

Designing a Liberal Arts Curriculum that Develops
the Capacity for Effective Practice

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Prepared for

“Liberal Education and Effective Practice”

a national conference co-sponsored by

Clark University

and the Association of American Colleges and Universities

Worcester, Massachusetts
March 12-13, 2009

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Our role in this conversation, as a former president and a former dean, is to ask from an administrative perspective how experiential learning opportunities can enrich an undergraduate liberal education and produce graduates who are prepared to grapple, imaginatively and responsibly, with complex challenges they will face throughout their lives. Our task in this paper is to offer a commentary on some of the pragmatics involved in leading an institution dedicated to the liberal arts and sciences, and biased toward pure intellectual attainment, to take more seriously the challenge of educating students for effective and ethical practice in the world. An administrative perspective requires that we begin by locating ourselves in the present, which is, as it happens, a fitting portal into our discussion of a pedagogy that endeavors to teach the art of “practical reasoning”¹ and that anchors itself in context as a first principle.

The context for decisions in colleges and universities about how to set priorities and allocate resources has changed dramatically in just the few months leading up to this conference. Although some endowments have been hit harder than others, even the wealthiest and best-positioned institutions are ensnared in significant cost cutting exercises with no clear end in sight. All educational institutions, private and public, rich and poor, large and small, are necessarily preoccupied with questions about the potential damage of the global economic crisis on their short-term revenues and their longer-term fortunes. Few are in a mood, at this moment of anxious uncertainty, to be considering new initiatives.

And yet, the most fruitful question leaders can be asking in a time of crisis is not how can we get through this, but who do we want to be coming out of it.² That question, in our case, entrains a second one: In what ways did the higher education system in the United States, and specifically, undergraduate liberal education, contribute to the

conditions that led to this crisis? One thing we as a society can hope our institutions of higher learning will elect to be, as the country emerges from the acute phase of the meltdown in its financial markets, is self-reflective and willing to assume responsibility—with others—for rebuilding the trust in institutions that has been shattered. And how much faith can we place in an educational system that has had a hand in producing graduates with the habits of mind and of heart that have brought us to the current state of economic paralysis? The historic moment in which we find ourselves, then, can be said to call, above all else, for the most profound sort of collective experiential learning.

I. Definitions and the Literature on Liberal Learning for Action

At the outset, our primary challenge is to define our broad topic sharply enough to locate it in a diffuse literature. The question we are asking—how a liberal educational might best produce people who will become “effective” actors in a complex world—draws us into at least two fundamental arguments, one on the aims of education in an ever-changing world, the other on the nature of learning in a rapidly advancing field of cognitive and learning science. We focus in this paper on the former, where we confront a long history of disagreement over whether a liberal education should be shaping actors of any kind at all, a “debate between utilitarian and non-utilitarian philosophers of education ... as old as the modern college,”³ Louis Menand wrote in a 1997 collection of essays.

*The Unsettled Aims of a Liberal Education?*⁴

Edited by Robert Orrill and published by the College Board, *Education and Democracy: Re-imagining Liberal Learning in America*, traced the historical debate on the aims of a liberal education and described an “unsettled state of mind” at the end of the twentieth century, as, indeed, there had been at the end of the nineteenth. Writing in the

late 1990s, Orrill characterized the field as “bereft of any forceful theoretical direction or unifying philosophical definition,” and beset by “educational confusion.”⁵ Menand wrote of a “staleness” that had “crept” into a low-stakes conversation limited to “tinkering around the edges” of laissez-faire curricula. He and others in that volume looked to John Dewey as “the philosopher most firmly associated with the conception of education as social and practical, rather than abstract and book driven.”⁶ If there were forces for change, the collection implied, they were outside of the academy, in demographic shifts that were producing a new population of college students making new demands on the more diverse colleges in which they were matriculating. As for Ivy League students, Menand wrote, they “will move on almost automatically to professional school or to high-status employment where their training will be taken care of.” So if they complete college not knowing “in a concrete way how the world works, or how to work it ... they’ll get that later.”⁷

Others writing in the same volume did see sources of pressure on all institutions of higher learning, including those serving elites. Ellen Lagemann framed them in terms of the knowledge students would need in a world and “at a time when change has become constant.” All of us, she wrote, will need to be able “to think in action, to understand the indeterminacy of knowledge ... to articulate, test, and revise [our] thoughts in conversations with others.”⁸ James Kloppenberg argued that the project of a liberal education should be “making lives more significant, not just more successful.” This would require that students develop the “cognitive, ethical and political tools for ... [lives in which] inner joy, courage, and endurance are joined with an ideal.” To prepare for such a life, as to live it, he wrote, invoking the pragmatists and especially William James, it “is necessary to back one’s ideals with virtuous activity.”⁹

Martha Nussbaum invoked the Greeks in her 1997 book, *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*. She emphasized “cultural diversity and increasing internationalization” as factors that were changing the essential tasks of a liberal education, an education that should cultivate “a whole human being for the functions of citizenship and life generally.” Nussbaum discussed three capacities that would be essential for “becoming a educated citizen ... and learning how to be a human being capable of love and imagination ... First is the capacity for critical examination of oneself and one’s traditions; [second is] an ability to see themselves not simply as citizens of some local region or group but also, and above all, as human beings bound to other human beings by ties of recognition and concern. ... Third ... is the narrative imagination ... the ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person’s story.”

She envisioned those capacities emerging out of a “community of reason” and of “argument” that was working to extend the Socratic ideal of “making truth ... publicly available to all who can think ... [by bringing] sustained unrelenting philosophical argument to bear on issues of communal concern.”¹⁰ A “successful democracy needs citizens who examine tradition,” she wrote. So it must be successful at integrating “previously excluded groups as citizens with equal respect [by] realizing their capacities for rational autonomy and Socratic self-examination.” In this project, she asserted, “our institutions of higher education have a major role to play,” and she took comfort in her impression that “many talented and committed young faculty”—more than ever before—are thinking about how to connect education with citizenship in our times.

The Unsettled State of the American Higher Education Enterprise

That may be, but major concerns remain in contemporary writings about the status and focus of higher education in the United States. Critics of undergraduate education from outside the academy—and advocates from deep within—continue to describe a worrying state of affairs. Many have concluded that the system has serious enough deficiencies in access, quality, and costs to cast doubt upon the nation’s long-term capacity to sustain its standard of living in a newly competitive global economy. The language used to describe these deficiencies has been more or less alarmist depending on the source, but even the most loyal insiders have seen “underachievement,”¹¹ an “erosion of trust,”¹² the end of a “golden age.”¹³ When talk turns to the liberal arts college, it has been “embedded in one or another narrative of decline.”¹⁴

The major trade associations and foundations have been sponsoring initiatives aiming to improve teaching, measure and strengthen student learning, widen financial accessibility, enhance accountability and transparency, contain costs. An ambitious project recently completed by this conference’s co-sponsor, the Association of American Colleges and Universities, named the diagnosis in its title, “Greater Expectations.” America’s colleges and universities are good, but not good enough; society ought to have greater expectations of them, and they ought, in turn, to have greater expectations of the students they certify as educated.

In a similar vein, a 2007 report from the National Academies, *Rising Above the Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future*, laid out “the top ten actions, in priority order, that federal policymakers could take to enhance the science and technology enterprise so that the United States can successfully compete, prosper, and be secure in the global community of the twenty-first century.” Even

as it identified concrete steps, and before the economy cratered, the report expressed deep concern: “Although the US economy is doing well today, current trends ... indicate that the United States may not fare as well in the future. ... This nation must prepare with great urgency to preserve its strategic and economic security.”

As the critics call for urgency, a sense of stalemate permeates much of the literature, a recognition that deep structural paralysis in the academy prevents problems from being addressed, much less resolved. William Massy warns that the day will come when global competitive forces will require “American institutions to support their quality claims with data rather than reputation.” Prestige has been “the chief arbiter of market power,” he writes, but the changing global market may undermine traditional hierarchies. If so, “prestige-based institutions” may be hard pressed to adapt. They are “inward-looking, preoccupied with what they are, what they value, and what they have by way of human, financial, and physical resources.” They “may be using prestige to shield themselves from accountability for educational quality.”¹⁵

Who Are We Educating—And How?

The changing global market is in part a function of world population growth (projected to meet the nine-billion mark by 2050). That growth will be concentrated in the lowest income groups of emerging nations in Latin America, the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa, signifying that “while the United States is changing, the world in which it is situated is changing at a much faster rate and in far more significant ways.”¹⁶ Summing up the potential meaning of these global trends for American colleges and universities, the director of the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education observed that: “market-based processes will ... increasingly put pressure on American higher education in all places and all modes. If we play it right, not only will increasing

globalization expand opportunities for our institutions, but the resulting competition will help stimulate improvements in our *own* institutional quality.”¹⁷ There will be winners and losers in this new more competitive world market, so “playing it right” will take place in a game in which the rules are changing as the stakes are rising.

The national demographic trends of greatest relevance to our conversation are not so much the size or distribution of the college-aged population as its composition: by 2050 the 18-24-year-old cohort will be predominantly people of color, and by 2100 will be roughly half Hispanic- and Asian-American.¹⁸ Owing to the widening gaps in access to quality education at the pre-K-12 level,¹⁹ the problem of differential preparation for college is expected to intensify, raising increasingly urgent questions about education and social justice.

In the United States we reconcile the tension between freedom and equality by convincing ourselves that our society offers equal opportunity, principally through access to educational and career advancement. As unskilled jobs have gone overseas, however, making a college degree indispensable, attention has turned to the two gradual trends that have rendered college inaccessible to growing numbers of students. First, weaknesses in the nation’s primary and secondary educational systems have left far too many students utterly unprepared for serious college-level work. Second, the rising costs of post-secondary education have rendered college unaffordable to growing numbers of families whose incomes have lagged behind rising tuition costs. In combination, according to pollster Daniel Yankelovich, these trends are making “access to higher education ... a passionate concern of our political life.”²⁰ As college becomes a greater and greater necessity in the public mind, he says, and as people worry increasingly that qualified students lack the access to a baccalaureate degree that they have earned and deserve, an

unwritten social contract is being violated. The public has been willing to accept the elitism of the academy so long as it delivers on its commitment to equitable access. “You have a three-to-five year time frame to address this issue,” he said last summer to a group of higher education leaders. After that, public resentment may push beyond “a tipping point,” stripping higher education of the public support on which it has long depended.²¹

In its landmark empirical study of access to the nation’s most selective colleges and universities, the Mellon Foundation drew a similarly ominous conclusion exclusively from demographics, independent of politics. Contending that “the major threat” to the continuing excellence of American higher education is what the book *Equity and Excellence* called “a serious supply-side block of potential college graduates,” the study warned that “the nation’s changing demography gives us no choice but to tap more effectively the talent that resides in these ‘less traditional’ pools comprised of students from racial or ethnic minorities and from poor families. There simply will not be enough ‘more traditional’ candidates to meet the needs of our country in an ever more ‘brain-intensive’ age.”²²

Some writers are more sanguine about the prospects for American higher education, and for its graduates, in an increasingly demanding world. Fareed Zakaria,²³ for example, argued recently that some of the pessimistic numbers are “wildly off the mark,” and asserted that “higher education is America’s best industry,” with a strategic advantage “so overwhelming” that it will not soon erode. Nevertheless, the general picture from a variety of perspectives is rather more tentative, with reason at least to wonder about the future standing of American higher education as one of the nation’s most successful export industries, about the ability of educated Americans to hold their own competing for high-quality jobs in globalized labor markets, about the capacity of the United States to sustain

its standard of living, and, even, about the durability of the essential pillars of a successful pluralist democracy.

It was to this last issue that Vartan Gregorian gave a particularly chilling spin in a 2004 speech. “We must reform higher education to reconstruct the unity and value of knowledge,” he said, laying the “atomization” of knowledge at the feet of the academy. Failing now to work with students at a reintegration “is a missed opportunity of staggering dimensions.” The absence of intellectual coherence leaves a vacuum in which the human “craving for wholeness” can be “manipulated by radical theologies and militant ideologies ... that practice hatred and intolerance while proclaiming superiority and exclusivity.”²⁴ How can an education lacking intellectual coherence, Gregorian seems to be asking, arouse in college students the motivation and self-knowledge and insight they will need to shape lives of meaning, promise, and purpose, lives, in the images of Parker Palmer, that align “who they are with what they do,”²⁵ or that unify “soul and role.”²⁶

What Role for What “New Agenda”?

The literature extends, of course, far beyond the few sources cited here.²⁷ And although the critics would certainly never agree that engaged or experiential education is the omnibus answer (or, in the view of many, any answer at all), what’s striking is the extent to which the diagnosis of what is wrong—lack of meaning, integration, coherence, unified goals, focus, purpose, innovation, measurable impact—resonates with the prescriptions offered in the “new agenda for higher education”²⁸ that this conference has been convened to explore.

We’ll say more about that agenda as we proceed, but for now it may be helpful to bear in mind that it has marched under various banners, some advocating process (engaged teaching and learning, experiential learning, “high-impact educational practices,”²⁹ and so

on), others outcomes (education for critical thinking, for citizenship, for “civic agency,”³⁰ for a life of learning, and so on). In both camps, it is common to encounter a cluster of pedagogies and supporting programs (including internships, service learning, fieldwork, action research, case studies, role playing, simulations, study abroad), that foster direct, personal involvement intended, in another of Palmer’s images, to connect students’ small stories to the large stories of the disciplines.³¹ They do this, in part, by structuring learning environments in which students are systematically taught to practice the art of applying concepts and theories to messy and real problems in the world.³²

Rather than attempt a comprehensive synthesis of a sizeable literature, we will draw now for a flavor of the discussion on two books from Harvard, both published in 2006 by insiders and former administrators. Then we will discuss three ongoing projects, underway over the past decade, that can be said to be at the heart of an emerging movement intent on changing the direction of higher education in America. We’ll then discuss our own experiences and extract from them, and from the literature, some questions and some inferences for leaders of colleges and universities who want to assess the meaning of this movement, or capture some of its momentum, for their own institutions.

Dissatisfaction in the Land of “Veritas”

“Something is wrong with our educational system when so many graduating seniors see consulting and investment banking as their best options for productive lives,” Harry Lewis wrote in 2006, well before everyone discovered how profoundly wrong something was with our consulting and investment banking businesses. Student career preferences will surely adjust to the fall from grace of the finance industries, but as the dust settles we should try to clarify what kind of education could prevent the systemic lapses in

judgment that brought the industry to its knees. The two Harvard books speak indirectly to this question.

In *Excellence Without a Soul: How a Great University Forgot Education*,³³ Harry R. Lewis, former dean of Harvard College, draws on historical documents to illuminate a contemporary breakdown in institutional leadership at his alma mater and life-long employer. In *Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look at How Much Students Learn and Why They Should be Learning More*,³⁴ Derek Bok, former Harvard president (who makes no reference to the controversy but who subsequently returned to the presidency in an interregnum resulting from it), lays challenges at the feet of all who are responsible for the education of American undergraduates. Implicitly the Lewis book does so as well.

Although distinctly different from one another, both books echo Gregorian's worry that colleges are failing in their responsibility to provide students the opportunities they need to make meaning for their future lives, the work Sharon Daloz Parks describes as the primary task of young adulthood, developing character and a moral compass, "asking big questions and discovering worthy dreams."³⁵

Lewis laments what he terms a "collapse of values," and pleads for "the restoration of a true core to undergraduate education, an approach to education that will turn dependent adolescents into wise adults." He wants Harvard to "inspire its students to develop a philosophy of life that brings dignity and honor to human affairs [by] signal[ing] those values in everything it [Harvard] does." And he faults not only his own institution but also the wider professoriate for abdicating its responsibility for students' learning. By avoiding the hard work of resolving their own disputes and arriving at a consensus about what "books, theories, and ideas" undergraduates should study, faculty "pawn the choices off on individual students," he writes.

Derek Bok's book is an extended reflection arguing from experience and educational research that colleges and universities "need to recognize the risks of complacency ... for all the benefits they bring [they] accomplish far less for their students than they should." He proposes eight specific "purposes" of colleges, "basic ends to which they should direct their efforts," and reviews the empirical literature on what is known about how to achieve each of the ends, confining his list to goals that have some chance of being achieved, rather than "quixotic efforts [that] waste students' time and leave them disappointed and disillusioned." Improving the clarity of goals and objectives and measuring the results is a theme that pervades the contemporary critiques.

The purposes Bok would have colleges pursue for their undergraduates are: (1) learning to communicate; (2) learning to think; (3) building character; (4) preparing for citizenship; (5) living with diversity; (6) preparing for a global society; (7) acquiring broader interests; (8) preparing for a career. Often as he is reviewing the literature on one of these goals, he pauses to note how "curious" it is "that faculty members rely so heavily on methods of teaching and assessment that seem ill suited for the goal they claim to value." His third, fourth, and eighth purposes would be viewed by many university faculty as at best quaint and possibly reactionary and overreaching, certainly not their responsibility as world-class scholars.

Bok writes at length about gaps between rhetoric and reality on the separate but related educational objectives of building character in college students, and preparing them for citizenship, two of the taken-for-granted results of a liberal education that have long been presumed to equip college students to become effective people in the world. On character, he concludes, "after so many years of ambivalence and neglect, surely it is time to address this question with the care and deliberation it deserves." On citizenship, he

argues that educators are “peculiarly dependent” on “an active, flourishing democracy,” and therefore have both self-interest and civic duty as motivation to do all they can to address the corrosive “jeopardy to the quality of American life” caused by “ignorance and apathy.”

Possibly the most troubling observation Bok makes is the now familiar complaint that most students arrive at college--*and leave*—as “naïve relativists; they think that different people have different views and that there is no valid basis for judging the opinions of others.” He blames outdated pedagogy—the continued dominance of passive rather than active learning—for the lack of “success in improving the reasoning ability of undergraduates.”

So, from these two candid and seasoned leaders of arguably the leading university in the world, we have a call to arms. It is, in part, an indictment of large research universities for pursuing “the wrong kind of success,” in Lewis’s words, allowing money to distort their missions³⁶ and competitive dynamics to eclipse sustained collective attention to the education of undergraduates. But it is, as well, a call to all institutions of higher learning to themselves become learning organizations, engaged in what Bok describes as “a campus wide process of renewal and improvement.”

II. Three Collaborative Renewal Projects

Which brings us to our three projects, all seeking in one way or another to catalyze that renewal process. The first was launched in 2005 by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). Building on its 2000 “Greater Expectations” initiative, LEAP (“Liberal Education and America’s Promise”) is designed to advance “the importance of undergraduate liberal education for all students,” and to clarify “the aims

and outcomes of a twenty-first-century college education ... what contemporary college graduates need to know and be able to do.”

Repositioning Liberal Education for the 21st Century—The AAC&U

The Association has published a series of monographs synthesizing current research and advancing “an emerging consensus, about the kinds of learning Americans need from college.” This consensus is reflected in a set of four “essential learning outcomes” developed by the Association, which has also published its National Leadership Council’s summary of “principles of excellence,” and “frameworks for accountability,” together with the aspects of “principled and determined leadership” necessary to ensure that “all who enroll in college” and “who have placed their hopes for the future in higher education are actually achieving the kind of learning they need for life, work, and citizenship.”

At the heart of this effort to re-position and communicate the power of a liberal education is a democratizing impulse. The LEAP project strongly emphasizes experiential learning and the need to help students connect their learning with their lives. It directly challenges the notion that the purpose of a liberal education is learning for its own sake and decries the increasing bifurcation of American higher education into a two-class system: elite liberal arts study for the few and applied vocational study for the many. Rather than sit back and allow higher education to go the way of public education in America, the LEAP Council argues, if we can craft curricula that ground the study of the liberal arts and sciences in real-world problems, we will benefit all students.

Each of the Association’s four essential learning outcomes has a practical element: engaging big questions; practicing skills; developing personal and social responsibility through active involvement in communities; and demonstrating the ability to integrate

acquired knowledge and skills across a range of settings and problems.³⁷ The original LEAP report highlights 16 exemplary colleges or educational systems, and the Association website regularly features new exemplars, as do other organization websites, notably Campus Compact,³⁸ the American Association of State Colleges and Universities,³⁹ and others.⁴⁰

Documenting Effective Practices--The NSSE

The second project, the National Survey of Student Engagement, is now collaborating with AAC&U, which has published a new monograph bringing the two efforts together.⁴¹ For years, George D. Kuh has been refining a measurement strategy for assessing the degree to which a package of curricular and co-curricular offerings is drawing students into specific learning activities that educational research⁴² has linked to student satisfaction and achievement. This work is oriented toward the overarching theme of “talent development,” that is, taking institutional responsibility for meeting students where they are, supporting their success irrespective of their preparation, and creating the conditions that will enable them to maximize their potential.⁴³ Out of this work has come the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the NSSE Institute for Effective Educational Practice at Indiana University, and the Documenting Effective Educational Practices (DEEP) project, a two-year study of 20 four-year colleges and universities selected for their high scores on the NSSE.⁴⁴

The “high-impact educational practices” include: “first-year seminars and experiences; common intellectual experiences; learning communities; writing-intensive courses; collaborative assignments and projects; undergraduate research; diversity/global learning; service and community-based learning; internships; and capstone courses and

projects.” These practices encourage active learning, student retention, student engagement, and personal development, learning outcomes that are operationalized in the NSSE and quantified in student surveys. Publications from the DEEP project, especially the 2005 book, *Student Success in College: Creating Conditions that Matter*, describe in detail the key components of each of the high-impact practices, illustrated with examples from the high-scoring schools.

Colleges and universities that participate in the NSSE are provided comparative data from peer institutions, as well as national norms. In addition, individual survey items are aggregated into five “benchmarks of effective educational practice” that are also compared to the peer and national samples and to groups of high-performing schools. The benchmark constructs are: level of academic challenge; active and collaborative learning; student-faculty interaction; enriching educational experiences; and a supportive campus environment. *Student Success in College* elaborates the elements that make up these benchmarks and amplifies them with many concrete illustrations from site visits to the DEEP schools and extensive survey data. It lists “conditions worth emulating” at the end of each chapter and concludes with more than fifty pages of “guiding principles for promoting student success” in three categories (“tried and true,” “sleepers,” and “fresh ideas”), as well as recommendations for institutional leaders. There is much practical wisdom here.

Sizeable and increasing numbers of colleges and universities are using the NSSE instrument, at last count on the order of 1,200 in the U.S and Canada.⁴⁵ This effort is picking up steam and is bringing into the councils of higher education a line of educational research that had been largely overlooked by faculty and administrators whose disciplinary allegiances were with the liberal arts and sciences, not the study of pedagogical practice. A

number of foundations, notably Teagle, Spencer, Mellon, and others are funding empirical studies that are uniting these worlds.

Educating for Civic and Political Engagement—the Carnegie Foundation

The third stream of work we are highlighting comes out of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Over the past decade, Carnegie has been engaged in two lines of investigation that are germane to our thinking about education for effective action in the world; the two converged in a synthetic project of special relevance to our topic of the capacity for effective practice. Anne Colby and Tom Ehrlich arrived at Carnegie in the late nineties and led a study of undergraduate education for moral and civic development that drew on scholarly work each of them had done elsewhere.⁴⁶ While conducting that study, which led to their 2003 book, *Educating Citizens: Preparing America's Undergraduates for Lives of Moral and Civic Responsibility*,⁴⁷ they found many examples of campuses emphasizing civic engagement in general but few attending to education specifically for involvement in the political sphere, even broadly defined.

Thus was born their second collaboration, the Political Engagement Project (PEP), which culminated in the 2007 book, *Educating for Democracy: Preparing Undergraduates for Responsible Political Engagement*.⁴⁸ At the same time and place, William Sullivan was leading a group that was studying and comparing education for the professions, including law, engineering, medicine, nursing and teaching. Of the several monographs produced by that project, the one of greatest salience for us is the 2008 capstone, *A New Agenda for Higher Education: Shaping a Life of the Mind for Practice*.⁴⁹

Educating Citizens singled out and analyzed 12 institutions the authors found to be placing a high priority on moral and civic education as evidenced in a “holistic” and “multifaceted” strategy aimed at building these learning objectives “into the heart of” the

experiences of all their students. The 12 were selected for in-depth study from a larger universe of noteworthy schools in order to cover a wide range of institutional types. The study was designed to demonstrate the feasibility of providing robust programs of moral and civic education across the higher education system “for the diverse student population of U.S. college students in the twenty-first century.”

Educating for Democracy studied courses and co-curricular programs rather than institutions, 21 altogether, selected for their focus on political learning, their use of at least one “pedagogy of engagement,” their relative stability, and, again, their range across types of institutions, students, courses and programs and, presumably, then, their ability to represent the U.S. college student population at large. Like the prior study, *Educating for Democracy* included in-depth interviews with faculty, program leaders and students but it went a step farther and administered a quantitative pretest-posttest evaluative survey to measure students’ satisfaction and evidence of their “political learning.”

Both books meticulously defined the conceptual and theoretical terrain they were traversing. They specified goals and desired learning outcomes, examined controversies and questioned conventional wisdom. Both described effective pedagogies and discussed in detail the range of factors associated with success, citing many concrete examples of moral, civic, and political education initiatives that seemed to work. Insisting that programs like these are most effective when aligned with and capitalizing on the institution’s own mission, culture and strengths, both studies stressed that there is no one formula for success. But they also recommended principles and strategies, and connected their readers to a line of reasoning, a body of research and a field of practice replete with persuasively buttressed and thoughtfully organized advice from the front.

III. An Emerging Consensus

The essential messages from all three of these projects is that much is known about how to educate college students to become “positive forces in the world ... willing to act for the common good and capable of doing so effectively,”⁵⁰ that a sizeable and growing number of American institutions, representing virtually all types, is making this goal a priority, and that a great deal more can be done to advance this as a national ethos for American higher education across all sectors and for all students.

This literature abounds in practical wisdom in the form of guidelines, principles and best practices from dozens of case studies. Every institution is different, we are reminded repeatedly, and because educating the whole student requires a special kind of holistic learning, the most successful programs embody a learning culture seen as both pervasive within an institution and particular to it. Nevertheless, there are lessons to be learned from institutions that seem to be doing the most to educate their students for effective practice in the world. They are:

- integrating effective practice as an intellectually rich subject of sophisticated study in multiple departmental and interdepartmental offerings across the undergraduate curriculum and at each stage of a student’s college career;
- employing teaching strategies that include “pedagogies of engagement,” designed to connect with students on the emotional as well as the intellectual level, support complex learning of problem-solving, communication, and interpersonal skills, and enhance the likelihood that knowledge will be both retained and applied or transferred to situations different from the ones in which it was learned;

- surrounding classroom learning with exciting and thought-provoking co-curricular opportunities that test students' learning on real-world problems, build their confidence, develop specific skills, and motivate reflective practice;
- supporting this emphasis on education for action through recognition and incentives for faculty and staff participants and advocates;
- reinforcing it through signals conveyed in the campus' physical, social and cultural environment and its institutional relationships and conduct;
- championing it at the highest levels of the institution, and
- turning their attention to how to assess the impact of these interventions, an area that all agree needs further development.

Three Unanswered Questions

After reviewing this literature, we were left with three lingering questions. First, despite careful and repeated caveats in each of these projects about limitations inherent in the research designs and dangers of over-generalizing from one setting to another, we wonder about the downside of the dominant strategy in the major research and demonstration projects we have presented here. All have cast a wide net to show the applicability of their findings across all types of institutions serving all types of students. But that approach universalizes at the expense of particularities, the devil that's in the detail. Complexities in institutional cultures, governance traditions, resource constraints, student demographics, and the local nature of faculty work, among many factors, may go a long way toward explaining why this well-lit path is not a thoroughfare. Reading the literature, one scratches one's head and wonders why everyone doesn't just do it. Could it be that it's just not that easy, we keep asking ourselves.

Second, we sensed a gap between the ambitions of the “movement” (as we are calling this effort to rally educational institutions around a new conception of liberal education) and the specific initiatives and programs being offered as testimony to its potential. If Bok, and Lewis, and Gregorian, and the AAC&U Council, and the National Academies, and the many other contemporary critics of higher education are justified in the claim that undergraduate education needs to be fundamentally rethought, then AAC&U’s guidelines, Kuh’s engaged pedagogies and Carnegie’s civic, moral, and political education are steps in the right direction, it seems clear, but short steps on a long journey. What’s holding us back? The answer resides, we suspect, in our third question.

In the literature we find instances of faculty leaders as the driving force behind an institution’s commitment to these new kinds of experiential learning. And we also find recognition of the skepticism that arises in many faculty quarters, the resistance of which Derek Bok wrote so poignantly. Our overriding impression, from scanning the literature and from our own experience, is that if the new agenda (or any agenda) for higher education is to become a movement, it must first confront a double bind: widespread faculty support is a *sine qua non* for significant progress, and widespread faculty support is elusive at best. Our third question, then, is what would it take to win faculty allegiance to this new agenda.

Faculty Allegiance to and through Practical Reason

This brings us to *A New Agenda for Higher Education*, the most recent Carnegie book in the series. We found it intriguing because it plunges headlong into the world of faculty. And it writes a bolder prescription better matched to the diagnosis of where liberal education has been falling short. The prescription, elegantly argued, is to widen the aperture on the aims of a college education to encompass not only the ubiquitous but

elastic goal of “critical thinking,” but also, more broadly, “practical reason,” of which critical thinking is but one step or stage (a “moment” in Dewey’s term).⁵¹ The critical or theoretical moment is a mid-point in an iterative and cyclical three-way process of entering and interpreting a situation, applying theory and abstract analysis, then re-entering the world of practice to test the analysis, in a larger frame of meaning, against concrete details and a felt sense of the goodness of fit.

“Education for practical reasoning,” which the authors trace back to the European Renaissance and re-anchor in contemporary theories of mind, “grounds the meaning of critical rationality in human purposes that are wider and deeper than criticism.” Those purposes are partly cultural, passed down through the generations, and partly social, constructed in interpersonal relationships. Practical reasoning is fundamentally social, and it is developmental. “It values embodied responsiveness and responsibility over the detached critical expert. ... [Its] educational goal ... is the formation of persons who think and act through a back-and-forth dialogue between analytical thought and the ongoing constitution of meaning.”⁵² It focuses the student on forming an identity, one that is forged in a social context and takes responsibility for judgments, decisions and actions through “imaginative engagement of the needs of others.”

The book is unusual in the way it unfolds the story of a faculty research seminar, the narrative of which illustrates both the complexity and the appeal of practical reasoning as a mode of sense making. Practical reasoning becomes both the subject of the seminar and its process, both message and medium. We are shown how the seminar participants studied practical reasoning by practicing it, working from the particular to the general and back—from narrative to analysis to interpretation. This was a very different process from the usual detached academic argument that begins and ends in generalizing theory. The

narratives from which the seminar participants worked were stories of their own experiences as teachers of courses intended to provoke their students to grow an awareness of themselves as reflective and responsible agents in the world.

Fourteen seasoned teachers participated in the “Life of the Mind for Practice” seminar, meeting four times between September 2002 and December 2003, with serious work conducted at a distance between sessions. Participants were selected to bridge the two worlds of professional education on the one hand and, on the other, education of undergraduates in the liberal arts and sciences. All were “teachers whose pedagogies exemplified the challenge of placing formation for lives of reasoned action at the center of their educational mission,” a commitment that the authors note “cuts across the grain of mainstream academic aspiration.” The impetus for the seminar was the avowedly “startling” idea, proclaimed in the book’s opening sentence, that “professional and liberal education practitioners need one another’s pedagogical insights.”⁵³

Through a flexible process, including missteps that became occasions for learning, the group gelled over the 15 months into a candid and trusting “dialogic community.” Members explored challenges in their own classrooms, listened to one another, and hammered out a deeper and fuller appreciation of the values informing their own teaching and of aspirations they shared. They explored how good teaching in the liberal arts and sciences hones students’ skills in interpretation and analysis, while students in professional schools, who are taking up roles and responsibilities, learn that traditions of interpretation and analysis find their meaning in actual cases, as an aid to reasoned judgment and skilled action. When the two worlds are brought together, both are enriched. What analysis and critical thinking dissect, judgment and responsibility weave together into a larger mosaic. And higher education reaches for its higher calling where theory and interpretation

contribute to “the active formation of new narratives of individual and collective identity and responsibility.”⁵⁴

The seminar’s emphasis on narrative as an organizing principle and a theoretical platform draws on Jerome Bruner’s distinction between analytical and narrative cognitive styles, the latter forming meaning through metaphor and analogy and the integration of sense experience from encounters in the social and physical worlds. “Narrative without analysis can be naïve,” Sullivan and Rosin write, “but analysis without narrative is literally meaningless.”⁵⁵ Taking that as our cue, we turn now to our own story, hoping it may shed light on the force fields within the academy that support the status quo and on the difficulty of moving an institution toward a wider perspective on its educational mission. Much of the available literature omits or downplays setbacks and failures, making the volatile work of institutional change appear linear and tidy in the hands of heroic leaders. Our story is emergent and fluid, a process of planting seeds, trusting that they would germinate, improvising interventions when something went awry, running experiments, watching them bear fruit, adjusting our strategy, learning from mistakes, all the while refining our appreciation of what was at stake and why.

IV. Our Experiences Leading a Faculty

When one of us (DCW) arrived at Wellesley College in 1993 to lead her alma mater as president, she was met by a faculty uncertain of its ability (or defiant in its inability) to reach consensus on its educational philosophy. Consciousness of this inability, lodged deep within the college’s culture and governance structures, was alive in the fresh memory of a debacle at the close of a high-profile planning process. The faculty at large

had debated and rejected, *seriatim*, all but one minor item in a package of curricular recommendations advanced by a prestigious faculty committee.

A Three-Year Labor Reviewing the Curriculum

To neutralize feelings of defeat and polarization, a newly appointed dean, Nancy Kolodny, was determined to lead her faculty colleagues in a successful restructuring of the curriculum. So determined was she that, as a member of the presidential search committee, she made it a point to secure from all the candidates their affirmation that, if selected, they would stand squarely behind the effort. To her question at the interview, “Do you support periodic reviews of the curriculum?” the correct response was self-evident, even if the subtext was opaque. It wasn’t long, though, before we had all hands on deck in a complicated and high-stakes curriculum review that became a major focus of the first three years of the Walsh presidency. It was the main event at faculty meetings and a subject of discussion at every meeting of the trustees.

At the outset, many faculty were resistant, or even hostile to the idea of another potentially divisive effort to air and argue their differences about the most essential elements of the college’s educational program. Sweeping curricular changes were rare and required ratification by a two-thirds majority of Academic Council. Individual courses and departmental offerings were constantly being redesigned or modified, but these local adjustments could be effected privately or collegially, outside of the formal rules-making processes. Innovation germinated locally, in the imaginations of inventive teachers, stimulated by the feedback of curious students, and in the creativity of departments unsatisfied with the status quo. While this process did continuously revitalize course and departmental offerings, it failed to address the coherence of the overall student experience

and did not coalesce the faculty in its collective responsibility for the quality of every student's education.

So the rookie president threw the weight of her new office into the deans' efforts to muster the faculty behind a process they were inventing on the fly. She also created a second associate deanship to focus on curricular renewal and, with the dean, recruited the other of us (LC) to that position. Ultimately, the deans enlisted over 160 volunteers (from a faculty of 225) to work for two years on five task forces and then convened another faculty working committee drawn from the task forces to work over the summer synthesizing the many recommendations and thrashing out priorities.

Walsh's third academic year opened with the synthesis report as the focus of extensive discussion among all constituencies and in all relevant standing committees of the governance structure. Student leaders canvassed and communicated student sentiment on the proposals and helped shape the discussion with intelligent and measured input. The trustees remained steadfast in their interest and their determination not to interfere. The faculty were splintered and the odds of reaching a consensus on many issues seemed small. We were saying at every opportunity that the review process itself had been beneficial, whatever the outcome might be. The deans were listening to many voices, modifying the proposals, mobilizing the silent majority, and titrating when to exert pressure and when to pull back.

In the end, the faculty approved, by a solid margin, a new quantitative reasoning requirement,⁵⁶ entirely revamped distribution requirements,⁵⁷ and the opportunity to offer half-unit courses. This third provision, deceptively innocuous, was a foot in the door for new kinds of teaching and learning—including experiential courses—an offer of flexibility for faculty who might want to try out new structures and techniques. Beyond these changes

to the curriculum, the three-year conversation had stimulated the faculty's thinking about pedagogy, the quality of intellectual life, and the aims of a Wellesley education, big topics we revisited repeatedly over subsequent years. We convened working groups and task forces and commissioned in-depth studies to review many aspects of the college experience: "global education," the advising system and the first-year experience, the evaluation of faculty teaching and student learning, technology-assisted learning, interdisciplinary research and teaching, the role of the department chair, the state of the honor code, the contributions of diversity to educational excellence, and the role of experiential learning at Wellesley.

Building Structures for Experiential Learning

Immediately on the heels of the curriculum review, we took advantage of the door that had been opened by the faculty vote to permit half-unit courses and commissioned a working group on experiential learning. Walsh asked Cuba to co-chair that working group with the director of the Center for Work and Service (CWS). We had created this administrative department, directed by a seasoned associate dean of student life, in a merger the previous year of a long-standing career services office and a newer center for community service. We wanted CWS to be a resource to which students would look throughout their four years at college and long after graduating. The dual chairmanship of the working group signaled our desire to bridge the gap between the administrative units responsible for academic life and student life and to forge stronger links between faculty and administrators. Too, we wanted to encourage a more comprehensive perspective on the challenge of how to help students weave together disparate elements of their college careers.

The group's 1996 report, "Translating the Liberal Arts Experience into Action," put forth a rationale and a strategy for expanding service and experiential learning. Citing 1994 data that indicated a relatively high level of participation by Wellesley students in internships and other forms of experiential learning (45% of graduating seniors, compared to a median among 31 comparison schools of 31%),⁵⁸ the group noted that opportunities for students "to tie their internship and service experiences to their classroom learning are informal and idiosyncratic, leaving undeveloped a fertile area pedagogically."

Granting that its proposals would "require a considerable shift in perceptions and attitudes on the part of faculty members ... [and] a considerable process of learning ... before most faculty members would consider adopting the practices," the working group proposed a systems-change approach. The report called for a new program of faculty fellowships, faculty workshops and seminars, and a fund for course development, as well as supportive administrative structures and practices, all of which were implemented. The fellows produced working papers on aspects of experiential learning and functioned as consultants to the community on broad issues of learning and teaching at the college. They served as advisors to the CWS and met regularly to facilitate integration and advocacy of the new programs. The faculty fellows became change agents, as we had hoped they would. And the working group report fed directly into our thinking for a comprehensive fund raising campaign.

In June of 1998 we took the trustees on a retreat to review a proposed table of needs for a future campaign. In a background paper for the retreat, Walsh noted that the campaign could begin to resolve "tensions ... between the liberal arts and the new competencies, [and] between knowledge and service." If somewhat obliquely, she had put experiential learning on the table for the campaign. The trustees set a \$400-million

campaign goal, including \$20-million for internships and experiential learning. The final case statement asked donors to support the college's efforts to "provide an innovative and integrated educational experience that extends from the classroom, to the campus, to the world." The goal of ensuring that students were making vital connections—"between thought and action" and "between the college's history of privilege and its ethic of service"—resonated powerfully with donors who responded generously with endowment gifts for internships.

The college also went on to endow two all-day campus-wide conferences, each in a different way training a spotlight on the fruits of a liberal arts education. Emphasizing students' scholarly work, the Ruhlman Conference (begun in 1996), reflected the faculty's desire to break down barriers to interdisciplinary teaching and learning and to strengthen intellectual life on campus, two persistent themes from the curriculum review. "Ruhlman" was such a success that, five years later, the vice chair of the board of trustees worked with Cuba to design the Tanner Conference. It honored the students' desire to break down barriers between curricular and co-curricular learning and to integrate their education with real problems "outside the bubble."

The two conferences are held annually: Tanner in the fall as students return from summer internships, volunteer work or international study; Ruhlman in the spring just after senior theses are due. Both bring out into the public sphere activities that tend to be private; both require student participants to enlist an official faculty advisor, emphasizing that vital partnership; both stress community, collaboration, and the enactment of the ideal of living a life of learning. The Tanner Conference, in particular, echoed and extended themes developed by the working group on experiential learning. The conference was designed to span the liberal arts classroom and student action in an increasingly diverse

and interdependent world. In panel discussions, individual presentations, roundtables, poster sessions, exhibitions, multi-media presentations, and performances, the annual Tanner Conference provides a venue for students, faculty, staff, and alumnae to contemplate, analyze and exchange with others in the college community insights from their off-campus experiences.⁵⁹ It showcases the learning that occurs in a wide range of practical settings, brings alumnae back to campus to discuss how their participation in these experiences as students has enriched their lives, and exposes everyone to a wider range of possibilities for learning by doing and serving.⁶⁰

A Focus on Active Learning as One of Many Agendas

In 1999, Walsh used the selection process for a new dean of the college as an opportunity to emphasize a desired direction for the college that was becoming clearer in her own mind. She wanted a leader, she wrote to the faculty, who would work to: “(a) support faculty-student mentoring partnerships and extend them to greater numbers and types of students in a wider variety of settings and formats; (b) reach beyond the classroom to engage the problems of the world in rigorous learning encounters that cross disciplinary boundaries and foster collaborative learning; (c) strengthen the quality of campus intellectual life for students, faculty, and staff and (d) lead the faculty in a serious and extended exploration of the issues the college faces as one of the nation’s leading liberal arts colleges at a time of rapid change in higher education.”

At a trustee-faculty retreat in 2002 to assess our progress in addressing questions about the quality of a Wellesley education the concern that emerged from a lively interchange was whether *all* of our students were graduating with the knowledge and skills the faculty saw as essential to their lives, and how we knew we were meeting our educational goals. After that retreat, Cuba led a “committee on educational excellence” in a

data-driven analysis of students' educational experiences. Variations they flagged in sub-groups of students sent us down a path of inquiry and concerted action seeking to narrow achievement gaps by race and ethnicity.

In all of this, the deans' office endeavored to spend its time pursuing meaningful questions, not bureaucratic ones. They never wanted for complex knots to unravel: how to mark distinctions while sustaining community; how to evaluate teaching while protecting the faculty-student relationship; how to uphold academic integrity while enabling students to learn from mistakes; how to improve intellectual discourse while valuing academic freedom; how to shore up the values of institutional commitment and loyalty while recognizing a diversity of contributions and talents; how to innovate by substitution rather than always by accretion. An important meta-level question was never far from our minds: how to support faculty engagement in a process of continuous improvement. Faculty time was arguably our most valuable strategic asset and we wanted to be sure we were asking them to commit their time to the most important questions. That meant using data creatively and asking the right questions (a skill at which we improved). It also meant listening to faculty voices for their worries and insights about where our vulnerabilities were, and we did that well.

What we didn't do was mobilize the faculty to hammer out a unified philosophy of education, much less one that centered on an active pedagogy that would have challenged their beliefs both about their autonomy in the classroom and about what constitutes effective teaching. We were clear that our overriding goal was to continue improving the quality of what was, by all standard metrics, an excellent education. We did persistently advance the goal of asking hard questions and assembling increasingly rich empirical data

to inform our understanding of our educational strengths and weaknesses. We did cultivate a “culture of evidence.”

At the close of the five-year campaign we created another commission to assess the long cycle of incremental improvements to the college, integrating that work and projecting it forward as a way of growing the college toward its future. A year later, the commission became a vehicle to prepare the community for a presidential transition, to take stock of what had (and had not) been accomplished, and, importantly, to draw a deep breath and collect ideas and observations that might otherwise be swept under the rug as the college cleared the way for a new leader. We wanted to shape an opportunity for the college as a whole to learn from its recent history and to solidify steps it had been taking toward becoming a learning organization.

The commission discussed in some detail, and ultimately ratified, the statement that “student learning is our top priority,” a conclusion that sounds benign or even banal until you unpack its implications, as the commission began to do. The aspirations for students to which commissioners gradually gave voice, tentatively at first, became increasingly pointed and heartfelt as members experienced the shift in consciousness that can occur when people come together to learn from their differences, reveal their disappointments, and reach for a desired future they have imagined together.

In a transmittal letter with the final report, Walsh remarked on the multiplicity of story lines the college had lived in her 14 years: “All the ways in which we strengthened the college and positioned it well for the future, with a great deal of support and with the wind strongly at our backs much of the time; all the ways in which the future remains a mystery to us, how little we truly understand of the accelerating forces of change; all the things we did and learned, the problems we solved, the messes we fixed, the messes we

made; all the questions we saw and lived with tenacity, courage and heart, and the ones we could not bring ourselves to face. ... As much as we accomplished,” she wrote, “I am conscious as I prepare to go that more remains to be done. ... I stand with utter humility before the bulwarks of the status quo.”

Taking Stock

We have told this 14-year story in the hope of conveying the complexity of leading a faculty through a process of institutional change. From the outset, we were unwavering in our support of faculty who were willing to experiment with modes of active learning, faculty who were reaching outside the classroom to engage students in the problems of the world around them. We wanted to move the center of gravity gradually in the direction of Dewey’s pragmatic engagement, adding to the college’s tradition of closed classroom learning more community and service learning, moving from primarily discipline-based to more problem-based learning, and, especially, moving from individual to collaborative study in a vibrant learning community. We believed that these transitions could be supported in part by the creative use of instructional technology and more careful assessment of learning outcomes. We wanted to be sure that Wellesley was creatively engaged in these debates and was self-consciously positioned within what we saw as a growing movement in higher education, even if we found ourselves standing at times in reasoned opposition to elements of it.

In retrospect, what did we accomplish? The systems-change approach advocated in the 1996 report on service and experiential learning did move the faculty, in part because we were strategic in the faculty fellows we enlisted, in part because we avoided further faculty votes, in part because we were fortunate to secure extensive donor support. We saw our task as building meaningful faculty engagement and we learned from experience that

the faculty would not be engaged directly. When we sought to enlist them in rethinking the college's pedagogical vision, we met challenges to our authority and stalwart defense of the status quo, or conflicts between competing versions of a fragmented status quo embodied in divisional, departmental and interdepartmental politics and philosophies. We learned that the only available recourse was a different strategy, a growth strategy, working by indirection, slowly building alliances, learning along the way. We made small inroads that gradually opened wider pathways. We worked along parallel routes to shift the dynamics within the faculty, enlisting established leaders to help us remove barriers to fresh thinking.

For example, in selecting the faculty fellows recommended in the 1996 report, we began with a humanist (in classics and history), a respected full professor with a strong research record, known as a conservative despite his interest in new pedagogies. His scholarly gravitas and conservative reputation gave the faculty comfort that we would not be lowering standards. As a result of his work we devised a mechanism for students to earn credit for off-campus internships, by adapting an existing "independent study" option through which students could work with a faculty advisor to produce a significant piece of scholarly work. The half-unit course provision remained the only modification we made to the curriculum.

Our second faculty fellow, another senior historian, made her mark by establishing student internships in Africa. She began a trend among faculty with international research interests who saw that they could tap the administrative expertise of the CWS to set up student internships at home and abroad.⁶¹ Other faculty developed dozens of credit-bearing wintersession courses all over the world,⁶² many action-oriented and all enormously popular with students. This second faculty fellow also initiated a summer institute for

service learning, a ten-week summer program integrating service and study designed to increase students' understanding of social change.⁶³

As the CWS expanded its internship programs, we consciously designed them to maximize student-faculty partnerships by engaging faculty actively in all aspects of the internship process, hoping to pique faculty interest in the interface between internship experiences and the academic program. Faculty sit on the committees that interview, screen and select candidates, they shape the criteria for programs, and they write the required letters of recommendation for students applying for internships. While labor intensive, this speaks to the relevance of an internship in the student's total educational program and encourages a more fully rounded discussion between faculty and students of connections between experience in the world and classroom learning.

Another important decision was to make our internship program competitive at a time when some of our peers were guaranteeing an internship to every student as a recruiting tool. We wanted our students to have to make their case to a faculty committee that their proposed experience would have intellectual value and would enhance their program of academic study. There have been years when we have chosen not to award an internship or stipend rather than fund a weak proposal.⁶⁴

Housing the program in the CWS, which manages an extensive alumnae network for career advice, fortified the alumnae role as a backbone for the internship program, beyond their all-important philanthropic support. The CWS director sees the program as a triangle, with her team in the middle coordinating the linkages.⁶⁵ Faculty help develop the sites, visit them periodically, help to select and then prepare students through an orientation, and, at the end, serve as advisors for their Tanner presentations or credit-bearing independent studies. Alumnae and alumnae clubs ground the program in their local communities,

identify sites, mentor students and help them network, run interference when needed and host faculty who make site visits. Students are required to develop a learning contract, have a planning meeting with their supervisor, complete a mid-course self-evaluation, and write a concluding essay, as well as a report to the fellowship donor.

CWS annually administers roughly 300 Wellesley-funded student internships, most of them highly competitive. Many rely on relationships with sites the college has cultivated for years, helping to ensure a valuable experience for both the student and the host organization. Several directly involve alumnae mentors. Many are connected to academic departments.⁶⁶ And a number are international, often building on long-standing college ties to a country (e.g., Taiwan, China, Japan), or an established international study program (e.g., France, Spain, Germany) or current professional contacts of faculty members (e.g., Morocco, Uganda, Costa Rica, India, the Netherlands).

In general, the approach we took facilitated innovation by faculty inclined toward experiential learning, but probably left a less visible imprint on the entire faculty than would have been made by an initiative more deeply planted in the classroom and the academic year. In retrospect, perhaps the incentives for new course development were inadequate in amount or design; very few Wellesley courses have a service-learning component. Thus while the college has devoted significant resources to providing high-quality experiential opportunities for large numbers of students,⁶⁷ and while many of these opportunities are directly connected to the curriculum (international study and undergraduate research in particular), many others (notably internships and service opportunities) are not, leaving students on their own, in these instances, to connect what they are learning on campus to their extracurricular work.

V. Summing Up: Some Lessons Learned

As we conclude this review, we are acutely conscious of blinders we wear in our tiny corner of the nation's vast and varied landscape of institutions of higher learning. The residential liberal arts college, although a "distinctively American"⁶⁸ symbol of the very idea of "college," accounts for less than one percent of enrolled undergraduates. Yet highly-selective residential liberal arts colleges are in many ways the institutions best suited to take up the cause of producing graduates who will, as so many of their mission statements say or imply, not only make a difference in the world but make a better world. The emphasis these schools place on teaching, their intimacy of scale, the dedication and quality of their faculty, staff, and trustees, and the support they enjoy from generations of loyal graduates are great assets. So is a general feeling that at heart what they are (or should be) doing is transforming young people into responsible and caring adults with the reasoning skills, and the courage, to defend the ethical distinctions and judgments that will inform their decisions through lives of learning in the service of causes larger than themselves.

But it cannot be said that these institutions, as a group, are in the vanguard of the movement we are tracking here. Nor, as a whole, are the most selective research universities. Would it matter if they were, if Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Stanford, Amherst, Williams, Swarthmore, and Wellesley were out front leading the charge? We think it might, but we see serious obstacles to this leadership in the structures of these colleges and universities and specifically in faculty dynamics. The structural barriers are by no means unique to the top-ranked institutions, but they are most clearly visible there, not because their faculty are uniquely difficult, but because they are uniquely powerful.

These are some of the reasons to expect that change in these respected and influential institutions may be a long time coming.

In the top research universities, first of all, efforts to align one's teaching with pedagogies of effective practice do not "count" in the metrics that matter to their faculty. In a system that disproportionately rewards research over teaching, it is hard to see why faculty seeking tenured positions at prestigious universities (Ivy or not) would commit the time needed to design and incorporate new pedagogies into their courses. Given that tenured faculty are likely to be recruited from outside the university on the basis of their standing in the field, the incentives to invest in pedagogical experimentation are further diminished.

In the case of liberal arts colleges—where good teaching is expected and rewarded—many faculty remain concerned about the considerable time necessary to develop courses that contain meaningful field work components. It is not uncommon to hear senior faculty say that they were free to entertain the possibility of teaching community-based learning courses only after they were tenured; they counsel their junior colleagues to steer clear of this distraction until they have cleared the tenure bar. Given that "excellent" teaching can be defined in many ways, faculty—senior and junior alike—may harbor a realistic skepticism about the benefits of exploring pedagogies that are more likely to engage students as active learners.

Second, because many believe that pedagogies of effective practice are discipline-specific, they respond to calls for reform with the rejoinder, "That's not what I do." The well-established practice of requiring laboratory experiences in the teaching of science promotes an image of science, among both scientists and non-scientists, as closely aligned with the goals and methods of experiential education. Some social science disciplines

(most notably anthropology, psychology and sociology) have a similar appreciation of the importance of fieldwork to understanding the principal concepts of their fields (or human behavior, more broadly). For faculty working within these scholarly traditions, notions of community-based learning and research have a meaningful and historical resonance. For faculty in other fields, however, calls for new pedagogies focusing on student experience outside of the classroom may seem inappropriate and disconnected from the theoretical, methodological, or pedagogical traditions in which they work. Faculty who value close readings of texts may not immediately see why certain forms of teaching are valued over others, and those who by training and practice engage their research subjects individually may be hard pressed to see how they might collaborate on undergraduate research projects with their students. One of us (LC) recalls an interaction with a faculty colleague who expressed her distaste for the college's growing emphasis on experiential education. "Isn't my literature class an 'experience'?" she asked. "Aren't students here for the classroom experience?" If pedagogies of effective practice are to be adopted with greater frequency by faculty in these ranks, we must be able to model new ways of teaching (and demonstrate their effectiveness) across all areas of the undergraduate curriculum.

Some colleges and universities have a strategic advantage as they seek to move experiential learning more deeply into the curriculum. For those with an undergraduate core curriculum, for example, introducing an experiential component may be less radical. Others may draw on historical connections to shape a new commitment to civic engagement or may find in their current practices—re-examined and re-organized to strengthen the institution—a more coherent and compelling mission organized around the themes of engaged learning and community service.

The difficulty of incorporating experiential learning opportunities into an already crowded liberal arts curriculum may be assuaged if they can be embedded in existing courses or programs. Many schools provide resources and counsel to faculty interested in modifying their courses to include a greater emphasis on experiential learning. Others encourage students to complete independent studies or departmental honors theses with a public service component; some departments (for example, history and political science) directly note how public service can be incorporated into the major or minor program.

The ways in which experiential education is described on a campus may further influence faculty reaction to its inclusion in the curriculum. Definitions of experiential learning that are broad and inclusive leave more room for discussion and creative experimentation outside of the disciplines in which this work comes most naturally. An experiential education initiative conceived as one component of a multi-faceted, multidisciplinary, multi-year approach to liberal arts education opens multiple avenues to participation (including community-based learning, service learning courses, international travel). This curricular/co-curricular flexibility appeals to faculty and students alike.

Word choice matters too. Some faculty are more at ease referring to their students as “engaged” learners than “experiential” learners. “Service learning” may connote volunteerism and an absence of academic rigor, while “community-based research” may pass muster as legitimate fieldwork that deepens students’ understanding of disciplinary concepts taught in a traditional classroom setting. Renaming “experiential education” itself in ways that resonate with a college’s local culture may also encourage faculty discussion of its place in the liberal arts curriculum.⁶⁹

In our experience, faculty tend to be most skeptical of experiential opportunities they see as least closely aligned with a traditional liberal arts education and least relevant

to the curriculum. It is relatively easy to generate support for programs that involve study at another academic institution (in the U.S. or abroad) or for undergraduate research opportunities (within or beyond the academic year), and these programs are widespread and expanding. But when educational experiences like community-based learning take students out of the classroom (whether on or off the campus) for significant amounts of time, they threaten to crowd out time for more traditional forms of learning in an educational calendar perceived as a zero-sum game. This structural condition tends to provoke faculty debate over how undergraduates should allocate their time and what constitutes “knowledge,” “learning,” or an “educational experience.”

While debates about what constitutes a meaningful liberal arts curriculum are healthy and essential for every college and university, too often they fail to address the pointed questions that might help to promote a more nuanced discussion. If a faculty committee were to begin with a review of the extent to which a variety of experiential and active learning pedagogies are already in the curriculum and would then pursue a series of analytic questions about the degree to which they are integrated into students’ academic experiences, the conversation might shift to an exploration of how to integrate them more fully. This, in turn, would lead to a series of questions about the nature and quality of student learning. In what ways can active learning experiences enhance students’ learning? What institutional goals do these approaches address? What coherence, if any, is there among the varieties of experiential opportunities students are currently being offered? What is the relationship between traditional classroom learning and these experiential learning opportunities? How should the various experiences be sequenced in relation to the student’s college “career”? Are there specific points at which particular experiences might be most beneficial and how do the answers vary—by types of students, by disciplines, by

other factors? How do students understand the place of various experiential learning offerings in their college education? Do they share the institution's goals or are they looking for something else?

Thoughtful, sustained assessment of how and what students are learning are necessary to address questions like these, and to engage faculty in an extended conversation about the worth of innovations in experiential learning. Some faculty will have to be convinced that experiential education “matters,” but many already have a sense that it does, just as they “sense” that their own teaching is effective. Assessment efforts that provide faculty a window into their student's lives—into what students are making of their education as a whole—will be of special interest to them. Faculty and students have been absent from most discussions of assessment of student learning, even though they have the greatest stake in the outcome.

But Does It Work? The Issue of Assessment

As we noted earlier, and as the literature attests, the integration of experiential learning into a liberal arts curriculum should proceed from an articulation of the goals an institution is hoping to achieve by modifying or expanding the opportunities it offers students. This articulation is clear at many institutions that have added more opportunities for engaged learning for their students. But what evidence do institutions have that their programs are indeed achieving the learning outcomes they seek to promote?

The Teagle Foundation has, in recent years, been asking assessment questions as part of a larger effort to enhance student learning. The foundation is channeling grant funds to institutions willing to set clear educational goals for their students, systematically measure progress toward those goals, and adjust their programs and practices based on what they learn. In much of its grant making, Teagle fosters collaborations among

institutions with similar missions, programs or interests, and gives priority to “faculty-driven, ground-up assessment of student learning outcomes in the liberal arts and sciences.”⁷⁰ For the past four years Wellesley has been part of a Teagle-funded collaboration,⁷¹ the New England Consortium on Assessment and Student Learning (NECASL). Composed of seven liberal arts colleges (Bates, Bowdoin, Colby, Middlebury, Smith, Trinity and Wellesley), the collaboration focuses on critical transition points in the academic careers of students: moving from high school to college and settling in, selecting a major, deciding whether or not to study abroad or away from the campus, and engaging in capstone experiences and post-graduate planning during the senior year.⁷²

NECASL wants to understand how students make these important academic decisions, what the consequences of their decisions are, and how institutional practices (e.g., general education requirements, advising systems, first-year programs) influence (or don’t influence) students’ decision making. The administrators, faculty and students participating in the project agree that they have acquired a richer perspective on student learning by probing students’ thought processes at key decision points and mapping how students sort through the curriculum, experience intellectual and social transitions, discover their intellectual and civic passions, and develop into mature learners, engaged scholars, and responsible citizens.

The NECASL schools have used both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to assess student learning and academic decision making, but their most challenging and ambitious collaboration has been a longitudinal study of students from the class of 2010, 36 students on each campus.⁷³ These students were interviewed three times in their first year of college (2006-2007) and once each semester thereafter; they will be interviewed

once again in the year following their graduation. Six of the colleges are using upper class students as trained interviewers and the other uses faculty members.

In NECASL's organizational structure, which has evolved over the past four years, several characteristics have become special strengths. First, the project has become a meaningful collaboration among academic administrators, faculty, institutional research staff, and students. The opportunity to interact closely and regularly with those who play different roles at each school has challenged assumptions and beliefs about "what faculty or administrators think" or "what students do (or don't do.)" It has demonstrated that understanding and improving student learning is necessarily a collaborative enterprise that must attend to multiple, and sometimes conflicting, perspectives. And it has given those involved in this project the sense that they are doing something meaningful and important—not just for their home institutions—but for those interested in improving liberal arts education across the country.

The small size and relative homogeneity of the consortium has served as a foundation for mutual understanding and exploration. There are more commonalities than differences across the seven campuses in the lived experiences and perspectives of faculty, administrators, and students. But the differences highlight aspects of campus cultures and practices, and stimulate interest in the finer points of how each campus shapes its learning and teaching milieu. Faculty from one college can see themselves in the story told by a colleague at another college; students compare notes on the phenomenology of residential life, classroom experiences and degree requirements. Participants see first-hand how some institutional practices appear to be more effective than others and how discussions of change on one campus can be inspired by insights from another. Because the group's work

is grounded in local and current experiences of its members, the questions that motivate their inquiries are seen and felt as immediately relevant.

It matters, too, that these inquiries are driven by data. The NECASL project is first and foremost an assessment project informed by empirical studies of the residential, liberal arts experience of students. Most of the work of the group is devoted to collecting and analyzing information—developing and administering interview schedules and surveys, drafting coding schemes, reading course transcripts and writing samples—and then trying to make sense of what the data say about student learning. The decision to craft its own assessment instruments proved a critical factor in achieving commitment within the group; because the construction of these instruments has been a truly collaborative effort, it also signals that assessment (as a means to improving student learning) is a responsibility that faculty and students *share* with deans and institutional researchers. In particular, we view the inclusion of students as bona fide partners in this project as one of the most unique and innovative aspects of the NECASL consortium. It is manifest in the transcriptions of the interviews for the panel study that having students interview one another leads interviewees to speak candidly, and to reflect thoughtfully, about their college experiences. The interview experience invites reflection on the part of the student interviewers too, and enables them to deepen their engagement with their own educational journeys.

The collaborative activities of the NECASL schools have affected participating colleges by clarifying their own educational goals, nourishing a culture of inquiry among faculty, staff and students, and reinforcing a shared appreciation of the value of assembling empirical evidence to drive efforts to improve teaching and learning. Participants in the project have a more grounded appreciation of assessment as a recursive and dynamic process of continuous improvement. Their work has also led already to institutional

changes (in academic advising, writing instruction and first-year seminar programs) at several of the colleges. We believe that well-designed consortial structures can act as a catalyst for robust dialogue and creative experimentation with specific forms of experiential education.⁷⁴

VI. Looking Ahead

We end where we began, mindful of the current context. At a time when budgets are stressed beyond all recognition, and the air is filled with fear, many colleges and universities are hunkering down for a period of scarcity, shared pain, and conflict. If there is a moment to be seized now, it is brilliantly camouflaged. Every institution will be forced to look for positions, programs, even principles that are expendable, for costs that are tangential to the “core purposes” of the institution, a concept that will be contested by multiple interest groups. Any “new agenda” will be vulnerable to the “last-in, first-out” impulse. Because it is difficult to mobilize a faculty consensus around a major innovation, new visions of higher education are often introduced as experiments and funded with new resources raised by presidents, provosts, and deans. Experimental programs that have been running in tandem with the more traditional curriculum may be tempting targets for wholesale cutting. “We can’t afford that now,” could be the refrain. The mantra, “We will invest in student learning and success,” will be subject to multiple interpretations and distortions.

But what if an educational institution were to meet the challenges ahead in the spirit of experiential learning we have been exploring here? What might it look like to take up this historic moment as an invitation to the most profound sort of collective experiential learning opportunity? One shape such a commitment might take is outlined in a model Adam Kahane has evolved for solving tough problems.⁷⁵ What’s notable about his model,

and others like it,⁷⁶ is how much it employs principles of experiential learning, and how closely it matches the stages of practical reasoning.

After the initial steps of convening a group of people who can serve as a “microcosm of the system,” freeing them to see the problem from multiple perspectives—immersing themselves in its complexity so they can build up “a shared picture of how it works”—the process calls for a “retreat to the source of insight and commitment.” In this place and at this moment, people start to see and feel “not only what [they] need from the system, but what it needs from [them].” Only then can the group experiment with targeted interventions into the system and gradually begin to “grow ecosystems of new practices.” Over time, if it does its work well, the organization can become “a living example,” Kahane writes, “of how to solve problems peacefully,” how to find “a better way to create a better world.”⁷⁷

John Dewey argued that education for democracy should be conducted democratically, and the Carnegie Foundation conducted its seminar on practical reasoning by reasoning practically. Here, then, is a new opportunity: a civic politics for an education in civic engagement. What might it mean for a college or university community to take up the challenge of how to invigorate an inchoate civic engagement movement by developing the community’s own civic agency and civic politics⁷⁸ around the question of how to preserve, at a time of crisis, the elements of a liberal education most essential to the task of building a safer, saner, and more sustainable society? This would require expanding the singular focus on student learning and success to encompass the values of community, shared responsibility, and concern for the common good,⁷⁹ taking seriously Kloppenberg’s injunction to make significant lives, not just successful ones. And it would require taking

up the question of how to weather the current economic storms as a collective opportunity, across the campus, to find better ways to create a better learning environment for everyone.

References

¹William Sullivan and Matthew S. Rosin, in *A New Agenda for Higher Education* (Jossey-Bass, 2008) make an extended argument in favor of “practical reason” in preference to “critical thinking” as the goal of a liberal education. They draw on the work of Jerome Bruner, and John Dewey before him (as well as others, going back to Plato) to make the case. We find their position persuasive and adopt it in this paper as the ultimate goal of the variety of forms of “experiential learning” we explore.

²We are indebted to Paul Bataldin, M.D., Dartmouth University for this insight.

³Louis Menand, “Re-imagining Liberal Education,” in Robert Orrill, editor, *Education and Democracy: Re-imagining Liberal Learning in America*, The College Board, 1997: 1-21.

⁴This heading evokes Alfred North Whitehead’s classic work, *The Aims of Education*, New American Library, 1929, and also the University of Chicago collection of faculty speeches, *The Aims of Education*, University of Chicago Press, 1997.

⁵Robert Orrill, editor, *Education and Democracy: Re-imagining Liberal Learning in America*, The College Board, 1997:

⁶Menand, “Re-imagining Liberal Education,”:

⁷Menand, “Re-imagining Liberal Education,”:

⁸Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, “From Discipline-Based to Problem-Centered Learning,” in Robert Orrill, editor, *Education and Democracy: Re-imagining Liberal Learning in America*, The College Board, 1997: 21.

⁹James Kloppenberg, “Cosmopolitan Pragmatism: Deliberative Democracy and Higher Education,” in Robert Orrill, editor, *Education and Democracy: Re-imagining Liberal Learning in America*, The College Board, 1997: 94.

¹⁰Martha Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*, Harvard University Press, 1997: 20.

¹¹Derek Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges*, Princeton University Press, 2006: 113.

¹²William F. Massy, *Honoring the Trust*, Anker Publishing Co, 2003.

¹³Francis Oakley, “The Liberal Arts College: Identity, Variety, Destiny,” *Liberal Arts Colleges in American Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities*, American Council of Learned Societies, Occasional paper, No. 59, 2005: 1-15.

¹⁴Russell Edgerton, “American Imperative,” American Association for Higher Education, August 2, 2004; Louis Menand, “College: The End of the Golden Age,” *New York Review of Books*, vol. 48, no. 16: 44-47, Fall 2001. Note that, in contrast, W. Robert Connor takes issue with the language of declinism in his essay, “Last Bastion of Liberal Education,” in *Inside Higher Education*, July 24, 2006.

¹⁵Massy, *Honoring the Trust*, 2003.

¹⁶Swail, *Change*, July/August 2002: 16.

- ¹⁷ Swail, *Change*, July/August 2002: 16.
- ¹⁸ Swail, *Change*, July/August 2002: 18.
- ¹⁹ Jonathan Kozol, *The Shame of the Nation*, Crown Publishers, 2005.
- ²⁰ Daniel Yankelovich, "Ferment and Change: Higher Education in 2015, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 25, 2005: 1-11.
- ²¹ Daniel Yankelovich, "How Higher Education is Breaking the Social Contract and What to Do About It," paper presented at the 2008 Aspen Symposium of the Forum for the Future of Higher Education, at the Aspen Institute, Aspen Colorado, June 18, 2008, also see John Immerwahr and Jean Johnson, "Squeeze Play: How Parents and the Public Look at Higher Education Today," and the follow-up survey of the same title, published in December 2008.
http://www.highereducation.org/reports/squeeze_play/squeeze_play.pdf
- ²² William G. Bowen, Martin A. Kurzweil, Eugene M. Tobin, *Equity and Excellence in American Higher Education*, Princeton University Press, 2005: 250.
- ²³ Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World*, Norton, 2008: 187-199.
- ²⁴ Vartan Gregorian, "Colleges Must Reconstruct the Unity of Knowledge," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 2, 2004: 2.
- ²⁵ Parker J. Palmer, *The Courage To Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, Jossey-Bass, 1997, tenth anniversary edition, 2007: xv.
- ²⁶ Parker J. Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life*, Jossey-Bass, 2004: 21.
- ²⁷ Two very different recent books we wanted to work in but for the lack of space were Mark Bauerlein's *The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future*, Tarcher/Penguin, 2008 and Howard Gardner's *Five Minds for the Future*, Harvard Business School Press, 2007.
- ²⁸ We use this phrase, borrowed from William Sullivan and Matthew S. Rosin, *A New Agenda for Higher Education: "Shaping a Life of the Mind for Practice*, Jossey-Bass, 2008, as shorthand for the topic we are gathered to discuss.
- ²⁹ George D. Kuh, *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them and Why They Matter*, American Association of Colleges & Universities, 2008.
- ³⁰ Harry C. Boyte, "Against the Current: Developing the Civic Agency of Students, *Change*, May/June 2008, at Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching web archive: 1-9.
- ³¹ Palmer, *Courage to Teach*: 77.
- ³² Anne Colby, Thomas Ehrlich, Elizabeth Beaumont, Jason Stephen, *Educating Citizens: Preparing America's Undergraduates for Lives of Moral and Civic Responsibility*, Jossey-Bass, 2003: 135.

³³ Harry R. Lewis, *Excellence Without a Soul: How a Great University Forgot Education*, Perseus Books, PublicAffairs, 2006.

³⁴ Derek Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges*, Princeton University Press, 2006: 113.

³⁵ Sharon Daloz Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose and Faith*, Jossey-Bass, 2000.

³⁶ Derek Bok, *Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education*, Princeton University Press, 2003.

³⁷ National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America's Promise, *College Learning for the New Global Century*, American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2008.

³⁸ "Campus Compact is a national coalition of more than 1,100 college and university presidents—representing some 6 million students—dedicated to promoting community service, civic engagement, and service-learning in higher education." See <http://www.compact.org>.

³⁹ The American Association of State Colleges and Universities, <http://www.aascu.org/>, a membership organization of 430 public institutions, emphasizes the roles of its member organizations as "stewards of place," a focus that Harry Boyte argues makes them especially promising settings for promoting civic agency in their students, see Boyte, 2008: 8.

⁴⁰ A sampling of such organizations would include: Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs (HECUA), St. Paul, MN, <http://www.hecua.org/>; National Society for Experiential Education, <http://www.nsee.org/>; Project Pericles <http://www.projectpericles.org/>; Council of Independent Colleges, <http://www.cic.org/>; The Higher Education Network for Community Engagement (HENCE), <http://www.henceonline.org/>; Democracy Matters, <http://www.democracymatters.org/>; CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement).

⁴¹ George D. Kuh, *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them and Why They Matter*, AAC&U, 2008.

⁴² See, e.g., Alexander W. Astin, *What Matters in College: Four Critical Years Revisited*, Jossey-Bass, 1993; L. L. Baird, *Using Self-Reports to Predict Student Performance*, College Board, 1976; E. T. Pascarella and P. T. Terenzini, *How College Affects Students*, Jossey-Bass, 1991; A. W., Chickering and Z. F. Gamson, "Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education," *AAHE Bull.* **39**(7): 3–7, 1987; A. W. Chickering, and L. Reisser, *Education and Identity* (Rev. ed.), Jossey-Bass, 1993.

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⁴⁴ George D. Kuh, Jullian Kinzie, John H. Schuh, Elizabeth J. Whitt, and Associates, *Student Success in College: Creating Conditions that Matter*, Jossey-Bass, 2005, and George D. Kuh, Jullian Kinzie, John H. Schuh, and Elizabeth J. Whitt, "Never Let It Rest: Lessons about Student Success from High-Performing Colleges and Universities," *Change*, July/August, 2005: 44-51.

⁴⁵ NSSE website, <http://nsse.iub.edu/html/staff.cfm?iuid=kuh>, as of January 11, 2009.

⁴⁶ Anne Colby and William Damon, *Some Do Care: Contemporary Lives of Moral Commitment*, Free Press, 1992, and Thomas Ehrlich, "Dewey versus Hutchins: The Next Round," in Robert Orrill (ed.), *Education and Democracy: Re-imagining Liberal Learning in America*, College Entrance Examination Board, 1997.

⁴⁷ Colby, *et al*, *Educating Citizens*.

⁴⁸ Anne Colby, Thomas Ehrlich, Elizabeth Beaumont, Josh Corngold, *Educating for Democracy: Preparing Undergraduates for Responsible Political Engagement*, Jossey-Bass, 2007.

⁴⁹ Sullivan and Rosin, *A New Agenda for Higher Education*.

⁵⁰ Colby *et al.*, *Educating Citizens*: 7.

⁵¹ Sullivan and Rosin, *A New Agenda for Higher Education*: 110.

⁵² Sullivan and Rosin, *A New Agenda for Higher Education*: 104-105.

⁵³ Sullivan and Rosin, *A New Agenda for Higher Education*: 1.

⁵⁴ Sullivan and Rosin, *A New Agenda for Higher Education*: 143.

⁵⁵ Sullivan and Rosin, *A New Agenda for Higher Education*: 107.

⁵⁶ The QR requirement had three components (a QR assessment of incoming students, a basic skills first-year course for under-prepared students, and a distribution requirement) designed to ensure that all Wellesley graduates would have both basic mathematical proficiency and exposure to at least one course focusing on the use of numerical and symbolic reasoning in problem solving and data analysis. The faculty came to see this as both an essential component of a liberal education and an indispensable skill in the modern world.

⁵⁷ The new distribution requirements moved from a disciplinary-based system (requiring students to select units from three departmental groupings) to a system stressing the substance of courses and the reasoning skills they inculcated (guiding selections from among eight substantive categories). The number of courses to satisfy the distribution requirements (hence the balance between depth and breadth) remained unchanged, but the new scheme defined the central elements of a liberal arts education, and the interconnections among elements, and provided students with more explicit intellectual guidance in the design of their program of studies.

⁵⁸ These were data from the Consortium on the Financing of Education (COFHE) of which Wellesley is one of 31 member institutions, including 13 liberal arts colleges.

⁵⁹ More than 200 students, with a total of more than 100 individual faculty advisors, participated in the 2008 Tanner Conference. Additional faculty participated in roundtable discussions of special topics related to experiential learning. Of the 37 departments and programs to which the college makes faculty appointments, 30 were represented by the faculty participating in the 2008 conference.

⁶⁰ The published program each year includes an extensive section listing and describing all service and experiential learning opportunities available to Wellesley students.

⁶¹ Groups of students have joined a Latin Americanist to study the role of women in Costa Rica, a sociologist studying human rights at the International Criminal Court at The Hague, a political science-environmental studies professor researching organic farming in Italy, a religion professor's work at a rural farming institute in Japan, among other projects.

⁶² Examples are credit bearing international wintersession courses developed by Wellesley faculty in Jamaica (cultural anthropology), Georgia (history, politics and culture), Belize and Costa Rica (ecology), India (grassroots development) Morocco (history, culture, politics), Ghana (women, religion and culture), Lake Baikal (marine biology/Russian culture), Spain (art, history, culture), France (Paris in the 40s and 50s), Japan (religion and culture), Vienna (German language), Moscow (Russian language) and Rome (Italian language), as well as domestic wintersession courses in Hawaii (geology of volcanoes) and Washington, DC (American politics).

⁶³ The Lumpkin Summer Institute for Service Learning is designed for students with a demonstrated commitment to service and seeks to deepen their understanding of social change in the Greater Boston area through a 10-week program that integrates traditional classroom learning with on-site community service work. Students live together in Boston while participating in internships and studying the roles of Boston's public and not-for-profit institutions. They participate in weekly seminars in which they analyze, contextualize, and reflect on their service experience. The Institute involves Wellesley College faculty, staff, and students, as well as practitioners from the organizations in which the students serve. Having directed this program for the past two years, Lee Cuba has witnessed the transformative learning that takes place among this group of students who are living together but participating at different worksites. They benefit enormously from the opportunity to reflect on their experiences with their peers, and the teaching and learning that takes place between the students is impressive. Recent internship sites include the International Rescue Committee, the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center, St. Francis House, Riverside Community Care, Crittendon Women's Union, and Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center.

⁶⁴ The CWS application requires students to address these points directly.

⁶⁵ Personal communication, Lee Cuba with S. Joanne Murray, February 4-5, 2009.

⁶⁶ E.g., art, economics, English/writing program, French, German, political science, psychology, religion and several science departments.

⁶⁷ Of seniors responding to the NSSE survey in the spring of 2008, 85% had participated in internships, 79% had volunteered or participated in community service, 40% had done research with faculty, 43% had done independent studies, 42% had completed or were in the midst of a senior thesis or capstone course, and 61% had studied abroad. Only 7% of those seniors had "participated in a community-based project as part of a course."

⁶⁸ Steven Koblik, and Stephen R. Graubard, editors, *Distinctively American: The Residential Liberal Arts Colleges*, Transaction Publishers, 2000.

⁶⁹ Williams College for example, uses the term "uncomfortable learning."

⁷⁰ <http://www.teaglefoundation.org/grantmaking/education.aspx>

⁷¹ This project has also received support from the Andrew W. Mellon and Spencer Foundations.

⁷² Additional information about this project may be found at <http://www.wellesley.edu/NECASL>.

⁷³ Students participating in the study were selected using a race (and, for the coed colleges, gender) stratified random sampling frame that yielded six Asian American, six African American, six Latino/a, six international and 12 domestic white first year students at each college.

⁷⁴ While the assessment of experiential education (e.g., internships, international study and undergraduate research) is one of many goals of the NECASL consortium, and one that the consortium is only beginning to address, we would note that the Teagle Foundation has funded collaborations focused primarily on this aim. These include grants to Belmont University and Wagner College; Rhodes College, Franklin & Marshall College, and Niagara University; and Augustana College, Alma College, Gustavus Adolphus College, Illinois Wesleyan University, Luther College, and Wittenberg University.

⁷⁵ Adam Kahane, *Solving Tough Problems: An Open Way of Talking, Listening and Creating New Realities*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2004.

⁷⁶ See, for example, the work of Peter Senge, beginning with his first book, *The Fifth Discipline*, Doubleday, 1990, and C. Otto Scharmer, *Theory U: Leading from the Future as it Emerges*, Society for Organizational Learning, 2007. It is also worth mentioning that the Difficult Dialogues Project at Clark University, funded by the Ford Foundation, has assembled and applied a variety of alternative problem-solving models, see http://www.clarku.edu/difficultdialogues_2.cfm

⁷⁷ Adam Kahane, "The Language of Power and the Language of Love: Solving Tough Problems in Practice," Shambhala Institute for Authentic Leadership, *Fieldnotes*. December 2007, online at <http://www.shambhalainstitute.org>

⁷⁸ Boyte, "Against the Current:" 4-5.

⁷⁹ Boyte, "Against the Current:" 5.