of the hottest academic programs at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, where I am an associate provost, are in the College of Computing and Informatics. That is not surprising. Academic programs that are directly aligned to industry and commerce, especially in technology fields, have become more popular among students and parents who want assurance of an economic return on their investment.

But it is the college’s prominent Mission and Values statement that suggests a more democratic aspiration for its influence and purpose than that which attaches to its role as an economic engine alone. In its statement, the college commits to:

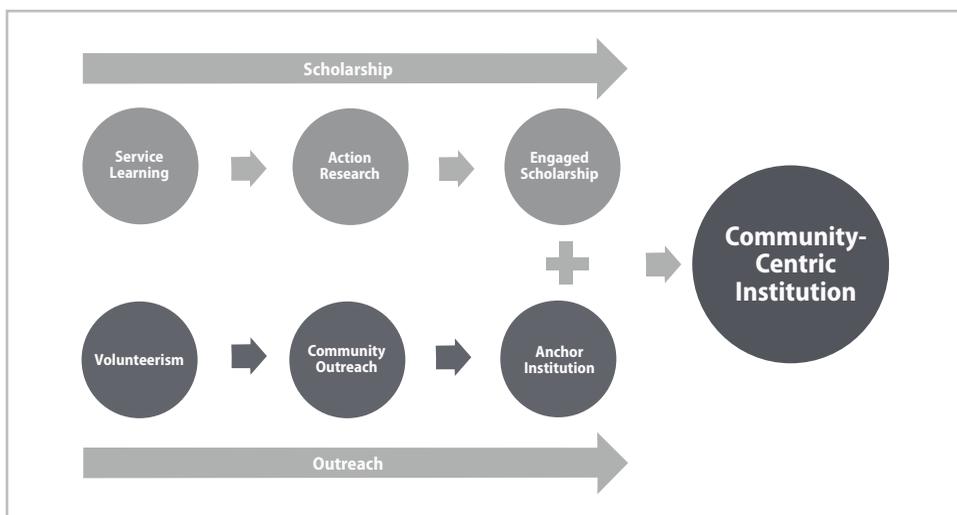
- Cultivating an inclusive culture dedicated to student success and equity in education
- Stimulating innovative high-risk, high-impact research and development
- Maintaining a resilient and ethical society of educated, caring citizens

And, the college states, this mission is driven by the following values:

- To acknowledge inequity and do everything in our power to address it
- To take responsibility for the ethical implications of technology in everything we do
- To value community and to value the well-being and sense of worth of all its members⁸

Of course, expression of a more democratic purpose does not guarantee it will be consistently pursued or achieved. Mission statements do not ensure

practice, especially when the forces of tradition weigh against systemic change. Self-interest tends to rule out in the end.



Nevertheless, this mission statement is the reason I am hopeful about higher education’s trajectory. Currently, the values of the College of Computing and Informatics projects promote the very behaviors it needs to succeed. The currents of self-interest and democratic purpose are starting to move in the same direction, making the momentum for systemic transformation far more likely than it was 40 years ago, when maverick leaders were seeking to reclaim the democratic purpose of higher education from what the Campus Compact authors called “the pressures toward personal acquisition and personal advancement.”⁹

During a recent webinar on anchor institutions, hosted by the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities, Melanie Perreault, provost at Towson University, stressed this current reality:

If you just want to get down to the bottom line, if you want to strip away all those niceties, you are a smart institution if during times of economic stress, you double down on the investment locally. And that’s just flat-out economics. So, in times of stress, where you want to put this investment is in the local economy . . . because it’s the right thing to do but it also just happens to be self-serving. . . . You can’t separate out the higher education institution from its local environment. . . . That’s a mistake that a lot of institutions may have made in the past. . . . What’s different about being an anchor institution is that we’re much more deliberate about those relationships and understanding of how we are part and parcel of each other. So, if your community is suffering, you as an institution are going to suffer as well.¹⁰

My position as associate provost for Urban Research and Community Engagement was established to drive engaged scholarship as a core strategy for institutional success. A few years ago, such tasks were cordoned off as community relations features within the advancement apparatus. Faculty who were serious about engagement as a serious scholarly undertaking were exceptions within their departments. Pursuing engaged scholarship still requires a bit of swimming against the current. But the water is smoother largely because of institutional recognition that a more community-centric approach is necessary for prosperity. Arguably, universities' most critical strategic priorities—student enrollment, academic relevance, and revenue generation—are tied to the degree to which the institution aligns itself to the civic priorities of the community.

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Student Enrollment

In nearly every part of the country, demographic shifts are leading to a reduction in the population of what had previously been considered the prototypical college student: a White, affluent, recent high school graduate from a high-achieving school, whose parents attended college. This is the student that most universities and colleges are most successful at graduating—and their ranks are declining.

That means if predominantly White institutions of higher education are going to maintain their current enrollments, they will have to recruit and attract students from groups that are underrepresented within their student populations. These include students of color, low-income students, first-generation college students, and adult learners, many of whom may have started college years ago but never finished.

Most higher education institutions tend to be far less successful with these students. While the long-held rationale has been that these students are less “college-ready,” the real problem that is becoming apparent is that colleges are not ready for them. In other words, higher education has been successful with the students it was designed to educate.

So, what will it take to not only attract so-called underrepresented students but also, and perhaps more important, to ensure they persist to degree completion?

Some research suggests that college students from less affluent backgrounds tend to tie their education more closely to how it will benefit their families and communities than do more affluent students, who tend to be more motivated by the individual benefits of their education.¹¹

For first-generation students, community-engaged learning may be less an adventure into unfamiliar communities to complement the *real* academic

The more closely college experiences are tied to community well-being, the more motivated first-generation and other nontraditional students will be to see learning as relevant to their values.

work happening in the classroom than it is often portrayed. These experiences are not opportunities to pad their resumes or alleviate societal guilt. In many cases, for these students, community-engaged learning represents the familiar terrain where learning is applied and

put to the test—a true extension of the classroom. This suggests that the more closely college experiences are tied to community well-being, the more motivated these students will be to see learning as relevant to their values. The latest state-of-the-art equipment in the student recreation center may be less critical than whether the university's presence has helped improve conditions in their neighborhoods. This may be even more true as students increasingly choose to go to school near the places they grew up.¹²

Moreover, given the power that community has as a motivation for these students, we would be wise to more deliberately enlist its participation. This may be especially true for Black and Latinx students, whose parents are more likely to see the value in higher education than White parents.¹³ Currently, the strategy for students perceived as not quite college ready is to extract them from their communities and influencers and to surround them with mentors, peers, and services that are more knowledgeable about the college experience. However, whenever I've listened to the testimonies of these "at-risk" students who persist and graduate, they tend to credit intimate influences—parents, siblings, relatives, coaches, clergy—as much as, if not more than, the services they received.

Rather than ignoring these influencers, we would be wise to aggressively engage them in the life of our campuses and equip them with tools and information that would allow them to be even more effective advocates. We should see them as cochampions rather than hindrances. For underrepresented students, recruiting their network may be more important than personal mailings and college fairs focused on the aspirations of individual students.

Academic Relevance

The disruption of technology has impacted higher education far more deeply than many faculty and academic administrators care to admit. I witnessed this same denial in the newspaper industry. There was no doubt that the notion of people waiting a day to get their news delivered in an ink-and-paper format when it was accessible instantaneously online was unsustainable. And yet it was almost impossible for those of us invested in the sector to imagine a world without the printed paper.

Similarly, I often ask faculty how long they believe people will continue to pay tens of thousands of dollars to pursue a credential that requires them to take specific courses, at specific times, sitting in specific rooms, in specific sequences, especially when most of the information being transmitted can be found on their smart phones almost as instantaneously as the professor can share it.

This does not mean all learning will be virtual. We learned during the pandemic how critical in-person

exchange and interaction is to learning and engagement. The larger question is not trying to figure out the right mix of in-person and virtual instruction. It is the realization that learning must be tied to the world outside the classroom to be relevant. Technology helps to enable this connection. In other words, expertise and knowledge exist beyond what the professor knows and is readily accessible. Faculty members increasingly need to be coaches in helping students

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sort through this diverse knowledge and make sense of it, rather than dictators of what is worth learning.

A priority for this assistance must be helping students to explicitly align the competencies they gain from their academic experience with the competencies that employers are asking for in the workforce. Except in a few select fields, the match between expertise gained through academic majors and ever-changing and emerging job descriptions is imprecise. Higher education must do a better job translating between the two.

Revenue Generation

Much has been made of the fact that state funding for higher education has been declining for decades. This has caused many institutions, even public ones, to become more tuition-dependent for their revenues. Shifting the burden to individuals has positioned college as more of a private transaction, which means students, and their parents, have assessed the return on investment more in those terms. Chief among payoffs is the likelihood of students getting a job. Meanwhile, universities have become much more dependent on philanthropy, including local and regional support, to fund operations.

This shift in the business model of higher education, too, leans toward the necessity of a more community-centric organization. First of all, more young people are thinking of “getting jobs” that are socially oriented. Many view their vocations and civic purposes as more intertwined than their parents did. They do not see themselves as working stiffs from 9-5 to pay the bills and then participating in PTA meetings at night as part of their civic duty. Employers are fully aware of this and are reexamining how to weave together business and social impact to attract young people.

Add to this fact the reality that higher education’s revenues are mostly tied to instruction and it becomes clear that colleges and universities will need to demonstrate tighter integration between curricula and social impact in order to attract tuition-paying students and support community engagement at scale. This may be particularly true for populations such as students of color and low-income students, who are least represented in higher education and are most available.

Similarly, local foundations and philanthropists, while motivated to enhance the status of nearby universities, are more keenly interested in making investments that lead to measurable community social and economic improvement. And this no longer means making sure colleges simply graduate enough skilled labor to fill employer demand. Many funders are just as conscious of the

need for colleges to address issues such as racial equity and economic mobility for low-income people, pursuits that are codesigned with community expertise and innovation and that require a much more comprehensive focus.

Exposing the Democratic Magic

Of course, while the trajectory toward deeper community engagement bodes well for higher education, it does not guarantee success. The institutions that truly thrive and distinguish themselves will find it necessary to push beyond creating programs. They will need to make systemic changes to operate in more democratic ways.

In many ways, the newspaper industry was aware of what it needed to do as well. It chose to tinker around the edges—to try to mitigate the effects of imminent change rather than restructure to adapt to it. The response generally was along the lines of putting the newspaper online rather than fundamentally reimagining how news is generated and presented.

In hindsight, I have imagined an innovation that might have saved my old industry and wondered what its higher education equivalent might look like. One of the most dynamic occurrences in the daily production of the newspaper was not reporting or even editing stories. It was the Page One meeting. There, behind closed doors, senior editors would offer up the news of the day and debate its importance and appropriate placement in the paper. They would hammer out what should be on the front page, which photo best illustrated the story, and what story lead best balanced interest and fairness.

In many ways, this was the part of the newspaper that could not be duplicated. Other entities could gather the news and distribute it in multiple ways. But the active deliberation of what was news, what mattered each day and why—that is when the impact of events was given context and meaning. Ironically, this most democratic aspect of the business was the least visible to the public. Exposing it, even to reporters in the newsroom, was seen as tainting the objectivity of the news decisions made in the Page One meeting. Of course, there was nothing objective about the proceedings. Rather, its magic was the collective exchange of a group of subjective individuals.

I've often wondered what would have happened if we had opened up the Page One meeting. What if we had live-streamed it to anyone who wanted to watch? What if we had created a way for the public to contribute to the discussion, and determine—as a community—what the most important news of the day was? This process might have found an audience. In many ways, it would have looked a lot like the panels of commentators who provide entertainment

on cable news networks today. The most popular edition of *Charlotte Talks* on my local public radio station is the *Friday News Roundup*, when local journalists discuss the week's news. The difference is that the community-enriched Page One meeting deliberation would have produced a public asset: the community's collective expression of the news.

I am not sure if my novel approach would have saved newspapers. It might have failed miserably. Just restructuring newsroom routines to accom-

What if we asked students to declare a “mission” rather than a “major” upon entering college, and we spent their first years helping them identify a major in service to that mission?

modate such a dramatic innovation might have proven far too daunting. But I have noticed that innovations in citizen-centered journalism, which have emerged in recent years, provide a more active role for the general public in the framing and

production of news than serving its readers as merely passive recipients.

Regardless of the merits of my fantasy, I am convinced there is a lesson in it for higher education. Perhaps it is in the collective reflection and consideration of values and evidence—in a word, deliberation—where true democratic purpose is hidden. Exposing it will require higher education to move from seeing its central role as that of *knowledge generator* to that of *knowledge navigator*. This does not mean universities should cease generating knowledge. That, of course, is their core competency. Nor does it mean all knowledge must have practical application. But higher education can no longer be insulated from accountability for solving public problems.

The true drivers of this pursuit of problem solving, of course, are students, which brings me to my Page-One-meeting vision for higher education: What if we asked students to declare a “mission” rather than a “major” upon entering college, and we spent their first years helping them identify a major in service to that mission? After all, like the Page One meeting, the deliberation behind the choice of major is where the magic really happens. That is where students try to find that mix of purpose, passion, and curiosity that will determine their academic and professional pursuits for years to come.

Currently, it is somewhat of a mystery how that decision is made. It might be honed through years of consideration. It might occur on a whim. It could be influenced by a teacher or parent, a mentor or counselor, a friend or a social

media post. And yet, it is a critical decision that reverberates throughout the university. Not only does it dictate the outline of each student's academic roadmap, it impacts course offerings, faculty lines, and university revenue. It is higher education's Page One meeting.

So, what if we treated it with similar purpose? Upon entering college, students would declare the mission they want to pursue, driven by civic purpose, career aspirations, or intellectual interest or, more likely, a mix of all that. They would spend

their first year or two engaged in a deliberate exploration culminating in selection of a major—or mix of majors—tied to those objectives. This exploration would be navigated by knowledgeable faculty in concert with community experiences and guides. The result likely would better position students for

short-term and long-term personal success, and social impact. It would also force the institution to orient its focus outward, beyond the academy, to facilitate a truly meaningful exploration.

Of course, such a venture would be so disruptive as to seem nonsensical to many. The tradition of entering college with a major in hand is critical to the entire post-secondary apparatus, determining everything from class schedules to departmental funding. To see that largely mysterious exercise as the central catalyst for redefining the intersection between the academy and the community would be as institutionally disruptive as exposing the Page One meeting to the world.

In the meantime, experiments in deeper community engagement are under way at urban universities to improve democratic practices. At UNC Charlotte, we are developing faculty to conduct community-oriented research, providing tools to incentivize students' civic competence, creating data dashboards that measure social impact and reflect community ways of knowing, and developing innovation labs where community residents join researchers to codesign solutions to “wicked” problems.

The institutions of higher education that thrive over the next decade or two will find it necessary to distinguish themselves not so much by edging toward deeper community connection, but rather by making systemic changes to operate in more democratic ways.

Still, the institutions of higher education that thrive over the next decade or two will find it necessary to distinguish themselves not so much by edging toward deeper community connection, but rather by making systemic changes to operate in more democratic ways. Local leaders are demanding solutions from their institutions of higher education. Addressing fundamental operational challenges of securing enrollment, maintaining academic relevance, and generating revenue requires that we respond.

Who knows? Maybe one day my scheme to declare a mission upon entering college may not seem so bizarre. Certainly, no more so than the demise of newspapers seemed 20 years ago.



NOTES

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CIVIC ENGAGEMENT CONTRIBUTES TO CULTURE CHANGE AT A COMMUNITY COLLEGE

John J. Theis

Democracy in the United States is facing a crisis—not from our recent experiences with the political ascendance of Donald Trump, but one that has been brewing for years. National polls consistently show that not a single national political leader is consistently viewed in a positive light, while confidence in our political institutions is at record lows. In June 2019 Gallup surveys, just 38 percent of respondents had “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in the institutions of the presidency or the Supreme Court, while only 11 percent had confidence in Congress. This contrasts markedly with respondents’ opinions when the questions were first asked in 1975. At that time, the presidency stood at 52 percent, the Supreme Court at 49 percent and Congress at 42 percent. Even in the aftermath of Watergate, American political institutions fared better than they do now, some 40 years later.¹

Not only are we losing confidence in our political institutions, but we are also losing confidence in each other. Poll results show that the trust Americans have in their fellow citizens has been declining precipitously and has now reached the lowest level ever.² Regardless of whom we elect and which policies are implemented, the public has become increasingly disillusioned, cynical, and apathetic, while problems continue to fester and grow. It seems to many that those in charge are either incompetent, impotent, ignorant, in someone’s pocket, or all of the above. Partisan posturing and an often-noted decrease of civility among representatives from different parties reflect an adversarial, mobilizing politics that professor, author, and public scholar Harry Boyte sees as emerging from the ashes of the 1960s.³ This kind of politics is ill suited for the problems the US faces in the 21st century.

Education in general, and higher education in particular, have been historically seen as fundamental to preparing young citizens in the skills needed to make democracy function. From the Founders onward, education was regarded as a cornerstone of democratic society. According to Thomas Jefferson, “No

other sure foundation can be devised for the preservation of freedom and happiness. . . . We must establish and improve the law for educating the common people. Let our countrymen know that the people alone can protect us against these evils [of misgovernment].”⁴

We have forgotten John Adams’ advice to his son, “You will ever remember that all the end of study is to make you a good man and a useful citizen.”⁵

When the Constitution’s framers talked about education, they did not just mean vocational training or apprenticeships. “While this type of training was certainly important, they also

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wanted a citizenry trained in government, ethics (moral philosophy), history, rhetoric, science (natural philosophy), mathematics, logic, and classical languages for these subjects made people informed and civil participants in a democratic society.”⁶

Early educational reformers pursued this relationship between education and citizenship. Horace Mann, an early advocate for public education and the father of “Common Schools” explicitly contended that democracy required educated citizens. John Dewey, a leading reformer of public education said, “Democracy cannot flourish where the chief influences in selecting the subject matter of instruction are utilitarian ends narrowly conceived for the masses, and, for the higher education of the few, the traditions of a specialized cultivated class.”⁷ The Truman commission on higher education stressed the importance of educating for democracy when it reported, “The first and most essential charge upon higher education is that at all levels and in all its fields of specialization, it shall be the carrier of democratic values, ideals, and process.”⁸ In many ways, college should help develop qualities of mind and heart that facilitate reflective citizenship. A fundamental irony of American colleges today is that as they have become more democratic and inclusive in recruitment, their curricula have become less concerned with democracy.

To change the type of politics currently practiced in the US and effectively deal with the problems we face, higher education must play a central role in educating our next generation of citizens. Ironically, it may not be particularly well suited for the task.

For one thing, higher education is rigidly hierarchical and becoming more so. Despite proclamations about shared governance, decisions are often made by administrators and then committees are formed to arrive at that end. Classrooms are hierarchically organized as well. A faculty member provides a list of expectations in the form of a syllabus and determines the criteria that constitute

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achievement in the form of grades. A teacher's time is traditionally spent lecturing to the students and making periodic assessments of how well they have "learned." Increasingly, outside powers—accrediting bodies or state agencies—impose metrics of mastery on both faculty and students.

In the face of perceptions that colleges and universities have become hotbeds of "liberal indoctrination," there is a general fear of politics on college campuses, according to Boyte. Fear of being accused of bias for pushing one's ideological agenda lead faculty members to eschew political action and to avoid encouraging their students to pursue it.⁹ Faculty and administrators have become sensitive to those critiques and have sought to minimize political action on college campuses. This problem is acute because politics has come to be narrowly defined as consisting of campaigns, elections, and voting. In this definition, citizens are consumers of politics and their participation is restricted to working on campaigns and voting for their candidates. These are necessarily partisan activities that occur only periodically, and yet, political education becomes defined by these activities. The result is a hollowed-out notion of citizenship and politics that minimizes the role of ordinary citizens in the everyday lives of their communities.¹⁰

Civic education in most US colleges and universities has essentially been confined to three areas: political science classes, service learning projects, and student life activities such as Democrat or Republican clubs, debate teams, student government, and volunteerism. These ways of learning civic engagement emphasize a view of government as the center of democracy and citizens filling prescribed roles away from the centers of power.

An alternative model of “politics” is essential to understanding how higher education can teach the civic and political skills badly needed in our current crisis. This model focuses not on the government and experts as the center and citizens at the periphery, but rather on citizens at the center and government and experts as partners in civic life. This happens only by building a sense of civic agency in students and providing the spaces for them to practice it deliberatively. As Boyte notes, “Civic agency involves people’s capacities to work collectively across differences to cope with common problems and build a democratic life together.”¹¹

Ultimately, for real civic education to occur, our centuries-old model of lecture-driven education will have to give way to a more holistic notion of education that seamlessly incorporates democratic practices across the entire scope of a student’s campus life. Civic engagement is about developing deliberative and public work skills to help students see themselves as active citizens. This “politics of the people” is political but not partisan. This is the notion of politics and engagement that has served as the foundation of the civic engagement work at Lone Star College-Kingwood (LSC-K).

Civic Engagement at Lone Star College

Efforts to create a Houston community college that served the needs of residents in the northern suburbs began in the post-World-War-II era. Like most community colleges, it was envisioned primarily as a “job training” institution. As John A. Winship, one of the early proponents of the community college said, they “are geared particularly to the needs of the community and that’s where . . . junior colleges have strength. It will be for this community, and it will offer courses in job training for the people of the community. The challenge of our junior colleges is to meet the needs of our new and complex society where more technicians are required.”¹²

For 17 years, leaders in three north Houston school districts worked to build community support for the creation of a new college, and on October 7, 1972, voters approved a bond issue to purchase land and create the North Harris County College. In the following years, North Harris County College grew to become an academic institution that serves residents in 11 school districts located in two major counties in Texas. Today, the renamed Lone Star College System boasts 7 campuses and 10 centers spanning the northern Houston suburbs. Lone Star College (LSC) serves an area of more than 1,400 square miles with a population of 2.1 million, including some of the fastest-growing communities in the state. With an enrollment of 99,000 students, it

has become the fastest-growing community college in Texas and is recognized as a Top 10 associate-degree-producing institution in the country.¹³ Like so many community colleges, despite the growth and the changes, Lone Star never lost its identity as a “job training college.”

Since LSC sees itself primarily as a workforce training school and is a nonresidential two-year college, building student civic programs and creating a culture for democracy education takes on a whole additional set of challenges. When I arrived on the LSC-K campus in the fall of 2008 as an associate professor of government, I quickly saw that this was not the type of college I had been used to as a student or faculty member. I had attended a four-year private school for my undergraduate degree, a four-year state college for my master’s degree, and a flagship state university for my doctorate. My fondest recollections of college were not the classes. Rather, they revolved around my campus life—the spaces where students of different majors and from different places got to know each other and worked together. It was in the library, the cafeterias, and the lounges in the dorms that communities were built each school year.

At LSC-K, there was a dearth of campus life. The location of the campus in a suburban area meant students were never far from home. Other faculty told me it was a “PCP” campus—a place where students went from the “parking lot to class and back to the parking lot” to go home. In addition, many students held jobs while they went to school part time. Many of them were

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under a constant time constraint as they sought to balance school, family, and work. It was not the ideal environment in which to develop a robust campus life or build civic engagement. Finally, the lack of residential facilities meant that the campus didn’t have

students who lived on campus as a built-in audience for evening events, so the campus shut down by late afternoon. There were attempts at engagement. Volunteerism was encouraged as faculty, staff, and students participated in holiday toy and food drives and the Heart Walk. A handful of faculty engaged students in service learning. The Office of Student Life celebrated Constitution Day with cake and free copies of the Constitution for the handful of students

who came. There was a speaker's bureau that engaged one or two speakers a year though the events were sparsely attended. And, while there was a student government, its members were not elected.

Two changes in the thinking of the LSC community had to happen in order to introduce civic education at Lone Star College. First, the ideas that faculty, staff, and students had about what political education is had to be reshaped. A key to success was

making civic engagement political, but it had to be done in such a way as not to be perceived as "liberal" in what is one of the most conservative

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environments in the country. Secondly, civic engagement needed to be crucial to the institution's self-interest. Community colleges struggle with student retention. Half of the students who enroll are gone by the following year. State funding has come to be tied to graduation and completion rates. Success is the operative word on community college campuses. To build administrative support, civic engagement had to be seen as improving student success.

Working with Phi Theta Kappa (the national community college honor society), I launched Public Achievement shortly after arriving at LSC-K. Public Achievement is a youth engagement initiative developed at the Sabo Center for Democracy and Citizenship at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In the Public Achievement model, college and K-12 students partner in teams to research and develop action plans to impact issues in their community. College students serve as coaches and help the groups develop and implement their plans.

LSC-K students have worked with students from four schools in three school districts in the northeastern suburbs of Houston since the program began in 2010. Students choose issues and form action groups around those issues. The issues range from parochial ones, such as improving school lunches and addressing bullying, to larger, communitywide issues, such as building a community teen center and stopping animal abuse. Regardless of the issue, the coaches and students must learn to access power by discovering who has it and what their interests are. They must learn to craft appeals, listen to feedback, and modify proposals based on stakeholder interests. Public Achievement participants need to adapt to be successful. They cannot count on pushing their proposals through based on expertise but must find ways to shape their ideas to satisfy multiple and often competing stakeholders and provide each with

some level of investment in a shared outcome. Public Achievement provided the organizing model for developing civic engagement programs at Lone Star College and broadening its impact across its campuses.

After taking an exploratory group of faculty, students, and administrators to the Sabo Center we began working with Splendora High School in the spring of 2010. This became the signature program of what would soon become the Center for Civic Engagement (CCE). Public Achievement also provided me with opportunities to present at national conferences, and in 2011, Dr. Bill Coppola and I attended the American Democracy Project meetings in Orlando where Brian Murphy and Bernie Ronan were organizing the Democracy Commitment, a national community college democracy education organization. I began to see the possibilities of the work beyond Public Achievement.

Free Spaces

Free spaces are settings between private lives and large-scale institutions where ordinary citizens can act with dignity, independence, and vision. These are mainly voluntary forms of association, which are open and participatory and grounded in the fabric of community life. According to Evans and Boyte, “They are defined by their roots in the community; the dense, rich networks of daily life; by their autonomy; and by their public or quasi-public environments, which nurture values associated with citizenship and a vision of the common good.”¹⁴ Free spaces differ from volunteerism because the work its participants decide to do is chosen by the participants instead of by an organization and is arrived at through collective decision-making about priorities and values. Public Achievement became a program that provided a free space for students to act on problems they identify while teaching basic organizing skills. Students in Public Achievement with a taste for public work in free spaces went on to help launch a whole set of programs that became the backbone of the CCE. As the center began to grow, I envisioned it as a “free space” that would provide the students, faculty, and staff of LSC-K a place to work on issues they cared about.

Alternative Spring Break

In 2013, a faculty member approached me about starting an alternative spring break program. We began discussing the possibilities and, together, we developed the programming and funding to take a group of students to El Paso to look at border issues during spring break of 2014. Alternative spring break

became the second program born in the new CCE. We have since had 15 alternative spring breaks both locally and internationally.

As elections loomed in 2014, students decided to host voter education efforts by holding candidate forums. We invited candidates for all state, local, and national offices on the ballot from both Democrat, Republican, and third parties. Attendance at the forums varied from a dozen to over 100. We also invited state and local candidates to come and speak to students, held voter registration workshops, and registered voters at campus events.

All these activities were planned and organized by students and faculty working together. As the programming grew, faculty, staff, administrators, and students noticed a change on campus. Things were

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going on, and the CCE could help. Administrators saw the center as a place that could put on successful programs. When the chancellor wanted to host some campus forums on the topic of guns on campus, in anticipation of the upcoming state legislation that would allow conceal-carry on college campuses in Texas, the president of Kingwood came to me and said, “The chancellor wants to do some guns-on-campus forums, and so I volunteered us to do the first one. You can handle that, can’t you?” Yes, we could.

More than 300 people from the school and the community, including elected representatives, came to the gun forum. This was an event that would never have happened at Lone Star College before the CCE shifted the thinking about what community college could be. Training was provided to the Student Government Association so students could learn the deliberative skills to help guide deliberation at the forums. Senior college leadership participated in a dialogue about the purpose of higher education, after which, one vice president remarked, “You know, I don’t think we have ever had this conversation amongst ourselves.” Deliberation became more than a classroom activity; it became a method of problem solving.

The more I did the work, the more I noticed another outcome. I realized that our community college campus was losing some of its former “PCP” culture and gaining a more participatory, vibrant, democratic feel. Students were taking on projects and staying around campus; faculty were increasingly inclined

to engage in campus activities rather than just teach their classes and go home. And administrators were supporting the activities in both word and deed. The campus culture was changing. As the vice president of instruction at Kingwood Rebecca Riley said, “The work of the Center for Civic Engagement has almost single-handedly created the context for activism, engagement, and intellectual liveliness on our campus by being a consummate practitioner of grassroots organizing.”

Digging Deeper

In the spring and summer of 2016, we conducted 28 interviews with faculty, administrators, and staff involved with civic engagement on the Kingwood campus. I was particularly interested in what had brought them to civic engagement and how civic engagement activities had shifted the way in which they and the campus operated. One major point that jumped out in the interviews was that 70 percent of the faculty who were interviewed said they had become involved in civic engagement because they had backgrounds that led them toward activism and service. As one faculty member said, “In my personal life, I have worked with the Boy Scouts . . . and with the Red Cross as a trainer, so I want to get students thinking about how they can be part of the community.” Some faculty members were now bringing into their professional life the passions of their college days. As one respondent noted, “My undergraduate years were part of the change on college campuses, and as an African American student in a predominantly White university, I worked on efforts toward inclusion.” Most respondents had a personal connection to the work, and the civic engagement program at Lone Star College gave them an avenue to revitalize their interests and move to action in their professional careers in a way they had not before.

The success of civic engagement at Lone Star College opened a door that had been closed for many of them. Civic engagement provided permission (in a sense) to bring onto campus and into their classroom the issues that they cared deeply about and worked on outside of their professional lives. They began to see their jobs not just as teaching a skill set, but rather as teaching a way of thinking and acting in the world. For some faculty, the civic engagement activities created a safe space on campus for them to pursue their passions. As one faculty member said, “I have always had a deep commitment to social justice but was never involved as an undergraduate myself. Incorporating civic engagement at Lone Star allows me to give my students experiences that I missed.”

Faculty also found the great benefits that accrued to their teaching through their participation in civic engagement activities. As one adjunct faculty member put it, “I feel it enhances my ability to teach because I am getting the students involved in the process of acquiring knowledge.” Another faculty member put it this way: “Including civic engagement in my classes breaks up the monotony of teaching the same two classes over and over. The civic engagement work is ever-changing and keeps you on your toes.” Finally, one senior faculty member said, “Civic engagement enables me to experience the highs of teaching that come from an active classroom. Some of those less engaged are pulled along in the process and become better students.”

In addition to making teaching better and more interesting, civic engagement has helped create linkages between faculty in different fields. The tendency of faculty to stay within their subject areas is an issue that has plagued higher education for years. Civic engagement serves as a bridge that brings them together. As one faculty member put it, “Personally, it has helped me out tremendously by connecting me with various faculty members throughout the campus. This has, in turn, motivated me to include more civic engagement activities in my classes.” As another faculty member stated, “Civic engagement work has helped me reach out to professors in other disciplines.” The interdisciplinary nature of civic engagement cannot be underestimated in helping to bridge the divides that are so common in academia, whether those be discipline specific or organizationally driven differences between student services and academics.

An administrator put it this way: “Organizing efforts have produced a genuine sense of camaraderie and an increase in faculty morale for those faculty involved in the projects.” One faculty member found, “The collaboration with other faculty leads to friendships and a general increase in workplace satisfaction.” A final faculty benefit of civic engagement work seems to be the psychological benefits derived from participation

Faculty members believe that the things they care about make a difference in student learning. It is, therefore, not a surprise that in the interviews we conducted, faculty members talked about how important civic engagement was. One adjunct faculty member said, “The challenge for many FTIC [First Time in College] students is not knowing what abilities and behaviors are required for academic achievement, or personal success. Civic engagement activities offer an opportunity for students to explore their abilities and put them into action in a nonthreatening real-world situation.” Or as one professor put it: “General introductory classes tend to cover a breadth of information related

to the discipline. Working with community partners and organizations allows students to gain a deeper understanding of a particular issue. In political science, such singular experiences as working with a social service agency allows them to see how classroom knowledge is practiced and can unite discipline concepts into a shared experience among students and faculty.”

Every faculty member interviewed saw civic engagement activities as critical for student success. Most respondents believed that getting students involved meant they would be more socially connected, which would make them more successful, as evidenced by this adjunct’s comment that “the

Every faculty member interviewed saw civic engagement activities as critical for student success. Most believed that getting students involved meant they would be more socially connected, which would make them more successful.

essence of civic engagement promotes strategy-based thinking and social integration, which are two common predictors of academic success,” and by this faculty member who said, “Civic engagement activities allow students to integrate into the campus and form relationships with peers who are experiencing similar challenges.”

Ultimately, the value of civic engagement is of no importance if you can’t show that it matters. Much of the decision-making at colleges and universities revolves around data and analytics. If civic engagement is to have a firm foothold on a campus and build administration support, it is essential to demonstrate its efficacy in promoting student success and retention. One measure of whether a college is doing its job is fall-to-fall retention. This is a measure of students who enroll in the fall of a given year and reenroll the following fall.

The fall-to-fall retention rate for Lone Star College-Kingwood was 52.1 percent for the 2016-2017 school year. During that year, participation in civic engagement activities was tracked, and 1,873 students participated in at least one civic engagement event. An analysis of students who participated in civic engagement events found a 6.73 percent increase in retention because of participating in civic engagement. The retention rate for the college would have moved from 52.1 percent to 58.8 percent if civic engagement were part of every student’s educational journey. There are several reasons to think that this is a realistic outcome. As we have seen, faculty are more engaged in the

material at hand when they are involved with civic engagement. They have better morale, and, in general, are more excited about their professional role. Furthermore, there are reasons to believe that if students see how a history, political science, or humanities course is relevant to the real world, they would be more energized to complete the course and continue their education. Finally, and perhaps most important, by incorporating a broader definition of the importance and utility of a college degree at an earlier stage of a student's college experience and throughout its duration, students would find their college experiences more compelling. Those students would also be more likely to internalize those experiences and more likely to stay in school. If the only reason a student decides to attend college is to get a job and the only benefits he or she gets from a college education are utilitarian job skills, the student will be more likely to drop out when a job comes along. A year or five down the road, these students are more likely to find themselves right back in the position that brought them to college in the first place as the vagaries of the market lead to layoffs, bankruptcies, and unemployment. For our students, developing a sense of agency is crucial to their success as students. Civic engagement helps them do that.

The organizing framework that was used to develop civic engagement on the LSC-K campus led to the development of a wide variety of programming that brought students and faculty together. The "free space" of the center allowed faculty and students to bring ideas to life and create campus life. As one faculty member saw it, "By participating in civic engagement events, faculty and students develop relationships." The relational nature of civic engagement meant that participants would get out of the programming as much or more than they put into it. Another faculty member put it this way: "The energy you put in is paid back with the energy you get from working at a campus full of life and community." Over several years, people noticed the change across the campus. According to one administrator, "The energy and feeling of community are markedly different on our campus compared with campuses that don't do civic engagement. You can see it just walking around campus."

One long-term faculty member provided the following explanation for the changes: "Lone Star College-Kingwood has been transformed by some key hires of full-time faculty in the last decade. Two or three energetic and visionary people can affect a sea change in an institution's culture. I've seen it happen at Lone Star in recent years. That gives me the energy to keep innovating and teaching with commitment well beyond what some would consider retirement years." Another simply said, "I can say that our campus culture

has been transformed.” Civic engagement and the organizing surrounding it helped to create an atmosphere on the Kingwood campus that encouraged faculty and students to look at the possibilities and promises of a college not simply as job training, but in a much broader way. People began to see the possibilities of what they could do. Their interests and passions could be acted upon. Ideas could be brought to fruition. The campus was a place of activity and promise.

By the fall of 2016, rooms would have to be reserved before the semester started because most large spaces on campus were booked by faculty, students, and administrators who were holding nighttime events. Over the course of five years, a campus that had been largely closed at night had become a place to go, in the evening, for speakers, candidates, dialogues, and panel discussions.

The atmosphere had changed, and the campus felt like a four-year residential college campus where people and activities flourished.

Students who had previously come to campus for classes and then gone home stayed around. There was even a section of the cafeteria where gamers began to congregate to play after classes. The atmosphere had

changed, and the campus felt like a four-year residential college campus where people and activities flourished. While the civic engagement program was not responsible for all the programming, it was a catalyst for reshaping the mindset about what was possible. Through careful organizing of full-time and adjunct faculty and staff and providing administrators with evidence of how civic engagement tied to student success, the campus became a hub of activity. As one college president put it, “LSC-Kingwood is known as a place where difficult topics can be discussed in an atmosphere of civility and understanding. Students at the college are exposed early and often [to the idea] that their task in higher education is not simply to get through their coursework, but also to learn to become discerning, thoughtful citizens.”



NOTES

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TREATING AN AILING SOCIETY

Citizen Nursing in an Era of Crisis

Katie Clark

*This essay draws upon material previously published in *NurseManifest*¹ and *Nursology*² and from a speech delivered by the author at Augsburg University in the Augsburg Bold Series.³*

I work as a nurse, an educator, and as the executive director of the Augsburg Health Commons, which are nurse-led drop-in centers providing basic care to marginalized communities in Minneapolis. The model of care at the Augsburg Health Commons provides opportunities for nurses to make human connections, to build relationships based on mutual benefit, and to accompany others on their health journeys while leveling power and sharing knowledge development. In this work, I am immersed in the deep tensions of professional systems struggling to respond in a timely, inclusive manner to multiple crises—the COVID pandemic, economic decline, and the beginnings of a much-needed racial reckoning spurred by the events surrounding George Floyd’s death. I have learned many lessons about how and why people respond, rise up, and take action alongside or on behalf of communities in ways that build collective agency.

In this essay, I reflect on my experiences and what I learned during these past two tumultuous years, working with and caring for people at the epicenter of our nation’s racial injustice. During that time, I witnessed many examples of public institutions’ dysfunction—and worse, condescension, alienation, and even hostility toward the public they intend to serve. But I have also seen inspiring collaboration among citizens and professionals and their institutions, including at the university where I teach. I believe that these experiences and stories of citizen nursing have lessons for all of us about how we can—and must—come together as a society to address challenges shared by all citizens and the particular traumas and needs faced by marginalized groups among us.

Most of these stories originate from my work at the Augsburg Central Health Commons (ACHC) located at Central Lutheran Church in downtown Minneapolis. The ACHC provides health care without judgment and with hospitality to all who enter our doors. The expert model is de-emphasized, and relationships are built on mutuality and agency. We hope to accompany people on their journey to health, understood not simply as the absence of medical problems but more broadly as well-being and thriving. Student and faculty involvement (beyond the nursing department) has been the backbone of this work, now in existence for almost three decades.

At the ACHC, most of our guests are experiencing homelessness or are marginally housed. No proof of need or identification is required, and we offer only what people request. This often means new socks, clean underwear, hygiene supplies, and a nurse visit to address questions or health concerns and to have someone to talk to. Before COVID-19, some 120 guests typically came to the ACHC during the three hours we were open each week. In this space, as people shared their stories or presented with simple requests for basic supplies, I witnessed the implications of health issues compounded by deep societal complexities. Among the people we served was George Floyd. While we knew him only in a limited capacity, his membership in our community amplified the emotions and passions we felt and led us to take action in response to his death.

The university's deep-rooted commitment to show up and do the work asked of us as citizens, neighbors, and friends has not been relegated to an extra or optional service activity to participate in when time allows.

The health commons model is distinctive because it operates outside the physical parameters of the university's campus but is part of the university and represents Augsburg University's abiding efforts to be immersed in the community as a steward of place. The university's deep-rooted commitment to show up and do the work asked of us as citizens, neighbors, and friends has not been relegated to an extra or optional service activity to participate in when time allows. Augsburg University's president, Paul Pribbenow, describes the importance of being stewards of place when he writes, "It's not enough to say we are in this place; we must be able to say, with conviction, we are of this place."⁴ The work at the Health Commons is a profound demonstration of this ideal and the university's mission and commitment in action. We have kept our doors open and maintained our relationship with our community despite the risks and chaos during a year marked by disease and unrest. We maintain our commitment to this community because food, water, care, and belonging are needed despite the onset of a pandemic or social unrest.

The unanticipated crises of 2020 demonstrate how Augsburg's community partnerships can strengthen and pivot as needed in a constantly changing world. For example, our long-standing partnership with Central Lutheran Church has shown the university's deep commitment to ensure that we do

not abandon our community when they need us most. While the doors of the building were forced to close because of the governor's orders, the people at Central Lutheran got creative. When we could, we brought resources out to people. We continued to make hot meals and allowed people to come in to use the restroom or phone. At the height of the building closures, we were one of only four places still providing meals in Minneapolis. Central Lutheran has lived out its faith commitments to caring and solidarity.

Working at the Augsburg Central Health Commons has helped me understand the barriers imposed on some of our community's most marginalized citizens and the complexity of systemic issues that create further isolation and stress for those seeking help or trying to belong. Being at the ACHC has also allowed me to work collaboratively with those who enter our facility and to identify failures in our systems through a new lens. We strive to cocreate a plan grounded in epistemological humility.⁵ And while this journey of accompanying one another is unscripted and open, it is vital to working *with*, as Kettering Foundation president and CEO, David Mathews, has called us to do to preserve our democracy. Mathews writes, "A *with* strategy is, most of all, a strategy for strengthening our democracy. . . . *We*, the People, are the democracy. That idea is at the heart of a *with* strategy."⁶

For professionals to act *with* communities requires connecting on a human scale, where citizens have opportunities to work together to name problems and to cocreate actions that promote healing for all. These are also many of the lessons I have learned while engaging in the Kettering Foundation community. Mathews urges us to remember that "When the things that happen frustrate, disappoint, and anger us—as they will—the question we have to ask ourselves is not what is wrong with democracy, but what are we going to do about it? That question can be answered only *with* one another."⁷ While my stories of being a nurse in the epicenter of the 2020 events in Minneapolis have shaped my worldview, they have also shaped my passion and sense of urgency. We must focus on our ability to build on collective agency as we take this journey together. These stories represent not what I have done alone, as this work does not happen in a vacuum, but what I have been able to do with a community. They are about caring and taking shared risks in solidarity.

Working with these largely homeless citizens during the overlapping crises of the past year provided insight into challenges embedded within our community. To support those experiencing homelessness in Minneapolis during the pandemic, the urgent need for professionals and institutions to respond was clear. This population already suffered from higher rates of chronic medical

conditions, unstable housing, and lack of access to sanitation, which increased their vulnerability and risk of infection during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, they had experienced additional negative effects from some of the efforts to restrict the spread of the virus. For example, as buildings closed in response to guidelines set by governmental bodies, those who were experiencing homelessness were left with limited options. Typically, those in the homeless community

access the skyway system, light rail, public library, and other public spaces for shelter, toileting, and rest. But, as social distancing requirements continued to heighten, more buildings closed, making it hard for vulnerable

populations to get their

basic needs met. At the Health Commons, one guest said to me, “It’s like no one cares that we are still out here. I haven’t met anyone with this disease, but I will know people who will die from it because of all these rules.” He took photos of what he saw on the streets and sent them to my cell phone to help me understand the gravity of what was happening, in particular how access to water was nearly impossible because water fountains were turned off and bathrooms were closed to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

I mentioned this in one of my graduate nursing classes and the response of the students left me in awe. One student began collecting donations and bottled water to be delivered to the Health Commons. (So far, over 27,100 bottles of water have been donated. Other outreach programs, in particular Healthcare for the Homeless, have used this resource to make sure people can survive.) Throughout our programs, students, responding to the call for citizen nurses, have volunteered their time to be at the Health Commons or deliver food to the encampments. They’ve sewn masks and created hygiene kits. And, as vaccines have become available, students and faculty have volunteered to help distribute them in the most marginalized communities.

They continued to engage in this work despite the uncertainty and safety concerns of social unrest during the trial of Derek Chauvin and the killing of Daunte Wright. The students do this work despite the stressors they’ve endured

For professionals to act with communities requires connecting on a human scale, where citizens have opportunities to work together to name problems and to cocreate actions that promote healing for all.

providing care at hospital bedsides while juggling school and family responsibilities. They have demonstrated the ability and passion to lead when it would have been easier to retreat or feel helpless. The students in our nursing programs have inspired us all to continue in these efforts. We are seeing the power of collective agency.

In the spring of 2020, as the COVID-19 infection rates rose, with marginalized groups such as Black and Indigenous populations dying at alarming rates in comparison to their White counterparts, George Floyd was murdered

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by Minneapolis police officers after he was arrested for allegedly using a counterfeit \$20 bill at a local grocery store. Like many nurses in our state, I know all too well the appalling racial

health inequities that exist because of systemic racism, systems of oppression stemming from slavery, Jim Crow laws, redlining, and mass incarceration. All tie directly to both wealth and health. The anger at yet another killing of a Black man because of systemic racism in our policing systems could no longer be silenced. Minnesota had seen the deaths of Jamar Clark, Philando Castile, and now, George Floyd. Days of large-scale peaceful protests were followed by nights of looting and rioting. Buildings were burned, stores were raided, and the Minneapolis Third Police Precinct was taken over by demonstrators. After each night of protests, the early morning revealed not only visible social carnage, but also the anger, fear, despair, and loss felt throughout the community.

Prior to the killing of George Floyd, in response to the food insecurity that had surfaced during the pandemic, I had been working with mutual aid groups, volunteers, and other providers to distribute food to the local homeless encampments, also known as tent cities, in the Minneapolis area. I committed to continue this effort despite the protests and destruction. The food needs of those displaced people didn't end because of the chaos. This community had borne the brunt of the overlapping crises of the pandemic, racial injustice, and an increasingly unequal economy.

One afternoon in May 2020, I made a delivery to the largest encampment in Minneapolis, known as the Sabo Encampment. Accessing the encampment proved more difficult than usual. The typical path into the encampment was through the parking lot where, the night before, a Cub Foods grocery store and Target had been set on fire. After discovering a way to the area, I was suddenly

in the middle of a scene I still fail to understand. The police were dismantling the residents' tents in the name of public safety. According to these officers, the residents of the encampment were responsible for the looting, and the encampment was a public health concern because of drug use and human feces discovered on site. Thus, against the backdrop of charred rubble and buildings still in flames, surrounded by a group of activists from Natives Against Heroin and Cop Watch groups, I made my way into the encampment to deliver food and water. Realizing how many people were displaced by a pandemic and political unrest, with no place to go, I left with a flood of emotions, tears pouring down my face, yet with an overwhelming realization of my privilege: I could leave and retreat to the comfort of my home.

In response to these challenges, nurses have organized to respond as a collective in real time by taking immediate action both to maintain safety and to fight for justice. These nurses are engaging in what we call emancipatory nursing, which has the potential to help dismantle power systems that privilege some over others on the basis of economic means, social status, or hierarchical position. All create health inequities.⁸ While I have endless stories to offer from my nursing practice, I will relate a few that demonstrate the capacity to act, to create solutions in community, and, potentially, to save lives.

Nurses have generative power—not simply power against or over, which Harry Boyte calls “power which turns opponents into enemies to be controlled,” but power to build relationships and make change.⁹ This power can be used to support and create change in communities where we are called to care. I have been transformed by the destruction, fear, and pain that has been embodied in structural racism in Minneapolis for more than 100 years, but also by the kindness, goodwill, and brave actions of people—many of them nurses—demanding justice for George Floyd and compassion for all.

These stories of nurses engaging in emancipatory action while caring for marginalized communities in innovative ways shed light on what nursing practice can embody. Typically, nurses have little training in recognizing and understanding the sources and impacts of racial health disparities. Becoming aware of these issues offers an opportunity to broaden our beliefs about what nursing practice should entail. It also deepens our skills for collaborative action in response to injustices and socially isolating situations.

I am reminded of the words Reverend Al Sharpton offered at George Floyd's memorial service; he said to the world, “Get your knee off our necks”¹⁰—not only our physical knees but the metaphorical knees of racialized systems of oppression that have led to this moment in time. These “knees” have resulted

in endless health inequities for people based on where they live, work, and learn and the air quality they are exposed to in the neighborhoods they call home. Social determinants of health are not only “social”; they are political and often unjust. We must discover, analyze, and strategize about the causes behind the causes in collaboration with those impacted by these inequities.

I strive to embody these ideas in my professional practice and in my teaching. I encourage my students to build careers as “citizen nurses.” The citizen nurse, a term inspired by the teachings of Harry Boyte,¹¹ is defined as a professional nurse who is connected with other citizens as cocreators, whose work has public meaning, who de-emphasizes the expert model, who forms purposeful relationships for the common good, and who practices from a social justice framework. I have found that teaching students the importance of de-professionalizing and engaging in public relationships has transformed the work they do and how they see themselves in the world.

An example of citizen nursing in practice comes from my colleague Sarah Jane Keaveny, public health nurse and activist (and Augsburg University nursing alum). During the pandemic, Sarah Jane connected with the existing resources of outreach workers and community members engaged in mutual aid to respond to those displaced by social structural inequities by establishing Mobile Outdoor Outreach Drop-In (MOODI). MOODI offered meals and connections to resources every day of the week at a local park. In addition, while many of the shelters began moving people experiencing homelessness into nearby hotels, many of those left on the streets formed or joined existing encampments.

Because of the increased numbers in the unsheltered community, disproportionately representing people of color or Indigenous people, outreach workers were forced to secure food and water for this group rather than address long-term housing or health issues. Sarah Jane demonstrates emancipatory action through nursing practice and community engagement; while uplifting human dignity, she works with communities to respond as a collective, outside of institutions or systems that have limited capacity to respond in the urgent manner required in this pandemic.¹²

Another prominent example of a nurse taking creative action last year was the creation of the Sanctuary Hotel. Seeking shelter for the unhoused, nurse practitioner Rosemary Fister led an effort to negotiate with a local hotel to provide temporary protection. Rosemary was a member of a larger group of volunteers who had been organizing efforts to address health and safety issues in communities of homeless people during the pandemic. They needed to mobilize in new ways because of the civil unrest. Inspired by a theory of mutual

aid, they formed a human shield as best they could; volunteers, service workers, and nurses fought to secure safety for the unsheltered. After negotiating with a nearby hotel, the unsheltered were welcomed to stay at what was temporarily named the “Sanctuary Hotel.”

The plan was for these people to stay until the nighttime violence ended. That next morning (Sunday), I was able to help provide care to those staying in the hotel and in a nearby encampment.

Most people were exhausted from the endless chaos and trauma they were enduring. A few suffered from eye irritants, wounds from rubber bullets, or falls sustained while attempting to flee. Not one person told me they had participated in protests but said that they were caught in the crossfire simply by being in the place they called home. The hotel owners decided to allow the unsheltered guests to stay longer. A nearby foundation offered funds to cover the cost of the hotel.

I had never before witnessed a group acting in such solidarity, without hierarchies or narrow self-interests dictating the next move. People came from other communities to provide assistance. They formed trusting relationships in real time.

The members of the volunteer group spread the word that additional volunteers would be needed to maintain the hotel for the guests. In response, many volunteers helped on site to coordinate collection of donations, distribution of food, cleaning of rooms, washing of clothes, provision of medical attention, and operation of the front desk. I had never before witnessed a group acting in such solidarity, without hierarchies or narrow self-interests dictating the next move. People came from other communities to provide assistance. They formed trusting relationships in real time. While the hotel had to end the stay for these residents ten days later, my experience with this group reinvigorated my hope as a nurse in how we can cocreate communities in the future. And this story inspired a movement in Minneapolis to care for those displaced, to tackle issues of poverty, to approach change using all forms of knowledge while forging a plan for the future *with* the people who experience the targeted oppression. This is an effective means of challenging and shining light on structural problems and moving toward real solutions.

Another example of citizen professionalism comes from the president of my university. Paul Pribbenow offered to help me bring food into the encampments during the summer of 2020. One morning when he accompanied me, it had been raining and the conditions were muddy and slick. I explained to Pribbenow that this site had been plagued with many forms of violence and could be unsafe. There was, of course, the worry about COVID-19. But there were reports of other diseases as well because of the horrific conditions in

We must learn to understand one another, to lean into uncomfortable situations, to see ourselves as a community.

which people were living. And recently, gun violence had increased in the area. He said he was still committed to helping, despite the concerns I had shared with him.

We pulled up and started unloading the supplies. Pribbenow distributed socks, food, and water to people. The encampment seemed relatively calm, so I told him that he could walk around to the various tents to ask people whether they needed anything. Without any hesitation, that is exactly what he did. There were no cameras, no crowd to impress, just the two of us, checking in with people. I have traveled to more than 20 countries, often volunteering to provide care in a remote part of the world or responding to a disaster. And, while I could describe the lack of sustainability of these models of providing care abroad for such a short time period or how some of the work I did imposed our Western values on others, I learned a lot about people's interests, talents, intelligence, and the sheer impact of being authentically present. Pribbenow was authentically present on that day at the encampment. His focus was not on providing acts of charity to those we met, but on taking shared risks in solidarity, responding to the crises upon us all.

These stories of innovation and coproduction in response to an unprecedented public health crisis and all-too-common patterns of racial injustice contain lessons that can help shape professional practice, civic action, and institutional habits in both good times and bad. It is imperative that we rethink the conventional behaviors that exacerbate social divisions and alienation that divide the public and institutions from one another. Violence, polarization, and demonizing patterns of responding have become normalized, and, in my view, they are the largest threats to our democracy—as demonstrated in the insurrection at our nation's capital in January 2021. This leads me to lean on the teachings of Bayard Rustin, Martin Luther King Jr., and Dorothy Cotton

on nonviolence and, in particular, the imperative lesson of “speaking truth to power.” This means challenging and shedding light on injustices and demanding action but in a way that is grounded in believing in the good of humanity, where “love endures and overcomes” and where love guides a path forward. King said, “Darkness cannot put out darkness; only light can do that. . . . I have . . . decided to stick with love, for I know that love is ultimately the only answer to mankind’s problems.”¹³ Speaking truth to power, grounded in love, is the practice we need to learn to engage in now more than ever.

What tactics might we employ to shed light on systems and practices without exacerbating polarization? This requires a firm belief that we are in this together, which is another type of power, one that requires the participatory development of a different story in which many people of different views and backgrounds see themselves in the call for change. It demands that we find ways to bring love back into our common lives. And it is informed by our willingness “to learn to unlearn in order to relearn.” (Winona LaDuke, an internationally known author and activist from the White Earth community, said that at a conference I attended last year, and it stuck with me during these experiences in Minneapolis.) In each of these ways, we approach this work of challenging and shedding light on injustices with humility, with a commitment to authentic and mutual relationships, and with a vision of social well-being grounded in caring and solidarity. We must believe in the goodness of humanity, in our interconnectedness, in our capacity to reweave our torn social fabric, and, in the words of the late Senator Paul Wellstone, that “we all do better when we all do better.”

We must learn to understand one another, to lean into uncomfortable situations, to see ourselves as a community. This can be as simple as challenging our biases or our worldviews. Many of the amazing nurse volunteers who helped me last summer experienced situations they had never imagined. Take, for example, a recent volunteer—a nurse on furlough who dedicated his free time to help me. During his time at the encampment, he was approached by a woman who asked for PrEP (a medication regimen to help prevent contracting HIV) because she had engaged in sex work to make ends meet. Another man asked the nurse about safe injection methods and whether the volunteer nurse could supply him with clean needles. Through interactions like these, this nurse learned about life circumstances that are often hidden from the more privileged.

If professionals and institutions are to serve the public, it is crucial to know the public and to work with citizens. We must cocreate actions with people who experience the challenges themselves in order to speak truth to

power. People living in the encampments said some volunteers who were trying to advocate on their behalf seemed more concerned with posting on social media outlets and organizing efforts with other volunteers than asking the people living in the tents what they wanted and how they wanted to be involved. We have to dare to demand change, with all people gathered at the decision-making table. When I asked one of our guests at the Health Commons about this issue, he said, “You can’t come with the answers if you don’t know the problems.” People who are living without a permanent residence are not to be pitied, but instead, honored for their humanity, their strengths, and how they care for one another.

I do not mean to minimize the efforts required to engage in this professional practice. As a citizen nurse, working with citizens who have no medical training and trying to purvey professional expertise without alienating the public can be demanding—even exhausting. I have heard from colleagues who see friends and relatives post misinformation about COVID-19 online. Many of these colleagues said they lacked the energy to continue to participate on social media platforms because the push-back from others felt frustrating and belittling, with little change observed in shifting the opinions or beliefs of those who posted inaccuracies. Some nurses felt compelled to take a break from social media altogether because of the backlash experienced while trying to challenge misinformation or disinformation, such as spreading doubt about the efficacy of wearing a mask to protect oneself and others from infection.

Students often seem to create grandiose ideals of what the citizen professional is and feel as though becoming one is unachievable. My students give me perspective on how intimidating these civic ideals can be for young professionals just entering the nursing field. The largest hurdle in teaching this concept is that students feel as though they are disassociated from the work themselves. Often, they say that they “wouldn’t be able to give up their lives” to do what these professionals do every day. They see the work as being “selfless” or “giving.” While that may be true to an extent, the work of the citizen nurse is not an act of charity, but of solidarity.

As nurses, as citizens, we must take action without perpetuating polarization. We must challenge and shed light on systems and hierarchical norms that have left us ailing, organize across our differences to do better, demand justice by claiming our power to do something. It will be messy, but we must muddle through to reinvent ourselves. Leading change is critically necessary for individuals and for members of institutions. Effectively speaking truth to power requires a firm belief that we are in this together. It demands that we find

ways to discover a shared humanity, to see each other through our imperfections. And it is informed by our willingness to learn to unlearn. In each of these ways, we come to the work of demanding change with humility, with a commitment to authentic and mutual relationships, and with a vision of social well-being grounded in caring and solidarity.

The importance of these stories lies not in the deep misfortune they uncover but rather in the lessons they offer in how to take action, to share power. I won't lie; I am sometimes livid, watching the continual suffering of people living on the streets—people I have

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come to know and develop relationships with over the last decade—whose mental health status has been impacted by the chaos visited upon us and who have had to endure the images of their friend George being killed. I struggle to find the words to describe my emotions at those times. Yet my passion for this work, and the work we are all called to do, is stronger than ever. And the future of the work is still unfolding. The peacetime emergency of the pandemic will end, and people will owe rent while stimulus checks will end and the fallout of the economic crisis will be upon us. We can do something about all of this, together—for the common good. Polarization or “othering” is not the answer. Paulo Freire said, “Because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is a commitment to others. No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is commitment to their cause—the cause of liberation.”¹⁴ As the suffering continues in our communities and our nation, I remind myself of the importance of these words.

As I conclude this essay, I want to reflect on some of George Floyd's final words, “I can't breathe,” recorded on the video that shocked the nation's conscience. Had these words been uttered in any medical setting in the country, an influx of health-care providers would have rapidly responded, attempting to save the person's life by providing immediate care. Nurses would be running to help. These words not only represent Floyd's murder but also mirror the racial inequities that exist for those who are struggling to breathe in the worst pandemic in modern history. Nurses must struggle to uncover the dominant

health practices that foster Western ideals of health, which minimize the nurse's role to "helper" or "do-gooder." The words "I can't breathe" should call all nurses to action. First, we must look inward at our role in perpetuating systemic inequities related to race and injustice. Then, we must respond as a collective to undo generations of harm that have traumatized communities and individuals for far too long. And, finally, we must speak truth to power as we lead with love. Witnessing a man struggle for oxygen to survive under the knee of someone who swore to protect and serve undoubtedly warrants the declaration of a public health crisis and calls for immediate nursing action. In the words of James Baldwin, "Not everything that is faced can be changed; but nothing can be changed until it is faced."¹⁵ And in my view, facing the failures now becoming obvious in our policing, medical, and political institutions will change the world. We have a responsibility to make sure that it does.



NOTES

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THE PANDEMIC, TRUSTWORTHINESS, AND A PLACE FOR CIVIC SCIENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Jonathan Garlick

The global pandemic precipitated politicization of critical scientific information, erosion of the public's faith in science, and pervasive health inequities that disproportionately impacted communities of color. As the pandemic forged an uncharted and uncertain course, it felt as though the relationship between institutions of science and the public was also entering uncharted waters. Scientists and science information were going to be more central to our collective lives than ever before.

Preparing for a Moment of Reckoning with Science

As a stem cell researcher and civically engaged scientist, I had prepared myself for this public moment of reckoning with science. I had spent much time over the last decade developing programs and initiatives intended to make science more relevant and accessible to the public. As part of the growing field of civic science, I develop frameworks designed to help individuals explore the meaning and value of science and to reflect on how citizens and scientists can work together to shift the culture of science toward a more inclusive and collectivistic mindset. Ultimately, my goal is for civic science to link the vast potential of science to civic capacities in our communities in ways that might revitalize the democratic purposes of science for the public good.

The ideals of civic science have for many years influenced my approach to classroom education, communicating scientific findings, and engaging the public in dialogue about often divisive science-related issues. The COVID pandemic has both challenged and reinforced my commitment to civic science. As the events of the last year have made quite clear, scientists cannot prevent the continued spread of this deadly disease without collective public support and action that are necessary for effective responses to the threats this virus

poses. At the same time, while scientific knowledge is critical for personal decision-making, it is often not sufficient to help people make choices and take action. The psychological, social, economic, civic, and spiritual needs of individuals who feel mistrustful of and disengaged from health-related decision-making must also be understood. These inform the personal and structural influences on citizens as they balance the risks and benefits of vaccination and consider how to best protect themselves and others from harm.

Answering the Call to Shift the Culture of Science: A Civic Science Curriculum

The pandemic has revealed fault lines that have roots in a long history of failure to include citizens in science-related decision-making—an exclusion that has had a disproportionate impact on racial and ethnic minority populations, who have been underrepresented in science-based conversations and deliberations in the United States. If scientists want to build public trust, they need to listen to and respect concerns that individuals hold on complex and contentious science issues. Part of the challenge in doing so is that institutions of higher education have not focused on developing the skills needed to engage voices that have been historically missing from our national science conversation. And these are not skills that have been typically taught in graduate school. Since colleges and universities will continue to play a leading role in preparing students for the scientific professions, higher education must do more to bridge the divisions and distrust between scientific institutions and the public. Teaching these civic skills will better prepare students to embrace the full complexity of the science ecosystem from a socially engaged perspective as well as from a technological perspective.

The pandemic has highlighted the necessity for higher education to prepare future generations of scientific and medical professionals not only to efficaciously advance research and practice, but also to communicate in ways that respect both scientific information and citizens' knowledge, experiences, and values. How can higher education respond to this challenge? What skill sets do scientists need to be better listeners, to respect the experiences and identities of people without scientific credentials? What tools do scientists need to build inclusive partnerships between themselves and other citizens in democratic societies, to offer their wisdom in a fair and balanced way? What learning opportunities build scientists' capacities to listen across differences of beliefs, values, and levels of trust? How can scientists implement conversations that ensure that individuals feel seen and heard, especially about high-stakes

or polarizing science issues? How can scientists enter communities and act in ways that build trust and “do no harm” at the personal and institutional levels?

At Tufts University, we have taken these questions on by developing an undergraduate civic science program that spans the four-year curriculum and bridges the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and life sciences. Courses teach the principles and practices of civic science to advance students’

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skills in communication, advocacy, dialogue, and deliberation about polarizing, complex, and uncertain science issues. Our courses challenge our students to consider the question: Now that you have learned about complex and controversial science and public health issues, how are

you going to speak to others who hold beliefs different from yours? Courses are designed to help students understand how they can actively engage on science-based issues by applying civic skills in communities they care about. They offer students a chance to grapple with science issues that are rife with uncertainty and to find their voices on topics of personal resonance at the interface of science and society.

We teach science communication approaches by creating facilitated dialogues on challenging science issues in which students learn practices to build mutual understanding between individuals who hold different convictions, beliefs, and values. These programs can also have educational benefits for students who help to convene and facilitate the dialogues. Students tell us that these dialogues help them discuss science-based issues in ways that inspire curiosity and empathy for positions that differ from their own.

Students also reflect on the limits of scientific expertise through a series of talks delivered by scientists deeply engaged in community work. This informs students’ understanding that, while scientists are trained to find the “right answer,” it is also legitimate to say, “I don’t know the right answer.” Students learn that scientists can gain public trust, but that proclaiming “expertise” can be an ineffective strategy to achieve this goal. They begin to understand that scientists can sometimes play the role of an expeditionary guide; Sherpas possess

expertise, but even an experienced Sherpa can't always predict whether the weather is going to turn bad on the other side of the mountain. When students realize that even the "expert" in the room can't see what's on the other side of the mountain, they also learn to put more trust in each other and in themselves. We teach students that scientists have experience that others do not have but they don't have all the answers that inform public decision-making. In this way, students understand that civic science can help bridge the gap between the generation of scientific knowledge and the translation of that knowledge into meaningful, real-world solutions through community action and social change.

Teaching Civic Science through an Equity Lens

This educational grounding in civic science provides curricular content based on the view that science issues are connected to students' identities, which incorporate race, gender, cultural heritage, ethnicity, and more. Our civic science courses aspire to provide more inclusive, equitable, and intersectional educational approaches to enhance science learning. These courses are dedicated to learning about exclusionary practices and policies in research and about the impact that the systemic structuring of opportunity and the values assigned to these opportunities have had on people of color. Most recently, we have taught this through the lens of the disproportionate harm caused to Black, Indigenous, and other people of color during the pandemic. Invited speakers give voice to the lack of diversity in institutions dedicated to scientific research, including underrepresentation and under-funding for research conducted by investigators of color and lack of inclusion of communities of color in science and research. We commit ourselves to teach

toward equity in the classroom. Becoming more effective anti-racism science educators requires that we reveal understanding of marginalized perspectives

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and illuminate the impact of structural oppression on science and its institutions. We challenge students to explore means by which they might address these inequities by moving toward broader inclusion in research and science as a collective investment in improving a democratic society.

Our classes make the case that diversity should matter to all scientists and not just those involved in community-based research. We delve into the

reasons diversity matters for the sake of science itself as a human enterprise. The scientific process challenges us to create the broadest possible potential for generating important new questions. If science is guiding the shape of our future, then science needs to embrace the greatest possible diversity of creative people. Our courses help students develop the skills and sensibilities to respond to the urgent challenges central to equity that science faces in our lives and

If science is guiding the shape of our future, then science needs to embrace the greatest possible diversity of creative people.

communities. We offer frameworks that teach how students can confront existing systemic and institutional barriers related to marginalization, bias, and

exclusion on the basis of race, gender (identity and expression), ethnicity, ability, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, age, familial history of higher education, and the intersections of those identities.

Structural oppression has become evident most recently at the interface of racial injustice and the COVID pandemic. Through this lens, students learn that science and its institutions have a tremendous amount of work to do regarding those who have been historically excluded from research or have suffered harm from science and its institutions. We have found that students are highly motivated to address these inequities.

Shifting the Culture of Science and Building Trust for Science at the Institutional Level

As a next step in building trustworthiness with the public, we seek to explore how institutions of higher education might have a transformative impact on the culture of the scientific enterprise. Civic science is poised to play a role by weaving together its programs, expertise, and practices into a coherent framing of educational and research experience. This will support crossing the boundaries between STEM fields, the social sciences, the humanities, and the arts.

The challenge is to demonstrate the financial and academic contributions that civic science can offer the academy. Civic science can deliver hands-on, experiential learning through the lens of equity and identity, as well as conceptual framing of science issues that can build students' sense of civic agency. Civic science courses offer training in civic skills that include public and collective evaluation, strategic thinking, and organizing on science issues. Academic centers can further enhance their community partnerships by positioning

themselves as curators and disseminators of information needed to support public decision-making on complex science-based issues. This will ultimately cultivate educational programs and scholarly initiatives that can turn science-based information into valuable public knowledge and can generate trust in the communities they hope to serve.

Institutions of higher education have been hesitant at times to innovate in the area of civic engagement through curricular, research, and service work. This may be a barrier to

the institutional culture shift that will be needed to allocate resources beyond the traditional boundaries of science to these newly conceived civic dimensions. Civic science must make the case that it is essential to the institutional mission

Academic centers can further enhance their community partnerships by positioning themselves as curators and disseminators of information needed to support public decision-making on complex science-based issues.

of building trust with the public. Civic science should become an elevated institutional priority because of the impact of scientific research, scholarship, and teaching with civic dimensions on topics that are of growing importance to our society. An additional challenge is fighting the perception that public service and civic engagement activities lack academic rigor. Advocates for civic science must make the case that a civic lens is necessary to tackle some of the thorniest and most intractable problems of public engagement with science.

The Power of Dialogue and the Challenge of COVID

Many problems require engagement from both scientists and other citizens in order to promote solutions that are both efficacious and democratic. Most recently, the COVID pandemic has dramatically demonstrated the risks of mutual distrust between citizens and scientific institutions. We have learned that science information alone is not sufficient to impact decision-making when the public considers the risks and benefits of masking and vaccination. Civic science has an important role to play in helping to reconcile scientific evidence and the values that citizens hold dear.

At Tufts University, my colleagues and I have experimented with various forms of public discussion of science-related issues for many years now. Over time, we have learned how to create spaces that are as safe as possible to support

individuals who want to share their lived experience and beliefs. Once participants feel a degree of safety, they are better able to speak from a place of “productive discomfort” that helps them take the risks needed to share their experiences without feeling threatened. They learn to understand that feeling discomfort is not the same as feeling unsafe. This allows dialogue participants to share, with curiosity and humility, their hopes and concerns about science issues that impact their lives, even in the face of continuing disagreement. Our hope for these conversations is to instill a sense of wonder not only about science but also about the stories shared by those engaged in the dialogues.

This experience has led to dialogues with diverse public groups, creating conversations on a wide range of issues, including the abortion debate, the opioid crisis, the Flint water crisis, GMOs, and “designer babies.” Our hope was that these civic science “roundtables” could break down stereotypes and build trust, dignity, and security across diverse values and beliefs. At times, participants communicated deeply held beliefs and hopes with a sense of determination—as though their lives and well-being were hanging in the balance. We discovered that open-minded dialogue on contentious science topics could be a path towards exploring highly charged science issues with empathy and compassion for others.

As the pandemic raged on, I realized that one of our society’s greatest challenges might be how people talk to each other about complex and uncertain

“One-way” public health messaging has not worked sufficiently to build trust with communities that have suffered historical harms rooted in centuries of racist exploitation by American physicians and researchers.

issues during a time of intense polarization and politicization of science information. How were Americans going to speak to those who held beliefs that differed from their own? In response, we thought that issues such as vaccine hesitancy, COVID testing privacy, and the disproportionate impact of

COVID on communities of color might be ripe for the types of dialogues we had been bringing to our Boston communities. After a decade of developing civic science, we felt that it was time to put our ideas to the test in response to the pandemic.

The pandemic revealed that public health communication strategies about COVID required listening more intentionally to community voices, hopes, and

fears. “One-way” public health messaging has not worked sufficiently to build trust with communities that have suffered historical harms rooted in centuries of racist exploitation by American physicians and researchers. As an example, vaccination rates for Blacks and other minorities have consistently lagged behind those for Whites.¹ *The New England Journal of Medicine* recently called for “a collaboratively designed Operation Build Trustworthiness that matches the seriousness and scope of Operation Warp Speed,” the federal government’s vaccine-development program.² It was time to build community partnerships to initiate new communication approaches that could meet people where they are.

We decided to create community-specific dialogues built on recognizing the legitimate concerns many people have about COVID vaccination. Our hope was to support individuals who were feeling disconnected, mistrustful, and disengaged from COVID vaccine-related choices and to support them in feeling more connected, trusting, and engaged. Our goal was to address this by communicating that it is not the responsibility of community members who had been historically harmed by science or medicine to find ways to trust COVID vaccination. Rather, it is the responsibility of those offering the vaccine to demonstrate that they are worthy of that trust. Leveraging our experience with the community dialogues we have previously convened on topics related to health disparities, we are creating conditions in which citizens can feel as safe as possible to engage in open-minded conversation and listen and learn from each other by sharing life experiences that underlie how they *feel* about COVID vaccination. These conversations are meant to offer a space where people humanize one another as they consider the risks and benefits of vaccination. This approach starts with listening in order to understand the legitimate hopes and concerns of individuals by respecting what people are thinking and feeling. By honoring voices that have been historically excluded, those offering these types of conversations can be seen as more deserving of public trust.

As we are in the early stages of doing this work, several challenges feel daunting. Will citizens who are justifiably mistrustful of science and its institutions want to join these dialogues? Will people be ready to make decisions on the politically charged and scientifically uncertain issue of COVID vaccination? Can we develop community-specific approaches, such as community dialogues, that offer scientific information and conversations about the COVID vaccine in ways that will be viewed as trustworthy? Developing wider public discourse on COVID-related choices continues to be challenging in the face of increasing polarization of discourse around masking and vaccination as the pandemic crisis continues.

There are unavoidable tensions in this work. The pandemic has dramatically revealed the need for public health communication strategies that value people's legitimate uncertainties and fears about COVID vaccination. The goal of dialogue is not to persuade others, but rather to encourage empathic listening and mutual understanding by inviting participants to share their stories and life experiences. Dialogues invite speaking about foundational hopes and concerns in ways that go beyond the binary terms that inform "yes or no" or

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Dialogues are *not* meant to coerce or convince others of what they should do or what choices they should make. However, this core principle of our dialogue work feels somewhat at odds with the need for scientists to make a con-

vincing case that COVID vaccines are safe and effective. Our hopes are, on the one hand, for increased vaccine confidence based on scientific evidence and, on the other, to create space for empathic listening and questioning that honor citizens' critical thinking about what they are reading and hearing about the risks and benefits of vaccination.

Dialogues must reflect community-specific needs and are built on partnerships with trusted community members. Such partnerships always take time to nurture and build. How can we balance the public health benefit of quickly getting "shots into arms" while honoring the concerns of community members and respecting the pace of change within each community? This heightened sense of urgency makes it challenging to take the necessary time to encourage democratic, inclusive, and thoughtful decision-making. This sense of urgency can also lead to a failure to acknowledge the creativity of community partners or to a willingness to sacrifice democratic and collaborative process in favor of efficiency.

I began to notice that many of the tensions that were coming up for me were aligned with the characteristics of white supremacy culture outlined by Tema Okun. According to Okun, this is a list of "15 behaviors, all of them interconnected and mutually reinforcing."³ They appear below:

- perfectionism
- a sense of urgency
- defensiveness and/or denial
- quantity over quality
- worship of the written word
- the belief in one “right” way
- paternalism
- either/or binary thinking
- power hoarding
- fear of open conflict
- individualism
- progress defined as more
- the right to profit
- objectivity
- the right to comfort

I began to see that these characteristics were linked to some challenges we were facing in our dialogue project. For example, “either/or binary thinking” was undermining the complexity and nuance of the relationships we were hoping to build with our community partners. The “sense of urgency” was evident in the need to vaccinate but seemed to be making it hard to be inclusive, encourage democratic thinking, and allow the consequences of our next steps with community members to be carefully considered. I was also finding that these characteristics were reflected in the culture of science and its institutions and were being promulgated by science training programs as necessary for professional success. I realized that this should not be surprising as institutions “to some extent require [these characteristics] and constantly reproduce them in order to benefit from them . . . which is why they are so prevalent in our culture and institutions.”⁴ I was further motivated to create these dialogues through my growing awareness that they might help me better understand the impact that white supremacy culture has on our work and on the institutions of science.

Challenges also arise over how to communicate information about COVID vaccination and booster shots in ways that will most effectively prompt community dialogues. It is important that we share scientific knowledge about the vaccine with transparency. This means that we need to explain what science knows and what remains uncertain about vaccination to help people accurately understand potential risks and benefits. Messaging used to deliver this information needs to acknowledge the historical context and lived experience of each community. There is no “one size fits all” approach to communicating science information as we need to first understand what COVID-related scientific information is relevant to the issues each community is trying to address and choices it needs to make.

This also raises questions about the limits of scientific expertise. As a research scientist, I lean into the limits of my expertise and into my humility every day. We thrive on the unexpected result and benefit greatly when our hypotheses are proven wrong. I embrace scientific uncertainty in my lab. How can I do the same when I engage with public groups about the uncertainties of COVID vaccination? Scientific evidence seems strong that the health risks

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of the vaccines approved for use in the United States are low and the benefits are high. As a result, I feel the temptation, as a scientist, to weigh in with the “right answer” about vaccination. But how much risk people are willing to tolerate or how much they trust the people offering vaccines are not questions with scientific answers. This is a

moment for scientists to see the value in personal decision-making, rather than telling the public why they need to follow the “right” answer based on science. This is a reminder that while science information is important for decision-making, it is not always sufficient to help people make up their minds about what to do. The value of dialogue is that it brings in voices of individuals who have shared lived experience. In this context, citizens can learn from each other how they *feel* about taking action on science information relevant to COVID vaccination.

It is also important to communicate science information about COVID vaccination in ways that decrease stigma. The media often represent those who are hesitant to be vaccinated as uninformed, but recent surveys have shown that there are many among the hesitant who are quite well informed. Those declining vaccination are sometimes branded as ignorant and selfish, when, in fact, many of them are thinking critically about what they are reading, hearing, and seeing about COVID vaccination. Scientists can be more open to encouraging and validating this type of thoughtful analysis of scientific information.

If successful, community-specific dialogues can broaden public participation and support vaccine preparedness in communities of color and immigrant communities. Preparation for these dialogues is built on the grassroots involvement

of individuals and community organizations, such as local faith leaders and community advocates, with well-earned reputations for trustworthiness. The dialogues we are creating will engage these trusted local leaders as “community catalysts” to lead these discussions about the experiences of community members related to vaccination. These dialogues are built on recognizing the legitimate concerns many people have about COVID-19 vaccination. We strive to involve community members at each step of the communication process to inform the specific focus of each community dialogue.

Concluding Thoughts

Civic science is an inclusive ecosystem that welcomes scientists, other citizens, and institutions by inspiring, supporting, and promoting a new approach to civic participation in science. This path to civic discourse and problem solving on science issues offers transformative change in the culture of public engagement in science through which scientists and other citizens can engage as authentic partners and cocreators. Our civic science curriculum challenges students to find inclusive approaches to build scientific trust in communities they care about as they take action on complex and challenging science issues with individuals who may hold convictions, beliefs, and values different from theirs.

On the path to the institutionalization of civic science, we will likely encounter tensions that arise from the individualistic pursuit of scientific discovery, which seems embedded in the culture of research. As a stem cell scientist, I experience the need for rewarding the rugged individualism of scientific discovery every day in my lab. It is an engine that drives science, builds capacities, and cures diseases. But building relationships of trust with diverse stakeholders will require a shift of science towards a more collectivist culture. As communities continue to experience health disparities and disproportionate harm from the pandemic, scientists will benefit from grappling with the limits of their expertise as they engage with these communities. Learning to value all forms of knowledge is an important step toward holding productive dialogues so that voices of community members can be centered and better understood. To be effective, this community work needs to be firmly grounded in grassroots involvement of individuals and organizations with solid, well-earned reputations for trustworthiness. Those offering vaccines will have to work on developing a more communal way of thinking about what they have to offer. When this happens, science will be able to support people reaching out to each other across the divide to activate an open-minded, well-informed,

and empathic dialogue on highly charged issues that may help repair the broken landscape of our American discourse. Trust will follow.

Rebranding the role of the scientist as an outward-facing citizen will result in higher-quality teaching, research, and learning. Demonstrating that civic science can prepare people who work and learn in universities to lead lives of responsible citizenship, linked to meaningful personal and professional development, will help make this case, too. We have seen civic science training, skills, and sensibilities shift institutions and departments to a more productive culture of internal communication by building a culture of inclusion and representation.

As I was doing my clinical work in head and neck cancer, the Hippocratic Oath asked that I use my judgment for the benefit of my patients “to protect them from harm and injustice.” Civic science is making a similar request of me—to do “no harm” as I engage with stakeholders and communities that hold diverse identities. Building trust is not just about being credible and authentic. It is also about using this credibility and authenticity to protect others from harm and injustice. At times, even the best of intentions cannot prevent harm. But it feels as though civic science is asking me to constantly check my biases and assumptions and to clarify the intentions of my words. In this way, it is

Civic science is an inclusive ecosystem that welcomes scientists, other citizens, and institutions by inspiring, supporting, and promoting a new approach to civic participation in science.

teaching me what it means to be trustworthy. When I show up, I will try to do so in ways that are not going to make others feel disrespected, demeaned, or humiliated. Building trust in science will also depend on scientists recognizing their place in this process. Scientists can best serve

others by listening to the citizens they hope to serve and the communities they wish to support.

Civic science trains scientists not only to know the language and expertise of science but, more important, how and when to use it. The first step in this process is to listen and get to know the community. Handing over the “power of knowing” to others creates a space for scientists and other citizens to work together so they can share diverse forms of knowledge and experience across their diverse values and beliefs.

It has been said that immunity is a communal experience. Laboratory scientists, epidemiologists, public health specialists, and others are still puzzling about how we can get to “herd immunity” for COVID. While there is no certainty about what our journey as scientists will reveal, issues such as COVID vaccination will awaken us to communal choices that speak to the heart of our natural and societal order. These issues call on us to connect to our deeper sense of social justice and equity. They ask us to create inclusive dialogues. There is no turning back from our collective future.



NOTES

- ¹ As of this writing, 70 percent of White Americans, 65 percent of Black Americans, and 61 percent of Hispanic Americans have been vaccinated. The Kaiser Family Foundation tracks and updates this data. “KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor,” Kaiser Family Foundation, <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/dashboard/kff-covid-19-vaccine-monitor-dashboard/> (accessed October 7, 2021).
- ² Reuben C. Warren et al., “Trustworthiness before Trust—Covid-19 Vaccine Trials and the Black Community,” *New England Journal of Medicine* 383, no. 22, <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2030033> (accessed October 7, 2021).
- ³ Tema Okun, “White Supremacy Culture Characteristics,” White Supremacy Culture, <https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/characteristics.html> (accessed October 7, 2021).
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LEARNING TO BECOME A CIVIC PROFESSIONAL Using Deliberation in Community Engagement

Timothy J. Shaffer and David E. Procter

Introduction

“Community engagement” has become a near ubiquitous term used by higher education to articulate its purpose, impact, and possibilities. It shows up in brochures for interested students and parents, winds its way into job descriptions and titles in faculty and professional roles on campus, and is found in the rhetoric of administrators and others expressing a sense of purpose for students and the institution. The Elective Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, for example, has become a symbol of commitment to such efforts for colleges and universities, requiring extensive documentation of efforts to demonstrate such activities as community partnerships, service-learning opportunities, and the integration of such civic commitments into promotion and tenure expectations.

Traditionally, in higher education circles, community engagement has been defined as a faculty expert bringing knowledge to a community group or, perhaps with students, directly serving a particular community need. These efforts are always well intentioned and can be beneficial. But on the receiving end, this expert advice or activity is often perceived as disconnected from community context for lack of community input and viewed by the people it was intended to serve as having limited applicability.

What might it take to change the approach to this work when so many aspects of it are rooted in an established protocol? This article focuses on one such change—a different conception of community engagement most commonly known as *public deliberation* and loosely defined as a methodology in which groups of citizens are brought together to define their problems and work through the pros and cons of various solutions. Working with trained facilitators utilizing a variety of deliberative techniques, community members become deeply involved in community problem solving and public decision-making. This concept shifts the role of the academic professional from “content expert” to “civic” or “democratic” professional.¹

As a land-grant university, Kansas State University is committed to serving the public in diverse ways. Community engagement practices have taken many

forms but have generally been dominated by traditional outreach and service models of knowledge transmission and transfer. Disciplinary rather than social needs have driven faculty and students into well-defined and increasingly bounded disciplinary units. Research universities have shifted public higher education's focus from attention to social problems to the achievement of scholars within academic disciplines. Moreover, many people shifted from the view that higher education is a valued public good to questioning whether these institutions are engaging in

indoctrination. The community-engagement movement has been a response to this dominating viewpoint. Amidst these discussions, but often on the periphery,

Public deliberation shifts the role of the academic professional from “content expert” to “civic” or “democratic” professional.

is the sense of what different conceptions of “community engagement” mean for faculty members, the central actors in the story of higher education.

Faculty members make possible the teaching, research, and service that most see as the *work* of higher education. Without faculty, students don't complete degree programs or move into multiple domains in order to shape our world. Without faculty, new ideas and experiments don't change how we think about complex issues. Without faculty, conversations about how degree programs meet professional and civic purposes don't exist. The growth of cocurricular programs and associated staff addressing all aspects of student life and well-being could well make it seem as though the “academic side of the house” is not as important as it used to be. If there is to be transformation within higher education, faculty members must be viewed as agents of change and not simply instructors in necessary courses for credentials.

Given this framing, how should community engagement be realized through democratic practices rooted in deliberative politics and dispositions? Specifically, we focus here on how faculty members at Kansas State University, a research-intensive university, have aligned disciplinary goals with principles of democratic engagement. We also highlight the intentional efforts necessary to integrate and embed dialogic and deliberative practices into teaching, research, and engagement.

Establishing a Space for Deliberative Engagement

Scholars and practitioners writing in a 2018 *Higher Education Exchange* article noted the existence of some 110 centers devoted to engaging campuses

with communities; most are at institutions of higher learning.² These centers and institutes are playing crucial roles in shaping their campus cultures and impacting broader communities. The Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy (ICDD) at Kansas State University is counted among these campus-based centers that have committed to public engagement through the use of public deliberation. ICDD was founded in 2004 by a small group of faculty members interested in cultivating civic agency work in all mission areas of the university—research, teaching, and engagement.

ICDD’s Public Issues Facilitation Workshop was launched in 2006. Opportunities for professionals to learn about how to create conditions for

“From the beginning, this workshop was about more than simply training individuals to moderate conversations. Consistent with our mission, we wanted to build citizen civic agency.”

deliberative discussion were extended to individuals from across the university in addition to community partners across the state. As noted by Timothy Steffensmeier and David E. Procter, “From the beginning, this workshop was about

more than simply training individuals to moderate conversations. Consistent with our mission, we wanted to build citizen civic agency. Thus, we were intentional about inviting citizen leaders and policymakers to participate.”³ The idea that deliberation is an essential part of being a citizen was and has been at the heart of how ICDD engages different individuals, groups, and communities. When we think about how universities engage with stakeholders and skeptics alike, public deliberation about issues of shared concern presents an opportunity for the institution to be viewed as a partner and not just as a source of information or indoctrination.

Near the end of the 20th century, there were calls for land-grant universities, Kansas State among them, to return to their roots. The original acts of Congress creating these institutions, agricultural experiment stations, and extensions (Morrill in 1862/1890, Hatch in 1887, and Smith-Lever in 1914) created a public system for connecting universities and citizens to build a stronger democratic society. As Nathan Sorber noted in his study of land-grant institutions, “The land-grant college could enroll the public in a democratic experiment of engaged citizenship to partner with people in schools, granges, farms, and homes to produce lasting cultural, social, and material benefits for

communities.”⁴ Yet, this experiment was marginalized as a model for democratic engagement and has only recently been framed as a “prophetic” narrative of the institution’s impact on civic life.⁵

For ICDD, democratic engagement has taken shape through the creation of formal and informal spaces for learning, including a graduate certificate program in dialogue, deliberation, and public engagement and the interdisciplinary doctoral program in leadership communication grounded in community-engaged scholarship, which incorporates the study of models of deliberation into the graduate curriculum. In addition, ICDD offers professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, and community partners. The Civic Engagement Fellows Program has been one such example, bringing together academic professionals from across campus (and beyond) to learn about how deliberative practices complement other public engagement efforts in their scholarship and practice.

The Civic Engagement Fellows Program

The Civic Engagement Fellows Program, developed by the authors, both longtime students of deliberative engagement, was built around four goals:

(1) building a community of practice around community-engaged scholarship, (2) strengthening understanding of and commitment to deliberation as part of community-engaged scholarship, (3) creating a cohort to address significant campus/community challenges, and (4) becoming a campus/community composed of agents of change. Kansas State University has a general institutional commitment to community-engaged practice. Within this generalized commitment, various

departments and individual faculty have demonstrated an interest in engagement. Of these, a small group of faculty members have incorporated deliberative practices

How might the sustained use of deliberative practices transform the way in which faculty members understand “community engagement” and their relationship to citizens?

into their community-engaged work. An attempt to build up this approach was rooted in three core questions:

- How might the sustained use of deliberative practices transform the way in which faculty members understand “community engagement” and their relationship to citizens?

- How might deliberative practices, sustained over time, include cocreative action, relationship-building, and public work under conditions of disagreement?
- How can deliberative practices provide communities with spaces to experience politics in a less adversarial way than “politics as usual”?

We designed a four-part curriculum that explored deliberation as a central form of community engagement. The curriculum was delivered through four face-to-face meetings and a capstone experience during which the fellows presented a research project or a theoretical thought piece at Kansas State’s annual engagement symposium. The face-to-face meetings were characterized by reflection on commonly assigned readings and group discussion highlighting individual faculty experiences and concerns. The four modules of the fellows curriculum are:

Academic Teaching, Research, and Engagement as Public Work. This module includes a discussion of Kansas State University as a land-grant unit and its historical commitment to engaging the state’s residents to address significant challenges they face. The module provides an overview of university/community-engaged work and an overview of deliberation and its central connection, community engagement. At our first fellows meeting, we also explained that the work would culminate in a project or paper to be presented at the engagement symposium.

Dialogue and Deliberation Process Models. The second gathering of the fellows is a daylong retreat, exploring and practicing different models of deliberation. During this session, we brought in associates from ICDD to highlight and lead practice in a variety of deliberative methods. Some of the methods we discussed were deliberative forums modeled on those conducted by the National Issues Forums Institute and approaches such as Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), Appreciative Inquiry, and Nominal Group Technique.

Connecting Deliberative Practice to Academic Disciplines. At our third fellows meeting, we identified (as best we could) examples of community-engaged scholarship integrating deliberative practices into the specific disciplines represented by the fellows cohort. For many fellows, this was often a time when they were introduced to on-the-ground examples of deliberative work as it aligned with specific disciplines.

Reflecting and Looking Ahead. This meeting served as a time of reflection on the Civic Engagement Fellows Program. The fellows talked about what

they had learned and how they saw their own work incorporating deliberative practices into community-engaged scholarship moving forward.

Moving Forward: Strategies to Expand Deliberative Practices into Academic, Community-Engaged Work

The Civic Engagement Fellows Program was an invited, yearlong, professional development and peer-learning community for university faculty and professional staff interested in deliberative practices and community-engaged scholarship. Fellows were intentionally drawn from a variety of disciplines and campus units where we identified interest or history with some form of deliberative practice. Certain familiar disciplines such as communication and leadership studies, as well as more diverse fields such as architecture, drama therapy, biology, and family studies, have been represented. Some participants have been somewhat familiar with the language of community engagement and deliberation, while others have found the alignment of these concepts new and more challenging.

Katie Kingery-Page is associate dean for research in the College of Architecture, Planning, and Design (APDesign) at Kansas State University where she also leads the office

of Student Academic Services. As a previous member of the Civic Engagement Fellows Program, Kingery-Page has embraced the idea of deliberation as a form of community engagement. While trained in a field that is rooted in participatory practices, the deliberative civic

The Civic Engagement Fellows Program was an invited, yearlong, professional development and peer-learning community for university faculty and professional staff interested in deliberative practices and community-engaged scholarship.

engagement literature and associated practices were unfamiliar to her. But through her experience of learning about deliberative civic engagement, she added it to her professional role in the College of APDesign. Building on landscape architecture's interest in participatory design processes, Kingery-Page brought deliberative democracy concepts such as "enclave" deliberation to the table, developing ways in which these smaller groups of otherwise

marginalized voices could engage in dialogue prior to involvement with the broader community.⁶

Another civic engagement fellow was Bonnie Lynn-Sherow, now retired as an associate professor of history and former executive director of the Chapman Center for Rural Studies. She successfully integrated deliberative practices into the training of graduate research assistants working with local museums and

“To a certain extent, I think inertia sets in. We’re not used to doing it that [new] way, and it’s hard to change.”

historical societies across Kansas. She taught these graduate history students to engage with rural communities not as experts *from* the university but as civic professionals, using

what they had learned about public deliberation to engage in dialogue *with* the community. The Chapman Center continues to utilize deliberative practices in its community-based work.

Katherine Schlageck, associate curator of education of the Beach Museum of Art, has developed connections between dialogue—particularly Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)—deliberation, and the use of visual arts. As a structured way of facilitating discussions around images, VTS offers the opportunity to explore a shared experience. Kansas State University colleagues Saya Kakim and Kerry Priest describe it as “an advanced form of mediated dialogue . . . [that] offers an innovative way to engage participants in dialogue and sense-making.”⁷ The wedding of dialogue and imagery that isn’t clearly defined creates an environment in which people listen, learn, and consider how their interpretations or experiences stand alongside many others. Schlageck’s experience with the Civic Engagement Fellows Program has strengthened her commitment to the integration of dialogic and deliberative practices in the public education work she does for youth and adults through the Beach Museum. While not explicitly about deliberation on a public issue, VTS has been paired *with* deliberative dialogue as a beneficial starting point because it helps individuals and groups open up thinking about something that isn’t immediately clear. We have found that VTS greases the deliberative wheels for a smoother discussion.

These are just three of the examples from civic engagement fellows but they highlight some of the distinct approaches individuals have taken in using deliberation in their public engagement, teaching, and research.

Challenges to Incorporating Deliberative Practices into Higher Education Work

In the three years of this experience, we have found great enthusiasm for participating in the Civic Engagement Fellows Program from the faculty and staff whom we have invited to join. Faculty who heard of the program sometimes asked why they had not yet been invited; others told us they hoped they would soon be invited to join. In fact, over the three years of the program, only one faculty member declined our invitation. Later that year, this same faculty member expressed regret over that decision and hoped to receive another invitation (which occurred and was accepted). Still, as we met with our civic engagement fellows and encouraged them to consider incorporating deliberation into their community-engaged scholarship, we heard several concerns and challenges to integrating deliberative practice into their teaching, research, and outreach.

Disciplinary Resistance. Faculty members have spent years in graduate school and then working in academic departments with an embedded tradition of how to teach and conduct research. Often these disciplinary epistemologies and methodologies are not receptive to community engagement and deliberate practice. As one fellow from political science stated:

I direct a program here in public administration, and there has been a wealth of information that's been written about the importance of engaging people. I mean we're teaching practitioners about things like how to go out and manage a crisis. But here are people (in the department) who have built an impressive career in peer-reviewed research; they don't really know how to think about engaged research and how it can contribute to the literature, our base of knowledge. [Engaged research] is something different [from] what is in that research category. That's the pushback I've seen.

This civic engagement fellow saw value in deliberation as part of scholarly work, indeed, saw it as fundamental to the knowledge she needed to teach her students. However, her challenge was that her program is located within a broader discipline—political science—where its history and the culture is very much focused on conducting experimental design research and producing books and juried, peer-reviewed essays.

Inertia and Fear. As faculty spend years in graduate school and in the academy learning pedagogies and research methodologies, they become “efficient” in their scholarly endeavors. Using what they have learned and

on their mentors' examples, they tend to develop certain routines. In conducting research, for example, they know and understand the literature of their research area, develop and refine research questions, know the number of subjects needed, and become efficient in the methods necessary to carry out their scholarly activity. According to a fellow from geography, "To a certain extent, I think inertia sets in. We're not used to doing it that [new] way, and it's hard to change." Another fellow from leadership studies said that doing community-engaged work and adding a deliberative piece to that work initially "can be a cumbersome process, and it's just an extra thing."

Many faculty who might be interested in this form of scholarship have not had any experiences or training in community engaged methods or deliberative models. These faculty members may be interested in these modes of scholarly inquiry but unsure how to do this work—even a bit fearful of venturing onto unknown ground.

Lack of Resources. K-State's Teaching and Learning Center offers a variety of resources in support of the university's teaching mission. That same kind of institutional and budgetary support was limited for community-engaged scholarship generally and deliberative practices in particular, according to the fellows. One fellow specifically called out the lack of resources for community-engaged work, while another spoke of lacking the language to articulate the work and the need for a community of interest that could support faculty conducting this kind of scholarship. Still another fellow argued that this form of research and teaching "is not heavily advertised." So, while there are institutional structures through which community engagement and deliberation are recognized and supported—among them, K-State Research and Extension, Global Campus, and some individual academic departments—few campus-wide offices or centers focus on community engagement or deliberation education. There is need for a much broader institutional effort to educate for and support community-engaged scholarship and deliberative practices.

What we learned from the fellows is that the use of deliberation aligns with the efforts of the land-grant mission to educate and engage diverse populations. A notable challenge, however, is the tension between the use of deliberation and the "go-go-go" approach of engagement, one fellow pointed out. In some circumstances, the introduction of and commitment to deliberative practices that invite individuals and communities to step back, listen, and consider actions—often a slow and intentional process—can, at times, lose out to more traditional modes of engagement that lead to immediate or near-term changes.

A further challenge to deliberation is the continued marginalization of this practice within the academy both in terms of promotion and tenure as well as in embedded norms about the ways higher education engages with the public. One way to respond to this is to vigorously promote deliberative civic engagement within departments, colleges, and the university. The provision of multiple opportunities to learn about deliberation is a critical component of advancing the institution's commitment to viewing teaching, learning, and engagement through a deliberative lens.

Conclusion

At this writing, the institutional home for the Civic Engagement Fellows Program has been on hiatus because of staffing changes and the dramatic impacts of COVID-19. The location of the Center for Engagement and Community Development, previously home to programs such as ICDD and this work, is now within the Staley School for Leadership Studies. The future of such professional development learning opportunities remains in question.⁸ The impact of such uncertainty has paused the fellows program, but there is hope that this professional development opportunity will go on. ICDD, now housed within the Department of Communication Studies, affords an opportunity for much of the work of the program to continue. As we seek a new path on what we hope is the back end of a global pandemic, Kansas State University continues to explore how best to

fulfill its land-grant mission and prepare faculty, staff, and students to engage as civic professionals. But rhetoric and reality must align. Similar to community engagement more generally,

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deliberative civic engagement requires investment not just to make it possible but to enable it to flourish.

Continuing to introduce faculty members and academic professionals to deliberative civic engagement through the Civic Engagement Fellows Program is one important way to build a culture of public engagement rooted in democratic practices. Continued opportunities for formal and informal learning are essential components of fostering deliberation within the campus community so that it can be utilized in a variety of ways through teaching, research,

and engagement. Democracy requires us all to advance its cause. Civic professionalism affords a language and a practice for those with institutional and positional power to engage with others seeking to make democracy work as it should through deliberative community engagement.



NOTES

- ¹ On the concept of deliberative civic engagement, see Derek Wai Ming Barker, “Deliberative Civic Engagement: Toward a Public Politics in Higher Education,” in *Creating Space for Democracy: A Primer on Dialogue and Deliberation in Higher Education*, ed. Nicholas V. Longo and Timothy J. Shaffer (Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2019), 57-68. On the concept of civic professionalism, see Timothy J. Shaffer, “Democratic Professionals in Civic Life: Cultivating Civil Discourse in Community Development,” *Community Development* 51, no. 3 (2020), 196-211, and Albert W. Dzur, “What Is a Democratic Professional?,” *Kettering Review* (Winter 2019), 12-18.
- ² Joni Doherty and Alice Diebel, with Joseph Hoereth, David Hoffman, Marla Kanengiter-Wildeson, Windy Lawrence, David E. Procter, Norma Ramos, and Lisa Strahley, “Centers for Democratic Public Life: Learning as a Deliberative Democratic Practice,” *Higher Education Exchange* (2018), 17-28.
- ³ Timothy Steffensmeier and David E. Procter, “Kansas State University’s Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy: Developing Civic Agency,” in *Deliberative Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning for Democratic Engagement*, ed. Timothy J. Shaffer, et al. (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2017), 137.
- ⁴ Nathan M. Sorber, *Land-Grant Colleges and Popular Revolt: The Origins of the Morrill Act and the Reform of Higher Education* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018), 12.
- ⁵ On the prophetic work within land-grant universities and higher education more broadly, see Scott J. Peters, “Recovering a Forgotten Lineage of Democratic Engagement: Agricultural and Extension Programs in the United States,” in *The Cambridge Handbook of Service Learning and Community Engagement*, ed. Corey Dolgon, Tania D. Mitchell, and Timothy K. Eatman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 71-80, and “Afterword: The Prophetic Aspiration of the Scholar as Human,” in *The Scholar as Human: Research and Teaching for Public Impact*, ed. Anna Sims Bartel and Debra A. Castillo (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2021), 248-265.
- ⁶ Katie Kingery-Page, “Local Participation and Lived Experience: Dialogue and Deliberation through Participatory Processes in Landscape Architecture,” in *Creating Space for Democracy: A Primer on Dialogue and Deliberation in Higher Education*, ed. Nicholas V. Longo and Timothy J. Shaffer (Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2019), 240.
- ⁷ Saya Kakim and Kerry L. Priest. “Developing Leadership Capacity Using Visual Thinking Strategies,” *Journal of Leadership Education* 19, no. 3 (2020): 84.
- ⁸ Charles S. Taber, “Advancing Leadership, Engagement and Honors to Build a Signature Land-Grant Experience,” news release, August 19, 2021, <https://www.k-state.edu/today/announcement/?id=76324> (accessed October 7, 2021).

“ATTENTION, ATTENTION MUST BE FINALLY PAID”

A Case for Reinventing Liberal Arts Education

Chris Gilmer

Even as I faced the first class of my academic career, I somehow knew that Shakespeare purely for Shakespeare’s sake was not going to appeal to a millennia-spanning new generation of college students. I had to make the Bard of Avon relevant to the lives of young people who grew up in the impoverished Mississippi Delta and on the bayous and backwaters of the Mississippi River.

The year was 1999. Today, more than two decades later, it looks as though I was right. The assumption has become a well-tested hypothesis that now drives my entire approach to providing a liberal arts education as the foundation for career success and informed citizenship. I make the case herein that the most fundamental disconnect between American higher education and those it intends to serve—the institutions competing for a shrinking pool of students and families trying to find the best way forward for their children and grandchildren—is a growing lack of belief in the basic value proposition of higher education.

When my grandfather, who quit school in the first grade and could not read or write, watched me walk across the stage as the first college graduate in his family, he did not care or even try to imagine what I would do with my college degree. He cared only that I had earned it. Education was “sacred” to him, the education of his grandchildren especially. My grandfather was not unique in this generational belief. He saw education as the great equalizer and the only means for his grandchildren to know a larger world than he had known. Many Americans today, most I would argue, no longer regard higher education as sacred—important, necessary, desirable, or optional, perhaps, but not absolutely essential to function in society or even to achieve the elusive and changing American dream.

We can no longer sell the value proposition of higher education, especially to the historically underserved students, who have been and will continue to be my greatest passion, based simply on its intrinsic value. We must sell it based on its economic value and its value to produce the qualities necessary for informed

citizen service. In my role as president of West Virginia University at Parkersburg, I speak often to the employers who hire both our liberal arts graduates and those graduating from our technical programs, and this is what they tell me: They want employees who have at least the basic academic content knowledge necessary to perform their jobs, but much more than that, they want employees who possess what we often call the “soft skills.” These included the ability to work in teams; to be self-directed; to be punctual, mutually respectful, and

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empathetic; to assess a problem quickly and to think critically about solutions; to honor commitments when made; and to defer the need for immediate gratification. I submit that these are not “soft” skills at all.

These are the skills that our students who are the future employees of a global workforce can learn from exposure to and exploration of the great themes of the liberal arts. In my view, there is no better way to teach these skills, perhaps no other way at all. Employers tell me that if they have to accept an educational deficit in new employees, they would prefer that it be a deficit of content knowledge because they can teach that knowledge on the job more easily and successfully than they can teach the less tangible workforce skills.

Certainly most employers have good intentions for their employees. With exceptions, employers want their employees to balance job satisfaction with the ambition to grow professionally, preferably within the company. Many companies have an active interest in improving their communities, both to enhance the quality of life for their current employees and to better attract new employees.

I will go so far as to say that the best employers have an inherent concern for the happiness and personal fulfillment of their employees. At the same time, many of these employers also answer to boards of directors and shareholders, whose principal demands relate to satisfactory returns on their investments.

Many employees are loyal to their employers as well, but, for a number of complex reasons, employee loyalty to and longevity with employers has diminished since the World War II generation left the workforce. For employers and employees to successfully engage with each other and with the public they

serve, the old so-called soft skills must now expand to include higher-level and more complex skill sets necessary both in the contemporary workplace and in a functional democracy: the ability to work in teams across significant sociopolitical and cultural divides; the willingness to consider points of view diametrically opposed to one's own and to do so with tolerance and mutual respect, if not acceptance; the maturity to know when to speak and when to be silent in judging whether an unwavering principle has been violated or whether the offense is of lesser magnitude, and most important, what, if any, actions of protest are appropriate; the emotional intelligence (and empathy when it applies) to at least try to understand how others feel and why; and the humility to understand that we are all stitches in a delicate tapestry, not tapestries unto ourselves. Exposure to Mozart, Madam C. J. Walker, and Ta-Nehisi Coates can help us to develop these skills, as can an illiterate grandfather, such as my own, who is a lifelong learner. The challenge for traditional academic programs, however, is that the liberal arts must be framed and taught in an applicable, practical manner, not just as a collection of philosophical or abstract concepts.

In my current role, I speak to many prospective students and their families, and this is what they tell me: At the most basic level, families with very limited socioeconomic means need me to prove to them that a higher education will help their children pay the electric bills. Let that sink in for a moment. How can I convince these families as they are struggling to keep a roof over their heads and to put food on their tables, that they should defer immediate earning potential in favor of a

longer investment that might lead to a lifetime of greater economic security? Those families with fewer concerns about immediate needs, want me to prove to them that a higher edu-

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cation will help their children build longer-term wealth while endowing them with the essential qualities of service to some greater purpose and to citizenship. More often than not, when given the chance, I can still make these arguments in a compelling manner, but spokespersons for higher education are often not even given the chance to make that case, these days. Certainly, the old argument of Shakespeare for Shakespeare's sake or my grandfather's belief in the sacredness of education would be unlikely to compel these families to enroll

their children in college or persuade the students themselves to defer immediate gratification and to put forth the necessary effort once enrolled.

The value proposition of higher education still exists, but it has changed considerably over the last 50 years. If we are to restore confidence in American higher education and transcend the significant cultural rifts in the broader American society, and between that society and higher education, as Linda Loman says in *Death of a Salesman*, “Attention, attention must be finally paid. . . .” One way that attention can and should be paid is through the reinvention of our approach to teaching the liberal arts.

As a junior faculty member, I turned a few heads with my nontraditional techniques of student engagement; senior colleagues were, at best, amused, at worst alarmed. A student came to my office, one day, deeply concerned because an internationally acclaimed scholar, whom I deeply respected and respect still, had told a classroom of our shared students that I was “teaching down” to them because they were African American and I am White. She was dismayed and disillusioned. She did not feel taught down to. She felt heard and uplifted, but she needed and deserved to be convinced that I was teaching her just as I would teach any student, regardless of race or any other personal factor. The truth set me free that day as I told her I was teaching her the only way I knew how, the only way that made any sense to me, and she left my office smiling.

My career began at a private liberal arts college, a Historically Black College (HBCU). Since then, I have served as a faculty member or administrator at three HBCUs, one Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), and now as president of

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an Appalachian college with many first-generation students still overcoming, as I overcame, the vestiges of multigenerational poverty. For many years working through the ranks to become a tenured professor of humanities, I have

brought Broadway to the Bard, often singing show tunes, loudly and off key, which related the themes of misogyny in *Othello* to the plight of prostitutes explored in the Tony-winning show *The Life*. I climbed on desks and repurposed sport coats as head wraps to appear a bit more ominous and mysterious as I combined speeches of the witches from *Macbeth* into one soliloquy. Yes, I had a slightly different voice for each witch. No, I was not a particularly good actor,

but I accomplished at least three things: I humanized myself to my students, I proved to them I was willing to do almost anything to get their attention, and I got their attention.

Having accomplished that foundational goal, we then went on to talk about iambic pentameter in the sonnets and the Renaissance history that framed Shakespeare and his contemporaries. We got to the academic part—just by a circuitous route,

which at the time I thought of as a means to an end. Twenty years later, I think of it still as a means to an end but

Everyone needs to understand the timeless themes and be able to apply them.

now also as a worthy end in itself. People training to be teachers, college professors, librarians, and others who seek knowledge simply to build virtue need to understand the subtlest nuances of language and history, but *everyone* needs to understand the timeless themes and be able to apply them. My grandfather was a master storyteller, and while he had not read *Beowulf* or the poems of Emily Dickinson, his mother had told him the stories of the religious text of his family, the *Bible*, which contains some of the best literature ever written. And somewhere along the way, he had memorized most of *Aesop's Fables*. Obviously, he did not acquire this knowledge in college, but he did spark my fascination with words and with learning, and he had been exposed to the great themes of the liberal arts such as good versus evil, fate versus free will, right versus wrong, and the vagaries of human nature. He applied these concepts to his daily life and created metaphors and analogies that became the moral and ethical values of our family. He used to say, "Son, any job is noble as long as you do it honestly and with pride. It's just as good to be a farmer as it is to be an astronaut, and we need a lot more farmers than astronauts. What I want you to believe is that you are good enough to do anything you want to do and that there is nothing you are too good to do." Simply put, my wise and humble grandfather taught me that no one should be exempt from having an informed worldview. In my estimation, we do not cheapen the liberal arts by making them accessible and relevant to all; indeed, we add value.

I will go a step further and risk alienating the purists. Through this philosophy of teaching, we ensure that a large portion of this generation of students and the next does not choose to disengage with the classics entirely. We ensure that the trials of Odysseus, the poems of Sappho, and the slave narratives of America's unsung storytellers remain a part of our broader cultural narrative

and not just part of the narrative of those with the resources and interest to earn a more traditional liberal arts education.

A liberal arts education has the potential to lift not only individuals, but groups of people who have been marginalized based on sex, race, sexual orientation, gender, or status as a veteran or first-generation student. For example, many minority-serving institutions have emphasized a liberal arts education, recognizing that the next generation of leaders needs the skills embedded in such an education to attain civic as well as economic advancement. In Mississippi, where I was born, the child of a sharecropper, and first enrolled in a community college 38 years ago, and in Appalachia where I serve today, first-generation college students, some of them barely 18 years old, feel the same weight I felt to lift their families from poverty. I do not understand from lived experience what it is like to have my ancestral lands stolen or to be separated from my parents at the border of the United States and Mexico. I do not understand from lived experience what it is like for my ancestors to have been brought to these shores on slave ships. I do not understand from lived experience what it is like to be denied leadership opportunities or equal pay based on my sex. I do not understand what it feels like to have my life threatened and to be abandoned by family members and friends as a gay man, to grow up with holes in my shoes and only cornbread in my school lunch box, and to be taunted relentlessly by my peers because of childhood obesity. I know what it is like to be smart and talented and ambitious, and to live within a culture that thought I should be none of those things. I know what it feels like to hear my spouse tell the stories of his childhood—nearly drowned in a middle school toilet and stuffed into an elementary school garbage can because he was not like the other boys. I share these truths with you not as an exercise in self-indulgence, but so you can more clearly understand that my life, like many others, is a case study in the transformative power of education not just for individuals, but for families and entire communities.

Education is the great equalizer, and the shoulders of those of us who call ourselves educators are broad enough to lift an entire generation that will define our future, not just to lift those at the highest level of preparedness who would likely make the climb on their own. Education must not be simply a privilege of those to whom access comes easily. It must not be tailored to serve the needs of only those prepared to excel. It must be a right of every person willing to work hard for it. It is less the job of the student to meet higher education fully prepared than it is the job of higher education to meet each student wherever she, he, or they might be along the continuum and to serve

as a bridge to opportunities for a lifetime of professional service. Only when this vision is realized will the promise of equality and social justice for all, made so long ago by this nation, be kept.

Double consciousness, a term once used by W. E. B. DuBois to describe the life-experience of African Americans in a segregated society, has become multiple consciousness now as we all struggle to understand, live into, and sometimes rebel against the multitude of consciousnesses placed upon us by others or assumed by ourselves.

Here are a few thoughts about how the liberal arts can be reimagined to ensure continuing relevance and how the colleges and universities of this nation can reassert themselves as fully credible instruments of community service and civic education.

- Institutions not founded with the primary purpose of serving historically underserved populations can actively partner with Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), such as HBCUs, HSIs, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and others. There are many excellent examples, such as the Tougaloo College/Brown University exchange program, which has been successful for decades. Exchanging best practices in teaching and student engagement, as well as cross-cultural understanding, can move in both directions. Along with a group of colleagues from across the nation, I have founded the National Institutes for Historically-Underserved Students for this purpose and to move underserved students to the front of the discussions most relevant to their future.
- We must own our individual and collective history rather than constantly working to rewrite it. Allow me to clarify. Revising the way we tell it to our children to ensure its accuracy and inclusiveness is essential, but pretending it never happened to make some of us feel better about it is dishonest and counterproductive. The pages of history need to be inclusive, and they need to tell the truth. One of my colleagues in the national institutes, the patriarch of a large and prominent Latino family, said these words with tears in his eyes, voice trembling with emotion, to 75 family members and friends gathered in his barn for a holiday meal right after Donald Trump was elected president of the United States: “I walked on picket lines so that my children would not have to. Now it seems my grandchildren will have to do it all over again.” It is important to note that the national institutes is a nonpartisan organization and that it includes colleagues and students with voices from across the political

spectrum. Still, the words of my friend and colleague are no less relevant to us all.

- The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us many things and, if the landscape of higher education has not been forever changed, it has certainly been changed for its next long phase. While remote and online learning do not take the place of face-to-face interaction, the technology to do it well has greatly improved during the pandemic, as has the capacity of faculty members to utilize it effectively. Furthermore, the great majority of college and high school students embraced technology even before COVID-19 and will not give it up as a meaningful part of the college experience moving forward. Students will demand more hybrid approaches, and it will not help for colleges to rebel against these approaches, which are expected by the population we serve.
- Community colleges are not private liberal arts colleges, are not research universities, and are not regional universities. Each is equally noble. Each has a mission, and while we should explore how those missions overlap and deliberately build as much overlap as possible, we should not try to make one fill the role of the other. That does not mean that the liberal arts, broadly defined, should not form the core of all of these institutions or even be infused into workforce and technical programs to the degree it is practical and relevant or that all students should not be welcomed and served well by all institutional types. Of course, this should be the case. It simply means that there is room and need for us all to live fully and cooperatively into the purposes for which we were formed, even as those purposes evolve and cross traditional boundaries.
- Some students come to the academy ill prepared, most of the time through no fault of their own. People do not choose to be born poor or in geographical locations without the tax base needed to provide the highest-quality college-preparatory education. They do not choose to be born into a historically disenfranchised or persecuted group or into families with no culture of higher education and without even the most basic knowledge about accessing financial aid. This does not mean that historically underserved students are or should be ashamed of their heritage. I am one of them, and I am immensely proud of the accomplishments and sacrifices of my ancestors.
- Allow students to blend the personal with the academic and to use the personal as a bridge to the academic. First-year English composition

might need to end with a well-conceived, documented research paper, but what is the harm in letting it begin with a journal entry focusing on what new students know and understand best—their own personal narratives? Why not let them build ties to timeless academic themes through the lens of personal experience?

- Here is a radical idea. What if the students were involved in helping to redesign our general education curriculum? I am not suggesting turning it over to them entirely because I recognize they do not yet have the necessary content or pedagogical knowledge, and surely I am not disrespecting the faculty who have spent a lifetime amassing their knowledge and credentials. I am suggesting only that the end-user might have some useful, even insightful, ideas about how the curriculum could be built and delivered.
- It is time that our equity and inclusion programs in higher education finally move beyond simply arranging events during Black History Month or Pride Month, and even beyond providing safe spaces for students to come together on our campuses. These functions are surely necessary, but they are insufficient, and I respect that many such programs have moved far beyond these basic functions. The next step, however, is proactively embedding equity and inclusion directly into the curriculum, as its foundation, not as an afterthought. For example, some years ago I led a team that redesigned the first-year English composition sequence at an HBCU to include more culturally relevant prose models. Is it not reasonable to assume that Margaret Walker Alexander or Richard Wright might be more accessible to

students at an HBCU in Mississippi than Samuel Johnson would be? We all did “Writing across the Curriculum” for

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a season. Some still do. Why not “Equity across the Curriculum?” With all respect due to Johnson, there is time for him later. Let equity and inclusion be part of the main course of the meal rather than only the seasoning.

- Is the “core curriculum” still core? I suspect that in most cases the answer is yes, but is it possible that different majors and different career tracks call for a personalized rather than a standardized core curriculum? To some degree this kind of academic innovation is already happening, and to some

degree it is frightening to the establishment. What is the harm in exploring different ways to reach different students if we could agree on a baseline of the content and the skills everyone needs to learn?

- Few times in the history of our nation and our world have seen greater sociopolitical tension, overt prejudice, and both civil and uncivil disobedience. Colleges and universities still have both the opportunity and the obligation to educate citizen leaders who graduate well versed in the responsibility and even the joy inherent in civic service. Higher education should not attempt to indoctrinate students in belief systems, but we should expose students, frequently and deliberately, to a wide diversity of ideas and new ways of thinking within an environment that is made safe and welcoming to all people. Our job is not to tell them what to think so much as to teach them how to think and how to draw responsible, socially conscious conclusions. Colleges and universities must not abdicate their leadership role in educating for informed citizenship.
- Internships and learning by doing are more important than they have ever been, and many institutions of higher learning are doing wonderful work in this area. In many if not most competitive professions, it is no longer enough to show up with a degree or certificate. Our graduates must also show up with a portfolio of professional work and the ability to demonstrate that they already know how to successfully contribute in the workplace. These work-study programs can directly benefit the institutions as well.

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As part of the new experiential learning program we are building at the university here, I more or less turned the marketing of the university over to

the students enrolled in our strategic communications major, under the supervision of their faculty and professional staff. This decision was met with audible, campus-wide gasps, but the community soon came to see that our marketing has never been better or more relevant to the students we are trying to recruit. And its success was affirmed in two years by 12 national marketing awards and an uptick in enrollment. It was a risk that now is paying big dividends, but it was equally a risk for a 55-year-old

president to presume what messages would market most effectively to a pool of potential students 30 years and more his junior.

- Finally, institutions must be willing to take risks even to the point of failure. Again, I should clarify. I am not suggesting we should be satisfied with broad institutional failure or repeated failure in ourselves or others. I am sug-

gesting that those entrusted with positions of leadership must create cultures of ambition rather than cultures of fear, cultures that become

For trust in American higher education to be rebuilt, the value proposition of higher education must be reconsidered.

leadership incubators in which colleagues trust that risk, even when well-conceived, sometimes takes a sojourn in the temporary failure of innovative ideas and that they are safe in those moments. If we learn from those moments rather than fear or lament them, most of the time we can repurpose them into success.

For trust in American higher education to be rebuilt, the value proposition of higher education must be reconsidered by the academy from within because, be assured, it has already been reconsidered by the current generation of students, potential students, and employers. It has been found lacking. They are watching to see whether we will catch up to them. I humbly submit that a reinvention of the way we approach the liberal arts is perhaps the best tool that we have.



A CALL FOR ACADEMIC INVENTIVENESS

David Mathews

The problems of democracy have been discussed in the last several issues of *Higher Education Exchange*, and the situation has gotten worse, not better. Democracy is in serious trouble worldwide and certainly in the United States. And authoritarian governments, convinced we are a weak and declining country, see an opportunity to take advantage of our divisions.

Democracy's problems go deep into the foundations of self-rule. There is a growing recognition that Abraham Lincoln was right when he said that a divided nation cannot stand. The one thing most Americans agree on is that we are too divided.

Human beings can tolerate only so much instability; our survival instincts compel us to become more united and stable. But what form of stability will emerge is unclear. Sometimes, unity can come at the price of freedom. Other times, it has spawned the political inventiveness that renews democracy.

What role higher education will play as our country tries to come together is also unclear. Colleges and universities have lost public confidence, been buffeted by the COVID pandemic, and are struggling to keep costs down. They may be too overburdened to deal with anything but day in, day out crises. But failure to play a significant role in strengthening democracy leaves higher education with no role to play at all. The future of higher education has often been determined by how its institutions respond to the great issues in society. What will happen to democracy is that issue today.

Colleges and universities are among the many institutions, both governmental and nongovernmental, that face an uncertain future. Not only have they suffered from a loss of public confidence but what they have to say isn't trusted as it once was. This loss of trust is particularly troubling because many of these institutions, including the academic ones, see themselves as authoritative sources of factual information, or "truth." However, many people no longer believe their facts.

Aware of the lack of trust, some governing institutions have attempted to counter the growing public alienation in various ways. Initiatives to improve the relationship with the citizenry have had names such as public participation, public engagement, civic engagement, consultation, and public accountability.

How effective have they been? Regrettably, declining public confidence hasn't been arrested by decades of civic engagement efforts. Even more alarming, according to scholars like Brian Cook, some of these participatory practices may have been counterproductive, unintentionally widening the divide that they were intended to close.¹ Whether or not this is the case, the loss of public confidence has increased even as engagement efforts have grown.

In studying this situation, the Kettering Foundation came to wonder whether the institutions engaged in governing the United States might want to consider other strategies for relating to an often alienated citizenry. In the 2020 issue of *HEX*, I discussed a brief research report titled *With the People: An Introduction to an Idea*, which provides an overview of the case for more collaboration between citizens and institutions. In the next few months, the Kettering Foundation Press will publish a full report in book form: *With: A Strategy for Renewing Our Democracy*. The titles of these reports are inspired by Abraham Lincoln's description of an ideal—a government *of*, *by*, and *for* the people. Because there is some doubt now about whether we have any of those, we wondered about adding another preposition, *with*—governing more *with* the people.

With the people is a collaborative relationship; and like all collaborations, each party does its own work and then connects that work to the work of the other party. In this case, citizens would have to be producers making things of value to the governing institutions. We call that “complementary production.” Being volunteers doing the work institutions do is fine, but that wouldn't be enough. Citizens have work that only they can do. And citizens couldn't be simply consumers of services. We don't normally think of citizens as producers, but maybe we should. Elinor Ostrom won the Nobel Prize by showing that our governing institutions need what citizens can provide in order to be optimally effective.

At first blush, a *with* strategy appeals to common sense. However, there are challenges. What would it mean for institutions of higher education to relate to citizens as producers? For valid reasons, academic institutions aren't “built” to do that. Citizens are usually treated as beneficiaries of services. They are patients for medical schools, clients for colleges of law, and customers for business schools. They are undergraduates to be taught. Citizens are to be acted upon; they are not actors themselves.

What would it look like to prepare students entering professions like law, medicine, business, and others to think of citizens as producers? The question seems to bring out the inventiveness in educators. Using early drafts of *With*:

A Strategy for Renewing Our Democracy, a dozen or more faculty have developed courses that begin to answer this question. In classes ranging from civics to public administration, these teachers are introducing the idea of treating citizens as producers and thinking beyond the usual notions of public engagement. Tom Bryer, at the University of Central Florida, designed such a class built on a deceptively simple idea: “A working government requires a working citizenry.”² For some students, this is a new idea, and they immediately point out the barriers and challenges. Others warm to the idea and see the benefits. Jeremy Walling, at Southeast Missouri State University, reported that his students were “enamored with the ‘with strategy’ and . . . [it] planted a seed for thinking about public problems in a new way and looking to citizens as producers.”

That some of these classroom experiments are going on in public administration is significant because of a tension between this profession and democracy. A young scholar, later to become president, Woodrow Wilson, shared a growing faith in the power of the social sciences to lead the way to collective well-being. Although Wilson favored reforms like referendums, he is best known for putting government in the hands of professionally trained administrators, who, of course, were unelected. After Wilson, the growth of expert administration and faith in the social sciences was irreversible.³

Wilson wasn’t unaware of the tension between scientific professionalism and the norms of a democracy. He noted that, while it was fairly easy for a bureaucracy to carry out the commands of a single monarch, serving a sovereign public was more difficult. How could administrators respond to a ruler who couldn’t be found at any specific location and whose opinions might vary from time to time or issue to issue? Wilson first tried to solve this problem by restricting bureaucracies to an administrative sphere outside of politics. He insisted that administration was not political at all but rather a neutral, objective instrument that had to be protected from political interference, even from the public.

Wilson, however, eventually recognized that this separation really wasn’t possible. He came to see that what citizens did was essential. He said, “There must be discussion and debate, in which all freely participate. . . . The whole purpose of democracy is that we may hold counsel with another. . . . For only [then] . . . can the general interests of a great people be compounded into a policy that will be suitable to all.”⁴

Tina Nabatchi, professor of public administration and international affairs at Syracuse University, calls for new thinking in public administration.⁵ And Albert Dzur, another scholar in the field, is doing just that. He makes a case

for what he calls a “democratic professionalism.”⁶ There is an urgency in his voice. Dzur sees signs that institutions are moving in the opposite direction by developing even more expert and technical processes in hopes of restoring lost public legitimacy or creating better defenses. He calls this movement “super professionalism.”⁷ Harry Boyte has used a similar concept, “citizen professionalism,” in what he has written for *HEX*.

The faculty members who are now designing courses for professionals in public administration show that civic or democratic professionalism is getting some traction. They are opening a door, inviting other professions to experiment with their own ways to make use of what citizens as producers can do.

Treating citizens as producers also has obvious implications for undergraduates. One way to do that is to teach students how to make decisions deliberatively on the work they might do as producers. There are several reports on these experiments. One of the most detailed was done by Wake Forest faculty Katy Harriger and Jill McMillan. In 2007, they published a book about what they had accomplished: *Speaking of Politics: Preparing College Students for Democratic Citizenship through Deliberative Dialogue*.⁸ I described their impressive results in a 2019 *HEX* article. A follow-up study at Wake Forest found that the participants in this program retained and continued to use what they had learned. That 2016 study is described in *The Long-Term Impact of Learning to Deliberate*.⁹

Also, on the student front, using the online Common Ground for Action platform, National Issues Forums have been held on campuses nationwide and across geographic barriers. These are providing opportunities for students to learn how to reason together. Here are just four examples:

- On Constitution Day, September 17, 2020, the State University of New York (SUNY) system held a statewide, online deliberative forum on voting.
- During Constitution Week, the Minnesota state system of higher education, which includes 30 colleges and 7 universities, organized 10 forums using the Common Ground for Action platform. These statewide deliberations were on free speech, voting, and policing.
- In November, Chris Gilmer, president of West Virginia University Parkersburg and a founder of the National Institutes for Historically-Underserved Students, worked with other college presidents to connect students from diverse backgrounds in inter-campus deliberation on racial justice. Sinte Gleska University in South Dakota, Tougaloo College in Mississippi, Adams State University in Colorado, and WVU-Parkersburg in West Virginia participated.

- Kara Dillard, professor of communication studies at James Madison University, used the Common Ground for Action online platform to organize a national week of cross-campus deliberations last October. Students participated in forums on voting, policing, economic recovery, and free speech.

Given the crises that democracy faces today and difficult questions about the role, if any, higher education will play, I am encouraged by the inventiveness of faculty, the deliberative initiatives of students, and the potential in a more democratic concept of professionalism.

What is needed for these ventures to flourish, I believe, can only be found outside academe. I don't want to be critical of academic leaders talking to one another about their immediate and urgent problems. That's necessary. However, what seems missing are conversations between academic leaders and "outsiders" off campus who are also worried about the serious challenges to democracy. Where are these outsiders? There are some in journalism, where Kettering senior associates Paula Ellis and Maura Casey, both veteran journalists, have found a willingness to work for a fundamental realignment between the media and the citizenry. I have also just described what is happening in the ranks of public administration. What about those in other governing institutions, even governmental bodies like legislative ones? The continuing loss of public confidence is a threat to their legitimacy. In the nongovernmental arena, I have heard foundation executives wonder whether they need to pay more attention to the fundamental problems *of* democracy itself, not just to the problems *in* democratic countries, serious as they are. In addition, businesses, particularly those that depend on strong communities, may be interested. Many of these outsiders may not be altogether outside. They may be serving on the boards of academic institutions.

What kind of conversations are needed for this exchange to be productive? I don't think an occasional conference will be enough. Maybe this conversation requires the kind of "sustained dialogue" that is used in nongovernmental diplomacy. Those ongoing exchanges have been occurring for decades when government-to-government negotiations have stalled. They have allowed participants from opposing countries to develop nongovernmental ways to work together that strengthen the relationships.

Is there any evidence that such an exchange is possible? I often turn to history, and there is a precedent—not in one example, but in the long sweep of time. The history of higher education is full of examples of the important role outsiders have played, often as champions of a stronger democracy. Anxious

to bring the values of a new nation to institutions of higher learning, outsiders added state universities to the ranks of the colonial colleges founded by monarchies. Later, determined not to be excluded, other outsiders joined with academics to create agricultural and mechanical institutions. Later still, the same type of alliances led to what are now the Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Democratic imperatives continued to be reflected in creating Tribal Colleges and colleges for women. The history of higher education is inextricably linked to the history of democracy. A sustained dialogue might build the kind of inside-outside collaboration that has been productive in our past.



NOTES

- ¹ Brian J. Cook, *Bureaucracy and Self-Government: Reconsidering the Role of Public Administration in American Politics* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 134-135.
- ² Thomas Bryer, "Finding Common Ground in Company of Strangers," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 12, 2020.
- ³ Larry Walker, "Woodrow Wilson, Progressive Reform, and Public Administration," *Political Science Quarterly* 104, no. 3 (Autumn 1989): 509-525.
- ⁴ Woodrow Wilson, *The New Freedom: A Call for the Emancipation of the Generous Energies of a People* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1913), 91, 105.
- ⁵ Tina Nabatchi, address to the joint staff and partners meeting at the Kettering Foundation, September 18, 2019.
- ⁶ Albert W. Dzur, *Democratic Professionalism: Citizen Participation and the Reconstruction of Professional Ethics, Identity, and Practice* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008).
- ⁷ Albert Dzur, memorandum to Kettering Foundation, November 27, 2012. This document can be found in the David Mathews collection, Kettering Foundation archives. For more information, contact archives@kettering.org.
- ⁸ Katy Harriger and Jill McMillan, *Speaking of Politics: Preparing College Students for Democratic Citizenship through Deliberative Dialogue* (Dayton, OH: Kettering Foundation Press, 2007).
- ⁹ Katy J. Harriger, Jill J. McMillan, Christy Buchanan, and Stephanie Gusler, *The Long-Term Impact of Learning to Deliberate* (Dayton, OH: Kettering Foundation Press, 2017).

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