

Phi  
Kappa  
Phi

# FORUM

A Quarterly Publication

Fall 2004

PROFESSORS  
PROFESSING:  
Higher Education  
Speaks Out

# Phi Kappa Phi FORUM

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The purpose of the *Phi Kappa Phi Forum* is to enhance the image of the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi and promote the pursuit of academic excellence in all fields through a quality, intellectually stimulating publication for its membership.

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the staff of *Phi Kappa Phi Forum* or the Board of Directors of The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi.

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The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi was founded in 1897 and became a national organization through the efforts of the presidents of three state universities. Its primary objective has been from the first the recognition and encouragement of superior scholarship in all fields of study. Good character is an essential supporting attribute for those elected to membership. The motto of the Society is *philosophia krateitō phōtōn*, which is freely translated as "Let the love of learning rule humanity."

Phi Kappa Phi encourages and recognizes academic excellence through several national programs. Through its awards and grants programs, the Society each triennium distributes more than \$1,300,000 to deserving students and faculty to promote academic excellence. These programs include its flagship National Fellowship program for students entering their first year of graduate study, Promotion of Excellence grants for faculty-led projects, Study Abroad grants for undergraduates, and Literacy Initiative service grants. For more information about how to contribute to the Phi Kappa Phi Foundation and support these programs, please write Perry A. Snyder, PhD, Executive Director, The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, Box 16000, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70893 or go to the Phi Kappa Phi web page at [www.phikappaphi.org](http://www.phikappaphi.org).

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## Letters to the Editor

*Phi Kappa Phi Forum* publishes appropriately written letters to the editor every issue when submitted. Such letters should be no more than 300 words in length.

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# A Note from the Editor



James P. Kaetz

## EXCITING CHANGES IN STORE FOR THE FORUM

Normally this note begins with a look at what is coming up in the issue. However, some changes have been approved for the *Forum* at the recent Phi Kappa Phi Board of Directors meeting that open new possibilities for the Society and its publications. I wanted to alert everyone to what those changes are.

For a while now we have been talking about some ways that we might better serve our members. The *Forum*, while intended for all members, traditionally has been seen as more of a benefit to our sustaining members; therefore, we have examined ways to address the concerns and interests of our newest members, most of whom become inactive after just a couple of years. All this discussion led to a more general look at Society publications and other facets of communications through a marketing study.

As a result of that study and of our evaluation of what components from the study we might most feasibly implement, beginning in 2005 we will be making some additions to Society publications. For one, we will be creating and publishing a Web-based “e-zine” aimed more at our younger members but featuring information that we hope will be of interest and use to everyone in the Society. It will offer such things as job and career advice and articles, information about graduate study, profiles of members, feedback pages and message boards, links of interest, and much more.

Another exciting component that we will be developing and adding over the next year is a Web seminar, an interactive session in which members will be able to participate live and that then will be available for replay on the secure members section of the Phi Kappa Phi Web page. Tentatively we plan to do two of these seminars per year, with the

first planned for mid-year in 2005. We want to draw our authors and presenters for both the e-zine and the Web seminar from our active members, with emphasis on members in the private sector, those who can speak most directly to new initiates who soon will be entering the world of work. In addition, our national headquarters has some initiatives that will develop over the next few months.

To free time and labor for these initiatives, we are reorganizing and combining our largest print publications, the *Forum* and the *Focus*, our quarterly member newsletter. Beginning next year, the Society and member news formerly appearing in the *Focus* will be folded into the *Forum*. The single-topic theme of the *Forum* will remain the same. Two issues of the *Forum* each year will expand to feature the combined material, and one issue of the *Forum* will be printed in its current form, for a total of three *Forums* a year instead of the four that we currently print.

Change can be a very good thing, and we are confident that these changes to the print publications and the addition of the electronic publications and seminars will reap some important benefits for the Society in the future. We hope that you are also excited about these prospects. Come with us as we set off on this journey.

## IN THIS ISSUE

To be brief, in this issue we feature more than fifty of our members who work in higher education, writing about multiple facets of the academy. Within you will hear members speak out on athletics, on the use of adjunct faculty, on governance, grade inflation, teaching, the community college, and much more. Their voices are sincere and even urgent, and we hope that you will be as fascinated with what they say as we have been.

## APPRECIATIONS

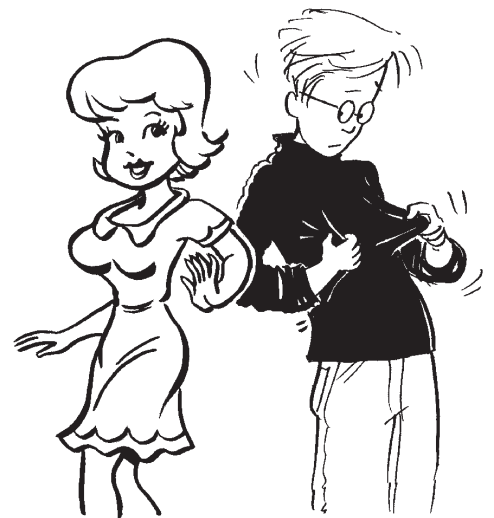
Thank you to all the members who took the time to write for this issue. We wish that we had been able to use every submission and all of what everyone had written, but the issue would have been half again as long, and it is already expanded. We

are happy to have so many members who wanted their voices heard in this special issue of the *Forum*. In addition, I want to thank the Board of Directors of Phi Kappa Phi for its vision and courage in embracing the changes that we have proposed; their excitement over the possibilities shows that our members have chosen excellent leaders.

## CORRECTING A MISCOMMUNICATION

In our “Sequential Art” issue (Summer 2004), we included artwork by many of the cartoonists who wrote for us. Somehow we miscommunicated with Paige Braddock, and thus we did not have a sample of her work. To rectify that oversight, we are reproducing a special piece of art from Paige that features the main character from her strip, *Jane’s World*, and an “anonymous” character illustrative of one of the points that Paige made in her article. See the caption for what we mean.

Enjoy the issue!



As Paige Braddock writes, in most cartoon strips the female characters have “sex appeal ... great hair ... [and] boobs for days.” Her main character, Jane of *Jane’s World* (on the right), however, is “basically just another ‘B’ cup gal trying to figure her life out.”



Forum on  
**E**ducation  
&  
**A**cademics  
Andrea Ickes-Dunbar

## Beyond the Dunce Cap: “What’s My Grade?”

It’s 2:30 p.m. on report-card day. An air of fatalism pervades my homeroom as students wait to receive the chit of paper on which their semester grades are printed. There are no surprises; students have already been informed of their grades by all of their teachers. Yet there is apprehension, as students wait to confirm the wonderful or dreadful truth in official printed form.

The report card indicates far more than mastery of a subject. For some, it reaffirms their intellectual superiority. For others, it is a badge of shame and mortification. For some, it is a validation of struggle and hard work. For others, it means admission to or dismissal from an athletic team. For some, it is currency to exchange at home for material goods, tangible rewards, or money. For others, it represents a tradition of family pride and honor. For some, it is a banner of passive resistance. For others, it is a distress signal. For all, including the teacher, it elicits a collective intake of breath and a collective sigh, and it represents a fresh start.

A grade is a grade is a grade, one might suppose. Teachers give them. Students earn them. It is commonly thought that grades, to be valid, must be objective. According to popular perception, a fair grade must somehow be independent of teacher manipulation. However, because of the powerful backlash effect of grades, there is always an aspect of judgment on the teacher’s part. Let’s see how the psychology of grading really works.

Start with a batch of one hundred eighth-grade essays. Among these are papers by students who vary widely in their writing ability. The writing

process for this assignment involved several weeks of instruction and support through multiple drafts. Even so, the essay by Eloise Eloquent will be vastly different from the paper by Greg Garbled. Angela Articulate will have written her usual masterpiece. Ricky Redundant’s essay will meander. Connie Concise and Salvador Succinct will say just enough to be interesting, but Michelle Minimal will be too brief. Gavin Garrulous and Louie Longwinded will not know when to stop. Isadore Insightful will have much more to say than Boris Boring, who probably would not be, if he were writing in his first language. If only Fred Fragmented and Randy Run-on and Veronica Vacillating could write as well as Carrie Competent. Terrance Tardy will turn in a poorly written paper several days late, which will need to be penalized, lest other students decide to ignore future deadlines. Daniel Defiant will not turn in an essay at all.

In grading these papers, the teacher wants not only to acknowledge skillful student writers, but also to encourage and instruct rudimentary or reluctant writers as well. If all papers are graded to the same standard of excellence, then some students will inevitably fail. Unfortunately, for a struggling writer to receive an F on his or her essay, flawed though it may be, can be so defeating that the student will not even attempt subsequent papers.

The grading rubric must therefore be designed to provide even the weakest writers with some evidence of success. Allow ten points for the title, ten points for the appearance of the paper, ten points for inclusion

of notes and drafts, ten points for participating in peer responding, and another ten for participating in peer editing. Then incorporate ten for elements such as “coherence,” “organization,” “use of counter arguments,” “mechanics,” and so forth. Something for everyone! Somehow, the grade must signal to the student the deficiencies of the paper, yet acknowledge the attempt and provide impetus for continued effort. Achieving this balance is a delicate matter that requires careful teacher manipulation.

“What’s my grade?” students begin to clamor a day or two after turning in their essays. It is common knowledge that when graded essays are returned, students take note of the grade, and nothing else. The teacher therefore has to devise a system whereby students are forced to take a fresh look at what they have written before they lose interest. Students must be inspired to examine the criteria of the assignment and mentally compare their own papers with successful models. The grade is the very last piece of informative feedback.

These essays are one set in a series of six throughout the year, timed to correspond to report-card grading periods. Numerous other assignments of varying point-value also are required by the teacher. The weighting, distribution, and balancing of graded assignments must consistently reflect student effort over the course of several months. Provision must be made to redeem occasional lapses in performance and for the slow starter, so that students “in the hole” can find a way out. Due dates of major papers must be scheduled to allow time for careful teacher evaluation and must take into account the burden on students who have similar requirements in other classes.

History projects, oral presentations, scientific lab reports, math competence, and foreign-language proficiency call for somewhat different approaches to grading. In certain subject areas, student learning may be assessed in discrete units of knowledge or understanding, while in others, such as language acquisition, evaluation should reflect demonstrated level of communicative proficiency.

If Daniel Defiant suddenly decides to become compliant and produc-

*(continued on page 7)*

Forum on  
**Business** &  
**Economics**



Larry Chambers

## Investing and Fear

This is *not* the age of safety. This is the age of confusion, doubt, and fear.

Many who begin to invest, *quit*. This is a genuine tragedy; worse yet, it is an *unnecessary* tragedy. After all, the investors who quit and those who continue share a broad field of common emotional ground — fear of uncertainty. We are all subject to elements and events throughout our lives that are unexpected, for which we are unprepared, and yet, we routinely survive. Oddly enough, this life experience is critical to the investing process.

Virtually every investor faces a specific moment when the urge to quit is strongest. That moment usually comes when investors convince themselves that their next effort is already doomed to fail, that the economic structure is flawed, or when they lose sight of their destination. The fact that there are many more investment choices to sort through today could easily tip the scales against them.

If you tracked Peter Lynch's investing past, you would find that even he made mid-course corrections, some really bad decisions, and even stopped investing from time to time. But quitting is fundamentally different from stopping. We all stop occasionally to "catch our breath," then start again. Quitting happens once. That means *not* starting again, and investing is all about starting again, and again, and again.

To survive as an investor requires confronting uncertainty. Investing precipitates self-doubt, stirring deep

waters that lay between what you know you should do and what you fear might happen if you do not. Those who continue to invest come to realize that self-doubt is a normal, recurring function of the investment cycle. Uncertainty is essential, inevitable, and an all-pervasive companion; a tolerance for uncertainty is a prerequisite to succeeding.

Seasoned investors embrace the paradox of investing: *If you want to make money, you have to take risks*. This means you can also lose money. For many people, that's enough to prevent them from ever beginning to invest at all. But, one of the basic and most difficult truths that every investor must learn is that even the failed investments are essential.

A ceramics professor decided to grade half the students in his class on *quantity* and the other half solely on *quality*. The procedure was simple: For the final grade on quantity, one hundred total pounds would equal an A, eighty pounds a B, and so on. Those graded on quality, however, needed to produce only one perfect item, however large or small, to get an A. At the conclusion, the professor found that the group being graded for quantity produced works of the highest quality. It seems that while the quantity group was busy churning out piles of pottery and learning from their mistakes, the quality group sat theorizing about perfection. In the end, they had little more to show for their efforts than grandiose theories about clay. The quantity group followed a process.

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## REQUIRING PERFECTION INVITES PARALYSIS

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Investors who try to time the market or pick the perfect investment never succeed, because they are waiting for everything to be exactly right, which will never happen. They find reasons to procrastinate to avoid making mistakes.

Getting on with your investment strategy requires recognition of the investment process as a paradox, a flawed concept. Perfection denies the very reason an investment would go up in value. The seeds of a successful investment are embedded in the imperfection of your current ones.

In the actual investing process you have to give yourself room to react to both the good and the bad. What is really needed is nothing more than a broad sense of what you are looking for, some strategy for how to find it, and an overriding willingness to embrace mistakes and surprises along the way.

Your knowledge unfolds day-by-day and trade-by-trade, transactions not escaping cause and effect. What you need to know about the next trade is contained in the last one. The place to learn about the market is in the market. You learn about risk by taking risk. The very act of investing is your guide — a complete, comprehensive, reference book on how you invest. There is no other such book, and it is yours alone.

If you follow the crowd, whether they are friends or associates or worse, the media, you lose the power of your own experience. A ship in a safe harbor is safe, but remaining in the harbor is not what a ship is built for. Experience comes in the doing. You do not gain experience watching the news, which can often be misleading and raise false hopes.

Today, five financial news networks operate around the clock. But the media have an inherent conflict of interest. While their stated goal is objective journalism, their express agenda is to increase their audience. They use sensational verbiage and emphasize the more intriguing details to amplify material and fill time or pages. At best, the media can only conduct and report an honest search for accurate information; but the



general public's erroneous perception is that what they see or read in the media is the final word.

As fearful investors, we listen more intently to information that supports what we already believe than to information that refutes what we believe. To make matters worse, we are deluged with misinformation and conflicting information, mostly from organizations the agenda of which is to sell you something.

Publications love to print "rear-view mirror" lists of the year's top investments or mutual-fund managers. Maybe their success is due only to probability, but probably also means they *may not* be on top the following year. Maybe it is talent, but having even the best talent does not guarantee future success. And maybe even talent is an illusion.

Investors get better by sharpening their skills or acquiring new ones, and by learning how to invest from the process of investing. Naïve passion promotes an investment strategy done in ignorance of obstacles, such as the need for approval and uncertainty. It becomes, with experience, *informed* passion that promotes investments done in full acceptance of those obstacles.

## FEAR IS A LEARNED BEHAVIOR

You are born with only two fears: the fear of falling and of loud noises. Every other fear is learned! So, how do we learn investing fear? Babies are not afraid of risk or volatility. We attach a negative meaning to those words and then become afraid of that meaning without acknowledging how risk and volatility are directly responsible for gain. The minute the stock market drops 10 percent, fear takes over and the investor becomes disempowered. If instead, investors were to first identify how much of a drop, or loss, they could actually sustain, a *tolerance level for risk* could be established as a guide for their actions, rather than fear. Professional traders have taught themselves to buy when everyone else sells.

But with the average investors, emotions usually drive their actions before the intellect gets a chance to intervene. When we are intensely afraid, we are almost completely cut off from accessing reasonable infor-

mation stored in our cerebrum, the center of conscious thought, even if it was recently stored there. The brain actually shifts into the survival mode operated from the primitive part of the mind called the brain stem. The results are that we do not think — we just react.

When the source of our fear is unknown, we call it anxiety. Anxiety frequently motivates inappropriate behavior. It is usually brought on by some intangible that we unconsciously desire — "I'm afraid I might not get what I want!" What if every time you felt anxious, you recognized and acknowledged it, and then asked yourself, "What is it that I am wanting?" You would then be able to reframe that *want* into something tangible and put a structure in place to obtain it without fear being a factor.

The intangible needs can be interpreted into attainable goals with a strategy that manages expectations within a level of risk the investor can tolerate. If every "blip" in the financial marketplace is not viewed through the anxiety of needing to win big, not making a mistake, or needing approval, otherwise panic-stricken investors can turn with confidence to their overall investment plan to determine if any action needs to be taken.

## EXPECTATIONS RESIDE SOMEWHERE BETWEEN YOUR FEAR AND CONFIDENCE

Being one of the higher brain functions, expectations provide a means to merge imagination with calculation. But, it is a delicate balance — lean too far one way, and you have no probability of success; lean too far the other, and you are paralyzed.

Expectations drift into fantasy all too easily. Nebulous expectations whisper to you that you soon will be rich and it will come easy and you will pick the next Microsoft. Unfortunately, expectations based on illusions almost always lead to disappointment. Conversely, expectations based on accurate historical investment data can be the most useful tool the investor could have.

Most of our expectations are actually unrealistic in the short-term. But, if your expectation is having enough money to fund a twenty-year

retirement, that is achievable over a longer time horizon. The confidence in achieving such an expectation lies in financial planning. As life expectancy is stretching out longer beyond traditional retirement ages, making our funds last has become a major concern. An investment process that takes into consideration elements such as time, contributions, and tolerance for risk replaces our fantasies, anxiety, and fear with confident actions.

Decisions made with informed confidence give us a sense of some control. All of us who have a fear of loss of control create stress in our lives, and/or depend on believing that somehow it will all work out. Everyone wants the illusion of human security — but is there, really? Our default emotion is anger, and our defense mechanism is fantasy, neither of which is very beneficial in the world of investing or in living a creative life.

The answer is not in more control. Some of the most powerless people I know spend all their time and energy trying to control things that they cannot. They operate in the mindset of, "I've got to do it perfectly so everyone will think I'm smart"; as opposed to, "I can put my time in learning how to be a successful investor and really achieve financial freedom in my life."

## IN THE END IT COMES DOWN TO THIS

You have a series of choices between giving your investment opportunities the best shot and risking that you will not reach your goal; or quitting and thereby guaranteeing that you will not reach your goal. In a choosing between certainty and uncertainty, uncertainty has to be the choice.



**Larry Chambers is a financial writer living in Ojai, California. He has authored more than 1,000 magazine articles and thirty-four business books. His latest book, *The First Time Investor, 3rd edition, McGraw Hill, will help you get a good start in a disciplined investment process. He welcomes feedback at Lchamb007@aol.com. You can find his books at [www.competitiveforce.com](http://www.competitiveforce.com).***

# Forum on Science & Technology



Devlin M. Gualtieri

## Technology's Assault on Privacy

Technology has steadily eroded our privacy. As a prime example, our most personal possession, our DNA, is being used against us. Even before a child is born, its parents can ascertain its sex and do a DNA analysis for genetic defects. According to UNESCO, nearly 96 percent of female fetuses were aborted after amniocentesis testing in Bombay (Mumbai) in 1985. Because DNA analysis now has the capability to cheaply screen for genetic markers for diseases, there is a fear that insurance companies will reduce their financial risk by insuring only certain DNA profiles. Insurance rates may even be adjusted on the basis of a "risk score," a very similar idea to offering smoker/non-smoker rates. Thirty states now collect DNA from juvenile offenders, and there is a movement afoot to collect DNA from all persons who are arrested, not just those convicted. We may not be far from the time when a parent will demand a sample of an intended's DNA before allowing a child's marriage.

Technology leaves us no place to hide. Cell telephones now contain "Enhanced 911" circuitry that can determine a cell telephone's location to a high accuracy. There is talk about tracking your cell phone to amass a dossier on your daily itinerary for marketing programs that would encourage your visiting nearby shops and restaurants. Some systems allow companies to track the whereabouts of their employees and parents to track their children. The Global Positioning System (GPS), a satellite-navigation system now in some automobiles, enables mileage-based and venue-based insurance rates, as well as location-based marketing and government tracking. GPS has been

proposed for tracking parolees in Tennessee.

Your automobile was once as much a haven as your home, but technology has changed that. E-Z Pass, a wireless toll-collection system, is now installed in millions of vehicles, recording the times at which they pass toll points. The New York Thruway Authority has turned over more than sixty E-Z Pass records in response to subpoenas. The E-Z Pass circuitry is also active between tolls because it is used in a system to monitor traffic flow on the open road, and this always-on feature could be used for tracking. Many automobiles are now equipped with an "Event Data Recorder," a "black box" for automobiles, that will log your speed and whether you use your seat belt. In 2001, the FBI obtained a court order to activate the microphone of an automotive navigation and emergency-response system to secretly listen to conversations over a period of a month.

Closed-circuit television cameras (CCTV) seem to be everywhere. The Baltimore Inner Harbor area is being fitted with a multimillion-dollar camera system to transmit images to police cars and helicopters. Other U.S. cities with extensive camera systems are Boston, Washington D.C., Tampa, Jersey City, Virginia Beach, and Ayers Island resort near Orono, Maine. Police in Manalapan, Florida, an enclave of half-million-dollar homes, plan to run background checks on every driver based on license-plate photographs. A face scanner is in place at a Phoenix, Arizona, school in a pilot study to identify sex offenders. False-positive identifications are

expected to be a problem because such systems are not foolproof.

The BBC reports that there is a CCTV camera for every fourteen people in the United Kingdom (UK). Visitors to London are likely to be on camera three hundred times in a day. In London, cameras read license plates to charge drivers an extra tariff for traveling in an eight-square-mile area of the central city during busy weekday hours. This system employs a staggering 688 cameras at 203 locations. Other large cities, such as New York, are monitoring London's success with this system and anticipate their own large revenue stream from fines and fees. Of course, there has been some grassroots pushback by UK citizens. The UK has 4,500 "red-light" cameras installed at intersections, and an average of one of these has been vandalized each week, sometimes by explosives. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety has estimated that seventy U.S. cities have red-light cameras.

CCTV is an antiquated technology compared with Radio Frequency Identification (RFID). RFID is a wireless form of product bar coding that uses integrated circuit chips embedded in products or their packaging. RFID codes can be read at a distance, and they can contain a serialized product identification code that identifies not just the type of item, but the specific item. Wal-Mart and Gillette are in the forefront of RFID tagging of consumer items. If you purchase an RFID item by credit card, databases can associate you with the particular article, and you might get a pitch for accessory items next time you shop. In a more sinister scenario, you can be tracked using the RFID tags in your clothing. For example, a list of attendees at a political rally could be developed from the RFID tags in their shoes. One company has developed an RFID blocker that emits spurious signals to confuse RFID scanners, a form of electronic warfare against snoopers.

Some companies are using RFID tags embedded in ID cards to track employee movements within buildings, and a Buffalo, New York, elementary school is using RFID to track its students. It's not surprising that England, the land of unbridled surveillance, has proposed the incorporation of RFID into license plates

to allow for precise vehicle tracking. Mexico seems to be sold on RFID. One Mexican company, VeriKid, allows parents to track their children by subcutaneous RFID chips. The Mexican Attorney General and some members of his staff have subcutaneous RFID chips that allow them access to sensitive databases. As a side benefit, the tags would track them if they were abducted.

Tracking technology has legitimate uses. In one interesting example of genetic tracking, the poacher of a black walnut tree was traced by a DNA analysis that matched the tree stump to wood in a lumberyard. The E-Z Pass system allowed the travels of murdered Assistant U.S. Attorney Jonathan Luna to be tracked. A Canadian man was convicted of vehicular manslaughter in 2003. Data from his automobile's EDR, which was introduced as evidence, revealed that he was traveling up to three times the posted speed limit at the time of the accident. There were no human witnesses. Sensor networks that monitor household routine and signal anything out of the usual are allowing older people to remain living at home. Cameras that record the license plates of people who run red lights at intersections act as a deterrent for some serious accidents. However, online access to these technologies, or the databases derived from them, can fall into the wrong hands, or the government itself could subvert their original purpose. It already appears that the nearly ancient technology of speed radar has transitioned from its intended safety purpose to a revenue stream for municipalities.

Technology is also affecting our fair use of copyrighted materials. Beginning in July of 2005, a technology called a Broadcast Flag will prevent your recording copies of your favorite shows on the newer digital televisions. One company has developed an inexpensive chemical treatment for paper to track or prevent copying of documents. Fair-use copying of paper media may become a thing of the past.

Forty years ago, Richard Feynman, Nobel Prize winner and the archetypal example of a preeminent physicist of the late twentieth century, identified technology's potential effect on privacy. In a 1963 lecture at the University of Washington he said,

"We are pleased by the ability to communicate between nations, and then we worry about the fact that we can be snooped upon so easily." Feynman died in 1988, just as the internet was emerging as a cultural phenomenon. Would Feynman do his banking online if he were alive today?



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*(Beyond the Dunce Cap continued from page 3)*

tive, he will need to see his belated efforts reflected in something more than the failing grade he already had. Mathematically this may not be possible. If Daniel's course grade was 25 percent in October, submitting one essay probably will not bring his cumulative score above 50 percent. Should he or should he not see an F on his interim progress report? There is no motivational power in an F. It is up to the teacher to resolve this dilemma. Much will depend upon the teacher's perception of Daniel's sincerity and ability to sustain nascent efforts. Again, teacher judgment affects outcome.

The social and psychological repercussions of grades are so potent that their intended function is often obscured. As early as middle school, grades are fraught with prestige or ignominy, imbued with glory or disgrace, indicative of personal worth, and predictive of future success in life. Many students and parents frankly care more about bragging rights than about actual learning. Some parents ask: "What is my child's rank order in class?" Or they complain: "This is Johnny's first C. He's so disappointed. Couldn't you give him a better grade?" Or they announce: "We're not going to sign Janie up for Spanish, because it might jeopardize her 4.0 GPA."

One wonders whether students would bother to learn if there were no built-in payoff in the form of a grade. How would anyone know they were learning? Would our entire academic system collapse for lack of accountability? Do we lure children to kindergarten with the threat and promise of grades? Did Socrates quibble over B+'s and A-'s and confer with parents over a student's GPA?

Grades provide reassurance and a sense of legitimacy that time invested in school is time well spent and that evaluation is consistent across settings. The apparent simplicity of a letter grade implies objectivity, fairness, and equity.

Grades should be "fair" and "equitable," but to what extent are they "objective"? Much depends upon subject matter and teacher judgment. We see that grades are not simply earned by students nor simply given by teachers. They derive from learning tasks that are designed and weighted and modified and planned as part of a dynamic instructional process. Ideally, grades should reflect academic progress and spur further learning. Grades represent a tacit contract between teacher and student: the student is expected to work to potential, and teachers are expected to reward both achievement and effort.

Until students ask more interesting questions than "what's my grade?" we linger still in the era of the dunce cap. If students engage in self appraisal against comprehensible and reasonable standards, the printed report card seems less arbitrary. Perhaps a day will come when students and teachers will grapple less with the challenge of grades and more with the challenge of ideas. Then we would no longer need to convene at 2:30 on report-card day for a collective intake of breath and a collective sigh. Every day would be a fresh start.



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Forum on

# the Arts

David Thurmaier

## A Connecticut Yankee Fifty Years Later

In my previous columns, I focused on two topics that have fascinated me for some time: the development of American music and the importance of contemporary music. Part of my interest in these topics stems from my work studying the composer Charles Ives (1874–1954), whose music is American and in many ways still seems contemporary. This year provides us with a chance to reconsider Ives’s legacy given that he died fifty years ago. Indeed, this anniversary has stimulated a renewed interest in Ives; for example, the New York Philharmonic held a two-week festival in May entitled “Charles Ives: An American Original in Context,” during which the orchestra performed many of Ives’s most influential works side by side with those of his experimental contemporaries such as Debussy, Berg, and Varèse. Additionally, recent articles about Ives by such notable critics and writers as Richard Taruskin (in the *New York Times*) and Alex Ross (in the *New Yorker*) prod those of us who appreciate and enjoy Ives’s music to consider Ives from fresh perspectives. In light of this exciting activity, I thought it would be a good exercise for me to express my own thoughts on Ives’s music and what it means for us in 2004.

If there were any truth in the adage that art imitates life, then the music of Charles Ives should be as colorful as his remarkable life. His father, George, was a Civil War bandmaster whose fine musical abilities reportedly inspired a laudatory discussion between Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant. Lincoln remarked

that George’s First Connecticut Heavy Artillery band was a “good band,” to which Grant replied, “It’s the best band in the army, they tell me.” George Ives was not the typical father; he was known as something of a ne’er-do-well who cavorted around Danbury, Connecticut, with his trumpet, leading dueling marching bands up and down Main Street. George instilled two important characteristics in his son Charles: a respect and love for American traditions and a willingness to experiment and question the “rules.” In his memoirs, Ives recalls several experiences in which George would ask young Charles to do such tasks as performing songs in different keys simultaneously and playing pianos set in unorthodox tuning systems — George insisted that these activities “stretched the ear.” Throughout his life, Ives never lost his penchant for experimentation, even when he argued with his more conservative teachers at Yale, where he received a music degree in 1898.

When music as a career lost its luster for reasons that included the death of his father, feelings that his creativity was stifled by numerous rules and regulations, and the promise of financial stability outside of music, Ives turned to another field entirely. He started work at an insurance company in New York after graduation and eventually co-founded his own highly successful company. The tremendous diversity of his musical output is even more remarkable when one considers that he held a full-time job for more than twenty years, finding time to compose only at nights and on the weekends. Yet

this arrangement allowed Ives the freedom to compose music how he wished, without pressures from society patrons demanding a certain type of musical work.

Being a composer in the first part of the twentieth century must have been challenging for Ives and his contemporaries. In his book *Remaking the Past*, Joseph Straus points out that “music composed in the first half of the twentieth century is permeated by the music of the past.... Traditional sonorities, forms, and musical gestures pervade even works that seem stylistically most progressive.” In other words, no matter how experimental Ives may have been, his music was still inevitably infused with idioms from earlier music. While it is generally agreed that Ives’s music was progressive for its time, one is struck by the constant reminders of the past found interspersed throughout his output.

So why should we still care about this conflicted Connecticut Yankee? In short, because his music still matters and because it depicts American culture and life with a great passion and profundity. I think that Ives’s talent for weaving elements of the past and present into his music reflects a quality found in many of us. How many times have you yearned for something in your past or expressed a longing for the “good old days,” but then realized that it makes more sense to focus on the present and future? I believe that this duality was an ever-present dilemma throughout Ives’s life. The historian Robert Crunden describes this phenomenon as “innovative nostalgia” — someone who forges new ground in his or her area while maintaining a strong sense of the past. Much is made of Ives’s progressive musical contributions, which are certainly noteworthy, but behind that veneer of modernity his music portrays the quality of life in a nineteenth-century New England town. Interestingly, Ives bemoaned the encroachment of modern technology and what he perceived as a loss of tradition, while at the same time he wrote music that would take many years to find an audience and still leaves some people befuddled.

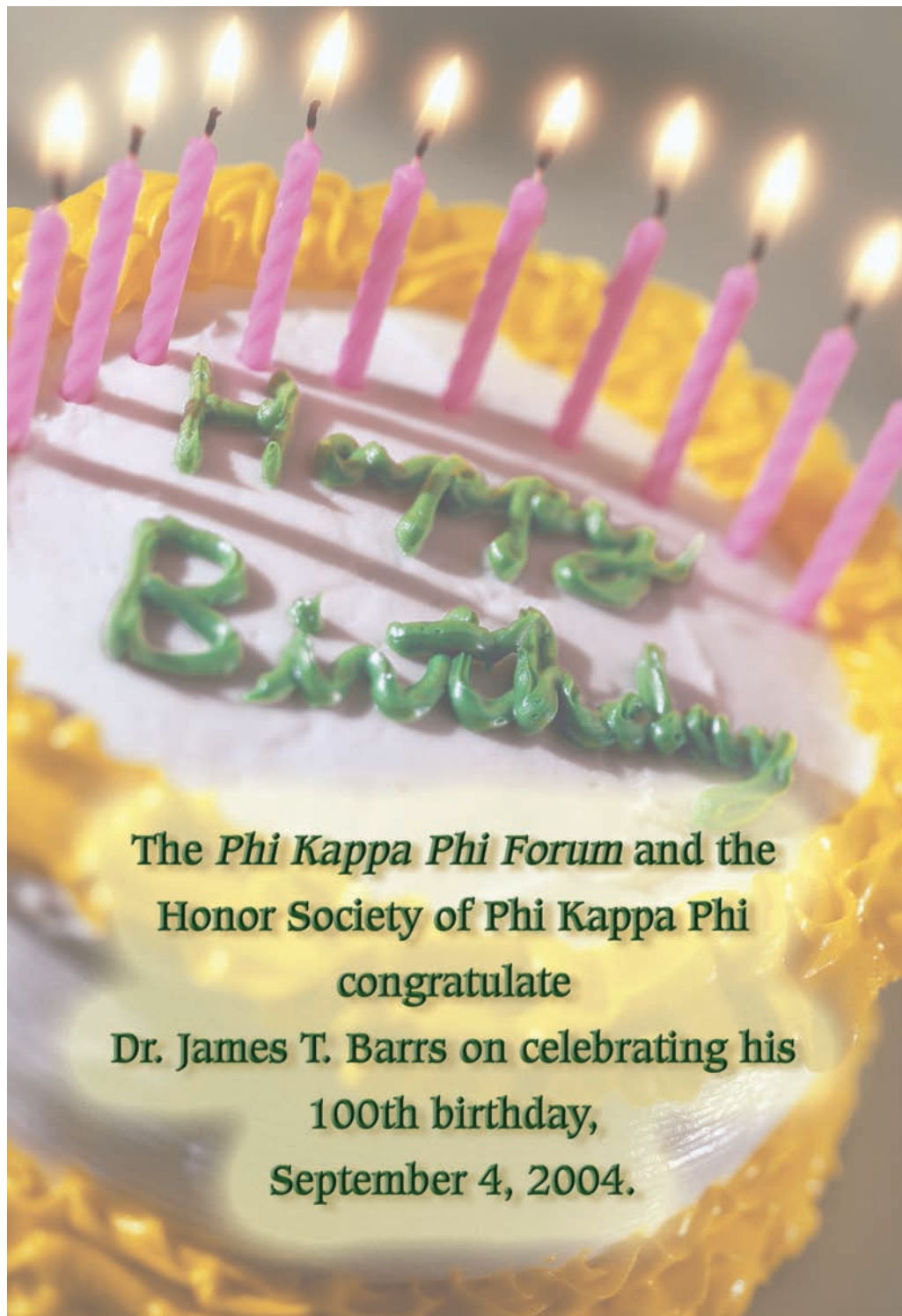
If you listen to Ives’s music, you are bound to hear quotes from hymns,

popular songs, marches, patriotic tunes, and more. The conflict between the past and the present is exemplified most clearly through quotation. Other composers before Ives borrowed existing music (somewhat analogous to “sampling” in today’s rap and hip-hop music) and incorporated it into their own — G. F. Handel was notorious for doing this — but the way that Ives borrows music remains special and imbues his own music with a uniquely American flavor. To take two examples: the wonderfully evocative *Central Park in the Dark* contains numerous tunes woven into a patchwork quilt, yet boisterous statements of “Hello! Ma Baby” drift in and out of the texture unmistakably; and his orchestral tone poem *The Fourth of July* combines two patriotic tunes — “Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean” and “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” — in a wonderfully playful and skillful manner. These tunes are not chosen arbitrarily or to be funny; instead, Ives’s musical borrowing goes to the heart of his musical sensibilities. Within the context of a chaotic, frantic musical landscape containing all kinds of strikingly new musical sounds, Ives has one foot in the past and the other foot in the future.

This unique human ability to evoke both past and present allows Ives’s music to resonate today. Some might say that all composers do this — Beethoven’s early music pays homage to his predecessors Haydn and Mozart, for example — but in Ives’s case, he overtly extols the culture and traditions of late nineteenth-century America with his choices of quotations and descriptive writings that accompany each piece. One truly gets the impression that Ives felt that his music should speak to events both past and present. That is why much of his music sounds wistful, sad, joyous, raucous, controlled, and stirring, all at the same time. It reflects the beliefs of a composer working in two centuries simultaneously — a conflict between the past and the present that affects all of us at some point. In the fiftieth year since his death, we should welcome the opportunity to become (re)acquainted with the music of Charles Ives, who still remains one of our most fascinating and influential American composers.



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**The Phi Kappa Phi Forum and the  
Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi  
congratulate  
Dr. James T. Barrs on celebrating his  
100th birthday,  
September 4, 2004.**



Ashley B. Benjamin

## College Athletics: Reconnecting Academic Values in College Athletics



reating an atmosphere where intercollegiate athletics is congruent with the academic mission is the ethical and practical quandary that universities face today. The hypocrisy of the current system is difficult to overlook when many of the athletes, especially in basketball and football, are of a much lower academic caliber than the regular student body. Because the amount of time spent

on a sport can easily exceed thirty to forty hours per week during the season, academics is hardly a priority. Add the exorbitant coaching salaries and frivolous expenses, and it becomes increasingly clear that the “tail wags the dog.”

The truth is that college athletics provides pre-professional sports training, advertising and public relations for the university, and a form of vicarious living for students and community — often at the expense of academic integrity. However, sports may be the only route for some students to get a college education, which also may boost the diversity of the student body.

The following multilevel interventions, which address the business of big-time college athletics, would ensure that intercollegiate sports espouse the values consistent with an academic setting.

1. **Professional Sports:** College sports often are the only way for many high school athletes to hone their talents. All professional sports organizations should take a cue from sports such as baseball or tennis, which have incorporated minor leagues for up-and-coming players without scholastic aspirations.
2. **Governing Bodies:** The connection between winning and monetary rewards needs to be severed. Winning schools should not be rewarded monetarily, as this is partially what drives the enormous expenses, cheating, and related abuse of student athletes. A simple solution is to divide the money based on participation in the NCAA or to create a formula based on school size or conference.
3. **Universities:** Presidents are in a difficult position. They may privately believe that academics comes first, but they also appreciate two truisms — universities are big businesses, and most alumni are not interested in the academic mission of the university. Of interest, Vanderbilt University, Northern Iowa, and Jacksonville University have made courageous changes by subsuming the athletic departments under the Department of Physical Education, which allows the university to dictate policy and control revenues.
4. **Athletic Departments:** Athletes should graduate with meaningful degrees of their own choosing, as athletic-department counselors

John Knorr

## Athletics on Campus: Refocusing on Academic Outcomes



he place of athletics within the university has long been a topic of debate. Historically, advocates for athletic programs on college campuses have argued that athletics are educational for participants; athletics provide a source of entertainment and serve a unifying function for the university; and athletics generate direct and indirect revenue.

However, research has empirically discounted the claim that athletics teaches educational values and increases academic performance of participants. Studies also have shown that athletic programs do not correlate directly with alumni giving and that only 15 percent of Division I and II programs operate in the black (and even this figure is suspect because capital expenditures, debt service, and many indirect program costs are not figured into the balance sheet).

It is evident that the outcomes of college athletics programs are far removed from the academic values often espoused. The central issue then becomes one of control — what entities are in place and what steps must they take to realign college athletic programs with justifiable academic outcomes?

Controlling forces of intercollegiate athletics are both external and internal. External control is directly delegated to national athletic associations such as the NCAA and to member athletic conferences. In a less direct sense some level of control also might be found in higher education associations such as the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB).

Control through the NCAA and member conferences is vested in the philosophies and voting power of member institutions. The NCAA is not in the business of creating control but rather in carrying out the will of the membership. Higher education associations likewise can recommend policy change in the athletic arena but historically have had little real power to mandate substantive change.

Therefore, to define the place of athletics on the college campus, it is essential to consider the elements of internal control. Internal control begins and ends at the desk of the university president/CEO. Other internal controls include the role of the board of trustees, faculty, the faculty athletic representative, and the student athletes themselves.

often steer student athletes on the basis of their capacity to maintain eligibility. Athletic directors with known involvement in unethical or illegal activities should be banned from college athletics for a significant period of time.

5. **Coaches:** Big-time coaches are essentially professional coaches as defined by their exorbitant salaries and the amount of time spent toward one goal — *winning*. Coaches need to be a part of the teaching faculty, as they are in smaller-division sports. Also, coaches guilty of academic or ethical breaches should be barred from coaching at another university for a designated period of time.
6. **Student Athletes:** Student athletes need the same rights as any other student. For example, if a student desires to transfer and compete for another college, he or she is ineligible for the next season ([www.studentathletesrights.com](http://www.studentathletesrights.com)).
7. **Alumni:** Unfortunately, many alumni remain connected to the university only through athletics, although contrary to public opinion, contributors to academic facilities or the general scholarship fund do not base their decisions to donate on athletic success. Alumni gifts should go to a general university fund where a portion of this money can be earmarked for athletics.

I am sure that there are multiple legal, financial, and political reasons why the status quo will be maintained. However, if we want to eliminate the hypocrisy and unethical aspects of college sport and stay true to the vision of athletics within the auspices of an academic setting, the above could go a long way toward rectifying our present unethical situation.

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**Disclaimer:** The opinions contained above are those of the author and do not reflect the opinions of the Department of Defense or the Department of Veterans Affairs.

For a variety of reasons, many presidents have been unable or unwilling to exert dynamic leadership over athletic programs. Barriers to leadership include bureaucratic layers/filters, trustees who evaluate “good management” in different terms, and the changing nature of the role of the president away from campus to external friend and fundraiser (Chu 1989; Bailey and Littleton 1991; Duderstadt 2003).

How then can colleges and universities best regain control of their athletic programs and ensure relevant academic outcomes for participants? The answer lies in the organizational placement of athletics within the administrative structure. Athletics should report directly to an administrator who has “academic oversight authority” (Chu 1989). This academic administrator must have as a guide an institutional-position paper created by and supported by the president and board that forcefully and specifically outlines program goals and objectives, clearly states procedures for review and evaluation of program policies, and states the commitment of the institution to the total welfare of the student athlete (Bailey and Littleton 1991).

Important roles in this structure also exist for both faculty and student athletes. Many who have advocated athletic reform insist that faculty become more actively involved in the determination of policies for the conduct of athletics and speak out when academic values are jeopardized. Appropriate campus venues for faculty involvement include the faculty senate, representation on the athletic council, and as academic advisors to student athletes, replacing athletic-department academic advisors prevalent in many programs (Bailey and Littleton 1991; Duderstadt 2003). The position of faculty athletic representative must be thoughtfully appointed to ensure a faculty member willing to provide critical oversight and not be a faculty member who simply has an interest in athletics.

Similarly, the student athlete must be given a real voice in matters of athletic policy related to academic outcomes. It should be noted that through NCAA sponsorship and resources the Student Athlete Advisory Committee has emerged on many campuses as a powerful representative for the student athlete.

That athletic programs on many college campuses have failed to adhere to academic outcomes is evident. The need for change and to regain control is a clear mandate. It is not the abolishment of athletics that is called for but rather a renewed emphasis on the educational role of athletic programs in serving the student athlete. Whatever the model, for athletics to regain its place in the academic mission of the institution requires that presidents, boards, faculty, and coaches be held accountable for such outcomes.

A. Bartlett Giamatti, former president of Yale, in testimony to the first Knight Commission stated that those accountable for athletics could no longer afford “failures of nerve, principle, and purpose” (Commission 13), and this statement holds even more truth today.

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**Ronald L. Baker**

**Athletics and Academics:  
The Soul of Culture**



have been a Boston Red Sox fan since childhood, partly because when I was a fifth-grader I played second base for a summer-league team called the Red Sox, but mainly because since childhood I have admired Ted Williams, the Splendid Splinter, who for nineteen years played left field for the Red Sox and was the last major leaguer to hit .400 (.406, to be exact, in 1941). Williams remains one of my few folk heroes. I still hang pictures of him on the walls of both my study and my office.

Another of my folk heroes, though going back only to my graduate student days, is another Bostonian, Francis James Child, who was born in Boston in 1825. In his native town, Child attended the English High School, the Latin School, and Harvard College, a relatively small institution at that time. Graduating from Harvard with an A.B. in 1846, Child immediately became a teacher at Harvard — first as a tutor in math, then in 1848, at his own request, as a tutor in history and political economy.

After spending a couple of years studying philology in Germany, Child returned to Harvard in 1851



to accept a professorship in Rhetoric and Oratory. Child's main interests were always in language and literature, so while he held tutorships and even a professorship in other areas, he spent virtually all of his spare time reading and writing in his favorite subject, English literature. At the age of only twenty-three (the same age that Ted Williams was when he batted .406), Child published his first book, *Four Old Plays*. As professor of Rhetoric and Oratory, Child graded English compositions for twenty-five years, and all the while he studied and wrote about English literature. Finally, in 1876 Harvard established its first chair in English, and Child was appointed to this professorship. Thus, he became the first professor of English at Harvard — a position he found “thoroughly congenial,” according to Child's most famous student, George Lyman Kittredge.

As early as 1853 Child became the general editor of the *British Poets*, a series of around 150 volumes. Out of this work grew his three major contributions to English scholarship: his edition of Spenser in 1855, his observations on the language of Chaucer in 1863, and his life's work, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, first published in eight volumes in 1857–58 and finally published in ten parts in 1882–98. Child died in Boston in 1896, two years before the last volume of his definitive ballad collection was published, so his student Kittredge saw the final volume to press.

Kittredge speaks of his teacher as “a great scholar and a good man.” I have already indicated that Child was a great scholar, but what about the man? Kittredge enumerates Child's “gracious family life, his civic virtues, his patriotism, his bounty to the poor.”

Though both lived and worked in Boston and shared many of the same qualities, it may seem that the English professor Francis James Child and the left fielder Ted Williams are worlds apart. But are they really? When Texas Tech basketball coach Bob Knight was asked to name his favorite sports heroes, he named only one: Ted Williams. When asked why Ted Williams, Coach Knight replied: “Because of a lot of things. Williams said that his goal in life was to walk down the street and hear somebody say, ‘There goes the greatest hitter that ever lived.’ And he just worked at that. And I doubt if anyone else in athletics has ever taken one thing and worked as hard at it as Williams did. And Williams was his own man.”

Francis James Child, like Ted Williams, “was his own man.” But more important, Child, like Williams, was the best at what he did. When Child walked down the street, people probably said, “There goes the greatest English teacher who ever

lived.” And Child worked at it, constantly reading and constantly writing. No one else in English studies has taken one thing, as Child did with the British ballad, and worked as hard at it.

The examples of Francis James Child and Ted Williams illustrate very well that extraordinary ability does not come easy. As university teachers, we, too, need to take just one thing, our discipline, and work as hard at it as Child did on his ballads and Williams did on his batting. We need to go about doing our thing the best way we can do it.

As the poet Robert Frost notes in an article he wrote for *Sports Illustrated* in 1956, the ancient Greeks were concerned with the development of the body as well as of the mind. Thus, in the *Republic*, Plato, allegedly himself a wrestler in his youth, includes physical training as an essential stage of his ideal continuing education. In ancient Greece, feats of strength and dexterity held a special place, and athletics should hold a special place in today's colleges and universities, too. That's why we, like Frost, should be “so particular college athletics should be kept from corruption.” Like the liberal arts, sports are “close to the soul of culture.”

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**Martin W. Schoppmeyer**

### The Athletics Business Model



he major problem with the modern university is that it seems to have forgotten why it exists. As a result much of its activities have but questionable educational or scholarly merit.

Just look at the obvious example of intercollegiate athletics. Intercollegiate sports, especially for Division I institutions, have become big business. No longer are they a pastime for gentlemen but rather for as many paying fans as can be accommodated in the stadium or arena. College athletics are in direct competition for the entertainment dollar as noted by at least one athletic director. Success in doing so allows for coaches' salaries that far exceed the salaries of Nobel Prize-winning faculty.

And what has been the answer of academe to this development? In essence it has been to try to copy athletics' forward monetary march. Old-style academicians turned administrators have been replaced by platoons of professionally trained bureaucrats

bearing strange and exotic titles. They represent “diversity” and create huge top-heavy university administrations that have little to do with teaching and learning. This tacit business model has more resemblance to General Motors than to higher education under the leadership of Nicholas Murray Butler, Charles Eliot, or even Robert M. Hutchins.

As a result of this administrative shift, quality scholarship and effective teaching, once the hallmarks of a university, have been replaced by highly praised fiscal goals. As just one example, a major state university felt it had not received all the money it wanted from its legislature. Therefore, the provost called a faculty meeting and informed the assemblage that their major function was to get grants. This practice would seem to be the academic version of filling the stadium.

Throughout history universities have never made a practice of being profit-making. Some years ago Parsons College attempted it and seems to have disappeared. For a university, trying to turn a profit will tear apart its very fabric of scholarship and learning. The current profit-centered practice of degrees by computer is far from being a university experience. The fabric is gone. If universities are to remain bastions of research and teaching, they must stop emulating their athletic departments.

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### Liana Valente

#### What Can We Learn from the Student Athlete?



I consider myself fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with student athletes at the college level; as a group, I have found them to be engaging, conscientious, and eager to learn. Because of the student athletes’ determination to excel, their success in my class was virtually guaranteed. They were committed to the work, to attending classes, and were genuinely interested in earning their college education. And while most non-musician students were happy to simply fulfill the requirements of my music appreciation course and earn their grade, the students who were always eager for more were the musicians and the student athletes.

As a music educator, I continually guide my students to make the connection that as musicians, they too are athletes. They learn during their lessons of the importance of setting goals (mental and physi-

cal), working to attain those goals, and then analyzing their results. The rigors of music lessons are similar to those of any athlete and include strength-building exercises, learning about health issues specific to the instrument, and the study of basic physiology. And while I have been aware of the athleticism of my chosen field of music performance, it was not until I met a student athlete who was interested in pursuing music formally that I realized that the connection between musicianship and athleticism truly does work both ways.

This student was a member of the volleyball team who decided that, in addition to her major, she wanted to pursue a minor in music. She was as serious about her academic studies as she was about her responsibilities as a member of the team, and that commitment was evident to me. Because of the discipline she learned through athletics, she was a much more productive music student and was able to reap the benefits of music study much faster than her peers. Her ability to perform under pressure during a volleyball tournament allowed her the poise to perform music in front of a discriminating audience. Of course, all of the body training that was required of her for the volleyball team was an added bonus for her as a singer — a physically fit singer tends to be able to learn new skills, modify behavior, and progress much more quickly and successfully than a singer who does not follow an athletic regime. I left the university before my student graduated, but because of her abilities and record of successes, the head of the voice department accepted her as a student.

While each student is by definition an individual, every one of my student athletes has brought a higher level of commitment and analytical ability to their respective lessons and classes when compared with my non-student athletes. The rigorous training that is demanded of student athletes helps them to solidify in their own lives the importance of setting goals, striving for those goals, and then analyzing the results of their attempts. These are skills that do not come naturally to most and must be learned. For the student musician, these skills are learned during the course of lessons, while the student athlete learns these and other lessons through his or her participation in sports.

Commitment, dedication, and perseverance; these are just a few of the things that we can learn from our student athletes.

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Liana Valente is an assistant professor of music at Wesleyan College. She previously taught music appreciation at the University of South Carolina.

# Adjuncts, Permatemps, and Part-timers

John Knox

## Permatemps: Ghosts of Academic Present and Future



People tell me that I look like a professor, and not just because I'm near-sighted and bearded. I look the part on paper, too: a PhD from a Big Ten institution, an Ivy League post-doc, several national awards (including a Phi Kappa Phi Fellowship).

I work at a well-known university, where I teach, perform federally funded research, and serve on committees.

But I am *not* a professor, with all the privileges that appertain to that designation. I am what the business world calls a “permatemp,” an employee hired year after year on temporary contracts. I am not complaining, but I am not alone either. According to the latest data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 43 percent of faculty members at all American institutions of higher education in 1998 were part-time, up from 33 percent in 1987 (another 28 percent were full-time but non-tenure-track, up from only 3 percent in 1969). In the words of Harvard education professor Richard Chait in the August 4, 2002, *New York Times*, “The full-time, tenured faculty member is about as representative of higher education today as Ozzie and Harriet are of American society.”

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### A GHOSTLY PRESENT

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By sheer numbers, permatemps might be fairly considered the *present* of American higher education. But we are a ghostly present and presence. In general, we are not at faculty meetings and graduations. You will not read much about us in the campus newspaper because we are categorically ineligible for many teach-



*"I'm almost done for the day. Are the adjuncts ready to carry me to my car?"*

ing and research awards. Our hirings and rehiring do not show up in press releases or in professional newsletters, unlike the hirings of professors. Our names may not even be in the semester course catalog; we are frequently referred to generically as “STAFF,” because we are usually hired after the catalog is published.

However, in the place that defines the academic side of college for most people — the undergraduate classroom — permatemps are legion. For example, I teach 300 to 600 students every year, ranging from freshmen to doctoral students, in five different courses in three different university programs. The NCES data show that non-tenure-track faculty at four-year doctoral institutions teach 1.45 times as many undergraduates as do tenured faculty who teach undergraduates (who comprise only about two-thirds of all tenured faculty at these institutions). Overall, 27 percent of all undergraduate credit hours in the United States in 1998 were taught by part-timers. And so for many students, permatemps are an integral part of the “college experience.”

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### NOT JUST TEACHERS ANYMORE

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The stereotype of the permatemp as a limited-skills teacher of freshmen is also changing. Although it is atypical for a “temp,” I am bringing in four months of my own salary this year via three extramural grants, and I serve on two

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national professional committees. Further evidence of a preternaturally talented temp pool comes from Northwestern University. NU's Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences has hired non-tenure-track adviser/lecturers who have terminal degrees, positions that presumably attract permatemps who seek more stable employment. A perusal of their biographies reveals a remarkable level of professional achievement in all categories. The current adviser/lecturers include a multiple nominee for the Pushcart Prize, journal editors, a discoverer of twenty new galaxies, an Oxford University fellow, and a committee member of a prominent national organization.

In short, it seems plausible that at least some of today's permatemps are as proficient at academia's professorial Trivium — teaching, research, and service — as today's professors were when they were hired.

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### THE ECONOMIC IMPERATIVE

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**T**he prevalence of permatemping is attributable to economics: we can do many of a professor's tasks, but at a fraction of the cost. Where the money is saved is subtle, however.

In my very largest classes, I am paid a flat fee that (not including tests or office hours, and based on a sixty-minute hour) translates into a paltry-seeming one penny per student per minute of lecturing. In other words, I am "worth" only half as much per lecture to a student as the can of soda the student buys from the vending machine on the way into class! Even for my smallest classes, the pay rate inflates to only about twenty-five cents per-student per-minute.

But this is not unusually low pay. In my previous position as an assistant professor at a highly rated teaching-intensive university, my salary translated into a rate of no more than ten cents per-student per-minute of lecturing. The tenure-less, for-profit University of Phoenix pays its longest-serving instructors a flat per-course rate that, for most class sizes, translates into a similar pennies per-student per-minute rate. The April 19, 2002, *Chronicle of Higher Education* cites data showing that instructors and lecturers are paid 74 percent to 84 percent as much as assistant professors when all pay is standardized to nine-month salaries — a little less, but not a huge disparity given the broader responsibilities of assistant professors.

The real money saved by universities using permatemps derives from at least two sources: 1) salary saved over the course of a career because, unlike an assistant professor, a permatemp often cannot be promoted into a higher salary bracket; and 2) money

saved from denial of benefits to part-timers. Either of these can add up to hundreds of thousands of dollars saved by the university over a thirty-year career.

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### PHANTASMS OF THE FUTURE

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**G**iven the financial advantages outlined above, it is quite possible that permatemps are the *future* of higher education. Furthermore, as the tide of "hard" money from the government continues to ebb and the costs of benefits outpace even the best returns on university investments, all academic positions could liquefact into soft-money jobs that resemble permatemping. For example, some prestigious research universities are now requiring new professors to accept positions with much less than 100 percent hard money, on the assumption that the professor can raise a sizable amount of his or her salary via grants.

This erosion of hard money for professors may be just the start of a sea change for academia. Cornell University president-emeritus Frank H. T. Rhodes, in his 2001 book *The Creation of the Future: The Role of the American University*, foresees the "unbundling" of the duties of the professor under intense pressure from for-profit universities and information technologies. The possibilities for unbundling are manifold: professor positions unbundled from hard money; tenure decoupled from compensation; and teaching severed from research and service. Rhodes anticipates a limited form of the latter: large introductory courses taught via instructional technology by a few national "star" professors, with "local instructors" providing one-on-one mentoring.

But who will these locals be? If history is any guide, this kind of "high-touch" work will be outsourced to teaching assistants and permatemps instead.

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### THINK GLOBALLY, AXE LOCALLY

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**B**ut permatemps could eventually become the *vanished* ghosts of academia. In other sectors of the American economy, jobs are relocating overseas at an alarming rate. "First, manufacturing was outsourced. Now it's information," says Sreekant Khandekar, founder of a Web marketing site, in a November 1, 2003, article in the magazine *Promo*. The January 14, 2004, *TechWeb News* reports that 35 percent to 45 percent of all full-time information technology (IT) jobs at Fortune-1000 firms will be outsourced overseas by 2006. Meanwhile, IT-related work in India is projected to increase an astounding fivefold by 2008.

A question arises: if information can be outsourced overseas, why not knowledge and instruction? Instructional technology should, in the next decade or two, make it relatively easy to delocalize Rhodes's "local instructors." At that point, the academic permatemp pool will expand into a global ocean, with American permatemps expecting double the money or more for the same work. Thus, American academic permatemps could find their job opportunities shrinking from both ends — fewer permatemp slots due to overseas outsourcing *and* fewer traditional tenure-track positions. Over time, a limited number of permatemps could assume the roles left behind by the die-out of traditional professors. The rest may simply be out of options, and out of luck.

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### "BEFORE IT'S GONE"

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And so it is just possible that I am participating in the last glory days of an educational tradition of human-intensive higher education that traces its roots back to England, Italy, and even ancient Greece. I'm glad I did not miss it, even if I arrived a little too late for the high tide of funding and tenure-track positions that crested in the 1960s. Like the Kevin Costner character in *Dances with Wolves*, I got to see this frontier before it lost all its vitality, before it was carved up into economically efficient packages like Dakota farmland and buffalo tongues. I walk into my classrooms, using my own syllabi, telling my own stories, nurturing my classes as living communities, letting the ideas roam freely, trying to make these days some of the best for my students.

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John Knox is an associate research scientist and lecturer at a nationally known public university.

James G. Todd

### Adjunct Faculty: A Crisis of Justice in Higher Education



When I began teaching on a tenure track almost thirty-five years ago, an adjunct instructor was someone who on rare occasions was employed as a temporary replacement or as an outside specialist to assist in a special course or program. Adjuncts might even lack the usual credentials and degrees and so would not necessarily receive normal employment benefits or have the same responsibilities as permanent faculty.

By the time I retired in 2000, the regular and growing use of adjuncts had become a nationwide phenomenon in higher education, and at my university approximately 30 percent of the faculty were adjuncts. What had once been a category for special temporary teaching arrangements had become an administrative device for hiring teachers without having to pay for the rights and privileges of tenure-track positions such as health insurance and pension contributions. The increased national use of adjunct teachers was in effect an indirect attack on tenure because the growing numbers of adjuncts provided an excuse for administrations to reduce the overall number of tenure-track positions.

The extensive use of adjuncts in place of tenure-track positions reflects a crisis in higher education. The policy not only demeans the professoriate, it also erodes the process of shared governance in colleges and universities, promotes faculty inequity, undermines institutional allegiance and faculty morale, eliminates common standards for professional responsibilities and working conditions, and perhaps worst of all, by creating an atmosphere of arbitrary procedures and chronic job insecurity, it destroys the intellectual and creative self-confidence of professors that is central to the integrity of any college or university.

The blame for using adjuncts as cheap labor usually falls on state legislatures for their failure to adequately fund higher education. While this is undoubtedly the major cause of the problem, it does not follow that higher education should have chosen such an ignoble and academically destructive solution to deal with a financial problem. The growing denigration of selected members of our profession could not have happened without the acquiescence and cooperation of faculty and administrations alike.

So what is to be done? One solution is the efforts of some adjuncts to form their own unions. And if higher education fails to respond to their grievances, that probably is their only recourse. But it is not a desirable solution because it will only make permanent an unjust category for teachers and further erode an already-damaged sense of collegiality. Even if higher education fails to acquire adequate funding from state legislatures, that is no excuse for maintaining a policy that is unfair and exclusionary. The fact that we have been willing to do this undermines our claims that colleges and universities represent higher ideals, and only makes our alleged altruism appear hypocritical and arrogant.

Instead we could begin on the department level by refusing to hire adjuncts unless they were given the same rights, protections, and responsibilities as the full-time faculty. Their wages would not be

negotiated arbitrarily, but would be a percentage breakdown of what is earned by their peers, and job searches would be conducted with the same stringency as those done for the tenure-track faculty. Permanent “temporary” status for adjuncts would no longer be acceptable. If adjuncts were continuously rehired, they would automatically be considered eligible for tenure after the same period such consideration is given to tenure-track faculty, and if they were not rehired they would be given adequate notice, not “last-minute” notification as has become common practice. Deans would uphold these departmental policies and defend them to the administration. University and college presidents would in turn publically support these positions as just and necessary for the honor of their professoriate. If legislatures still refuse to grant adequate funding, presidents would make it clear that they would stay within the confines of their allotment, but not at the expense of denigrating their teaching faculty. If that hampers growth, so be it. And in those instances where colleges and universities are unionized or have collective-bargaining representatives, those organizations must fight for the rights and protection of *all* faculty, whatever the financial problems of their respective schools.

Barring the real solution of returning to full-time tenure-track employment, I see no other alternative to reversing higher education’s downhill slide into the survival tactics of the corporate marketplace. If we are willing to sacrifice the dignity of our teaching colleagues because of restricted budgets, it is only a matter of time before whole departments and professions will be sacrificed on the same altar.

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James G. Todd is an emeritus professor of art and humanities at the University of Montana.

**Joseph M. Schneider**

**Employing Adjunct Faculty  
from an HR Perspective**



In many states there is an ongoing controversy regarding the large number of college classes being taught by adjunct faculty. A review of individual personnel data reports in institutions of higher education frequently reveals that the number of part-time or “adjunct” faculty exceeds the number of full faculty.

This article provides general insight into the motivation and circumstances that are usually considered when decisions are made about employing adjunct faculty. While information being

used for this article is based upon the Florida Community College System in general and specifically Palm Beach Community College, one of Florida’s larger public community colleges, much of this information is also likely to apply to other areas of higher education.

During the annual budget-preparation process, administrative decisions must be made regarding the number of full-time faculty and the number of part-time or adjunct faculty to be employed for the forthcoming fiscal or academic year. Unless there is a pending reduction in full-time faculty, their number is likely either to remain intact or to increase if enrollment and funding will allow for an increase in full-time faculty. Even if there is a pending reduction in full-time faculty, tenured faculty members are very likely to remain employed because of the job security that they have.

Full-time faculty members are also much more likely to be represented by a faculty union that may increase their employment security. Adjunct/temporary faculty members have no such employment security. They typically are employed term-by-term without any guarantee of future employment, even though some adjunct faculty members may be employed on term-by-term contracts at individual colleges or universities for a number of consecutive years. In addition, it is not uncommon for some adjunct faculty to teach the same number of classes as full-time faculty usually teach during a year. Generally they receive no sick leave or any other employee benefits except legally mandated benefits such as workers compensation. While a number of states allow the unionization of adjunct-faculty members, they usually are not represented by faculty unions in most states, including Florida.

The cost difference between employing full-time faculty versus employing adjunct faculty to teach the same classes is frequently quite dramatic. A comparison of a projected mean or average salary of a full-time faculty member at Palm Beach Community College teaching a full load with one or more adjunct-faculty members teaching the same classes reveals that the salary costs are only about 40 percent as much when employing adjunct-faculty members. When the extra costs of benefits that full-time faculty receive are added for health insurance, retirement, and matching social security, the calculations indicate that it costs only about 33 percent to use adjunct faculty compared with the cost of a full-time faculty member. In other words, it would cost about three times as much to employ a full-time faculty member as it would to employ one or more adjunct-faculty members to teach the same classes as a full-time faculty member would teach.

Even though the above-referenced information has been approximated from a specific community college within the State of Florida, the cost impact is likely to be as great or greater at many universities, especially when one considers their emphasis on research as a part of a full faculty work load.

Adjunct-faculty members are obligated by accrediting agencies to have the same academic qualifications as full-time faculty. Indeed, many of them have significant business or vocational-technical backgrounds that add to their ability to educate students. In addition there are geographic areas that have many retired educators who frequently enjoy the opportunity to teach part time. Thus the adjunct/temporary faculty member can add an important dimension to instructional programs in higher education.

The employment of adjunct faculty at institutions of higher learning also provides significant flexibility for colleges or universities. In times of tight budgets a decision can readily be made not to reemploy an adjunct faculty member for the next term. In certain instances the use of adjunct faculty may be prudently used in distance-learning programs, especially when there is some doubt whether the class is financially feasible.

Of course, a key factor that each institution of higher education must consider is the availability of qualified adjunct faculty in the geographic area which the college or university serves. When a significant number of qualified adjunct faculty are available to a college or a university, it is likely that cost considerations, plus their flexibility, will result in the continued liberal use of adjunct faculty in institutions of higher education.

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Joseph M. Schneider is a retired director of human resources.

## Annabelle W. Boehm

### The Accidental Adjunct



trange glances were coming my way. Slowly, I set up my materials at the lone teacher's desk in front of the classroom. Nervousness hit my stomach. Could I really do this? Could I really teach a graduate level college class? Someone in the back of the room said, "Oh Professor, is this 'Problems and Issues of Special Education Research'?"

I looked behind me to see who had walked into the room. It occurred to me that all the eyes were focused on me. Thunder struck! They were addressing me! I was the Professor. The silence was deafening. It occurred to me that the professor listed in the bulletin was a young, tall, Indian woman who had her doctorate and wore beautiful saris.

This short, freckled middle-aged Caucasian woman was not what the students expected.

Three weeks earlier the phone call had come. Out of the blue, Dr. K. had left a message on my machine. A few of my professors thought I had a talent for teaching at the college level. The scheduled professor had a personal emergency. Could I teach the class? The course outline was in the mail. It would be a challenge that would expand my professional horizons, according to my respected teachers.

So with two weeks to go before classes started, I dug out my notebook and old textbook and set up a class outline and syllabus. Luckily, a dear friend had joined the world of adjuncts the year before. She guided me through the ups and downs of setting up a syllabus. It was amazing how daunting it was to be on the other side of the podium. How many course outlines had I read? What had been my pet peeve? Oh yes, how out of touch with the real world of teaching some of my professors had been.

The world of an adjunct is unique. We teach one or two classes a week. With the high demand for education, we provide a valuable service to the colleges, universities, and evening students. We get paid by the credit hour and do not qualify for benefits. We have no office space. Therefore, we use our home phones, cell phones, and personal e-mails. Adjuncts do not have a secretary, and copying materials for classes in a timely manner can be a true adventure. You can recognize the adjuncts by their rolling travel boxes and suitcases. The adjunct is a self-contained unit. If you need a supply for teaching, you must carry it with you. The rolling office becomes heavier as the semester progresses, and the "just in case" articles get added to the mix. To give credit, we do have a mailbox with our names, sometimes spelled correctly, written on a scrap of paper and taped to the box.

It was 5:00 P.M., and the clock had started. With my most confident smile, I addressed the class and explained away their fears and confusion. Because I had recently been in their shoes, the class took on a hands-on, practical approach. Everyone worked well together and shared their experiences. We created cohorts who were working on similar topics so that they could expand their research. The learning curve improved as I listened to my students and used the classroom forum to expand all our horizons.

Time has passed, and more adjunct teaching experiences have come my way. The classes are interesting and take on their own personalities. As usual, last-minute assignments come my way with limited resources, but the challenge, enjoyment, and personal fulfillment I feel at the end of each class makes it all worthwhile.

Now when I hear, "Oh Professor?" I smile and say, "May I help you?"

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**Anonymous**

**The Part-Timer Next Door**



As I write, I do not know whether I will be part-time, full-time, or no-time in any particular semester. If you ask the personnel department, they will say that I am not an employee of the university at all, but they say that before every semester. I have been at the university for three years, and during this time I have been assigned a full-time teaching load three times, only to have it snatched away at the last minute.

Part-timers may make only 40 percent of what the lowest paid full-timer makes per class. Part-timers are routinely passed over when it comes to raises. Some universities even have a cap on what a part-timer is allowed to earn. In some colleges, this cap may be as low as \$5000 per semester. Working part-time generally means it will be impossible to make up the difference elsewhere. Not many jobs will allow someone to be off from, say, 10:10 to 11:30 on Tuesdays and Thursdays each and every week. Jobs that do are usually reserved for students.

Part-timers are segregated in a part-time ghetto. Part-timers might have to share an office with as many as four other part-timers in a room with three desks, two telephones, and one computer. The part-timer may have to change offices every semester. The computer may be only six months away from being carted off to the surplus-property facility. The part-timer may not be allowed a personal key to the supply cabinet but instead share one key with all the other part-timers. Lesson plans are trashed if one of them forgets to return the key. Part-timers may be a model of resourcefulness, creativity, and innovation, none of which is likely to be appreciated by the full-time staff.

The part-timer's name is not on the office door, only a generic sign saying "Part-Time Faculty," thus

signaling to one and all the part-timer's lowly status in the department. Meanwhile, the part-timer has the same teaching responsibilities as the full-time professor in the office next door. Part-timers must prepare lessons and examinations, lecture, advise students, and assign grades. Someone should do a study comparing the number of grade appeals against part-timers versus full-timers.

Students believe part-timers are undesirable instructors, a misconception fueled by university public-relations material touting the percentage of tenured faculty, as if untenured, or even worse, part-timers must be incompetent. In fact, the perception may be partly correct, but not because of the part-timer. Part-timers are often expected to teach classes outside their field, and must often supply their own support, like a decent computer. Student evaluations may be used punitively against the part-timer. Some students know this, and use the knowledge to attempt to negotiate a better grade in ways subtle and not so subtle.

Part-timers often have no real representation on campus. Part-timers fortunate enough to have taught enough hours for enough semesters to run for the faculty senate usually do not want to rock their stable boat. Besides, much of what part-timers tolerate is defended by the administration as university policy. Gentle reader, before you cry, "Foul! Where are your citations," I invite you to conduct a study to document the plight of part-timers all across the United States. I would do the study myself if only I could find a full-time, tenured professor to serve as the primary investigator on the grant while I do all the work. You see, as a part-timer I might not be allowed to even do the research.

So why do I do it? Because every semester I hope that this will be the semester when my foot in the door will finally admit my whole being. Because I hope one day my contributions to the education of tomorrow's leaders finally will be recognized and rewarded. Because I desire university affiliation when I write. Because within my field, I have something of value to contribute to society's knowledge base. Because I need the faculty privileges in the university library. Because I am afraid that if I do not stay connected to my professional life, I may lose it altogether. Because any salary is still more than no salary. Because even a part-time salary will allow me to collect unemployment benefits in the summer.

Part-timers all over America are experiencing some subset of the stigma and problems I have described. It is an outrage that our more advantaged colleagues tolerate such treatment of the part-timer next door.

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Name withheld on request



Michelle Elizabeth Tusan

## Adventures in the Academic Marketplace



hen I entered graduate school, I faced a dilemma that those of us who have decided to take higher degrees in the liberal arts increasingly seem to face. “Do this because you love it,” counseled one adviser, “Not because you expect to get a job.” As a twenty-something woman from a modest middle-class background with no prospects of entering the genteel intellectual life,

these words proved cause for concern. Graduate education without any modern real-world application? A PhD in the humanities, when cast in these terms, seemed a pursuit only appropriate for the elite.

Many of us in my cohort did manage to land good jobs despite the dire predictions of some in the profession. However, we came to face a new problem: moving our lives to distant places in order to do what we had been trained to do. With overall cutbacks in university hiring, including in most of our home departments, we were admonished to “Go where the job is.” Building social and intellectual communities in our thirties and forties has taken the place of concerns over employment that had overshadowed our twenties.

I tell this story in part to point to what I think is a fundamental problem in understanding the nature of liberal arts education in the United States. Valued for creating “well-rounded” individuals rather than “useful” wage-earners, humanities and social science majors in many university settings are asked to justify their course of study every step of the way. This attitude has translated into an undervaluing of these disciplines not only culturally but on university campuses as well. Using adjuncts to teach undergraduates has become the dirty little secret of a number of universities that, when faced with budget cuts, hire part-timers to do what should be full-time work. Not only are adjuncts exploited with low pay and little collective-bargaining power, they also join an educational environment that at times can be said to challenge the very thing that universities should foster: the methodical study and understanding of the human condition in both the sciences and the arts.

With demand for higher education continuing to grow throughout the United States, the value of well-trained scholars and teachers also should rise. Despite a huge increase in retirements on the university level during the past twenty years, this has not been the case. It is simply more cost-effective to replace tenured professors with part-timers whose

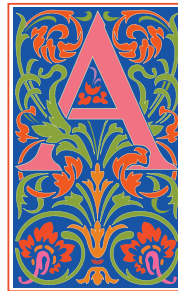
marginal status ensures that they are often prevented from fully participating in the larger university community. That obtaining a graduate degree in the humanities has translated into casting your fate to the gods of a capricious job market is partially a product of economics, to be sure. But there are cultural reasons as well. The resolve of university leaders who have to chase a smaller and smaller pool of research dollars needs to be strengthened to find ways to reinvigorate the university as a space of knowledge production through fostering the growth of an intellectual community of scholars and their students.

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Andrew L. Gerhart

## Adjunct and Temporary Faculty — Advantageous or Detrimental?



Adjunct faculty are an enormous benefit to any college and/or university. They allow for higher enrollments at the school while still keeping the class sizes low. They also save the college money. Adjuncts are paid less than full-time faculty because they are expected only to teach. If adjuncts do not perform well in the classroom, they can simply not be rehired. That fix is not so simple

with full-time faculty (especially if tenured faculty). In addition, adjuncts typically have loads of industry experience that can be used in the classroom for the students’ benefit.

Although adjunct faculty provide benefits, they also present serious problems. First, there is the issue of course consistency. When adjunct or temporary faculty are brought in to offer more sections of a specific course, often they are not advised or aware of the outcomes and objectives that must be met for the course. In addition, adjuncts often are brought in to a college from business and industry. They are typically masters of their profession. Unfortunately, this does not guarantee that the instructor can effectively deliver the discipline-specific material to students. Availability of adjunct and temporary faculty to students outside of the classroom presents a final problem.

Multiple steps must be taken to ensure that adjuncts are effective and worthwhile to both the institution and the students.

- Specific syllabus, course objectives, and course outcomes must be fully defined, given to

adjuncts, and followed. Adjuncts may need to be asked to sign a contract that will require them to follow course specifics. This should not hinder or prohibit academic freedom. How the material is taught is up to each instructor, but what is taught should be standardized.

- Universities need a program to train adjunct (and full-time) faculty to teach. They must understand the classroom environment and learning styles of various students.
- Adjuncts need to understand/learn how to apply industrial knowledge to the classroom.
- Adjuncts must not be teaching simply because they like to teach, but because they can teach.
- Adjuncts must not be teaching for the paycheck alone.
- The college employing the adjunct must have a feedback mechanism (such as an assessment program) to ensure effective teaching and coverage of all topics required in the course.
- Colleges and the adjuncts must institute a method to allow better availability of adjuncts outside of the classroom.

Adjunct and temporary faculty are an enormous asset to any college, and generally their student ratings are as good as or better than those of many of the full-time faculty. However, care must be taken to ensure that the students are not slighted. After all, students are paying the same tuition rate for an adjunct instructor as for a full-time instructor.

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### Michael Latta

## The Real World of Adjunct and Temporary Faculty In Higher Education



number of years ago, I saw a small ad in the American Marketing Association (AMA) newsletter looking for members of the pharmaceutical-business community who were qualified to serve as adjunct faculty to staff a new Pharmaceutical Executive MBA program. Soon I was teaching two courses on Qualitative and Quantitative Marketing Research Methods. The

emphasis in my courses and all others was to provide a “real world” perspective that combines pedagogical

rigor with content informed by aspects of current business practices in pharmaceutical companies.

Since 1990, the program has thrived and grown. A recent return on investment (ROI) analysis done by one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world revealed a four-dollar return on every dollar invested in tuition for pursuing the MBA degree offered by the program. This ROI determination is important because the program’s tuition is typically 100 percent reimbursed by the business where the students work.

The year before I joined the St. Joseph’s University Executive MBA program as an adjunct faculty member, I got a call from Professor Mike Etzel at the Mendoza College of Business at the University of Notre Dame. Professor Etzel runs the AMA School of Marketing Research that is jointly sponsored by the AMA and the College. Professor Etzel was looking for a business professional who could instruct a class on Demand Forecasting at a high level of competence and student satisfaction. Because the program involved a week of intense instruction on eighteen aspects of best practices in conducting and using marketing research in profitable-business management, and because the program came with a substantial tuition, delivery of valuable knowledge was a necessity to persuade business management that the program was a good investment in intellectual capital. Since then, I have been participating as an adjunct faculty member in this highly successful program that just completed its twenty-fourth year of excellence.

Over the years, I have seen many other adjunct faculty come and go from both of these programs for a variety of reasons. I believe my longevity and success are due to my experience in both worlds of business and academia.

I firmly believe a blend of the values of academia and the business world produce the highest value in both. To be successful as an adjunct or temporary faculty member, one needs to adopt the things that have value in the real world and bring them into the classroom.

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# Issues in the Academy

## Grade Inflation

James David Ballard

### Academic Standards and Grade Inflation: Easily Forgotten Structural Aspects of the Equation



In recent decades, higher education has undergone significant organizational transformations that affect grades, perhaps as profoundly as does the individual teacher who most often gets the blame for inflating them and for presumably lowering academic standards. Some call

these historical trends the corporate cooptation of the university; others refer to this transformation as the business model invading higher education; and still others suggest that this change is a much-needed adjustment in the social role of the university. What has transpired is that students have been given a primacy in the relationship with the university, and increasingly they have become the educational equivalent of consumers. These consumers have needs that have become a priority of the university as an institution, and the institution has changed registration and grading policies to meet their needs. This transformation may have made education more available to the masses and/or more responsive to students, but it also has a price, one that is not factored into the typical discussion of grade inflation and lower academic standards.

Let us examine some of these trends and how they effect grades. While it is difficult to argue that the result of changing drop/add and registration policies is not more student friendly and thus desirable, this change is not without unintended consequences for the institu-

tion and the education process. Altering university regulations that allow later and later withdrawals by students who wish to avoid the stigma of a poor grade, the haphazard acceptance by almost everyone at the university of wholesale teacher-shopping by students wishing to avoid the “hard” graders and/or more difficult classes, and other structural features of the registration and grading process contribute to the inflation of grades and perceptions of lower standards.

To illustrate this problem, consider three scenarios. All three scenarios are based on a class in which forty-three students were initially enrolled, thirty-nine actually attended and received at least one graded assignment, and thirty-two completed the course. In the first scenario, any and every student who wishes to opt out of a class is allowed to for any variety of reasons; only the class averages of those who finish the course (thirty-two students) are used as the basis of calculating class average scores, resulting in a class average of 84.5. Because only the “better” students typically would finish the course, the class grade distribution would be skewed in such a manner to suggest inflated grades to the observer who does not look at the structural implications behind the distribution of grades.

In the second scenario, those students who opt out of the class after at least one grade was earned in the course are assessed for purposes of class average calculations based on what they have earned at time of withdrawal (a total of thirty-nine students). One assumption: the teacher would have to keep detailed grading records so that we could identify precisely when the student withdrew with respect to the grading process. The class average calculations would now include these partial grades and reflect a more realistic picture of all students who were in the class, with the class average falling

to 75.82, a full letter-grade difference. The resultant overall class average is thus recalculated in a manner that would suggest a modicum of fairness to the faculty who are asked to use their class grades as baseline data for assessing grade inflation.

In scenario three, every student who was signed into the class is assessed (forty-three students), and for those who were briefly on the role sheet but did not take an exam or receive a grade for any assignment, a normalized array of grades is assumed, resulting in a class average of 74.81. As may be obvious, this recalculation could be minor or major, depending on the first-day drop rate for a course. In this scenario the drops were minimized to demonstrate a minor recalculation effect.

The point of such recalculations is to illustrate how policies that allow class-switching, that encourage drops by students who are not doing as well as they anticipated, that promote incompletes and/or other structural features of the modern service orientation of universities, all can contribute to the inflation of grades.

Academic standards and grade inflation are serious issues for academics. We should continue a dialogue about what is transpiring and why. During that discussion it is not unreasonable to seek answers outside of the classroom as contributing factors and to ask that grade averages be calculated with such structural factors taken into account. In this manner the real contribution of how the faculty grade students would be more readily apparent.

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### Ronna Vanderslice

#### When I Was Young, An A was an A: Grade Inflation in Higher Education



People often criticize elementary and secondary schools for their low standards and elevated grades. Political candidates use higher standards in education as a platform for their campaign; yet institutions of higher education cannot deny the statistics: only 10 to 20 percent of all college students receive grades lower than a B-. This figure means that between 80 and 90 percent of all college students receive grades of either A or B (Farley, cited in Sonner). In 1969, 7 percent of all students received grades of A- or higher. By 1993, this proportion had risen to 26 percent. In contrast, grades

of C or less moved from 25 percent in 1969 to 9 percent in 1993. The pattern, which continues today, reveals an issue that concerns academicians and the general public alike.

One may wonder why this is a problem. For one, employers seem very concerned that good grades on transcripts have very little meaning. It is extremely difficult to differentiate between competent students and incompetent ones by viewing a transcript from most institutions of higher education today. Also, students may be left with an incorrect picture of their own competence. Most importantly, how grades relate to student learning and understanding is not clear. Variety in grading practices across disciplines and between institutions further complicates the question of what exactly an A means.

Universities must initiate reforms that increase standards instead of decreasing them. Even though some educators clearly see the wrong in grade inflation, for others it has become such a routine that universities must be explicit in their plan of remedy for this situation. A head-on approach that has been used lately is to include on student transcripts not only the grade for the class, but also the average grade for all students enrolled in the class. Indiana University, Eastern Kentucky University, and Dartmouth College are institutions that have used some type of indexing system. Harvey Mansfield, a longtime critic of grade inflation, uses a similar approach within his own classroom at Harvard University, giving each student two grades: one for the registrar and the public record, and the other in private. The private grades give students a realistic, useful assessment of how well they did and where they stand in relation to others.

Indiana University also proposed a three-year moratorium on the use of student evaluations in personnel decisions as a method to curb the problem of too many high grades. The university believes that removing concerns over student complaints about receiving lower grades might motivate all instructors to reset their standards, free from the pressures to give A's in exchange for high evaluations (McSpirit). Felton also recommends that universities rethink the validity of student-opinion surveys as a measure of teaching effectiveness.

Other institutional practices include requiring schools and departments to review grading practices with the goal of bringing rigor to their programs. An emphasis in student recruitment on what is expected of students in terms of academic preparation also may be worthwhile (Wilson). In addition, faculty should take an active approach in insisting that academic standards are an essential part of the academic ethic and that by rewarding mediocrity,

we discourage excellence (Wilson). Simply recognizing that grade inflation devalues your content to students is a necessary step in the right direction. Wilson points out that grade inflation reveals a loss of faculty morale. It signifies that professors care less about their teaching. Anyone who cares a lot about something is very critical in making judgments about it. Far from the opposite of caring, being critical is the very consequence of caring.

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J.D. Coleman

### The Student as Client



Grade inflation is a complicated phenomenon driven by many factors — student competition for college and graduate school admission, the necessity of scholarships to fund college education at all levels, and professors' quests for good student evaluations, among many others. Despite my own conscious efforts to maintain grading standards, I have taught very few

classes with a grade spread in the classic bell shape, with the majority of students making C's. All of my colleagues share this experience and are concerned about grade inflation, but most have become resigned to it. They do not want their students to be at a disadvantage for scholarships and admission to graduate school, and they do not want poor evaluations. Today there are basically three grades — A, B, and C, with C the equivalent of failure. I am capitulating. I have rationalized by recalling one of the graduate schools I attended, a very fine one, in which there were only three grades — honors, pass, and fail. So a C is now failure and that's that.

Grade inflation is related to another concern common to modern universities, particularly public state universities — retention. In response to the convoluted method of funding universities, universities compete for warm bodies, better known by that impersonal moniker, Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs). Although the more stellar programs — law, medicine, and architecture, among others — generally maintain high standards, many departments struggle to control the quality of students presented to them by their administrations. The university seems to find a place for or some means to accept students who are woefully unprepared for even the diluted rigors of the modern university. Admitting marginal or unqualified students serves only the interests of the university. Most of them will not graduate. To legitimize this policy, universities have created remedial programs aimed at improving the retention of these students.

Besides the ethical issue of taking advantage of the intellectually disadvantaged, there are other problems with this practice. Remedial courses are generally limited to basic skills in grammar and mathematics. If courses do not have a specific prerequisite for math or English, remedial students can take these classes. Unfortunately, these students are often not just deficient in math and English. Many of them should not be in the university. They should be learning other skills, skills that are just as necessary and valuable to our society as those requiring a university degree.

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### Assessing Students

Dallas Brozik

### Whom Do I Blame?



No kidding, I mean it. Whom do I blame? I teach upper-division and graduate courses, and I am constantly confronted with students who cannot spell, who do not or will not read, and whose math skills are simply appalling. I spend a whole lot of time trying to get these kids up to a reasonable level of literacy. I should be teaching content, but, oh no, I just try to get past sentence fragments.

I think the problem is that our raw material, the student body, is not as good as it used to be. I teach a freshman-orientation seminar each fall, and these are some very bright kids, but their abilities to focus

and concentrate are as poor as their basic skills. They really have no idea of how to be a student. After thirteen years of the K–12 experience, why are these kids so poorly prepared for advanced study?

By gosh, I think I may have just answered the question. What the heck is going on in K–12 anyhow? When I talk to my grandchildren, I am disappointed with how little they know for their respective levels of education. They seem to think that education involves sitting around and listening to a teacher who wants to be their friend.

Maybe that is another part of the problem. The parents might be able to get the kids to study, but to be fair to the parents the assignments are given by the classroom teacher. If the impetus does not come from the classroom, the parents have little ability to guide the kid through additional studies. And if they do make the kid do extra work and learn more, the poor kid is regarded as a geek by the other kids.

And lest we forget, there is now evidence to indicate that too much television at an early age is detrimental to a child's learning ability. Could someone please tell me why this is a surprise? Put kids in front of a television and then praise them when they learn the ABCs through a song and dance, and they expect to have a song and dance to learn everything.

To be perfectly fair, I must admit some complicity on the part of the college faculty, but it arises out of a concern for self-preservation. The whole business of student evaluations has gotten way out of hand. We are now to the point where the undereducated are rating the underpaid, and these ratings carry significance for salaries, promotion, and tenure. Only the most senior professors who are well tenured and bulletproof can even dare to teach a rigorous course.

Another result of this whole situation is the incredible state of grade inflation at all levels. I remember the days when a C really was the average grade. Who was it who came up with the dumb idea that everyone has special status? Just look in the mirror and try to convince yourself that you personally are a whole lot more special than anyone else.

The whole educational pipeline leaks like a sieve, and the kids are the ones getting hurt. Let all of us involved in the process take a little responsibility for our own actions and get the job done right. You K–12 teachers, quit trying to make the little darlings feel happy and put them to work. You have a strong union, so you will be safe. Teach them basic writing skills and the multiplication table. I can remember learning the multiplication table in fourth grade. Sheer rote memorization, but I learned my numbers and so did my classmates.

Parents need to be brought more into the process. Maybe time could be set aside each night for school work. Two hours of no television, no video games, and no exceptions. If on a given night the homework is easy, read ahead and prepare for the next day or just read another book for recreational purposes. And keep the little kids away from the tube! It never has been good for them.

Those of us in the colleges simply have to demand more of the students. We also need to break the back of the student-evaluation monster. Student comments are fine in their place, but they cannot be a major source of information concerning teaching performance. We need to spend more time in each other's classes learning about ourselves. The grade-inflation nonsense really has to stop, too. If we demand a fair evaluation system for ourselves, we must be ready to apply a similar system to the students. Making an A an accomplishment might just give some students a bit more focus.

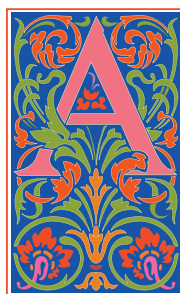
Take another look in that mirror. That is the person to blame. All of us are part of the problem. It is high time we all fixed our own little corners of the world. If we all fix what we can, I think that the whole problem will be solved, and we can give our students a real education and a real chance in life. And if we get blamed for their success, fine.

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**Tamara Kay Baldwin**

## **Student Evaluations of Instruction**



month or so after each semester ends, a sealed brown envelope stamped "Confidential" in bright red ink arrives in my school mail slot. I am embarrassed to admit that at the sight of it, my heart pounds. Oh no, I think, student evaluations are here. Those moments before I can return to my office, firmly shut the door, rip open the envelope and quickly scan the results

feel like what I imagine a severe panic attack must feel like. What did my students say about me? Even though I have been teaching for more than twenty-five years and have always gotten good evaluations, the feeling never changes.

Though my initial reaction to the results of my student evaluations borders on panic, I am a strong advocate of students having the opportunity to evaluate the instruction that they receive. Every one of

us can probably recall taking a class with an instructor who had little regard for or was oblivious to his or her effectiveness and who could have benefited from some constructive comments from students — if only they had been asked to make some.

I have come to rely on my students' feedback to help me improve my teaching. In fact, I ask them at evaluation time, which at my university involves administering a campus-wide standardized evaluation a few weeks before the semester's end, to please take the time to give me feedback that will make the course they have nearly finished with me a better one for the students coming behind them. They take me seriously, and even though it would feel better not reading about my shortcomings or failures, I must admit their comments are usually just what I need to hear to make course material clearer or instruction more meaningful. That is, after all, the original intention of student evaluations of instruction: to provide the faculty member feedback to help improve teaching effectiveness.

In recent years, however, student evaluations have been put to a very different use on campuses around the country. At many institutions they are used by tenure and promotion committees as a measure of a faculty member's teaching effectiveness, one of the areas commonly evaluated in the tenure and promotion process. This usage concerns me because research into student evaluations indicates that numerous and varied factors — many of which are totally out of the control of the faculty member being evaluated — can affect the evaluations that the faculty member receives from his or her students. Studies have shown that factors such as the time of day that a class is offered, the student's desire to take the class, the student's anticipated grade in the class, whether or not the class is a required one or is an elective, or even the gender of the student and/or the faculty member, to name just a few factors, can have an effect on the ratings that a faculty member receives. To be fair to faculty members who are required to submit student evaluations as part of their tenure and promotion documents, it is essential that committees and administrators making such decisions gain an understanding of how such factors might affect the ratings that faculty members receive from their students.

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Stokes Schwartz

## Should Young People Delay College?: A Modest Proposal



Almost a decade of teaching in a college environment — as a graduate assistant at two Big Ten universities and an instructor at a community college — plus my own undergraduate status as a returning adult student allow me to make two broad observations about the student body in colleges and universities today. First, it seems that many returning adult and foreign-born students

function much better in a college environment. Their generally favorable academic performance comes from a higher value placed on education, combined with a more serious attitude toward their studies. Often, these students achieve greater academic success despite numerous commitments simultaneously vying for their time. More troubling is the situation of their younger American-born peers, who lag somewhere behind. Too frequently, these students lack discernable curiosity and motivation, refuse to engage with college material, and display no readily apparent will to achieve.

In light of the above, I suggest that more young people put off college for three to five years. Certainly, many young people adjust well to the challenges of college. They expose themselves to new people and ideas enthusiastically, embrace new subjects, and work hard to master them.

If we expand our focus, though, we find that too many other students have considerable trouble adapting to and performing within the same environment. These young people arrive on the doorstep of their chosen college or university ill-equipped for the requirements of independent student life. Their lack of preparedness does not necessarily involve poor skills in basic reading, writing, and critical thought. Instead, these young people are mentally and emotionally unready for college. Consequently, a greater number of parents should delay sending their children to a post-secondary institution.

An interim of three to five years between their senior year of high school and freshman year of college means that young people can become more mentally, emotionally, and intellectually ready for the post-secondary educational experience. They can avoid the problems that come from lack of wisdom, focus, and drive. In general, adult students are better able to put their best academic foot forward. Many young people have trouble making the leap between the child and adult worlds and flounder as a result. Because parents often restrict certain activities and

privileges for younger siblings who are not yet mature enough for additional responsibilities, it does not seem beyond reason to suggest delaying what can be a daunting transition for many young people.

How might young people spend their hiatus between high school and college then? Working in the adult world for several years has a number of benefits. First of all, this time allows young people to see how limited their options and potential are without a college education. This experience alone makes one more appreciative of the opportunity to earn a degree. Next, several years spent holding down a full-time job, paying bills, and managing one's life as an adult produce a more solid work ethic, better organization, and stronger time-management skills, all of which are necessary to achieve on campus and in life. Third, functioning as an adult sharpens young persons' sense of responsibility to society and to themselves. In addition, a chance to broaden their horizons outside of the academic environment encourages receptivity to new ideas once young people return to school. Furthermore, a more mature perspective and scope mean that college students are better able to absorb and process the copious amounts of new information awaiting them on campus. Finally, the process of becoming an adult helps young people glean more from college when they finally make the decision — their own decision — to return to school at twenty-two or twenty-three.

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Stokes Schwartz lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He teaches developmental writing, world literature, and public speaking at Brown College.

## Role(s) of the Professoriate

David R. Stronck

### A Helpful Tenure Process



Throughout American universities, many assistant professors live in fear because decisions about the granting of tenure sometimes seem arbitrary and unfair. Despite some flagrant problems, the process of tenure review at every university is designed to provide a reasonable and fair system. The following basic characteristics are found almost universally:

- The most important review is done by a committee of peers in the same department of the university. The professors on this committee know well the appropriate standards in the specialization of the applicant for tenure.

- The chair of the applicant's department has access to much information and writes a very important review of the applicant's performance.
- Committees at the college level and at the university level are especially focused on assessing the process of the reviews and consistency in the analyses.
- Administrators, including the dean of the college and the president of the university, are eager to enforce the standards of the university.

This system provides a long series of reviews with checks and balances, starting with reviews by peers and ending with the highest administrator of the university. The tenure review seems to resemble legislative processes of American government with its many checks and balances.

Of course, failures do occur in the human systems of well-organized governments and universities. Nevertheless, universities can reduce the problems by having a clear philosophy. An admirable philosophy exists at the California State University-Hayward (CSUH): the tenure-review process should be supportive and helpful to the applicant. At CSUH there is an assumption of good will with the goal of encouraging the good work of the applicant.

At CSUH the procedures well match the philosophy. These procedures include the following:

- The chair of the department meets annually with the assistant professor to plan professional development.
- Annually each applicant provides documentation of achievements with the request for retention. This document is carefully reviewed by the chair and a departmental committee. Both make recommendations, especially to provide directions — for example, the need for more attention to the quality of teaching, or the need for more work on submitting publications, and so on.
- If there is a disagreement between the chair and the departmental committee, or recommendations against retaining the applicant, the document is also reviewed by a college-level committee of promotion, tenure, and retention.
- If the recommendation is against retention, the dean of the college and other administrators become involved in the final decision.

This annual process of meetings, reviews, and recommendations has the intention of smoothly guiding the applicant until the application is made for tenure.



At CSUH the process is working well. Approximately 94 percent of those applying for tenure have been successful. Some of the credit for this success must be given to the careful work of search committees in identifying excellent applicants to start tenure-track positions. The assistance provided in the annual retention process has guided the assistant professors on the right path. Moreover, chairs of departments and departmental committees must annually reflect on their own recommendations and be consistent in their analyses of the strengths and weaknesses of the assistant professors. Annual reviews tend to eliminate any arbitrary or inappropriate judgments because they provide annual steps toward reaching tenure.

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**Juanita Manning-Walsh**

## **The Academic Responsibility of Academic Freedom**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

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The term “academic freedom” has become a mantra so commonly, and erroneously, used that it is rendered almost meaningless (Bellack). Most assume that it is a well-defined concept; however, in reality it is more philosophic than legal and is often used as a justification for actions taken inside and outside of the classroom that have nothing to do with the original intent of academic freedom. The roots of the concept of academic freedom are found in medieval times, when universities were considered free from the constraints of civil law and faculty were believed to need protection from political and religious interference (Bellack). Today academic freedom is a right, protected by the First Amendment, as determined by the Supreme Court in *Keyishian v. Board of Regents* in 1967 (AAUP). The concept of academic freedom, however, must be accompanied by an equally demanding concept of academic responsibility. The purpose of this paper is to explore the balancing effect that academic responsibility has on academic freedom.

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### **ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

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Academic freedom is essential for both teaching and research. In the teaching aspect, it is “fundamental for the protection of the rights of the [pro-

fessor] in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning” (AAUP 1). Freedom in research is essential for the development of new knowledge. Academic freedom is defined by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) as freedom to:

- Conduct research and disseminate the results without externally applied presuppositions about the direction and findings of the research
- Teach subjects in the classroom for which one is qualified and has specific knowledge
- Express opinions in public through speech or writing, without institutional censorship or discipline.

As such, academic freedom is central to the intellectual process of increasing knowledge (Mercer, Galvin, and Jones) both in the research laboratory and in the classroom. It is not, however, an excuse for poor teaching technique.

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### **ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITY**

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While academic freedom is reasonably well accepted and somewhat understood, academic responsibility is much more vague and often obscure. Academic responsibility includes the obligations, legal and ethical, that correspond to and balance the freedoms associated with academic freedom.

The academic freedom to conduct research and disseminate the findings without interference is balanced by the responsibility to use ethical principles and adhere to federal regulations and guidelines in the research process (Thompson *et al.*). It is the responsibility of professors conducting or overseeing research to protect the rights and welfare of those (the subjects) without whom knowledge could not be advanced.

The freedom to teach subjects for which the professor is qualified and has specific knowledge is balanced by several academic responsibilities. Academic responsibility includes “defining one’s philosophy of adult education, the design, implementation and evaluation of curriculum, preparation of course materials, [and] teaching and evaluating in the classroom” (Thompson *et al.* 166–167). Other academic responsibilities, according to Thompson *et al.*, include advising students and mentoring others into the teaching role. Professors have an academic responsibility to remain current in the knowledge of the discipline by conducting cutting-edge research, attending professional conferences where research findings are disseminated, reading current professional journals, and networking and dialoging with other scholars within the discipline.

Teaching in many disciplines, especially the practice disciplines (for example, nursing, medicine, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and so forth), is guided by the requirements of professional bodies that establish standards of practice and curricular guides, as well as by regulatory agencies and the academic institution itself. In practice disciplines, academic responsibility plays a major role as the professor follows the standards of the discipline in developing content to be included.

As members of communities, professors have the rights and obligations of any citizen. However, when professors speak or write as citizens, they must ensure that their statements are accurate and show respect for the opinions of others. They also must make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the employing academic institution, but for themselves.

An additional academic responsibility, not paired with a definitional statement about academic freedom, but nonetheless important, is one of subscribing to and fostering “a culture of high aspiration characterized by standards for peer review....[and] compliance with established standards and policies of the academic program and the institution” (Bellack 528). Professors who take academic responsibility seriously will welcome peer review by colleagues and use it as a formative evaluation of their teaching (Thompson *et al.*) that is useful for expanding content and improving delivery, thus cultivating a heightened quality of education for students.

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### SUMMARY

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Good professors learn to balance academic freedom with academic responsibility, creating an environment in which students can become people who think and question freely. When this happens, the classroom becomes the heart and soul of the university. Academic freedom, balanced by adherence to institutional and professional policies and use of sound ethical principals when conducting research, becomes operational and is no longer meaningless rhetoric.

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Ruth N. Henry

### Where Is the Honor?



student in a sophomore literature class bought a term paper through the internet. A senior turned in another student’s lab report with his name on it. A freshman history student used text messages on her cell phone to get test answers from her friend across the room. Her classmate’s answers were correct, because she had taken a picture of the study guide with her cell-phone camera before the test. An algebra student with a programmable calculator retrieved the equations he needed to work the problems on a test.

What do all of these students have in common? They are all cheating, although they are doing so in nontraditional ways. None of these five students has ever copied answers from another student’s exam just by sneaking a glance across the aisle. In fact, some of these students do not consider themselves “cheaters” at all — so what are they thinking?

It is hard to say what they are thinking, but what is clear is that they are not thinking about integrity. Integrity has become an out-of-date virtue to many people in academics and in the business world. Students are simply doing what it takes to “make the grade”— often in response to pressure from parents, graduate school admission standards that they will face in the future, and scholarship requirements that they must meet each semester.

At the private, church-affiliated university where I teach, we worked with the Center for Academic Integrity to conduct a web-based survey of our faculty and students concerning cheating practices. While we found that our cheating rates were slightly below those of other schools across the country, we were not pleased with our findings. We found that, while very few students reported actually copying answers on a test, unauthorized collaboration on assignments, plagiarism, and other nontraditional forms of cheating were much more prevalent. According to Don McCabe, who developed the Academic Integrity survey, this is a nationwide trend.

In response to our findings, a committee of concerned faculty at our university took a full year to study our survey results, interview our students and faculty, and research academic-integrity policies at other universities. As a result of our efforts, we have found that college faculty can take several steps to maximize honesty on campus.

- Communicate! Talk to the students about integrity. Let them know that you expect their best effort. Define what your policies are for each assignment in each class. While collaboration is encouraged on some assignments, it is strictly forbidden in others. Communicate clearly to them what is acceptable.
- Make it easier for your students to do the right thing. Even if your school has an honor code that encourages teachers to leave the room during exams, do not do it! According to the students we surveyed, the teacher's absence increases the likelihood that they will be tempted to cheat. Also, teachers can give alternate forms of the same exam; with today's software programs, it is easy to scramble questions and make a different form for each row of students. Do not allow cell phones, hats with bills, or programmable calculators during exams.
- Try to develop a campus culture where cheating is unacceptable. This may involve an institutional-integrity policy, a clear statement of the institution's academic-integrity policies, or consistently enforced sanctions for integrity violations. Do not rely on your school's honor code to reduce dishonesty if it is based on students turning in their peers for cheating. Research has proved that, even if students do not approve of unethical behavior, they will not betray their classmates.
- Model personal integrity for your students. Be honest in your dealings with them and employ impartial, appropriate assessment techniques. If we as teachers misrepresent data on a research project, use unjust grading procedures, or fail to treat all students fairly and equally, what are we showing them about our own integrity?

We live in an imperfect world populated by people with human shortcomings, where pressures abound, business and political role models are corrupt, and good role models are rare. Although the academic environment is far from being a perfect world, the decision to be honest is still made individually by each student; we as faculty members can influence our students to take that decision seriously and to take pride in their own integrity.

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**Michael W. Brough**

### **Philosophical Limits: A Question of Ethics\***



Unfettered investigation is the realm of philosophy. Among the many goals of a college-level introduction to philosophy is to allow students to question even their most tightly held beliefs, to doubt what they had before considered indubitable. Over the semester of such an introductory philosophy course, professors hope their students glean an appreciation for and understanding of different positions, a respect for the force of reason, and a healthy skepticism. Success, for a philosophy professor, is a student who sees the world differently, who reasons more tightly, who reads and listens both more curiously and more questioningly.

But success does not always occur by the end of the undergraduate semester, and most philosophy professors realize that. Many students no doubt leave with more questions than they entered with — either they have come to doubt the too-easy answers that they had been given previously, or they have faced issues that they had never before considered. Either way, there is a good chance that students at the end of their semester-long philosophical experience will be more “mixed up” than when they started. Philosophy professors should not agonize over this, of course: students have plenty of time to make up their minds about the important life issues that philosophy raises. Even if students are confused now about their obligations to others, the existence of God, or what the Good Life is, they have years to decide on these important issues, and the chances are low that they will do serious harm to themselves or others while taking those years to reflect and live.

That approach is appropriate for professors at most institutions, I think, but for the past three years I have taught introductory philosophy, a course with a heavy emphasis on ethics, to sophomores at the United States Military Academy at West Point, a four-year institution the express aim of which is to graduate and commission officers into the U.S. Army. The aim of the Academy places its philosophy professors in a unique position: these cadets to whom I teach ethics may lead platoons in as little as a few years, and that fact will give pause to anyone familiar with the military. The men and women who graduate and lead platoons are some of the most powerful twenty-two and twenty-three-year-olds on the planet. They command units of

about thirty soldiers, and most wield implements of destruction — rifles, tanks, and missiles. As we have seen throughout the twentieth century and most recently in Afghanistan and Iraq, they possess the potential for unimaginable evil, as well as good.

It is this consideration that draws me away from the position that I outlined earlier, the one that remains satisfied with graduating those who are utterly confused about life's big questions. The course I teach focuses on ethical issues, partly because ethics is the domain in which a lieutenant's missteps are the most damaging — and deadly. We need only recall Lieutenant William Calley's role in Vietnam's My Lai Massacre to understand the dangers that a morally bereft platoon leader poses to noncombatants and his own soldiers. In teaching this course, I take on several mutually supporting obligations: to the nation, to the future officer, to his or her platoon, and to the people of other nations who might be helped or hurt by the officer's decisions. Those obligations entail that I make a strenuous effort to turn my students away from ethical nihilism, for example, and that I make an unobvious argument for the immunity of noncombatants. Such obligations also require that if cadets mention that they think that all people in a combat zone are equal, and therefore equally targetable, I try to persuade them that such is not the case. Naturally, this is only after I let their classmates persuade them, but the point is that I cannot in good conscience let such an ethical statement lie. To do so in the standard college classroom is merely to recognize the student's continual search for moral understanding. To do so at a military academy is to invite atrocities such as those we have most recently witnessed at Abu Ghraib.

Deciding which few things are nonnegotiable in a philosophy class like this is a dicey task with potentially serious repercussions, and it is a topic worthy of serious debate. Certainly, military education should not impose religious beliefs, and my own thought is that it ought not advocate any certain ethical framework over another. The military profession has plenty of room for Kantians, utilitarians, and observers of the natural law. There are some ethical standards that must remain constant, however; the military is no place for one who disbelieves in the relevance of ethics, for example. And in the specific cases, officers not only should follow the rules that prohibit torturing and killing POWs and targeting noncombatants, but they also must to a great extent "buy into" those moral positions, as well. If they do not, they run the risk of leading themselves or their troops into atrocities. When I teach them philosophy, at least part of my aim, on behalf of the American people, is to prevent that.

\* The views expressed in this piece are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the United States Military Academy, the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

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Mary Lynn Colosimo

### How Shall We Learn? How Shall We Live?



I have always been interested in manners. My parents hailed from Eastern Europe, and although uneducated, they cared very much about training my brother and me in proper, respectful behavior. I have brought this experience from my home as a child to my home as an adult raising four daughters and then into my college classroom.

Manners are also foundational to the educational experience in my psychology classroom.

In the college classroom, not only do I want my students to understand human development across the lifespan through their text and class time, I also want them to understand why this psychological knowledge matters, how it links to the world outside of the classroom walls, and why this knowledge opens their personal doors to life and learning. I believe that it also opens the windows to their souls.

The following five ideas increase the likelihood of our working together in civility and consideration as a classroom community.

1. **Presume welcome and extend welcome.** Students arrive at my class each day presuming my welcome. They wait for my smile and my greeting. They wait for me to ask them questions about their time between our last class and this present class. It is critically important to me to learn their names as soon as possible in the semester and to call them by name each time I see them in class or on campus. I honor them by remembering their names.
2. **Be present in the moment.** "Pay attention," the experts tell us. As a child, I remember hearing my parents' admonition, "Pay attention to the moment. It passes by very quickly!" From my parents I also learned that along with the fleeting moment, there are also manners of the moment. I learned to anticipate the needs of others by learn-

James Tackach

## The Public Role of the University Professor



- ing those rules of civility. Being in the present and paying attention are gifts that my students and I honor in our classroom community, as well. We wait for one another in whatever form that may take, and for which we are grateful daily.
3. **Listen deeply.** To listen deeply, we actually listen to the feelings beneath the words shared in class and in life. Quaker writer Douglas Steer puts it this way, “Holy listening — to ‘listen’ another’s soul into life, into a condition of disclosure and discovery — may be almost the greatest service that any human being ever performs for another.” In class we seek to listen to ourselves as well as to others.
  4. **Speak Kindly.** Above all, I want to be a kind person, and I want that gift for my students. I ask my students to think about how they want people to remember them after they die. I know that I want them to be remembered as kind. One way to open up to this experience and other emotions is to share our life stories with one another in class, and through our stories, we hear about kindness and courage and honesty and pain and gratitude.
  5. **Guard Time.** Punctuality is nonnegotiable for me. I reflect upon the importance of time at each class period. Arriving on time is a rule of civil, respectful behavior. Some years ago, I invited a guest to speak to my class. She was considerably early and remarked to the class that because of her respect for me, she wouldn’t even consider arriving late. I was honored by her civility, and I have held that story in my heart ever since she shared it.

These five ideas form the core of the most pressing issues today in my psychology classroom. The ideas also form the core of why the knowledge of psychology matters, how it links to the world outside the classroom walls, and how it provides a window to the souls of my students. This is how we learn. This is how we live.

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According to the contract that governs my professional life at Roger Williams University (RWU), I must teach four courses each semester, hold four office hours, serve on at least one academic committee (if asked), advise up to twenty-five students, and attend my university’s annual convocation and commencement ceremonies. The evaluation section of the RWU faculty contract also stipulates that I may be assessed every five years — I am tenured — on a wide variety of professional endeavors, including research and publication, participation in conferences and seminars, grant writing, curriculum planning and development, and community service.

My duties at RWU rarely take me beyond the grounds of our beautiful campus alongside scenic Mount Hope Bay in Bristol, Rhode Island. Once or twice per year, I am expected to attend a professional conference off campus and interact with colleagues from other academic institutions. Other than those semesterly or yearly ventures, I work for and with the students, faculty, and administration of RWU. Perhaps that is fitting and proper. For the most part, the students of RWU (a private, tuition-driven institution) pay my salary and, hence, deserve to receive the lion’s share of my labor.

I suggest, however, that college and university professors consider taking on a more public role that carries them, with greater frequency, beyond the iron gates or concrete pavements of their own academic institutions into the public sphere — not merely for high-income consulting but with the goal of educating the general public.

Certainly many college and university faculty members already perform this role very effectively. But for most academic professionals, these kinds of public activities are secondary or tertiary considerations; the goal of most college and university faculty members is to serve their own institutions through teaching and committee work and to inform and impress their academic colleagues by publishing their research in refereed academic journals that are rarely read by the general public. Furthermore, the evaluation system in place at most colleges and universities rewards these kinds of traditional academic activities — teaching, serving on campus committees, revising curricula, and publishing in academic publications.

As a result of this rather insular view of our academic workloads, our nation’s professoriate has,

to a great degree and in important ways, lost touch with the public surrounding our campuses. In my academic field, literary studies, for example, professors have been filling the pages of too many scholarly journals with a form of gobbledygook prose understandable only to a small number of specialists in the field. I have advanced degrees in English, but even I am often unable to decipher the arguments put forth in critical articles in literary journals in my field. I suspect that academicians in other academic fields have similar complaints about the stuff that their colleagues produce to fill the pages of academic journals and thereby secure tenure and gain promotion. I remember a news story of several years ago that reported on a sociologist who intentionally composed an academic article that said essentially nothing in several pages of jargon-filled prose and had the article accepted by a prominent journal in his field.

I realize that articles in certain scientific journals might be hard to digest by the common reader, and I fully understand the necessity of cutting-edge research reported in the language of specialists. But all of us, I would argue, particularly scientists, have a responsibility to bring our knowledge to the general public as well.

I propose that faculty members at America's colleges and universities make a new commitment to the public that supports our institutions with its tax dollars and tuition payments. Such a commitment might take any number of forms:

- Lecturing at public libraries, museums, Rotary clubs, and other venues where the public gathers.
- Participating on panels at theaters and concert halls during post-performance discussions.
- Writing articles for newspapers and popular magazines and authoring books for general audiences.
- Conducting research and writing grants for nonprofit community organizations.
- Offering workshops for high school teachers and speaking in high school classrooms.
- Serving on the boards of and participating in programs offered by museums and historical societies.

Of course, colleges and universities must reward these kinds of public activities. A biologist who secures a grant for a nonprofit environmental organization to conduct water testing on a local river must receive the same credit that her colleague receives for securing a grant for his university from the National

Science Foundation. A literary scholar who writes a travel piece on Concord, Massachusetts, for a newspaper or magazine must receive the same credit that a colleague receives for an article on *Walden* published in a refereed scholarly journal.

If colleges and universities mandated dialogue with the general public as an important element in a faculty member's contribution, more of my colleagues would descend their ivory towers and face the public. The public would benefit from our educational efforts; colleges and universities would profit from having their good names spread in the communities that support these institutions; and faculty members would benefit from an opportunity to make a positive contribution in the communities in which they work.

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**Audrey J. Jaeger and Courtney H. Thornton**

### **Fulfilling the Public-Service Mission in Higher Education: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Challenges**



engagement. Community Service. Civic Responsibility. Service Learning. Outreach. Extension. Today there are more nuanced terms that apply to the public-service mission of higher education than ever before. Some believe that this renewed interest in the public-service mission is cyclical and soon will pass in favor of another emphasis in higher education. Others believe that the call back to public service in higher education reflects the significant needs of society or decreased state funding for higher education, two areas that will not change quickly. Regardless of the reason for the increased attention to this oft-neglected aspect of the traditional tripartite mission (teaching, research, and service), public service faces many of the same challenges today that it did in ages past. When institutions realize that public service needs more attention, reactive changes to the curriculum, institutional policy, or organizational structure are implemented. These approaches are impermanent and even fleeting, changing perhaps as soon as the next faculty-senate vote. It is time to acknowledge the deep cultural challenges to fulfilling the public-service mission and to work as a national network in higher education to actively address them.

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## FACULTY SOCIALIZATION

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In 2003, we surveyed and interviewed faculty at a research institution to find out what they learn from colleagues about fulfilling the public-service mission. Countless stories were told about senior faculty who discourage tenure-track faculty from participation in public-service work until after they achieved tenure. Also contributing to this issue is a lack of sincere commitment to public-service in graduate education. A study from the Pew Charitable Trusts found that about 63 percent of doctoral students aspire to faculty positions (Golde and Dore). These students' doctoral programs generally do the best job of honing research skills, with little attention to other areas of faculty responsibility, including teaching and service.

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## TENURE AND REWARD

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Probably the single biggest reason why faculty members are socialized against public service is that it is not valued in the reward structures of many institutions. High percentages of faculty reported on our survey that individuals such as colleagues, department heads, and deans value public service, but inversely only 35 percent of faculty agreed that service was valued in the tenure process. For most faculty at research institutions, excellence in research, publication prestige, and adequate teaching and institutional service are the hallmarks of a successful dossier. Even the faculty we interviewed who had appointments specifically aimed at fulfilling the service mission described to us that their public-service activity was significantly less important in the tenure process than research and publication. With policies in place to reward public service in the tenure process, faculty still did not pursue this work because they did not believe that the review committees, which most highly value research, would follow the policies. An integrated balance in defining scholarship and clear expectations are obviously needed, as is a return to the original intent of tenure.

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## ACADEMIC CAPITALISM

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Almost no institution of higher education has escaped the fiscal hardships of recent years. For public institutions across the nation, the significant decreases in state funding have been particularly challenging. This scarcity of institutional resources has placed a new fundraising burden on the faculty that results in less time to focus on teaching and public service. Slaughter and Leslie term the new market-like behaviors exhibited by faculty to capture competitive resources as academic capital-

ism. Research, particularly in the technical sciences, brings in the most resources through competitive industry and government grants. Complex social issues of poverty, crime, and health care often lack faculty champions because they cannot afford to become part of the solution.

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## THE POWER OF THE DISCIPLINE

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Some of the most influential discoveries in the academy come when a chemist applies concepts of anthropology to his research, or when a mechanical engineer is able to see a biological organism in her masterpiece. Interdisciplinary research is powerful, but not often encouraged or rewarded. In our interviews with faculty, they realized that interdisciplinary efforts were the key to the academy becoming a valuable problem-solver in society. More must be done to encourage the community of scholars on a campus to once again act as a community.

How do you turn around centuries of change that have effected faculty values today? The people that make up an institution must believe that these issues are important and worthy of effort to truly and dramatically change the culture of the institution. The success at a few institutions would in turn affect the entire academy. These cultural changes in the academy would result in improved development of talent among faculty and students, heightened public confidence in the ability of higher education to create positive change, and a better future for both higher education and those we serve.

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Jagdeep S. Chhokar

## Higher Education for What?



The most common response that the question posed in the title elicits, at least in my experience, is “to get a good job.” My experience is not limited to only the developing world, where good (whatever that means) jobs are difficult to get, generally because of low levels of economic development and large populations, but I have found this to be the most common response even in the developed parts of the world. This response may be the one heard most often because all my teaching experience, in different parts of the world, has been in schools of business. However, I have been told by several professors in more traditional, academic departments that the general response of students in their departments is not too different. The answer that I hope for, and hardly ever get, is “for the sake of learning.” The questions this raises are: Why does this happen? Can, and should, professors, as important participants in the process of higher education, do something about it? What can be done?

An outcome of this narrow view of education is the inability and unwillingness of people coming out of institutions of higher education to get involved in the processes of the larger society. This phenomenon manifests itself in several ways. Inappropriate business practices that have come to light in the past few years in several countries including the United States and India are too well known to be mentioned, but there does seem to be an increase in the frequency of such cases.

Another example of the inability and unwillingness to participate in processes of the larger society is the low voter turnout during elections. This phenomenon also is not confined to the developing or the developed worlds but seems to be across the board. Lack of interest in elections has serious consequences for societies and nations. In the words of Plato, “The price good men will pay for not getting involved is to be governed by bad men.”

Undue focus on job-oriented education combined with neglect of citizenship-oriented education overlooks the importance of citizenship. And it goes against a well-known statement made by a Justice of U.S. Supreme Court, Felix Frankfurter, several years ago: “No job in the country is more important than that of being a citizen.” Professors engaged in higher education seem to ignore training students for the most important job in the country.

Professors engaged in higher education obviously can and should do something about this situation,

if for no other reason than to fulfill their own duty as citizens. What they can do is to focus on good citizenship along with whatever else they teach their students to become: good managers, architects, doctors, accountants, historians, economists, and so on. The almost complete delinking of higher education from what can be considered *basic* education about how to be a responsible and good citizen is risky for every society.

It is difficult to be a good citizen without being a good human being. Higher education therefore also needs to focus on inculcating good human values among the students, in addition to preparing them for jobs. Professors of higher education cannot escape responsibility for developing and offering courses that the students find interesting and useful. While societal trends are macro-phenomena over which individuals have very little control, each of us, as professors of higher education, needs to work not only toward making her or his courses relevant and interesting to students, but also toward ensuring that in the process the focus on assisting students to become good human beings and good citizens is not lost.

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Susan Berry Brill de Ramírez

## “The Interdependence of the Peoples and Nations of the Earth”: Beyond the Political-Correctness Debates



As we wend our ways through the twenty-first century, the global imperatives of terrorism, climate change, and civil strife will impel the academy well beyond the demands of the 1960s’ calls for relevance and the 1990s’ political-correctness debates. In the past, interest in the ivory tower’s commitment to and engagement with the broader nonacademic community has elicited debate, change, and critique, but now the exigencies of the day will increasingly inform our teaching and scholarship, as I believe it ought.

A few emerging trends can be seen clearly as we continue our journey through this new century.

- An ethical and social-justice imperative with increasing interest in environmental studies (for example, environmental literatures and eco-



criticism), indigenous studies (such as American Indian, Alaskan Native, and Canadian First Nations literatures), politically oriented literatures, ethically oriented literatures, and service learning;

- The globalization (and regionalization) of knowledge production and teaching (for example, a continued broadening of the literary canon with a concomitant reassessment of the British/American division of literature);
- More inter-/trans-/cross-disciplinary scholarship, curricular courses, and programs;
- Courses, programs, conferences, and scholarship more interconnected with their respective larger communities (both academic and non-academic);
- A renewed valuation and emphasis on the importance of interpersonal contact;
- The return of the sacred in education as the academy struggles to engage and embrace Islam, Christianity, Native American and First Nations sacred traditions, and the other religious traditions of the world;
- And a more explicit awareness and commitment to the ways in which our scholarship and teaching will be of benefit to the world (globally, regionally, and locally).

We live in wondrous times. A new global civilization rich in diversity and history is being birthed with all the pains of labor. Knowledge bases that have been part of each of the world's cultures are now becoming more globally available. Our choices lie in either helping these processes go forward with our stalwart faith in the future and in humankind or in hindering these developments by holding onto past belief systems, pedagogies, and expectations.

As college and university faculty members, we have great responsibilities in the world: how we contribute to the production of knowledge, how we educate our students, the very attitudes that we bring to both inform the larger fruits of our efforts. We are helping to educate and form young people who will be living their adult lives as world citizens interacting with many friends, acquaintances, coworkers, and family members from diverse geographic, ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Even though the immediate future of our planet is indeed very bleak with so much suffering, the future world that is emerging is global and diverse, with respect for women, elders, children, and the larger ecosystems of which we are all part. Our planet's history is that of cycles upon cycles, and after winter always comes spring. The work that we are doing is helping to lay the foundations for that emerging global civilization:

committed to the welfare of all peoples and responsive to "the needs of a continually evolving humanity."

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**Norman B. Sigband and John A. Biles**

### **While Enrollments Climb Rapidly, Available Seats Decline Dramatically!**



In 1987 the total enrollment in institutions of higher education was 12.7 million. By 1999 the figure jumped 17 percent to 14.8 million! And by 2012 the figure should reach 17.7 million enrolled. That is a 19.6 percent increase over 1999 and a whopping 36.6 percent jump in just twenty-five years. *Change Magazine* stated in a 1999 editorial that world wide, 200 million students will

seek college educations in 2025, up from 82 million in 1995. Where will seats and facilities be found in higher education in the United States for these ambitious students?

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#### **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE HIGH COST OF COLLEGE TUITION AND SHORTAGE OF SEATS**

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Several courses of action can be taken to solve or partially solve the cost of rising tuition rates. Among these are:

- Use a voucher plan for both public and private institutions.
- Offer a full range of courses in the evenings and on weekends.
- Present courses on the Internet and cable television at lower cost.
- Accept advanced placement classes for college/university credit.
- Expand and make more attractive enrollment in junior and community colleges.

The university itself will be redesigned to accommodate the increasing numbers:

- **Mega Universities:** These schools are prime examples of distance learning. The China TV University System was established in 1979 and had an enrollment of more than half a million by 1995. In England, the Open University had an enrollment of 157,450 students in 1995 and

numbered approximately 815 full time and 7,346 part-time staff members.

- **The Virtual University:** This is a consortium of universities in one state or among several states. It was planned and implemented by The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and was designed to serve individuals in outlying areas. It provides higher education courses through technology and awards its own credentials.
- **Multi-Campus for-Profit Institutions:** The most successful of these organizations is the University of Phoenix, which has almost one hundred sites operating in fifteen U.S. states, Puerto Rico, and Vancouver. It is by far the largest private institution in the United States and is accredited to offer Bachelor, Master, and Ph.D. degrees. The University of Phoenix boasts more than 225,000 students, with a revenue of 1.6 billion in 2004, up from 610 million in 1999–2000.
- **Not-for-Profit Institutions:** These schools, usually well established, operate on a satellite system of campuses and are found largely in the U.S. southwest. Chapman College, for example, has twenty-five satellite centers, La Verne University has sixteen, and Ottawa University in Kansas has several schools in the United States as well as in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia. Students, as in the case above, are largely employed adults who find evening classes convenient.
- **Corporate Universities:** Corporate universities confine themselves to special-training needs designed to support corporate products, missions and needs. They are found especially in large commercial firms specializing in engineering, business, law, public administration, and the health sciences.
- **Distance Learning:** Distance learning is a growing entity and if successful can bring low-cost learning to millions of individuals in dozens of cities, states, and nations. This category includes not only mega, virtual, for-profit, and not-for-profit institutions but also individual schools, universities, and a dozen other educational organizations.

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### CONCLUDING COMMENTS

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Good higher education is expensive. With almost every state in the United States in financial straits, the enormous cost of the war effort in Iraq and the general economic conditions in the United States today, the future appears bleak for higher edu-

cation to adequately answer the educational needs of eligible students. Although some solutions exist, the task — to be successful — will prove difficult if not impossible under present economic, social, and immigration conditions and policies.

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Diane G. Smathers

### A New Role for Emeritus Faculty



Since Bismarck retired his soldiers of labor at age sixty-five during the Franco-Prussian War, age sixty-five has seemingly become the arbitrary age that marks a life passage and separates workers from non-workers. This “retirement” age has become so accepted that both policies and practices have been implemented which underscore its importance as a time of fundamental change. However, as life expectancy has increased from thirty-five years in 1800 to today’s projection of almost eighty years, retirement at sixty-five is considered by many to be outdated and no longer realistic. People who retire at age sixty-five today could spend 25 percent of their adulthood *in retirement!* Aside from the obvious financial implications for the individual and society, such a “brain drain” in the workforce is simply wasteful.

Heretofore, retiring faculty were often seen as an asset to institutions because their retirement opened up the opportunity for new directions, more diversity, and younger hires with fresh ideas and lower salaries; however, this situation is no longer true. Today’s retiring faculty can put the institution into an untenable situation. With unprecedented budget cuts and a continual loss of state support, many public colleges and universities are finding it very difficult to replace retiring faculty. In some instances, an entire discipline or specialty area may be in danger of elimination because of the loss of a critical mass of faculty. Additionally, salary lapse from retirees often provides the only funds available for raises and in many instances is used simply to balance the budget rather than to make new hires, thus exacerbating the problem. When an institution does find itself in a position to replace a faculty member, the salary needed to be competitive, particularly in high-demand areas, is often more than that of the retiring faculty member. Therefore, many institutions are seeking ways to keep emeritus faculty involved.

In 1980, a study undertaken by the author looked at an amendment (which made age seventy the mandatory retirement age for faculty) to the 1967 Age Discrimination in Employment Act, and noted that alternatives to retirement needed to be identified on college campuses. One of the reasons for this need, which is still prevalent today, is the fact that professors do not tend to *disengage*. Faculty members tend to maintain their professional contacts and continue participating in professional activities. They also tend to continue activities such as consulting and writing that can be easily undertaken in the home environment. And although some may undertake a totally new profession, endeavor, or hobby, many continue in their chosen path but with a different approach. This approach may mean continuing one's research with a new twist, one's writing with an undaunted flourish, or one's teaching with experimental delivery that was heretofore just a dream.

Thus, it behooves colleges and universities to find a way for retired faculty to remain "connected" to the institution. Programs such as a Senior Scholars Academy or an Emeritus College are gaining in popularity and providing benefits to the faculty member as well as more tangible benefits to the university. For example, many retired faculty are amenable to remaining in the classroom, thus saving department chairs and deans from having to make new hires or from hiring adjuncts. Other faculty are continuing their research or scholarly pursuits and bringing much-needed funds to the university. Still others are providing advice, counseling, or mentoring with their vast experience (and newly found neutrality!), thus enhancing intergenerational relationships, while freeing younger faculty from some of these tasks. Finally, the goodwill created when faculty stay involved is expected to lead to reciprocal generosity in the form of gifts and/or bequests in later years.

Most retirees, academic or otherwise, do not "quit" being active; they just redirect their energies to more selective pursuits. And as the need and desire to remain active both physically and mentally during the retirement years have been well documented, the adage of "use it or lose it" can be very aptly applied to this stage of life. Thus, retired faculty are going to be active and involved; so why not keep their involvement at the university?

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Sheryl T. Smikle

## **Race, Authority, and the Brown vs. the Topeka Board of Education Decision**



It is daunting to reflect upon the jubilee anniversary of the landmark 1954 *Brown* decision, especially if you were a direct beneficiary of its educational mandate for equal public education for all. I was born four years after *Brown*; six years later, I entered the second grade. I attended an integrated elementary school in the northwest section of the Bronx, Marble Hill, in New York

City. Public school district 10 included excellent public and private schools — both of which were amenable to educating white and black students together.

I spent my entire academic career in this same district — moving effortlessly from P.S. 122 (the Kingsbridge School) to J.H.S. 143 (John Peter Tetard) and, ultimately, to a nationally recognized, specialized public high school, The Bronx High School of Science.

The irony of having a teacher of color every five years is now of great importance to me as a professor of higher education in a predominantly rural, white locale. More importantly, in the era of diversity and so-called multiculturalism, my predominantly white undergraduate and graduate students report, without concern, statistics that are worse than my own: many of them have had one or no teachers of color during their elementary and secondary school years. Before the *Brown* decision, two-thirds of teachers of color (82,000) were educated and employed in the South. In 1964, this number had been significantly reduced to 38,000. In the northeast, less than 5 percent of public school teachers were black in 1954; this percentage also took a downturn after the *Brown* decision (Moore). While the *Brown* decision focused on the racial composition of public school classrooms, it appears to have had precious little effect on the teaching staff — in the South or the North. This lack of influence has persisted in the decades following *Brown* and bodes ill for educators of color, especially those who teach in predominantly white institutions (PWIs).

The tragedy of the *Brown* decision is the failure of our public schools to truly diversify at all levels, so that both black *and* white children could benefit from witnessing and interacting with academic authority figures that reflect society. This profound lack of personal experience among many white students in school resulted in many of these students arriving at college with rigid, narrow conceptions

regarding the relationship of race, academic achievement, and classroom authority. Consequently, a significant number of white students devalue, challenge, and resist members of the professoriate who do not “fit the mold” (Harlow).

The promises of *Brown* have not been fully realized. Platitudes about diversity will not overcome the cultural divide that continues to persist in education at all levels. True diversity requires a firm commitment — a series of concerted efforts — and is an ongoing process that is fueled by open dialogue and genuine interactions. Diversity is more than token appreciation of others and highly visible *representation*. True experience is the best teacher.

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Hermann J. Donnert

### The Professorship: Just a Job — or a Higher Calling?



I have found that teaching, tutoring, mentoring, advising, helping, and advancing the students’ academic and economic interests is what matters ultimately. Foremost, be a student’s professor; be a *mensch*! I believe that committee service benefiting students is of tremendous importance — for example, chairing a grievance board on campus charged with the adjudication of academic disputes between students versus faculty and administrators, so that there is due process and either of the litigants has a fair chance to prevail; involvement in the activities of professional societies in matters beneficial for students; and diligent cultivation of germane professional friendships.

A professor’s involvement with the development of the student’s professional career should not end with the day of graduation. Many a student will appreciate further advice, counseling, and mentoring, a helping hand in launching postgraduate pursuits; the professor may be very valuable with references and recommendations for a job, admis-

sion to further education, such as graduate school, medical school, law school, and so forth. Engaging the professor’s personal connections, maybe even pulling some strings, can provide valuable assistance (but, to be effective, it shall never be forgotten, that the professor’s reputation and aura of honesty must be unimpeachable). I believe most firmly, emphatically, and with all vim and vigor, that the impact of a professor is not based primarily on research and academic work; a professor’s long-term legacy is the professional success of his/her students!

My experiences have led me to the inescapable conclusion that colleagues considering their professorship as just a job, as a way to make a living, will be not-so outstanding — my former dean’s euphemism for lousy — teachers. To become an excellent professor requires genetic aptitude, which is created in a person’s DNA at the time of conception by the fusion of a maternal with a paternal gamete, a process exemplifying the divine creator’s signature of a higher calling. Great teachers are born with an innate talent and ability! As a Catholic, I believe that I will meet my maker, sooner or later, but inevitably, for the final judgment of my life. I hope God’s verdict will be that I led my life as a decent human being, that I was true *mensch*.

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## Distance Education

Karie Hollerbach

### It’s a Brave New Online World



Three years ago I made a decision that would change my entire outlook on college teaching. I told my chairperson that I would develop the first online class to be offered by our communication department. I had been using web-enhanced components in my face-to-face classes for more than a year. Students loved the online gradebook that allowed them to check their progress anytime, anywhere. Assignments using the bulletin-board software that made asynchronous discussions possible about a variety of topics were also a big hit. I thought that developing and implementing a web-based class taught only in the cyberspace environment would be an easy transition and the next logical step in my own professional development as a teacher.

It was the next logical step, but it was far from easy. However, the investment of time and resources was worth it to me because I saw online teaching and learning as the future of my profession.

Online instruction involves four key elements: the curriculum, the technology, the professor, and the students. I had a fully developed course plan for my face-to-face theory and research class because I had been teaching it for nearly two years. But translating that course curriculum to the online environment was challenging and caused me to rethink not only what was being taught in the course, but why it was being taught and what would be the best way to teach it. The successful online classroom uses collaborative learning processes and outcomes. Creating these types of learning opportunities for my online class has led to a paradigm shift that has affected my other three classes as well. Now, in all four of my classes, we are doing as many participatory learning activities as possible.

Technology is a large part of teaching online. I had to learn an entire web-management software suite to facilitate my online class. I also took a very active role in designing the look of my web pages and wrote all of my content. Therefore, I am no longer completely dependent upon my university's online-course support team for any changes or updates that I want to make to my class.

The successful professor in an online class is much more of a facilitator of learning, a "guide on the side" if you will, rather than a "sage on the stage." My teaching style was aligned with the facilitator model before I began teaching online. However, the day-to-day experiences of working with students in cyberspace, some of whom are very committed to learning and others who could not care less, have strengthened my facilitator-teaching role. It is my job not only to provide meaningful learning experiences, but also to guide the students through those experiences and help them "connect the dots."

Students are a large part of any classroom, be it online or face-to-face. I was initially unsure how our professor-student interaction would be online. It has been just as rewarding as my face-to-face classes. My "onliners," as I refer to them, send me e-mails to talk about all kinds of things, not just homework. Some have even asked me to write a reference recommendation for them, even though we have not met in person! Some students write too much on the discussion boards, just like the ones who want to dominate the conversation in the face-to-face classroom. Some do not consistently turn in assignments and have the perennial "the computer ate it" excuse, just as in the face-to-face classroom. Communication

with the online students is the key to success, just as it is in the face-to-face classroom.

Teaching online has focused me on continually improving my instructional efforts. I am now thinking about teaching in a new way. I carefully consider what really needs to be taught and then find the best way to teach it. Many times there is a technology-based solution that delivers course content in a way that is fresh and new for both the students and the professor.

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## R. Zachary Finney

### Reaping the Whirlwind: Challenges for Professors in the Era of Distance Education

*We should all be concerned about the future because we will have to spend the rest of our lives there.*

— Charles F. Kettering, 1949



any academics would jump at a faculty position paying \$90,000 — especially if the job never required them to leave their homes. Ruth Achterhof holds just such a job. Or, more accurately, she holds *four* such jobs, at institutions in three states, at the same time. Combined, the four schools pay Achterhof almost six figures each year (Carnevale).

The boom in distance education (DE) makes Achterhof's unique career path possible. DE is "an organized instructional program in which the teacher and learner are physically separated" (Newby, *et al.* 210). Most previous articles focus on DE's impact on the student (Seay, Rudolph, and Chamberlain). In this essay, I emphasize the ramifications of DE for the faculty member.

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#### DE: CHALLENGES FOR FACULTY

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What does DE mean for professors? In the following paragraphs, I explore the manner in which DE will influence four aspects of academia: 1) quality of education, 2) intellectual property and academic freedom, 3) faculty workload, and 4) the academic job market.

#### *Quality of Education*

Academicians suggest that DE fails to provide a quality education. Many commentators note that

the physical separation between faculty and students precludes meaningful interactions during classes. Some faculty members also indicate that it is difficult to devise appropriate testing procedures for DE courses (Seay, Rudolph, and Chamberlain). Finally, many DE students do not believe that they receive a quality education.

In total, critics contend that DE (and the trends associated with DE) amount to the “commodotization” of higher education.

### **Intellectual Property and Academic Freedom**

DE also carries the potential for conflict between professors and institutions over ownership of course materials. DE courses can be *synchronous* (all students learn at set times) or *asynchronous* (students decide when to listen to lectures, take exams, and so forth). Most DE courses are asynchronous (Shea, Motiwalla, and Lewis). For asynchronous classes, professors generally provide students with access to all course materials. Questions often arise as to whether the institution or the professor owns the course content. As a result, many institutions ask professors involved in DE to sign contracts giving the institution ownership of course materials (Gendreau).

Critics also contend that DE has the potential to inhibit academic freedom. In a traditional classroom setting, any controversial remarks or materials are confined to a relatively small subset of the population. However, information transmitted by DE has the potential to reach millions of people across the world in a very short time (Dahl). As a result, Dahl contends that many schools now prohibit faculty members from putting controversial material online.

### **Faculty Workload**

Commentators stress that teaching DE courses involves an enormous effort by faculty. Professors generally must make available a machine-readable copy of each lecture for the students and provide precise instructions for all assignments. Unfortunately, most institutions provide professors with little help in establishing DE courses; in one study, 63 percent of professors participating in DE indicated that they had to develop their courses with minimal assistance from their employers (Perreault *et al.*).

After the up-front work ends, things do not get any easier:

Once the course begins, the long hours continue. Online instructors must log on to the course web site at least three or four times a week for a number of hours each session. They respond to threaded

discussion questions, evaluate assignments, and above all answer questions clearing up ambiguities, often spending an inordinate amount of time communicating by e-mail (Smith, Ferguson, and Caris 65).

Another problem with conducting DE courses is technology. Fully 80 percent of DE professors asserted that they had endured technology problems while attempting to teach their classes (Perreault *et al.*).

### **The Academic Job Market**

The growth in DE also has the potential to change the career path for scholars. Academicians worry that asynchronous teaching (and institutions' associated desire to record and subsequently own faculty lectures) will render many faculty members obsolete. (As a colleague of mine remarked, “Once they have all your lectures [recorded], why do they need you?”).

Also, many of the institutions most heavily involved in DE save money by relying on adjunct faculty members. Given that personnel costs account for more than 90 percent of most college and university budgets (Markel), the temptation to trim faculty spots through technology may prove difficult for administrators to resist.

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## **CONCLUSION**

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One could misconstrue the above paragraphs as an attack on DE. This is not my intention. In fact, I wholeheartedly agree with Eastman and Swift's assertion that “Education is a process, not a place. How a course is delivered is less important than whether the course has been well designed and is well monitored” (33).

However, it would also be misguided to assert that scholars should uncritically accept DE's merits. DE is rapidly growing. DE also has the potential to change the very nature of academia. Therefore, we owe our students and ourselves a clear-eyed assessment of what higher education stands to gain or lose in this brave new world.

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## Shared Governance

Lynne Burriss Butler

### Revolution 101: Shared Governance at the University of North Alabama



In 2000, the morale on the University of North Alabama campus was at an all-time low. The faculty had no confidence in the administration. The administration had no trust in the faculty. The staff was equally unhappy about working conditions and decision-making, but had no voice. Then a series of events developed which led to one of the most unfortunate things that can happen at a university: a vote of no confidence in the president. Ultimately, these events led to a new system of governance at UNA.

#### HISTORY

The committees at UNA were appointed by the president with the goal of having as many faculty members as possible on committees. There were no staff members and few student members. Some committees had as many as twenty or thirty

members, most of whom might have no expertise or interest in the area to which they had been assigned. This system was further hampered by the fact that most committees were dependent on vice presidents who controlled all the information, and most of the decisions were *fait accompli*. As a result, most significant recommendations went through the faculty senate committee system. This system, for whatever reasons, was also ineffective in that it was not expeditious. When a timely decision was made, the administration tended to take a negative posture in response to recommendations. Some committee recommendations took as long as two years to make it through the system. The result was an adversarial relationship between the senate and the administration.

#### THE VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE

In October 2000 after a series of clandestine meetings, a flurry of angry e-mails, and concern that we would all lose our jobs, a vote of confidence was held by the faculty senate. More than 70 percent of the faculty voted that they had no confidence in the president. However, the board of trustees declined to fire the president and instead brought in a group of consultants to negotiate the situation. The result was that the president remained the president.

#### THE TASK FORCE OF SHARED GOVERNANCE

The Task Force on Shared Governance was appointed by the board of trustees on the recommendation of the president and was charged with redesigning the committee structure. That group met weekly (sometimes twice weekly) for a year as members considered how decisions could best be made. All interest groups were consulted. The result was a proposal for a system that advocated a committee system in which the constituency (faculty, staff, students) most affected should have a proportional membership on a given committee. Thus, for example, the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, which is largely the concern of the faculty, should have primarily faculty as members, and infrastructure development, which is largely the concern of administration and staff, should have a proportionately large membership of those concerned parties. In all cases, the size of the committees was kept to the minimum number of people for accurate representation. The most radical departure was that committees were democratically appointed with chairs being elected by the committee. No vice presidents chaired committees. Ultimately, all committees report to the president.

## THE SHARED GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Basically, we have a two-tier system of committees: strategic committees that work on matters such as budget planning, academic affairs, and faculty and staff welfare, and task committees that consider issues already dictated by policy. All committees are encouraged to meet regularly and to develop a vision for how the university can best meet the needs and priorities. The umbrella committee, the Shared Governance committee, oversees the system, routes issues to the appropriate committees, acts as interlocutor with the president, and advises committees when they falter.

## RESULTS

With the strong support of the board of trustees, our system has been up and running for two years now, and there have been major changes on this campus. Worthy of note is the fact that the president who received the vote of no confidence became one of its more ardent supporters. At the January 2004 meeting of the board of trustees, twenty of the twenty-one recommendations of the shared governance system were accepted by the administration. The one recommendation not initially accepted was renegotiated to the satisfaction of the recommending committee. At the June 2004 meeting of the board of trustees' meeting, every item that the vice presidents presented was recommended by the appropriate shared governance committee. The most recent Faculty Attitude Survey (Spring 2004) showed a marked improvement in the faculty's approval rating of not only the president, but also of the vice presidents who had been actively working with shared governance committees. There also has been gratifying spill-over into areas not included in the shared governance document. "In the spirit of shared governance" has been a rallying call for many changes in departments, in search committees, and within the Staff Council.

## THE FUTURE

This system or any other system can survive and thrive only if all the parties buy into it. The shared governance system cannot hire or fire anyone. The committees can only recommend, not make decisions. Where then does the power for this system lie? Initially, it lay in the institutional memory of just how miserable life could be when the faculty was united against the administration. Now it seems to lie in the knowledge that the system is a huge

improvement over anything else that we have experienced at UNA. Check back with us in five years.

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Michael G. Murphy

## What about Administration?



Because of unique responsibilities of the professoriate that relate to instruction, curricula, scholarship, promotion and tenure, academic standards, and policies that affect faculty, among others, it is often easier to avoid or sidestep many issues. One of the most important concepts that emerged in higher education during the twentieth century is that of shared governance. Done

properly, this means that faculty members have a voice in the policies and decisions most directly affecting them. The other side is that faculty members have a responsibility to shoulder their share of the work, including actively participating on relevant committees, being more visible and less anonymous, resisting peer pressures that work to diminish the best interests of the academy, and so forth.

Having served as a professor, a chairperson, and a dean, I am concerned that few faculty members are willing to consider academic-leadership positions. This reluctance has the unfortunate disadvantage of such positions falling to those whose motivations are related more to power and/or remuneration than to making a difference in the academic community. On the other side of things, ineffective communication or faulty consideration of the genuine options in decision-making tends to alienate faculty members. The insightful cynic observes when Hanlon's Razor applies: "Never attribute to malice that which can be adequately explained by stupidity."

One of the games played by professors when disenchanted with the quirks of academic life includes lack of directness or even passive aggression. As annoying as that may be, it is less frustrating than faculty members who disengage from the academic community in which they operate. A particular example includes not expressing an opinion when it can make a difference — for example, not evaluating their chairperson when given a legitimate opportunity to provide this input. Sometimes this refusal is explained away as "it won't make a difference" when the opposite is actually true.



What is my point in all of this? I believe strongly in the inherent importance of the professoriate. It is my hope that the professoriate will rise to this role.

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## The Curriculum

Dawn Dekle

### The Metacurriculum: Guarding the Golden Apples of University Culture



he president of Harvard University, Lawrence H. Summers, recently oversaw curricular changes that sparked much debate in the academic community. Many other universities are following his example of reexamining the relevance of their official curricula against current educational challenges. Unfortunately, there is a growing awareness of something inchoate in the standard approach to curricular reform, that perhaps only part of the university picture is visible to us. A deeper look at the *metacurriculum* may provide a more complete picture and lead to a more robust analysis of the keys to success in these endeavors.

The metacurriculum is the emergent curriculum of a university, the net effect of the interaction encompassing the official curriculum and the hidden curriculum. It is an important driver of the culture of a university because it contains the socially transmitted behavior patterns that we have adopted as a heuristic for distinguishing one university from another. More precisely, the official curriculum consists of the descriptions of the various degree plans, course syllabi, and graduation requirements set by the university. In contrast, the hidden curriculum refers to the knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and rules that students internalize about a university, both intended and unintended.

The hidden curriculum refers to how students “learn how to learn,” the socialization process that they undergo upon entering and learning how to succeed in a tertiary environment. To survive, by trial and error, students learn the undisclosed norms and unstated rules of the university game, which takes as much energy and time as studying textbooks and attending class. Scholars such as Philip Jackson (*Life in Classrooms*), Eric Margolis (*Hidden Curriculum*

*in Higher Education*), Pierre Bourdieu (*Homo Academicus*), and Benson Snyder (*The Hidden Curriculum*) have provided solid evidence that hidden curricula are alive and thriving at the tertiary level of education.

The most challenging aspect of the hidden curriculum is its elusive nature, which is abstruse even for scholarly study, as it is nearly impossible to ascertain all of the informal rules and values that must be obeyed at a university in order to succeed. The hidden curriculum is by definition an artifact of the university, but it is not merely a passive or stagnant phenomenon. It is dynamic, and capable of exerting a tacit force so powerful that it can throw a university’s sextant off course. Universities need to begin putting in place structures that will look at the hidden curriculum. Universities have an obligation to make their particular hidden curriculum as explicit as possible, so that it can be harnessed and redirected if necessary.

Unfortunately, even the attempt to initiate dialogue on the hidden curriculum is often associated with casting aspersions on the university or engaging in subversive activities, as if it were a pejorative topic. It is as if the image of the hidden curriculum is dark and menacing, something happening behind the curtains, outside the rules; and most universities would rather remain in a silent state of denial about its existence than address it directly. However, it is also possible that many positive aspects reside in the hidden curriculum, facets that could help the university in a constructive and desirable manner if they were universalized as part of the core values.

Through active listening, sensitive facilitation, and careful interviewing, some broad categories of inquiry can help a university begin to understand its own hidden curriculum. Some examples might include identifying the Out of Bound Markers (OBMs), the moveable goalposts, implied agreements and negotiations, and the informal channels of power and information. Additionally, close readings of course syllabi matched with exit interviews of graduates can lead to enlightening insights about what is really being taught. Even locations of buildings and departments geographically convey importance and meaning to students about the status of different disciplines and courses of study.

The challenge to universities going forward is to acknowledge, identify, and unkennel this hidden curriculum, because it is an important component of the metacurriculum that interacts with the official curriculum and affects university culture. Culture is learned, and how universities are teaching and disseminating that culture is crucial. Most importantly, if the hidden curriculum is investigated and identi-

fied, a university can begin to manage its own culture.

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## Lea Puljcan Juric

### Is General Education Higher Education?



When the time comes for students to choose a course or instructors to create a syllabus, they find that their academic freedom is quite circumscribed: there are requirements to fulfill and guidelines to follow. This restriction is particularly evident in case of courses that fulfill the so-called General Education requirement.

Students can choose which classes that they wish to take, yet they must take one or two courses from each predetermined category (humanities, social sciences, and so on). Further, courses offered in each category are often very limited in number and, more importantly, unlimited in scope. For example, an introductory humanities course that satisfies the General Education requirement is a mechanical survey of topics within the field that are deemed necessary for general culture. Consequently, students are overwhelmed with a mind-boggling heap of information that they tend to forget the moment they step out of the classroom, whereas the instructor, however experienced and accomplished, may well be entirely at a loss as to, first, how to organize such an extensive course in only one semester, and second, how to keep students from daydreaming (or literally dreaming). Instructors can choose what and how they wish to teach, but only if they follow predetermined guidelines that specify which goals must be achieved for the course to be deemed successful (and, one hopes, useful). Hardly anyone worries about the fact that, as a result of limitations imposed by the framework of general education, students and professors are numbed into fulfilling requirements and are often personally detached from the process of learning/teaching: they consider it their duty, not an opportunity for exciting exploration of a given topic.

How useful can any such general course really be, then? Is college supposed to be about specializing in a chosen field, or about making up for the time lost in high school, where teens, so my students tell me, draw pictures instead of learning about the arts? Not only do they not learn about the arts; it is even more

disconcerting that many students who enter college also exhibit great difficulties with such elementary skills as reading and writing. The mere fact that these are *elementary* skills points to the stage of education in which they should be gained.

General education should not be a luxury accessible only to those who somehow manage to enter college, or to those who are lucky enough to attend a quality (often private and expensive) high school. Perhaps if background knowledge were steadily and consistently acquired throughout the years before entering academia, university students and teachers would really have more freedom to delve into thrilling and engaging particulars, and university would indeed be an institution of “higher education.”

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## Mentoring

Carol Boswell

### Mentoring: More Efficiency Needed



At every turn in the road, higher education is confronted by challenges. Basically, the number and type of challenges have not changed over the years. Higher education is called on to find innovative means for addressing the challenges of finance, enrollment, faculty shortages, and academic freedom, to name a few of the trials jeopardizing the educational process. One continuing adversity for the educative process is the need for effective mentoring of novice faculty members. As America grays, so does the faculty across the country. As these professors contemplate retirement, novice faculty members are hired to replace the seasoned experts. Given the fact that the replacement process is occurring, effective mentoring becomes of grave importance.

The partnership established by the mentoring experience requires short-term skill-development activities, lifelong-learning expectations, role development, and professional development. The process must be far more than just facilitating the transition from the work world into the academic environment. Moving into the classroom is part of the process anticipated within the mentoring encounter, but it does not stop at that point. M. G. McKinley (“Mentoring Matters: Creating, Connecting, Empowering.” *AACN Clinical Issues*, 15.2, 205–

214) expresses the idea of successful mentoring by asserting that unparalleled mentoring encompasses active leadership while nurturing leadership maturity through the enhancement of values and culture in addition to the confirmation of classroom skills and academic responsibilities. Within a mentoring relationship, the parties establish a nurturing environment that produces commitment, retention, and teamwork for the academic institute. McKinley identifies several benefits resulting from an effective mentoring endeavor — confidence, effective learning, new perspectives, networking opportunities, insights into career transitions, and organizational savvy. When the mentoring process is set up to develop the individual, these benefits can easily be accomplished. The mentor and mentee work together to encourage both partners through establishing a trusting relationship meant to inspire both participants to reach for the stars.

The mentor supports the mentee to acquire the classroom skills needed to be an effective educator. But the process goes beyond just this aspect. The stressors and challenges that the novice faculty member confronts within the academic environment need to be incorporated into the supportive union that has been established. Suggestions such as how to manage the overwhelming aspects required for tenure and promotion, professional development, and management of the expectations to be active in research, scholarly activities, and service are all aspects of the role that must be addressed for a mentoring process to be valuable.

Recruitment and retention of novice faculty members is of paramount importance as higher education addresses the developing challenge of the graying faculty. The mentoring process established to cope with this occurrence must be more than just a preceptor's endeavor to help make new faculty functional in the classroom. The classroom/educational process is but one aspect of the academician's role. It is an important role that needs to be addressed initially, but the true mentoring process tackles a long-term relationship of professional growth and development. Institutes of higher education and seasoned faculty members must make the commitment to engage in the long-term relationship to develop novice faculty members into peers who are confident, energized, and productive.

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Elizabeth A. Gazza

## **Establishing a Supportive Culture through Mentorship**



Establishing a culture supportive of educator development is imperative for the future of higher education. One method for establishing this culture is the use of faculty mentorship.

Successful faculty mentorship has been shown to positively effect the recruitment and retention of faculty. Retention is important at a time when some disciplines are facing a shortage of qualified faculty. However, the personnel shortage is not the impetus for the suggested cultural change. Instead, it is the need for faculty to establish connections within and across disciplines so that they can experience personal and professional growth. Effective mentoring relationships can aid the novice educator in developing pedagogical skills and the seasoned educator in establishing a new research track. Experienced faculty who are new to a particular institution can learn the existing political structure through mentoring. This information is useful for successful enculturation of the newly-hired faculty member. These examples show that mentorship is beneficial to both seasoned and novice faculty.

Implementing a successful faculty-mentorship program as part of the proposed cultural transformation can be accomplished through various methodologies. The professional literature offers information on a variety of mentoring models. Because the goal is to use faculty mentorship throughout higher education, it is imperative to consider the needs of the individual institution or department when choosing a particular mentoring model. Faculty and administrators must be included in the model-selection process to ensure a smooth transition to the new culture. Roles and responsibilities of the mentor and mentee or protégé must be clearly identified. Fulfilling these responsibilities requires time and effort on the part of both members of the mentoring dyad. Workload assignments must facilitate completion of these responsibilities for a successful mentoring relationship to ensue. All of these attributes are essential when establishing the culture supportive of personal and professional growth of the educator in higher education.

Implementing a successful mentoring program requires time and effort from faculty and administrators. It is not enough to say that a mentoring program is in place. Institutions must collect and review evidence regarding the effectiveness of programs. This evidence must show how successful the

mentoring program is at providing faculty with the support needed to function in the complex educator role. Deficiencies must be targeted for improvement through program revision. Through this dynamic process, program and cultural refinement will result.

Working as an educator in higher education requires ongoing professional development. To provide quality instruction in the classroom, complete meaningful research, and participate in beneficial professional and community service, faculty in higher education need to connect with each other to establish a culture of support that provides for the professional and personal development of educators in higher education. Mentorship is just one approach toward this cultural transformation.

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## FORTHCOMING ISSUES

Winter/Spring 2005  
THE HUMAN BRAIN

Summer 2005  
COMPUTER GAMES

Fall 2005  
COLLEGE ATHLETICS

Winter/Spring 2006  
NUTRITION AND HEALTH

Summer 2006  
TELEVISION: HISTORY AND  
IMPLICATIONS

Fall 2006  
CULTURAL STUDIES

Winter/Spring 2007  
MUSIC

### Phi Kappa Phi Needs Contributors for New E-zine

*Help all of our members stay ahead of the curve by sharing your ideas, advice, and experience through this exciting new member benefit.*

In June of 2005, the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi will launch a new Web-based e-zine intended to help our members stay ahead of the curve. It will offer articles on careers, the job search, life transitions, member profiles, message boards, contests, and much more. The e-zine will appear at least three times per year on a secure members-only site.

We want to put together a pool of contributors from among our members who can share their knowledge and experiences about these and other topics — if you have had experience writing for a Web site, even better. We are looking for authors from all walks of life, with an emphasis on people in the private sector. You would not be obligated to write for every issue. Articles will be concise yet detailed and specific (500 or fewer words).

If you think that you might like to write to a national audience through the e-zine, send us a letter, your resume, and a short writing sample (500-750 words) to:

E-zine  
Phi Kappa Phi Forum  
129 Quad Center, Mell Street  
Auburn University, AL 36849-5306

Or e-mail those materials to [kaetzjp@auburn.edu](mailto:kaetzjp@auburn.edu). **Please have these materials to us by February 1, 2005.** We cannot return any materials.

# Community Colleges

Gretchen Aggertt Weber

## Meet the New Community College Student



Like many Phi Kappa Phi members, when I think of my freshman year in college I recall an eighteen-year-old packed off to a public four-year college to spend a few carefree years studying, partying, and growing up. But this image of the typical student is out of date. Today,

the typical student might be a twenty-eight-year-old bartender raising two children, a forty-year-old laid-off steel worker on unemployment compensation, or a sixteen-year-old high school sophomore who qualifies for advanced placement courses. The typical student might even be someone like my husband, who retired after twenty-nine years of truck-driving and began taking courses. What the members of this diverse group have in common is that they began their college careers not at the four-year institutions that most of us remember, but at community colleges. And as varied as these students are, their reasons for choosing community colleges are similarly varied.

The role of public four-year colleges as traditional sites for the first-year college experience is being subsumed by community colleges. In 2000, 5.7 million first-time college freshmen enrolled at public community colleges, an increase of 14 percent in the last ten years, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). During the same period, freshman enrollment at public four-year colleges increased only 4 percent. Although community colleges offer technical and vocational programs, nearly half of their freshmen intend to transfer to four-year institutions, and 30 percent of the students at public four-year colleges have at some point in their educational careers been enrolled in community

colleges, according to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Why are students who once would have turned to four-year colleges choosing community colleges for at least some of their education? How do they differ from typical college students of the past? And who is the “typical” college student of today?

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### EASY TRANSFERABILITY OF COURSES

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One major reason for the popularity of community colleges is easy transferability of course credits. Transferring credits from community colleges to four-year institutions has been greatly simplified in recent years as a result of legislative mandates in many states. Such states have developed lists of courses that, when successfully completed at community colleges, must be accepted by public four-year colleges within the same state. South Carolina, where I teach in one of sixteen community colleges, is an example. Eighty-six courses offered by the community-college system, mostly in general education, are designated as automatic-transfer courses. The “List of 86,” as it is known, has proven to be a boon for students who plan to transfer later in their educational careers.

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### CHEAP TUITION

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The reason students decide to take as many courses as possible at community colleges is simple: money. Tuition at public community colleges now averages about one-fourth that at public four-year colleges, according to NCES, and the gap may be widened by tuition breaks. For example, to nurture its two-year college system, South Carolina offers tuition rebates funded by the state lottery and available only to community-college students. In 2004–2005, students can receive as much as \$924 per semester from lottery funds without regard to financial need or academic merit.

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## CHANGING STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

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Unlike most of the students of the 1960s and '70s that I remember, today's community-college students do not enjoy the luxury of making school a full-time job. Fifty-four percent work full-time. At Horry-Georgetown Technical College, almost all of the students work. They have to, because many of them are parents and have limited financial resources. Most are female, often supporting their children as single parents. They are likely to have at least one job, if not two, and one or more children to care for. Some work part-time, attending only when their schedules and family finances permit. In fact, part-time workers are more likely to attend two-year institutions than four-year, according to NCES.

The demographic profile of community-college students also varies in terms of age. According to the American Association of Community Colleges, the average age of community-college students is twenty-nine years. Students as young as sixteen attend classes alongside forty-year-olds (or, in the case of one of my own students at Horry-Georgetown, a seventy-five-year-old).

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## A NEW "TYPICAL" COLLEGE STUDENT

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As community colleges have grown, the "typical" college student has changed. If it were possible to describe that student, we would find that she is an older, working woman with children, and that she starts out at a community college. But if you have never visited the campus of your local community college, please do so. To the surprise of those familiar only with the student bodies of four-year colleges, more diverse students than ever before can be found in any community-college classroom. They have changed the face of the American college student and with it the experience of college life.

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Gretchen Aggertt Weber is professor of speech communication at Horry-Georgetown Technical College.

Sallyanne H. Fitzgerald

## Finding a Higher Education Position Where Teaching Comes First

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My community college is in the throes of hiring new faculty. Each spring as we complete this process, I am struck again by the realization that many qualified applicants simply have no idea what teaching at the community college (also labeled a two-year college or, less frequently, a junior college) involves and how to obtain such a position. So, I would like to offer advice about training, applying, and interviewing for a community-college applicant as opposed to a university one.

First of all, working at a community college is all about teaching. However, underlying that statement is the understanding that to be a good teacher one must also be informed about one's discipline and knowledgeable about ways to help students learn. Teachers who are the best in their fields know that behind the subject area knowledge is an assumption that good teaching is based on research as well as application.

Because experts in the field understand this assumption, they have articulated what is needed in terms of adequate training to be a community-college teacher. For example, the American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges led the way in 1992 with a document, "Guidelines for the Academic Preparation of Mathematics Faculty in Two-Year Colleges," and the Two-Year College Association (TYCA) of the National Council of English Teachers is preparing a similar document delineating the program of study that will make one a successful community-college English teacher.

Before even applying for a position, the candidate needs to visit the campus or at least review the website and the catalogue to be sure that he or she shares the goals of the college and understands the curriculum for that particular college. Taking time to do this will help the candidate frame answers on the application and in the interview.

Unlike some university-hiring processes, the community-college application usually includes a required application, a résumé (which cannot be substituted for the official application), a cover letter, transcripts, and sometimes supplemental questions, letters of reference, and lesson plans. To obtain an interview, the candidate needs to follow the job-announcement guidelines carefully. The application must be completed fully and signed. Transcripts need to be provided for all college work;

usually unofficial ones are accepted for the application, with official ones required for actual hiring. Answers to supplemental questions are taken seriously by most committees because they address not only the candidate's ability to write standard, edited English, but also because they help the committee determine whether the candidate understands both the discipline and the community-college culture. Letters of reference or names of references should be those of people who know the teaching of the candidate, not just know the candidate personally. If a reference can speak to the ability of the candidate to meet the specific items listed on the job announcement, that is particularly helpful to the committee. Lesson plans or assignments are less frequently part of the application process.

The successful candidate who is invited for an interview should anticipate paying most or all of the costs for travel. Some colleges will reimburse the candidate who is hired, but usually only candidates for administrative positions receive any reimbursement. The interview may include:

- A committee interview and then one with the president;
- A teaching demonstration from five to twenty minutes;
- A tutoring or student conference situation;
- A grading exercise.

Very few community colleges arrange tours of the city or the campus, and usually no social functions are provided for the candidate such as a lunch with the senior faculty that might be the standard for a university interview.

Preparing to teach in a community college and then developing the paperwork that will ensure an interview will inevitably result in an opportunity to talk to the faculty on a particular campus. But underlying all of the preparation needs to be a desire to teach and to support that teaching with research and scholarship in the field.

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Allan Danuff

## Tenure and Tenure Review



I recently received what is Central Florida Community College's (CFCC) equivalent to tenure, a continuing contract. This gave me a sense of security, but the reality is that CFCC could choose not to "continue" my contract. The idea that the college and I are not on the same mission in the future would be one reason that the contract would not be renewed.

I had reached the public schools' equivalent of tenure when I applied for the job at the community college. This change was a very scary proposition for our family; I was leaving a secure job for one that offered no security for three years. When you reach tenure in the public schools, about the only way to lose your job is to commit a major felony. I encountered many teachers with twenty or more years of experience and tenure in the public school system whose mission was not the same as the school's. They no longer devoted any energy to developing or improving their scholarly competence. The school system unfortunately had no recourse.

I must say that one of the things that impresses me about higher education, and more specifically CFCC, is that even though I have continuing contract, I am still required to turn in a Professional Development Plan (PDP) to the administration for annual review. I also have found that at this level, the student evaluations of the faculty often provide great insight into a professor's teaching ability, which is a very important part of the community-college mission. In our PDPs, each professor must include an explanation of how they meet each of CFCC's goals as well as improve their teaching and learning. CFCC has a Teaching and Learning Institute that provides workshops and in-services for the instructors. The hope is that you could teach there twenty years, still stay current in your field, and still maintain the goals of the college.

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Allan Danuff is a professor of mathematics at Central Florida Community College.

# Teaching

Carol E. Harding

## To Essay or Not to Essay?



I hate essay exams. Always have. As a student, I never felt that I had the time or presence of mind to develop what I really wanted to say, show what I really knew. As a teacher, I see too many students (especially, but not limited to, freshmen) who either have the same problem I did or really do not have

a clue but can fill five or six pages of a blue book with verbiage that wastes my time and theirs. The problem, of course, could be solved by assigning only do-at-home essays, as papers or as take-home exams, though these assignments allow lots of opportunity for, um, collaboration (yes, even outright borrowing from other students or the web). Over the course of twenty-some years of teaching I have developed a type of testing that, while ruling out timed essays, still accomplishes three goals: (1) it must be done under a time constraint and in a monitored site; (2) it must test understanding and recall of important concepts and elements in the literature that we study; and (3) it must involve active knowledge, not passive. I always use these tests as a balance to papers and/or take-home test questions prepared outside of class, where students have the opportunity to work out their ideas in the study pattern that suits them best.

Students always express relief when I tell them “no-essay tests” — what they do not realize is that the “short-answer” type of exam I give is much more demanding than the normal short-answer exam. Instead of, say, “Achilles was the key warrior for (a) the Trojans, (b) the Amazons, (c) the Achaians,” they get “Choose three characters from the list; name title and author of the work in which the character appears, and describe

the importance of the character’s role.” Until they are confronted with the difference, students rarely realize the quantum leap between recognizing an answer from a-b-c (passive knowledge) and producing the information from their memory (active knowledge).

When I ask them literary terms (say, *epic simile*), my students cannot just memorize a definition and be done with it; they also need to provide an example from a relevant work that we have studied and explain how the term describes the literary concept or technique. In other words, they have to be able to apply the general definition to a specific passage where the term is “at work.” We discuss these terms and some examples in class, so if the students have attended class, an example has already been demonstrated for them.

The closest I get to an essay on a test comes with the one-paragraph answers. Here, they basically provide one solid support paragraph in answer to a question that could, with some tweaking, be an essay question. While these questions demand some of the same thinking skills as a developed essay does, they are much quicker to read and determine whether the students know the information or whether they are just filling up space — and the whole of their test grade does not depend on answers to one or two questions.

Most students have a quick learning curve on my tests; once they have experienced a midterm, they realize that they really do have to read, attend class, and remember what we talk about. They learn that the study of literature is not an isolated focus on one novel or drama after another, but that the terms, techniques, and concepts are relevant across texts. They learn that an essay done outside of class has high expectations for polish



and coherence, and that it is not just a timed-test essay (written once and handed in) prettied up. My students know that if I assign an essay, they will not have to do it during a forty-five-minute, do-or-die period. And I do not have to read the panicked ramble, the falsely confident collection of generalities, the forlorn ten sentences masquerading as essays.

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Carol E. Harding is chair of the Humanities Division and associate professor of English at Western Oregon University.

**Michael Huber, Michael Phillips, and V. Frederick Rickey**

### **Would Isaac Newton Read *Harry Potter*?**



At the beginning of the next semester, walk into your classroom and ask your students, “How many of you have read, or knows someone who has read, a *Harry Potter* novel?” Everyone will raise a hand. Then ask: “How long did it take?” The responses are usually, “Three days.” “Four days.” “A long weekend.” Then you give them the punch line.

“That’s a few hundred pages per day, isn’t it? In this course, all I’m asking you to do is read five or six pages of mathematics per night.”

Getting our college students to read their mathematics or science textbooks can be a challenge, even if we ask them to read only a few pages at a time. Many textbooks have bold-faced type for important concepts; still others have colored boxes containing theorems or definitions.

But mere reading is not enough. We expect our students to understand what they read. We want them to have seen the terminology and be familiar with the concepts that we discuss in the classroom. Here is a quotation describing how Isaac Newton learned mathematics:

Took Descartes’s *Geometry* in hand, tho he had been told it would be very difficult, read some ten pages in it, then stopt, began again, went a little farther than the first time, stopt again, went back again to the beginning, read on till by degrees he made himself master of the whole, to that degree that he understood Descartes’s *Geometry* better than he had done Euclid (*The Mathematical Pages of Isaac Newton*, vol. 1 [1967], 5–6).

We would all agree that Newton was not a typical student. However, every student should expect to have to read his or her mathematics textbooks more than once. That is one way we learn.

What to do? Provide an incentive for students to read. Give a pop quiz and allow the students to use the text. One variation might be a true-false quiz, where students provide the page in the text to support their answer (to justify or deny). Another technique is to set up a webpage with two or three questions to be answered from reading the text. Students answer the questions and submit their answers to a batch file, which the teacher reads before class. This technique requires some effort from the teacher, plus each student must have access to a computer; but it will help focus the ensuing class if the students find difficulty with a particular question from the reading.

A small portion of the grade can be set aside for those who answer the questions. The goal is not to ensure that the students answer every question correctly; the goal is for students to at least read the material and think about the learning objectives before coming to class. Students who apply knowledge gained from reading their textbooks are more likely to exhibit an increased understanding. Also, students get satisfaction from getting the right answer.

Getting our students to discover and learn on their own is a daunting task. However, if we want to develop our students into competent and confident problem-solvers, and if we ask them to purchase a textbook at the beginning of the semester because we feel it will add to their development, we, as teachers, must create an environment in which our students will read that text. Whether the course is in mathematics, pre-med, or nuclear engineering, get the students to read!

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Michael Huber (associate professor), Michael Phillips (professor), and V. Frederick Rickey (professor) all teach in the Department of Mathematical Sciences at the United States Military Academy.

Sandra L. Cavender

## **“I Think I Can, I Think I Can”: If Only I Could Think**



I teach freshman composition at a community college in Nashville, Tennessee. My goal is to teach students just entering college how to write better (“Better than what?” I often ask when students write a comparative without the initial component of comparison). I want to teach students to write better than they did in their most recent English class, or history class, or in their last e-mails to friends. Many days, though, I admit that I will simply settle for this: I want my students to write (sans better).

The problem with writing, you see, is that as with many things in life, it requires thinking. And thinking is an uncommon skill these days, especially among young people. Schools have long required the “three R’s,” but not the “three T’s”: thinking, thinking long and hard, and thinking things through.

I cannot tell you how many times I have heard from a student, “I can’t think of anything to write about.” This happens regardless of whether I have assigned a writing topic, or I have allowed the students to choose their own topics. I once spent forty minutes after class helping a failing student “think” about his topic for a research paper. Not only did I suggest the topic, I also helped him create the outline for the paper content. I never saw the student again, and he failed the course. I wondered afterward whether thinking through the formidable task that lay ahead “did him in” (albeit he and I were “thinking” together).

Lesson learned: you can lead a student to the ink well, but you cannot make him dip his quill in the ink.

I have witnessed countless other incidents of students struggling with mind over the matter of a blank page. Preoccupied with head phones, cell phones, television, and Tivo, students are too engaged with gadgets to be bothered by brainstorming. The motto of today’s writing student might well be, in the words of E. M. Forster, “How do I know what I think until I see what I say?”

The point is that we educators must learn how to deal with a generation of students who cannot or will not think their way through academic challenges. Perhaps critical thinking should be a mandatory freshman class. It couldn’t hurt. We must come up with ways to make higher learning just that: learning through high-level thinking. I have used various tech-

niques — team activities in class, treasure hunts in the library, innovative writing topics such as arguing “for” or “against” French fries.

Some assignments are more successful than others in provoking critical thought, but none are foolproof. I simply offer all this up as food for educational thought. Have you thought about this lately?

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Veronica P. Stephen

## **Hello, Out There ... Is Anybody Thinking?**



I am troubled. Only some of our students are thinking, and only a few are thinking outside the box.

Many seem to regard inquiry or speculation as an extra, relatively unimportant and pointless learning experience. The majority seem to view discourse as an opportunity to voice personal opinions, but distinctly unproductive. A simple activity, even if it is of the paper-and-pencil variety, appears to be more enjoyable and more fruitful (in the long run) than an introspective conversation.

I ask my students to think about people, places, and things, as well as ideas. I ask them to explore the connections between time and space, between global and local concerns, between divergent lifestyles and cultures, between events and ideas, between individualism and interdependence. Regardless of the topic, sessions devoted to thought and dialogue are hesitantly approached and contributions are limited.

I take values into consideration — some of the most universal qualities that we uphold, such as justice, equality, fairness — yet many students stress that they are apprehensive and uncertain about teaching values, while others ask what kind of a daily lesson plan could they create with particular values for each day.

I stress empathy, time and time again — if you do not know the meaning of empathy, you cannot understand, feel, sympathize, or even come close to standing in someone else’s shoes — and they respond with political correctness. To further an understanding of empathy, I provide dilemmas for moral consideration; although students do enjoy the deliberations, they find that such scenarios fail

to mirror virtual time. Even when furnished with “what if” postscripts that relate to the here and now, students maintain that their responses would be only suppositions, not necessarily reflective of their potential behaviors and actions.

Is thinking a lost art? Has it gone out of vogue? Is dialogue a lost art? Has the Socratic technique become antiquated? Many of my students are uncomfortable when faced with having to think and then to talk about what they were thinking. Do they not want to take the time to think, or are they incapable of thinking, or do they fear where thinking may take them? Judging from actions, comments, and behavior, it seems that most students fear to think. Apparently, thinking is something different from the current, acceptable norm, and venturing into such unknown territories makes them uneasy. Apparently, thinking and talking about the thinking going on in one’s head are too speculative, devoid of the solace provided by right and wrong answers.

Evidently, then, many students fear the unknown. They fear thinking because it is an unknown, seldom-frequented domain. They do not wish to waste their time perusing the “why” factor; nor do they wish to spend time on the “what if” category.

Periodically, however, a few rays of sunshine brighten my days. Here and there, a few bright and free-flowing spirits do take on the challenge. They are the ones who enrich a language-arts lesson plan by integrating architecture, poetry, music, and more. They are the ones who develop student-learning activities that include provisions for the auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learner, in addition to those with multiple intelligences. They are the ones who develop curricula about the Civil War that focus not only on battles, but go beyond the norm by exploring primary accounts and integrating music, visual arts, dance, and literature from the period. They are the ones who weave aspects of anthropology, theology, and philosophy into their teachings. They are the ones who incorporate all of the precious resources that life has to offer.

Thanks for these few brave souls. Thank you, those who are talking and thinking. And, thank you, those who are doing more — thinking outside the box.

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Veronica P. Stephen is a professor of education at Eastern Illinois University.

Janet M. Quinn

## Reading and Writing— Do We All Have to?



I remember very well the day I realized that I could read. I not only remember the day, I also remember the time and the place. I was walking home from first grade, rounding the corner on my block, and passing the cleaner’s store that I had passed countless times before in those first six years of my life. But this time it was different — I could read a sign in his store! I do not remember what the sign said — that was not important to me. What was important was that I knew what it meant to be able to read. I was floating on air. My heart was singing, “I can read!” I didn’t know that it would be such a joyous occasion.

But I also sensed that not everyone in the first grade was as excited as I was about reading, though I did not understand that then. And we did not all learn reading at the same pace and to the same level of proficiency.

Years later, after college graduation, I was talking with a former high school friend who also chose a career in teaching. She was taking a class in the teaching of reading; I was preparing to teach English as a Second Language (ESL). I was amazed by her confession that she always hated reading. So there was another side to this. No wonder there isn’t any celebration for crossing the threshold into the world of reading. Not everyone had that feeling I had. Oh, I knew there were people who did not like reading. For one reason or another they were just not very good at it. But I was shocked. She was a teacher.

Around this same time, in one of my graduate courses, my professor announced that our goal was to get all of our students to like reading. I was immediately struck by the unrealistic nature of this goal. It seemed pompous and audacious partly because of its absoluteness — is there any one thing that everyone likes? This teacher made me instantly question why reading is put in a different category from swimming or dancing or painting a portrait or playing the violin. I cannot paint a portrait or play the violin, and no one expects me to. Why does society expect me, everyone, to read and write?

Later on, when I started teaching ESL writing at the university level, it also made me think that perhaps we have the same goal for our students with respect to writing. Albeit the frustrated writing teachers have long ago put aside the notion that all of their students will like writing, we all continue to

pursue the goal that everyone will be able to write an acceptable academic paper, whether they like it or not. After all, it is a requirement for graduation.

But aren't there other forms of expression? Aren't there other ways of disseminating information, thoughts, ideas, and opinions? What about those paintings we enjoy in our favorite art museums, the music we listen to on our radio stations, and the popular talk shows and television news digests? Aren't these conveyors of messages, formats of learning, gathering places for information? Some people actually think in pictures anyway, not words. Yet no one is forced to express themselves in art or music or even the spoken word — only in the written word. I am reminded that language is an inherent human ability, but it is speaking that is inherent, not writing. Besides, I do not recall my heart ever singing, "I can write!"

Why then do we proceed with the underlying assumption that everyone — everyone, at least, who is educated — must write well enough to meet an acceptable standard? In reality not every successful person does. Many years ago I read a letter in Ann Landers's column written by a woman with three brothers, who said that their mother was very worried about two of them when they were younger because they had a learning disability and they could not read. The third brother, fortunately, was very good in school. However, as adults the two "illiterate" brothers became presidents of their respective businesses and managed to give their third brother extra jobs to support his teaching salary.

This is an unusual story, of course, but perhaps we place too much pressure on the need to write. Our current composition theories tell us that the composing process is a task for the skilled juggler of many cognitive tasks. Juggling three balls might actually be easier, though not as useful as writing. But do we really have to write for ourselves? I am not expected to fix my own toilet. I can call a plumber. I am not expected to prescribe my own medicine — nor would it be desirable. Let's not forget that the president of the United States does not write his own speeches; you can pay someone to write your résumé and hire a professional to write a letter for you. How was it decided that writing was so necessary and so accessible to everyone?

Are we perhaps involved in what Mike Rose warns against? Are we focused on the "preservation of a discipline, not the intellectual development of young people"? He tells us that "[o]urs is the first society in history to expect so many of its people to be able to perform these very sophisticated literacy activities." In fact, most of the international students I teach have never studied writing in their native

language. Are we really at an advantage because we do? What if we didn't?

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Janet M. Quinn teaches English as a Second Language at DePaul University and has a Master's in writing.

Larry Levy

### "Most Pressing Issue in Higher Education": Drawing Out the Voices



In traditional college and university classrooms, where lecturing still dominates as a mode of delivery, students tend to be passive receivers of the teacher's language. Even after more than a quarter century of the "writing across the curriculum" movement in higher education, whose purpose is to draw students out of silence and invisibility, one can still walk down many a college

corridor and see professors "talking to the blackboard." True, we have newer and more sophisticated ways to do this in so-called "smart classrooms," but it is still the professor who controls language.

In the last year I have taught three sections of a course for our faculty called "Writing to Learn." Most of the teachers who enroll are newer hires and newer to teaching. They come from all corners of the campus — nursing, respiratory therapy, physical-therapy assistant, English, art, chemistry, biology, math, history, health and wellness, speech, psychology, sociology. I have learned that nothing is taught on our campus that would not be enhanced by the use of informal writing. What separates us is obvious; what unites us is pedagogy.

What the teachers share is a sense that they are working harder than their students, that their students need to be challenged more — not just occasionally, but in every session. Almost all the teachers cannot recall their own undergraduate professors using informal writing to engage students' powers of observation and reflection. For most of the teachers, the only writing they experienced as college students was formal, graded essays and papers. Most of their best memories of college teachers involve skilled, entertaining lecturers.

Without abandoning the inspiration provided by these persuasive role models, they want to grow beyond that example. They want their students to log or free write about their prior knowledge, their perceptions as they arise and grow during the course, the connections that they are able to make between one assignment and another, between the classroom and what is going on elsewhere in their

lives and in the world, between abstract concepts and application, and about their sense of their own progress or stumbling blocks. They want, as educator Parker Palmer has written, to “hear their students into speech.” They want to do better than to assume their students’ strengths and needs.

They are realizing that there is no better way to do this than through informal writing. They are beginning to accept what Janet Emig wrote more than twenty years ago, that “writing is not merely different but unique” in its ability to put everyone in the room, simultaneously, to the best thought they can muster; that writing is not merely the transcribing of what is already known but the generating of thought in language that combines the “insider vocabulary” of the discipline with the student’s own language. Finally, they are realizing that writing, unlike speaking, provides a record of thought, however rudimentary in its depth or grammar, which provides a basis for teacher-student dialogue and continued growth for both parties.

What has kept this notion from wider popularity? To some degree, “writing to learn” requires that professors be prepared in pedagogy as well as in their discipline. It requires a view of writing that is not limited to a compartment of the curriculum but is a tool available to any teacher.

A biology professor at a large university once wrote me, poignantly I felt, that he would like to hear more of what his students were thinking but that his dean was far more interested in his publishing regularly. Consequently, the teaching I observed at his school seemed to me to be a “covering” of the subject. The teacher spoke; the students copied his words. In one class, the professor spoke for ninety minutes while writing formulas on the board, his back to the class. With a few minutes to go, he turned and asked his hundreds of students, “Any questions?” There was dead silence.

“Go ahead and ask them,” I thought. “Have them take out a sheet of paper and jot down the three most significant ideas in today’s lecture and the one idea that seemed most confusing.” He would hear a lot, I am sure.

To that professor and to all professors in higher education, it should be obvious that there are indeed questions. There are also impressions, perceptions, reflections, self-assessments, and connections. And there are ways involving informal writing — none very complicated — that are nearly foolproof in drawing out the voices.

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Larry Levy is a professor of English at Delta College.

Rachel L. Jablon

## Undergraduate Writing Skills; Or, Whatever Happened to Basic Grammar?



I have been teaching in the University of Maryland’s Freshman Writing Program for approximately four years. The course covered by the Freshman Writing Program, “Introduction to Academic Writing,” is a required course for all undergraduates, although exemptions are possible for certain students. Typically, however, my students barely write on a high school-level, let alone on the college level that is expected of them by their instructors. I find that I spend most of my time coaching my students through the basic tenets of grammar, sentence structure, and syntax, as opposed to the rhetoric around which the course revolves.

My opinion of the rhetorical skills and tools that those of us who teach in the Freshman Writing program offer to our students is perhaps rare, in that I believe that the rhetoric is important, socially relevant, and quite useful to students who are just learning to make their ways in the world. I love Aristotle’s ideas of *pathos*, *ethos*, and *logos* and the manipulation of them to reach intended audiences, but I find conveying them to my students incredibly difficult when they do not have a basic understanding of what a subject and verb are. In other words, before I can teach them the eye-opening world of rhetoric, I have to teach them vocabulary that they should already know, considering that, as the university reports, the average SAT score and high school GPA of incoming freshmen keep rising and rising.

I do not necessarily complain about expanding my teaching goals to allow time for grammar and syntax, but I do question the outlook my students seem to have on the quality of work that colleges and universities expect of them. How can my students not know that sentence fragments are unacceptable in the schema of most academic writing? How can my students not know that subjects and verbs must agree, or that subjects and pronouns must correlate according to number? How can my students not know that spelling errors suggest carelessness and lack of effort? Ideally, my students would acquire the fundamental skills of writing mechanics in grade school, so that when they come to my classroom — wide-eyed and confident in their writing, as often they are — I can focus on my tasks at hand: to teach the art of argumentation, to develop research and communication skills, and to ease my students’ transition to college-level courses.

However, I seldom have students who enter my classroom with writing skills that are up to par so that I can begin with the rhetoric which I think they could enjoy, if given the right circumstances under which to learn it. Instead, I have to goad them into learning about proofreading, run-on sentences, and passive voice. They often become so disheartened by their shoddy use of grammar that turning to rhetoric becomes overwhelming, intimidating, and irrelevant. Having to account for the lack of basic writing skills in a class designed to concentrate on rhetoric creates a challenging teaching environment, one that I am game to face but also one that needs to be assessed from a pre-college and pre-university perspective. If we do this, students will be able to gain as much from their college careers as possible, and their teachers will be able to accomplish their course goals.

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Rachel L. Jablon is an instructor in English and comparative literature at the University of Maryland, College Park.

**Julie A. Ray**

### **Effective Teaching Strategies in Higher Education**



Research about the learning process has demonstrated that learning occurs when students are actively engaged, have opportunities for interaction with others, are presented with challenging situations or questions that require critical thinking skills, and are surrounded by a nurturing learning environment. This article will present ways to actively involve students through lectures, as well as through examples of other teaching strategies that are effective in helping students develop in-depth understanding of new concepts.

Discussions in pairs or small groups about information presented in a lecture can be a useful method of helping students explore concepts and share their experiences or understanding of the information. Two examples of how to structure group-discussion time come from Kagan's (*Cooperative Learning*, 1994) cooperative learning strategies: "Think, Pair, Share" and "Numbered Heads Together." In Think, Pair, Share, students are given a challenging question relating to the lecture that they must first think about, then pair up with another student to discuss, and then share their ideas with the class. When using Numbered Heads Together, students are put in equal-sized small groups to discuss a topic, or put

their "heads together" to make sure that they all understand the concept. Each student numbers off in the group, and after the discussion, the instructor calls out different numbers for students with that number to stand and share answers, thus requiring individual accountability in the group. Finally, an alternative to an instructor lecture is to have student group presentations about a topic.

Students also can be actively involved during a lecture by the use of a listening guide, which lists major points of the lecture. Students use the listening guide to fill in information about each point. Another summarization strategy is the "3, 2, 1" method. At the end of class, students write, or are assigned, these prompts to answer: three things I learned today, two things I heard today that I need to further ponder, and one thing I would like to learn more about relating to this topic.

Alternative teaching strategies to the lecture method are case studies, simulations, and games. Case studies can be an effective way to actively engage students in thinking about complex concepts. The most successful case studies are those that are relevant to the students, present a realistic dilemma with dialogue, and require action or a decision by the participants.

Simulating a real-life situation can be helpful for students understanding a concept in context. For example, to help students understand the economic concept of mass production, a class assembly line can be created to make a product and then compare that experience with creating the product individually.

Games can be an effective review or assessment strategy. For example, the "Four Corners" activity can be used to assess students' understanding or to review concepts. Corners of the room are labeled A, B, C, and D. The instructor reads a multiple-choice question, and students must move to one of the four corners that represents their answer.

These are just a few samples of how professors can actively engage students in their course content. Using active teaching strategies can be challenging for professors. Many of these strategies require an extended block of time, space for movement, special preparation, and extra supplies or materials. Online courses also present unique challenges in building a collaborative-learning environment. However, creative professors will find that leaving the podium and using interactive teaching strategies yields high student achievement.

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Julie A. Ray is an assistant professor of education at Southeast Missouri State University.

Betty J. Crouther

## Student Input Equals Better Survey



The twenty-first-century college student is not the student of the 1970s. Teaching methods that were standard then may not work today. Whereas the average twentieth-century student was disciplined to listen carefully and take prodigious handwritten notes from the professor's lectures, many contemporary students require a great deal more direction.

A good tool for determining whether a sufficient gap exists between the professor's college culture and that of students is the course evaluation. Written comments in such evaluations are especially useful. Evaluations of large lectures may indicate that although the professor is well organized and presents material in a clear and understandable manner, students are having difficulty managing the sheer volume of information. In addition, they may be having difficulty with notetaking because of the number of unfamiliar terms and names. A useful study aid here would be a vocabulary list organized to outline the lectures. This list would also function as an effective review sheet when preparing for exams.

The contemporary student often desires individualized attention, even in the largest of classes, and frequently requests discussion opportunities. The challenge here is in getting students to probe a topic to sufficient depth. The tendency is for many students to rely heavily on electronic media for research, which often works against the need to read definitive printed library sources — journals in particular. Experts in pedagogy could lend a hand in helping lecturers in many disciplines address this challenge. Librarians also might give helpful tips. There are aspects of old-fashioned library research that are not yet matched by Web surfing, and better techniques for encouraging students to engage in it are needed. Then thoughtful discussions by well-read students in large lecture classes might become more desirable.

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Betty J. Crouther, PhD (University of Missouri), is an associate professor at the University of Mississippi.

Joyce Anderson

## Educating Generation Zzz . . .



Although it will take a decade or so for the current generation to visit the campuses of higher education, the Academy must be prepared for Generation Z. Unlike Generation X, who had a self-motivated mission to find their inner voices, Generation Z has been given cell phones and search engines to guide their way along the information highway and beyond. Raised on *Blues Clues* and reality television, Generation Z will need a wake-up call to get involved.

For Generation Zed to benefit from higher education, professionals need to prepare the next student body with Zest, Energy, and Direction.

As education molds the paradigms of the future, the classroom becomes praxis for the boardroom. Let's change these bored teens into motivated citizens with a Zest for excellence (not abstinence). Instead of being disruptive students in detention-filled hallways, today's youth are currently being encouraged to become citizens of the world. Service learning has been the objective of many campuses. Focusing on helping others instead of becoming an apprentice to a millionaire pushes Generation Z past the graveyard at Ground Zero to create a more compassionate world.

Each generation also must expend some Energy. Generation Z must become engaged in effecting change. A Boy Scout badge or digital diploma becomes discarded like an old stuffed animal. Instead of simulated cities, Generation Z needs energy to confront the enduring issues of Planet Earth. Inter-racial and intergenerational families provide a true appreciation of the melting pot of this nation. As professionals in higher education, we must prepare to energize Generation Z. What are their educational, emotional, spiritual, and political needs? We must think about these issues now, not a decade from now. As professors, we should recognize that Generation Z may extend our understanding of what it means to be human, utterly human, from the first stem cell to the last identified piece of DNA.

Preparing Generation Z means giving them Direction. Generation Z deals with disease and death on a daily basis. AIDS, anthrax, and red-alerts from Homeland Security are part of the current vocabulary. Rather than focusing on the destructive aspects of humanity, Generation Z needs to turn Diversity into Unity. They need the energy to believe and trust in each other, rather than in their

wonderful WiFi connection. The next virus may be devastating to their PC's, but Generation Zed needs to develop a vision of their destiny. Can Generation Z make quantum leaps in medicine and research, inventing new technology and curing diseases, while providing poetic ways to salve our cancer-ridden population? Dynamic discoveries are possible when professors provide direction for their students to uncover new ways of learning and new horizons for humankind.

Although they may need some sleep now, rest assured, Generation Z will have work to do when they grow up. After all, they will be teaching the Alpha Generation their ABCs.

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Joyce Anderson is a professor of English at Millersville University.

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## MEDITERRANEUM CAFÉ, BERKELEY

Never did fit in here,  
 even though I thought I should.  
 Came and loitered among gnarly drunks,  
 hot-eyed poets, a hundred varieties of  
 off-beat castoff and dissenter.  
 Didn't they recognize me as brother,  
 me with my hatred of bosses,  
 my awkwardness,  
 my poetry?  
 But shyness is not a credential  
 for joining the counterculture,  
 and I don't know the hardscrabble streets.  
 My suffering has been highfalutin:  
 delicate gay slighted by husky men,  
 artist misunderstood by the starched university . . .  
 I don't belong here.  
 Yet I like to sit among the dissatisfied,  
 the bittersweet anyway:  
 where else do I belong?

MARC ELIHU HOFSTADTER

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Marc Elihu Hofstadter has a PhD in literature from the University of California, Santa Cruz and has taught at Santa Cruz, the Université d'Orléans, and Tel Aviv University. He has published two volumes of poetry, *House of Peace* and *Visions*. He works as the librarian of the City of San Francisco's transit agency.

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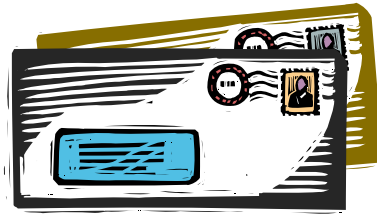
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The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi is pleased to announce that its newest grant program, the Literacy Grants, will be awarded once again in 2005. The inaugural round of grants under this program was an overwhelming success, with nearly ninety applications received and seventeen grants of up to \$2,500 being awarded. For more details about this program and about past recipients, visit the Phi Kappa Phi Web site at [www.phikappaphi.org](http://www.phikappaphi.org).

These grants of up to \$2,500 are offered to both individual members and campus chapters. The grant application is also available at our Web site under "Scholarships and Grants"; you can fill it in online or print it out. Deadline for receiving applications is February 1, 2005.

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# Letters to the Editor



## THE ESSENTIAL ROLE FOR NEWS MEDIA

In the Winter 2004 article “The Essential Role for News Media” [“Is Democracy in Danger?”], Elliot writes “News media have the responsibility to be an independent chorus in the triad of government, citizens, and journalism.” As an informed citizen who does not rely on the media to interpret the news, I was delighted to see the title and anxious to read the article. Unfortunately the author missed the point. Instead of building the article on how not only the government but also the media are responsible for misinforming citizens, the blame is placed on leaders and government. The author neglected to mention how the media takes it upon themselves to interpret versus present the news.

The author clearly demonstrates this throughout the article. One example is the author’s use of a passage from the 2003 State of the Union address. “The subtle linking of Saddam Hussein with 9/11...” the author refers to was her interpretation and not what was actually said. This is a direct “manipulation of the truth” that the author claims will cause citizens to “assume that leaders cannot be trusted to tell them the truth.” In fact in this case, the author decided to neglect to mention Iraq’s lack of compliance with numerous United Nations resolutions, world intelligence reports of Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction, Iraq’s human rights violations, and warnings to U.S. citizens that Iraq was a threat to world and U.S. security from at least two administrations. All of these were presented to citizens by the Bush administration repeatedly, but the author chose to present only statistics and quotes that supported her perception of the information.

I was struck by how this directly contradicted the author’s state-

ment that “Democracy can truly work only with active, informed citizens who have reason to trust the information that they get from the government and the information that they get from news media.” Although I strongly agree with this statement, I was frustrated to find that the author chose to blame our leaders and the government for deceiving the public. The author neglected to mention the mistrust citizens have for the media.

The author is listed as a professor of Media Ethics and Press Policy at the University of South Florida. This title suggests that the author has professional responsibilities to train future journalists. I hope that the author is able to set aside her personal political beliefs and teach what needs to be taught to future journalists even if it “shakes” her view of the world. This is the only way we can be certain that future journalists will provide objective, truthful reporting.

Marion M. Piccolomini

## FORUM ON THE ARTS

I was very disappointed to see the article “Embedded: A New Satire Explores The Art of War” in the latest issue of the *Forum* [“Sequential Art: The Comics,” Summer 2004]. Apparently the editorial staff of the *Forum* has forgotten that the term “academic excellence in all fields” includes more than the liberal academic profession. You have also assumed that all of your readers agree with the left-wing venom spewed by Mr. Tim Robbins who wrote and directed the play highlighted. Many of us disagree with Heidi Motzkus’s notion that the play characters included “the cabal of neoconservative government officials.”

Obviously, anyone in attendance at the “riveting” new play understands that Tim Robbins is

furthering his agenda to smear our government leaders and paint our military, including the young men and women who serve us with their life on the line, as the enemy.

Certainly I will discuss this article with many of my nonacademic fellow members. I will discontinue support for Phi Kappa Phi and hope many of my friends do likewise. Perhaps this will cause you to consider your responsibility to “all fields.”

H. Rex Martin  
Wichita, Kansas

## SEQUENTIAL ART: THE COMICS

Zap. Kapow. Wow! As an everyday reader of the comics since I learned to read (in fact, my father taught me the elements of reading with the Sunday funnies), the “Sequential Art” issue [Summer 2004] is a collectible. I have always appreciated the comics as an art form and, at times, have viewed some comics as a philosophy lesson. The underlying academics have now justified my countless hours invested in this legitimate literature, perhaps to the dismay of my elders and teachers who believed that I was wasting time.

Having been admitted to Phi Kappa Phi in the mid-1970s, I have been a regular reader of the *Phi Kappa Phi Forum* and other publications for nearly three decades. The “Sequential Art” issue was among the best. As long as you keep thinking “outside of the box,” you will continue to tickle the interest of our members.

Keep up the good work.

Benedict P. Kuehne  
Miami, Florida

“Comic Books” — the subject means different things to different people. To me it means memories from my youth.

If there is such a thing as a password to memory, “comic books” is it for me.

Early 1941 — C.T. Dearing Printing Co., Louisville, Kentucky — second largest printing house in the South — twenty-four hours a

day — a large flashing sign on the roof proclaimed it to the world. A lot of seven days a week there, too.

Rotary press room — in comes the “comic press.” It’s huge. It clatters, bangs, hums. That whirling sound — you get used to it — in fact, I would like to hear it again.

Cheap paper — fuzz flying everywhere.

Cheap ink — lots of color — the ink man, young like me, so splattered with ink he resembled a circus clown.

*Captain Marvel, Batman* — every month we received a copy of every publication we printed.

Wish I had kept them.

More important — I have memories.

Henry V. Neumayer, Sr.  
Louisville, Kentucky

I enjoyed your Summer 2004 *Phi Kappa Phi Forum* issue on comics, particularly the excellent interviews with popular cartoonists and how they got started. The history and milestones article, however, was particularly memorable for its glaring omission of *Li'l Abner*, regarded by many as the greatest comic strip of all time. Consider these feats from a strip that didn't even warrant a single mention in the issue:

- Made into a hit Broadway musical;
- Spoof strip within a strip (Fearless Fosdick) made into a TV show;
- Official origin of Sadie Hawkins Day;
- Origin of an amusement park (Dogpatch USA) and a soft drink (Kickapoo Joy Juice, still produced);
- First major licensing phenomenon, with more than \$150 million in the 1940s from just one character, the Schmoos;
- Additions to the American language: “if I had my druthers,” “schmoosing,” “double whammy,” “as any fool can plainly see”;
- Twenty-seven printed books of *Li'l Abner* cartoons;
- Forty-three-year original run,

reaching more than 450 papers during the Depression (and still reprinted seventy years later).

In addition, cartoonist Al Capp was a frequent guest on *The Tonight Show*, spanning hosts Jack Paar, Steve Allen, and Johnny Carson. He authored his own newspaper column and radio show and was a guest lecturer at campuses nationwide.

Can you think of any other cartoonist of any era with half as much impact?

Bob Forgrave

## WOMEN IN COMICS

I am an avid comics reader, daily and in the Sunday paper. Therefore, I truly appreciated last issue's focus on this topic. Ms. Paige Braddock's article, titled “Women in Comics,” was the first story I read. Her description of what a woman in

the comic strips looks like did not surprise me at all. As a woman, I see the characters she mentioned daily and do not feel represented by them at all — *Cathy* included! Her experience with a newspaper editor disgusted me, although it did not surprise me one bit. What *did* catch my eye was that *Forum* did not publish even one strip done by a woman. Now isn't it ironic that a magazine publishing a piece such as Ms. Braddock's would perpetuate the same issues denounced in her article? I guess this could be food for thought for the heavily male staff of *Forum*.

Thank you very much!

Marta Donayre

*See the “Editor's Note” in this issue for artwork from Paige Braddock. And to clarify, the full-time staff of the Forum consists of one male and two females. — Editor*

## WEATHER UPDATE

The air's heavy breathing makes me sick,  
keeps me up at night with its stench  
of freezing sweat and shrieking whispers.  
I hate the taste of the rain; it paws me all day.  
I hate how the sky leers with its one dim eye,

watching us trip the trick wires—  
can't it see what we do to each other?  
History's booby-trap opens and  
bulldozers grind the luckless to dust  
while we slap at misfortune's hold.

My hands are screaming for a chance  
to smack this week off the map and you  
know next week won't be any better.  
They're calling for flurries with suicide  
bombers, torrential weeping into the night.

SUSAN THOMAS

Susan Thomas publishes stories, poems, and translations in journals and anthologies. Her collection, *State of Blessed Gluttony*, (Red Hen Press, 2004), won the 2002 Benjamin Saltman Prize. She is also the winner of the 2003 Iowa Poetry Award from the *Iowa Review* and the 2003 Ann Stanford Prize from University of Southern California.



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