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The Elusive Ideal: Civic Learning and Higher Education

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The Elusive Ideal: Civic Learning and Higher Education

Abstract

General book description:

From curriculum standards and testing to school choice and civic learning, issues in American education are some of the most debated in the United States. *The Institutions of American Democracy*, a collection of essays by the nation's leading education scholars and professionals, is designed to inform the debate and stimulate change. In association with the Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands and the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania, *The Institutions of American Democracy* is the first in a series of books commissioned to enhance public understanding of the nature and function of democratic institutions. A national advisory board--including, among others, Nancy Kassebaum Baker, David Boren, John Brademas, Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, David Gergen, and Lee Hamilton--will guide the vision of the project, which includes future volumes on the press and the three branches of government. Each essay in *The Institutions of American Democracy* addresses essential questions for policymakers, educators, and anyone committed to public education. What role should public education play in a democracy? How has that role changed through American history? Have the schools lost sight of their responsibility to teach civics and citizenship? How are current debates about education shaping the future of this democratic institution?

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THE ELUSIVE IDEAL: CIVIC LEARNING AND HIGHER EDUCATION



Matthew Hartley and Elizabeth L. Hollander

THROUGHOUT AMERICAN HISTORY, COLLEGES AND universities have espoused various conceptions of civic responsibility, adapting them to meet the contingencies of the times. The colonial colleges of the 1700s trained the children of the elite in order to perpetuate the religious and civic leadership of their communities. Over the next two centuries, as higher education expanded from a select group of private academies into a broad national system, other notions concerning the purpose of the university began to vie for dominance. Nevertheless, a higher purpose for higher learning—to foster citizenship and to serve a democratic society—has remained an enduring, if contested, ideal.

Today there is in place a multiplicity of efforts aimed at promoting civic engagement at colleges and universities. Since the 1970s these activities have evolved from individual acts of student volunteerism to comprehensive institutional efforts. Many colleges and universities now embrace the notion that they have a responsibility as “institutional citizens” within their communities and have cultivated sophisticated, sustained, and reciprocal community partnerships. Some have attempted to embed service into the curriculum and to encourage scholarly work that addresses local concerns.

Although these efforts have become more prevalent, they are not universally accepted or supported. The very structure and culture of the system of higher education are often at cross-purposes with civic engagement. Nonetheless, the movement toward greater campus engagement continues to gather momentum on campuses across the country.

In this essay we examine how the democratic purposes of colleges and universities have been expressed historically and are being pursued in the twenty-first century on numerous campuses, despite powerful forces acting against such efforts. First we offer a historical perspective on the evolving conception of

higher education's civic purposes. We next examine how the organizational qualities of colleges and universities tend to push civic education to the margins. Finally, we describe the ways in which many institutions have begun to actively engage in meaningful civic work. We contend that these institutions are participating in the reinvention of American higher education and are continuing the long-contested dialogue about what it means to educate in a democracy.

Changing Conceptions of Democratic Education: A Brief History

The earliest colonial colleges trained the sons of wealthy patrons of a particular locale. Yale was conceived as an institution "wherein youth may be instructed in the arts and sciences, who through the blessing of Almighty God, may be fitted for public employment, both in Church and civil State." Rutgers University (then Queen's College) was created "for the education of youth in the learned languages, liberal and useful arts and sciences, and especially in divinity, preparing them for the ministry and other good offices" (Brubacher, p. 8).

This rather elitist rationale was mirrored in the constrained reach of these institutions. Historians estimate that no more than one in a thousand students attended college before the American Revolution. In *The American College and University: A History*, the educational historian Frederick Rudolph wryly observes that "[Although] some middle- and lower-class families sent their sons to the colonial colleges . . . it should not be forgotten that the overwhelming majority of their sons stayed home, farmed, went West, or became—without the benefit of a college education—Benjamin Franklin or Patrick Henry" (p. 22).

Serving the Republic

The purpose of higher education began to shift in the aftermath of the Revolution as it became explicitly linked to the fortunes of the fledgling democracy. No longer was higher education the sole purview of the rich. In the two decades following the Revolution, nineteen colleges were chartered, tripling the number of institutions of higher learning. At the same time, the idea of a civic purpose for higher education began to grow. As Rudolph notes, "A commitment to the republic became a guiding obligation of the American college" (p. 61).

Religious movements also played an important role in shaping the civic purposes of colleges. The Second Great Awakening, a religious revival that swept the country in the early nineteenth century, spurred the founding of many small denominational colleges. Although these institutions educated only a fraction of the population, in their founding, higher education took its first halting steps toward democratization. Expressing the populist ideals championed by President Andrew Jackson, these institutions saw themselves as serving the democracy by providing higher education to a wide range of students, especially the poor. In 1847 the Reverend John Todd, in an appeal to philan-

thropists, proclaimed: "Our colleges are chiefly and mainly institutions designed for the poor and those in moderate circumstances, and not for the rich. . . . We have no institutions in the land more truly republican than our colleges" (Lucas, p. 121).

Up to this point, the civic purpose of higher education was largely limited to shaping the minds and hearts of future civic leaders. However, the industrial revolution brought with it a new imperative—vocational training and the expansion and proliferation of practical knowledge on industry and farming. The Morrill Acts (1862 and 1890) gave large tracts of federal land to the states to create public universities. These acts came after the Agricultural College of the State of Michigan (now Michigan State University), founded in 1855, served as a successful prototype. The acts emphasized the teaching of trades as well as the application of scholarship to the practical needs of the community. In attempting to resolve the problems of the farmer down the street, the land-grant universities expanded knowledge about agriculture to the benefit of all. They exemplified an ideal of the institution of higher learning as a solver of local problems and a servant of the people.

The Research Paradigm

In the latter half of the nineteenth century the German university model, with its focus on research and specialization, began to establish dominance. This change profoundly influenced American higher education. The search for new knowledge through research presented a powerful purpose that began to eclipse others. With specialization came the creation of academic departments and the rise of disciplines whose narrow focus created fissures in the university community. The new university model and its ethos of pure, or "value-free," research heavily influenced academic norms and helped to de-emphasize higher education's role in shaping students' values. The civic purposes that had been central to many institutions were now competing with an increasingly crowded field of other institutional imperatives and goals.

The twentieth century witnessed the creation of a mass system of higher education, and with it new imperatives regarding institutional purpose. The first three-quarters of the century brought unprecedented growth in both numbers and types of students. The proportion of graduating American students attending college tripled from about 4 percent in 1900 to 15 percent in 1940. The government invested heavily in higher education through the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (more commonly known as the GI Bill), which provided financial assistance to 2.25 million World War II veterans, swelling the enrollments of colleges and universities across the country. In 1954 the landmark legal decision *Brown v. Board of Education* fractured the wall of segregation and made it possible for men and women of color to attend previously all-white colleges. The percentage of American students attending college tripled again

between 1940 and 1970 to reach 45 percent. The range of institutional types increased dramatically as well, most notably in the rise of community colleges (Geiger, p. 61).

Even while these dramatic shifts were broadening the mission of higher education to encompass vocational training, economic development, and other new imperatives, the research paradigm still largely reigned supreme. During the post-war period, the engines of scientific research were stoked by federal funds during the technological race against the Soviet Union. While such efforts were no doubt viewed as “serving” the nation, they were tied to nationalistic ambitions. Research on local problems received no concomitant financial support.

The Business Paradigm

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, higher education experienced another major shift. The late 1970s were a difficult time for American colleges and universities. A stagnant economy and rampant inflation drained state coffers and decreased state funding for public education, which by that point covered 80 percent of all college students. Tremendous fears of a demographic slump caused some experts to predict that within one to two decades, nearly a third of all colleges and universities would merge or close.

In response to these pressures, institutions began to pursue a business model. Increasingly, students were viewed as “customers” whose interests needed to be accommodated. Surveys at the time made clear that what these “customers” wanted most was jobs. During the 1980s and 1990s, when Wall Street traders became national heroes, there was a dramatic shift toward careerism. Professional education elbowed past the liberal arts and quickly dominated the curriculum, leading some to wonder whether higher education was more of a private than a public good.¹

Development of Campus-based Civic Engagement

The shifts that were occurring in the academic enterprise were so profound that many within higher education began to call for reform. They contended that higher education could best serve students—and the public good—by providing educational experiences that combined real-world and academic knowledge through civic engagement.

Since the 1980s, the move toward civic education and community engagement among higher education has grown tremendously. This change has come only with great effort. The barriers to any kind of institutional change, particularly change that requires a coordinated effort among parties with divergent interests, are high. The following sections examine the challenges to civic engagement and the ways that higher education institutions and associations are working to overcome those challenges.

Systemic Challenges

ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS. The very structure of American postsecondary institutions works against broad-based change efforts. Each college or university is divided into schools, which are further divided into divisions and again into departments. Coordination of this complex structure is complicated by the fact that colleges and universities are institutions with diffuse power. Although the regents or boards of trustees hold ultimate authority, they cannot implement broad-based change unilaterally. They depend both on the insight of administrators who are closer to the institution's inner workings and on the curricular expertise and cooperation of the faculty. On the other hand, the faculty cannot advance an institutional initiative without the financial support of the administration and the board. In essence, each constituency has sufficient power to block any new initiative. As Clark Kerr, former chancellor of the University of California system, once observed, universities often end up maintaining the status quo because it is the only option that cannot be vetoed.²

Curricular change is particularly difficult because it requires the cooperation of many academic departments. Such cooperation requires faculty members to look beyond the confines of their departments, where most of their work is centered, in order to serve a larger institutional purpose. In addition to this hurdle, comprehensive change necessarily creates winners and losers. For example, the English department may be reluctant to allow a course on business writing to fulfill a distribution requirement for fear that such a change will drain freshmen from introductory English classes and result in a decline in humanities majors. In addition, there are ideological differences about what collection of courses constitutes a meaningful core set of knowledge for students.

FACULTY NORMS AND THE ROLE OF DISCIPLINES. A second factor that inhibits civic engagement is the set of beliefs, values, and customs that guide the work of the professoriate. In the late 1950s Alvin Gouldner observed that many professors feel a greater affinity for members of their disciplinary community at other institutions than for the faculty members down the hall. Certainly more are inclined to participate in disciplinary activities than they are to serve, say, on the parking subcommittee of the faculty senate. In short, the discipline tends to draw faculty members away from institutional matters, particularly at research universities.³ Further, academic disciplines have tended to denigrate academic work aimed at addressing local problems. The system of peer review, though a useful means of evaluating research, tends to reward scholarship in its familiar forms. Ernest Boyer's idea of a "scholarship of application," in which disciplinary knowledge is put to use in addressing community concerns (outlined in the highly influential book *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, 1990), is only just beginning to gain legitimacy at some institutions.

Another factor that impedes faculty engagement is lack of time. Faculty members are pulled in a multitude of directions. They teach, research, advise, write letters of recommendation, mentor young scholars, participate in peer review for academic journals, and much more. They have precious little time to pursue any activity whose purpose may be construed as tangential to their core duties. The dramatic increase in the number of part-time teaching positions has exacerbated this problem.

"In 1999, 43 percent of faculty members worked part-time, up from 34 percent in 1980 and 22 percent in 1970. Adjuncts whose terms of employment are uncertain and who must cobble together positions at several institutions to earn a decent living are understandably less likely to invest time and energy supporting broad-based change at any one institution."⁴

EXTERNAL FACTORS. The instability of financial resources experienced since 2000 has given external constituents (state legislators, boards of higher education, donors) unprecedented influence over the agendas of colleges and universities. Legislators increasingly are pushing the "useful" aspects of education (e.g., job training) and greater efficiency. A preeminent American scholar of higher education, Richard Chait, points to this shift in the governance of American institutions of higher learning as a serious threat.

The "enemy," if one chooses to apply that term to the marketplace and to external constituencies, is much stronger than any of these three groups alone, and perhaps stronger than all three together. If the board, the administration and the faculty do not coalesce, and maybe even if they do, the "market revolution" will supplant the "academic revolution."⁵

CONTESTED PURPOSES. Finally, many scholars question the validity of promoting civic engagement. They argue that the primary purpose of higher education is to encourage the development of analytical skills, facility in written and oral communication, and knowledge of a particular field of inquiry. What students choose to do with this knowledge (or whether they do anything at all) is beyond the scope of higher learning. The idea of value neutrality remains a potent inhibiting force.

The Civic Education Counterrevolution

Despite the forces standing in opposition to the civic mission of higher education, the last two decades of the twentieth century witnessed a resurgence of efforts to foster community action and civic engagement. It is striking that such activities were achieved with a minimum of government involvement. Instead, they arose from a confluence of grassroots factors.

Some proponents of community and civic engagement have felt that scholarship has been overly attentive to the theoretical interests of disciplinary

communities. Some have grown anxious over the commercialization of higher education and fear that the pursuit of financial stability has compromised the nonprofit mission. (This became particularly evident with the increasing corporate sponsorship of research.) Community-based learning has also proved to be a useful means of accommodating the emerging emphasis on preprofessional training and job preparation, while remaining consonant with the ideals of liberal arts learning. Many campuses located in low-income communities have been spurred by enlightened self-interest, hoping to improve their communities and in the process become more attractive to prospective students. Finally, there are deepening concerns about the state of America's civil society, particularly low levels of democratic participation among young people and doubts as to whether the next generation of adults is prepared to take up their democratic responsibilities. Taken together, these factors have refocused attention on civic education.

Concerns about an increasingly self-centered society have been building since the 1970s, as expressed by the social critics Tom Wolfe, who coined the term the "Me Decade," and Christopher Lasch, who condemned a growing "culture of narcissism." By the 1980s such concerns focused on America's youth. Surveys of college students showed a rise in the percentage of students who saw making money as a primary personal goal and a corresponding decrease in students who wanted to develop a meaningful philosophy of life. Fewer students indicated that they were interested in participating in community affairs, protecting the environment, or working to promote racial understanding.⁶

Such concerns galvanized college students and college presidents alike. In 1984 a recent Harvard graduate, Wayne Meisel, walked from Maine to Washington, D.C., and visited seventy campuses in order to find and motivate other students who were deeply committed to social issues and willing to go "into the streets" and give their time to help others. His journey led to the founding of the Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL), whose primary function was to mobilize college students in the service of their local communities. COOL also forcefully demonstrated that the negative stereotypes of students as entitled and self-indulgent did not reflect the values of many young people.

The following year, Frank Newman, former president of the University of Rhode Island and then-director of the Education Commission of the States, wrote a report that highlighted the need to reassert civic education in college.⁷ Newman's missive caught the attention of a group of prominent university presidents, including those of Stanford, Georgetown, and Brown, who met with Newman in 1985. This group agreed that college students were being mischaracterized and that if students were given a chance to serve their communities, they would hasten to do so.

Out of this small gathering and several subsequent larger ones was born a presidential organization called Campus Compact. Its mission was to create pub-

lic service opportunities for college students and to develop an expectation of service as an integral part of the student experience. The dream of its founders was to gather one hundred like-minded presidents to further this work. (In 2004 Campus Compact had more than nine hundred member colleges and universities supported by a network of national and state offices that provided training and technical assistance to students, faculty, and administrators in support of the civic mission of higher education.

The focus of these early efforts was to encourage and demonstrate the capacity of young people to act on behalf of those less fortunate than themselves. Through such activities as tutoring a child, volunteering in a soup kitchen, or cleaning up a park, young people could “give back” to society while gaining active learning experiences to prepare them for civic responsibility.

Soon, however, college educators who supported the idea of encouraging student volunteerism began to question whether students were learning the “skills and habits” of citizenship. There is value in recognizing societal problems and serving others. But students also needed to develop the skills to analyze the causes of social ills and to craft policies to address them. From these concerns the broader concepts of service-learning and civic engagement emerged.

From Service to Service-Learning

During the early 1990s, service-learning became the preeminent vehicle for promoting civic education at colleges and universities. Service-learning—the embedding of student service into the curriculum—proved to be an excellent way of promoting deeper understanding of complex societal problems. Service-learning also met other pedagogical aims by marrying disciplinary theory with practice in the context of active learning. In other words, the experience of putting their academic knowledge to work in the community bolstered students’ understanding of classroom material.

It also became clear that incorporating service into coursework offered the best hope of sustaining these efforts long term and ensuring that they did not become marginalized in the academy. A number of important efforts on the part of individual campuses as well as education associations were aimed at accomplishing that goal. In the late 1980s Campus Compact organized the Invisible College, a group of faculty committed to service-learning. This group recognized that many faculty members were reluctant to try service-learning because they could not envision how such work would help promote learning within their disciplines. It therefore proposed developing a series of books on service-learning in specific academic disciplines. By 2004 this series, published by the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) in conjunction with Campus Compact, included nearly twenty volumes. In addition, the peer-reviewed *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* emerged to further the advancement of knowledge about service-learning.⁸

In 1998 Campus Compact received a major grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts to spread the practice of service-learning across higher education. This grant resulted in the creation of a series of practical publications, such as the *Introduction to Service-Learning Toolkit* and *Fundamentals of Service-Learning Course Construction*. Training sessions across the country involved nearly fourteen hundred faculty and administrators. An extensive Web site and a journal compiling published articles about civic engagement and service-learning from around the country (the *Campus Compact Reader*) exposed the practice to tens of thousands of others. Campus Compact also gave grants to seventeen disciplinary associations to encourage service-learning through their Web site, special editions of disciplinary journals, and conference sessions.⁹

The impact that such activities have had in promoting service-learning nationwide is reflected in data gathered from Campus Compact member institutions. Between 1998 and 2002, the average number of service-learning courses on member campuses grew from sixteen to thirty and the proportion of faculty undertaking service-learning grew from 13 percent to 22 percent. Other evidence that all of this activity took service-learning from the margins to the mainstream of higher education is found in *U.S. News & World Report's* annual rankings of colleges, which in 2002 began including "active pedagogical practice" in its calculation.¹⁰

Development of the "Engaged Campus"

An early goal of service-learning was encouraging students to grapple with societal problems. At the same time, many also began to question the role of colleges and universities as institutional citizens.¹¹ In 1999 Campus Compact and the American Council on Education (ACE), arguably the most influential higher education association in America, organized a meeting of sixty college presidents that resulted in the issuance of the "Presidents' Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education," which stressed the need to educate the next generation of active citizens and for campuses to be good citizens in their own communities. The document featured a civic self-assessment guide that included such questions as: Do our students have an opportunity to practice the arts of democracy on campus? Is our faculty actively engaged in addressing community problems? Is our staff valued for what they can bring to civic engagement? (More than 535 college and university presidents have since signed this declaration.)¹²

In the early twenty-first century there was an outpouring of writing on civic education.¹³ Many education associations, including the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, and the National Organization of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, have published works or begun initiatives focusing on civic engagement in higher education.

These efforts evolved from a shift in focus from student community service to a comprehensive idea of the “engaged campus”—the concept that colleges and universities have a responsibility both to educate students for citizenship and to act as good institutional citizens in their own communities. These efforts also evolved from an understanding of active citizenship that moved beyond simple acts of compassion expressed through volunteer activities to active engagement in social, political, and policy issues. Two driving forces for this change were concern about democratic participation among young people and new thinking about the relationship between civic education, liberal arts, and issues such as diversity.

DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION. In 1998 an influential study by Arthur Levine and Jeanette Cureton, *When Hope and Fear Collide*, found that students felt disenfranchised from the political process: “Undergraduates reserve their strongest criticisms for government and the American political system. They don’t believe either works” (p. 28). Levine and Cureton noted a “new localism”—a shift toward small, pragmatic, manageable agendas for change. As one student in their study observed, “I can’t do anything about the theft of nuclear-grade weapons materials in Azerbaijan, but I can clean up the pond, help tutor a troubled kid, or work at the homeless shelter” (p. 36). Students were not entirely apolitical; in fact, Levine and Cureton’s analysis showed a substantial jump in student demonstrations between 1976 and 1993, a finding supported by Robert Rhoads’s 1998 text *Freedom’s Web*, an investigation of student activism in the 1990s. However, students had lost interest in voting and saw no connection between the ballot box and the societal problems they were seeking to alleviate.

During the same time period, a series of highly publicized surveys highlighted this disengagement. In 1998 Public Allies published a poll by Peter Hart Research Associates revealing the distaste of young people for politics, including their reluctance to vote. In 1999 a poll for the National Association of Secretaries of State reaffirmed these findings. Regular polling by the Institute of Politics at Harvard University continues to chronicle the preference for service over politics. In 2002 a study by Scott Keeter et al. found that 40 percent of fifteen- to twenty-five-year-olds volunteered, but only 3 percent volunteered for a political group. These studies have raised the question of what role higher education might play in reconnecting students’ societal concerns to active democratic participation through politics and policy making.¹⁴

CIVIC EDUCATION, LIBERAL EDUCATION, AND DIVERSITY. As the broader framework for civic education in higher education gained traction, there was increasing examination of the intersection between civic education, liberal education (referring to the liberal arts, not a political viewpoint), and diversity initiatives. The most fully developed of these explorations is the intersection of civic and liberal education. The Association of American Colleges and

Universities (AAC&U) has been the most influential higher education association espousing the importance of a liberal education. In 2002, consciously echoing Campus Compact's "Presidents' Declaration on the Civic Responsibilities of Higher Education," the group issued a call for a Presidents' Campaign for the Advancement of Liberal Learning. This initiative stresses the intersection between higher education and the needs of the democracy and posits that a liberal education is the best way to achieve education for global democracy, including developing "intellectual and ethical judgment; expanding cultural, societal and scientific horizons; cultivating democratic and global knowledge and engagement; and preparing for work in a dynamic and rapidly evolving economy."¹⁵

In 2003 Campus Compact and the AAC&U joined together to establish the Center for Liberal Education and Civic Engagement. The center's guiding principle is that "education for democratic engagement in the face of differences both embodies the best of a liberal education and sharpens its purposes." The initial purpose of the center is to encourage on-campus dialogue about liberal education and civic engagement.

At the opening of the twenty-first century the relationship between civic engagement and efforts to grapple with inequality and diversity was just beginning to be explored. During the debates over the legal future of affirmative action, which was decided in 2003 by the Supreme Court, campuses began to think about alternative strategies for attracting and retaining a diverse population. Many minority faculty members have expressed a desire to do more engaged scholarship. Legitimizing this form of scholarship is therefore important to retaining faculty of color in the academy. In addition, students have articulated a connection between their community work and their deeper understanding of diversity. A number of the studies cited earlier indicate that students place high value on understanding diverse peoples. The service work that students carry out in diverse communities is an important experience for building that understanding.

Civic Engagement on Campus

Despite the internal and external hurdles to incorporating civic engagement into institutional priorities, many colleges and universities have made a significant commitment to doing so. The following sections examine campus practices designed to educate the next generation of active citizens and offer a few of the many examples of campuses that act as engaged citizens in their own communities.

To describe the progress that has been made thus far, we turn to a set of thirteen indicators of campus engagement first outlined by Elizabeth Hollander, John Saltmarsh, and Edward Zlotkowski in 2002.¹⁶ Each indicator addresses a

particular constituent whose participation is required to achieve full institutional commitment to the civic mission: administrators, faculty, staff (in particular community service or service-learning directors), students, and community partners. The indicators also address structures needed on the campus to achieve full engagement:

- mission and purpose
- administrative and academic leadership
- external resource allocation
- disciplines, departments, and interdisciplinary work
- faculty roles and rewards
- internal resource allocation
- community voice
- enabling mechanisms
- faculty development
- integrated and complementary community service activities
- pedagogy and epistemology
- forums for fostering public dialogue
- student voice

No campus has every indicator of engagement, and some campuses are stronger in certain realms than others. However, each indicator represents an important element in achieving comprehensive and long-term change.

How can an institution traverse the distance between an ideal and realization of that ideal? One description of this process is provided by Paul S. Goodman and James W. Dean (1982), who delineate five stages in the spread of a particular behavior throughout an institution:¹⁷

1. Knowledge of the behavior: People within the organization become aware of a new activity or behavior.
2. Performance of the behavior: Certain individuals (though often a tiny minority initially) begin to perform the activity. Over time, the behavior becomes more pervasive.
3. Preference for the behavior: Individuals express a preference for the new activity. Institutional recognition and rewards for the activity may follow.
4. Normative consensus: As more people become aware of the new activity, a consensus emerges that it is appropriate.
5. Values: The institution states its commitment to the activity, which comes to represent an expression of the core purpose of the institution.

This framework is a useful yardstick for measuring progress toward institutionalized civic engagement efforts.

Knowledge of the Behavior

DEFINING CIVIC EDUCATION. Typically, civic engagement begins with a person (or small group of persons) and an idea. In the 1980s faculty who pioneered community-based work were often iconoclasts and mavericks who received little support and less encouragement. More recently, a number of civic engagement efforts have been advanced by senior administrators or multiple constituent groups. In each case people within the institution must define civic education in ways that best fit their institutional circumstances.

At the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis this was accomplished by a civic engagement task force that was supported by the president, charged by the provost, and convened by a number of prestigious faculty members. The task force spent a year organizing conversations on the campus in every dorm, in roundtables with community leaders, state legislators, and foundation directors, and even in a local drugstore known for political discussion groups. These conversations led to a broad understanding of the public role of the university.

Rockford College in Illinois entered into a discussion of civic engagement by revisiting its historic legacy. This small, private college was the alma mater of Jane Addams, the social innovator who founded the settlement-house movement in Chicago in the early twentieth century. Rockford's president is promoting a college-wide conversation about the values held by Addams and how these values can be reflected in the college's mission, vision, and student life.

FACULTY SOCIALIZATION. To lay the groundwork for the future involvement of other faculty members, it is imperative that faculty members establish for themselves the legitimacy of any new pedagogy or scholarly activity. Since few faculty encounter purposeful civic education in graduate school, they must learn what it is in its particulars and assess its efficacy as a tool for teaching and learning. To that end, professional-development opportunities have been a useful step toward introducing specifics to a campus.

Performance of the Behavior

ENABLING MECHANISMS. Translating knowledge into behavior requires both administrative and academic leadership as well as an investment of resources in new structures necessary to sustain the contact between faculty and students and the larger community. Not every faculty member needs to adopt engaged pedagogies for these pedagogies to be institutionalized on campus. Instead, the aim is to legitimize this form of teaching and give it equal status on campus.

Both Eastern Michigan University and Montclair State University in New Jersey offer a series of workshops to faculty members interested in experimenting with civic engagement. These workshops provide examples of civic engagement from other campuses and introduce faculty to available institutional and

community resources. These schools and others also provide minigrants to faculty to develop new courses and incorporate democratic education into their work as teachers and as scholars. Some campuses (e.g., Brown University, the University of Wisconsin-Madison) even make grants available to students wishing to do community-based research projects as part of their coursework.

Perhaps the most visible means by which institutions are encouraging the practice of civic education is the growth in the number of community service and service-learning offices on campus. Hundreds of colleges and universities now have such offices. Their resources, especially their knowledgeable staff, make it easier for interested faculty members to become involved. Such offices identify a wide range of community projects and can match them to the goals of particular courses. They often provide training to students to prepare them for community work. At Brevard Community College in Florida, the Center for Service-Learning offers a full range of services, including faculty development workshops and minigrants. It is a model that is becoming increasingly popular.

At James Madison University in Virginia, the Center for Leadership, Service, and Transitions introduces students to individual community involvement in their first year; the goal is to equip students by their fourth year to analyze or even influence policies that affect the community. Students themselves attest to the success of this approach. One such student, Kymber Lovett, worked in the community as part of a freshman social work course; as she noted in a 2002 speech at the launch of Virginia Campus Compact, "I had never thought to ask why so many children that I worked with . . . were not reading at their grade levels or why they did not have health care service. But once I started asking, I realized that there were opportunities that I had as a member of the community to work to make changes." By her senior year, she was taking a health policy course and lobbying for health legislation for children.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND LEADERSHIP. Enabling mechanisms such as service-learning offices can succeed only if the administrative and academic leadership of the institution support them. Obviously this means adequate funding. Increasingly, campuses are seeking to endow this function by finding donors to support the college's civic mission. However, it is also important for the chief academic officer to discuss the civic mission with deans and department chairs and to invite them to foster department-specific initiatives or interdepartmental projects.

At American University in Washington, D.C., the president challenged each department to put on an event as part of a yearlong celebration of the civic purpose of the university, and he provided funding to assist them. At California State University at Northridge and at Miami Dade College, the provost and president sponsored Engaged Department Institutes in which thirty-five departments participated in a three-day discussion of the theory and practice of civic education.

Such action by top administrators is an effective means of overcoming the perception that civic engagement does not warrant institutional attention.

INTEGRATING ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES. As discussed earlier, departments have an organizational tendency to operate in relative isolation. This necessitates bringing together the academic and cocurricular staff, as well as providing "bridging" mechanisms between the campus and the community. Such mechanisms vary considerably depending upon the size and complexity of the institution. Coordination is particularly challenging at large comprehensive universities, where each school (e.g., law, medicine, etc.) may have its own outreach activities. One way this is handled is to start with an inventory of all the activities on campus and post it on a Web site where additions can easily be made. Harvard University, among others, has such an inventory. To sustain coordination and collaboration, some campuses assign responsibility to an academic leader; others create centers for engagement.

Some campuses have adopted a strategy of focusing on particular neighborhoods to maximize their impact. Trinity College in Connecticut created a learning corridor adjacent to its campus that included a Boys and Girls Club as well as elementary and high schools. Students from the campus regularly volunteer in this corridor as part of a comprehensive effort to improve the quality of Hartford public schools. These activities have led to a major effort to integrate community learning courses, student volunteer activities, and community outreach through regular meetings and a new Web site.

Preference for the Behavior

Faculty who use engaged pedagogies point to numerous benefits. Community-based work enriches students' understanding of the theories to which they are being introduced and enlivens class discussions. The inherent messiness of resolving problems in a community setting disabuses students of the notion that "textbook" answers exist. Many faculty also point to the intrinsic rewards of applying their expertise to help others. Further, given the brief shelf life of disciplinary content, community-based learning is seen as a way to instill certain habits of mind and a sense of agency that students can carry with them.

However, no activity can last long if it is outside of the existing formal reward structure of the institution. In order to draw a larger cadre of faculty to the practice, it is essential to adjust both the internal and the external reward systems. Currently, faculty in the most elite American research universities are rewarded primarily for their research, second for the quality of their teaching, and last for their "service," which in most institutions means membership on faculty committees rather than service to the larger community. Of course, many institutions place a higher priority on teaching than on research (e.g., small liberal arts colleges, community colleges, urban comprehensive univer-

sities), but even at these institutions the standard of the research university is influential.

Creating alternative reward systems that rigorously assess and honor community-based scholarship and teaching is one of the most difficult aspects of achieving an engaged campus. A few leading campuses, such as Indiana University and Michigan State, have added community engagement as one basis on which a faculty member might seek tenure, along with research and teaching. Some campuses use a portfolio approach for tenure review. The contents of the portfolio (e.g., unpublished research conducted on behalf of a particular community-based organization) are reviewed and critiqued by academic peers across the country. On campuses where the practice has taken hold, such as Montclair State, job descriptions for faculty positions include requirements for experience in service-learning and are a part of the review process for faculty hiring.

Because the faculty is generally self-governing, it is essential that the disciplines and academic leadership of departments support engaged teaching practices and help create rigorous review systems. In the meantime, as the slow process of winning over departments and disciplines takes place, administrators have sought to support these practices through alternative reward systems such as institutional teaching and engagement awards, course design grants, and administrative support.

Normative Consensus

PUBLIC DIALOGUE. Maintaining institutional commitment to civic engagement requires on-campus dialogue and debate. At the University of Minnesota, conversations with state legislators and others brought into focus the extent to which the public purpose of the institution was under challenge. The American Council on Education, as part of its civic initiative in 1999, helped a dozen campuses host "Listening to Communities" sessions, designed to help campuses understand how they could work with community organizations.

The college campus has traditionally been a space for debating public issues with rigor, not rancor. Public forums that involve a wide range of constituencies can be an important vehicle for both applying academic knowledge to community problems and modeling democratic debate for students. The University of California, San Diego, sponsors the San Diego Dialogue, which addresses the economic future of the San Diego/Tijuana metropolitan area. The dialogue involves community leaders of all kinds and is informed by academic research on such topics as the role of historic associations in building social capital, and U.S./Mexico border crossings. The campuses of North Shore Community College in Massachusetts and Gulf Coast Community College in Florida are known as important places for everyone in the community to learn about and debate public policies. To achieve this aim, the campuses regularly invite public leaders to open events.

STUDENT VOICE. Schools that want to encourage civic engagement need to create meaningful mechanisms for students to participate in democratic decision making on their own campuses. This can range from student participation in faculty hiring to serving on the board of trustees. Many public universities include a nonvoting member on the board. In Oklahoma, the board of regents for the public university system has very active student participants. Under their leadership, Campus Compact set up a state office in Oklahoma to help create more volunteer options on campus. Some campuses, such as Antioch College in Ohio, have a long tradition of student involvement in all aspects of campus life. Students serve as full voting members on every tenure and hiring committee, as well as on budget and administrative committees. Every week the entire campus community is invited to a meeting at which issues can be raised and discussed and action taken. At Hampshire College in Massachusetts, the president has an open breakfast every Monday at which students may discuss special concerns. These are rare practices, however, and many campuses find that there is little student interest even in the more traditional student governments.

Much more common are issue-oriented student groups. At Stanford University, students counted more than four hundred such groups in an undergraduate student population of fourteen thousand. Student groups undertake direct service, advocacy, and politics. Generally they are not in regular touch with one another, even though they may be addressing similar issues. A few campuses are consciously bringing these student groups together to learn from one another and deepen their engagement practices. At the University of Pennsylvania's Civic House, the center that supports student volunteerism, students are encouraged to root their advocacy work in local service and to understand advocacy issues in their service work.

In a broader effort to coordinate student activity, Campus Compact has launched a national initiative entitled Raise Your Voice: Student Action for Change. The purpose of this initiative is to encourage more students to become involved in all kinds of civic activities, and to help them see the connection between service work and public policy. This campaign has led to reforms on dozens of campuses. For example, Stanford students have initiated a dialogue between student service and political groups on campus to achieve greater impact. Students have also advocated for their own civic engagement with state legislators' and governors' offices. These initiatives to nurture the policy and political engagement of students beyond community service can be found across the country, but they are not yet as widespread as either volunteer service or service-learning initiatives.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS. Truly engaged campuses have also found ways to honor the input and knowledge of the communities with which they are partnering and are deploying their resources strategically for maximum community

impact. Many campuses have created community advisory boards. Some, like Clark University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Spelman College, were instrumental in forming nonprofit community development agencies in which they participate without dominating. Others have added their resources and expertise to existing municipal redevelopment efforts, such as Bates College's role in the larger community of Lewiston/Auburn, Maine, through the community-based alliance LA Excels. Some institutions, including Yale University, have well-supported centers that work to ensure that campus resources are effectively deployed to meet the community's needs. Visible enabling mechanisms like these help the community know how to approach the campus for assistance. Such centers can also leverage campus resources such as hiring, purchasing, and construction contracting on behalf of local residents.

At the curricular level, well-developed community partnerships may involve bringing in compensated community instructors to co-teach. For example, at Providence College in Rhode Island, one history professor co-taught a course called Community Service in American Culture with the codirector of Amos House, a multiservice agency focusing on peace and justice. At San Francisco State University, a political science professor co-teaches a course called San Francisco Political Issues: Housing and Economic Development with the city's former deputy mayor and staff from several local agencies.

These kinds of deep community connections can have a powerful influence on both students and faculty, and even the institution itself. Faculty at Goucher College in Maryland note that a subtle institutional transformation occurs when faculty meet regularly with community partners and weave their perspective into the classroom. As one professor put it, "Instead of experiencing a 'split' between the mandates of the curriculum and 'extra-curricular commitments' that render one or the other marginal, students, faculty, and ultimately the institution itself re-envision academic expertise as a way to leverage our capacity to create change."¹⁸

Values

Finally, a fully realized change in an institution, according to Goodman and Dean, is reflected in the values that the institution holds and in the institution's willingness to measure its success in accordance with these values. In higher education, this stage is reflected in serious attention to the institution's mission and in assessment procedures designed to make the civic mission "count" in meaningful ways such as allocation of funds.

The mission statement of many (indeed, most) colleges includes a civic purpose. On most campuses, however, few staff, students, or faculty can cite the institutional mission. Campuses that are serious about realizing their civic mission undertake a conscious process to reexamine their mission and have widespread discussions about it on campus. One example is DePaul University, a large

Catholic institution in Chicago that has a strong commitment to its namesake's mission of serving the poor. (Saint Vincent de Paul was a French priest known for his work among the poor in the 1600s.) This commitment is evident in many ways. It is discussed in new staff and faculty orientations and posted prominently on the university's Web site. Most significantly, the mission is built into the university's strategic plans. These plans are widely discussed with the campus community and reported upon after implementation.

Another example is Portland State University, which has its mission—"Let Knowledge Serve the City"—carved into a bridge crossing a major downtown thoroughfare. Beyond this symbolic gesture, Portland State has evaluation systems for both faculty and students to help measure the extent of civic engagement on campus. Such measurements are important because one of the ways to determine whether the mission statement is actually a driving force is to examine whether a college assesses its own success on the basis of its values and mission.

Increasingly, engaged campuses are realizing this aim by identifying student outcomes that they hope to achieve. Hocking College, a two-year school in Ohio, requires eight "Success Skills" of all students who complete an associate's degree. The college measures these skills with pre- and post-testing, course evaluations, and other means. One of these skills is "community, cultural, and global awareness," including knowledge of social and political processes, civic rights and responsibilities, community needs, and other indicators.

As the engaged-campus movement has gained momentum, so has the practice of assessing campus engagement.¹⁹ The effort to measure civic outcomes for students and the campuses is taking place in a context in which American higher education is being urged to focus more attention on student outcomes rather than simply measuring inputs such as credit hours. Campuses are increasingly using a national survey of student engagement to assess how well the campus is actually achieving student learning.

Conclusion

American campuses offer a wealth of activities whose purpose is explicitly linked to building a democratic society. And despite prodigious resistance, evidence suggests that these activities are beginning to move from the margins toward the mainstream. In 1998, when Campus Compact first began using its Service-Learning Pyramid—a tool to measure the extent to which individual colleges and universities have institutionalized civic engagement—these activities were marginal on most campuses. More than two-thirds (68 percent) of the 578 Campus Compact member schools surveyed reported that they were at the bottom of the pyramid, with less than 10 percent of their faculty using service-learning. By 2002, the strata of the pyramid had begun to shift. Only 52 percent

of member schools (then 868, approximately one-quarter of all colleges and universities nationwide) remained at the bottom level of the pyramid, while those at the most advanced level (25 percent or more of faculty using service-learning) increased from 4 percent to 12 percent. The average number of service-learning courses per campus continues to climb, reaching thirty-seven in 2003.

Faculty engagement in service-learning is, of course, only one measure of civic engagement (although it may be the most difficult to achieve). The number of signatories of the "Presidents' Declaration" suggests that civic responsibility is being embraced by senior administration as well. Further, these activities are not occurring only at small colleges or religiously affiliated institutions. There is increasing activity from many of the most influential research-oriented campuses. In 1998 30 percent of research-intensive institutions (based on the Carnegie classification system) were Campus Compact members; by 2002, this number had risen to 61 percent.²⁰

Despite a waxing of interest in civic education, campuses have a long way to go before such activities become mainstream for most faculty members. Civic engagement remains a contested ideal. In 2003 Stanley Fish, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago, called into question the development of civic capacity in principle and in practice: "My main objection to moral and civic education in our colleges and universities is not that it is a bad idea (which it surely is), but that it's an unworkable idea."²¹

Fish's first assertion reflects the continued dominance of disciplinary aims over all other concerns, including societal ones. To the world beyond the ivied walls, however, academics who want students to breathe only the rarified air of disciplinary theory sound a bit like the two sociologists who came upon a man who had been set upon by thieves, beaten, and left unconscious at the side of the road. Turning to one another they exclaimed: "The man who did this needs our help!" The point of this old joke is not that efforts to understand the root causes of social ills are not valuable, but that we need to consider ways to address the community needs that are immediately before us.

The perceived distance between the work of the academy and the exigencies of daily life has, since the 1980s, spawned a veritable cottage industry of higher education critics. Misperceptions about the work of the academy have caused the traditional appeals for public support of higher education—which focused on its contribution to the public good—to lose their resonance. The fruits of this misunderstanding are visible in the unprecedented cuts now being made in public higher education. A number of states have even attempted to privatize the flagship public research universities, allowing them to raise their tuitions to reflect the value of their education if they will forgo or accept reduced public support.

Part of the problem is that members of the academy have done a poor job of informing external constituents (e.g., legislators, leaders in the corporate world,

taxpayers, the public at large) of the civic role they play, the knowledge they can bring to pressing issues of the day, and the impact of civic education on their students. Too much effort is put into trying to secure public funds without making a clear case about the public benefits of higher education beyond obtaining a job. Sustaining the future of the civic engagement movement in higher education will require giving it a much more public face.

Fish's second assertion, that civic education is "unworkable," points up the difficulty of measuring the impact of engagement efforts. The nascent research on service-learning and civic engagement clearly indicates that institutions can influence students' knowledge of politics and the systemic nature of social problems. Studies have shown that students who participate in service activities (even if it is required) grow to be more concerned about social issues, enjoy learning, and do at least as well in their nonservice courses as their nonparticipating peers. (That is, service work as an extracurricular activity is not a drain on their academic work.)²² Researchers are developing tools to measure the civic behaviors of college students. Longitudinal studies are needed to determine the impact on behavior after graduation.

What is clear is that students value civic work. Volunteerism by college students is increasing; one-third of all undergraduates are estimated to have participated in volunteer work in 2002-2003. In addition, a 2002 study shows that linking volunteerism to class discussion leads to deeper civic engagement by students:

Student volunteers who are encouraged to talk about their volunteer work in class are much more likely to stick with it. . . . This group is twice as likely to volunteer regularly as those who don't get the chance to talk about their experiences (64% vs. 30%, respectively). They are also much more likely than those without such discussions to work on a community problem (47% vs. 32%), to participate in a run, walk, or bike ride for charity (27% vs. 15%), or to influence someone's vote (50% vs. 34%). These findings remain valid even when a lot of other factors are taken into consideration.²³

Of course the decades of cynicism (including faculty cynicism), government bashing, and "dirty" politics have taken a large toll. Students are not, in the main, naturally sympathetic to the benefits of political participation. However, helping them understand that their action in the community is an expression of their political will may be a means of encouraging greater involvement.

Robert Maynard Hutchins, president of the University of Chicago during the 1930s, once observed: "The death of democracy is not likely to be an assassination from ambush. It will be a slow extinction from apathy, indifference and undernourishment." Higher education has a responsibility to help nourish civically engaged students. The work will be contested, the outcome may be uncer-

tain, but the imperative is clear. John Dewey, the great educator of the early twentieth century, sums it up best: "Democracy has to be born anew every generation, and education is its midwife."

Notes

1. The most prominent surveys were conducted by UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute. For a synopsis of trend data, see Astin, Alexander. "The Changing American College Student: Thirty-Year Trends, 1966-1996," *The Review of Higher Education*, 21(2), 1998, 115-135.
2. Clark Kerr, "Postscript 1982: The Uses of the University Two Decades Later," *Change* 14 (September/October 1982), 23-31.
3. Alvin W. Gouldner, "Cosmopolitan and Locals: Toward an Analysis of Latent Social Roles," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 2 (December 1957), 281-307.
4. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. "Digest of Education Statistics, 2002." Available at <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d02/tables/dt227.asp>.
5. Chait, "The 'Academic Revolution' Revisited," 273.
6. Tom Wolfe, "The Me Decade and the Third Awakening," in *Mauve Gloves & Madmen, Clutter & Vine* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976); Christopher Lasch, *Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: Norton, 1978).
7. Frank Newman, *Higher Education and the American Resurgence* (Princeton, N.J.: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1985).
8. Joseph Galura and Jeffrey Howard were the series editors for volumes 1-3 of PRAXIS (Ann Arbor, Mich.: OCSL Press, 1993-1995); these volumes on service-learning led to the establishment of the influential *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*.
9. Campus Compact, *Fundamentals of Service-Learning Course Construction* (Providence, R.I.: 2001) and *Introduction to Service-Learning Toolkit: Readings and Resources for Faculty*, 2nd ed. (Providence, R.I., 2003). More information can be found on Campus Compact's Web site at www.compact.org/.
10. Campus Compact, *2002 Annual Service Statistics* (Providence, R.I., 2003); "Programs That Really Work," *U.S. News & World Report*, America's Best Colleges 2003, September 23, 2002, 114.
11. See Bringle, Games, and Mallory, *Colleges and Universities as Citizens*, and Harry Boyte and Elizabeth Hollander, *Wingspread Declaration on the Civic Responsibilities of Research Universities* (Providence, R.I.: Campus Compact, 1999).
12. Campus Compact, "Presidents' Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education" (Providence, R.I., 2000), www.compact.org/presidential/declaration.html.
13. See for example Ehrlich, *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education*; Rosovsky, "No Ivory Tower"; and Robert Zemsky, "Have We Lost the 'Public' in Higher Education?" *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Chronicle Review, May 30, 2003, B7.

14. Peter D. Hart Research Associates, *New Leadership for a New Century: Key Findings from a Study on Youth, Leadership, and Community Service* (Milwaukee: Public Allies, 1998); National Association of Secretaries of State, *New Millennium Survey: American Youth Attitudes on Politics, Citizenship, Government and Voting* (Washington, D.C., 1999), www.stateofthevote.org/survey/index.htm; Scott Keeter et al., *The Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Generational Portrait* (College Park, Md.: Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, 2002).
15. Association of American Colleges and Universities. "Presidents' Campaign for the Advancement of Liberal Learning." Available at www.aacu-edu.org/CALL/CALLtext.cfm
16. Elizabeth Hollander, John Saltmarsh, and Edward Zlotkowski, "Indicators of Engagement," in *Learning to Serve: Promoting Civil Society through Service Learning*, edited by Maureen E. Kenny et al. (Boston: Kluwer, 2002).
17. Paul S. Goodman and James W. Dean, "Creating Long-term Organizational Change," in *Change in Organizations: New Perspectives on Theory, Research, and Practice*, edited by Paul S. Goodman (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1982).
18. Quoted in Burton et al., "Liberal Arts College Faculty Reflect on Service Learning," 162.
19. A seminal assessment tool is Gelmon et al., "Assessing Service-Learning and Civic Engagement."
20. Campus Compact, *2002 Annual Service Statistics*.
21. Stanley Fish, "Aim Low," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 16, 2003, A10.
22. Alexander W. Astin and Linda J. Sax, "How Undergraduates Are Affected by Service Participation," *Journal of College Student Development* 39, no. 3 (1998), 251-263.
23. Keeter et al., *The Civic and Political Health of the Nation*, 33.

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