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Kathleen McGrory

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#### 1993 Conference Capstone Address

# An Outsider's View of POD Values—and of POD's Value to the Academy

#### Kathleen McGrory

Society for Values in Higher Education

Thank you for inviting me and for making me feel so much at home. It must have been that mention of the Holy Grail in my background that led Suzanne Brown to invite me here, since we are all questing, probably on similar routes. It seems to me that one could not be actively engaged in POD, or in the Society for Values in Higher Education, without being part idealist, part evangelist, and part missionary. A colleague of mine from Mount Enterprise Texas added a new verb to my organizational vocabulary when he told me about Texas missionary friends of his, about whom he said, "They've just got to mish." We're not exactly "mishing," but we certainly do have a mission. That's why I'm here. I'm guessing it's why you're here, too, at the last event and on the last day of an exhausting and stimulating conference.

Let me explain what my mission is here, today. Suzanne Brown invited me to give a "capstone" address. Having spent much of my adult life teaching James Joyce's fictions, I immediately thought "tombstone." I knew somehow that was not what she wanted me to deliver. My assignment today is to sum up the conference from my perspective, to give some reflections about the conference, and then

to say something possibly memorable about values in higher education. I will have to ask your indulgence, since this will be not a spontaneous, but a contemporaneous presentation, meaning I was not allowed to share any pre-fabricated thoughts with you today.

Several of the special events that occurred during the week seemed to resonate with POD's mission and to tie in with the overarching theme of this week's work, discovering and sharing the values that form the foundation of what we do in and for students and higher education at our own institutions. The dramatic reading of A.R. Gurney's Another Antigone was instructive, while it reminded me of the Greek tailor who looked at the torn trousers of his customer, a classics professor, and asked a one-word question, "Euripides?" The professor is supposed to have answered with a question, "Eumenides?" The Socratic method at work! The play had a serious message for us about faculty-student relations, differences in values, professional motivations, ways in which we assess students and they assess us and our institutions. But it was equally obvious, from the various award presentations that began and ended this conference, that the spirit of fun is held as a value by POD members, too.

Several of the themes I heard during the meeting seemed to recur again and again in different rooms, on different days. The first of these is change. The second is diversity. The third is an unanswerable question: "What is the role of the faculty developer within the institution?— unanswerable in generalities, answerable only by the life and effectiveness of the professional POD member working in each individual system or institution. Among this company of like-minded POD colleagues, it's fairly clear what your mission is. But when each of you returns to his or her campus, some of you will go home to extreme isolation and more than a little ambiguity about where you fit — certainly not ambiguity from your perspective, but from the larger institutional perspective. How you are perceived will undoubtedly affect your mission and, to some extent, your professional effectiveness. Some of you are lucky enough to be clearly perceived by enlightened faculty and administrators as colleagues helping faculty and the institution itself to develop their potential. But some of you have spoken about being perceived, not as colleagues, but more like administrators with an imposed mission to "improve faculty performance." Others gave examples to illustrate how they are perceived as part of the academic dean's scenario on "a bad hair day," after too many student complaints about Professor X, along the lines of the A.R. Gurney play. The latter is more likely to happen in institutions governed by administrative fiat rather than in systems in which collegiality is an institutional value. "Suddenly we had faculty development."

No matter what your situation, each one of you is dealing with the most volatile idea and value on campus, the idea of change. You recall the question about how many communists it takes to change a lightbulb? "None, because the bulb contains within itself the seeds of revolution." How many POD members does it take to change a lightbulb? One, but only if the bulb wants to be changed. Academic communities are among those most highly resistant to change. This fact of academic culture makes your mission all the more challenging, and all the more rewarding when you succeed.

I think it's important to say here that the arena in which we all work, "The Academy" (as Suzanne has put it in the title she assigned to my talk, "An Outsider's View of POD's Value to The Academy"), for all its claims of open-mindedness, impartiality, equity — and all of the other values we like to put in our mission statements — is still one of the most highly stratified and class-conscious forums of human endeavor. I'm not only talking about rivalry between disciplines, competing for dollars or majors—but there's too often a genuine lack of respect on the part of some people for other people who happen to belong to a different culture: for example, the culture of academic affairs or the culture of student affairs, where these are at odds. There are lots of communicational gaps in higher education that no one intends. This is not how higher education is supposed to be.

Having seen your reader's theater and enjoyed your presentations, and having heard what POD stands for (I've heard "Peas in a Pod," "Participate Or Die"), I've concluded that everybody should have a POD of his or her own. But POD is helping, and can help strengthen, within higher education, some of the values we need in order for the supreme value of "the Academy," education for responsible living, not merely to survive but to prevail. Already your name means "POD Optimizes Diversity," "POD Overhauls Developers," and maybe even "POD Outlaws Deadbeats." What is unusual about POD, judging from

the sessions I have attended and the members I've heard from this week, is that there is so much collective energy directed toward a central mission. You may not know it, but it really is unusual to find so many people agreeing on what it is you want to be and what are the values you wish to profess.

When the Society for Values in Higher Education does a "Values Audit" for an institution, we take literally a wise teacher's saying, "By their fruits, you shall know them." Again, the Socratic method proves useful: we know what the institution said in its mission statement, but who are these people really? Do their actions and behaviors mirror and manifest the values in their institutional mission statement? Looking at the short form of POD's mission statement in my conference packet, I saw that the important verbs in your statement are "to nurture, support and encourage members." In the larger picture, obviously, the student is the primary beneficiary of your focus on teaching and learning. You believe in humane pedagogies. You assume that positive change is a good, that personal development must be part of whatever you do-not just professional development, but personal development. You see the value of research on teaching and learning. You have a strong interest and belief in the value of networking. From what I have seen this week, and if you are representative of typical POD membership, then you do indeed practice what your mission preaches.

Before coming to Minnesota for the POD conference, I had been preparing materials for the 70th anniversary meeting of the Society for Values in Higher Education, the annual "Week of Work," to be held at Emory University next July. In reading something published for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Society, I was struck with its relevance to POD. In a document published in 1949, the president of SVHE, who was then heading an inter-governmental refugee agency that worked beyond the end of World War II, said that every organization, regardless of its age, should be constantly asking the same questions that I have heard in my sessions with you. "What is our purpose?" "What activities do we engage in?" "What are our values?" "What are our defects?" "Could the time and money now put into this organization be invested in it in other ways?" And, finally, "Should the organization expand?" The author went on to say "People like us are among the luckiest in the world in the matter of mental and spiritual

self-sufficiency, but we might become starved and lonely if left to our own private devices." Finally, he said of the annual week of work, "It produces new life and accelerated growth, precisely because it is both scholarly and merry." You don't hear that said about very many of our staid professional organizations, but it certainly is true of this group. The founders of SVHE spoke of their organization as being a fellowship of kindred minds. That's certainly what I found here in POD, as well.

This year's conference announcement, the call for presentations (not for papers, I notice), began with SVHE values pioneer Dick Morrill's definition of values as standards, patterns of choice. Then it took off on an enlarged definition that broadened the field of your concerns beyond the personal into the institutional, especially focused on the student and the faculty. The overall title of your conference, "Unveiling Inherent Values, Invigorating Values Inquiry," is precisely what higher education, and every other American institution, will be doing in the years ahead. You certainly have a jump start on what is becoming a nationwide impulse.

One of the things that came into focus while I sat with you, listened and talked with you, is how closely your concerns mirror the national concerns of higher education today. What will occupy our successors in the jobs we now hold in our own institutions? Most certainly, the "unveiling" of inherent values and the "invigorating" of values inquiry" must be built into the *modus operandi* of the institutions that will survive the values holocaust of our century. You regard values teaching as values inquiry, which is precisely the point of my own Society — that we are to promote values inquiry, not as though "we" had the truth and "you" need it, but in the realization that we are all seekers, all of us "questers," looking for our piece of truth as it is unfolded before our eyes, often through research, more often in exchanges with students, and very often in feedback by faculty. And so, values inquiry becomes a tool, a technique, but more than that, a way of life for effective teaching and lifelong learning.

In assessing our own role in the universe of higher education, we have to take into consideration the "whole world catalogue" of institutional life: its structure, its governance, its leadership, how it makes its decisions, and its rewards. Each of these reflects the values of the

institution and, frankly, they are reflected nowhere else, not in the mission statement, but in the actual works and days of the institution. A few months ago I met Suzanne on a similar podium, in a statewide system's discussion of the moral responsibility of the university. We need to keep that discussion going, looking at our institutions as though they were moral persons, because institutions, too, have very deeply set value systems and these values sometimes reveal themselves at the oddest moments, when you least expect them. When you expect that your mission statement values will kick in, you suddenly find yourself, institutionally, doing something else, like inhumane downsizing, or reward systems that don't truly reflect the value you say you place upon teaching, when compared with the rewards for research. This is why I see POD and POD members as a kind of conscience within the institutions of higher education.

Therefore, in fulfilling my mission for POD during this conference, I put on my values-inquiry lens to see what actually did take place. I should mention that I regard faculty development, like all responsible human behaviors, as a moral undertaking. For that reason I see you all as A.O.C.: Anomalies on Campus. The reason for this is that, having seen some of the results from surveys you've taken, I've found it extraordinarily interesting how much feedback you are giving each other. You're sharing freely without copyright and without many restrictions. I found it interesting, too, that you have catalogued your own reasons about why you think faculty would want to change. What is it that would motivate faculty to change? The results of the new perspective that Alan Wright put out are more than helpful. They are enlightening and encouraging. I couldn't help contrasting your discoveries with those that emerged during an evaluation visit I chaired for an unnamed New England college. The president of the institution had discovered what he thought were the prime motivations that would move faculty to change. He told me, "Early on in my presidency, I discovered that faculty respond to only three stimuli: sex, money, or fear. Since I couldn't use sex or money, I decided to use fear." This is a true story. And a sad one. The damage done by such misconceptions goes very deep into the fabric of a college or university. Which is why we need POD to publish your findings.

High on your list of motivators is feedback from deans and department heads interested in fostering attitudes that recognize the importance of teaching and the recognition of teaching in tenure and promotion decisions. High on the list, too, is money and released time to prepare proposals. Also high on your list, the role of senior administration in support of faculty and the recognition of good teaching as an equal partner with research. This is simply not happening in most American institutions. We mention teaching first in our mission statements and then we go on to reward almost everything else because teaching, at this point, is not a glamour issue. I think it could be. That's where we get back to POD. You are modeling what institutions themselves could do.

The latest research on the gang warfare that's destroying our cities seems to show pretty conclusively that young people today have two very basic human needs that are not being fulfilled in their homes, churches or schools: respect and belonging. These two needs appear to be so deep-seated that young people drop out of high school because they certainly don't find either respect or belonging in their schools. The same two qualities, or values, are what we, as adult professionals in academe, need, perhaps more than we need our degrees. It seems to me that in creating POD, you've actually given structure to a place where you all feel safe enough to talk about your successes and failures, to share your euphoria and anguish. There seems to be little of the competitiveness we have all experienced in other professional meetings where there is a lot of one-upmanship going on, where people are lobbying for jobs in a "meat-market" ethos. That clearly is not what's happening here. You are to be congratulated on maintaining the ethos of humane professionalism. There is always a danger of creeping competitiveness and of wanting to sound better than someone else who's doing the same thing. I think that you, being as sensitive as you are to human behaviors, realize that would be destructive to what POD is all about

Your POD meeting was also a place to meet new concepts and pedagogies for the first time. I attended an interesting session on TQM, something we all need to know more about. Many of those whose institutions have introduced Total Quality Management modules or techniques — or any other "newness" — may have no quarrel with

TQM, but an enormous quarrel with the top-down manner of its introduction to the system. "It's not what you're doing, it's how you're doing it that's killing me," a message to administrators from faculty that probably ought to be engraved on the walls of every college and university in America. It takes a certain amount of insensitivity these days to ignore the humane need to involve people in the decisions which will affect their lives and their students' lives. The rule of thumb that I employ is that policies are best formulated at the level closest to the level at which they'll be carried out. Controversial new methodologies like TQM would be more effectively introduced if we all remembered the value of meaningful consultation.

I'm now at the point where I'd like to give you some feedback as to what I heard at the conference and about the values I saw exhibited. Values are a bit like the operating systems that run our moral engines. And like our technology and its inner workings, values systems are easy to misread. That's one of the benefits of conferences like this, in which we all find help to interpret what it is we are seeing in the behaviors of our faculty. Why would faculty want to change? If we were able to devise a values flow-charting of incentives to change directed toward the least changeable and the most-suspicious-of-external-change agents of any group in ancient and modern society, our faculty (and I am a faculty member at Georgetown, so I include myself in this descriptor), we might start at the top, with the most idealistic answer to the question of "Why?" "Because it's the right thing to do." That doesn't work. Why is it the right thing to do? "Because it will make me a better teacher and person." Why? "Because it will take off my rough edges, or help fix whatever's broken." I may not agree with you that anything's broken. Why? "So that students may learn better and more, so that you, as a person, may experience greater success and satisfaction, so that this university may fulfill its mission, so that higher education may deserve and fulfill its public trust." Well, maybe. I would like us to see everything we do put on that macro level, but I think many of us are so bogged down in the micro that we sometimes can't get our job done. We have a great mission, which is to try to reveal, to unveil the larger picture, as your conference theme suggests. Whatever each one of us does as a part of a genuine team to affect the student in a beneficial way will affect not just this institution, but it will ultimately affect higher education in America at a time when public trust and signs of hope that education can make a difference are desperately needed.

Of all the sessions I attended, the one on the spirit of POD was most revealing about how the members see themselves and each other. We were asked to list values and behaviors that we perceive as being good to have or desirable, and then to compare these with what's actually being revealed here in POD. I learned that POD is perceived as a community different from a collegial grouping, but also collegial, a community in the sense of sharing similar thoughts and beliefs and values, collegial in a sense of esprit de corps, a sense of being equals; that POD is an advocacy group (there's that "mishing" again); that there's mutual respect for each other, and a note of service in what you do. I heard that there's an openness to newcomers, an openness to ideas, an openness to collaboration, to inclusion, to sharing, to participation, dialogue, learning, and teaching. Someone said, I think quite wisely, that one of the reasons you may enjoy each other so much is that you are so independent when you're back on the job. You come out of the cold into a warmer environment where you can be yourself and find the kinds of support that you often don't find in your home community. I noticed the equality, no doctors, no titles, only first names on badges. This is similar to SVHE's practice and signifies the same values: a willingness and a desire to mirror the values that you profess, valuing people over numbers in research, hard work, volunteering. I heard some of the less tangible, harder-to-get-a-hold-of virtues and values, such as integrity, trust and honesty. Here there seems to be not a lot of acrimony, not a lot of hidden agendas. On the contrary, there does seem to be an attempt at frankness, which is, quite frankly, refreshing.

Someone mentioned that in POD, you're used to meeting not in a city but in quiet surroundings, not in an urban center, not in a hotel with a hundred tunnels. But the fact is that all of us live in the "city of the world," the crowded human city recognized with all its warts by Saint Augustine. The difference between meeting at, say, a lovely golf-course-studded place in the South or in the West or in the North is the difference between a resort and a retreat. It can look the same to the outside world, but I think you're the only ones who know what

goes on in the meeting. We're having our annual meeting in Atlanta next year, after being at Bowdoin this Summer and the previous Summer at Colorado College in Colorado Springs. We'll be at Claremont College in 1995. So, Atlanta in July, late July, is going to be a real test of our devotion. We also feel that it is important to mirror to the members and to ourselves that we are not an ivory tower group, that we know that most of the action is happening in the inner cities. What will happen if all we do is go from a country campus without a lot of diversity (one of your members told us that in her university, "diversity" means when your purse and shoes don't match!) to another resort-like area where we're not truly in the milieu that will help us focus on our problems? These are decisions that can only be made by the individuals doing the planning. I'm for diversity in sites, as a reminder of the broader diversity we claim as a value in American pluralism.

What about the role of the lay people in the organization? Suppose someone is not involved in faculty development, what then would happen to that person? Say you have a history professor who's interested, how will the group respond to that person? At this point, I'd say you'd respond very well. It seems to me that you don't differentiate. This seems to be a rejuvenating, almost spiritual exercise for some. The world of the future will not cringe from such words as spirituality, values, morality, even religion, provided we don't use those concepts as weapons. Rugged individualism will not work for the institutional good of our students and ourselves. The equally American values of networking, mentoring, interdependence just might.

The issue of diversity seems important to you. It's certainly important to all of us in higher education. As I look around this group, it doesn't *look* very diverse. I know I'm not seeing the whole organization. But what is diversity? There is more to it than ethnic, religious, and racial difference. American pluralism has now embraced gender, age, and even cognitive differences as welcome parts of the mix. POD could help us define such terms as diversity in global ways, so that we might learn from each other to regard diversity as a value itself and not treat it as a problem. It can be a problem if we let it become that. Higher education needs a higher consensus model to help us move

beyond tolerance—beyond simply tolerating each other's differences. With the help of groups like POD and SVHE, we will discover, through education and counseling and reading, how the otherness of the other will enrich our own experience—how this person will bring to the negotiating table, to the classroom, to the organization something that wasn't there before because we didn't have representatives of that particular culture, race, religion, or way of looking at things.

What finally came out of that "Spirit of POD" session was a list of values that might be adopted for any faculty development effort anywhere in the U.S., not simply values associated with POD. The top five of the values appropriate in a faculty development person were: learning, collaboration, support, continuous improvement, and openmindedness. And here were the POD values: collegiality, quality, inclusiveness, trust, integrity. The POD values are more personal and internalized, and a POD meeting is obviously a place to get those internal batteries charged. On the contrary, many faculty development professionals, in their workplace, find themselves on "discharge" as far as their internal batteries go. You saw faculty developers typically acting as advocates for processes, creating opportunities, consulting, modeling, analyzing. Those are very active attributes. On the POD side of the house, typical behaviors were: sharing, nurturing, growth (there was some argument about that), mentoring, and consensus. Once again, a familiar pattern emerges. There is individuality on the job and a collegiality, a feeling of being in community, in POD. This is rare and ought to be preserved at any cost. Don't worry about being considered a womb-like environment. That will never happen. We have to posture as children to be treated as children. I think we all learned that early on in behavioral science. If we keep insisting on rights and responsibilities of ourselves and others, I think we will continue to be able to enjoy this kind of POD-like nurturing which is certainly not available to many people at the MLA, AAHE, AAC and so on. It is interesting too that the chief value of the faculty developer is learning, but it focuses on teachers.

Having extolled the virtues of POD, and all of us, we may now proceed with the canonization, because we have all emerged with zero defects. This is the ideal in TQM. One of my favorite stories from this conference was told in the TQM session: the U.S. corporate buyer who

insisted that his Japanese supplier provide his company with parts that were 90% perfect. The puzzled Japanese firm sent him ninety parts that had zero defects and ten that had defects, wondering why he wanted the ones with defects. I'd like to thank George Jops for that story. It was very appropriate in the conference's context of the revelation of values not always apparent on the surface.

"It couldn't happen here," because we in POD and SVHE spend all of our professional lifetimes trying to help and sensitize others to values like justice, equity, compassion, community; and because our own backgrounds and educations have privileged us to recognize prejudice in the speech and actions of others. That's probably true. The more educated we become, presumably the more sensitized we are to the use of spoken language and body language and behaviors. That's undoubtedly true. Yet, even we might forget and serve a pork entree on the Jewish sabbath. We have probably all heard jokes made by faculty about administrators and vice versa. When I was a dean, I began to collect jokes about deans. "An associate dean is a mouse training to be a rat." Some jokes are even less humane. A member of the Society for Values in Higher Education is currently doing research on "dumb blond" jokes, showing how these slighting stories have affected blond women. Sociologists have shown that the prevalence of such jokes in American culture have often caused blond women to act in ways they might not have, if they had not been mindful of the joking assumptions about their intelligence and sexuality. What we're really talking about is what Sandra Harding wrote about in a recent SVHE publication and what Johnella Butler talked about during this conference — what Sandra calls the need to assume "multiple subjectivities" in order to understand the impacts we have upon others who are different from us. Only in that kind of bringing together of opposites, not emphasizing differences but finding reasons to respect and even admire, will any of our organizations make any sense, and any community, out of higher education in the future. If we continue as we are, polarized, without ever meaning to be polarized or knowing that we are, we will, indeed, have a chaos in higher ed. It won't be the fractal kind of chaos with lots of order lurking beneath the surface. It will be the kind of disorder which has brought larger institutions than higher education to their knees. Despite what critics say about "political correctness," we can probably never be too sensitive to the legitimate needs of others for respect and belonging.

Here are some of the polarities which I hope we'll expunge from our academic language: "the top" and "the bottom" of institutions and organizational structures. In the fallacy of the missing opposite, when we name one polar, we're assuming the other, even though we may not say it out loud. I heard in several groups that things were filtering down from deans and department heads. Did you ever hear of anything filtering up in higher education (there's another expendable polar opposite)? Yet, that is a process that does happen in higher education. I also heard about academic versus student affairs, another polarity that induces a kind of academic schizophrenia in both faculty and students. Many of you are lucky enough to work on campuses without this split existence. The student as Academic Person and as Social Person has a right to collegial teamwork in which both academic and student services professionals work as partners in the service of the same student. But on some campuses, these are still separate domains, little kingdoms, each with its own walls. It's clear that we live in a world of relativity, in which "up" for one person might be "down" for another. The prestige of a deanship might be traitorism to another. Therefore, we've got to pay attention to opposing points of view—not adopt them, but at least try to understand them and bring them into the equation.

We need to find new ways to talk about relationships and relatedness. One eminent Black educator, Chuck Willy of the Harvard School of Education, prefers to use the terms "dominant" and "subdominant." As a faculty development professional, you relate to faculty and students in a way that's different from the ways in which deans relate to faculty and students, the ways in which counselors, psychologists and other service professionals relate, and even different from the ways in which faculty members relate to each other in a nondevelopment setting. You are in the middle, in a very good place to be. It seems to me that we are now in the era of cross-training, cross-dressing, cross-disciplinary studies. It may be disturbing for some people to see those old boundaries beginning to blur. As long as the boundaries remain, they are like Maginot lines, lines in the sand during the Persian Gulf war. I actually heard a lot of metaphors of war used here this

week. "We've been able to crack all the sciences," meaning, we've got someone from each of the sciences to join us. Although harmless in themselves, such lapses into the language of violence do convey attitudes of opposition over the long term.

I'd like to end here with a quote from the local paper: a woman who was director of women's studies at a state university wrote about her experience of giving birth to an autistic child, now 21. "Because I had an autistic child like Paul, I was forced to confront my deepest prejudices. Beneath all the other differences which might define human beings, there was one which for me which was unquestioned, and that was intellect. Living all of my adult life in an academic environment, I had never been forced to consider that intellect is not the same as merit. It is not the same as virtue. It is a gift of nature as surely as any other. We don't ask for our intelligence, and we can never do anything to deserve it. It is simply given, a gift."

In spite of the title of these remarks today, I hope I may leave you with the conviction that there is no "outside" and "inside" in POD or in SVHE or in higher education. There is a team. And anyone may be a member if that person knows what he or she is getting into and agrees to be there. Hodding Carter in his recent autobiography said that he entered Bowdoin College as a bigot and in the four years that he was there, every single one of his accepted beliefs and assumptions was challenged. What a great tribute to any college. However, he concludes: "I left there with my prejudices, still. But I wasn't a bigot anymore." You are the people who challenge the assumptions that are getting in the way of the student as learner and of the faculty as change agent. But like the professor in A.R. Gurney's play, faculty members are not all paranoid: some people are out to get them. It is up to us to understand their nightmares as well as their dreams, and to try to help them get where they want to be. That old friend from Mount Enterprise, Texas had a recurring nightmare, that he would wake up one day and have no one to teach. It is probably the worst of all possible academic nightmares, but it will happen if change does not happen in the people we are now trying to ease into better ways of doing things. Presidents, deans, and others who partner with faculty development staff can help change entire environments by their positive attitudes as well as by balanced reward systems, by inexpensive means like a

simple smile, words of encouragement, or rewards that reveal the institutional value placed on good teaching. This is the least we should expect from our policy makers and leaders.

Faculty development personnel are in the right place in the right time. But if there is one barrier to service that we must all get rid of, it is the leader as albatross — that voice heard in the French Revolution, coming from the rear of the vanguard of populace surging ahead, shouting "Let me through! Those are my people, and I am their leader!" You are already helping our teachers to teach and our students to learn. You understand better than any other member of the academic community the values that move faculty and students to embrace constructive change. Use that knowledge to help your leaders lead and to help your governors govern. Let the leadership of higher education know that you are a major institutional resource. Thanks to POD for being a prime source of support for all our efforts to restore higher education to the public trust and to remind us in gatherings like this — that we're all lifelong learners and that higher education is a team endeavor. Thank you.