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SINCE 1915

THE CONFOUNDING PROMISE OF COMMUNITY

Why It Matters More Than Ever for Student Success

The Need for Nuance
Two Ethicists on Teaching Students How to Disagree

Public Scholars
Why More Academics Should Write Op-Eds, Plus Editor Tips

THE CONFOUNDING PROMISE OF COMMUNITY
Why It Matters More Than Ever for Student Success

"At Rutgers University–Newark's Honors Living-Learning Community, we challenge the notion that our scholars are the exceptions or distinct from others in their home community. We believe that they possess unique knowledge and skill sets rooted in their backgrounds and that centering their identities and communities within our curriculum is crucial to our mission."

—Marta Elena Esquilin and Timothy K. Eatman
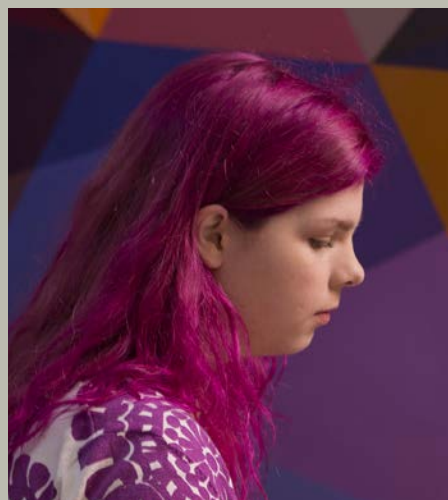
(Cover) Participants hold a candlelight vigil during a 2017 Take Back the Night event at California State University–Channel Islands.

Liberal Education

A S S O C I A T I O N   O F   A M E R I C A N   C O L L E G E S   A N D   U N I V E R S I T I E S

SINCE 1915

Game of Thrones and Educating for Democracy

At a time of increasing polarization in our nation, and indeed around the world, a monumental moment occurred in May when people all along the political spectrum came together to embark on a shared endeavor—to watch the finale of *Game of Thrones*. It turned out to be HBO's most-watched episode ever, garnering 19.3 million viewers, including replays and streams.[1] These record-breaking numbers materialized despite more than 1.6 million fans signing a petition on Change.org demanding a remake of Season 8 "with competent writers."[2] Since most of my knowledge of the series comes from the comedians Keegan-Michael Key and Jordan Peele's *Game of Thrones* recap sketch—dominated by the refrain "Kilt! Kilt! Kilt! Kilt!"—I was baffled when I read that some businesses had reportedly hired grief counselors to help their employees cope with their disappointment over the season and return to a focus on work.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I was, however, captivated by a scene in the final episode when members of the Great Council, charged with determining the future of the Seven Kingdoms, engage in a swift, wholesale repudiation of establishing a democracy. With the council devolving into laughter at the mere suggestion of letting all inhabitants choose the next leader of Westeros, one council member offers the rejoinder, "Maybe we should give the dogs a vote as well." Skepticism regarding the wisdom of democracy has long been a topic of philosophical treatises, from Plato's *Republic* to Ronald Dworkin's *Is Democracy Possible Here? Principles for a New Political Debate*. Dworkin's contemporary discourse confronts a particular challenge for democracies during periods of extreme polarization, when partisan divides reach the point at which we are no longer partners in self-government and "our politics are rather a form of war." He warns:

> Democracy can be healthy with no serious political argument if there is nevertheless a broad consensus about what is to be done. It can be healthy even if there is no consensus if it does have a culture of argument. But it cannot remain healthy with deep and bitter divisions and no real argument, because it then becomes only a tyranny of numbers.[3]

According to Dworkin, the full promise of democracy requires fomenting public debate or, alternatively, finding common ground even in the absence of consensus.

Since our nation's inception, institutions of higher education have been established with the goal of educating for democracy and preparing knowledgeable citizens and leaders. If colleges and universities are to develop the independent and critical thinkers necessary to ensure that democracy flourishes, we must reaffirm a

commitment to the civic mission of higher education. Doing so mandates the development of a deeper-level understanding across subject areas, connecting knowledge to experience and adopting a holistic approach to evidence-based problem solving that incorporates diverse, sometimes contradictory points of view as central to liberal education.

The ability to engage in and learn from experiences different from one's own and to understand how one's place in the world both informs and limits one's knowledge is essential to the crucial capacity to understand the interrelationships between multiple perspectives, including those that are personal, social, cultural, disciplinary, environmental, local, and global. This understanding is pivotal for bridging cultural divides and necessary for working collaboratively to achieve our shared objectives around solving the world's most pressing problems.

The authors in this issue provide a road map for promoting engaged civic learning across all types of institutions, in the classroom and beyond. In the process, they offer hope that higher education can and will play a crucial role in shaping a future grounded in social justice and in which democracy is more than the tyranny of numbers forecast in *Game of Thrones*.—LYNN PASQUERELLA

> **Since our nation's inception, institutions of higher education have been established with the goal of educating for democracy and preparing knowledgeable citizens and leaders. If colleges and universities are to develop the independent and critical thinkers necessary to ensure that democracy flourishes, we must reaffirm a commitment to the civic mission of higher education.**

NOTES

1. Nicole Lyn Pesce, "It's Official: The 'Game of Thrones' Finale Was HBO's Most-Watched Episode Ever," MarketWatch, May 20, 2019, https://www.marketwatch.com/story/its-official-the -game-of-thrones-finale-was-hbos-most-watched-episode-ever-2019-05-20.

2. Dylan D., "Remake Game of Thrones Season 8 with Competent Writers," Change.org, accessed May 29, 2019, https://www.change.org/p/hbo-remake-game-of-thrones-season-8-with -competent-writers.

3. Ronald Dworkin, *Is Democracy Possible Here? Principles for a New Political Debate* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006), 6.

A Confounding Promise

THIS ISSUE is not a collection of articles on how to teach community engagement. It is not a set of case studies. It is not about assessment. It tackles something less discussed but just as crucial: the fact that the often-complicated insights, confrontations, and sobering realities that characterize students' reactions to being part of a community create experiential highs and lows. In short, community engagement can be confounding.

Yet the evidence shows that the transformative effects of community engagement on student learning and development are significantly, and consistently, positive. Students' engagement in communities produces real opportunities for applying and integrating learning, for developing a sense of flourishing and self-efficacy, and for fostering a range of civic outcomes. Without question, community engagement remains one of the most promising experiences colleges and universities can offer.

If ever there has been a time to take on what community engagement means in all its complexities, it is now. The road to civil discourse, on and off campus, is increasingly obstructed by partisan divides. Ironically, as the world grows more diverse, the communities in which we find ourselves—online, in our neighborhoods, in our schools—are becoming ever more homogenous. The rapid diversification of American higher education within this broader context raises deep and uncomfortable questions about who makes up democracy and who has agency and voice within it. Accordingly, colleges and universities have the opportunity to consider how community-engaged experiences go beyond commitments to citizenship to address twenty-first-century commitments about equity.

FROM THE GUEST EDITOR

The essays in this issue tackle the complexity of community. *Who or what defines it? Who is included? Why does thinking equitably about student success need to be at the heart of it all?* Peter Levine of Tufts University looks back at the civil rights era and its prescient implications for today's student activism and success. Levine reminds us that to flourish is to find purpose, to experience sacrifice for a cause larger than your individual desires, and to share that with others. Colleagues from California State University–Channel Islands, Oxnard College, and Santa Barbara City College describe their collaboration to create a "college going" community that encourages underserved students in their region to seek a degree. Marta Elena Esquilin and Timothy K. Eatman discuss how they have upended the model for honors programs. At Rutgers University–Newark, they have turned the Honors Living-Learning Community into an inclusive, assets-based model focused on belonging, equity, and cultural wealth. Leeva C. Chung of the University of San Diego and her former student Daniel McArdle-Jaimes detail the value of alumni mentors as vital connectors within students' career and community networks. Finally, Jason Leggett of City University of New York Kingsborough Community College flips discussions about the role of technology and virtual communities by arguing that we've missed the point: technology doesn't create communities; *communities create technology*.

The articles in this issue take on the hard questions of community engagement, not because they have all the answers but because the opportunities that come from engagement are so important. It is our challenge to make sure that those opportunities are not just for the few who participate in service learning or study abroad but for all who walk our campuses and hope to change the world.

—ASHLEY FINLEY, AAC&U *senior advisor to the president and vice president of strategic planning and partnerships*

NEWS AND INFORMATION

AAC&U Welcomes New Communications VP

Former *Liberal Education* editor David Tritelli returns to AAC&U as the new vice president for communications and public affairs. Most recently, he served as director of AGB Press at the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. He has also served as an adjunct faculty member at the George Washington University, where he taught courses in English composition and literature. He serves on the editorial board of *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education: An International Journal of Theory, Research, and Practice* and formerly served on the board of directors of the Washington Internship Institute. He holds a BA from the University of Delaware and a PhD in English from the George Washington University.

Overheard at . . .

AAC&U's 2019 Diversity, Equity, and Student Success Conference: "Engaged Inclusivity: Perceptions, Realities, and Aspirations," held in March in Pittsburgh, reflected on how colleges and universities can make campuses more inclusive and improve the educational environment for all. Participants examined critical questions and offered inspiration for change. Here are a few speaker highlights:

"What are we willing to give up to be free? What are we willing to risk to have the higher education that we want?"—*Charles H. F. Davis III, University of Southern California*

"We need to create a climate and an environment in which there is an expectation that all voices will be heard and all voices will be respected."—*Lynn Pasquerella, AAC&U*

"Students should be considered institutional stakeholders just as much as members of the board of trustees are."—*Fernando Soriano, Chatham University undergraduate student*

"For ourselves, for our students, for the next generation of students—there are not domains in life where religious and secular diversity are not present. Just like any other global reality, we need to ask: What do students need to learn? What knowledge, skills, and attitudes should they develop?" —*Lisa Davidson, Interfaith Youth Core*

"The environment disables people by design. We have the opportunity to design something inclusive or exclusive. . . . I will always have this impairment, but I may or may not be disabled. That's determined by the environment."—*Amanda Kraus, University of Arizona*
—Emily Schuster

Upcoming Conferences

• October 17–19, 2019
Global Citizenship for Campus, Community, and Careers
San Antonio, TX

• November 7–9, 2019
Transforming STEM Higher Education
Chicago, IL

BY THE NUMBERS

AAC&U's VALUE Institute provides robust and actionable assessment evidence to help educators enhance student learning achievement, as well as develop reports for accountability and accreditation. Here's a snapshot of the 2018–19 season. Scoring begins in July.

7,000: Number of student artifacts and assignments sent for assessment

37: Number of two-year and four-year universities and colleges participating

450: Number of educators to receive training in the VALUE rubric approach. Select individuals will help score student work.

Interested in taking part? Email valueinstitute@aacu.org or visit www.aacu.org/VALUEInstitute. Registration for 2019–20 opens in October!
—Bethany Zimmerman

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PETER LEVINE

Another Time for Freedom?

Lessons from the civil rights era for today's campuses

THE SUMMER OF 1961 was the summer of the Freedom Rides. Interracial groups led by college students drew global attention as they traveled on intercity buses in the teeth of white-supremacist violence. The student leaders were torn between launching more such confrontational direct-action campaigns and registering millions of new voters. They met for tense debates at the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee and decided to do some of both.[1]

Martin Luther King Jr. spent most of that summer far from the action. He was on Martha's Vineyard, writing and preparing a philosophy course (from Plato to Nietzsche) that he planned to teach at his alma mater, Morehouse College.[2] He also wrote a *New York Times* essay about the student activists. Published on September 10, 1961, "The Time for Freedom Has Come" describes the enormous educational benefits of making sacrifices as part of mass, youth-led social movements that seek to transform the whole society.[3]

Movements like Black Lives Matter and climate activism do not merely advocate specific policies but attempt to fundamentally transform society.

Today, powerful youth-led social movements—Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, the campaigns against gun violence and climate change, and anti-abortion and other movements on the right—are again engaging substantial numbers of students. Although King would point to its educational value, this activism functions very differently from the operations of colleges and universities, which ought to strive for political impartiality, welcome diverse views on contested social issues, and protect the well-being of all students. Therefore, King's article invites us to ask: What is the appropriate role for higher education at a time of social activism?

The lessons of sacrifice

King's article is not about the civil rights movement as a whole, nor is it about the movement's issues and strategies. Instead, his subject is the "college-bred, Ivy-League clad, youthful, articulate, and resolute" students of what we now call Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), those "Negro collegian[s]" who have "created the sit-ins and Freedom Rides." He wants to tell the predominantly white and college-educated readers of the *New York Times* about the students he has met on the South's black college campuses.

PETER LEVINE *is the associate dean of academic affairs and Lincoln Filene Professor of Citizenship and Public Affairs in Tufts University's Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life. His most recent book is* We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For: The Promise of Civic Renewal in America *(Oxford University Press, 2013).*

(Top) Civil rights activists march through Chapel Hill, North Carolina, in 1964. (Bottom) In 2014, demonstrators protest the University of Michigan's lack of racial diversity and an admissions process they see as disadvantaging minority applicants.

In King's account, the student bodies of the HBCUs are *unified* in a political cause: "More than one college [has seen] the total student body involved in a walkout protest." Back in the 1930s, King writes, a whole campus might be "alive with social thought," but only a few students took action. By 1961, however, the "dynamism of both action and philosophical discussion" was universal. A youth movement that was both intellectual and activist had "engulfed the whole student body."

The students, King says, are ready to sacrifice: "Theirs is total commitment to this goal of equality and dignity. And for this achievement they are prepared to pay the costs—whatever they are—in suffering and hardship as long as may be necessary." He is "no longer surprised to meet attractive, stylishly dressed young girls whose charm and personality would grace a Junior Prom and to hear them declare in unmistakably sincere terms, 'Dr. King, I am ready to die if I must.'"

Sacrifice is a troubling term. Why should people who are already suffering injustice be the ones to sacrifice to remedy the situation? Shouldn't people with more power and status give something up? That is undoubtedly right, yet King and, before him, Mohandas K. Gandhi constantly called on their followers to sacrifice. Gandhi even defined *satyagraha*, or truth force (his basic concept), as "sacrifice of self."[4]

Being willing to renounce something of value in public for an explicit public reason is a powerful tool of persuasion, useful both for influencing wavering minds and for motivating one's own side. Because you bear the cost yourself, you are able to pay it—you don't need anyone else's resources. And because you absorb the suffering, you prevent a cycle of violence and revenge that almost never yields justice or peace. Nonviolence, King writes in his *Times* essay, "offers a unique weapon which, without firing a single bullet, disarms the adversary."

As political theorist Danielle Allen has argued, sacrifice is intrinsic to democracy. Even the act of voting requires a sacrifice of time. Whenever people vote, one side loses, giving up what they wanted in return for making a collective decision. Even a policy as routine as controlling inflation by tolerating a 5 percent unemployment rate means deliberately costing

millions of people the chance to work in the interest of collective prosperity.[5] So, sacrifice is inevitable and always inequitable.

But sacrifice for one's freedom and dignity can be its own reward. Gandhi held that "a life of sacrifice is the pinnacle of art and is full of true joy."[6] In the Indian independence movement, the prisons that held protesters were viewed as temples.[7] Similarly, King described the laborers and domestic workers who boycotted Montgomery buses, saying that "they knew why they walked, and the knowledge was evident in the way they carried themselves. And as I watched them, I knew that there is nothing more majestic than the determined courage of individuals willing to suffer and sacrifice for their freedom and dignity."[8]

One way to make a sacrifice rewarding is to do it with others. King emphasizes in his *Times* essay that *all* the students of an HBCU could face arrest. "It is not a solemn life, for all its seriousness," King observes.

Another way is to celebrate success. Although the unfinished work of the civil rights movement is all too evident today, King could state in 1961 that "the victories of the past two years have been spectacular and considerable."

King's essay also underscores the learning and personal growth that occurs as a result of one's "own direct sacrifice": "The forging of priceless qualities of character is taking place daily as a high moral goal is pursued. . . . The movement therefore gives to its participants a double education—academic learning from books and classes, and life's lessons from responsible participation in social action." He even quips that a way to produce a "more mature, educated American, to compete successfully with the young people of other lands," might be to imitate the experience of the civil rights movement, which is such an effective educator. Perhaps King hoped that prospective employers would look favorably on the graduates of black colleges who were deeply involved with the movement.

Self-sacrificial political action has never vanished, but it has recently become much more common for American youth and college students. In the fall of 2018, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at Tufts University's Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life found that 22 percent of current, full-time college students had recently engaged in protests or other forms of offline activism.[9] To walk in a

Being willing to renounce something of value in public for an explicit public reason is a powerful tool of persuasion, useful both for influencing wavering minds and for motivating one's own side.

march is not a huge sacrifice, but it is at least a modest one, and some students have been arrested, abused online, or—as in Charlottes-ville in August 2017—even killed as part of social movements.

When movements meet institutions

In the model of civic action that King de-scribes, college students plug into national social movements that have leaders and orga-

nizations outside higher education. The stu-dents' involvement is youth-driven: students recruit other students to participate. Recent research finds that recruitment often precedes commitment. People participate because a peer asks them to, and then they gain their ideals and strategies from the movement. For in-stance, sociologist Ziad Munson has found that many anti-abortion protesters do not start with strong opinions on the issue but are recruited into activist networks from which they derive their anti-abortion views.[10]

Like most participants in social movements, the students King describes in the *Times* essay have transformational goals. They do not aim to modify the policies and practices of existing institutions—such as their own colleges—but to rebuild or reconstitute the whole society. Student activists, King writes, are "seeking to

save the soul of America. . . . One day historians will record this student movement as one of the most significant epics of our heritage." Today, movements like Black Lives Matter and climate activism do not merely advocate specific policies but attempt to fundamentally transform society, from white supremacy to racial equity, or from carbon-dependence to global sustainability.

By contrast, colleges and universities—including the HBCUs of 1961—are *institutions*. As such, they are inevitably led by people who have extensive experience, who must therefore be older. Institutions can encourage youth voice and can change as a result of social movements. For instance, a range of curricular and policy reforms that promote greater racial equity and

diversity can be traced back to the civil rights movement. But institutions will predictably resist more radical transformations. They are not movements; they are targets of movements.

The tension between movements and insti-tutions is inevitable, but higher education has a particular commitment to ideological plural-ism and debate. Although pure neutrality is impossible and a misleading ideal, colleges and

(Left) Police arrest a civil rights activist during a 1963 demon-stration in Brooklyn, New York. (Right) A Black Lives Matter activist protests the recent shooting deaths of several unarmed black men by police at a 2014 march in Washington, DC.

universities must demonstrate a reasonable degree of impartiality about the contested issues of the day. As academic institutions, they value reflection and "organized skepticism."[11]

When today's colleges and universities go beyond classroom teaching to offer experiential civic education, a typical model involves supporting students to choose and define their own issues and to develop and implement plans of action—not signing them up for specific social movements that will demand sacrifice. Often, an institution's recruitment takes the form of a general invitation to civic engagement, civic learning, or dialogue, not a call to join a movement.

Discourse and care

At no point in his 1961 article does King mention any role for college educators in the social movement. Perhaps he thought of a college as a place to learn challenging ideas from people who held advanced knowledge. As a Morehouse undergraduate, King learned about Gandhi from his faculty mentor, Benjamin Mays, who had traveled to India to meet Gandhi in 1936.[12] When King returned to Morehouse in the early 1960s to teach, he saw his job as leading a seminar on texts from the history of philosophy.

Social movement activists must take care of themselves—must heal, rest, reflect.

Although King does not offer guidance for colleges in a time of social movement politics, institutions can play important roles.

First, higher education should promote free and critical discussion. That means not only protecting freedom of speech but endorsing, teaching, and modeling skills and habits of vigorous discussion and openness to diverse views. Vibrant discussion does not always come naturally to social movements, which often draw people of like mind. However, research on social movements shows that they are more likely to succeed when they encompass a variety of perspectives and beliefs and promote robust internal discussions within their own "free spaces," such as the churches and union halls in the civil rights movement and the consciousness-raising circles in the women's movement.[13] Movements that tolerate narrow ranges of views typically fail. Colleges and universities are particularly well designed to teach and encourage open discussion within all settings, including social movements.

As Tufts University's Nancy Thomas and Adam Gismondi advise in *Inside Higher Ed*, "Study, deliberate, study: don't let students go down some rabbit hole of alternative facts or myopic analysis. Insist that students answer questions, like what do we know about this issue? Is what we know reliable? How will we fill knowledge gaps? And most importantly, what are all of the perspectives on this issue, including unpopular ones unrepresented in this group?"[14]

Second, we know that social movement activists must take care of themselves—must heal, rest, reflect, and practice what Jesuits call *cura personalis* (care for the entire person). A cofounder of Black Lives Matter, Alicia Garza, describes the importance of attending to her "emotional and mental health as if it is food, or water, or air." As she writes for *Complex*, "If I am not committed to my own well-being, I worry that I will find that deep place, fall in, and not be able to emerge again."[15]

Supporting students in self-care is an appropriate role for higher education. Thomas and her colleagues at Tisch College have found that academic institutions enhance civic participation better when they work on "social cohesion," meaning a "sense of shared responsibility" for other people and the institution, and a "culture of caring" that works "across differences of social identity and political ideology." That means offering students well-being programs and supporting, training, and setting expectations for staff as they interact with students—including commuter and nontraditional students—outside the classroom.[16]

A professor who leads our Social-Emotional Learning and Civic Engagement (SEL-CE) initiative at Tisch College and three students in the initiative have written that discussion and civic action inevitably create "dissonance and discomfort" if students have diverse backgrounds, identities, and opinions. Dissonance is a good thing, but it requires attention to the "social-emotional dimensions of teaching [and] learning."[17]

By no means are all students drawn to all social movements. In the CIRCLE poll, 78 percent of current college students reported that they had not participated in a protest.[18] (And to engage in one protest does not make you a participant in a social movement.) Educators should be attentive to the social, emotional, and civic-learning needs of their students who are uninvolved as well as those who are making sacrifices for social causes.

Not long after major and sustained unrest had occurred in the neighboring city of Ferguson,

I visited the University of Missouri–St. Louis. The campus was a place of physical safety and emotional support for many of the students who had participated in the Ferguson protests. It was also a place for learning. Students, for instance, organized a day of silence, during which, as an act of protest, they did not speak at all. At the end of the day, however, students spoke at an open mic about "issues that typically silence others."[19]

Students are, and should be, drawn into public life through social movements. But college educators have appropriate roles to play. We can start by recognizing that many of our students are learning and growing by making sacrifices in social movement politics. That represents both a danger to those students and a potential basis for their ability to flourish. Without endorsing any particular movement, we can strive to make the experience of social activism as beneficial and educational as possible for those most involved, while also providing alternative forms of engagement for those who choose not to participate. ⬛

NOTES

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5. Danielle S. Allen, *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since* Brown v. Board of Education (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 41.

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14. Nancy Thomas and Adam Gismondi, "A New Era of Student Unrest?," *Inside Higher Ed*, February 7, 2017, https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2017/02/07/do-recent-student-demonstrations-signal-new-trend-activism-essay.

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16. Nancy Thomas and Margaret Brower, "Promising Practices to Facilitate Politically Robust Campus Climates," *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* 50, no. 6 (2018) 25–26.

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MARTA ELENA ESQUILIN AND TIMOTHY K. EATMAN

Cultivating Publicly

Rutgers University–Newark is revolutionizing honors and leveraging local talent

GABRIELLE VERA *is a member of the 2017 Honors Living-Learning Cohort and will spend the fall term of her junior year in a study abroad program at Oxford Brookes University in the United Kingdom.*

But a few years ago, Gabrielle would not have embraced the idea that she is a scholar. Feeling as if the system couldn't address her learning needs, she dropped out of high school at age sixteen. But Gabrielle, a resilient fourth-generation Newarker, went on to earn her GED and complete other tests to receive college credits. In 2017, she was admitted to the Honors Living-Learning Community (HLLC) at Rutgers University–Newark. Now a junior who is even more in touch with her brilliance, Gabrielle has demonstrated consistent academic success, particularly in political science. In 2018, she received a coveted spot at the Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars in Washington, DC, and interned with Kalik & Associates as a political consultant for members of Congress. Her intelligence, drive, and passion for social justice made her an ideal candidate for the HLLC; however, many of these qualities would not have been evident if the HLLC relied solely on traditional metrics for admission. Gabrielle's story is representative of many of her fellow scholars who are part of the HLLC, an initiative that is expanding traditional

Why do we continue to overlook brilliant young people from under-resourced communities? How do we identify the next generation of thought leaders?

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notions of honors and transforming the Rutgers–Newark community.

A liberal education should prepare critically thinking, engaged citizens to participate actively in our democracy, and honors colleges are positioned to cultivate some of the most promising scholars and leaders. However, an unfortunate dearth of diversity exists within honors programs, which consistently have low enrollment among students of color and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.[1]

This reality raises larger structural and programmatic questions: Why do we continue to overlook brilliant young people from under-resourced communities? How do we identify the next generation of thought leaders? What skills will they need to effect social change? Will we miss them by primarily relying on standardized test scores to determine who gets a seat at the honors table?

"Revolutionizing Honors, Cultivating Talent, Engaging Communities" has become a mantra for our efforts to build the HLLC. Established under the leadership of Chancellor Nancy Cantor in 2015, the HLLC promotes academic excellence, community engagement, and social equity. It seeks to eradicate structural barriers while critiquing deficit-based ideologies that fail to recognize the talent, academic potential, and intellectual abilities of scholars from under-resourced communities. Soon to be housed in a new, state-of-the-art academic and residential building, the HLLC is an expansion of Rutgers' Honors Enterprise, which provides merit scholarships for room and board and challenges scholars with an eighteen-credit curriculum focused on social justice. It can also be understood as a place-based initiative within the city of Newark, New Jersey, and as a community partnership of shared resources and mutually beneficial work and scholarship focused on the public good. As

Engaged Scholars

Marta Elena Esquilin, associate dean of the Honors Living-Learning Community (HLLC), with HLLC scholars at Rutgers University–Newark

Cantor has articulated, the university's mission centers on not simply being in Newark but being of Newark.[2]

Cultivating community

As one of the oldest and largest industrial hubs in New Jersey, Newark welcomed many new residents during the Great Migration, including Gabrielle's family, who came from Puerto Rico and Cuba via Miami, moving to Newark's Central Ward in the early 1950s. Like countless other migrants, they left their homes after World War II in search of affordable housing and employment within Newark's growing industries.[3] Sixty years later, the city continues to be a destination for immigrants in search of opportunity. Newark's current population is 50.1 percent black, 36.4 percent Hispanic, and 10.7 percent white, with 47.2 percent of the population speaking non-English languages—most commonly Spanish and certain Indo-European languages.[4] Similar to other US urban centers, Newark has considerable educational and racial/ethnic inequities. In 2018, district-wide, 75.7 percent of Newark public high school students graduated, compared to 90.9 percent of students statewide.[5] In 2017, 14 percent of Newark residents who were twenty-five years of age or older had attained a bachelor's degree or higher; the statewide average was 38 percent.[6]

Rutgers–Newark has partnered with Mayor Ras Baraka and the City of Newark to expand college opportunities for academically promising Newark residents like Gabrielle. As a result, over the past five years, the university's enrollment of Newark residents has increased by 80 percent. The HLLC expressly identifies local talent that has been overlooked for too long. One-third of HLLC scholars are transfer students from local community colleges, two-thirds are from Newark or Greater Newark, and—consistent with the city's racial demographics—approximately 80 percent of HLLC scholars identify as black or Latinx. More than 65 percent of these scholars are eligible for Pell Grants, and almost 50 percent are first-generation college students.

In order to realize the HLLC's larger goals—and to account for the challenges and opportunities our scholars experience, including institutional barriers that affect the retention of first-generation and underrepresented students—we have committed to advancing our community in nuanced, deliberate, and regionally specific ways. To this end, we've implemented a model for student success and community engagement that has several implications for practice—including holistic admissions, inclusive and community-engagement classrooms, and comprehensive infrastructures for mentoring and support. We seek to create an environment in which

- we recognize the distinct assets, knowledge, and abilities that HLLC scholars bring to Rutgers–Newark;
- HLLC faculty and administrators make scholars' experiences central to the curriculum, which we see as critical for their academic success;
- we develop infrastructures (mentoring, advisement, leadership opportunities) that help us identify and cultivate scholars' unique strengths, talents, and skill sets; and
- we create concepts of community both within and outside the university that contribute to our broader vision of graduating innovative change makers to help solve local and global issues.

Holistic admissions

The first implication for practice relates to developing a more holistic admissions process to assess HLLC candidates' academic potential, abilities, and intellect. We designed a rubric that evaluates applicants along a range of spectra: critical-thinking abilities, social and emotional intelligence, leadership skills, academic skills, artistic and intellectual abilities, resiliency, passion for social change, and the ability to engage in challenging dialogue across difference.

We also host a series of individual and large-group interviews of up to two hundred prospective scholars. The individual interviews allow evaluators to take a deep dive into an applicant's academic transcript and personal story. During the group interviews, applicants participate in activities aimed at assessing their interaction in communities, their critical-thinking abilities, and their orientation toward social justice. These activities connect applicants and help us gauge their collaborative effort. To further underscore the importance of community partnership, a diverse cross section of faculty, staff, and community educators help evaluate candidates and foster a deep investment in our scholars.

When Ryan Smith, now an HLLC junior, applied to the program, he was excited to

> **Over the past five years, the university's enrollment of Newark residents has increased by 80 percent. The HLLC expressly identifies local talent that has been overlooked for too long.**

During the HLLC's holistic admissions process, prospective students visit the center to learn more about the program and to participate in group activities that assess their interaction in communities, critical-thinking abilities, and orientation toward social justice.

participate in community-building activities with other candidates from a diverse array of backgrounds—a change from the segregated school system he was used to attending. The large-group interview made him realize that an HLLC education would involve more than studying from books—it would also entail meeting people, listening to different points of view, and learning through dialogue. He came out of the admissions process with the view that the HLLC would help him build a purposeful life. "It really hit home that this was the place I wanted to be," he says. "We all had different philosophies, but they were equitably shared, and everyone's voice was heard. It was the first time I realized that change would take more than just intellect but that I could learn the actual steps needed to make change."

Cultural histories

The second implication for practice—and perhaps one of the most challenging aspects of the HLLC's work—focuses on implementing community-resource models to cultivate the talent of scholars from groups that have been historically disenfranchised. More specifically, we assess ways in which we might leverage the strengths and resources that our scholars already possess to further thought leadership skills. This is particularly important for students who have internalized the negative belief that they are not as intelligent or academically capable as students from more privileged backgrounds, also known as "impostor syndrome."[7] Strengths-based perspectives assume

that every individual possesses resources that can be mobilized toward success in many areas of life,[8] an approach characterized by "efforts to label what is right" within people and organizations.[9]

Since many HLLC scholars have never been taught about their own cultural histories or their community's contributions to our society, the HLLC initially focuses on communities of origin to ignite and then expand scholars' academic interests. All of our courses involve engagement with Newark-based organizations and institutions, and scholars learn about their community's rich history and develop pride for their hometown. This past semester, scholars studied environmental justice issues through a partnership between Rutgers–Newark's Arts, Culture, and Media Department and the Ironbound Community Corporation, located in Newark's Ironbound District. The course explored how toxic waste has affected the neighborhood and how residents have mobilized around the issue.

For another course, "Local Citizenship in a Global World," scholars learned about Newark's history. One student, a first-year scholar at the time, described her astonishment at realizing how little she knew of the city's history even though she'd lived there her entire life. Understanding the area's past helped her transform feelings of shame about her community into feelings of respect. She had internalized the negative labels associated with the city, defined by crime and poverty. Her new-found pride resonated throughout her experience with the HLLC and allowed her to view herself as an

HLLC scholars take courses together and live in the same building, creating a community that enhances the learning process as class discussions carry over into residential spaces.

agent of change committed to Newark's promise. A marketing major, she has since used her passion for increasing visibility of the arts in Newark to help launch innovative arts and music outlets that celebrate local talent.

Our work also confronts the deficit-based ideology that students from under-resourced communities lack the intellectual abilities or skills to be successful in college. Too often, students who benefited from programs aimed at increasing access to higher education for those from historically underrepresented communities have had to navigate challenging campus dynamics. Such students are labeled as low-income, minority, or nontraditional, and because of their successes are viewed as exceptional. This exceptionalism fails to consider that entire cities are full of individuals with the same potential.

Describing the effect of comments that relegate him to being "nontraditional" and a "poor minority," Ryan says, "I am constantly being told how special, even lucky, I am that I was the 'one' who somehow escaped the horror of my community to become 'somebody'—that I've made it despite my upbringing, not because of it."

What do phrases such as *at-risk*, *defying the odds*, and *poor minority* say about scholars like Ryan and imply about their potential? How do these scholars assert their own narratives, have

We believe that our scholars possess unique knowledge and skill sets rooted in their backgrounds and that centering their identities and communities within our curriculum is crucial to our mission.

pride in where they come from, succeed in the university environment, and leverage their experiences to optimally impact social change? At the HLLC, we challenge the notion that our scholars are the exceptions or distinct from others in their home community. We believe that our scholars possess unique knowledge and skill sets rooted in their backgrounds and that centering their identities and communities within our curriculum is crucial to our mission.

Core values

The third implication for practice is the importance of intergenerational learning communities and mentoring in supporting student success. Our scholars range in age from eighteen to sixty-five. They may have just finished high school or community college, or they may have spent years out of school. All scholars live in shared residential suites and work with mentors— more senior HLLC scholars and faculty who advise cohorts of ten to fifteen students. Cohorts meet twice a month during scholars' first year and discuss topics—such as navigating personal family dynamics and time management— aimed at helping them succeed in the college environment.

The HLLC has a family mind-set, Ryan explains. "We call each other brother and sister, and this has meaning that we take very seriously," he says. "Everything we can do to help each other, whether other students need help studying or food from the food pantry on campus, we are going to do what is necessary to support

each other's success. I've never been part of anything else like this."

HLLC faculty and staff meet regularly to address pedagogical questions and strategies for assisting scholars. These strategies include engaging in critical discourse, supporting individuals at different skill levels in the same class, incorporating technology in teaching, and sharing best practices for educating in diverse settings. Additionally, first-year HLLC scholars take three core courses together in smaller sections of twenty students. These courses focus on intensive writing, local histories, social justice frameworks, and cultural competence, as well as dialogue and advocacy skills. Scholars in the HLLC also connect through academic communities, identity-based discussions, career development communities, arts spaces, community events, and monthly meetings. The HLLC Student Council, for instance, was started in order to support leadership development, while the men's, women's, and LGBTQ+ groups support identity development. Scholars have also created premedical and STEM study groups, as well as the Healing Sounds of Newark—a community performing arts space hosted by HLLC scholars at our campus jazz club, which was named after the late Newark historian and beloved community member Clement Price.

Purpose and confidence

For scholars like Gabrielle and Ryan, being a part of the HLLC has been transformative. Ryan has served as a teaching assistant for the HLLC's first-year courses, coteaching the same curriculum from which he learned so much during his first semester. He now aims to pursue a career in the academy. "I plan to be an academic," he says. "Being in front of the classroom is what I want to do with my life."

The accessibility and support of HLLC deans have been crucial to Gabrielle's achievements and ability to navigate the university, particularly since she is a first-generation college student. Taking classes as well as living in the same building as other HLLC scholars has also enhanced her learning process, because, she says, "Our conversations always bleed out of the classrooms and into our residential spaces." One of Gabrielle's favorite HLLC courses has been "Representing Cuba," which she says challenged her to "step back from my personal bias and narrative and learn about my history through a different lens."

When Gabrielle interned in DC, she felt prepared to handle the challenges of working at a political consulting firm in an environment lacking diversity. The HLLC, she says, "equipped me with the skills to navigate really challenging conversations in DC about politics and identity when I was one of the only students of color there."

The HLLC has become a hub for academic and civic innovation, helping reframe honors programs as inclusive models for equity and student success. Through this program, Rutgers–Newark has fulfilled its mission as an anchor institution by giving us all, students and faculty alike, the extraordinary opportunity to explore what it means to be citizen scholars and leaders, on and off campus. [LE]

NOTES

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AMANDA QUINTERO, GEOFFREY BUHL,
MICHELLE PAJKA HASENDONCKX,
CAROLYN INOUYE, AND JOSHUA RAMIREZ

Ventura beyond the Campus

Outreach propels CSU–Channel Islands' work to promote a college-going community

THE 1.2 MILLION ACRES that make up Ventura County, California, run along forty-two miles of coastline in the west and stretch north and east to the mountains of the Los Padres National Forest, where the elevation rises to 8,831 feet at Mount Pinos.[1] It then plunges south to the valley farmland that makes the county a leading agricultural producer. Ventura's population of around 851,000[2]—the eleventh largest of the state's fifty-eight counties—is 42.9 percent Hispanic and 7.8 percent Asian.[3] Naval Base Ventura County at Point Mugu is the area's largest employer, followed by the county government and the Port of Hueneme, California's only deep-water port between Los Angeles and San Francisco.[4]

> We must get out into the community to find prospective students who might not see college as part of their plans but who are capable of attaining a four-year degree.

This is the region that California State University–Channel Islands (CSUCI) was founded to educate and enhance. Plans to build CSUCI began in 1965 when the state passed a bill calling for the establishment of a four-year

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public university in Ventura County. But with no resources or land on which to build, it took nearly four decades and support from the county's residents to make the case for converting the former Camarillo State Hospital into a university rather than into a prison.

In 2002, with 629 transfer students, CSUCI opened its doors in the city of Camarillo and became the youngest of the twenty-three campuses in the California State University (CSU) system and the only public four-year university in the county. The first freshman class of five hundred students enrolled in 2003, and the university chose red and silver as its colors: red for the strawberries grown in the area and silver for the dolphin, selected as the mascot for its sacredness to the local Chumash tribe.

Today, the campus of 1930s Spanish and Mission–style architecture has around 7,100 students and is truly local-serving: 52 percent of all students enrolled in fall 2018 were from Ventura County, 26 percent came from neighboring Los Angeles County, and most other students hailed from other nearby counties. The composition of the student body also closely matches the demographics of Ventura County's college-age population, with 52 percent of CSUCI students identifying as Hispanic or Latinx in fall 2018, 28 percent identifying as white, 6 percent identifying as Asian, and 2 percent identifying as black.[5] Designated a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) in 2010, CSUCI continues to invest in supporting a college-going community. The University Culture program, for instance, provides high school and community college students with information about attending a four-year university. The program focuses on developing the talent of the youth whose parents saw that building a
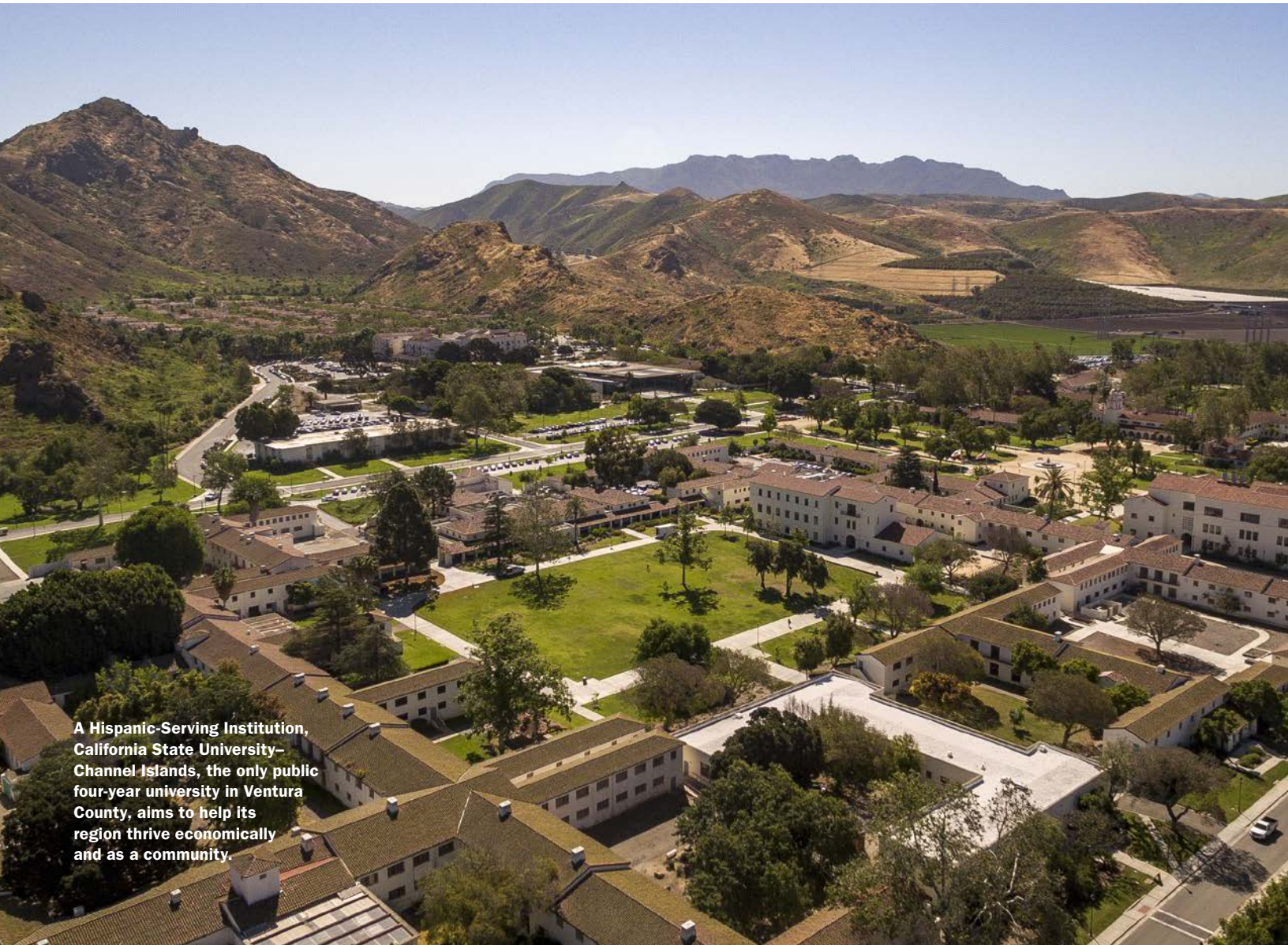
A Hispanic-Serving Institution, California State University–Channel Islands, the only public four-year university in Ventura County, aims to help its region thrive economically and as a community.

state university—instead of a state prison—would be liberating for their region by providing a path to higher education for thousands of students, many of whom would be the first in their families to obtain a baccalaureate degree.[6]

California's degree deficit

CSUCI's relationship to the local area and its residents is about more than classroom instruction. It's also about helping the region thrive economically and as a community. But if college attendance rates do not increase, one million fewer college graduates will enter California's workforce in 2025, leading to a degree deficit.[7] California's future economic prosperity depends on a supply of diverse, college-educated workers from groups that have been historically underserved by higher education.

If college attendance rates do not increase, one million fewer college graduates will enter California's workforce in 2025, leading to a degree deficit.

Adding some 500,000 new college graduates to the state's population would reduce the anticipated degree deficit by about half. One way to achieve this is for the CSU system to improve the overall four-year graduation rate by 21 percent and the six-year graduation rate by 18 percent, while partnering with the California Community Colleges to realize a 20 percent increase in transfer rates by 2025.[8] With an eye toward this goal, CSU launched Graduation Initiative 2025, calling on all twenty-three campuses to reduce the time to degree completion, eliminate student achievement gaps, and ensure that every student has access to the tools, resources, and guidance needed to achieve.

But merely lowering the time to degree completion will not be enough to narrow California's degree deficit. The state's institutions of higher education must also shift practices to serve the increasing number of students who have evolved beyond the traditional student profile. These post-traditional students include the growing Latinx population, as well as low-income students, first-generation college students, adult learners, full-time employees, commuter students, and working parents.[9] The access-retention-success model designed for traditional students is passive and has always been a poor fit for open-access institutions like those in the CSU system and the California Community Colleges, which enroll increasingly diverse student populations.

As an open-access institution, CSUCI accepts all applicants who meet the requirements for admission. Therefore, our responsibility for supporting students from historically underserved groups must go beyond access and retention. We must reimagine our model for student success, one that embraces equitable outcomes for all students and reflects our mission and HSI identity, commitment to serving the region, and responsibility for dismantling institutional structures that create barriers for post-traditional students.

The community college connection

CSUCI has embraced an outreach-engagement-equity model to construct a different student experience, one that serves the growing numbers of post-traditional students and will lead to bridging the degree deficit. We must get out into the community to find prospective students who might not see college as part of their plans but who are capable of attaining a four-year degree.

Through Project ALAS (Aligning Learning and Academic Success), CSUCI, two-year HSIs, and other regional community colleges are working together to improve practice, curricula, and policies that support students as they transfer to four-year institutions and complete their undergraduate education. For many students in our region, the journey to earning a university degree is not a straight pathway through a single community college. Students often attend two or more community colleges before transferring, and some continue taking community college courses while enrolled at a four-year institution.

As part of the ALAS partnership, CSUCI hosts an annual Transfer Success Student Academy, inviting community college students to spend a day at CSUCI with faculty, staff, and peer mentors (former community college students). Sessions include discussions on financial aid and transfer preparedness and faculty-led roundtables offering insight on majors and career preparation. Both university and community college faculty offer guidance on course selection. Transfer students meet CSUCI peer mentors and get a chance to become familiar with the campus and the transfer process.

Academy participants also interact with other community college students from across the region. Students from Oxnard College, for instance, begin to realize that students from Santa Barbara City College have similar questions and concerns about transferring to a university.

"I really enjoyed the different workshops that were available," says one community college

student who participated in the academy. "I learned a lot from the peers who were teaching about differences between [community] college and university, and about student life on campus."

CSUCI is less than ten miles from Oxnard College, yet many students there do not explore CSUCI on their own. Project ALAS, however, has helped excite students about the possibilities that transferring to CSUCI can offer, while ensuring that they have information and support for navigating the process. Oxnard College now needs a bus to accommodate all its ALAS academy participants.

A shared responsibility

As HSIs with a commitment to student success and equity, CSUCI and community colleges in Ventura County share students and a common purpose. We coordinate outreach efforts to increase transfer preparedness, including shared undergraduate research opportunities that expose students to high-impact teaching and learning practices regardless of when they start down the path to a four-year degree. With multiple avenues for student engagement, we can better align practices and curricula at CSUCI and regional community colleges. These efforts prompted *Money* magazine to rate CSUCI fourth in the nation for best colleges for transfer student success.[10] CSUCI and community college partners call this work "aligning to one degree," which recognizes that, together, both the two-year and four-year systems can provide the coursework upon which the baccalaureate degree is awarded.

In support of this alignment philosophy, the ALAS partners created a cross-institutional professional learning community, Regional Transfer Success (RTS) Fellows. The program brings together faculty from regional community

During the Farmworker Immersion Project, students learned about farmworker rights and immigration issues and gained firsthand experience of working on a farm.

(Right) Student activists campaigned for the Oxnard Union High School District to implement an ethnic studies graduation requirement. They celebrated when the district unanimously passed a resolution supporting the requirement.

Many local students are the first in their families to pursue a college education, and they live in communities where access to college resources is limited, with particularly few resources available for Spanish-speaking families.

At the 2018 Regional Transfer Success Summit, Luis Ponjuan, associate professor at Texas A&M University, spoke about the educational crisis facing men of color.

colleges and CSUCI for a year to identify curricular, programmatic, or policy changes to institutional structures and practices to improve the transition from a community college to the first year at a university. One group of RTS fellows was made up of CSUCI academic advisors and community college counseling faculty members. Santa Barbara City College and Oxnard College counselors uncovered a core issue: a large number of CSUCI transfer students were returning to their community colleges to receive advising on course selection. This insight informed the redesign of the CSUCI transfer-student orientation so that participants now leave with a first-semester class schedule. CSUCI also created a transfer boot camp, during which participants learn about technological tools, various campus resource centers, career services, and graduate studies services. In addition, transfer students now review academic expectations with faculty advisors, learn about the availability of emergency funds and food security issues, and meet with peer mentors (former community college students) who are pursuing similar majors and career pathways.

To amplify the power of these cross-institutional networks and expand the community beyond the RTS fellows, the ALAS partners created the annual Regional Transfer Success Summit. Open to all area community college and CSUCI faculty, staff, and administrators, as well as P–12 educators, the summit highlights RTS fellows' innovations for improving the experience of the region's transfer students.

One example of this work is the annual Communication Studies Articulation Summit, at which CSUCI and community college communication faculty members align upper- and lower-division coursework. This ensures that upon transfer to CSUCI, communication majors will be "true juniors"—meaning they will have only upper-division coursework remaining, significantly reducing time to degree completion. The Regional Transfer Success Summit is the only event at which the presidents of Ventura County's four public postsecondary institutions, all of which are HSIs, come together to discuss our institutions' shared responsibility in ensuring students obtain their degrees.

Culturally responsive

Creating a college-going culture in our region is a culturally responsive student success strategy. Many local students are the first in their families to pursue a college education, and they live in communities where access to college resources is limited, with particularly few resources available for Spanish-speaking families. Through the RTS Fellows program, CSUCI convened Chicana/o studies faculty members from the region's HSIs. Over the past three years, these faculty members met regularly, identified the role of community engagement as critical to fostering Latinx student success, and, as a result, conceived the first Chicana/o Studies Summit of Ventura County, which Oxnard College hosted in 2017.

At the inaugural summit, "Connecting the Community to the University with Self-Determination," the region's teachers, faculty, community members, and school district representatives were invited to create a Chicana/o Studies Disciplinary Council. The aim was to

unify our efforts to build culturally relevant curricula and pathways from local high schools and regional community colleges to CSUCI.

Building on this momentum, the second annual summit, "Call to Action: The Development of Chicana/o Studies G-22 (Gestation to Graduate School)," brought together 167 faculty, staff, administrators, students, and community members to examine educational inequities in the P–20 pipeline. Attendees identified a lack of culturally relevant curricula in regional high schools, where Hispanic or Latinx student enrollment is more than 76 percent.[11] Students participating in the summit voiced their concerns about not seeing successful Latinx role models represented throughout the high school experience and curriculum, specifically through the use of Latinx-authored books that portray Latinx history and culture as assets to society.

To sustain economic prosperity in California, we must inspire our young-adult Latinx population to graduate from high school, attend college, and, most important, obtain a four-year degree. The work and concerns raised at the second summit led educators to join with college and high school students in campaigning for the Oxnard Union High School District (OUHSD) to implement an ethnic studies graduation requirement. On May 16, 2018, the OUHSD Board of Trustees unanimously passed a joint resolution supporting the requirement.

"Ethnic studies not only increases students' self-worth through cultural affirmation but it also inspires students to do more for their community by exposing them to social injustices and offering potential interventions," says OUHSD alumnus Martín Alberto Gonzalez.

This victory demonstrates how much we can accomplish by working with our community and collaborating with prospective students and their families as educational advocates. In addition, organizing the annual Chicana/o Studies Summit inspired Ventura College to host its own summit in spring 2018 on increasing faculty diversity. In 2019, Santa Barbara City College and Oxnard College also held Chicana/o studies summits. The partnerships and work through Project ALAS have ignited a growing regional movement, showing how we can truly serve our community both on campus and off.

"Communities should be reflected in the history that is taught," says Isa Sapo, a 2018 graduate of Oxnard High School and now a student at the University of California–Santa Cruz. "Showing young adults an academic perspective of their community and the people who come from it can have a strong positive influence on their choices of what to do after high school." LE

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The Real World

Community engagement meets

LEEVA C. CHUNG AND

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THE GREATEST CHALLENGE as we strive toward excellence in teaching and student success is creating an environment in which anything is possible, for all students regardless of their background, demographic characteristics, or path to college. Conceptual understanding for any student begins with undergoing an experience, and having a memorable experience prompts the cycle of learning. Theoretically, this makes sense: experience + process = individual learning. But the reality is much messier. Learning is more than a single outcome or one-solution result. If we fail to account for this, we have failed as teachers.

Achieving learning outcomes during a semester- or quarter-long course is no guarantee that students "got it"—that students have learned how to learn or that they have successfully bridged the gap between theory and practice. Higher education has developed diverse pedagogical approaches to expand the notion of teaching. These include flipping classrooms, creating student pair-and-shares, offering service-learning opportunities, tackling global issues, and inviting thought partners and mentors into the classroom. Over the past three decades, building connections and long-term, quality interactions within a community has been framed as a way to provide more of a conceptual "real world" experience for students. However, investing in community engagement requires time and effort to coordinate schedules, sustain student motivation, and intersect shared learning goals with external partners. These factors all play a key role in determining how to bring students to the community, particularly students from underserved backgrounds whose time or resources might be especially strained during college. But what if we changed the traditional approach to community engagement, in which students leave campus to engage partners? What if we brought community partners into the classroom?

In 2006, we—Leeva Chung, a professor of communication studies at the University of San Diego (USD), and her former student Daniel McArdle-Jaimes, now a senior communication consultant at Portland General Electric—joined forces to answer this question. We integrated Leeva's quest for alternative community engagement methods and a global advocacy teaching philosophy with Daniel's interest in shaping intentional career development paths for undergraduates. Together, we developed a model that brings workforce development partners—community members, business leaders, nonprofit administrators, elected officials, university professionals, and others—into the classroom. These partners collaborate with our students to tackle complex public and community-centric

> **What if we changed the traditional approach to community engagement, in which students leave campus to engage partners? What if we brought community partners into the classroom?**

in the Classroom

hands-on career development

DANIEL McARDLE-JAIMES

issues ranging from health-care advocacy, e-waste, environmental sustainability, and developing intentional communication and engagement pathways for underserved local and global communities.

From experience to action

So how did the concept for this model come about? While incorporating service learning into communication courses (such as small group communication and interpersonal communication), Leeva recognized that something was incomplete after each iteration. The low level of student participation often resulted in limited self-reflection and insight. Her students were missing a "personal face"—a mentor who could inspire, support, and advise them while they worked with a community partner. She had the idea of engaging a former student to be that face and remembered the tenacity and drive Daniel had originally brought to her class. After graduating in May 2005, Daniel endured a waiting period of countless "thanks, but no thanks" responses from employers. Although he'd been aiming for a permanent position, he reluctantly accepted an internship at a strategic communications firm. Little did he realize that the move would be the launching point to put him on a successful career path that he happily maintains today. When Leeva reached out to him, she asked him to help current undergraduates develop determination, gain familiarity with talking to nonacademic adults, and otherwise prepare themselves for the world beyond campus. He agreed. But rather than simply telling his story to students, Daniel emphasized his experience with enduring

struggles, intentional problem solving, and finding courage through self-reliance.

Since starting our partnership, we have created an environment in which students work together to face major problems in the safety of the classroom. Students have learned, for instance, to pitch outreach campaigns for places such as the City of San Diego, Donate Life California, and Stance Socks. They have also learned to defend their research in Q&A sessions with clients ranging from elected officials to board members, executives from the local chambers of commerce, and organization employees. Not only do students begin to understand the complexity of problem solving and learn to interact with professionals; they also gain concrete experiences to draw on when they later interview for jobs.

Education is not about seeking answers but about questioning answers and being open to multiple perspectives—helping students connect their own dots to solve challenges. The classroom can be a holistic place to draw out workforce skills that aren't covered in lectures or readings. In developing this alternative community engagement model, we have learned to emphasize three foundational pillars that help students bridge classroom theory to life practice.

Pillar 1:
Find inspiration in unexpected places

Daniel's willingness to mentor USD students is an example of finding inspiration in unexpected places in order to motivate students at different levels of learning. Alumni provide the "street cred" needed to teach undergraduates as they workshop career skills and community-based

(Above) University of San Diego students helped the city's Public Utilities Department gain insights about how multicultural communities and millennials perceive drinking tap water. For the class final, students presented their research, branding, social marketing, infographic, and public service announcement video to department officials and a panel of judges.

assignments. Alumni can guide students as they navigate workplace dynamics through group projects by helping students understand how to solve problems as a team and how to use their book learning beyond college tests and papers.

"School is sometimes about memorizing facts and dates, but it's a different kind of challenge to learn an idea or a theory and apply it to everyday life," says alumna Mae-Ling Choquette, explaining that in the class, students didn't simply take notes or study for tests. They presented to community professionals as if they were actual clients, who critiqued the ideas and pushed students to think outside the box.

Alumni provide the "street cred" needed to teach undergraduates as they workshop career skills and community-based assignments.

"In my post-grad job hunt, this helped me set myself apart from other candidates," adds Choquette, who currently works for the investment manager PIMCO in financial recruiting. "I now collaborate and communicate with my colleagues and candidates for a living, and I was more than prepared. I even went to my boss and coordinated a project for [Leeva's] class in the fall of 2018."

Pillar 2:
Find perfection in imperfection
Student-empowered learning challenges individuals to grapple with accountability—to take responsibility for their education. One way to foster this kind of learning environment is to have students develop viable solutions to a specific company or organizational problem. Alumni can offer realistic challenges for students to take on:

- Find ways for the university to "go green" and propose environmentally friendly products for it to develop.
- Create a workshop for re-entry into campus life as students return from studying abroad.
- Organize an advocacy campaign on campus, such as for promoting sustainability or collecting e-waste.
- Work with a global nonprofit organization to help it communicate about the importance of investing in water infrastructure in developing nations to promote health, safety, and human resilience.
- Work with organizations to gain insight into how communities and groups perceive real-world issues, such as potable drinking (tap) water.

For one student project, the City of San Diego Public Utilities Department partnered with the class over two semesters. The task for students: Help department officials gain insight into how multicultural communities and millennials perceive drinking potable water from the tap. Why do these communities prefer to drink bottled water over tap water?

The students compiled research for the department, made the department more aware of local water-supply challenges, connected staff to millennials and multicultural communities, and suggested ways for the department to better engage these demographics. "Students took a complex topic and made it fun and engaging through YouTube videos, infographics, and social media posts that the city shared on a local and national stage," says workforce development partner Sarah Lemons.

After the project was completed, one student from the class was hired as an intern for the City of San Diego in order to implement strategies and tactics that she and her teammates had proposed. This included printing an infographic on reusable grocery bags and streaming the group's video on local TV and social media.

"The valuable thing I learned in this class is WHY working in groups tends to be painful," wrote one student in a reflection paper. "It's almost like learning how things are made in factories—I never really wanted to know how pasta or sausages were made, but now I know, and I feel more informed. I learned why some people don't work well in groups, why there is a fight for power, and more important, how to solve these problems."

Pillar 3:
Value small steps
How do educators prepare students for the ups and downs of a career—the dead ends, detours, and long waits—when they must ultimately experience their own struggles as part of their journeys? Some teachers share case studies, theories, and philosophies within an area of study. We do this, too, but we do it in a way that also reinforces the importance of process. The model we have created helps students become more competitive, strategic, and intentional in their career searches, because it exposes students to clients, research projects, and professional assignments and products.

When we first implemented our community engagement model, students who were used to

traditional teaching pedagogy and visiting an off-site community organization struggled with the real-time expectations of working with community partners. The disconnect between goals and results caused students anxiety and uncertainty, both individually and as a group. The ultimate aim, however, was not to create "success" but to have students understand that several viable alternatives often exist for solving a problem. The class challenged students to let go of the need for clarity and to focus on the process. Students began to understand the relevance of the class and why they were assigned difficult problems that required field research, grassroots outreach, project management, client interaction, public speaking, and other skills such as video editing, graphic design, and infographic development—all of which prepared students to start their professional lives after graduation.

"I am re-energized by students' innovative ideas and appreciate the fresh outlook and

creative thinking they bring to the table," says workforce-development partner Brad Makaiau, an assistant director at Donate Life California. He's collaborated with the class twice, and after each project he ended up hiring a student as an intern. "I'm reminded," he adds, "how important it is to stick to the basics, which is the 'project challenge' in which students attempt to bridge their ideas with what has already been done and what is feasible."

In order to develop effective members of society, educators must be invested, committed, and flexible. Before students graduate and head into the workforce, educators must mold them into active listeners, participants, and innovators. We want to offer our students a similar kind of inspiration as Oprah Winfrey gave in her 2018 commencement speech at the University of Southern California: "Your job will not always fulfill you. Become so skilled, vigilant, and flat-out fantastic at what you do that your talent cannot be dismissed."

We are proud to have contributed impressive graduates to today's global workforce, including alumni in positions with the Kansas City Chiefs, Toyota, Google, and Netflix.

"I recently brought you up at work," writes a 2018 graduate, "and took my time explaining that what you taught me about myself was more valuable than any lesson in a textbook. It makes me proud, and I hope other students realize it too. I found our external mentors inspiring and would love to help spark that in your students." [LE]
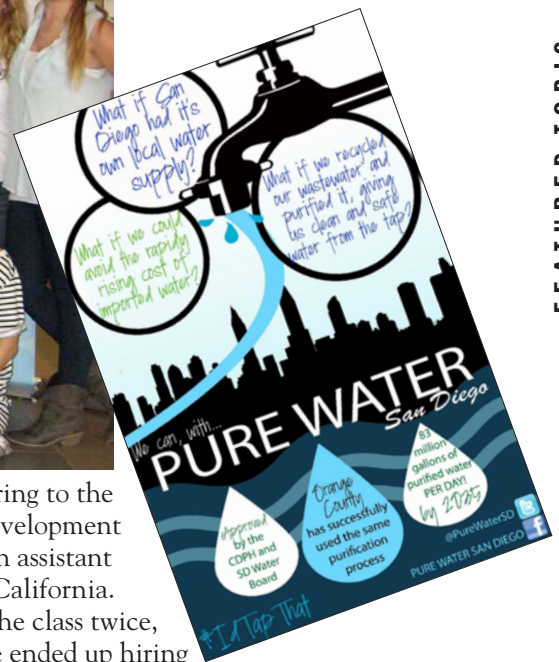
USD students tour the City of San Diego's Pure Water Demonstration Facility and receive their class project challenge. As part of the project, students designed a water-purification infographic to be printed on reusable bags.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Consider the following points as you plan to bring community engagement into the classroom.
1. I am comfortable allowing students to think more creatively.
2. I have support on campus, such as guest judges for student projects and departments that need student feedback.
3. Alumni are available to mentor and otherwise participate.
4. I created separate rubrics and evaluations for assessing both the final product and students' *process* of learning.
5. I am comfortable having students spend class time on their projects.

JASON LEGGETT

The Community in Technology

How collaboration drives virtual spaces

WHEN EDUCATORS TALK ABOUT TEACHING with new digital resources and tools to create productive learning communities, a familiar comment often arises: "You do not have to reinvent the wheel."

But this statement misses the point. Higher education must reinvent how we think about collaborative learning. To provoke change toward more democratic and equitable educational opportunities, we must discuss what technology we need to imagine, design, and create in order to navigate today's global challenges, especially if we hope students will continue their work after they graduate. As a community of learners, we must involve students in these conversations about deciding which devices and platforms might best achieve our shared educational goals. It is not technology that creates communities; rather, communities of learners together create technology. And for those of us who want to see change in education more broadly and equitably, we need to forget the wheel. We need to be inventing spaceships.

For those of us who want to see change in education more broadly and equitably, we need to forget the wheel. We need to be inventing spaceships.

Teachable moments

My parents both came from blue-collar, working-class backgrounds, and I was the first in the family to go to college. My dad purchased our first computer by mail order and built it himself. My mom learned to use bookkeeping software on my grandfather's home computer to better manage his small business machining parts for local companies. In elementary school, I used a classroom computer to practice math, find information using *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and play *The Oregon Trail*. That educational video game let me and my fellow students explore pioneer life as we worked as a team to survive a virtual cross-continental journey by covered wagon. We built a shared experience of learning and problem solving that we could apply to future scenarios inside and outside class.

These early experiences showed me that technology has always been critical to education and, therefore, to upward social mobility. Yet despite the technological advances that have been made since the days I played *The Oregon Trail*, many educators still resist the technology that has been integrated into our everyday lives.

I do not say this without some hesitation. At my own institution, the City University of New York Kingsborough Community College, we face very real challenges in adapting to new technology within the campus community. Who gets access, who gets to participate in purchasing decisions, and how the technology will be distributed are questions with which many campuses wrestle.

Some institutions struggle with these challenges more than others. Our present reality in higher education includes two very different types of communities: those that enjoy access to the latest technologies, are engaged in problem solving, and have the resources to prepare for the future; and those that lack these resources, are unprepared for and unaware of the challenges they will face in even the near future, and are excluded from the kind of upward social mobility in which supporters of liberal education believe.

I recently taught a summer program for incoming freshmen at an Ivy League institution where this technological divide was abundantly clear. The cutting-edge classroom contained

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confident digital natives ready to engage with new technologies because these students had been trained in the latest technologies and expected to use them at the college level. At Kingsborough, most students learn in temporary buildings in need of repair. Some rooms have a pillar in the center that arbitrarily divides the class. In most classrooms, there's no air-conditioning, the smartboard flickers on and off, the computer is outdated, and permanent marker covers the whiteboard. Unlike the students at the Ivy League institution, the students at Kingsborough have not been prepared to use cutting-edge technologies and do not even know what they are missing.

These two disparate educational environments are not providing an equal opportunity for upward social mobility, because the tools available to students are very different. However, resource challenges can also be learning opportunities. For one course at Kingsborough,

I had the class work with mobile phones, because it was a technology all students had. We practiced using the picture and text applications to conduct field research about legal rights. Some students then took pictures in their neighborhoods of common police "stop and frisk" points; others looked up judicial opinions using Google Scholar. Students later met in small groups to discuss what they had found. While we lacked the best technological tools, we found a suitable option to begin our different analyses. Instead of blaming the unequal access to particular technologies, we used an ordinary device for the education of our community of learners. The inequity of the classroom environment led to a teachable moment.

A community in the making

At Kingsborough Community College, nearly twenty thousand students come from more than one hundred different countries, speak as many

or more languages, and bring a kaleidoscope of socioeconomic narratives and experiences of injustice. As a campus, we are a community continuously in the making, always learning how to learn with each other.

Too often, though, when we in higher education discuss the formation of communities, we point to foundations such as common language, nationality, ethnicity, and religion. But on a campus, particularly one like Kingsborough, these elements are never homogenous. In our classrooms, we must bridge the differences among the members of our community. Digital tools can help us do this. They allow us to capture and document our work with our increasingly diverse student body and share our discoveries across the globe.

Today's technologies are not the inventions of individuals or small groups; they are reflective of larger social processes that account for complex and diverse interests and needs.

For example, I have students think about immigration law and policy, beginning with questions about migration, citizenship, and the institutions within government that affect our ideas. In one class, students worked in small groups, with one group gathering video clips focused on the enforcement of immigration policy, another group collecting clips on media coverage of immigration policy, and a third conducting online and person-to-person surveys about perceptions of the fairness of immigration law and policy. Two students also interviewed faculty and staff who identified as immigrants. I then worked with a couple of students to edit the collected work, and we posted the final project as a documentary on YouTube.

Across the nine classes I teach each year, I use a series of free websites and creative platforms, such as SoundCloud and YouTube, to work with students on projects ranging from podcasts and blogs to documentaries and portfolios. Students can easily access online platforms, which also include library resources, web applications for saving data, and cloud-based productivity software, to plan and track projects that I compile for each group. Learners dump content into a cloud-based folder so others can view, share, or comment on this information over the course of the semester. This fosters constant reflection at the
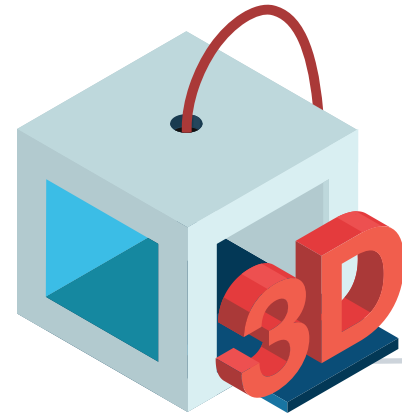
individual and group levels and also lets others beyond the initial group participate (often family members and friends of an individual student), thus expanding the original community exponentially. Our community in the making is now visible via digital technology.

Other digital tools such as cloud-based spreadsheets, word processors, and presentation programs help me collect student questions, survey results, reflection statements, and reading comprehension information. I can then share aggregate information. I also post the course outline and homework assignments on a web page that I can update in real time. Using technology in these ways lets me record a broad picture of the learning process, making it easier for me to design interventions and enrichment opportunities for individual students.

Learning in action

My own work has been inspired by a challenge posed by Caryn McTighe Musil, senior director of civic learning and democracy initiatives at the Association of American Colleges and Universities, during a faculty development training: "How can we discuss with our students, given the diversity of backgrounds and understanding, what these terms mean: *community, democratic thinking,* and *difference?*"

I decided to ask my students to grapple with these terms as a group, as each new class develops ongoing learning processes for its unique makeup and needs. We cocreate structured learning opportunities in which students work together to solve common problems and develop practical, digital-based skills they can use across classes and disciplines, as well as in cocurricular activities.

One class, for instance, learned to use online legal resources to defend against a landlord eviction action in a public court. Using the computer lab, students downloaded and completed a form from the local court website to respond to the eviction notice. They also typed a support of their defense in a Word document, using web-based resources like Google Scholar

and the Legal Information Institute to find supporting case law and arguments.[1] We often ask that students engage with civic problems, but we take for granted the skills necessary to do so. Using these digital tools allows students to gain confidence while learning about the processes and underlying arguments that formalize the judicial system.

In an environmental politics course, I asked students how they would respond to a sudden unknown situation using the knowledge from class. They chose disaster response as their research topic, deciding to design an ecological-preparation video game based on what happened during 2012's Hurricane Sandy. Because I did not have much knowledge about video games, I collaborated with a former student who had gone on to earn a master's degree in criminal justice with a focus on investigation using technology. I also reached out to a community partner with whom I had previously coordinated an after-school program and who had an interest in designing environmental simulations and games. Students used multiple open-source online platforms to share information and track our progress on the project. We started off using Adobe PDF worksheets but transferred to the website platform WordPress, which provided a more interactive user experience and allowed us to communicate quickly with all project participants and upload content during class time. Students worked in three groups over the semester to develop the coding, characters, and storyline for a natural disaster response.

Today, we have a growing community of learners interested in improving the original video game and simulation. The game is shared on a website for ongoing action research projects, allowing former students to share it on social media. It also allows me to reuse the project with future classes. I've even had someone email me to ask about replicating the project at her institution. On my own campus, I am now learning the software application STELLA to conduct systems analyses of global environmental and social mobilization problems with professors from another department. In sum, the use of technology has provided a nexus of activities from multiple points of view and across disciplines to confront global challenges with students.

The future is now

If we agree that we must provide learners with the digital tools necessary to collaborate globally on pressing modern challenges like migration and climate change, why has the integration of new technology been so hard to implement equitably nearly two decades into the new millennium? I believe that those who maintain the status quo, those who do not try to reinvent the wheel, are at least partially to blame. I have outlined how technology can be integrated even at an under-resourced institution and in a way that builds community across differences.

Today's technologies are not the inventions of individuals or small groups; they are reflective of larger social processes that account for complex and diverse interests and needs. Truly innovative technology is the product of social construction and the ability of community members to use their education to adapt and improve society's material conditions through collective thinking and action. Change in the educational status quo needs to employ technology as central to the presentation, collection, documentation, record-keeping, communication, coproduction, and distribution of new and old knowledge. Educators must facilitate structured learning opportunities that allow learners to coproduce civic knowledge using digital tools and resources. These technologies help hold students accountable and make it easier for them to creatively share knowledge face-to-face and in online communities. Digital resources also help educators better serve students' individual needs and provide collective opportunities for reflection, revision, and sharing across generations and learning methods. With an institutional commitment, learning systems can change radically toward this kind of coconstruction of knowledge. We know where we have been: the wheel of education. We must now decide where we will go next and which metaphor is best to get us there: the wheel of old or the spaceship of new. LE

NOTES

1. For more information on the "Legal Information Institute" at Cornell Law School, visit https://www.law.cornell.edu.

BERTHA ALVAREZ MANNINEN AND JACK MULDER JR.

The Philosophy

We owe it to our students to teach them how to disagree

WE ARE Bertha Alvarez Manninen, a pro-choice associate professor of philosophy at Arizona State University, and Jack Mulder Jr., a pro-life professor of philosophy at Hope College in Michigan. Since graduate school, we've argued with each other about abortion and other issues, while respecting each other's stances and our friendship. In the current political climate, however, we've become exhausted with the increasing polarization as divisions on political values that reached record levels during Barack Obama's presidency have only continued to grow since Donald Trump took office.

But despite the tribalism that often pervades liberal and conservative politics, civil and fruitful discussions on tough issues are possible, even between two people with opposing views.

Our backgrounds in philosophy have taught us that disagreement is a normal part of life and that the reasons for it are rarely as simple as the other side's being ignorant or morally bankrupt. Whether it's through Rene Descartes's desire to raze his previous beliefs in an effort to be freed "from all prejudices," the medieval method of the "disputed question" (in which scholars give the best arguments against their own position before articulating that position and responding to objections),[1] or whether it's through attention to a contemporary classic like Charles Mills's *The Racial Contract* (which

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BERTHA ALVAREZ MANNINEN *is associate professor of philosophy at Arizona State University and* JACK MULDER JR. *is professor of philosophy at Hope College. They cowrote* Civil Dialogue on Abortion *(Routledge, 2018). They would like to thank Maggie Pavlick for her help with this article.*

critiques the Western tradition of political philosophy for its role in racism), the disposition of philosophy is deeply self-critical.[2] Philosophy emphasizes the use of logical thinking to construct arguments and promotes familiarity with logical fallacies in order to identify flawed arguments. One of the most pervasive fallacies in public discourse is the *ad hominem*, designed to personally attack the speaker rather than the argument. Another prevalent one is *ad hominem tu quoque*, or what has come to be known as "whataboutism"—an attempt to deflect your own faults by pointing out that other people also engage in problematic behavior.[3] The focus on deconstructing arguments rather than criticizing people helps us remember that it is not the *person* to whom we are objecting but rather the *argument*.

At a recent talk, the two of us served as dialogue partners on the abortion issue—one of us pro-choice, the other pro-life. If you don't like those terms, consider that they are how each side generally refers to itself. To grant the other side its preferred descriptor is to be, at least methodologically, charitable. During our dialogue, we didn't try to mow each other down with words, and some in the audience were disappointed that we didn't engage in a no-holds-barred debate. Unfortunately, that method usually results only in the hardening of one's position and the demonization of one side against the other.

Taking the time to listen and genuinely understand someone on the other side of a debate, even if not ultimately coming to an agreement, makes it difficult to hate that person or to paint him or her as an immoral caricature. In discussing a contentious issue, the two of us consider where the other person may be right and where we may, in fact, be flawed in our own thinking. For instance, while we disagree significantly about contraception (one of us is a

# of Conversation

practicing Catholic), we can admit that a culture that treats sex in a cavalier and pornographic way is likely to lead to unwanted pregnancies. Likewise, a society that reinforces racial and economic inequalities and lacks a social safety net will bring people to a point where abortion looks like the only way out of a difficult situation. We don't finally agree about contraception or abortion, but we can agree about background principles, like care for the vulnerable.

Critical discussion of a controversial issue, with an appreciation for nuance and with an attempt to highlight common ground, is sorely lacking in public discourse and often disparaged when it does appear. When politicians change their minds on a topic based on new information, they are derided as flip-flopping. Accordingly, conceding that your opponent may have a good point is considered a weakness. Even listening to a point from the opposite side has become a betrayal.

Philosophy professors Jack Mulder Jr. (left) and Bertha Alvarez Manninen (right) serve as dialogue partners—one of them pro-life, the other pro-choice—at a recent talk on abortion.

We must teach our students to start off with the assumption of mutual goodwill, to avoid assuming the very worst of the person with whom they are arguing. We can do this in the classroom by cultivating an environment that gives differing views equal consideration, care, and also criticism—while all will be respected, no view is immune from critical scrutiny. We must teach students to read outside their comfort zones and encourage them to use their imaginations, to challenge themselves first and others later. We must teach that being able to admit when you are wrong is a sign of personal growth and development. And we must model this behavior ourselves and be open to the possibility that our students will catch us in the same mistakes we teach them to avoid, and delight in that possibility.

We talk further with *Liberal Education*'s Christen Aragoni and each other about not just agreeing to disagree but allowing yourself to see an argument from another person's point of view.

Abortion is one of those topics that, in today's climate, can make or break a relationship. How did you become and remain close friends?

Bertha Alvarez Manninen: We were friends way before any of this stuff came up in our discussions. We established a foundation that neither of us was willing to break. I'm not going to lie—I have cut off relationships with people when disagreements reveal a fundamental difference in our moral character. For example, I just cannot have a close relationship with someone who exhibits blatant racism. My disagreements with Jack have never betrayed anything morally questionable about him as a human being.

Jack Mulder Jr.: Bertha is willing to believe that people are usually coming to the conversation with goodwill, even if there are reasons they feel a particular way about a particular thing. She starts off with the position that, nine times out of ten, we do have something to talk about. We do care about similar things. I mean "we" generally, not Bertha and me, because then it's ten times out of ten.

Are there issues on which someone is simply wrong?

Bertha: I have absolutely cut off people for having what I perceive to be cruel or callous views. We can disagree, for example, on how best to reform our health-care system, as long as we can agree that we need some sort of reformation. If people say things like, "I don't agree with health-care reformation because if you get

cancer, and you're not me, I don't care." That I can't deal with. That's not an intellectual disagreement. I don't want to be friends with someone who's mean and selfish. Again, those things have never been an issue with Jack. Never in any of our disagreements—and there have been many—have I once questioned his commitment to kindness.

Jack: To have a conversation characterized by respectful and rational dialogue across differing views, you have to hold a view that can at least pass muster in a rational conversation. One of the things about racism is that there actually isn't any such thing as biological race. It doesn't pass scientific muster. Thus, racist beliefs don't have rational grounds.

On the other hand, you can talk about what racism is. You can talk about how we understand race, because it's a complicated concept. We can discuss the idea that race is no longer the same type of axis of oppression that it once was—I think that's false, but we could talk about it. If someone harbors openly racist views, you can't have a rational discussion. You can't get off the ground.

Bertha: Jack and I actually agree on important things. I agree with the pro-life side, for example, that fetuses are not inconsequential beings. I don't think that they're clumps of cells. I don't think that getting an abortion is like getting a haircut. I am willing, and have done so on paper, to call out the pro-choice movement for that kind of language. That makes my position harder, but I'm willing to embrace that difficulty.

Jack also agrees with me that abortion is a socioeconomic concern and has ties to racism and poverty. We need more equity. We need more rights for women. We need more free and quality child care. If you want to take care of abortion, you need to go to the reasons women are getting abortions. Those are important tenets that we hold and allow us to cross the aisle in ways that perhaps other people don't, or can't, or haven't.

Jack: One of the things that has helped us have a dialogue about these things is that we're willing to stand apart from what often forms the pro-life pack or the pro-choice pack, where each pack has certain beliefs a card-carrying member cannot question. Well, actually, sorry, you have to talk about that. You can't treat abortion as merely one issue without realizing that people are going to have abortions if they're

In a 2016 survey, fewer freshmen than ever identified as politically centrist—students often arrive on campus already entrenched in a partisan set of beliefs.[4]

Yet a 2018 study shows that a college education tends to widen students' political perspectives on both sides of the aisle.[5] College is actually a time when they meet people with different views and come to respect them.

forced into bad choices by socioeconomic circumstances. If you don't address that, it's always going to be a problem.

How do you help students to have these conversations and be more open and thoughtful in thinking about issues?

Bertha: When I teach, I present both sides of an issue, with a strong article or essay about the topic from the different viewpoints. I give equal time to either side and present each viewpoint as sympathetically as possible. I like to teach issues that even I'm kind of lukewarm about. In the abortion debate, for instance, I ideologically believe that reproductive rights have the stronger argument, but when a pro-life person talks, I think, "Yeah, okay. I could see that," because I have certain reservations myself. Same thing with the right to die. I'm sympathetic to the idea that people have a right

> **Jack:** You have to cultivate a classroom atmosphere in which you can get people to understand, "We can talk about this, and we can disagree."

to decide for themselves that they don't want to suffer. At the same time, there are questions about sufficient safeguards and euthanizing someone society doesn't deem valuable.

Jack: You have to cultivate a classroom atmosphere in which you can get people to understand, "We can talk about this, and we can disagree." You have to carefully choose the readings that can help do this and that are vivid enough to show students what people think on both sides of an issue.

Occasionally, I'll even assign a piece that I've written. I don't want them to think that ethics and philosophy are just an endless barrage of competing opinions, and nobody ever makes up his or her mind. People actually do make up their minds. Their instructor has made up his mind about something. I also want them to see that I'm not going to treat my view as immune to criticism. There isn't a view that doesn't have difficult things it needs to own up to.

Has a student ever caused you to rethink your view?

Bertha: In my philosophy/religion class, we do a section on prudentialism, or pragmatic belief in God, versus evidentialism: Is it permissible to believe in God if there is little or

> **Bertha:** Just admitting that the other side might not be crazy is now, apparently, seen as a weakness. You can't have nuanced discussions anymore, and that's concerning.

no evidence just for practical reasons—you might get into heaven, it feels good, it's comforting—versus should you only believe in God because there's evidence for God? Eventually, we get into a conversation about whether it's permissible to sacrifice truth for convenience. I'm of the idea that a painful truth is preferable to a nice lie. A student, though, told me about leading his troop in Afghanistan. He is an atheist. They were under attack, and one of his mates was lethally shot. As they waited for help, his mate asked, "Do you think I'm going to heaven?" My student said, "Yeah, of course I do. Of course I believe you're going to heaven. You're almost there." My student wrote this in a paper. He says, "Do I believe that? No, I don't. I believe that when he died, that was it. Was I going to tell him that? No, I wasn't." That made me rethink my commitment to the view that you should always opt for a hard truth.

Jack: I have an example from last fall. You have to draw some hard lines about what kinds of things the state can get interested in, like blood donation, or bone marrow donation, or what kinds of organs you might be called upon to donate. I don't think there's an easy answer to that question, not that it's impossible but that it's hard. I generally believe that if you're in a unique position to offer assistance, you should. One student said, "Look, I have a really rare blood type. People call me all the time trying to get me to donate blood, so how

often would I be obliged to say yes?" When people offer those things from their own perspective, they tend to have a certain vividness and importance that can cause you to rethink or bring more nuance to your viewpoint.

Bertha: Another example is from when I was teaching twelve or so years ago. A young man confided in me that his girlfriend got pregnant. They were going to keep the baby and get

Bertha: People in a democracy have power to shape the world that they live in, and they need to be responsible with that power. That entails critical thinking, and that's what I'm here for.

Jack: It isn't that important that I flag myself as somebody who thinks like you on a bumper sticker. It's more important that you get to know me. Tribalism isn't more important than friendship.

married. Then they got news that the baby had markers for Down syndrome. My student was like, "Okay, well that'll make things more difficult, but fine." But without his knowledge, his girlfriend got an abortion, which she's legally entitled to do, at the very least. He was absolutely distraught. An ethicist needs to take any kind of harm seriously, and so his experience made me think long and hard about what role men should have in an abortion decision. I've written quite a bit about that because of that student.

All of this is important in educating students to become democratic citizens. Can you talk about that larger picture?

Bertha: I teach an article that argues it is immoral to believe things based on insufficient evidence. Your beliefs affect your actions,

which in turn, affect the world in various ways. You therefore have a moral obligation to make sure your beliefs are rational and sustainable. For example, one time a student wrote that she was against universal health care, or any kind of social safety-net program, because it was in the Bible that "God helps those who help themselves." Except that it's not in there. Benjamin Franklin actually popularized that in *Poor Richard's Almanack*. So, someone believes something, which affects how she votes, on the premise that God believes this thing, and that's just false. People in a democracy have power to shape the world they live in, and they need to be responsible with that power. That entails critical thinking and having sufficient knowledge, and that's what I'm here for. I am here to help shape better, more responsible, and more ethical human beings.

Jack: In a democratic citizenry, it's important to be humble. To be humble enough to say, "Well, that's an interesting challenge, and I might need to think about it for a little while." Technology doesn't do us a lot of favors in this. The whole "you have to get it inside of 140 or 280 characters" is not helping us. Donald Trump is not a humble man—he's the apex of pride and a braggart in our contemporary political milieu. But he's also not a blip. He's a symptom of our larger unwillingness to engage with one another in deep and meaningful ways and of our insistence that we have to be able to counter everything right away. It's all about perception—you can never appear weak, you can never say, "I need a little time to think about that."

Bertha: I started to notice that my students perceive nuance as a weakness. I teach an essay in which the author claims that the arguments for atheism are stronger than those for theism. But he doesn't claim that the theists are necessarily irrational. Inevitably, at least one or two students say that this concession destroys his argument. Just admitting that the other side might not be crazy is now, apparently, seen as a weakness. You can't have nuanced discussions anymore, and that's concerning. I don't see a way out of this horrible polarization until we can start going back to a position of nuance.

Do we have any hope for getting back to nuance as a first step?

Bertha: Teaching some form of critical thinking—it doesn't necessarily have to be philosophy—from early on is probably one of the

best chances we've got. I already do it with my kids. If we're eating at the dinner table, and my oldest says, "Well, I believe X," I ask, "Well, have you ever thought about Y? Have you ever looked at it from this way?" We need to start that from early on, and we're just not doing it. We're not doing it around the dinner table. We're not doing it in schools. The media doesn't help. There is hope, but the things we need to do to get there are not being done, and that worries me.

Jack: We have to take our hope from person-to-person interactions. It isn't that important that I use a bumper sticker to flag myself as somebody who thinks like you. It's more important that you get to know me. Tribalism isn't more important than friendship. Our echo chambers have a lot of problems, but we're only going to be able to fight them one person at a time, one friendship at a time. There are moments when there might be an opening to ask, "Why do you hold that view?" I'm not saying the door is always open. Sometimes it's actually unsafe to try to rationally engage someone who holds an irrational opinion. At the same time, if you never look for those doors to open, and you never walk through them when they're presented, then that will result in more polarization. LE

The preceding conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

NOTES

1. See Descartes's own synopsis of his *Meditations on First Philosophy*.

2. Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

3. For an extensive list and explanations of many logical fallacies, see Robert Arp, Steven Barbone, and Michael Bruce, eds., *Bad Arguments: 100 of the Most Important Fallacies in Western Philosophy* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2019).

4. Kevin Eagan, Ellen Bara Stolzenberg, Hilary B. Zimmerman, Melissa C. Aragon, Hannah Whang Sayson, Cecilia Rios-Aguilar, *The American Freshman: National Norms Fall 2016* (Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA, 2017),

5. Scott Jaschik, "Liberal Indoctrination? Not So Much," *Inside Higher Ed*, February 5, 2018, https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/02/05/research-suggests-colleges-broaden-students-political-views; "Does College Turn People into Liberals?" The Conversation, February 2, 2018, https://theconversation.com/does-college-turn-people-into-liberals-90905.

Audience members listen to the authors' nuanced discussion of their views on abortion.

PERSPECTIVES

Arguing the Point, Not the Person

The desire to cultivate a society that can heal from its extreme divisiveness should be, at least, a starting motivation to debate a topic rather than to verbally attack a person with an opposing viewpoint. When an ideological difference exists between two people, both must resist the inertia that would pull them apart and into their own echo chambers. Think about the following steps when discussing a contentious topic.

• Allow your conversation partner to speak.
• Make sure not to represent the other's view or caricature him or her.
• Be charitable and avoid vitriolic debate.
• Consistently check in to ensure you're being fair and are understanding the other person's argument.
• Find common ground to cultivate respect.

Self-criticism is also key: If you catch yourself saying that you can't imagine how someone could believe the opposite of what you believe, ask yourself why. Have you read deeply from a serious writer who disagrees with you? Can you even name one? Which of their premises do you grant? If the answer to all of these questions is no or none, that is almost certainly evidence that you have not thought through your own view.

— Bertha Alvarez Manninen and Jack Mulder Jr.

RICHARD CHERWITZ

Why Become a Public Intellectual?

Reflections of a communication scholar

OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, I have received numerous letters, phone calls, and emails from friends, academic colleagues, and members of the community inquiring why, having been a scholar for more than forty years, I now spend so much time writing op-eds.

More of us must become public intellectuals to ensure that the work of the academy makes a difference in the larger world.

This is a fair question, and I have given it a great deal of thought. First, like so many faculty, I am bothered by the current polarized and rancorous political environment, including the uncivil discourse of our nation's leaders—which is exacerbated by the anti-intellectualism and populism that has taken hold and threatens the academic world, particularly the humanities.

So, what can I do to change this? I can vote—and do. I could also become a social activist, party official, community organizer, or political candidate. These are worthy, if not noble, pursuits but are not my calling. Instead, how can I use my unique skills and training as a faculty member to make a difference?

Power of the pen

During my most prolific years as a researcher, I would wake up in the morning with questions and ideas that compelled me to put pen to paper—even before finishing a cup of coffee. My best friend and department colleague once poignantly observed that professors have articles and books inside their heads crying out to be written. This also explains my urge to write op-eds.

I have spent my professional life writing academic books and journal articles in the field of rhetoric. Beginning about twenty years ago, however, I have felt increasingly obliged to use my knowledge to communicate to a larger audience outside the ivory tower—to reach ordinary citizens and members of the community with the capacity and potential to enact change.

This urge to write essays for the public at large is especially salient for me as a scholar of rhetoric, a discipline dating back to, and having roots in, the treatises of ancient Greek philosophers. Since its inception, the discipline of rhetoric has focused on the art of symbolic influence and persuasion. Thus, perhaps unlike other fields of study, rhetoric is the bridge between theory and practice. That is why, for me, it has become enormously important to write op-eds linking theories of rhetoric to the world of prudential conduct.

Rather than simply spewing partisan and visceral diatribes that would only serve to reflect the state of my political glands, I endeavor to write thoughtful commentaries grounded in an academic knowledge of rhetoric and communication. My mantra has become "I know, therefore I must write."

Let me offer a few examples of the dozens of op-eds I have written in the past three years:

- In a February 7, 2019, essay in *Citizen Critics*, which publishes work from the academic

RICHARD CHERWITZ *is the Ernest S. Sharpe Centennial Professor in the Moody College of Communication and founder of the Intellectual Entrepreneurship Consortium at the University of Texas at Austin.*

community and from policy experts for a broad global audience, I offered eight observations about President Donald Trump's second State of the Union address. Rather than simply communicating a partisan view, my analysis endeavored to underscore both effective and ineffective rhetorical appeals.

- In the January 2019 issue of *Communication Currents*, a publication of the National Communication Association bringing academic research to the attention of the media and public, I argued that Trump's rhetoric provides an empirical test of the social construction of reality hypothesis—a theory scholars have been debating for more than forty years.

- In a December 10, 2018, op-ed in the *Des Moines Register*, I used Aristotle's concept of the enthymeme—a rhetorical syllogism—to document how the eulogies of George H. W. Bush violated the norms of eulogizing by

providing what I labeled "shadow rhetoric." As a result, these speeches became an implicit, but obvious, critique of Trump.

- In a September 13, 2018, *Houston Chronicle* op-ed, I drew upon research on cognitive dissonance and persuasion to explain potential methods for Americans to transcend political polarization and find ways to compromise.

- In a July 30, 2017, op-ed in the *San Antonio Express-News*, I employed the classical rhetorical theory of stasis, first developed by the Romans and now the foundation of our country's legal system of argument, to suggest that Trump shows signs of someone guilty of wrongdoing.

My process of writing an opinion essay typically begins with a social media post. In the wake of comments and suggestions, some of those thoughts evolve into extended and carefully

crafted essays. Writing is what I was trained to do and invariably is a response to a deeply felt need rather than being an assignment or job—just as was the case with scholarly writing.

Walking the talk

A second and interrelated reason exists for why I write op-eds. In 1996, almost twenty years into my tenure as a professor, and during my stint as a dean in the graduate school at the University of Texas at Austin, I created the Intellectual Entrepreneurship Consortium (IE)—an initiative empowering students to own and become accountable for their education.[1] Through twelve graduate-level courses delivered to more than five thousand students in nearly every academic discipline, we teach principles of citizen scholarship, which encourages students to put their knowledge to work to create change and make a difference, whether in academic or nonacademic venues.

In talking about the consortium, West Virginia University's president, E. Gordon Gee, has described it as "a reassessment and restatement of what these great land-grant universities [such as the University of Texas] are all about—about community engagement, about thinking anew and fresh about how we communicate with our citizens and how we engage them in the wider world." The issue has become one of partnerships, says Gee, who has served as president or chancellor of five major research universities and has encountered numerous challenges to higher education. "No longer," he says, "can these vast enterprises called universities simply be isolated, arrogant, and do things on their own."[2]

In the process of promoting the IE program, I realized it was time to practice what I preached. I complained vociferously to university administrators that, if we wished to gain the respect and trust of the public, parents, and donors (the people who fund and sustain our work), then faculty must proactively document the value of what they do. This includes using their expertise to become involved in public policy and to work on solving community problems. Otherwise, outsiders with a political agenda who do not understand the goals of higher education will foist changes upon us that might destroy our academic venture. I was not suggesting that scholars give

up their research or apologize for their work; instead, I was advocating that they bring their knowledge to a wider and less insular audience.

Hence, in the intervening twenty-plus years, I have continued to write not only scholarly monographs but also essays that take my case to the public, as well as to higher education leaders across the country. This has led to positive curricular and other improvements in how education is designed and delivered at research universities. One example is Arizona State University's "New American University," which focuses on both the education of students and the betterment of society and teaches, for instance, engineers to work with economists in a multidisciplinary approach necessary to solve real-world problems.

"Unless colleges and universities are to appear as removed from the front lines of change as the most remote monasteries of the Middle Ages, they must embrace a new entrepreneurial academic culture such as that advanced by the Intellectual Entrepreneurship Consortium," including the program's concept of citizen-scholar, says Michael M. Crow, president of Arizona State University.[3]

More of us must become public intellectuals to ensure that the work of the academy makes a difference in the larger world. As Gee wrote to me, "We all have an obligation to speak out and speak up."

So perhaps the question is not "Why do I write op-eds?" but rather "Why don't more faculty also write op-eds?" After all, as scholars, we are highly motivated, knowing there are important reasons for undertaking research; and as educators, we take seriously our mission to teach. Don't we have an obligation, therefore, to educate the public about the value of our research? LE

> If we wish to gain the respect and trust of the public, parents, and donors, faculty must proactively document the value of what they do.

NOTES

1. For more information, see "Intellectual Entrepreneurship," Intellectual Entrepreneurship Consortium, http://www.ut-ie.com.

2. See "Intellectual Entrepreneurship," Intellectual Entrepreneurship Consortium.

3. See "Intellectual Entrepreneurship," Intellectual Entrepreneurship Consortium.

EVAN MINTZ

Take Your Ideas Mainstream

An opinion pages editor offers tips on writing for a broader readership

NEWSPAPER OPINION SECTIONS and academia make for natural allies—one side gets to deepen its coverage and hear from experts in different fields, and the other side gets to apply its scholarship to real-world discussions and demonstrate the worth of higher education beyond the academy. As the former deputy opinion editor for the *Houston Chronicle*, I've worked closely with professors, post-docs, and students on developing pieces for my newspaper. For those of you who are also eager to reach a wider readership but more used to writing for academic journals, here's some advice for getting published in traditional media outlets.

Rely on your on-campus experts

College and university communications and public relations departments are filled with former reporters, editors, and columnists. Rely on their expertise to help you craft an opinion piece and pitch it to the publications where they used to work. They know the industry, and they know what makes an effective essay—both in print and

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EVAN MINTZ *is former deputy opinion editor of the* Houston Chronicle's *editorial board*.

online—for newspapers, magazines, and other media. Even if you're already confident in your writing skills, they can help identify relevant topics and connect you with interested editors.

Follow the directions

If you don't have the assistance of a PR professional, look to the publication you're pitching for guidance. How long should the op-ed be? What sorts of topics does the outlet want? Where should you send your piece? Who is the editor overseeing opinion content? Go to the website or even call the front desk to get advice. Read through recent issues to make sure you're not writing something that's already been published. Think of this as the equivalent of reviewing the syllabus on the first day of class.

Send a full-length piece

I'll refer to the advice offered by *Washington Post* op-ed editor Michael Larabee: "Drafts are better than pitches."[1] It doesn't have to be a final draft, but a fully written op-ed will be better received than a mere proposal.

(Continued from page 41)

Find a hook

Your work on campus may be worthy of a Nobel Prize—or at least a tenure-track position—but most people are more interested in their personal lives. Link to a relevant and immediate topic. Look at the headlines. Reference pop culture. Address local issues specific to the readership you're targeting. Why should they care about what you have to say? Why do your points matter right now? Establish some kind of common ground, and move forward from there.

Say one thing, and say it clearly

If you're in academia, then you're probably pretty intelligent, and it can be tempting to apply your smarts to a vast array of topics. When you're writing an opinion piece, however, make sure to stick to a single topic. You only have about six hundred to eight hundred words, and they're best spent discussing one issue. If you feel compelled to weigh in on other topics, then you should write more op-eds.

Have a strong call to action

You know about a topic, and you're turning that knowledge into words. So what? The point of writing an op-ed is to change things. Don't just ruminate on an issue. Offer a clear and specific call to action. What needs to happen next? What's the solution to the problem you've identified? What should lawmakers do? How should people think or act differently? Take, for example, a 2014 op-ed by a professor who'd attended a conference on pandemics: In addition to recounting information he'd gleaned about infectious diseases, he helped people understand how they should think differently about global health and pointed out clear policy ideas.

Use specifics

Academia has probably taught you to write in generic, passive language—the god's eye from nowhere. Forget it. You're not writing for academics. You're writing for normal people, and you should use language that connects with them at a fundamental level. Anecdotes and specific examples are always a strong start to a piece. Rely on hard data where you can, but don't start the piece that way. It'll turn readers off.

Use universalities

At the other end of the spectrum from specific examples are the grand universal values that motivate people—things like liberty, equality, justice, security, and family. Connect your opinion to a larger narrative that's familiar to readers. For instance, we recently ran an op-ed that tied a new study about higher education in Texas to values of family, economic security, and—this is a Lone Star specialty—state pride.

Avoid terminology

There's no prize for being the first person to use a certain word or phrase in the newspaper. People won't view your use of oblique, academic jargon as a sign of your expertise. Instead, they'll see it as an excuse to stop reading. Rely on plain language to explain your point. Climb down from the ivory tower and join the laity.

No self-promotion

If you want to take out an advertisement, then be prepared to write a check. You're writing to talk about the larger world, the problems that exist, and the solutions you have to offer. You, the author, should be incidental to the main point.

Don't give up

You're going to get a few rejections. Trolls will spout off in the comments section. People might have earnest disagreements in the letters to the editor. That's all normal. Don't let it dissuade you. The world is facing major challenges—climate change, geopolitics, the 2020 election—and you can help steer things in the right direction. All you have to do is sit at your desk and start writing. LE

NOTES

1. Michael Larabee (@Michaellarabee), Twitter profile description, https://twitter.com/Michaellarabee.

W. JOSEPH KING

A Creative Legacy

To serve Generation Z and beyond, liberal arts colleges must redouble their efforts to build on their imaginative and innovative foundations

WHEN I WAS AN UNDERGRADUATE in the early 1990s at Southwestern University, two faculty advisors encouraged me to explore my interests in psychology and computer science, specifically nonverbal behavior in human-computer interaction. Over my next two years at Southwestern, a liberal arts college located near Austin, Texas, I conducted extensive library research, applied for a Sigma Xi undergraduate research grant, created an ad hoc laboratory, built instrumentation, programmed simulations, ran experiments, and generally had a great time. Ultimately, the project evolved into an honors thesis and led to my first peer-reviewed conference paper, on facial expressions in the human interface, which I presented in Japan in 1993. I also gained a level of self-assurance and resourcefulness I had never had before.

An even more profound experience came as the result of a class I had avoided since the day I arrived on campus. By my senior year, I still had not taken a required course in fine arts performance, and I was left with choosing between ballet (a nightmare for my pudgy and uncoordinated self) and drama (equally terrifying for the introverted nerd that I am). I signed up for drama, and it was as bad as I thought it would be: voice exercises, acting techniques, improvisation. For the final project, I had to recite a three-minute monologue on a raised platform at the front of the room, no less terrifying than being on an actual stage. But when the time arrived, despite my initial panic, I was surprised at how easily the words came. I was acting. Even more astonishing, my performance moved the audience.

I cannot overstate the confidence that resulted from that moment. I would not have been on the founding team of F5 Networks, taking the company public and ultimately replacing Kodak on the S&P 500, if I had not taken that drama class. That monologue and my honors project gave me the courage and the creative, innovative, and entrepreneurial tools that I needed to be successful.

As president of Lyon College, my goal is to provide an equally powerful, mentored experience to the students of today and tomorrow. And it is imperative not just for Lyon to carry on its liberal arts legacy. Liberal arts colleges and universities have never been more relevant to future students and their careers, and these institutions continue to lead the way in providing incoming generations with a critical intellectual and creative foundation.

Freedom of thought

Founded in the American colonies and later on the frontier, the nation's liberal arts colleges were charged with providing a broad-based education that would prepare students for a wide variety of professions. These early institutions looked to the ancient Greeks and Romans, who, keenly aware that a successful republic required creative free thinkers, developed *artes liberales*—subjects and skills worthy of a free person. In the new American republic, liberty, freedom, and freethinking were paramount concerns of an educated citizen. This is the basis of the liberal arts college, but it is just the beginning. The frontier is a perpetual process of reinvention and renewal that brings us to the

> **MY VIEW**
>
> **Liberal arts institutions continue to lead the way in providing incoming generations with a critical intellectual and creative foundation.**

W. JOSEPH KING *is president of Lyon College. He is coauthor, along with Brian C. Mitchell, of* How to Run a College: A Practical Guide for Trustees, Faculty, Administrators, and Policymakers (*Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018*).

modern liberal arts college, an institution deeply committed to creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit. These skills are often cited among the top abilities sought by twenty-first-century employers, along with critical thinking, leadership, communication, and collaboration.

The incoming generation of college students—Gen Z—embodies this spirit. The members of this group have been steeped in building, simulation, and gaming their entire lives. Born between 1997 and 2012,[1] with the oldest already on our campuses, they have created vast structures and machines in Minecraft, developed elaborate strategies in Dota 2, and built complicated objects using 3D printers. At school—in addition to singing in the choir, playing on the basketball team, or competing with the debate club—they learned to design web pages, build robots for competitions, and tell stories with video.

Authenticity and the value of experience matter to members of Gen Z.

Authenticity and the value of experience matter to them.[2] In a 2016 Adobe survey, 77 percent of Gen Z respondents in the United States said that they felt a variety of jobs required creativity.[3] During their professional careers, they will hold several of these kinds of jobs (some of which do not yet exist), move between industries, continue their professional development, and seek out lifelong learning opportunities. Members of the baby boom generation held nearly twelve jobs during their careers,[4] and members of Gen Z could hold even more.

Liberal arts colleges and universities are at the forefront of preparing students to navigate this future world of work and have aggressively integrated creative inquiry into their student experiences. In 2007, Oberlin College established a Creativity and Leadership program "designed to encourage students to put their innovative ideas into practice."[5] It has subsequently grown into the Center for Innovation and Impact. In 2008, Middlebury College established the MiddCORE program to support idea creation, design, collaboration, strategic thinking, leadership, and persuasive communication. One 2015 participant reflected, "I'm no longer afraid to take risks or put myself in uncomfortable yet growth-fostering situations. I am a stronger, more confident, more empowered version of myself."[6] At Beloit College, the Center for Entrepreneurship in Liberal Education,

established in 2004, helps students "originate, plan, and execute their own entrepreneurial projects . . . [and] develop the skills necessary for self-employment through actual practice."[7] In all three examples, the colleges have found ways to foster creativity and innovation through programs that supplement the curriculum in substantive ways. This gives students the freedom to grow through self-directed, creative inquiry.

Providing financial support and structure can also go a long way. At Princeton University, the Martin A. Dale '53 Summer Awards give selected sophomores a stipend "to pursue worthy projects that provide important opportunities for personal growth, foster independence, creativity, and leadership skills, and broaden or deepen some area of special interest."[8] At Lehigh University, the Mountaintop Initiative offers both summer funding and a special space—a former Bethlehem Steel research laboratory atop South Mountain—to support creative and innovative projects of students who apply via a competitive process. Faculty members serve as mentors, and student responses have been very positive. "You are the master of your own fate," 2014 Lehigh graduate Ivy Ochieng said in describing her experience at Mountaintop. "You make the rules."[9]

Most liberal arts colleges and universities have embedded creative inquiry into their signature core programs. The College of Wooster's APEX program seeks to integrate student learning, linking the wider world to creative and critical inquiry. At Washington & Jefferson College, the Magellan Project provides students working on individually conceived projects with funding and faculty support in the summer. At Allegheny College, the Gateway program provides a support structure for students to explore their own creative interests and apply what they learn. At Lyon College, we are in the process of revitalizing our core by embedding creativity, innovation, and interdisciplinary thought across all four years of the student experience. Our goal, like those of our peer institutions, is to provide a sandbox where students can grow through intellect and innovation.

A creative circle

Back in that drama class at Southwestern University, the professor challenged us to put more of our creative selves into the exercises. My fellow students and I slowly came to understand that any character that emerged from our performances

Class of 2016 Southwestern University student Kelsey Baker unites the principles of mathematics and computer science in the form of large-scale oil paintings. The pictorial compositions aim to inspire visceral, emotional responses from the viewer.

came entirely from our imaginations. We learned to trust our creative instincts. That was one of the most important lessons of my life, and I am not sure I would have learned it any other way.

In 2000, I endowed a creativity fund at Southwestern to foster this same sort of self-discovery. Its purpose is to support innovative and visionary projects of enrolled students, supporting multiple projects every academic year with grant awards ranging from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars. Since its inception, the fund has supported nearly two hundred independent, curricular, and cocurricular projects. The range of topics has been exceptionally broad. Students have designed and built electric cellos, Tesla fans, and thermal solar refrigerators. They have developed algorithms to drive the composition of large-scale paintings and perfect pottery glaze. They have sculpted, painted, sung, danced, and performed all manner of theatrical productions. One group formed a drum corps—the lack of a football team and marching band notwithstanding—to boost school spirit. There has been a peace conference, a teen summit, arts festivals, and a television station.[10]

Finally, through the creativity fund, students have conducted dozens of scientific studies, ranging from lucid-dream induction and chimpanzee social learning to sonic desalinization and serotonin analysis. Graduates have gone on to be scientists, artists, doctors, entrepreneurs, teachers, lawyers, and diplomats, to name just a few of their varied professions.

The fund is one example of the ways in which liberal arts colleges highlight how creative inquiry shapes and encourages the intersection of critical and original thought and remains essential even with the radical changes in global society.

> **Our goal, like those of our peer institutions, is to provide a sandbox where students can grow through intellect and innovation.**

Class of 2016 Southwestern University students Julia Sykora and Allison Young work on their King Creativity Fund project "3D Mathematical Models for the Blind," which will help engage math learners with physical impairments.

As Taylor Hutchison, a 2016 Southwestern graduate now studying for a doctorate in astronomy, wrote to me, "I really don't think that I would have had the same opportunities if I had not been able to participate [in these creative activities] for two years of my undergraduate career." Like Taylor, I do not think I would have had the same opportunities, either. That is why I have devoted my career to creativity and liberal education. In combination, they are a powerful force in preparing this generation of students and many generations to come. ⬜LE

NOTES

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■ ■ ■

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public standing of liberal education by making quality and equity the foundations
for excellence in undergraduate education in service to democracy.
We are truly grateful for all that you do to further our shared objectives.

—LYNN PASQUERELLA, PRESIDENT

Philanthropic support has been crucial to my longtime work in faculty development,
curriculum reform, and preparing future faculty in hundreds of colleges and universities.
Thank you for joining me in supporting this blue-ribbon association
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