



HIGHER EDUCATION EXCHANGE



2012

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The *Higher Education Exchange* is founded on a thought articulated by Thomas Jefferson in 1820: I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education.

In the tradition of Jefferson, the *Higher Education Exchange* agrees that a central goal of higher education is to help make democracy possible by preparing citizens for public life. *The Higher Education Exchange* is part of a movement to strengthen higher education's democratic mission and foster a more democratic culture throughout American society. Working in this tradition, the *Higher Education Exchange* publishes case studies, analyses, news, and ideas about efforts within higher education to develop more democratic societies.



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FOREWORD

By Deborah Witte

This year's issue of the *Higher Education Exchange* continues in the recent vein of highlighting and showcasing innovations and new thinking in higher education. Readers of this journal know that the Kettering Foundation's interest in this area of study is not really higher education. Kettering's interest is in putting the public at the center of the higher education-public relationship and getting at the problems behind the problems in the relationship.

In our work—in this area and others—we talk about the problems *of* democracy and problems *in* democracy. Higher education is good at addressing the problems *in* democracy. Innumerable college and university centers and institutes hold colloquia and conferences each year addressing such problems as poverty, health care, civil rights and others. Many universities consider this part of the service or outreach that connects them to the communities they border.

But it's the problems *of* democracy that most concern my colleagues and me at the foundation. These are problems like citizens sitting on the sidelines of the political system, with no way of entering the process except through voting. The problems of citizen agency and action are two other problems of democracy. Too many citizens don't believe they have any part to play in democracy, and citizen action is all too often limited to attending hearings and old-fashioned protesting. A more robust role for citizens is missing.

The articles in this volume respond to both the problems of democracy and the problems in democracy. They run the gamut from narratives on what should be done to bring citizens to the center of democracy, to interviews with leading higher education scholars and practitioners that outline the continuing challenges to this work, to stories of successes, both celebrated and cautiously hopeful, as well as a courageous story of a former faculty member who has found new purpose outside the academy.

We begin this issue with David Brown's interview with a well-known and respected scholar/practitioner. Harry Boyte's passion is civic agency, and this passion comes across strongly in his interview. He identifies an immense hunger for public experiences on the part

of the public. He acknowledges that many faculty norms of detachment are part of the professionalism of the academy. He suggests that the development of a new paradigm for civic engagement—called the “civic studies”—may, by integrating strands of work from a number of fields, help to push civic engagement front and center on campuses. Read this interview to see how Boyte describes this new initiative.

The story of a tenured professor who has left the academy follows. Seeking a better quality of life than the role of an academic could afford her, Claire Snyder-Hall decided, after spending more than twenty years as a faculty member, that “enough was enough.” Rather than continuing to live a life with one foot in the community and one foot in the academy, she embraced her community-based work and now devotes her time to doing what she really values.

Following Claire’s article is an interview with a leading scholar and philosopher, Elizabeth Minnich, who outlines the conceptual changes needed for educating democratically. She calls for the academy to recognize that traditional research standards can be applied to other, equally valid, research methods, such as action research that is undertaken with a community. She would like to see education embrace the idea of helping people become better at thinking creatively and responsibly—in other words, engaging with the world and people around them. Education, she asserts, should practice, inform, and renew.

Three stories from faculty follow. They illustrate different approaches to addressing the problem of the civic engagement of young people. Living Democracy, an example of a growing group of faculty who are using the community as a classroom, seeks to give students a more dynamic learning environment. This pioneering approach to civic engagement—and its effects on students—is described by its codirectors, Mark Wilson and Nan Fairley, with excerpts about some of the students in the program.

Introducing a civic engagement component of graduate education is tackled in the article by Ellen Knutson and Dan Lewis of Northwestern University. Their curricular program, carried out by the Center for Civic Engagement, provides practicums for doctoral students while supporting a scholarship of engagement and developing new career opportunities for students. Another noteworthy

outcome is the strengthening of ties between Northwestern and local community organizations. Don't miss the companion article by student Robin Hoecker. From a perspective not often heard in this conversation, she skillfully articulates the contributions to scholarship that her participation in the program has enabled.

Wynne Wright, a faculty member at Michigan State University—long a frontrunner in civic engagement among land grant universities—shares the struggles she and her colleagues face, namely the complexity of agrifood and natural resource problems. She characterizes these as “wicked” problems and shares three cases that describe new ways to approach solutions to these kinds of problems—all of which wrestle with questions of epistemology and local knowledge. Her recommendations may surprise you.

Elizabeth Hudson provides a review of *What Is College For? The Public Purpose of Higher Education*. This edited volume is another in a long list of books over the last ten years calling for answers to the crisis of the lost mission of higher education. Hudson identifies the problem as one of audience rather than message. While the sense of crisis is coming in loud and clear she argues, it isn't being directed at the people who can best hear it—the public.

David Mathews rounds out the issue by positing that a battle of sorts is being waged between factions within higher education. While the challenges of higher education are many, Mathews explains that the foundation is watching the promising experiments both on and off campuses. He suggests that a solid connection between the strong democracy movement off campus must meet the civic engagement movement on campus.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE AMERICAN COMMON— WEALTH PARTNERSHIP

An Interview with Harry Boyte

David Brown, coeditor of the Higher Education Exchange, spoke with Harry Boyte. Boyte is the national coordinator of the new American Commonwealth Partnership, which hopes to develop a “new stage” of colleges’ and universities’ engagement. He is also the cofounder, with the late Elinor Ostrom, Peter Levine, and several others, of what is called “the new civic field” or “civic studies,” which focuses centrally on the citizen as cocreator, agency, and a different kind of politics.

Brown: Much of your work assumes culture change but culture change does not come easily and usually comes slowly. Learned behavior, the essence of any culture, cannot be summoned.

Boyte: Generally, I agree about the challenges of culture change—“habits” of a culture are long-developing, and specifically, people adjust their sights fatalistically to “the world as it is.” This dynamic is conveyed by Pierre Bourdieu with his concept of habitus, in *Acts of Resistance*: “By making the whole future uncertain, it prevents all rational anticipation and, in particular, the basic belief and hope in the future that one needs in order to rebel, especially collectively, against present conditions, even the most intolerable.” Bourdieu is deeply pessimistic about the capacities of “the people” to develop capacities for free action, individually and collectively—what we call civic agency.

I would add another dimension here—citizens in the United States, this most supposedly revelatory and therapeutic of cultures, where people are encouraged to post their secrets on Facebook, have very few “public experiences.” I mean public in the sense of discussions and collaborative work in a sustained way with people who are quite different in ideology, culture, and ways of looking at the world.

We’ve seen a sharp erosion of public experiences, as “mediating institutions” like local schools, neighborhood businesses, unions, congregations with diverse memberships, civic groups, and the

like have declined or turned into service operations, and people have become more clients and consumers than productive citizens.

In contrast, the late Hubert Humphrey, Vice President of the United States, said he learned politics in his father's drug store in Doland, South Dakota, which his father—one of a handful of Democrats in a town of hundreds of Republicans—made into the civic center of the community. It was full of argument, music, discussions, and a launching pad for what we would call public work experiences. Now drug stores have mainly turned into CVS chain stores.

Brown: What, then, are your grounds for hope?

Boyte: There is immense hunger for empowering public experiences, mingled with fatalism. Even our dysfunctional politics may reflect this hunger. Let me give an example.

Grant Stevensen directs faith-based organizing for Minnesotans United for All Families, a coalition fighting an anti-gay marriage amendment to be voted on in November. He has a background in what is called broad-based community organizing, which intentionally cultivates skills and habits of public interactions across differences. Minnesotans United has consciously adopted an approach different than the 30 state fights, which have been built on the polarizing formula that now dominates in civic and political campaigns—find an enemy to demonize, develop a good versus evil script that removes complexities, seek to inflame emotions, and appeal to people's sense of victimization. All these earlier campaigns have ended in failure for the pro-gay-marriage side, by the way. The organizing framework of Stevensen's coalition has similarities to the Obama campaign of 2008. They talked to people on the other side, they developed what they call a "conversational approach," not trying to beat the other side in arguments, but rather engaging people in discussions and using stories. It's a shift to a different kind of politics, a citizen politics of public work.

It faces challenges, since people aren't used to listening deeply to people on other sides of issues. Grant said he thinks people hang on so strongly to rigid public identities like partisan labels, or identification with an issue cause, because they haven't had much public experience in the sense we mean it.

For all the ways their approach cuts against the grain, Minnesotans United is finding responsiveness to such citizen

politics. Volunteers are filling the offices of Minnesotans United across the state; they've created a diverse coalition, ranging from businesses like General Mills to unions, churches, local towns. And their message is different than earlier fights, emphasizing the importance of love and relationships, the freedom of people to love whom they choose. This speaks to deep worries, widespread among conservatives, that the social fabric is unraveling.

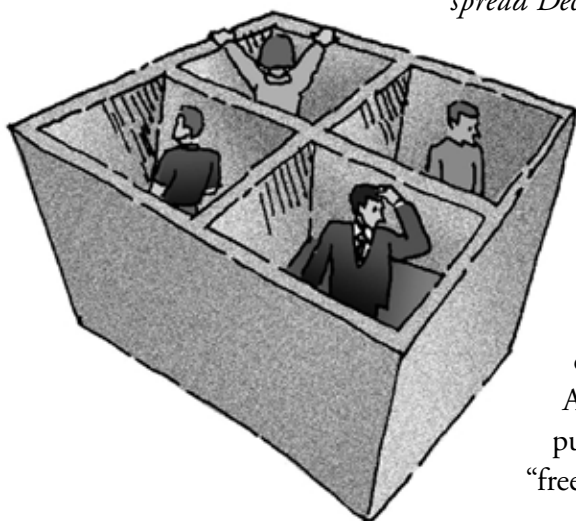
This kind of public experience is rare in higher education where politics is highly ideological. It is often very hard for young people who have been active in groups using the polarizing formula of campus activist groups to work well in public spaces full of ambiguity, diversity, open-endedness, where simplified good versus evil scripts are highly ineffective.

Brown: What are your grounds for hope in higher education?

Boyte: I don't want to minimize challenges. For many faculty members, norms of detachment seem set in stone. When Ed Fogelman, then chair of the Political Science Department at the University of Minnesota, and I did one-on-one interviews with senior faculty in the late 1990s, we heard poignant stories about what can be described as the disappearance of public life (see www.publicpolicy-educouncil.org/pdf/Public_Engagement.pdf). Most couldn't even imagine conversations on the topic. As Fogelman put it, "almost everyone has public motivations for going into their field. Almost no one admits it."

When Liz Hollander and I coauthored *The Wingspread Declaration on Renewing the Civic Mission*

of the Research University for a group of higher education leaders in 1999, I thought a lot about the cartoon strip "Dilbert," in which people are trapped in little separated, private cubicles. It came to mind as a way to describe higher education's culture. The declaration borrows from Jane Addams. Renewing the democratic purposes of higher education means "freeing the powers."



We also found strong desires to make work more public and empowering. As a literary scholar and chair of her department put it, everyone felt “cloistered”—detached from the city—and wanted change.

Institutional self-interests—the need for revived public support—as well as student and faculty desires to impact and engage the world, create an opening for new approaches. There are also new theoretical and practical resources.

Brown: What are they?

Boyte: Change in higher education to create more empowering public experience is closely tied to the effort to develop a third paradigm for civic engagement called the new civic field or “civic studies,” beyond the liberal-communitarian debate that has roiled political and social thought for a generation. The late Elinor Ostrom was a key figure in helping define this field. She won the 2009 Nobel Prize in economics for theory-building, which shows that citizen-centered governance is far more effective in sustaining common pool resources like forests or fisheries than either states or markets. The civic field integrates strands of work from a number of fields, including complexity, public work theory, common pool resource governance, pragmatism, social movement theory and history, popular education, and others.

Seven of us, including Ostrom, met several years ago to write a framing statement for the civic field that emphasizes agency and citizens as cocreators of their environments. Each year there is a Civic Studies Institute at Tufts, organized by Peter Levine and Karol Soltan. We had a session at the recent American Political Science Association on the civic field. *The Good Society* journal is an important intellectual space for this discussion. Bringing Theory to Practice, the think tank for innovation in teaching and learning tied to the Association of American Colleges and Universities, has commissioned a volume on the implications of the civic field for pedagogy.

There are also related practical resources for making change, such as a growing body of experience in translating organizing approaches into varied settings—the huge scale of community organizing methods in the Obama campaign shows some of the possibilities, which we have also seen in colleges and universities.

The civic field integrates strands of work from a number of fields.

There are also practical alternatives to the managerial fixation on narrow definitions of “accountability” and “outcomes.”

There are also important practical alternatives to the managerial fixation on narrow definitions of “accountability” and “outcomes,” which Elizabeth Minnich decries in this volume. I draw attention to the rich methods and concepts of “developmental evaluation,” developing ways to assess change in open, complex, highly dynamic situations where the point is large change, rather than narrowly framed, linear, predictable results. Michael Patton’s recent book, *Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use* is a splendid treatment of these.

Brown: Where does this all lead?

Boyer: The new civic field and some of these practical resources formed the basis for the Civic Agency Initiative, which we organized with the American Democracy Project in 2008, involving a number of colleges and universities that wanted to experiment with incorporating concepts and practices of civic agency. This was the background for the American Commonwealth Partnership (ACP) of colleges and universities launched at the White House on January 10th. The overall objective is “education for the public good”—taking the public engagement efforts to another stage of innovations with a civic agency character.

In higher education, the civic agency stage of engagement builds on the “liberal” stage, which focused on higher education’s expertise in addressing issues of injustice; and the “communitarian” stage, which focused on service, service learning, social capital, and related themes. The civic agency stage calls for shifting from scattered “activities,” like centers, courses, and discrete community partnerships, to deep civic identity as empowering, engaged institutions.

One basic change is from “partnering with communities” to becoming “part of” communities. This requires a lens larger

than institutions, focused on what can be called “empowering local ecologies” with many interacting institutions. Civic innovators outside of higher education will provide key leadership.

Brown: What, then, do you see as the role of ACP?

Boyer: ACP seeks to instill sober hope that people *can* change our institutional



cultures to become more open, empowering, and part of the life of communities. There are significant civic agency innovations, including new ones to build on, like the Citizen Alum effort, led by Julie Ellison, which reconceives alumni as partners in connections with communities and in teaching and learning, not only as donors.

Students will also be key innovators. For instance, at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County students have reconstructed the Student Government Association, shifting from a service delivery model to a center of student empowerment that facilitates constructive work. “Civic agency” can sound academic to groups that haven’t worked with the language, but at UMBC and elsewhere, students really like this language, which is tied to ideas like “being an agent of change.” Students have significantly impacted the culture at UMBC, and the process has larger implications. Student leaders had to argue down a move among many students at UMBC to change the name of the SGA because the general view of “government” is so negative. Led by Kaylesh Ramu, the student president, they argued that rather than reject “government,” the point is to transform it to “us” not “them.”

ACP locates higher education’s engagement efforts as part of the larger movement to address the crises in democracy. This is the great challenge of our time, all around the world.

Brown: What does it require?

Boyte: Partly, it requires a process of retrieval. The White House meeting on January 10th, “For Democracy’s Future—Education Reclaims Our Civic Mission,” marked the beginning of the 150th anniversary year of the Morrill Act. The Act, signed by Lincoln in the Civil War, initiated democratization in higher education by opening colleges and universities, the preserve of the wealthy, to “the industrial and working classes.” Land grants deepened this democratization for decades, in complex, often contradictory but also sometimes dramatic ways. They changed the curriculum, combining practical and vocational subjects with liberal arts. They were infused with public purpose. These elements deepened through the 1930s, when students and faculty in large numbers were active in the public life of the nation. They helped to organize movements for a more inclusive and just society, such as union organizing and struggles against racism. Often they

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participated in what I would call “commons building” movements, in which people solve problems and create public things together, across partisan and other divisions. These involved things like rural cooperatives, soil conservation, rural electrification, and the “Little Country Theater Movement.” All this history animated the Truman Commission’s report on higher education in 1948, which declared “the first and most essential charge upon higher education is that at all levels and in all fields of specialization, it shall be the carrier of democratic values, ideals, and processes.” Today, this history is largely unknown, despite the great scholarship of Scott Peters.

Brown: That’s Scott Peters at Cornell and his work in rediscovering the land grant history.

Boyte: Yes. The most basic idea to retrieve from this history is about democracy itself: democracy is a society, not a government-centered system of elections. Citizens are cocreators of such a society. Professionals are not outside “partnering with citizens”—a language that pervades the engagement movement. They are citizens themselves, working with fellow citizens.

To advance this alternative view requires a multidimensional focus on *agency*, but this also is an insurgent theme. Today’s intellectual trends give detailed attention to structures of oppression, but have little to say about how “the people” develop public capacities to refashion the world around them.

ACP seeks to bring back a public and empowering understanding of higher education’s democracy purposes and mission, a vision of “democracy’s colleges for the 21st century.”

Brown: Currently, which are some of “democracy’s colleges”?

Boyte: At the White House and since then, we have highlighted a mix of different institutions where civic agency innovations have occurred. These include Syracuse University, where Nancy Cantor has found broad support for the idea of “Scholarship in Action,” even though she has also taken heat for getting the university too involved in the life of the city. I’ve mentioned UMBC. I would note Northern Arizona University as a pioneer in curricular innovation that introduces thousands of students to public work experiences. Augsburg College, our new institutional home for the Center for Democracy and Citizenship, is full of civic

innovation. Colleges like Lone Star in Houston, Texas, University of Washington-Bothell, DeAnza College, and Maricopa Community College in Phoenix have become centers for experiments in public work and civic agency, adapting initiatives like Public Achievement, the youth empowerment and civic learning effort now operating in 23 countries.

We want to see ACP develop as a network of robust “communities of practice” through which people have multiple ways of exchanging lessons and learning together about civic agency innovations.

The largest initiative now is Shaping Our Future, with the National Issues Forums, kicked off officially on September 4th with a press conference at the National Press Club. Shaping Our Future aims to have hundreds of communities and campuses discuss the public purposes of higher education—to make this discussion owned by the people, not simply by insiders and specialists.

Brown: What are you and others looking for in “civic science,” another of ACP’s priorities?

Boyte: Again, the focus is on bringing a political and civic agency lens into the ways people conceive the relationship between science and society. Usually, discussion of science and society today focuses on the roles of scientists and lay people in governance and policy. The question here is where everyone fits in a state-centered system. The goal of civic science is to change the framing itself. In civic science, roles depend on the particular task at hand, but identities are constituted by the concept of a democratic society in which citizens are cocreators. Scientists don’t work *with* citizens. They *are* citizens. The question is how citizen scientists and lay citizens bring their diverse kinds of knowledge and talents to the table to do public work that solves problems, betters our communities, and builds a sustainable democratic society.

Civic science advances science as a tool of empowerment and a resource for human freedom, action *in* the world not simply description *of* the world.

This framework grows out of years of collaboration between the Center for Democracy and Citizenship and the Delta Center at the University of Iowa, leaders in the science of how infants develop. The idea is that early childhood education requires scientific

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knowledge of infant development, yes, but also the empowered participation of many other actors, including parents, day care providers, legislators, schools, science museums, community organizers.

Brown: Could you tell us about the “Get Ready Iowa” project of the Delta Center?

Boyte: The Delta Center launched a civic science effort in June called Get Ready Iowa, bringing together diverse stakeholders in early childhood education. Get Ready Iowa, emphasizing the skills of public work, has been gathering support across the political spectrum in the state.

I believe that civic science holds potential to change the culture of detachment in higher education, as well as to address polarization in society.

Higher education is changing rapidly. We will either be the architects and agents of that change in ways that deepen democracy—and this requires substantial cultural change to create sustainable foundations for civic agency—or change will happen *to* us, leaving us more powerless, weakening our collective ability to shape the future.

TALES FROM ANTI-CIVIC U

By Claire Snyder-Hall

I left a tenured position in academia this year because I was no longer happy with the quality of life it was providing me—with the degree to which it enabled me to link my public and professional lives. It was always a struggle to do public work within the parameters of what would be rewarded by my institution. Doing well at my job was important to me, and so my goal was to excel professionally, while also doing work that had public relevance and mattered politically. I was able to do all that, but it was a twelve-year struggle.

Don't get me wrong. My university was not particularly hostile to public work. To the contrary, it was simply a typical second-tier research university that modeled itself after what more prestigious research institutions are like—or what it thinks they are like. The challenges were exacerbated by the university's location in a major metropolitan area, characterized by suburban sprawl, frustrating commutes, and a careerist vibe.

Over the course of the twelve years I served on the faculty, the university grew tremendously in ways that made it more prestigious, which is a good thing in academic terms. This transition entailed the proliferation of doctoral programs, the valorization of research over all other activities, the fixation on peer-reviewed journal articles, the demand for increasing quantities of publications, the prioritization of graduate over undergraduate teaching, and the preprofessionalization of undergraduate education. As the process of institutional advancement unfolded, the university's incentive structure evolved in ways that made it more difficult to do work with public relevance.

More specifically, as the university sought higher rankings, the college promotion and tenure (P&T) committees that I sat on came to insist, more and more, that only blind-peer-reviewed journal articles and books should be counted as legitimate scholarship. Publications aimed at a nonacademic audience were completely disregarded, and collaborative work was viewed with suspicion: “How much did the applicant *really* contribute to the work?” The committee began to consider how often a publication was cited by other academics as evidence necessary for an evaluation of

excellence. When applicants included significant community work in their dossiers—even high profile projects that seemed very impressive—it was relegated to the category of teaching (not scholarship), and you could not get promoted on the basis of excellence in teaching anymore—not like before—unless you had published the requisite number of peer-reviewed articles about pedagogy, thus turning teaching into the subject of your scholarship.

Moreover, the quality of faculty life deteriorated, as the university's institutional ranking rose. Some of those who were most successful at high-status activities—or who had already been promoted to full and didn't have to worry—began to advocate posttenure review policies that would penalize their colleagues who were merely solid scholars and/or dedicated teachers, rather than celebrity scholar wannabes. It seemed as if the pretenure treadmill, which traditionally lasted only five years, was to become the new normal—eroding the possibility of work-life balance and time for community engagement. In addition, as the years rolled by it became more common for some of my colleagues to use review time to pick apart a person's record, criticizing even those who were publishing in top journals or presses for not doing even better. Ironically, several recipients of that type of treatment ended up leaving for better jobs.

During my twelve years at what I will henceforth call Anti-Civic U (ACU), I struggled in my efforts to introduce a public component into my research, teaching, and service activities. My research agenda has always been driven by a general desire to contribute to the public good. In fact, the original impetus for my application to graduate school was the desire to learn more about the ideas underlying political life. I was very involved in politics at the time, working with several groups that were active in my home state.

As a side note, when I reread the “personal statement” I submitted with my grad school application back in 1988, it is remarkable how brief and general it was—referencing things like my “solid liberal arts background,” my desire to “increase my understanding of the political situation in general,” my love of “learning,” and my plan for “a career of teaching and research.” Indeed, I had hardly any background in political science at all (having been a psychology major), although I did have a strong

academic record. The vague language of my essay would never cut it for admission into ACU—at least not in my department. We expect applicants to submit a fully developed plan for specialization, not simply solid credentials and a desire to pursue advanced learning. To me this exemplifies how far down the road of preprofessionalization and specialization academia has gone—a situation that might be even more pronounced at second-tier schools that are probably less inclined to take a chance on an unorthodox student. Or, to be more factual, my department did admit strong students who did not have a political science background when our graduate programs first started, but stopped doing so as the program sought—and received—higher rankings. Everything has become so competitive.

Because my interest in studying political theory grew out of four years of political engagement, my scholarship always had an applied focus, even if it was sometimes implicit. During graduate school, I began working with the Kettering Foundation, which greatly expanded my understanding of politics and democratic theory. When I went on the job market, my dissertation director advised me to group my Kettering work and some other things I had done under a heading called “applied work on democratic citizenship” on my vita, which I did. ACU seemed to be interested in my work with Kettering, which I saw as a sign that they were interested in civic engagement work—which to some extent they initially were. However, their real interests became clearer after I was hired, when a senior colleague said, “We are hoping you can teach us how to get grants.” And indeed over time, grant-getting became one of the university’s primary preoccupations and the basis for increased compensation. It probably goes without saying that being a good departmental citizen or strong teacher was not rewarded.

During my tenure-track years at ACU, I struggled to do work that was both civically engaged and countable toward tenure. Over the course of my three pretenure years—I started with two years credit from my first job—the quantity of publications required grew to “a book and six blind-peer-reviewed articles or their equivalent,” which was a larger quantity than was required at many first-tier research universities at the time, assuming what my friends at such

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schools told me was accurate. Personally, I found it nearly impossible to write articles that would both pass blind-peer-review in political science journals and also be of interest to a public readership, although I know that some people can do it. I found those two types of writing too different in terms of both subject matter and mode of presentation to be easily combined.

Because many in the political science field claim to do objective research, it is generally a challenge to publish normative work, even when it is rooted in academic literature. A lot of political scientists do not consider normative work scholarly. For example, when I went on my first job interview (at a second-tier state university that could also be called ACU), I used “Shutting the Public out of Politics,” which was forthcoming as a *Kettering Occasional Paper* at the time, as my writing sample, and I received a surprisingly hostile reception from several members of the faculty. One reportedly called me “a narrow-minded ideologue,” presumably because the essay did not meet the standards of “objective” social science. The next day he angrily told me he had seen my dissertation director on TV the night before, “and he sounded just like you,” which was clearly not a good thing. Another faculty member blasted me for not citing any statistical studies of race and voting behavior in my paper, which was puzzling, considering my paper was about the nineteenth century. And this was at a school that had advertized for a “democratic theorist!” Obviously, an offer was not forthcoming.

While that might seem like an extreme example, I got a similar reaction from some anonymous reviewers of my article on the history of higher education that I originally wrote for the Kettering Foundation. In that case I did end up getting the piece published in the academic journal *PS: Political Science and Politics*, thanks to a supportive editor, but in a section devoted to teaching, which probably didn’t really “count” in the eyes of my colleagues. In any event, I cannot think of another journal that would have even considered the piece. Where does one publish scholarship that focuses on the public?

These experiences highlighted the fact that the questions I was asking in my work with the Kettering Foundation were very different from the questions being asked in the mainstream of my

discipline. In addition, the writing style was different in each genre. When I wrote articles for *HEX*, the editors did not want an extensive review of the academic literature or a lot of footnotes. Journals like *Polity*, *Armed Forces and Society*, or *New Political Science* did. So over time I decided that it was easier to work on two separate research streams, rather than trying to serve both masters.

This was a good decision because when I came up for tenure in 2003, the four essays I published with *Kettering* did not “count,” nor did the seven other non-blind peer-reviewed publications I completed, mostly chapters in academic edited volumes. While my original chair had suggested that such publications might be “worth something”—I didn’t need them to count, so it was a moot point—these days, any work that is not blind peer-reviewed is seen as totally worthless in the eyes of the P&T committees in both my department and my college. Unless peer-reviewed, work that addresses public problems is not valued, unless there is grant or contract money for the university attached. Moreover, while some of my colleagues would fight to have a report for the State Department or the Department of Defense recognized as significant research, almost none would consider a work produced with a human rights or civic organization worthy of scholarly recognition. However, if you could demonstrate that such work had public impact, you might be able to get credit for it under “public teaching,” but certainly not under “scholarship.”

In addition to the frustrations of having a lot of solid work that I valued disregarded, I was also advised by senior colleagues to make my work “sound less relevant” in my tenure narrative. Since I had prided myself on my “applied work” and viewed the relevance of my scholarship as a plus, that advice was startling, although undoubtedly sound. Apparently at ACU, work that is read by only a small group of experts is preferable to that which speaks to a more inclusive audience.

The number of peer-reviewed publica-



tions I had to produce to keep my job definitely eroded the time I had for either community engagement or a personal life, and it left me feeling isolated. Consequently, after receiving tenure in 2004, I decided to become more involved on campus, while continuing to pursue a bifurcated research agenda that would allow me to do the work I want to do and also lay the groundwork for promotion to the top rank of full professor. When I was asked to lead the American Democracy Project (ADP) at ACU, I saw it as a great opportunity to deepen the public component of my work by taking part in a national effort to stimulate civic engagement among undergraduates.

Although it was the president of ACU who signed onto ADP, the project did not get much institutional support. Leading the effort was not enabled by course release time or a supplemental stipend (as were graduate directorships), although an administrative staff person was available to provide support, which made the work doable. Although the ADP committee was very large (over seventy members), only a handful of members (zero to six) attended meetings, and while they were helpful in generating ideas, no one was available to help put events together. Over time that made me less interested in trying to bring other faculty members into the planning process. It was simpler to work solo.

It was also disappointing to discover that ACU students were not interested in attending ADP programs—mostly panel discussions on hot topics, like immigration reform, gun control, and the Tea Party, as well as the annual Congressionally mandated Constitution Day celebration of our freedom—unless it was required for class. Of course this should not be surprising. After all, ADP was a very small program at a university with over 30,000 students, and it was in no way integrated into the curriculum. Most students are very busy and don't have time for unnecessary activities. Consequently, the only way I could turn out an audience was to convince a colleague to bring her class to the event—a strategy that worked pretty well, although it meant that it was mostly government students who attended ADP events.

During my first year as ADP campus coordinator, I attended its national conference and had a real insight about the program's chances at ACU. I was very impressed that one university—a branch

campus of a large state university—sent a large faculty team to the conference, including the provost who led the project on her campus. They did a great presentation on how they were integrating civic issues into the curricular requirements for undergrads, even recording participation on student transcripts. A lot of other campus teams were also from branch campuses. Then, it struck me: ACU would never really get behind ADP because ADP would be considered something more appropriate to a branch campus than to a “rigorous” research university that aspired to national recognition. It seemed that ACU had signed onto ADP simply because the president said, “hey this sounds like a good idea” and then sent the mandate to the provost, who eventually sent it to me. It was barely on the radar with only a \$5,000 budget. But at least we could say we were doing civic engagement!

Given my conclusion about ACU’s view of civic engagement work, I was surprised to be invited by the provost to a small meeting of people interested in “civics education.” I was eager to attend and went to several meetings. As it turned out, however, the provost was primarily interested in getting a contract for ACU faculty to write a high school textbook, and in resuscitating state-wide interest in civics so there would be a market for the book. There was also another set of meetings on a civics-related theme that focused on landing a major grant for the university, but I was not invited to attend that one—which was odd because it seems like the two efforts could have been connected to each other and to ADP. Such fragmentation and lack of coordination was typical of ACU in general.

After a couple of years of putting together “cocurricular programming” on public issues, I concluded that ADP could only be successful on campus if there were some sort of curricular tie-in, which ushered in a new, exciting phase in my civic work there. The new associate provost, who was my contact in the provost’s office, was very enamored with the idea of integrating civic themes into the general education curriculum, which he oversaw and which was going through a major renovation in preparation for reaccreditation. He and I talked about creating a wide range of lower level courses that connected civic themes to a range of disciplines: “The Artist as Citizen,” “The Scientist as Citizen,” “The Dancer as Citizen,” and so forth. He even articulated a link between gen ed and

democratic citizenship in the university catalogue—inserting the sentence, “Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”—this ringing phrase from the Declaration of Independence makes a fine statement about the ideals of general education (or, as it is more classically called, liberal education) as we strive to articulate it at [ACU].” That insertion prompted one department chair to go around campus expressing outrage at his pro-American bias!



Nevertheless, the associate provost and I decided to put together a faculty team to work on creating a set of new courses that focused on civic themes. With the enticement of a small amount of summer money for participants, I convened a “faculty learning community” that consisted of eight people from across the university, who were handpicked for their interest in civic engagement. We wanted to move beyond relying only on the humanities and social science scholars who populated the ADP list. The first few meetings were exciting, but then a couple of people dropped out—one suddenly decided she was too busy, the other didn’t want to participate unless we began by scrapping the entire gen ed curriculum, which he repeatedly deemed “a dog’s breakfast.” Two others decided to work by themselves on their own courses, which left a team of four—Dr. Science, Dr. Theater, Dr. English, and myself, Dr. Government.

Our original vision was quite grand. We wanted to change the culture of student nonengagement on campus. We decided that each of us would offer a course centered on civic issues, and they would be taught simultaneously. We would have some joint sessions with special guest speakers who would address public issues that were relevant for all four of our classes. The event would be open to the entire campus, as well as the larger community. The four classes would meet occasionally for interdisciplinary discussions among students. Ideally, student groups would “table” outside the event to stimulate student engagement. The public talks would become major events on campus. We decided that the first step would be to pilot the linked courses and speakers series.

The pilot version of the project was pretty successful overall, yet we ran into a number of institutional barriers. First of all, we had a surprisingly hard time getting our departments to schedule our classes at the same time. Second, because Dr. English created a truly interdisciplinary course, there was no way to offer it in his department, so he had to run it as a “UNIV” course, which ended up with only three students because it didn’t fulfill any requirements. (Needless to say, the administration was not happy with the low enrollment.) Third, Dr. Science dropped out without telling us, after receiving a grant to “buy-out” her courses. While she kept the summer money for herself, she asked her colleague to take over her role in the project, which he did, but he had little understanding of civic issues and felt that the focus on them detracted from the time he had to spend on his major course material.

The second year began well, although only Dr. English and I remained fully engaged, since the second Dr. Science was no longer interested, and Dr. Theater was appointed chair of his department and had little time for the project, although he still participated. Once again, we had trouble with scheduling. My new chair finally agreed to my time request with the caveat that I would not be accommodated again. Fortunately, Dr. English was able to create a new course that fit within disciplinary boundaries. And Dr. Theater ended up making his course a permanent one, although he no longer had time to teach it.

Overall, I was very happy with the way my courses turned out. The first time I participated in the project, I taught a special version of my 100-level “Democratic Theory and Practice” course, which sounds good, but there were two problems. First, I had 300 students, which was unwieldy for the purposes of the project. Second, since it was a gen ed course and a major requirement, I had a lot of “learning outcomes” to deal with, which made it challenging to teach.

In preparation for the second run-through of the project, I created a brand new interdisciplinary senior “seminar” (capped at 35 students), which worked really well—and also fulfilled a requirement. I organized the course around the question, “Now that you are graduating and becoming a fully participating member of society, what are you going to do to make the world a better place?” I piloted

Students told me that no professor had ever before asked them what they thought about important public issues.

the course in the fall and then taught it as part of the project in the spring.

I wanted to incorporate a civic engagement dimension into the class. Since I couldn't manage overseeing a service learning component, I asked students to choose a public issue they really cared about, analyze it from a values-based perspective, and then write a paper that included a discussion of what they were going to do about it, after graduation. The course utilized mostly popular materials from the public sphere—bestsellers, novels, and films—and the students came up with the idea of doing their presentations as short YouTube videos, which were posted online. It worked really well both times I taught it. The students loved it. They told me that no professor had ever before asked them what they thought about important public issues. In all honesty, teaching those two sections of the senior seminar was the highlight of my teaching career. I was able to use my professional skills to help students see themselves as members of an engaged public, and we discussed issues that really mattered.

My final class at ACU was a 20-person summer section of “Democratic Theory and Practice,” and it was also a pleasure. Due to the small size, I was able to return to the way I taught the course back in 2000 and 2001, when the course was capped at 19 rather than 300. We used David Mathews' book *Politics for People* as a frame, and as a centerpiece of the course we did “NIF in the Classroom.” And it was amazing. I was stunned by how an extremely skeptical view of deliberation amongst everyone in the class gave way to an amazing deliberative experience. We did the debt issue, and the students found common ground on the need for young people to be educated about financial responsibility. Even students who had never spoken before opened up and shared personal experiences as related to the issue. It was good to end my career at Anti-Civic U on a procivic high note, which is how it all began twelve years ago.

In the end, despite the very negative tenor of this narrative, I actually feel that I had a good run at ACU. I was able to do work I cared about and succeed in the profession. However, as I was talking to my chair about what I had to do to prepare for promotion to full, I decided that I had had enough. Although I believe I could

have succeeded at that final goal if I really wanted to—I was told that with two books, an edited volume, twelve peer-reviewed articles, and fourteen essays in edited volumes under my belt, not to mention my Kettering work, I just needed to finish that third book (and Columbia University Press had already reviewed my proposal and requested a sample chapter)—I realized that I just didn't want to do it anymore. I had already spent twelve years running on the academic treadmill, but where was it actually taking me?

In the end, I resolved my academic midlife crisis by leaving the university. During the second half of my life, I plan to devote my time to doing what I really value without having to focus so much on what external judges think is valuable. I decided to make time to get involved in my actual community and do actual political work, instead of trying to fit what I care about into a structure that is not designed to accommodate it, at an institution that doesn't think the work is very important. So I resigned my position at ACU, and, surprisingly, I am completely unambivalent about that decision. In fact, I am very happy—in both the public and the personal sense.



EDUCATING DEMOCRATICALLY

An Interview with Elizabeth Minnich

David Brown, coeditor of the Higher Education Exchange, spoke with Elizabeth Minnich, currently Senior Scholar, Association of American Colleges & Universities and former chair, Committee on Public Philosophy, American Philosophical Association. Brown was interested in learning more about what conceptual changes she thinks are needed for educating democratically.

Brown: There is a great deal of criticism these days that institutions of higher education pay too little attention to what you would call “active democratic education.”

Minnich: From whom? I’m not at all sure such criticism is coming from a broad public, much as I might wish it were. I don’t hear it from elected officials either. What we are bombarded with is criticism that colleges and universities are not contributing to economic “global competitiveness,” or delivering the exact “product” a “consumer” of education intended to be buying. Students are also rightly organizing about the monster problem of indebtedness. Neither they nor their parents are looking around for schools where they will prepare to be active in public life.

The passion for democratic education that actively as well as reflectively engages learning with responsible practice comes, in my experience, mostly from some faculty and students, and, increasingly, administrators. It is hardly irrelevant that it also comes from funders. The Department of Education in D.C. is now involved too, and that’s great. If there is criticism specifically about our shortcomings as educators in and for democracy, it is from those sources; they want it done more widely, deeply, and faster.

I actually think the academy should be admired and more actively supported in sustaining today, in the face of severe budgetary attacks, the many ways it has changed since it was almost exclusively for an elite few who could expect public influence as an entitlement of their class, their race, their gender.

Brown: Where, then, do you find the academy’s attention misplaced or contrary to “active democratic education”?

Minnich: Although specialization is perfectly appropriate to universities, it creates difficulties for its crucial counterpart, general education, and for some interdisciplinary and engaged civic education work. It does so simply because, while it is fine to evaluate specialized scholarship by standards honed for it through generations, it is ludicrous to apply those same standards to, say, action research undertaken with a community to find solutions to pressing problems defined by that community. Higher education still does judge disciplinary expert knowledge more effectively, on the whole, than it does teaching, and judges both a great deal more effectively than it does action. Furthermore, since academic judgment tends to founder when it encounters collaborative, and/or cross-disciplinary academic research (there are exceptions, as in science), there are indeed problems of evaluation, of judgment, inherited from times when disciplinary specialization was the standard-setting apex of academe. Thus, I hear from untenured and (the increasing number of) nontenure-track faculty as from students that they are concerned about being appropriately evaluated for work outside disciplinary spheres. Ironically enough, I'd also have to say that running and evaluating transdisciplinary and/or community-based, collaborative academic work may also be becoming a professional specialty.

Brown: Please go on.

Minnich: Right now, I think there is a relatively new problem, too. The managerial take-over of higher education in the last, say, 15 years or so is far more of a block to civic and engaged education in and for democracy than anything of what little is left of the old, discipline-bound, hierarchical academy. In systems in which prescribed results are to be delivered as efficiently as possible, we are precisely not practicing the arts of democracy, the most talkative, messy, pluralistic, individualistic, creative ideal of a free and equal collective life.

Education and democracy both thrive on inquiry, on experimentation that may enable discovery. I believe, with Dewey (and many others) that democracy and education can and ought to be deeply akin, complementary, mutually sustaining, precisely because I believe that thinking and acting are arts of freedom, and so also of indeterminate judgment with its particular kinds of responsibility. Managing to achieve predetermined results is quite different. Learning, like democracy, enacts freedom; management is designed

for predictability, presses for determinate judgment, and so requires control. In short, we have a contradiction of method and purpose when we try to manage minds or citizens, learning or acting together.

If, as educators, we cannot practice what we preach about civic life in democracy, we may contribute to, rather than counter, the increasing privatization of all our nation's public goods, including education.

Brown: What “conceptual changes” do you think are needed in order to “educate democratically” as you put it?

Minnich: It seems to me that the calling of education now may be to help people become ever better at thinking creatively, critically, responsively and responsibly, using indeterminate and determinate judgment appropriately, in a world that is so interconnected that our powers for good, for foolishness, for triviality, for evil, are almost infinitely magnified. The margin for errors of judgment far more than of fact shrinks daily. We don't need a few who know; we need a democracy of many who can find out, reflect, evaluate, choose, learn in an open, public, collaborative and ongoing way. So, education really does need to be rethought in close relation to democracy.

We also really do now need to focus on what we mean by *action*, by *practice*, by *experience*, by *application*, as we break out of older, dualistic and hierarchical meanings that divided mind from body, knowledge from action, truth from experience, principles from application, theory from practice, with the former terms privileged as “higher,” “purer,” and properly a guide for, rather than companion of, the latter. Democratic politics and morals suggest that, while we can maintain these distinctions, we may want to undo hierarchical divisions in favor of something more akin to a kind of contextualized complementarity.

There are related but importantly differing concepts that ought to be considered as well. For example, we *behave*, we *do* things, we *make* things, we *work*, we *create*. These all involve activity, but they differ; nuances of meaning, distinctions, and proliferation of terms indicate that there is rich stuff there to be thought through so that we may come closer to saying what we want to mean when we talk about action. On campuses now there is also talk of how service learning is or is not “really” civic education, and civic education is or is not “really” democratic

education. Civic, social, political: these are concepts relating to sorts and/or spheres of action and it is useful to distinguish them.

Brown: “Politics” and “political” are more often than not used pejoratively these days. How would you want them redefined? Do you subscribe to Hannah Arendt’s view that “political” “concerns action in a community of peers”?

Minnich: This, of course, extends what we were just talking about. I do think we need to rethink “political” and “politics.” It is presently distinctly not a compliment to say, “he’s very political,” and if you say someone, or someone’s art, is “political,” people assume you mean rudely ideological—not someone or something you really want around. This utter disrespect for political people is obviously a disaster for a would-be democracy, but it is very common indeed.

Arendt held that there are some ways we are active that specifically entail being in public with strangers with whom we have reason to speak, think, question, and perhaps now and again, join in making some decisions about common concerns. For Arendt, such occasions are more true to action and to the political than, say, voting, or making policy decisions, and they are most so when action springs up among equals, generating power that is precisely not force or violence but the persuasiveness of the many freely moving together. Given a chance, we do seem to want to cocreate our worlds with others, to be agents, and effective, and visibly so. With Arendt, I take this to be one of the root meanings of “happiness” as in “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

Brown: You have criticized “privileging” in the singular such terms as “citizen” or “politician.” Could you say more about this?

Minnich: Both education and democracy concern human plurality. If we were all the same, or very similar, both would be ever so much easier, and unthinkably impoverished (actually, they would be inconceivable). Both, at their best, help us enjoy what is unique or just different without collapsing into incomprehensible babble and chaos, but also without reducing ourselves to virtual clones of some one-model person. More specifically, then, blindness to the often starkly differing realities of students’ and citizens’ lived-realities tends more toward harm



“We are all equal before the law” does not mean that we are all the same.

than help, so it is of some small use as a reminder to say, “the students,” “the citizens” rather than universalized singulars, “the student,” “the citizen.”

Behind such small shifts in our picturings to ourselves, and our language, is a notion about equality that holds, as I do, that it is a democratic provision precisely because it protects our plurality, our differences. “We are all equal before the law” does not mean that we are all the same. It means that the ways we really do differ in terms of wealth, say, or gender, or race, or education can be for purposes of legal decision, rendered inoperative. And that means that we can be our motley lot of selves safely—one of the glorious promises of democracy and, one keeps hoping, of education as well.

In short, democratic thinking asks us to practice being with all sorts of equalized others who just plain are not and will not and ought not be the same as we, as each other, or as any one abstract standard or norm would have us be. Democracies are messy things in which sameness, unanimity, unity may be achieved but not, if freedom and equality are really protected, for long. Democracies, and education true to it, are not monologues, anymore than “the citizen” is singular.

Brown: You would have academics “practice” the “democratic arts of associative living, action, and learning” with their students and colleagues. Does that require some kind of revolution to overthrow the current professional mind-set in order to make classrooms more democratic?

Minnich: Not if “democratic” is understood as having differing meanings and practices in different arenas, as I have suggested it can, and should. We may vote on bonds for a public park, but it would be inappropriate to vote on the date of the Magna Carta, or, infinitely discussable as it is, what Kant meant by “categorical imperative.” Mutual respect can be practiced by people in differing roles, and authority can be sustained where it is both merited and creatively, rather than rigidly, exercised.

I also think that good teaching is supportive of democracy whenever authority is not confused with dictation, with telling people what they must take in precisely as presented. A good lecture that explores, turns things around, startles with fresh thought,

presents a coherent view that invites free reflection can enliven everyone's thinking. And of course discussion is crucial, and the practices of a good seminar can be fine education for democracy. After all, there we work to understand a text, say, from another time and place; we listen to each other; we speak as individuals engaged with others in a shareable task, and all the while we also have obligations to be truthful, informed, judicious in drawing conclusions. This, well done, is superb experience in the arts of democracy, is it not? It may even be better than being an intern at a nonprofit, during which a student experiences little other than the day-to-day slog of trying to raise money to keep understaffed programs going. What matters is learning the arts of democracy, not necessarily where we do so. "Off campus" is no more a guarantee that people value, practice, reflect on such arts than "on campus" is a guarantee that they do not. There are lousy, antiintellectual, antidemocratic experiences to be had wherever we are.

Brown: Your nonprofit intern example reminds me of John Dewey's observation that education in "life experience" can lead to "inconsistencies and confusion" unless distinguished from "non-educative and miseducative experience." How would you go about addressing Dewey's concern?

Minnich: Good question; this is key to bringing action and knowledge together in education. First, it seems to me that education—except for already engaged schools such as the Evergreen State College—needs to make every effort to engage students' experiences throughout their learning, including those they bring with them. Otherwise, learning becomes compartmentalized, unintegrated, and that is never quite safe. As a moral philosopher, I will say it can even be downright dangerous. It's also the case that students are less interested when they must leave their experiences at the classroom door, and that's not only sad for them but forces teachers to use external rewards and threats (grades prime among them) to substitute for the far greater rewards of genuine engagement.

So, where students are still "sent out" to "have experiences" with "real life," but courses across the board have not been redesigned to engage (at least imaginatively) with and reflect on experiences, the infamous disconnect between learning and "real life" has not adequately been breached.

Brown: A professor at Goddard College once asked whether educators wed to their fields of expertise and to their peers, both near and far away, can also cultivate “a sense of place” with their students so they can share both the local particular as well as the universal abstract? What do you think?

Minnich: What “a sense of place” that enables participation in “the local particular as well as the universal abstract” means is obviously complex, but yes, I do agree. Good teaching should do just that: bring students into thinking relation on the one hand with the particular, the material, the individual (or, with what we can actually experience) and, on the other hand, with the universal, the abstract, the theoretical (or, with knowledge, or what we can only think, or imagine). The dangerous certainties of knowledge and of experience both dissolve when thus challenged to take each other into account. Particulars, after all, are precisely not abstract, not interchangeable, not unchanging so theories and concepts that we bring to them are at risk of violating them if, as I said, simply applied. One can, for example, know every theory there is about psychosocial development and still find it difficult to say what is going on with Mustafa Chan Fernandes, age eight, from Elm Street in Omaha. But, I hasten to add, that does not of itself discredit the generalizing theories. It just reminds us of something basic: generalizations and individuals, particulars, are both significant and must not be submitted one to the other. For scholars and professionals, this can make actual practice very frustrating—or, one hopes, recurrently interesting—but it also has political relevance. It is, of course, why I speak of *indeterminate* judgment—that is, judgment that relates this principle to this unique particular in ways that do violence to neither. And right there is the crux of a relation between education and democracy. If we give sovereignty, as it were, to principles, we deal in abstractions and can do serious damage to real, particular, individual people, situations, things (as ideologues do). If we reject principles in favor of particulars, or theoretical understanding in favor of individual experience, we will find it hard to know what we can or ought to do whenever our first inclinations seem questionable, our own experience provides no guide. But where we can practice with others whose thinking and judgment move freely—without certainty, but with practical wisdom—

between experience and abstraction, impulse and principle, multiple points of view and our own values, desire for certainty and respect for differences, well, that can practice us in the art of indeterminate judgment, of making consequential decisions without certainty. This becomes a realization of education as it is of democracy. Or, rather, it is a realization of a key aspect of education fit for democracy.

Brown: Is the question of what institutions of higher education can do, or do more of, to make “action” a greater part of their curricula more suitable for particular institutions—land grant, community colleges—than lumping all institutions of higher education together?

Minnich: I can hardly hold that institutions of higher education ought to be lumped together and expected, let alone forced, to be the same. In the name of scholarship, of education, and of democracy, it really does matter that we remember that sameness and equality are quite different. Excuse me if I keep returning to this; it is, I believe, a key issue for education as always for democracy, so I really do object when pressure to standardize, via outcomes-dominated management, testing, interchangeable credits across differing kinds of schools and reduction of teachers to “content deliverers,” are presented as serving equality. No; equality allows our differences to flourish on shareable (not identical) grounds, and that is quite different.

Since I do believe that any learning is enhanced by a spirit of inquiry animating engagement with experiences, I also believe that inviting all kinds of educational institutions to find their own best ways to enhance such learning provides a collaborative approach to overcoming the old unhealthy hierarchical division between knowledge and action. Professional schools have a lot to teach liberal arts programs about bringing learning and experience together. For example, Carnegie has done fine work here. And the liberal arts can contribute, among other things, imaginative reflection and discussion to professional programs as has happened in some medical humanities programs already.

Brown: Donald Schön used the term “knowing-in-action,” which conflicts with the norms of technical rationality in research universities where, as Schön put it, “they don’t teach what they do, they teach research results.”

Minnich: Teaching, as Schön observes, has primarily concerned content as already-discovered knowledge, methods, techniques. Faculty have been and are held accountable for “covering the material,” and that can be so demanding a task that discussions have to be cut short; internships limited or avoided; lectures and tests over-used. Faculty also often feel that their authority as professors is specifically derived from the knowledge they have, rather than from their experience. This differs by field, although even in the highly technical professional fields, experience is usually not an adequate academic qualification.

Faculty, as noted earlier, are still usually hired, promoted, and tenured (well, the shrinking number who are) not on the basis of what they have actively done but on the basis of their research, publications, and service within the university. It is therefore an issue now that faculty who work with communities may actually hurt their chances of being promoted or tenured—or so it is feared. I hear this often, even though yes, there are universities that have extended “service” to include action with communities. Syracuse University has done so, for example.

Knowledge, we could say, is the answer to questions, the result of completed research and so is, as Dewey put it, retrospective rather than prospective. It refers to something already done, not to the doing even of its own discovery and validation processes, as Schön points out. Education driven by knowledge then becomes primarily preservation by transmission, rather than conservation through an ongoing renewal of actively intellectual, creative cultures. If we think of education more as the Eames

thought of design, or Dewey thought of inquiry, or Socrates practiced philosophy, we can change figure and ground such that it is thinking and acting together that is our primary practice, and transfer of knowledge that is among its valued effects.

Brown: You have been critical of those who use knowledge as a “possession,” but isn’t knowledge increasingly shaped in an “open source” process that is socially constructed?

Minnich: I find this very interesting, and of course have no idea how it will all work out. I will say, though,



that thus far, it seems to me that *knowledge*—in ways distinguishable from copyright protected *authorship*, which I believe remains very important if we want anyone to be able to sustain a creative life—has always been social rather than individual. Knowledge is, after all, publicly validated; I cannot claim that I have knowledge if all I can adduce is my own belief in it, my own idiosyncratic derivation of it.

So, as I've said, I think the advent of technologies that make what is already agreed-upon and socially validated as knowledge widely available is a good thing. Perhaps, as such access spreads, we really will get beyond the old hierarchical division of “Those Who Know” from all others. We are not there yet. It will take a spread not only of technological access and capacity across all income and education lines, but also of abilities to think, to evaluate, to judge—which do not just magically arise through content-driven, let alone highly standardized, education—in order to equalize us in this area. And as of yet, education, as distinct from experience and/or abilities, of the free arts of mind is rare and available, for the most part, primarily to the already privileged. I would like that to change. What a democratic revolution that would be.

Brown: How would you respond to Stanley Fish's argument that the “job” of the academy “is not to change the world but to interpret it?”

Minnich: Of course it is not the job of the academy to change the world if “changing the world” requires the belief that academics do know how the world should change, and how to make it do so. But if “changing the world” involves, among other things, educating future citizens who can think creatively and critically and who can act as well as work together effectively because they are practiced in the arts of democracy, then of course educators are involved in changing the world.

In truth, we are all involved in changing the world as we live and work and act among others. Work has products; actions have effects (as Aristotle long ago observed). Educators, in whose care we place our collective future in the

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form of our children but also the renewal of our treasured resources for meaningful lives, do have a special responsibility, though. To deny that is, perhaps worst of all, to deny that quests for truths, for beauty, for meaning shared across differing cultures and eras and spheres have effect on the world.

What we are doing now in the name of engaged democratic education is not aimed at reducing education to political ideology. On the contrary, it is to move closer to an understanding of democracy, as of education, that connects both to their still rarely realized but definitional commitments to freedom, equality, and justice. These, too, are both the grounds for the possibility of good thinking and sound knowledge, and crucial to the heritage educators are called to renew for rising generations and other newcomers. Have we overlooked or forgotten that dictators of all stripes close or purge schools; lock up scholars, writers, artists; slaughter intellectuals and professionals; shut down the liberal arts in favor of technical training; control the media? Democracy requires thinkers, and it is equally the case that thinkers require democracy. Education should therefore practice, inform, and renew both, or so I believe.

Brown: Thank you, Elizabeth. It is always a great pleasure to learn from you.

LIVING DEMOCRACY: A PROJECT FOR STUDENTS AND CITIZENS

By Mark Wilson and Nan Fairley

Living Democracy is a project for students and citizens who want to develop the capacities of others to solve the problems that matter most to them. Auburn University's role is one of convenor and moderator, bringing together diverse people and perspectives to see what we might be able to accomplish together. We at the university have some information to share and some background knowledge that needs to be conveyed, but our main task is to ask questions and facilitate a process that will fulfill our public mission through the lives of citizens with whom we collaborate.

“Even though a place may be small, it takes many intricate relationships to run it, and those relationships can lead to success or failure,” wrote student Blake Evans, reflecting on his first week of living in Linden, Alabama, during the summer of 2012. Blake Evans is one of seven Auburn University students who “lived democracy” in Alabama communities as part of the College of Liberal Arts' program that helps students experience democratic civic engagement in the nation's best classroom—a local community where people are making decisions and taking action on issues that concern them. Blake's “community instructors” came from a variety of backgrounds, since small towns are often much more diverse than stereotypes suggest, and the knowledge they imparted to him through everyday conversations and actions will continue to shape his understanding of what it takes to make democracy work as it should.

Over the past several decades, colleges and universities have increased their capacity to provide community service experiences for students such as Blake—those inclined to make a positive difference in the world and give back to society. Some faculty use service experiences with reflection to achieve learning outcomes in courses, and the range of academic disciplines incorporating the pedagogy is broad. Service and service learning experiences cultivate among participating students a sense of pride, and structured reflection challenges students to draw conclusions, ask questions, and practice the kind of reflective

examination required of productive adults in society. The nonprofit organizations providing social services in communities, not to mention the countless young people tutored and befriended by college students nationwide each year, appreciate these efforts.

Service and service learning opportunities allow students some interaction with problems that can be found in a democratic society—poverty, unemployment, crime, at-risk youth, cultural and historical ignorance, violence—but these experiences do not provide the context for students to grapple with the problems *of* democracy itself. Self-rule imposes on citizens the challenge of working through issues and decisions that matter most at any particular time. As Blake identified during his first week in Linden, an important network of collaborative relationships determines the health and future of a community, not to mention its level of resilience against forces of change that are beyond its control. What Blake experienced through a living-learning summer in Linden, Alabama, as described in this article, is wholly different from what can be learned through service or service learning experiences, and, if successful, will contribute to his understanding of citizenship, community, and the public good in a lasting and meaningful way.

“Living Democracy” is an experiment in democratic civic engagement and politics, the building of civic capacities, and will to solve issues that matter to all of us. The project, begun in 2010, rests on the following assumptions:

- Politics is best understood as the work citizens do with each other and with governments to change their communities. Politics is a public activity, not just the election of leaders and the passage of legislation.
- The best student learning occurs when students take responsibility for their learning. Responsibility comes partly through choices, decisions, and consequences.
- Local communities desire relationships with a university that are ongoing, purposeful, just, and mutually beneficial.
- To understand democratic politics in a community, students need to live in a community for a period of time. There is no substitute for living in a community.

The Process

Colleges and universities, especially those with a major focus on research and application, tend to relate to citizens and communities as either research subjects or consumers of products and services, rather than producers of knowledge and repositories of valuable lived experiences. No process for collaboration can completely bridge these complementary worlds, but we seek to build one in which the conversation begins where citizens begin, appreciating their civic learning experiences as valuable texts.

In November, 2010, professors Wilson, Fairley, and Ralph Foster, director of AU's Office of Public Service, convened community collaborators to introduce the project and develop a sense of what might be accomplished. Our colleagues come from a variety of backgrounds and professions—school teacher, mayor, pastor, city clerk, nonprofit social service organization, community development corporation, historical site director, chamber of commerce—although the title “community developer” is appropriate for each of them, since they actively work across different sectors and have a commitment to improving their community as a whole, not just a particular area of interest or concern. So we asked them to turn their reflections into civic learning by asking them “What have you learned about community development over the years?” and “What things would you do differently if you could?”

We asked our colleagues to think about their community as a classroom. What might students learn as a result of living and working alongside citizens for a summer? How might the presence of a student affect citizens? What do we hope students will take away from the experience? The variety of responses can be best summarized as “learning how to get things done,” which includes communication skills (speaking and listening), discerning aspects of power that are often hidden, and turning failure into a learning experience, rather than a stopping point. They identified several contributions that they believed students could make, including “bridging the gap” between age



groups in the community and modeling for everyone important ways to connect to young people in the community.

At the conclusion of the November workshop, colleagues completed a “Telling Your Story” questionnaire, adapted from the Harwood Institute’s “Seven Knowledge Keys for Understanding a Community” report. The questionnaire prompted participants to identify, in their own words, the aspirations of citizens for their community, the civic places where people create community, the concerns people talk about, and stereotypes about the community. Participants also identified the sense of place that an “incomer”—someone who is not an “outsider” to a community, but one who has “come into” the community by invitation and with a spirit of collaboration, openness, and exchange—might discover. As a way to begin our community collaboration over the immediate spring semester, Professor Fairley, who has been active in civic engagement for most of her more than twenty years at AU, assigned students in her community journalism course to visit the communities and write feature stories that were compiled in *Front Porch* magazine, an online publication that became a basis for information on the communities for Living Democracy students. We did not convene community collaborators again as a group until August of 2011, when most met their Living Democracy student for the first time.

From Classroom to Community

Blake Evans grew up in the small town of Deatsville, Alabama, and he was the third generation to graduate from Holtville High School, which was the subject of a 1946 United States Information Services film documenting daily life in a Southern, rural community. Having participated in numerous service opportunities through school and church, the Living Democracy program interested him because of its community-building aspects and opportunity to gain valuable experience, particularly in his major of communications. He does not know exactly what type of profession he would ultimately like to pursue, and he is typical of most of the cohort of Living Democracy students who want to be prepared for a variety of opportunities.

Shortly before the fall semester began, Blake and his cohort met their community collaborators at a workshop in Fairhope,

where he met Linden city clerk Cheryl Hall. The city of Linden, population 2,123, is located in west-central Alabama, away from interstates, and not too far from the Mississippi state line. White citizens are a slight majority (51 percent), with African Americans making up 46.7 percent of the population. Not



unlike many rural communities in the South, the public school enrolls African American students, while the private Marengo Academy educates white students just down the street. The schools' football teams had long shared a common field, but at the time of the workshop, the community was in the middle of a dispute that left the public school playing its games out of town for the immediate season. The nearest metropolitan newspaper reported that Linden was a town divided by race, a notion that some locals consider an inaccurate and short-sighted characterization.

At the workshop, Hall represented Linden native and mayor, Mitzi Gates, who had already begun the new school year in her "day job" as English teacher at Linden High School. The workshop led student/citizen groups to answer the following three questions: Who is our community? What are the opportunities for our community? What are the challenges facing our community? Each group mapped the sources of knowledge in or about the community (i.e., people, places, things), and then drew lines representing connections or relationships between each source of knowledge. Students listened while community members reflected on what their citizens seem to value most and learned about the traditions and activities that reflect what they hold valuable. Students asked questions related to challenges and opportunities, and they compared the communities under discussion with the community in which they were reared.

Just a few short days after the workshop in the fall, 2011 semester, Blake and the cohort enrolled in CCEN 2000: Introduction to Community and Civic Engagement, a course which seeks to introduce the context, issues, skills, and experience for

A journalism seminar gave students a crash course in writing for the public.

living in a democratic society. Students learn about democracy from the time of the Greeks and early Americans, and they consider some modern theories and research related to civic participation and involvement. But the core of the course is about the nature of problems—“wicked” vs. “tame”—and the ways in which the public might develop sound judgments and secure commitments to act together on these problems. But Linden was close to Blake’s mind, since he read his copy of the *Linden Democrat-Reporter* each week. During the holiday break, he visited Linden for the first time and participated in Chilly Fest, the town’s annual winter festival.

A 2012 spring journalism seminar on Communication and Community Building gave Blake and his cohort a crash course in writing for the public—a skill not likely developed in their respective majors—and helped them acquire a number of additional skills, while they made collaborative summer plans with their partners. Building on the framework of www.coveringcommunities.org, students studied the basics of journalism, wrote profile stories, and conducted interviews. They also created a number of social media tools to help them document their summer experience. Blake visited Linden one additional time during the spring semester, when Mayor Gates led him on a tour of the most unique of all Living Democracy student accommodations: a room above the B. W. Creel Fire Station. While he would spend his nights hoping sleep would go undisturbed by a fire call, he worked out of City Hall during the day.

More at Stake

In January 2012, we convened our students and community collaborators for a workshop to plan summer projects. We asked each community to develop ideas for a project based on past conversations, visits to the community, and interests of both the students and citizens. Some teams had a general direction or theme for a project, while others had numerous details. The project idea or general direction is important, but not every project can build the capacity of citizens to solve the problems that matter to them. Some community projects, unfortunately, erode citizen will and capacity. A project could only be a Living Democracy project, we suggested, if teams worked through and incorporated five different aspects: hopes; a table; conversations and crossroads;

actions; public celebration and reflection. Participants discovered these through the following questions:

Hopes

Every community has dreams, goals, and aspirations. What are citizens seeking to do to fulfill the community's potential? How will your project connect to citizen concerns and what people in the community consider valuable?

A Table

Every community project has a table where thoughts are shared and plans are made. Are people in the community already at a table working on the problem? Who, specifically, needs to be at the table for what you are hoping to organize citizens to do? Why will they want to be at the table? What might prevent them from being at the table?

Conversations and Crossroads

Communication is key to productive human relationships and the work citizens seek to do together. And the communication we are talking about is different from publicity and advertising. How will you communicate regarding the project? How often? Where? Some of these conversations will result in decision making. What decisions do you think will need to be made regarding the project? What decisions will be difficult but necessary? What will you do to make your conversations creative and productive?

Actions

What actions will need to take place to execute the project? When? Make a timeline for what needs to take place immediately, as well as over the next few months, as you prepare to live in the community.

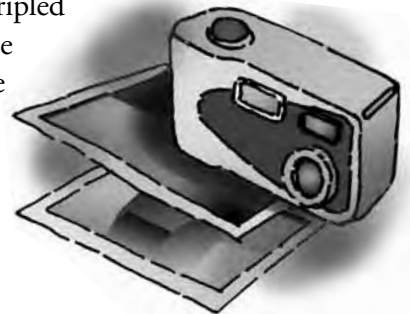
Public Celebration/Reflection

We measure the success of our projects in terms of what we've learned and experienced. There is no such thing as failure, only failure to learn. And there's nothing more fun than a culminating event that documents, makes public, and celebrates the work of citizens. How will you document, celebrate, and lead a public reflection on your project?

A Living Democracy project cannot be mapped out in complete detail because the project's success is dependent on a process that thrives on unpredictability. We do not expect participants to have answers to each of these questions, but we do expect students to understand the questions and why they matter.

Through his conversations with Mayor Gates and Cheryl Hall, Blake discovered that the city of Linden received assistance from neighboring University of West Alabama to develop a promotional video on the city for economic development purposes. The opportunity for Blake to learn about a community's desire to communicate its assets became a perfect project to coordinate. He became the script developer, which meant that he had to ask questions and listen to citizens, discover on his own the community's strengths, and manage all of the various details that preproduction would entail. In a very real sense, Blake helped create the space for citizens to speak to the world. In week nine of his ten-week summer, Blake introduced the video crew to each interviewee during two jam-packed days of filming.

Throughout the school year and into the summer, Blake followed the football field situation, and he learned that although race relations need improvement in towns such as Linden, some efforts were underway that were designed to make a difference. He found the local Youth Leadership Council, created by Mayor Gates and others to bring students from both schools together for shared experiences, an important local activity, and he decided to organize a project among the council teens in town during the summer. Mayor Gates requested support from the town's Industrial Development Board, a modest amount of \$350 to \$500, but when the IDB heard the details of the effort, they tripled the amount and appropriated \$1,500 because the project was innovative and unique. Blake distributed single-use cameras to students and asked them to take two pictures: one of something they believe illustrated why "Life is good in Linden," and another that identified an aspect of Linden that needed improvement.



Measuring What You Can't Count

Students who take responsibility for their learning live a life of reflection. Living Democracy students are required to reflect almost daily through email correspondence with us. "If you don't write it down, it didn't happen," we remind them, and more written communication means more opportunities for reflection, thus learning. We (students and faculty) participate in a conference call, usually lasting an hour, where we go town by town, each student reporting on the past and upcoming week. Complaints and frustrations are welcomed, even encouraged, although they are always outweighed by stories of success or pleasant surprises. Students start to understand each town better over time, even if they have never set foot in the place.

Students must submit weekly written reflections for publication on the Living Democracy blog, and the prompt each week focuses on an aspect of democratic life and practice: the unique aspects and hopes and dreams of the community; ways in which citizens are tackling a persistent problem; civic spaces; community communication; institutional politics; and how the project is building the capacities needed for democratic citizenship. The reflections are for public viewing, and we believe they are valuable texts for citizens to gauge student learning and interaction. Some reflections suggest that students are grappling with the challenges of living in a democratic society, while others reveal that students are simply experiencing their comfort zones stretched. A post-summer interview with each student will document what students believe they have learned as a result of the process.

Mayor Gates and Blake were astounded when the *Chronicle of Higher Education* sent a photographer to spend an entire day following Blake from meeting to meeting and place to place for photographs that would illustrate an article on the program. A positive article in the *Chronicle* is high praise for those in higher education, but it is not necessarily an indication of success. During the same week in Linden, a more accurate milestone of success was achieved when city clerk, Cheryl Hall, and Mayor Gates invited Blake to be the grand marshal of the 2012 winter Chilly Fest parade in December. The parade in Linden will not be covered nationally, of course, and Blake's participation might be difficult

to include in a curriculum vitae, but it is evidence that he has become a citizen of Linden and that the contribution of his presence and collaborative work had lasting value and meaning.

Alexis Sankey

Alexis Sankey, a sophomore majoring in psychology, spent her summer living democracy in Elba, Alabama (pop. 3,940). Her main community partner was Mart Gray, pastor of the Covenant Community Church.

To meet the community's need for more opportunities in arts education, Alexis created JumpstART, which offers art classes to local children at the Just Folk Coffeehouse and Arts Center. Alexis said her greatest reward came from seeing the children's smiles of pride at the concluding art exhibition.

After getting JumpstART in motion, Alexis interviewed citizens committed to moving Elba forward and worked closely with the staff of Elba's Senior Citizen Center, delivering hot meals and helping out in the office.

While the children gained new avenues of expression through JumpstART, Alexis found a new sense of confidence. "I have definitely gained more self-assurance. I realize that progress is not easy, especially when working with and depending on lots of different people. However, it's always possible."

Angela Cleary

For Angela Cleary, an interdisciplinary studies major with a keen interest in environmental issues, Bayou La Batre (pop. 2,558) was an ideal place to experience living democracy. On Mobile Bay in southwest Alabama, Bayou La Batre continues to face challenges created by disasters such as Hurricane Katrina and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

Angela partnered with the local Boat People SOS office, an organization involved in recovery efforts, which

works closely with the community's significant Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian population in Alabama's seafood capital.

Working with BPSOS's youth empowerment program, Bayou HOPE, was Angela's most rewarding experience. The youth organized beautification projects and community dinners, and followed a "work hard, play hard" mantra. Angela said, "These projects paved the way for the youth to become active citizens who take ownership and pride in their community."

She said her summer also changed the way she thinks of traditional classroom lessons. "There are only so many things you can learn from a textbook before you have to put yourself out of the safe zone and test some theories for yourself."

Mary Afton Day

Mary Afton Day, a junior majoring in public administration, lived democracy in Marion, Alabama (pop. 3,686) and worked with citizens and director Frances Ford through the nonprofit organization Sowing Seeds of Hope.

From sorting green beans at a local church, performing blood pressure checks at a rural community center, and mentoring local teens, Mary Afton went in dozens of different directions to gain an understanding and appreciation of how local people meet challenges on a daily basis.

Throughout the summer, she asked citizens to share images of the places in town that make Marion unique and important, and the project culminated in a public exhibition and companion blog featuring the work of citizens.

Mary Afton said one of her most rewarding experiences was spending time with the ladies of the West Perry Arts & Crafts Club, who quilt together and find ways to share their wisdom with young people in the community.

Andrew Odom

From living in a “haunted” antebellum home in downtown Selma (pop. 20,756) to involving teens at Alabama’s most famous ghost town, Old Cahawba, Andrew Odom discovered how to connect the past to the future.

Andrew, an Auburn University graduate now in law school, created a team of teens who helped launch a public-use bike program at the Old Cahawba Park. Youth wearing Living Democracy shirts coordinated the launch event, which was attended by local politicians, media, and civic leaders. Other summer events connected youth to local officials, civic leaders, educators, and artists.

Andrew’s main community partners were Old Cahawba site director Linda Derry and Selma/Dallas County Chamber of Commerce executive director Sheryl Smedley.

Andrew counts his conversations with local leaders one day and with those struggling with poverty the next as one of the most rewarding aspects of his experience. “I was able to listen and discuss concerns and possible solutions with both.”

Marian Royston

Marian Royston, a senior history major, lived democracy in one of the most historic communities in Alabama, Hobson City (pop. 771). Founded in 1899, Hobson City was the first all African American municipality in Alabama.

In part, Marian was on a mission to bring together a snapshot of Hobson City’s present through her work on a community needs assessment. However, by the end of the summer, her passion turned her toward a focus on one of the community’s greatest assets: history.

One of her projects involved collecting, sorting, and preserving stories of the community’s rich past, told in photographs and other historic documents.

Marian's community partners were Hobson City Community and Economic Development Corporation (HCCEDC) board members Eric Stringer, Charity Richey-Bentley, and Bernard Snow. Marian said one lesson she learned by spending time with citizens was that "building relationships may very well be the first and most important step in enacting change in a community."

Audrey Ross

Audrey Ross, a sophomore math major, started the Youth Leaders of Valley while living democracy in Valley (pop. 9,524), a town in east Alabama with a rich textile mill heritage. Youth Leaders grew into a team under Audrey's guidance as they helped with a police academy for youth, planned and staged a successful Community Day basketball tournament, spruced up the local Girl Scout hut, and attended city council meetings.

Audrey is confident that Youth Leaders will continue. "Rather than tell the kids what to do, we came together and discussed what we COULD do. As the kids became more comfortable in having a say in their community, the ideas came rolling in."

Audrey also helped out at the community farmers' market, tutored students of all ages, and learned more about mill restoration projects and community history. She worked closely with Valley police officer Sandra Crim and community partners Jim Jones and Martha Cato.

Audrey described Living Democracy as "an opportunity for a student to grow by watching the growth of others. It's a way to show someone that, while they are part of a much larger world, they can still have a big impact on many people."

She added, "I learned that good ideas will get support, and with the right support those ideas can be realized. It is in this way, not with one person doing all the work but with one idea sparking the work of everyone, that one person can bring about significant change."

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND DOCTORAL EDUCATION

By Ellen M. Knutson and Dan A. Lewis

“GEO provided me with a space to really think about how my scholarship should consider the concerns of a society larger than academia and also consider the role my scholarship can play in affecting change.”

—GEO Participant

From Carnegie reports to conferences, as well as in the pages of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, there has been much thought and debate about the future of the doctorate. At Northwestern University, we started an experiment in 2010, which we think has promise to reinvigorate doctoral education and contribute to the health of the communities that surround institutions of higher learning. Today’s students are looking for ways to express and refine what citizenship means throughout their twenties and thirties, and they do not park their commitment to engagement at the door before they enter graduate school. Indeed, many have experienced service learning in college and even high school and are drawn to the doctorate as a way of translating the desire to change the world into a set of skills that are both marketable and useful for social change. However, too often graduate programs deemphasize this goal in the quest to produce researchers. Students who have come to expect engaged learning as part and parcel of their education can be disappointed upon entering graduate school. When they find that engaged learning is not supported and work with community organizations may be thought of as peripheral, students can become disenchanted with graduate study. The more doctoral programs find a way to include engagement in their graduate training, the better prepared and more satisfied students will be. This can be done with a new course that moves across disciplines and leaves room for linking students’ interests with academically driven community involvement.

Beyond student interest and satisfaction, it is also no secret in the social sciences and humanities that there are, and will be, fewer academic jobs for people with doctorates in our top tier universities and colleges. Leaving aside the startling fact that most of these

universities are still admitting students to doctoral programs as if there were plenty of faculty jobs, recent graduates are finding the prospects rather bleak, and many are finding work outside the academy. Civic society is filled with opportunities for these students. We would like to see programming that prepares students to fill positions outside the academy and, equally important, learn the skills that could lead to productive partnerships between these institutions and engagement-oriented professors. This would mean academic programming that leads to the skill sets that are attractive to organizations, institutions, and groups outside the academy, as well as skill sets that would make for collaborations between such organizations and universities, such as working across differences and translating research findings into actionable plans.

These pressures, among others, have led us at the Center for Civic Engagement (CCE), to develop the Graduate Engagement Opportunities (GEO) Community Practicum program at Northwestern University, which forms the foundation of CCE commitment to the integration of academics with meaningful public service, research, and community partnerships. We began the program with four goals:

- to provide meaningful civic engagement practicums for doctoral students at Northwestern University;
- to support graduate students' academic needs by promoting a scholarship of engagement;
- to create new career training opportunities for doctoral students;
- to strengthen ties between Northwestern University and area organizations.

The GEO Community Practicum provides interested graduate students with the opportunity to undertake a quarter-long practicum or field study in the overlapping areas of civic engagement, social justice, or community studies. Through the support of the Graduate School, PhD students are able to use a portion of their Northwestern funding to participate in this program. This means that

Recent graduates are finding the prospects rather bleak, and many are finding work outside the academy.

When appropriate, practicing public scholars are invited to discuss their work and career paths with the students.

they keep their stipend and tuition scholarship while working with a community organization during one full academic quarter. The field study is combined with a credit-bearing seminar that encourages graduate students to reflect intellectually on civic engagement while actually engaging some dimension of civic life. Seminar topics include the role of higher education in democracy, the nature of public scholarship, and overview of various types of community-university partnerships. When appropriate, practicing public scholars are invited to discuss their work and career paths with the students and, as a group, the class makes at least one site visit to one of the host organizations during the course. The guest scholars and the site visit give the students a broader view of the civic life of Chicago and the surrounding area.

Through GEO, we support graduate students as they enhance their own academic experiences, while contributing to stronger communities and a more engaged university. Students are brought together in a multidisciplinary seminar to share the engagement experience with colleagues from across campus. The opportunity to build relationships with fellow doctoral students in other departments and schools allows them to gain deeper insights into the issues that surround university-community partnerships and the role of the university in a democracy. The four cohorts of students we have worked with represent eleven departments across four of Northwestern's schools. This fall we added three new departments and one new school. As Robin Hoecker shares in the next article, this multidisciplinary experience is key to the GEO experience.

We hope to counter the trend documented by Doberneck et al. (2010) that graduate students disengage from public life, even when it was a vital part of their undergraduate education. The focus on engaged scholarship is important for doctoral education if for no other reason than to break the cycle of disengagement, especially within research universities, which ends with a disengaged professoriate or dropouts. In order for graduate students to become engaged scholars they must be trained to master additional competencies beyond their narrow disciplinary knowledge. They need to learn how to navigate the complex and often rocky terrain of community relationships and collaborative inquiry. Not only must students balance the needs of the community organization with the demands

and expectations placed upon them by the university and academic standards, they also must work collaboratively with diverse people and manage competing interests. They need to communicate effectively with multiple audiences (academics included) and trouble-shoot situations where there may be few preexisting solutions, or even agreement, on the nature of the problem. Thus, there is a learning and reflective component to our civic engagement program, so students can have a safe space in which to share challenges and successes and to discuss and practice the needed competencies.

Perhaps most importantly, civic engagement is not just an intellectual exercise; it is about action and what you are going to do in the world. It is imperative that students not just take a course in engagement, but practice it in the community. Moreover, the work that doctoral students engage in should not just be focused on service or volunteering. It should include elements of developing active citizens and engaging with the intellectual work required to address society's most pressing problems. We focus on the students' scholarship and actively connecting their academic knowledge to a public purpose. The placements for the students have been as diverse as the students themselves, and have included: developing and implementing training for youth workers at an after school program in one of Chicago's most underserved neighborhoods; creating a civic engagement strategy and public programming plans for a proposed three-mile, elevated linear park and trail system; and writing white papers for a public employees' union about proposed state policy changes. The placements were either directly related to the student's research interests or helped to advance the student's career goals. In many instances, it accomplished both. We encourage the students to embark on the road to public scholarship, and the training and support we give them leads to a civically engaged career path, either inside or outside of the academy.

We do encounter challenges in this program. However, our challenges are not new, nor particularly unique (see Battistoni 2002 for a list of typical challenges). Some faculty think of engagement as an add-on to doctoral education. Not all students received adequate support from faculty in their department. At Northwestern University, we do have the full support of the Graduate School. The backing of the Graduate School is an indication of potential cultural change

It is imperative that students not just take a course in engagement, but practice it in the community.

within the institution. Additionally, there are faculty members and department heads that also support the program. Cultural change does not happen overnight, and the GEO program is still new, but we are optimistic about the potential for the program to grow deep roots in the university and to become an integral part of doctoral education for many students at Northwestern.

Addressing both academic and community goals (especially within the confines of a 10-week academic quarter) can be a challenge. We balance the learning needs of the students with community

organization needs, but find it necessary to meet the students where they are and help them to engage with a community organization that dovetails with their personal interests and passions. Another complicating factor is that our students come from a variety of departments and have placements that mirror the diverse interests the students bring.

Many of our doctoral students have stayed engaged with their community organization past the initial 10-week period, and we have also been able to connect the community organization to CCE's other programs.

The GEO program models how a research university can begin to reform doctoral education. While every university has a different culture and history, the interest of the faculty in introducing civic engagement into the pedagogy of graduate study, coupled with a supportive administration, can and should lead to learning experiences that go beyond the classroom. The benefit is twofold. First, doctoral students learn how to include community research into a portfolio of skills that they can bring to an academic position after receiving their degree, and more generally, that civic engagement is a topic of scholarly interest and research. Second, a variety of career options become more real. The skill sets that lead to employment in nonprofit, cultural, and civic organizations are learned in and through engagement with those sectors. Both experiences are invaluable in crafting PhDs that are more



competitive in the changing job markets in the United States. Finally, the university itself is transformed into a learning community that is more responsive to the communities that surround the campus. The walls that separate our universities begin to crumble for students who want to contribute to the world, and who now have the *skills* to contribute to positive social change in that world.

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PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP AT THE GRADUATE STUDENT LEVEL

By Robin Hoecker

I remember opening the e-mail about the Graduate Engagement Opportunity (GEO).^{*} The first sentence read, “Spend spring quarter working for a community organization in the Chicago area while learning about the role of public intellectuals in civic life.” I flagged the message immediately, printed out the flier and pulled up the civic engagement Website to learn more. I remember thinking, “YES! This is what I have been missing!” At the time, I was halfway through my first year as a doctoral student in Media, Technology and Society at Northwestern University. Having returned to graduate school after years of professional experience as a journalist, I found myself missing a connection to the “real world.” I started to wonder if the academic path was right for me. The GEO program gave me a spark of hope that I could find a way to make graduate school fit my personality and my goals.

In many ways, I am the typical “millennial student” that Knutson and Lewis describe in their article in this volume. Born in 1980, I came up through a public education system that valued and encouraged volunteerism and service learning. Throughout high school and college, I spent many hours volunteering and working with organizations like Alternative Spring Break. So, I entered my PhD program with the expectation that I would be working, at some level, with the people affected by my research.

The GEO program appealed to me for many reasons. My long-term career goal is to become a professor and work at a university, so I wanted to better understand the role of higher education in society. Furthermore, in a new city with few familiar faces, I wanted to meet new people outside my own department. I craved “real world” interactions and wanted a chance to explore the bustling city of Chicago. But ultimately, I chose to participate

^{*} The GEO program involves a seminar course about civic engagement in higher education and allows graduate students to work up to 32 hours a week in partnership with a local organization. For a more detailed description of the GEO program, please see the Knutson & Lewis article in this volume.

in GEO because I felt it would improve my research and enrich my time in graduate school. In all of these ways, the experience has been a great success.

With the help of the GEO staff, I arranged a partnership with the National Veterans Art Museum in Chicago. The museum—one-of-a-kind in the country and perhaps in the world—collects and displays artwork created by combat veterans. The museum fits perfectly with my research interests in visual communication and collective memory. Broadly speaking, I study how societies use visual media—including photography, art, comic books, and memorials—to remember and recover from conflicts. Having worked as a photojournalist, including a several-year stint at the military newspaper, *Stars and Stripes*, I am especially interested in how Americans learn about war, and how American veterans process their military experiences. The museum had been on my radar for years, and the GEO program offered the perfect opportunity to learn more about the museum, its collection, and its visitors.

Contributions to Scholarship

It might be tempting to see my work with the museum as a volunteer opportunity and nothing more. Some might view it as an internship program, and not a true scholarly endeavor. But, in my opinion, such an approach takes a very narrow perspective and overlooks the many ways in which such experiences contribute directly and indirectly towards research. Below are some of the ways I feel that the experience has contributed to my scholarship.

Access to an Archive

Through the museum, I gained access to an amazing collection of overlooked artwork and photographs. Cataloguing and digitizing the art, I became intimately familiar with the collection, including many pieces that were not on display at the museum or online. I also learned about other materials, such as a comic book series published about the Vietnam War. The museum had the comic books on site, which I studied as part of a collaborative project with another student. This project has led to several conference papers that we hope to publish.

Access to People

The museum connected me to three very important groups: artists, museum professionals, and veterans. Updating the artist files, I learned about the artists' backgrounds and spoke with many of them about experiencing war, becoming veterans, and making art. Working at the register, I also chatted with visitors, including many military families, about why they come to the museum and how they interpret the art. Talking with both the artists and the visitors helped me think about the museum as a medium of communication.

Furthermore, knowing people in the local museum community helps keep me informed about upcoming exhibits, documentary films, and photography projects about war and its aftermath. I have made contacts at the local VA hospital, as well as other veterans' organizations in the area. These are important professional contacts; we may become collaborators in the future. Furthermore, some have become my friends, which makes me feel more rooted in the Chicagoland community.

A Laboratory for Theory

For a recent qualifying exam in collective memory, I illustrated my arguments using examples from the museum. In her review of my essay, my professor wrote, "It is a comprehensive review of the literature; it points in a specific research direction and it includes a stream of examples, many from personal observations. Yours is one of the few student papers I read where the footnotes constituted a fascinating set of mini-pilot studies on their own." By thinking through situations at the museum, I could better understand the theoretical concepts. Perhaps this will pave the way for my own theoretical contributions as I go forward. These real-world examples also provide great ideas for teaching.

Overall, my experience at the museum has proven to be remarkable—one that continues to provide benefits, both personal and professional. A year after the GEO program ended, I still spend about five hours per week at the museum.

Moving Forward: Public Scholarship

Despite my positive experience with the GEO program, there remain major obstacles that prevent other graduate students from participating in civic engagement programs. First, I believe there is a general misunderstanding of what civic engagement actually means. Too many scholars—both students and faculty—view it as an internship or a volunteer program, rather than something that contributes to the creation of knowledge. This creates a false choice between civic engagement and scholarship, as if it's impossible to do both at the same time. As a result, many students and professors seem to view civic engagement as a *threat* to academic productivity. “It’ll take too much time away from my research” is a response I hear often when talking to other graduate students about the GEO program. In some cases, faculty members actively discourage students from participating because they believe it will “waste” time that could be otherwise spent working towards publication or applying for grants. I believe such advice stems from a genuine concern for their students. Professors want their students to be successful, and publishing is a major measure of that success. However, *the two are not mutually exclusive. Civic engagement can lead to publications.*

I have written at least five class papers related to the museum. I have already submitted two to national conferences; both have been accepted and I am currently reworking them for publication. I believe part of why they have been well received goes back to the fact that very little has been written in academic journals about this particular archive. The GEO program is what gave me access to these resources, and inspired me to write about them with passion.

Civic engagement can also help secure external funding, which is an equally important skill on the academic job market. Funders want to know that their money will make a difference and often require “broader impact” statements. What better way to understand the impact of your research than to build relationships with the community affected by it? Such hands-on experience, and the knowledge that results from such partnerships, helps researchers think about and articulate this broader purpose. Furthermore, national grant agencies are more likely to select interdisciplinary teams that are spread across multiple universities and geographic regions (Vashevko, et al). So it is important to get to know experts

in other fields and institutions. Programs like GEO, which bring together students from all corners of the university and professionals in the greater community, are important ways for students to build relationships outside of their department.

Overall, civic engagement offers many benefits to graduate students and faculty alike. As practitioners, we need to articulate more clearly what civic engagement is and how it can contribute towards scholarship. Perhaps we need to think about labeling. Personally, I have come to prefer the term “public scholarship.” As John Gastil pointed out in his 2007 article in this journal, the term emphasizes the word scholarship. This may help reinforce that such work contributes to, and doesn’t detract from, traditional academic values.

We also need to see more positive models of how civic engagement works, especially at the graduate student level. I believe I am one such example, and I am thankful to have the opportunity to share my experiences in this journal. If the goal of public scholarship is democracy (Cohen, 2006), then encouraging these values among graduate students is critical. Engaged graduate students become engaged professors, who in turn, help produce more engaged citizens.

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WICKED BEDFELLOWS: CAN SCIENCE AND DEMOCRACY COEXIST IN THE LAND GRANT?

By Wynne Wright

Five years ago, Michigan State University (MSU) began to explore whether deliberative dialogue could breathe life into the democratic mission of the land grant by renewing a place for citizens in their university. In part, we took on the task of assessing whether scientists and citizens could engage in deliberative dialogue to solve local problems and, in this way, serve the public good. In this essay, I discuss our experience and reflect on our institutional readiness as a land grant university to adapt to the new changing environment and to live up to our unique mission. By examining the role of faculty members to engage in meaningful public deliberation with citizens, I conclude that deeply rooted epistemological commitments present formidable hurdles to meaningful change.

Old Models, New Problems

Nowhere is this challenge more fully felt than in the case of the Extension Service, which is being called upon to broaden its epistemological repertoire, thereby loosening its tie to the traditional expert model of education delivery. The knowledge transfer model, which has typified much of Extension work over the years, was closely modeled after the research on the adoption of innovations. Adoption and diffusion research was generally concerned with the question of how new knowledge, created in the land grant system, could be transferred to catalyze behavioral change in society. Early enthusiasts were giddy for this framework, prompting a paradigm change in the fields of rural sociology, agricultural education, and communications. Outreach dissemination models became *de rigueur* in disciplines like animal science, soil science, and engineering. Yet research gradually began to show that the adoption/diffusion model took an advocacy approach toward technological change and failed to adequately interrogate the risks associated with adoption for the individuals involved, the natural environment, and for society

at large. Unfortunately, this seems to be the best kept secret in my university. Such scholarship and outreach models continue to proliferate, if not considered the coin of the realm. We at MSU are not unique, however. For example, the *Journal of Extension*—the premier journal read by Extension educators—abounds with scholarship founded on the unproblematized principles of adoption/diffusion (Stephenson, 2003).

The critiques of this model, and the social problems created from its application, are tired refrains. More recently, scholars have turned a critical eye to the power imbalances created between scientific experts, who are perceived to be the creators of knowledge, and citizens, who occupy the role of passive consumers of information with little to offer in the area of knowledge construction. This approach reproduces an enabling or deficiency view of citizens—of individuals having little to contribute to the management of their own problems and in need of a hero to save them. The result has been allegations of violations of the public's trust, and social and intellectual distance, all of which serve to further stratify society and alienate individuals from institutions that are designed to serve the public good.

Our problems are less technical than social today, however. Yields have been maximized, seeds have been vastly improved, modern technologies that make life easier are accessible, and conservation programs are in place. Today's challenges are more likely to arise from competing visions of how to organize natural resources, technology, labor, and capital to uplift humanity. We live in an era where questions of moral reflection, such as "ought we do this," trump more narrow technical challenges. Now that we have solved many of the more immediate technical problems to modernize our society, how are we to refashion the land grant function? Like beating a square peg into a round hole, we persist in turning social problems into technical fixes, perhaps because our unwavering defense of science is the primary tool in our epistemological tool kit. Under the cloak of "scientific objectivity," land grant research and Extension programming continue to embrace the power of



science to solve what are essentially social problems, either unaware of, or politically insensitive to, the socially-situated nature of knowledge construction or the problems and risks that emerge from innovation.

The “Wicked” World of the Land Grant

Land grant scientists are not so naïve as to believe that the problems with which we are faced are narrow, technical problems, easily solved with our disciplinary tools. On the contrary, the common buzzword in the corridors of my college is “wicked” problems—a label used to denote the complexity of contemporary agrifood and natural resource problems. Wicked problems are dynamically complex, ill-structured, public problems that defy the objective and linear assumptions of positivist science. They are problems that are open to interpretation, and contest, frequently making them vexing and intractable, and obscuring any clear and definitive way forward, and, thus, highly resistant to resolution (Rittel and Webber, 1973). Because of such complexity and interdependency, knowledge is always tentative and partial, owing to the sociocultural values at work, as well as the special interests and tactics of actors actively engaged in the manipulation of the problem. Wicked problems cannot be approached in terms of narrowly defined technical definitions and solutions—the purview of experts operating within the narrow analytical approaches of disciplinary paradigms. In the best-case scenario, they are managed, not solved.

On New Year’s Eve in 1999, four individuals claiming affiliation with the Earth Liberation Front firebombed the Agricultural Biotechnology Support Project housed in Agricultural Hall on the MSU campus. The arson attack can be read as just another irrational act of disenfranchised youth rejecting genetically modified organisms, or even modernity itself, but that would be a good example of *partial* knowledge. Biotechnology research, as well as resistance, is a wicked problem, the kind that is increasingly coming to dominate applied techno-science work in the land grant. Indeed, for virtually every question being asked by researchers inside the land grant university, others are stepping up to challenge its sociocultural, political, economic, and ethical rationality.

Wicked problems are public problems that defy the objective and linear assumptions of positivist science.

You don't have to experience a firebomb, however, to know that wicked problems are changing the landscape of the land grant. Wicked problems are forcing land grant universities to reconsider and account for multiple ways of knowing—ways that do not fit preconceived logic models. We are also being asked to move beyond a one-way transfer of information and technology, to open up ourselves to learning from and with others, to hear their concerns, incorporate their values, and to shed our strict, unwavering commitment to positivist science in favor of democratic participatory knowledge construction. This logic would seem to encourage, if not compel, me and my colleagues to engage with community members in context-specific problem solving that valorizes citizen knowledge.

With all of this as background, our work at MSU was designed as an intentional effort to infuse participatory dialogue and deliberation into efforts being undertaken by grassroots groups and organizations, public policymakers, decision makers, and civic professionals. Our focus was on wicked problems experienced in agriculture and natural resources. The MSU experience has revealed to us that public engagement through deliberative dialogue can invigorate civic life, but it also brings to light epistemological tensions that can fragment actors. Science is a double-edged sword: just as it can contribute to helping people live better lives, it can also obstruct efforts to improve the human condition, especially if one considers the advancement of democratic engagement as an integral part of social improvement. Many of the cases pursued at MSU in the course of deliberative dialogue work ran into what might be termed “scientific obstruction.” We learned that science can be both enabling and politically quieting or exclusionary. In the following section, I will describe some of the effects we encountered when land grant science collided with deliberative dialogue.

Science Meets Dialogue

Are we ready to meet citizens on equal footing and engage with them to solve our wicked problems? How receptive are we to citizen-scientist experiments in deliberative dialogue? Faculty involvement in our work typically came by way of project consultation as subject experts. In each case, faculty members' repertoire

for engagement appeared to exalt scientific rationality, with most showing relatively little to no interest in constructing new rules for engagement. While lip service may have been paid to the need to “bring stakeholders in,” at each turn, science was exercised to construct scientists as the arbitrator of authority and to use science as the benchmark for acceptable rules of engagement. Three cases illustrate this conclusion.

Case One*

We assembled a group to explore how we might incorporate opportunities for deliberative dialogue to respond to a timely economic issue facing Michigan residents. Some faculty participants labored with this approach. As one faculty member put it, “For the life of me I can’t figure out why we would ask people what’s causing the ...[problem] ... or what should be done about it.” When pressed to elaborate, the faculty member responded that any decision making related to this problem should reside squarely in the domain of those with specialized knowledge, with individuals who understand the complexity of this global and multi-dimensional issue—with scientists.

In these observations my colleague posits a binary divide between experts and citizens, revealing an approach that valorizes knowledge gained by scientific means and devalues or omits citizen knowledge. As this project unfolded—and it evolved with emphasis on gaining the public’s perspective on this subject—we learned that citizens’ knowledge on the topic was not only nuanced, but that it also mirrored every topic area deemed significant by the scientists. As a result, we proceeded to prepare a NIF-style issue book, written by members of the public who participated in a state-wide forum. The issue book contained practical solutions to address the problem. While the citizens involved did not articulate the complexity of the problem with the same breadth as the scientists, their personal experience gave them practical

* The specific nature of each of these cases has been obscured to protect the identity of the actors involved. In cases where I use the word “expert,” I do so not to devalue the knowledge of citizens but to differentiate citizens from those who hold professional roles as “experts.”

Citizens have unique and important contributions to make in solving wicked problems.

background for proposing ways to reduce the challenges citizens were facing, which escaped the scientists.

This example demonstrates that wicked problems cannot be solved in isolation; citizens have unique and important contributions to make in solving wicked problems. It also shows that deliberative dialogue can be a tool to bridge the divides and help scientists learn from citizens. The experience also reinforces that more accessible and diverse sources of scientific information should be provided to citizens as a means to enhance the value of science, but that scientists, likewise, need opportunities to hear citizens process practical problems and their resolution.

Case Two

A similar dilemma was faced by another faculty member. She was invited by a deliberating group to answer technical questions associated with the group's interest. At each turn, her responses were met with additional questions: group members pushed back, asking the expert to justify her answers, provide historical and social content, and engage with them about competing paradigms associated with a discussion of the topic at hand. At one meeting, following two hours of heated dialogue and debate, the scientist had this to say: "They sure don't respect science." She was perplexed at their refusal to accept her responses, and she noted the way they pushed back, often by offering competing knowledge claims—claims that they had developed from accessing sources outside of mainstream science. To this scientist, not only was her defense of science questioned, but so was her very identity. "Why don't they trust me?" she asked, unable to distinguish herself from the scientific process. For many we have encountered in this work, questioning science is perceived as an attack on the expert's sense of self.

To the faculty member's credit, she pushed back too, refusing to accept the citizens' critique of her thinking as superior; she critiqued their logic, sources, and motivations, too, and in this way, forced herself to interrogate her own logic, motivations, and received knowledge. As an outcome, the scientist was invited to join the group on a regular basis,

meeting to discuss issues of mutual interest. Such a coconstruction of knowledge—with techno-scientific knowledge operating alongside the values, interests, and competing ways of knowing that citizens bring—is critical in avoiding the partiality of knowledge that reliance on strict positivist science alone produces.

Case Three

A final example pertains to the prevalence of dueling tensions between science and society. In this instance, citizens were deliberating how to address a local ecological problem in their community. Experts from MSU and state agencies were invited to provide input at the citizens' invitation. The meetings regularly became contentious, with citizens and experts sometimes butting heads on appropriate strategies for resolving the community's dilemma. Citizens felt that some experts came to the meetings with preconceived answers to their problem—answers based in scientific expertise and professional experience—and disregarded their practical experience with the issue and desired values for their community. Some experts began to feel that their deliberations were being interpreted as successful only if citizens confirmed their techno-scientific recommendations. Several citizens responded viscerally to the circumstance and one said, "he [the scientist] would come in here every week and tell us what we ought to do in our community. He was so smug. It got to the point I could not stand to look at him, so I stopped sitting across the table from him."

Lashing out at the perceived arrogance of experts, and their use of science to establish themselves as authorities, forces us to place this interaction in a broader social context, one in which science is valorized and citizens' knowledge is subordinated. We might think of this citizens' reaction as a "weapon of the weak"—one of the few, if only, means powerless people have when they are confronted with interactions that deny them dignity and voice (Scott, 1985). In this way,



it becomes clear from the response that it may be less that science itself is suspect, but that the uses of science can facilitate perceptions of powerlessness among citizens. When that happens, science can be a means to stratify citizens, perpetuate the devaluation of expertise, construct partial knowledge, and move us further from the uplift function we desire science to play in bettering humanity.

Our three cases suggest that knowledge construction for problem solving in the land grant tradition is interactive. It is not static nor is it the special purview of experts who have been granted institutional roles to perform science or engage in the one-way transmission of knowledge. In order to address the wicked problems facing the twenty-first century land grant, scientists and citizens must avoid the partiality trap of constructing solutions with a singular scientific lens, and instead collaborate to coconstruct knowledge. This new partnership is not about substituting one form of knowledge for another but a new path toward problem solving that embraces respect for individual and community knowledge, incorporating values and interests *as well as* drawing upon knowledge that flows from the scientific reservoir. Our experience has taught us that this begins by setting a big table and inviting everyone to engage to avoid the problem of partiality, questioning what we think we know and admitting what we do not, listening more and presuming less, and avoiding the temptation to trespass where uninvited.

Conclusion

What then, can we learn about these experiments in deliberative dialogue at MSU? It is clear that citizens can engage meaningfully in discussions about science and wicked problems, as well as about the challenges these issues bring to everyday life and the conundrum they frequently present for land grant institutions. It is less clear that faculty are prepared to enter into such dialogue. Not only did we meet opposition to incorporating citizens in decision making, we encountered resistance to their unique knowledge and perspectives. This opposition to including the public in decision making seems to stem primarily from perceptions of public ignorance—that

citizens cannot possibly understand such complex information. In the end, both forms of opposition result in the valorization of science, yielding mixed results for society.

If room is to be made for democratizing the process of discovery and problem solving, new institutional forms of governance in higher education will need to be put in place—governance that brings citizens fundamentally into the knowledge-construction process. It remains to be seen whether higher education will acknowledge the problem and, with that, put into place policies and approaches to accommodate greater engagement of the faculty with the public. A good deal has been written about current reward structures for faculty and their inability to encourage this transition. Even if such systems are established, our work suggests that there is a difference between what institutions do and what faculty members do. Although there is considerable rhetoric associated with land grant universities as “engaged institutions,” that assertion (even if valid) does not automatically translate into the conclusion that faculty members at land grant locations are engaged faculty, generally, or more engaged than faculty counterparts located at non-land grant schools. When they are engaged, they may be so in ways that perpetuate the citizen-science divide rather than bridging it. The disciplinary and professional training faculty receive is a key variable, much more influential than institutional location or type. Believing that land grant institutions represent a “special case” (that is, land-grant faculty are more engaged than before, historically, or more engaged than colleagues located elsewhere) is probably more aspirational, if not self-serving, than it is real.

Perhaps the most useful finding from the MSU work is the constant presence of tension and struggle experienced by the MSU team. Our experience reinforces the belief that it does no good to look at deliberative work romantically; it is anything but conflict-free and harmonious. Rather, as Mouffe (2000) points out, struggle is at the vortex of public work; it is rife with conflict, loaded with the clash of values, power struggles, and ideas that seed struggle, but bring change. Faculty and citizens both need more preparation for the tension and struggle these epistemological divides engender, not training in consensus building. All citizen-science collaborative engagement will need to be understood for its dynamism that comes from problem complexity and competing values and interests. While

Believing that land grant institutions represent a “special case” is probably more aspirational than it is real.

no worthwhile change will likely take place inside or outside the academy without this awareness, the pressing question is whether contemporary land grant universities are truly up to the challenge.

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WHAT IS COLLEGE FOR? THE PUBLIC PURPOSE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Edited by Ellen Condliffe Lagemann and Harry Lewis
Elizabeth Hudson, Reviewer

In the last 15 years, higher education has more frequently articulated the importance of its civic mission. A new edited collection may interest *HEX* readers as an indication of how higher education frames its public role. *What Is College For? The Public Purpose of Higher Education* is edited by Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, a professor of the history of education, and Harry Lewis, a professor of computer science—both affiliated with Harvard University. They frame the book as an unapologetic critique of the growing economic discourse that characterizes higher education policy conversations and are especially troubled that an economic end for higher education is “widely agreed upon and therefore not in need of analysis or debate” (p. 2). The volume reflects the perspectives of many individuals in higher education who seek a stronger emphasis on and understanding of institutions’ public role—that is, a role that extends beyond solely the preparation of students for their careers.

Taken individually, the authors may further the existing conversations about the public good in higher education. The chapters employ diverse points of views about how higher education functions—and could better function—for the public. Several chapters interrogate aspects of the curriculum. The authors look to higher education—with a chapter each about nonelite education, the liberal arts, professional schools, and graduate education—as the place where individuals are given tools to act as responsible citizens. Another chapter encourages the framing of science and education as public goods in order to overcome pervasive antiintellectualism. By examining conversations about the public good from these multiple vantage points, the authors explore some new territory in the field and imply that if higher education institutions can change what they do or what they say about what they do, these institutions will be better justified with the public.

In the first chapter, “Renewing the Civic Mission of American Higher Education,” Lagemann and Lewis highlight the importance of civic education. They detail their charge to renew higher education’s civic mission:

[Higher education institutions] will not have fulfilled their public obligations simply by adding to the national stock of human capital, no matter how well they achieve that goal. They must recognize a direct responsibility for the civic learning of their students, spread across the curriculum (p. 12).

To accomplish this, colleges and universities must not only promote civic attitudes among students, but also attend to the nation’s problems, from education to the environment. These charges to higher education have been gaining momentum for more than a decade, but Lagemann and Lewis are careful to incorporate a deliberate message that can reach across diverse scientific fields, and it is captured in a “civic lesson” for students that they think should permeate the content of curriculum: “*You are responsible for not only your own future, but also for the future of the world*” (p. 39, emphasis in original).

From the perspective of a scientist, a chapter by Douglas Taylor captures the tension of how institutions can stay connected to a public purpose despite an increasingly antiintellectual public. Higher education institutions are facing a time when antiintellectualism has a “surprising effect on college and university faculty” (p. 46). Taylor offers evidence from his own experience as a faculty member in evolutionary biology and chair of the biology department at the University of Virginia. In the classroom, Taylor confronted a shifting public understanding of science that had him briefly apologize for any potential offense to the beliefs of students when he presented evolutionary theory. Through this narrative, he recognized that higher education “must accept some responsibility for the current state of affairs” (p. 60). He defends higher education’s contributions to “pure knowledge and [capturing] the imaginations of the brightest minds” as service to a public good and argues that scientific discoveries are public goods because of the potential benefits of fundamental advances. Education, as well, is presented as a public good, with its potential to generate a collectively more educated citizenry, with a

special emphasis on the benefits accrued from further education of the brightest students. By extension, Taylor sees higher education as a public good, and public acceptance of this premise as essential to combatting antiintellectual sentiments.

A contrast to Taylor's reflection on science and society is presented in a chapter by Paul Attewell and David E. Lavin entitled "The Other 75%: College Education Beyond the Elite." The authors accuse scholars of higher education of "parochialism," by attending closely to the development of traditional college students, and ultimately ignoring the majority—more than three quarters—of degree seekers in the U.S. who are older and/or part-time students. They cite problems in federal financial aid policy, which considers students as dependents into their mid-twenties. "[For] the nontraditional undergraduates who predominate today, college life is no time-out but rather an obstacle race of economic stress and cross pressure between family, work, and education" (p. 89). These are considerations for many working-class students at nonselective community universities, but they also exist at more selective institutions. In essence, the authors contend that higher education's public purposes, which they define as "developing students' civic courage, moral judgment, critical thinking, and scientific and global awareness" (p. 101), should be considered essential to all students regardless of the type of institution.

In another chapter, William M. Sullivan writes powerfully about the need to align professional education with public purpose. He notes that the migration of professional training from apprenticeships to university-based professional study aligned it more with meritocratic values. Post-World War II, technocratic knowledge production and quantifiable accountability resulted in the exclusion of educational outcomes that were less conducive to mathematical calculation, such as the connection of knowledge with public responsibility. As Sullivan argues, "the relative isolation of academic research and training from public concerns, while it fosters some kinds of intellectual development, has pushed the professions' social contract into the background during the critical years of schooling" (p. 119). The result is an imbalance of the "three dimensions of professional training"—intellectual training, skill-based apprenticeship, and ethical-based apprenticeship. He says that clinical education based in Dewey's concept of practical reasoning

should be modeled through a process of learning *while* doing, which is more complex than the common practice of learning *followed by* doing. Sullivan argues that educational processes should integrate the public purpose holistically, never losing sight of the artificial distinctions between theory and practice.

Other chapters highlight important considerations within the higher education system. Catharine R. Stimpson, dean emerita of the Graduate School of the Arts and Sciences and professor of English at NYU, provides insights about the nebulous history and purpose of graduate education in the United States. Elaine Tuttle Hansen, former president of Bates College and current executive director of the Center for Talented Youth at Johns Hopkins University, writes about the role of liberal arts education in the context of a national agenda for higher education institutions that pushes increased levels of enrollment and completion. She focuses on the values of liberal arts education that run contrary to consumerism and embrace a process that highlights slowness, complexity, focus, and contradictions.

What Is College For? The Public Purpose of Higher Education is another in a list of works over the 15 years highlighting a crisis of higher education's public purpose. Calls for higher education to reclaim, renew, or reinvigorate its civic purpose grow louder with each year of state funding cuts. Perhaps, though, to higher education's detriment, these calls may not be framed in a way that the public can appreciate. They read as reactionary and defensive responses to economic policy language in higher education, rather than as deep and deliberate calls for reflection on the emergent challenges and tensions of enacting a multifaceted institutional relationship with the public. If looking to foster a rich institutional discussion—through the authors' emphasis on defining a civic curriculum and interrogating who has access to it—the book gives dimension to the public purpose conversation for higher education leaders, policymakers, and faculty members. If the editors aim to foster a necessary inclusive conversation *with* the public about its purpose, this text will fall short. Perhaps, though, recognizing and delimiting the internal tensions of higher education's purpose is a necessary precursor for a conversation with any broad cross section of the public. From this text, it remains unclear whether or not higher education institutions want a public conversation about their purpose that extends into communities.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND HAR MEGIDDO

By David Mathews

What's the connection between American higher education and a town (Megiddo) located on a mountain (*har*) in the ancient Middle East? The connection may appear unnecessarily difficult to make, yet it's important. Bear with me.

In March, some of us at the Kettering Foundation were reflecting on a January White House meeting called "For Democracy's Future: Education Reclaims Our Civic Mission." Sitting in the foundation's Cousins House, we were talking to Caryn Musil and Elizabeth Minnich, both from the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) about a report made at the Washington meeting, which had been prepared by a committee that included Derek Barker, a Kettering program officer. The report proposes a number of steps that academic institutions could take to benefit American democracy.

At some point in our conversation, Derek noted that an 800-pound gorilla had been in the room when his committee drafted the report. The "gorilla" had an agenda quite different from the one the committee was considering. The gorilla's agenda came from external pressure on colleges and universities to be more efficient and productive in order to stem the growing cost of higher education, which has significantly outpaced inflation.

Elizabeth recalled other meetings where both these external pressures and higher education's own concerns were being discussed. Colleges and universities are being asked to cut expenses and do more with less while at the same time reach out and do more for external constituencies. The tension between the two imperatives was so great that an academic in one of these meetings said she felt like pulling out her hair!

Struck by how powerful this tension is, I have been reminded of the fateful battle at the town of Megiddo in 1479 BCE when Thutmose III drove out the prince of Kadesh. The clash was so prominent in the Middle East that it appears to be the basis for the Biblical "Armageddon."

Today, a great battle appears to be looming on the plains below the mountaintop citadels of higher education. The attacking forces

are intent on imposing productivity requirements on academe. These forces draw their strength from public concerns about the high cost of education and the lack of jobs for graduates. The campaign is already having effects, such as more reliance on less expensive adjunct faculty.

Making the case that higher education doesn't have any responsibility for graduating young people with job skills would be difficult. After all, from the time of the colonial colleges (which trained ministers) to the present, institutions of higher learning have recognized that their students need to be prepared for their careers. And it would make no sense at all to argue against cost effectiveness. Still, there seem to be reasons for concern about the implicit assumption that higher education is largely for the benefit of individuals and that any social benefit is the sum of these individual gains. The counterargument, well put in a chapter in *What Is College For?* by Ellen Lagemann and Harry Lewis, is that "higher education has vital purposes beyond aggregated individual economic benefits." Lagemann and Lewis fear that such purposes have "fallen by the wayside."

The defense on the hill—where these citadels of academe are located—is divided. One camp consists of academic traditionalists who champion the cultivation of the mind and fly the banner of excellence. The other camp is a polyglot array of the new legions of outreach: civic engagement, public scholarship, and community development. A richly heterogeneous lot, they have no common banner.

Of course, using the battle at Megiddo as a reference point is shamelessly overdramatic and potentially misleading. That said, Kettering is watching both the public that appears to support the attacking forces as well as those in the new legions of outreach who have a democratic bent. (The other group of academics, those dedicated to excellence, is battle tested and well known.) Severe damage to the Megiddo of higher education appears likely, perhaps by slow starvation for want of outside resources. Could this clash be avoided or even made constructive?

Look again at the public that seems to be supporting the attacking forces. The citizenry is concerned about more than the economy. Some are also worried about moral or ethical issues. Others

worry about the role of citizens in the democracy of the future. Could the democratically inclined, citizen-centered camps on the hill relate to these other public issues?

When reflecting on the Megiddo analogy, I also recalled a prescient observation from a report, *The Changing Agenda for American Higher Education*, on a 1976 Airlie House conference, which was sponsored by the then Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The report includes a quote from Earl Cheit, then dean of the business school at the University of California, Berkeley, who had said in a speech, “review procedures, regulation, litigation now command so much attention from college and university officials, it is easy to forget that for most of its history higher education in the U.S. was a movement, not a bureaucracy.”

Cheit was right. Higher education’s identity in the United States has come from being part of the great social and political movements in American history. Beginning with turning colonial colleges into “seminaries of sedition” during the Revolution and continuing with the creation of the state universities to provide leadership for a new nation, American higher education has been shaped by external influences. Public purposes are reflected in the histories of the agricultural and mechanical colleges, colleges for African Americans and Native Americans, and community colleges. In every case, higher education has been enriched by an alliance with citizens who have a great cause. That is exactly what I am proposing now when I suggest that the democratically inclined in academe might find much in common with a citizenry concerned about its declining role in our political system.

The potential of such an alliance prompted the Kettering Foundation to look at its research to see what implications our studies have had for strengthening the relationship between the public and higher education. We asked ourselves, what is today’s most significant political movement? Although it flies below most radar screens, I would pick the quest for a democracy in which citizens have a stronger hand in shaping the future. It is a movement of citizens to get off the political sidelines where they feel they have been marginalized. It’s a movement where, in Harry Boyte’s terms, citizens are producers of public goods rather than consumers of services, constituents of politicians, or simply voters. Using

a phrase coined by Ben Barber, I would call this the movement for “strong democracy.”

What is higher education’s relationship to this quest for a strong, citizen-centered democracy? Unfortunately, that question is being asked in conversations overshadowed by cost and productivity issues. Opposing these issues or demonizing their advocates isn’t going to be effective. After all, reducing costs is key to realizing two values higher education holds dear: greater access and greater diversity. The trouble is that most eyes aren’t on higher education’s role in democracy.

The good news is that academe is caught up in its own movement to legitimize the scholarship that has public relevance and to give students opportunities to serve as well as combine service with classroom instruction. Having studied the relationship between higher education and the public for more than 30 years, the foundation hasn’t seen anything like the current interest in civic engagement.

The academic movement is both wide and deep. Most of the energy is coming from faculty members who want to integrate their scholarly interests with their public lives. And nearly all types of institutions are involved. The implications of the movement reach down into academic disciplines, into the professional schools, and into the nature of knowledge itself. Kettering is now involved with studies of the civic roots of academic disciplines from political science to speech communication. We are following up on earlier studies of the liberal arts as civic arts and looking at the civic dimensions of all subjects, including those in the sciences. Through *HEX*, the foundation has published articles on the way citizens know through the practical deliberation that is aimed at sound judgment. We are trying to resurrect Aristotle on moral reasoning and Isocrates on the reasoning that is tied to feeling and imagination. In addition, we’ve found a shared concern across many professions that are moving beyond technical skills and expertise to look at the social and political dimensions of their work. (We’ve been following the work of scholars like Bill Sullivan, who pioneered the study of civic professionalism.)

For all of its promise, however, the civic engagement movement in academe faces some serious challenges. Some are internal

to the academy. One challenge is to give the movement greater intellectual integrity for a diverse group of academics who speak different languages. Nearly everyone in the movement would say they serve democracy, yet what they mean by democracy varies considerably. That isn't the problem, however. The problem is that there is too little analysis of those meanings. This opens the movement to the charge that it is largely rhetorical—a public relations Potemkin village with good intentions but little substance.

Ideally, advocates of public scholarship, service learning, and similar ventures would explain what they think democracy is and what it requires and then critique what they are doing by these standards. This would be an open, shared analysis. Scholars interested in community economic development may be moving in this direction by looking into the relationship between their concepts of community and development, on the one hand, and concepts of democracy, on the other.

A more detailed or nanoanalysis would put the work citizens do as citizens alongside the work of scholars and professionals to see if they are aligned and supportive, or, if they aren't, how they might become mutually beneficial. Journalists have come closest to doing this when they have compared the way they name problems and frame issues with the way citizens give names to problems in terms meaningful to them and frame issues for shared decision making.

Other challenges to the engagement movement on campus include the almost total absence of trustee participation. For years now, we have been trying in vain to locate a conversation among trustees about their own relationship to a citizenry that wants to get off the sidelines. Although trustees ostensibly represent these citizens, we've only met a handful of board members who want to address people's concerns about the future of our democracy.

The need for tenure standards that recognize public scholarship is an obvious challenge. Another is creating spaces within the institutions for initiatives in strong democracy, spaces that provide structure without the constraints that come from the typical academic silos. *HEX* has reported on the institutes or centers for public life that are trying to create this space. Of course, there are many kinds of institutes that make useful contributions; we've tried to find those that focus on building a greater capacity for citizens

to do their work (work such as the collective decision making that is the key to collective civic action). We have found more than 50 so far, and the number is growing.

Still another on-campus challenge—and opportunity—is in the way students come to see themselves as political actors. Strategically, students are critical as a source of energy for civic engagement, particularly when their idealism is joined by engaged faculty members. On some campuses, faculty and students have come together in classes where the faculty introduce students to a deliberative politics they can practice every day—a politics of shared decision making and action. Many of these courses use National Issues Forums guides for deliberative decision making.

The foundation is also watching some promising experiments to push beyond service and service learning (both are valuable) to embed students in ongoing community problem solving. These experiments are patterned after a project at Auburn University that put architecture students in rural communities to design needed structures using local materials like old tires and hay. The students didn't just drop into the communities; they lived there long enough to see the consequences of their work. Auburn is one of the institutions that are building on that experience by instituting a program of community-based civic work and study.

Even though most of what I have reported so far is occurring on campus, the orientation of the civic engagement movement is outward. It is moving in the direction of the citizenry that is supporting the campaign for greater college and university productivity. Regrettably, I don't think the campus movement has gone far enough to ally with the strong democracy movement off campus. If history is any guide, restoring public purpose to colleges and universities can't be done without engaging the public—and, I would add, engaging the public *on its own terms*.

In an essay entitled “Ships Passing in the Night?” I reported on foundation research that found a serious discrepancy between the questions citizens pose in their own terms as they struggle to solve the problems of their communities and the responses of academic and other institutions that want to assist them. In communities hit by some type of disaster—a hurricane, a collapsed economy, a rash of crime and violence—people want to know

how *they* can come together as a community, despite their differences, to rebuild their communities. Academic institutions are less likely to engage this question and more likely just to offer expert advice, services, and technical assistance.

This discrepancy undermines what the Megiddo analogy suggests is critical: a solid connection between the strong democracy movement off campus and the civic engagement movement on campus. To meet this challenge, academics will have to find roles off campus that go beyond providing expert knowledge (which does have its uses), perhaps even beyond being a “coach” for communities, or a “guide-on-the-side.” More appropriate roles may have to do with the public or collective learning that distinguishes resilient communities from those less resilient. Maybe academics should be colearners who work in tandem with communities. Communities won’t necessarily be interested in the subjects academics are investigating. Still, although the two have different ways of knowing, the spirit of learning, the desire to understand, can be shared.

Another related possibility for connecting the strong democracy movement off campus with the civic engagement movement would be to revisit the mission of higher education—but from the public’s perspective rather than the perspective of colleges and universities. Doing this may be tricky because asking people what they want from higher education may yield the predictable answers: lower costs and jobs for graduates. However, if people were first asked a broader question about their concerns for the future—and then what academic institutions should be doing about those concerns—the responses might reveal more about how citizens see academe. As already noted, people have more than just economic concerns, even though those may be uppermost on their minds right now. A new National Issues Forums guide, *Shaping Our Future: How Should Higher Education Help Us Create the Society We Want?* has been prepared for public deliberations on the mission of higher education. It could prove helpful, provided that the deliberations are more off campus than on.

Returning to today’s looming clash at academe’s Megiddo, the stakes are high. Costs have to be reigned in. Some type of post-secondary education is the key to most high-paying jobs today. Access to that education is critical. At the same time, the

soul of America's colleges and universities was shaped by the social, economic, and political movements that spawned these institutions. Take that away, and academic institutions become what Earl Cheit feared—bureaucracies whose goals are merely efficiency. Public purposes, the animating spirits of our colleges and universities, would be lost. That can't be allowed to happen, even with an 800-pound gorilla in the room. And it need not.

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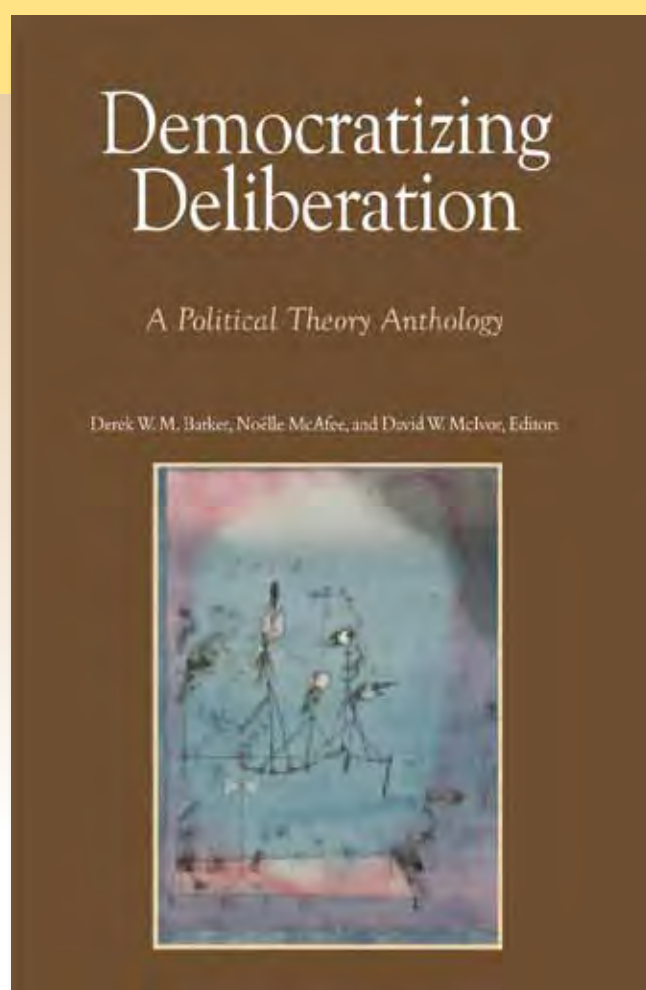
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