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Higher Education for the Public Good

a report from the national leadership dialogues

"Serving society is only one of higher education's functions, but it is surely among the most important. At a time when the nation has its full share of difficulties, the question is not whether universities need to concern themselves with society's problems but whether they are discharging this responsibility as well as they should."

The National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good (formerly the Kellogg Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good) is affiliated with the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education at the University of Michigan's School of Education. The mission of the National Forum is to "significantly increase awareness, understanding, commitment and action relative to the public service role of higher education in the United States."

The Kellogg Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good was established by a generous grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation in August 2000. In 2004, the foundation extended its support for the project through 2006. At that time, with the Kellogg Foundation's support and encouragement, the name of the initiative was changed to the National Forum for the Public Good, reflecting the broadened scope and objectives of its efforts in American higher education.

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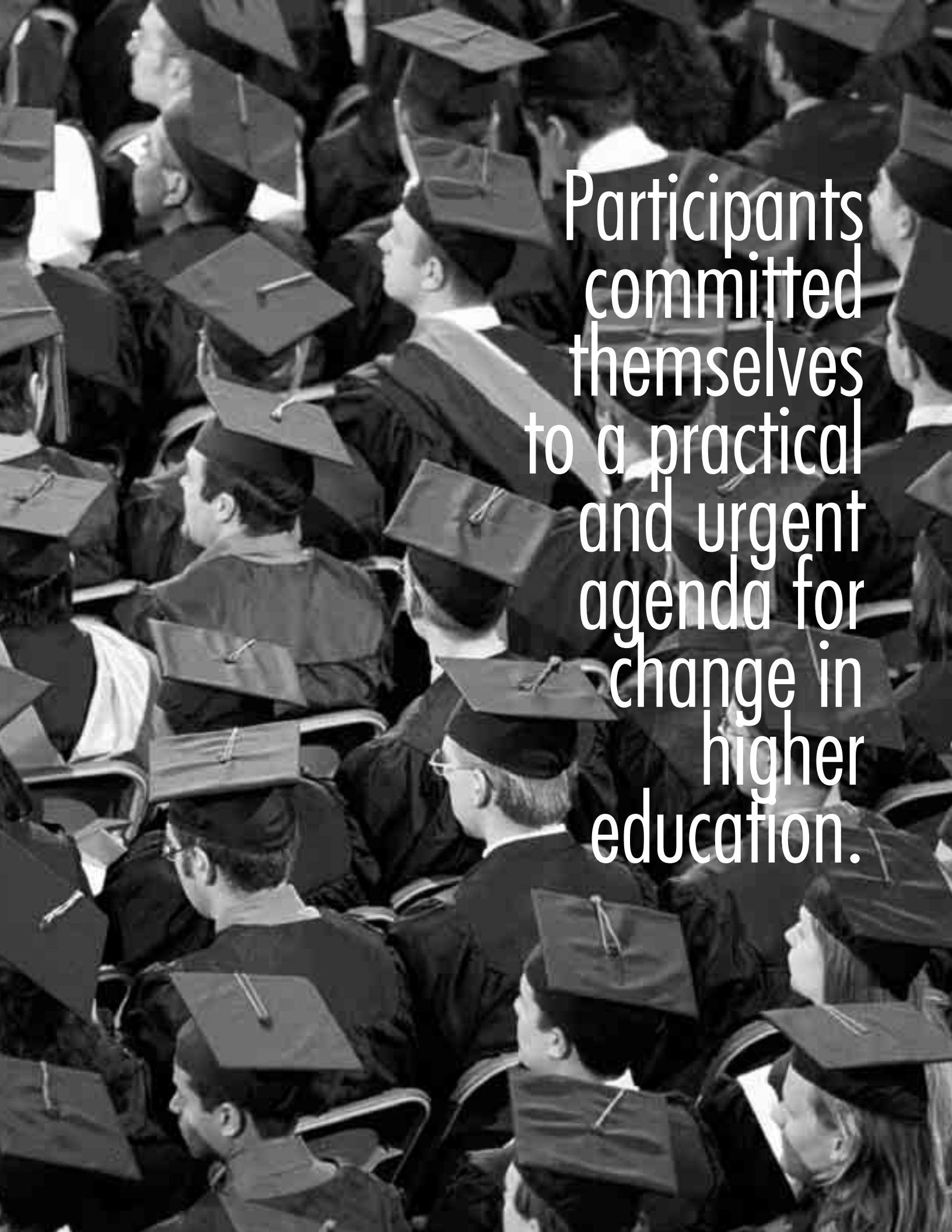
Higher Education for the Public Good

A Report from the National Leadership Dialogues

By Scott London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— Robert M. Berdahl
Chancellor of the University of California Berkeley
Speech at the National Press Club, June 1999

Serving society is only one of higher education's functions, but it is surely among the most important. At a time when the nation has its full share of difficulties . . . the question is not whether universities need to concern themselves with society's problems but whether they are discharging this responsibility as well as they should.

— Derek Bok
President Emeritus of Harvard University
Universities and the Future of America

"If we want to transform our organizations, we need to think about our work in public terms."

Nancy Kari
Higher Education Consortium on Urban Affairs

Preface

This report describes a continuing series of dialogues, and the stirrings of a movement, centered on the place of higher education among our social institutions and as a leading force in American society. It documents a remarkable series of gatherings convened by the National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good. Over the course of six weeks in the spring of 2002, three groups comprising over two hundred educators, policymakers, and students, along with a small number of foundation executives, community organizers, and others, came together to restate their commitment to civic responsibility and to examine practical strategies for renewing the covenant between higher education and society at large.

The dialogues each focused on a specific theme vital to the creation of a larger civic movement in American higher education. The first examined the role of public understanding, public support, and public policy in shaping the connection between higher education and society. The second took up the implications of social responsibility for faculty, administration, students, and the community. And the third explored practical strategies for bringing academic institutions and cultures into closer alignment with their public missions.

In the fall of 2002, participants from the first three dialogues reconvened at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor for a National Summit on Higher Education for the Public Good, an impressive gathering of over 200 people. The objective was to lay the groundwork for a common agenda and to identify key strategies that can be taken by professional associations, foundations, institutional leaders, scholars, practitioners, legislatures and policy-makers.

As outlined at the end of this report, the participants of the National Summit committed themselves to a practical and urgent agenda for change in higher education, one that has the potential not only to revivify the public service mission of our colleges and universities but also begin to heal the separation between our nation's academic and civic cultures, perhaps even help to restore confidence and legitimacy to our institutions in the face of declining public trust and support.

When we initiated our efforts to focus more attention on higher education as a public good, we recognized that we were dealing with ideas and relationships that were philosophical and, for many,

a bit abstract. We resisted the advice we received to simplify our language or to provide our own definition of the "public good" because we believed — and still believe — that it is only through an open and sustained deliberation on higher education's place in society that we could develop a shared context of meaning and a commitment to act upon our convictions.

With that in mind, it should come as no surprise that this report does not conclude with a simple statement of what we believe the public good should be. What is clear, we hope, is that a continuing dialogue about society's future and higher education's role in its achievement must guide and inform what we do at every level of our work. Defining the public good will always involve contested ideas about vision, values and relationships. Even acknowledging the importance of a "public good" as an organizing ideal for our social institutions represents a critical step forward.

In the months since the National Summit, several important events have contributed to the ongoing discussion of the public good. The positions argued before the U.S. Supreme Court in the cases challenging the principle of affirmative action are an example of this continuing debate. The plaintiff's cases, organized with support from the Center for Individual Rights, argued that the University of Michigan's admissions policies unfairly denied them access to the institution. The University contended that there were educational and societal benefits to be realized by providing a diverse educational environment for all students. The Supreme Court ruling acknowledged a compelling institutional and state interest and thus affirmed the principle of affirmative action. While this is gratifying, all of us recognize that the public discussion of this issue is far from over.

Simultaneously, students and their families have been shouldering an increasing share of the burden of paying for higher education. In some ways this is an obvious response to declining state resources, but it also reflects a belief that the primary benefits of a college education accrue to individuals rather than society as a whole. As we look at enrollment projections over the next several years, coupled with pressures on state budgets, we can anticipate further challenges to the principle of higher education access as a societal benefit. Just as the aspiration rate of African-American and Hispanic students is climbing, we may be imposing a new "participation tax" on opportunity.

In state legislatures and assemblies there has been an ongoing discussion about the importance of holding colleges and universities accountable for specific outcomes. Our analysis of the performance measures suggested in connection with these initiatives makes it very clear that the emphases center on the individual and economic returns of higher education. Relatively little has been proposed that measures the broader social benefits of colleges and universities, such as their contribution to civic life, cultural preservation, free inquiry, and other essential public goods. Tragically, the idea of higher education as an agent of social change and civic renewal has been deeply eroded.

In short, what originally might strike many of us as an abstraction — that colleges and universities have an essential role to play as stewards of the public interest — is a matter of contested values

held within a very contemporary context. This idea has important implications for us all. Our goal at the National Forum is to continue to nurture this ongoing discussion, to contribute to the quality of the public discourse — and in fact, to make the debate more concrete, more evident and more public.

For us, the depth and breadth of each dialogue gave voice to the common commitment to higher education's role and responsibility to serve society. The mirrored image of this common commitment is a set of daunting challenges that lie before us. We feel especially blessed to be walking this important path with such a remarkable group of citizen leaders and look forward to the next steps on this exciting journey.

John Burkhardt
Director
National Forum on Higher
Education for the Public Good

Tony Chambers
Associate Director
National Forum on Higher
Education for the Public Good

"We need to bring a lot more balance into the way we approach change."

Alexander Astin
Higher Education Research Institute

Introduction

In a commencement address at Ohio State University in May 2002, President Bush called on America's youth to embrace "a new ethic of responsibility" and to build "a culture of service." "America needs more than taxpayers, spectators, and occasional voters," he declared. "America needs full-time citizens — men and women who respond to the call of duty, who stand up for the weak, who speak up for their beliefs, who sacrifice for a greater good."

While rhetorical appeals are one of the hallmarks of a good commencement speech, the President's comments were grounded in more than lofty idealism. His call to public service reflects a deepening concern in many quarters of American society about the decline of civic engagement and the erosion of confidence in the political process. Evidence shows that over the last generation, Americans have become more disconnected from each other, from their communities, and from the institutions of public life than ever before.

It seems fitting that President Bush would chose one of the nation's great public universities to issue such a call to action. The idea that colleges and universities have a public face, that they are stewards of the common good, and that they are vital instruments of national purpose is deeply rooted in American higher education. More than two centuries ago, Thomas Jefferson avowed that the purpose of a liberal education was to promote and defend the "publick happiness" and "guard the sacred deposit of the rights and liberties" of the people. This ideal was carried forward in the nineteenth century by the land-grant movement which brought many of America's public universities into being. And it is reflected today in the mission statements of colleges and universities across the nation that stress the critical link between higher education and the public good.

Yet over the last half-century, the academy's commitment to outreach and engagement has been overshadowed by other pressing demands. New priorities — from expanding enrollment and strengthening academic disciplines to preparing students for the job market and, often enough, simply making financial ends meet — have taken precedence over serving the public good. As the academy has grown in scale, scope, and prestige — becoming an engine of economic growth and an unparalleled source of technological and scientific advancement — it has also retreated from public life. Today's colleges and universities have become worlds unto themselves, distant and disconnected from society at large. They have their own intellectual agenda, their own professional norms, and their own distinct culture.

In the rhetoric of higher education, much is made of "preparing students for responsible citizenship," "developing future leaders," and "inculcating civic values." But the fact is that few schools have actually made good on these promises over the last half-century. If anything, they have directed most of their resources and educational priorities to meeting private needs like economic advancement and social mobility, not serving the common good.

The disconnection between our academic and civic cultures is reflected in a host of problems, from the indifference of many institutions to their surrounding communities to the rise of distance-learning programs and "virtual" academies without campuses, student activities, or even permanent faculty. It is reflected, too, in trustees who reward presidents not for fostering shared values on campus, or enriching its civic culture, but for raising money and generating good publicity for the institution. Above all, it is reflected in the disengagement and cynicism of students who lack faith not only in politicians but, increasingly, in the democratic process itself.

The academy's retreat from public life has been a source of deepening concern over the last decade. A flurry of cover stories and op-ed articles have appeared with ominous titles like "What's Wrong with the American University," "Public Colleges, Broken Promises," and "Saving Higher Education's Soul." Scholarly works point to "moral collapse" and a widespread anxiety and insecurity of purpose in the profession. "Academics have done a poor job of defining themselves and their work to the public and often even to their own students," writes Lawrence W. Levine in *The Opening of the American Mind*. "We have simply lost track of the overall point of the endeavor," says Charles W. Anderson in *Prescribing the Life of the Mind*.

Yet there are stirrings of change in the academy. A small but diverse network of educators has come together in recent years to assess these problems and renew the civic mission. Conferences, roundtables and symposia have been organized around the country and new programs, institutes, and partnerships are emerging on a wide range of academic fronts. These initiatives seek to promote civic engagement on campus, forge stronger ties between institutions and their surrounding communities, and develop the theory and practice of "engaged scholarship," among other important public purposes.

While these efforts are certainly encouraging, much more needs to be done. By and large, the initiatives are still peripheral to what academic leaders regard as the primary "business" of education — credentialing, research, alumni relations, and professional training. What is needed is a broad-based movement aimed at infusing civic engagement into every aspect of academic life, one that spans departmental and institutional boundaries and affects not only the structures but the *culture* of higher learning.

In 2002, the National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good organized a series of National Leadership Dialogues to explore this possibility. Over the course of seven months, a diverse group totaling more than two hundred — college and university presidents, deans, provosts, faculty, graduate students, and association representatives, along with a handful of legislators, foundation

executives, and community leaders — came together to assess the state of the movement and explore practical and systematic strategies for change.

The first dialogue, held at the Aspen Institute's Wye River Conference Center on Maryland's eastern shore, April 22-24, 2002, examined the civic responsibilities of higher education from the vantage point of two key stakeholders, the public and government. The California gathering, held at the Mandalay Beach Resort in Oxnard, May 8-10, 2002, focused on the role of constituencies within higher education — academic leaders, faculty, administrators, students, and others — in building and strengthening a movement for change. The third meeting took place at the Riverwood Inn & Conference Center in Monticello, outside Minneapolis, June 3-5, 2002. Its focus was the role of institutions — colleges, universities, associations, and other centers of academic life — as agents of change and renewal. Participants from the first three gatherings then reconvened at the University of Michigan in late October 2002 for a "National Summit," one of the largest-ever gatherings of academic leaders aimed at strengthening the public purposes of higher education. Over the course of three days, participants worked closely together to craft a collective road map, or common agenda, to strengthen the relationship between higher education and society.

In his welcoming remarks at the first gathering, John Burkhardt, director of the National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good, urged the group to adopt the language and the logic of a social

The National Leadership Dialogues

DATE	LOCATION	THEME
April 22-24, 2002	The Aspen Institute, Wye River, Maryland	The Role of Public Understanding, Public Support, and Public Policy in Reflecting and Shaping the Covenant between Higher Education and Society
May 8-10, 2002	Mandalay Beach Resort, Oxnard, California	Educating for the Public Good: Implications for Faculty, Students, Administrators, and Communities
June 3-5, 2002	Riverwood Conference Center, Monticello, Minnesota	Practical Strategies for Institutional Civic Engagement and Institutional Leadership that Reflect and Shape the Covenant between Higher Education and Society
October 30-November 1, 2002	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan	Building a National Action Agenda to Redefine and Sustain the Covenant between Higher Education and Society

movement and to think in the broadest possible terms about the challenges and opportunities involved in this work. "There are examples of wonderful civic engagement efforts going on all around the country," he noted. "Examples of good things going on within institutions are heartening and important. But if we are going to transform the system of higher education we have to cultivate a larger movement. The challenges we face and the moral questions that are at the heart of this require nothing less than a social and professional movement, one that seeks to transform the relationship between what we do and the society we serve."

Burkhardt stressed that restoring the public service mission of colleges and universities requires change at many different levels — within individuals, within departments, within institutions, within the academic establishment and, ultimately within society at large. The National Leadership Dialogues are aimed at effecting change in one sphere in particular — the *system* of higher education. "We can't have any impact at all without changing all of these levels," he said. "But several decades of innovation suggest that sustained, transformative change cannot occur without reference to the whole work that we do in society — how it's done, what it means, the values we associate with it, the expectations we create for it, and how it's regarded. What we are really trying to do is establish a new context of meaning and to give a higher sustaining purpose to the work that we are doing."

An ecological impact model

Gail McClure, Vice President of Programs at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, underscored the need for a system-wide approach to change in higher education. "The Kellogg Foundation has been involved in grantmaking that has explored the boundary between higher education and society for many years," she said. "One of the most important lessons I have learned from this is that we cannot meaningfully change the performance of an entire system of institutions — and certainly not a system as complex and diverse as the system of higher education in our country by working in one institution at a time."

She went on to say that the National Leadership Dialogues represent "the kind of effort that it will take" — presidents and chancellors, leaders of our national associations, philanthropic partners, public officials, scholars, activists, and a new generation of inspired students and faculty all working together for change. "I am hoping that through these discussions we might engender a new sense of commitment to the public service mission of American higher education. Such a renewal of our covenant with society would reshape public policy, reshape institutional practices, reshape the expectations and experiences of our students, reshape our communities and, ultimately, revitalize and secure our democracy."

Educating for Engagement, Advocacy and Activism

I see a very unique role for higher education that goes far beyond economic development. The role of higher education is more than just preparing young people for careers. It is more than making them ready to serve as productive and engaged members of society. Our campuses have a very active role to play in *shaping* society.

Just think about the importance of campus activism in the civil rights movement. It succeeded because it united people of good will from across the country, from every strata of society, and every walk of life. Campus activism was an important and vital element of this monumental upheaval and it helped change society for the better, forever.

I have the impression that right now we are on the cusp of the next unifying, mobilizing, campus movement. The time has come for a new wave of activism focused on the damage we are doing to our environment and the need to act with a sense of urgency to undo that damage. Few issues demand our attention and involvement more than the environment.

Within this movement, there are a number of ways our colleges and universities can strengthen their link with society. The first builds on the practical role of our universities and colleges as centers of study and research. There are so many issues affecting our environment for which we lack clear answers, such as the impact of global warming, the effects of sprawl, and the debate between landfills and incinerators. These and many other environmental issues cry out for research and understanding.

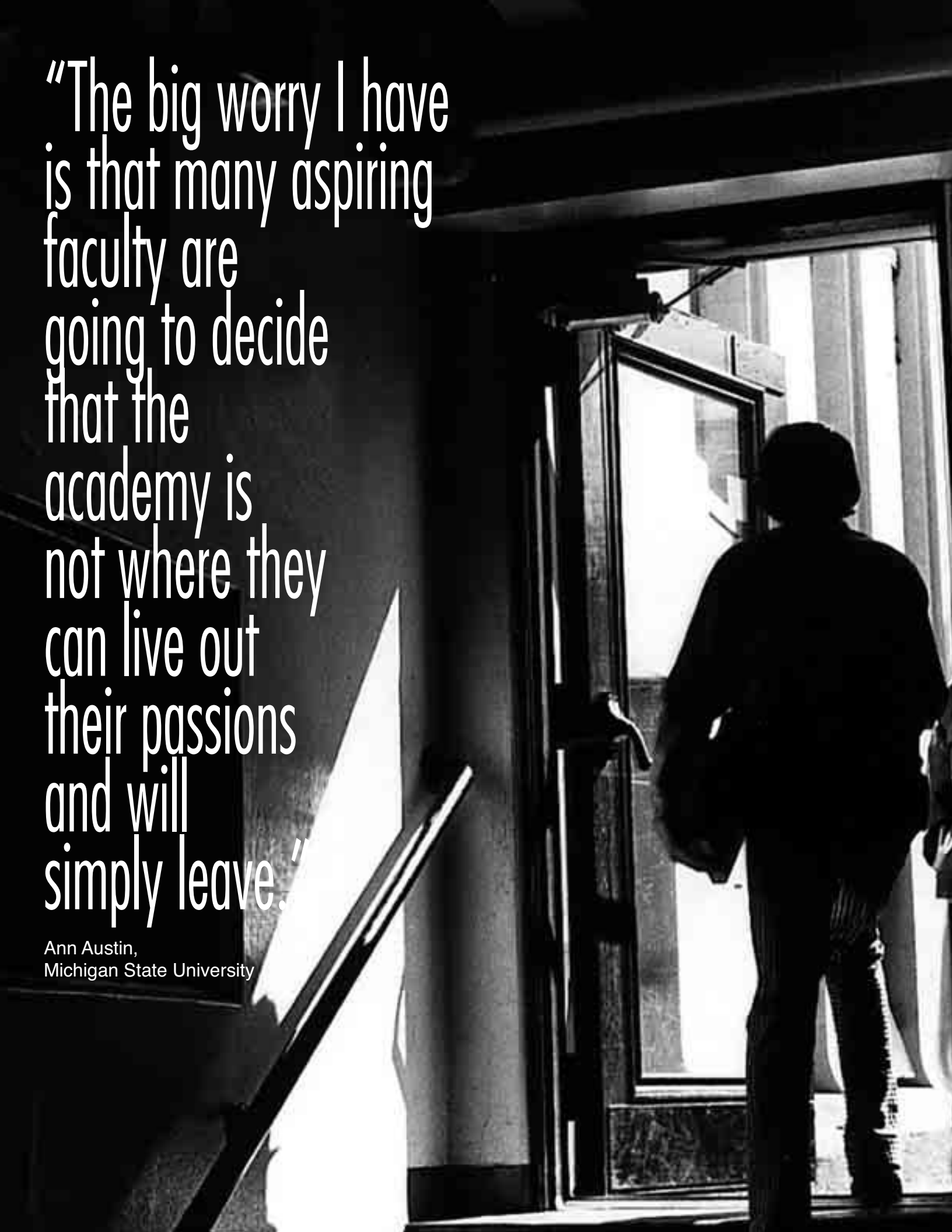
The second area is the classroom. We need to incorporate an environmental ethos into the college curriculum. We need to educate students on environmental citizenship. I know there are some who will ask if this is the proper role of our colleges and universities. But think about it, it has always been the role of institutes of higher learning to teach the basic values of a civil society.

The final area of impact from our colleges and universities comes outside the labs and outside the classrooms: it is the need for engagement, advocacy, and activism. I am, of course, not calling for violent protest. But we must raise the voices of researchers, professors and students — not small groups of activists that can be easily dismissed, but rather an outpouring of anger and outrage. There is, after all, so much about which we must be outraged. We simply must be more aggressive in protecting our environment.

Each of us here today has seen this exact same type of movement rise up, gain an unstoppable momentum, and bring about lasting change. It happened with the civil rights movement. It happened with the women's movement. It happened with the anti-Apartheid movement. And it will happen with the environmental movement.

The time has come for individuals and institutions, especially our colleges and universities, to enter the arena. Let us not stand by as timid souls while our planet — our very survival — is on the line.

— The Honorable Parris N. Glendening
Former Governor of Maryland



"The big worry I have is that many aspiring faculty are going to decide that the academy is not where they can live out their passions and will simply leave."

Ann Austin,
Michigan State University

Chapter One

Educating for the Public Good

George Orwell once observed that words like "democracy," "freedom," and "justice" have come to mean so much in general that they have ceased to mean anything in particular. He might have said the same about the term "public good," a phrase that conjures up a range of wholesome associations but resists almost all attempts at a definition. As the National Leadership Dialogues got underway, there was some grumbling about the lack of a commonly-agreed definition. Some participants urged the National Forum to take the lead in articulating a general statement on the public good, one that could be promoted and endorsed within the academic community as a whole. But John Burkhardt called for a more open-ended approach. "I want to lay to rest the notion that a few people, even with a lot of input, are going to define the 'public good,'" he said. "In some ways, 'public good' cannot be defined. It's a value, not a definition."

Participants did agree that while America's system of higher education is founded on a long and rich tradition of public service, it has not done all it can in recent years to respond to our nation's most pressing social needs. Worse, current trends in the academic world suggest a move in the opposite direction. As institutions of higher learning become more closely linked to for-profit activities and market forces, America's colleges and universities are in danger of losing their privileged status as guardians of the public interest.

But in spite of these worrisome developments, and partly in response to them, there are some promising signs of change. Programs and initiatives aimed at renewing the public purposes of higher education are beginning to emerge on a number of fronts. They take many forms, including diversity and access, volunteerism and service-learning, learning communities and leadership training, professional ethics and faculty development, capstone courses and integrative studies, and collaborative and problem-based learning. What these efforts share is a commitment to civic and social responsibility, to serving and protecting the common welfare.

The term "public good" speaks to this commitment. It implies a moral obligation on the part of individuals and institutions to attend to social problems, either by doing good works in the community or by directing academic resources toward applied research, community-building, and other forms of "engaged scholarship." Laying out the framework for the dialogues, John Burkhardt and Tony Chambers spoke of the relationship between higher education and society at large in

terms of a *covenant*, an essential agreement or promise that carries with it an ethical responsibility. The term is a provocative and difficult one, they acknowledged, because of its moral and even religious overtones. But it captures the essential truth that, at bottom, colleges and universities exist to advance the common good. The covenant is embodied not only in the core values of academic institutions, but also in a set of widely held beliefs in society about the role and responsibility of higher education. It is the integrity of that relationship that is at stake today.

Some felt that the public good is best expressed in terms of actual programs and practices, such as civic education, community-based research, university partnerships, and other forms of outreach and engagement. The key, they stressed, is to anchor the discussion not just in good intentions but also in good works. More than one participant invoked William Blake's famous line that those who would do good must do so in "minute particulars." Calling for public service and social responsibility can breed cynicism on campus and tarnish the institution's legitimacy in the community if it is not backed up by real commitments. Lester Monts, senior vice provost of academic affairs at the University of Michigan, cautioned against "the ill-effects of bad missionary work."

There was also a pervasive sense that the "public good," by definition, involves the public. The academy cannot presume to speak or act on behalf of the public unless it plays some role in defining its own interests. Colleges and universities routinely study and survey the public, but rarely do they engage community members, civic leaders, and other non-academics in sustained public work. Promoting the public good therefore means creating opportunities for substantive dialogue and collaboration to take place between institutions and their surrounding communities — for people to come together to, as John Dedrick of the Kettering Foundation put it, "frame issues, make decisions, and act on common problems."

Another dimension of the public good is the importance of understanding what it means to be members of a public. There are, after all, many publics and the prevailing view of the public good often depends on which public happens to be defining the good. The academy has a critical role to play in giving voice to those publics that are poor, weak, or otherwise afflicted. It also has a part to play in *creating* publics by serving as a venue for dialogue, deliberation, and collective action.

The public good can be likened to a "moral resource," observed Richard Cuoto, professor of leadership studies at Antioch University. A moral resource is best understood as a pursuit rather than an end-point, he said. Like trust, kindness, compassion, and other moral resources, the public good is best realized in the pursuit. "That's not to say we should walk on false paths or fool's errands. But there is something valuable in the process and we shouldn't be deterred by the difficulty of achieving it. Those people pursuing it come closest to knowing it, and they are also the ones who can help others along in the journey."

Reexamining Academic Values

In our national surveys of entering college students, we have documented some rather troubling changes. First, there is a disengagement of students across the board, a kind of withdrawal into individualism. It takes the form of disengagement from academics (while grades are higher, students are studying less and less), and disengagement from politics and the democratic process. Second, materialism is alive and well. Students tend to see their education in much more instrumental terms. Instead of viewing the college or university experience as an intrinsic good, it's seen as something you do in order to get somewhere else. Third, there is a disinclination on the part of students to get engaged in social causes of various sorts. There is one exception — volunteerism — which is experiencing a bull market now (in part because high schools are requiring or encouraging volunteerism at a level they have never done in the past). But there is a net decline in student service and volunteer work between high school and college. We are not even maintaining the level of engagement that students show when they come in.

In a sense, those of us in higher education have got caught up in the same individualistic and materialistic value system we see in our students. We are basically modeling for our young people the kinds of values they are expressing in the surveys. For example, the criteria for hiring CEOs at many institutions are increasingly focused on fund-raising and public relations. Thirty years ago, we didn't have directors of development at most institutions. Now they are among the highest paid people in the institution. The development office also seems to be moving closer and closer to the president's office.

One of the prices we pay for materialism, individualism, and competitiveness is that we become focused exclusively on exteriors and neglect our interior development. We need a much greater focus on values, beliefs, spirituality, and self-esteem. If we want to address issues like engagement, civic-mindedness and public service, the road to that is through the interior life of our students. And in order to address that we need to be talking with each other about our *own* values, beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions.

Why this kind of discourse and dialogue is not at the center of our educational efforts is a big puzzle to me. The only talking we do is at faculty and academic meetings which are little more than theaters for the display of our critical thinking skills. What we need are serious, deep, personal conversations about who we are and what we care about. If we are serious about changing the culture of higher education, we've got to start talking to each other in extended conversations about our lives as academics.

— Alexander Astin
Director, Higher Education Research Institute
University of California, Los Angeles

In practical terms, the work of promoting the public good takes many different forms. Leaders, administrators, faculty, students and other members of the academic community each have different roles to play and embody the public service mission in different ways. In sharply-focused small-group sessions at each of the National Leadership Dialogues, participants explored these roles at some length. The goal of these discussions was not only to identify practical strategies for institutional and systemic reform in higher education, but also to think deeply about the implicit values and beliefs at the heart of academic life.

Embracing real change requires that academics "reawaken a sense of personal meaning," in the words of Judith Ramaley, former president of Portland State and the University of Vermont who now serves as assistant director of the Education and Human Resource Directorate at the National Science Foundation. The challenge, she said, is "how to get past the constraints of academic professionalism to restore a sense of personal connection, while doing it in such a way that it doesn't become *prescriptive* — so that people don't impose their own meanings upon others."

Academics need to reflect deeply on teaching, research, and service as a *calling* not simply a profession, observed Helen Astin, professor of education at UCLA. All too often, she said, people in higher education discuss the need for change at the level of ideas or in purely technical terms that fail to engage their passions. If civic engagement and social responsibility are to mean something they must be rooted in conviction, caring, and commitment.

Leadership

Speaking at the California gathering, Frances Hesselbein, chairman of the board of the Peter F. Drucker Foundation and former CEO of the Girl Scouts of America, noted that there was a time when college and university presidents spoke out on pressing social issues and defended the public interest. Academic leaders such as Derek Bok, Theodore Hesburgh, and William Sloane Coffin put themselves — and sometimes their institutions — on the line for what they believed. "We didn't have to agree with them," she said, "but we knew what they believed. And they gave a voice to the sector."

But American higher education has fallen "strangely silent" on many questions of national importance, she asserted. Where there was once a lively debate, there is now mostly silence. Where there was once a fellowship of engaged public intellectuals, there are now a lot of insulated chief executives more concerned with day-to-day management issues than questions about the public good. Expert management is certainly important, but it must always be guided by some higher purpose. As she put it, "the mission of our organization is the star we steer by."

The fact that more and more institutions of higher education are reaffirming their commitment to the public good is a promising development, she added. The question is whether academic leaders have what it takes to mobilize their institutions around a common vision, one that resonates with the entire campus community — faculty, administrators, staff, and students. The challenge for leaders

today is to "communicate vision, demonstrate commitment, articulate values, and personally embody the principles of the organization as they manage the enterprise."

These themes reverberated throughout all of the National Leadership Dialogues. Participants agreed that leadership is vital to promoting academic reform and renewal since only leaders can give consistent and sustained voice to institutions' animating sense of purpose. It is crucial in spotlighting the important civic contributions of the institution and building strategic alliances in the community and beyond. There are also opportunities for leaders in the field of moral leadership. They can push for courses in professional ethics, for example, or promote greater civility and cooperation on the part of faculty and administrators. When these types of efforts are determined and sustained, they not only improve morale on campus but they model for students the importance of ethical standards and civic virtue.

But whether leadership on this issue is likely to emerge was very much an open question. A number of recent initiatives, including Campus Compact's *Presidents' Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education* (with more than 450 signatories to date) and the work of the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, suggest a move in the right direction. But efforts of this kind may not be enough to break the force of countervailing trends, such as the spread of bottom-line thinking and the relentless pursuit of high rankings and good publicity.

Participants identified a range of key strategies for chancellors, presidents, and other senior administrators that can help academic institutions in their engagement efforts:

- Reaffirm and restate the civic mission of the college or university — not simply in terms of what it can do to and for its graduates, but in terms of what the institution can do as an agent of civic change and renewal
- Promote civility and collaboration among faculty, students, staff, and administrators
- Model democratic discourse and engagement in the making of institutional policies
- Make diversity, engagement, and service central criteria in the hiring and promoting of faculty members and administrative staff
- Advance dialogue and self-reflection about core academic values within the institution
- Identify and support aspiring and early-career faculty members who are committed to engaged scholarship
- Educate trustees about the need for social responsibility and civic engagement
- Foster leadership, engagement, and activism within the student body

Faculty

The professoriate plays a critical role in shaping the culture of American higher education. Faculty not only teach the courses and manage the curricula that shape student learning, they define the questions that guide academic research and determine how and to what extent that research is applied to meeting the needs of society. Participants of the National Leadership Dialogues generally agreed that the first step in infusing the teaching, research, and service mission with a greater commitment to the public good involves addressing some of the systemic problems in the academy that effectively discourage faculty engagement. These include the rules governing promotion and tenure, the narrow range of what is considered acceptable scholarly work, the disconnection between the classroom and the community, and the prevalence of pedagogies that work against the broad purposes of civic education.

A recurring theme in the dialogues was the pervasive anxiety and insecurity of purpose in the professoriate — especially at large research universities. In a vivid illustration of the problem, Harry Boyte, co-director of the Center for Democracy and Citizenship at the University of Minnesota, reported on a study he conducted in the late 1990s among senior faculty members at his institution. A generation ago, the University of Minnesota had a vibrant sense of itself as a great public and land-grant institution, he observed. Professors routinely took their work out into the community and there was a lively culture of collaboration and open discussion in the academic departments.

But over the last thirty years that public spirit has been gradually hollowed out. One of the most striking themes in the interviews was how "radically detached" academic culture had become from society at large, Boyte said. "Again and again, we heard a concern about isolation, about the competitive culture, and about the spread of marketplace values — the idea of the student as customer and the notion that the university's public service mission is largely a commercial one. We found almost uniformly that people wanted more public relevance. But the norms of our institutions are silencing."

According to Ann Austin, professor of higher education at Michigan State University, this concern is also shared by early-career and aspiring faculty. Her research shows that graduate students and newly-minted professors tend to be impelled by a strong sense of social responsibility. "There is a vibrancy about the kind of work they wish to be able to do," she said. "In interviews that colleagues and I have done, we hear them explicitly saying, 'I do this out of passion.' They often link that to a desire to contribute to the larger good — to address public issues and social problems. They also have a desire to be part of a community with other people who share these passions. This is happening across disciplines."

What many young professors find, however, is that the academy does not reward them for the sort of teaching and research they want to do. The norms of scholarship and the structures governing promotion and tenure effectively discourage them from engaging in research and teaching that is

collaborative, student-centered, community-based, project-oriented, or cross-disciplinary. "The big worry I have," Austin said, "is that many early-career and aspiring faculty are going to decide that the academy is not where they can live out their passions and will simply leave."

A further source of concern is the new culture of entrepreneurship in the professoriate that makes it difficult for institutions to organize around a set of common goals. At many universities, individual faculty members now take their cues not from clearly articulated institutional objectives, but from the flow of federal, corporate and other private-sector research grants. Since these funding streams have transformed individual faculty members into independent revenue centers for their institutions, they are granted the freedom to pursue their own research agendas. In some cases, these faculty entrepreneurs resist institutional changes that threaten the support that funds their research and scholarly advancement, both for themselves and their graduate students.

A further challenge is the prevalence of outdated notions about teaching and learning. The traditional lecture where the professor assumes the role of "sage on stage" is still the pedagogy of choice in many American classrooms. John O'Connor, a visiting scholar at the American Association for Higher Education, spoke of "the gap between method and manner." Today, he said, we know a great deal about how the human mind works, but we don't apply that knowledge in the classroom. "We know a lot about how people learn, but it doesn't seem to affect how we go about teaching."

Participants agreed that if the goal of higher education is to inculcate civic values and practices and foster a stronger sense of social responsibility, then what is needed is a curriculum that teaches

Embodying Civic Values

An ideal college or university, one that embodies the highest civic values ...

- Educates graduates to have first-hand experience, understanding, and commitment to a higher, greater social good throughout their lives
- Fosters a culture of open inquiry and practices the art of true dialogue with rigor and without rancor
- Values all types of knowledge and equally respects basic research on all topics
- Welcomes life-long learners and students of all cultural and racial origins
- Provides a place of reflection — with the appropriate structures, experiences, and learning processes — for the community at large

— Roseann Runte
President, Old Dominion University

democracy in a democratic fashion, one that promotes dialectical thinking and knowledge-in-use rather than simply knowledge-acquisition, one that respects and incorporates a diversity of perspectives, one that embraces multiple types of intelligence, and one that is participatory and engages students in the types of issues and challenges they are likely to encounter in the real world.

The goal of civic education, participants felt, should be to remake the classroom into a learning community. "There is no other way to teach democracy than to model it," in the words of Richard Cuoto. "Students should know each other's names. There needs to be as much emphasis on group process as on group product. And there should be permeable boundaries between the classroom and the community."

Transforming faculty culture will require a concerted effort on many levels. In a presentation at the National Summit, Ann Austin proposed six key issues that need to be carefully addressed: 1) individual faculty members must begin with themselves by reflecting deeply on the values and beliefs they bring to their work; 2) they need to reexamine their interactions with students and explore new ways of teaching and learning that model dialogue, respect, and interdependence; 3) they must broaden the conversation, in formal and informal ways, with their colleagues about the nature of teaching, research, and service; 4) they need to reassess the structures of evaluation, promotion, and tenure; 5) they must experiment with new ways of engaging the public in their scholarly work; and 6) they need to do a better job preparing the next generation of faculty.

Other practical steps that might be taken to infuse faculty culture with a deeper commitment to civic engagement and social responsibility include:

- Providing opportunities for faculty to reflect on the public meaning of their work
- Expanding the core triumvirate of teaching, scholarship, and service to embrace a fourth category involving collaborative, practical, and public work
- Establishing co-curricular programs for leadership and public service
- Promoting community participation in teaching and curriculum development
- Emphasizing the role of scholars in calling attention to urgent social issues
- Convening dialogues that span conventional disciplinary and professional boundaries
- Redefining the nature of peer review so that assessment, promotion, and tenure review processes include non-professional and non-disciplinary views, not only those of academic peers
- Infusing graduate education with a greater commitment to civic engagement and social responsibility

Students

A flurry of studies and reports have appeared over the last decade bemoaning the low rates of political engagement among students. Evidence shows that students are increasingly cynical about government and wary of politicians. Their voting rates are at or near record lows. And their interest in traditional forms of political activism — participating in organized demonstrations, volunteering in political campaigns, or joining issues-related organizations — is on the decline. The annual Freshman Surveys conducted by UCLA's Cooperative Institutional Research Program show that volunteerism and community service among students have increased

Educating the Whole Person

In a set of informal remarks at the second National Leadership Dialogue, California State Senator John Vasconcellos observed that we are living in an age of chaos and uncertainty, a time marked by economic upheaval, demographic change and political instability on the one hand, and technological innovation and breakthrough insights into the nature and complexity of the human mind on the other.

"If we are going to prepare people to live in a world of profound change," he said, "we have to imagine and design an education that recognizes the *whole* person — body, mind, emotions, spirituality, sexuality, all of it together."

Educating for social responsibility must begin with "a commitment to the full human being," he said. "That is at the heart of the public good, because the more whole I am in myself the more I am able to contribute to the public good."

This is what humanistic psychologist Abraham Maslow had in mind when he referred to "democratic character structure," Vasconcellos pointed out. "A person has to integrate his body, mind and emotions so that they are fully valued, appreciated and liberated before he is able to realize his democratic character structure. A person who can learn to do that will spontaneously engage in society and live democratically."

Society needs institutions that allow individuals to integrate the various aspects of themselves, he said. "If you don't find those experiences at home, at school, at church, in the university, then you walk out into the world as nothing more than an economic machine."

Educating the whole person is best done by example, he added. "We don't teach by preaching; we teach by inspiring."

"I want to challenge you as leaders in higher education to help prepare students for the twenty-first century — to help them become embodied, passionate, full human beings. I want to encourage you to be out there on the frontier helping society find its way in a time of chaos and change."

in recent years. Yet it appears, somewhat counter-intuitively, that volunteering in the community does not necessarily contribute to greater political awareness or participation. In fact, it sometimes has the opposite effect by reinforcing students' feelings of powerlessness and indignation in the face of persistent social problems. The question is whether higher education bears some responsibility for the pervasive anxiety and disaffection among students. What role might institutions play in reversing current trends and re-engaging students? And to what extent can students be included as equal participants in the academy's civic engagement efforts?

Many participants of the National Leadership Dialogues insisted that the first step in renewing higher education's commitment to the public good has to be to openly acknowledge that it has not done all it can to educate for social responsibility. In some cases, it has even discouraged engagement by emphasizing academic excellence at the expense of other essential qualities, such as civic responsibility, ethical awareness, and concern for the interests of others. "Students often come in with the fire in the belly," as Therese Eyermann of the University of California, Los Angeles, put it, "but too often we beat it out of them to the point where they become interested only in what they need to know for their next exam."

One way to counter that disaffection is to give students opportunities to identify their own forms of engagement. Dialogues, study circles, National Issues Forums and other means of collaborative group inquiry give students a way to do this that is both empowering and instructive, observed Michael D'Innocenzo, professor of history at Hofstra University. It gives them a chance to discover their own passion and their own language for discussing social issues, he said — especially when they conduct the forums themselves.

The National Leadership Dialogues benefited from the input of a number of graduate students who spoke at first hand about the difficulty of bridging academic work and service to the community. Jodi Anderson, a doctoral candidate at UCLA, spoke of her years as an undergraduate at a large research university where the curriculum left little room for the integration of civic engagement or political participation. While she sought out opportunities for community service on her own, she said, it was a challenge to find faculty who were committed to it and harder still to incorporate or build upon the service experience in her academic work. "For a lot of students, especially at the undergraduate level, service is a way to connect what goes on in the classroom to the kinds of issues they really care about. But when it's disconnected from their academic work, it sends a message about the priorities of an institution."

Estella Zamano-Gutierrez, also a doctoral candidate at UCLA, emphasized that disengagement is a natural outgrowth of an education system structured around content rather than process. In her experience, undergraduate teaching is focused almost entirely around the *dissemination* of knowledge rather than the *production* of knowledge. If institutions are serious about engagement, she said, they need to provide students with opportunities to actively participate through deliberation, networking, and community-building on campus. That requires public spaces and "lateral commitments" within the community.

Despite growing concerns about student disengagement, some participants were quick to point out that the oft-cited studies and reports, such as the annual Freshman Surveys, can be misleading since they ignore non-traditional forms of civic and political participation. Elaine Ikeda, executive director of California Campus Compact, cited a 2002 report, "The New Student Politics," that vividly illustrates this misperception. According to a group of 33 college juniors and seniors who participated in the Wingspread Summit on Student Civic Engagement,

> The manner in which we engage in our democracy goes beyond, well beyond, the traditional measurements that statisticians like to measure us by, most notably voting. Indeed, student civic engagement has multiple manifestations including: personal reflection/inner development, thinking, reading, silent protest, dialogue and relationship building, sharing knowledge, project management, and formal organization that brings people together. Cultural and spiritual forms of expression are included here, as are other forms of expression through the arts such as guerrilla theater, music, coffee houses, poetry, and alternative newspapers.

According to Ikeda, students often see themselves as misunderstood by those who measure student engagement by conventional standards that do not necessarily reflect their own view of civic and political participation. They also have thoughts and ideas about how higher education needs to change to better accommodate their desire to work for social change. This suggests that the effort to re-engage students has to begin by learning more about how they understand social responsibility, what concerns they have, and how they wish to be involved.

This point was echoed throughout the four National Leadership Dialogues. Participants felt strongly that "we need to incorporate the voices of students as part of this effort," in the words of Jon Dalton, professor of educational leadership at Florida State University. "Students want to have a stronger voice. Too often they are invited in like china — we want to show them off, but we don't want to listen too much. We need to find ways to really get the voices and the energy and the idealism that students bring."

Participants identified a number of practical steps toward re-engaging students, including:

- Promoting student activism and leadership
- Enlisting student leaders in institutional engagement efforts
- Making community-based learning an integral part of the curriculum
- Fostering a vibrant culture of dialogue and debate on campus
- Experimenting with student-driven dialogues, study-circles, issue forums, and other means of group inquiry in the classroom.
- Providing a range of public service and non-profit career choices for students, along with financial aid and other incentives to encourage continued commitment to public service and social responsibility after graduation

Other Constituencies

Leaders, faculty and students are not the only constituencies with important roles to play in renewing the public service mission of higher education. Other members of the academic community, such as trustees and alumni, can also stimulate and support civic engagement efforts on campus. Trustees have an especially critical role to play since they control the mission, the programs, and the resources of their respective institutions. Indirectly, they shape institutional culture by defining the proper role of university presidents. They also provide a critical link between the institution and the larger community. "They bring to the campus the voice of the community and they speak on behalf of the college in the community," observed Susan Whealler Johnston, director of independent sector programs at the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. "They have one foot in each world."

Yet few trustees actually acknowledge their responsibility as stewards of the public good. Merrill Schwartz, director of special projects at the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, noted that the trustees she works with often have a highly-developed sense of social responsibility, but it rarely informs their work on governing boards. "You would think that we talk about the public good all the time since these are the people who literally hold the trust for the public," she said. "But we don't have conversations like this very often."

In her view, the idea of modeling the arts of democracy applies not only to academic affairs but to the work of governing boards. "Board meetings are not exactly models of democracy and respectful dialogue," she said. "There is a lot that could be done to train chairs and provide direction so that boards are more inclusive, so that the selection of trustees reflects the community, and so that they conduct themselves more democratically."

Like trustees, alumni have an important role to play in representing the institution in the community and advocating for its interests. It is important that they understand and support the civic mission. "In my experience, these people love their colleges," said Alexander Astin, director of the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles. "That caring and commitment to the institution makes them very receptive to being informed about these issues. Part of our job as academics is to educate them about what we are doing and to begin to change their concept and their understanding of what higher education is all about."

Educating for Conscience and Community

I directed a project for the American Council on Education where I went around the country and listened to communities. We brought together community organizers, politicians, police officers, business leaders, and so forth, and asked them:

- What personal qualities are we striving to cultivate in our students?
- What kinds of curricula and pedagogy are most effective?
- What are we currently doing right?
- What changes in institutional policies and practices are most likely to facilitate our public service mission?

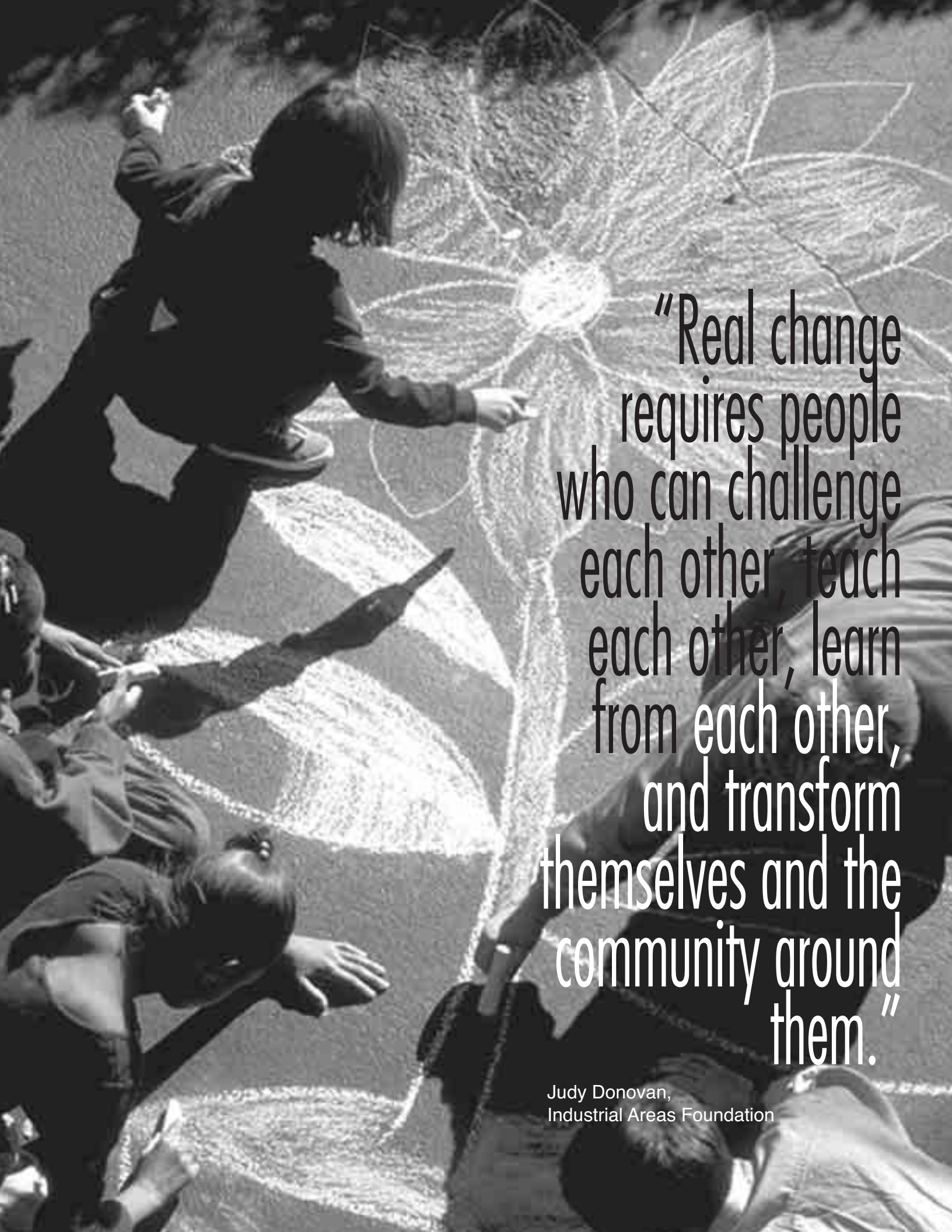
What I heard consistently was that higher education is doing a great job educating doctors, lawyers, engineers, occupational therapists and other members of the professions. But it's doing too little to nurture *souls* and to cultivate *successors*. People in communities were deeply concerned that we are not educating people who are going to step into their shoes — future teachers, superintendents, fire-fighters, and other keepers and builders of our civic infrastructure.

Through the "Listening to Communities" project, I developed a mantra for myself. It says that higher education's role should be to educate for conscience and community. By conscience, I mean ethical choices, moral intelligence, reflective practices, spirituality, integrated ways of being, and wisdom. We should be educating for wise and ethical leadership, and for engaged, responsible, and principled citizenship.

To do that, we need to build communities. It's our responsibility to create on our campuses little models of community — communities of discourse and communities of collaborative action — so that our students can practice the arts of democracy and be ready when they graduate to go out into the big world in a more skilled way.

The community must become central to the way we teach and learn. And colleges and universities should be places where values are explicitly and easily discussed, and where there is consistency between the values stated and the values played out.

— Nancy Thomas
Director, Models for Democracy Project
Society for Values in Higher Education
Portland State University



"Real change requires people who can challenge each other, teach each other, learn from each other, and transform themselves and the community around them."

Judy Donovan,
Industrial Areas Foundation

Chapter Two

Building Engaged Institutions

Despite persistent criticisms that America's system of higher education is bureaucratic, unwieldy, and impervious to change, the academy has mounted a number of remarkably successful reforms over the last three decades, from expanding access to diversifying the curriculum. By and large, these efforts have sought to change institutional structures — programs, policies, and practices — that stand in the way of crucial academic objectives. Important and necessary as these reforms have been, they have not significantly changed the *culture* of higher education — the values, beliefs, norms, and expectations that shape academic life.

One of the basic premises of the National Leadership Dialogues was a conviction that renewing the public purposes of higher education will require more than mere structural change within institutions. Alexander Astin stressed that many of the problems confronting the academy stem from unquestioned values and beliefs that govern academic life. "We need to bring a lot more balance into the way we approach change," he asserted. "We tend to think way too much about structures and not enough about culture. Curriculum committees and strategic planning groups talk about structures all the time. But culture gets neglected."

The point was underscored by the American Council on Education in a recent series of reports that distinguished between transformation and other types of change that occur in colleges and universities. Transformation was defined as the sort of change that 1) alters the culture of an institution by changing underlying assumptions and overt institutional behaviors, processes, and structures; 2) is deep and pervasive, affecting the whole institution; 3) is intentional; and 4) occurs over time.

Some of the most successful change efforts reported at the National Leadership Dialogue reinforce this understanding. In a keynote address at the third gathering, Robert Bruininks, president of the University of Minnesota, argued that academic leaders must think "beyond projects" and build a "culture of engagement" within their institutions. "When we think about civic engagement or about the public mission of our institutions," he said, "we tend to think about projects or name initiatives. This approach can best be described as a state of *antergism* — a term coined by two University of Minnesota colleagues to describe a situation where 'the whole is less than the sum of its parts.' It's true, projects and initiatives are tremendously important mechanisms for effecting change in communities, whether you're talking about institutions or the external community. But the problem

is how to scale ideas that are really good, and values that really mean something, into something that has real impact."

According to Bruininks, building a culture of engagement involves several components:

- Reaffirming the core values that guide and inspire the institution's work
- Recognizing that the culture and traditions of the institution are a crucial part of what makes it unique
- Aligning civic priorities with institutional planning and resources
- Launching constructive community partnerships
- Infusing engagement into the institution's governance and accountability systems

Looking back on the Civic Engagement Task Force at the University of Minnesota — a two-year initiative that he spearheaded — Bruininks acknowledged that "it's tough to move colleges and universities." Effecting change is difficult, he said, because the academy puts a premium on individual effort and entrepreneurial activity, not collective efforts. "If you go to a faculty meeting and say, 'We need to act with collective purpose,' they simply take a vote and get you out of there. It's just not how universities operate."

Ed Fogelman, professor of political science at the University of Minnesota, served as chairman of the Task Force. One of the initiative's distinctive features, he said, was that it was complex and multifaceted. By raising basic questions about the nature and purpose of academic inquiry and its place in a democratic society, it had a crucial intellectual dimension. It was organized around several structural components, including a range of programs and partnerships, faculty incentives and rewards, and a central body charged with clearly defined leadership roles. It incorporated a political process aimed at involving key stakeholders and constituencies in the engagement effort. And most importantly, it sought to bring about cultural change by focusing attention on the core values and principles of the institution.

The Maricopa Community Colleges of Arizona undertook a similar initiative, although in a very different organizational context. Paul Elsner, Maricopa's Chancellor Emeritus, traced the effort back to the early 1980s when the Campus Compact movement started to gain momentum. Given that the models and examples most often cited by Campus Compact applied only to four-year universities, he said, the challenge for Maricopa was to make these ideas relevant within a community college context. "It was a tough sell. We wrestled for a long time with how to get a consensual vocabulary and develop a framework."

An important milestone in the process, he said, was the publication of *Habits of the Heart*, Robert Bellah and his colleagues' study of civic life in late twentieth-century America. The book stimulated a wide-ranging discussion at Maricopa about the meaning of service and citizenship in a changing society. Over time, these discussions evolved into a comprehensive plan to implement social

Dimensions of Engagement

T*he public purposes and responsibilities entailed in a commitment to civic engagement are the following:*

1. ***Access to Learning:*** to assure the highest quality undergraduate, graduate, and lifelong learning opportunities to students regardless of age, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, income, or disability as part of connected learning experiences that extend from K-12 schooling to collegiate education, professional training and throughout a lifetime;
2. ***Enhanced Diversity:*** to promote the inclusion and participation throughout the university and in the larger community of people with diverse backgrounds and voices, nourishing a vigorous pluralism in American society;
3. ***Civic Learning:*** to develop among all students the civic competence and critical thinking that empower them as effective citizens in their localities, states, nations and in a global environment, and to develop among people from varied backgrounds the capacity for responsible leadership in private, associational, and public organizations and institutions
4. ***Public Scholarship:*** to foster new knowledge and creative expression in the arts, sciences, and humanities as vital manifestations of an active life of the mind and spirit, and to encourage faculty research and other professional work concerned with the conditions and problems of public life;
5. ***Social Well-Being:*** to contribute through the discovery, dissemination, and application of knowledge to the economic and social well-being of communities locally, regionally, nationally and internationally;
6. ***Trusted Voice:*** to provide citizens and leaders with dependable knowledge and reliable information for reaching responsible public judgments and decisions, and so to serve as a trusted voice in public debates over controversial issues;
7. ***Public Spaces:*** to provide accessible sites and intellectual leadership for public deliberation about the meaning and importance of civic values and civic participation;
8. ***Community Partnership:*** to collaborate with diverse groups, organizations, institutions, and communities as mutually helpful partners in furthering shared democratic purposes;
9. ***Self-Governance:*** to maintain the collegial self-governance and autonomy from special interests as necessary for the accomplishment of public purposes;
10. ***Public Accountability:*** to remain accountable for serving the public well by pursuing actively the full range of the institution's public purposes.

Adapted from "Civic Engagement: Renewing The Land Grant Mission," the final report of the University of Minnesota's Civic Engagement Task Force [http://www1.umn.edu/civic/reports/pdfs/final_report.pdf]

responsibility and service-learning throughout the institution, one based on "volunteer service and civic responsibility as not just an episodic experience for students, but as a long-term behavioral construct."

One college in the Maricopa system made volunteerism a centerpiece of its institutional mission, Elsner pointed out. "Rather than creating a marginalized structure for achieving this goal, they incorporated it into the whole panoply of student services, activities, functions, and structures," he said. "The entire student activities program moved toward the support of faculty in making carefully assessed appointments and assignments so that students landed in the right volunteer arrangement, one that is consistent with their interests and their developmental stages."

One of the lessons learned, Elsner said, is that the president or CEO must take the lead and "walk the talk." Given the challenges facing leaders today, this is exceedingly hard at most institutions. "The first thing a CEO is expected to do when he comes on board is start a capital drive," he said. "We are drawn away from public purposes all the time." Another lesson is that programs have to be organized in an open and flexible fashion with the necessary infrastructure to support the mission. In short, civic engagement has to be infused into everyday routines and practices. "What you want," he stressed, "is wall-to-wall commitment within the institution."

In 2001, Tufts sociologist Susan Ostrander undertook a study of five institutions recognized for their commitment to civic engagement and social responsibility — Brown, Portland State, Bates College, and the universities of Pennsylvania and Minnesota — to learn about some of the concrete ways colleges and universities have institutionalized the civic mission. In a presentation at the Minnesota meeting, Ostrander highlighted four major findings from the study:

1) **Distinctive Emphasis**. Colleges and universities are organizing their engagement efforts in a wide variety of ways. Brown University has put most of its emphasis on student learning, while Portland State has focused on curriculum transformation. Bates College has organized its engagement work around community-defined priorities, while UPenn and the University of Minnesota have incorporated components of all of these approaches. The wide scope of engagement strategies makes it difficult to develop an inventory of universal best practices.

2) **Incentives for Change**. In the end, designing an engagement effort is a local activity that must be grounded in the unique culture of the institution, not handed down from on high. A variety of local factors determine whether institutions get their engagement plans off the ground or not, including institutional history, incentives for change, and the presence or absence of a well-articulated and well-supported mission.

3) **Intellectual and Educational Rationale**. Institutional initiatives require a fully articulated intellectual rationale and a set of educational projects to support them. As Ostrander put it, "The work has to make sense intellectually. If senior faculty members are not involved in the process — if it isn't integral to the work of knowledge-production as well as the other activities — it's not going to engage people. This point is key to the successful integration

of civic engagement into the larger educational and intellectual mission and culture of the university."

4) **New Organizational Structures**. Making engagement real on campus involves creating new structures that align and integrate the institution's various parts while at the same time addressing the power dynamic between the university and the surrounding community. "Institutions have to be willing to share resources and share power with their communities," Ostrander said. "I believe this is the most challenging part."

A recurring theme of the National Leadership Dialogues was the sheer difficulty of effecting institutional change. It is a consistently risky undertaking, participants noted, fraught with troublesome political issues. "Those of us in higher education don't usually think about our work in political terms," said Nancy Kari, director of faculty development at the Higher Education Consortium on Urban Affairs. "We see ourselves as *apolitical*. If we're going to create a serious change in higher education, we're going to have to understand what politics means and how you do it. I don't mean electoral politics or the politics of elected politicians, but the politics of teaching and learning. If we want to transform our organizations, we need to think about our work in *public* terms."

Kari went on to describe how the College of St. Catherine, a Catholic women's college in St. Paul, Minnesota, has engaged in a sustained effort to cultivate civic engagement and social responsibility. The effort began some years ago with the rather prosaic challenge of renewing the core curriculum. At first, the effort seemed doomed to failure as faculty, administrators, students and others found themselves working at cross-purposes. It was only after everyone came together to reflect on the core values of the institution that they were able to articulate a framework for action. What was crucial, Kari said, was talking openly and deliberately about the politics of changing culture. "One of the mistakes we made in the beginning was that we didn't create enough space to conceptualize what we were doing. People have to own the process and name it in their own language."

In a presentation at the Minnesota dialogue, Gerald Taylor and Sister Judy Donovan, veteran organizers for the Industrial Areas Foundation, stressed that effecting institutional change is impossible without addressing the question of power. Bringing their experience in leadership training, relationship-building, and community organizing to bear on issues facing the academy, they noted that real change is created from the bottom up, not the top down.

"Programs are good things," said Donovan, "but if they are not built on the solid work of organizing a constituency that wants to sustain it over time, then they are just nice things done by nice people for nice reasons, but they are usually not sustained for very long. If institutions are really going to change, they cannot do it as isolated fortresses that periodically implement a program here or there. It requires the involvement of a broad-based group of people who can challenge each other, teach each other, learn from each other, and transform themselves and the community around them."

Donovan went on to distinguish between two prevailing theories of action: the service model commonly used by public institutions and the organizing model favored by the Industrial Areas Foundation and other community groups. The service model tends to revolve around specific problems, she said, whereas the organizing model takes the issue of power as its starting point. "Organizing is very explicitly about building power — powerful networks of institutions and powerful constituencies willing to do some hard work together in a sustained way."

The service model and the organizing model differ significantly in terms of basic strategies. Service-oriented initiatives tend to revolve around short-term projects or programs, often staffed by committed activists and volunteers. By contrast, organizing work revolves around identifying and developing leaders — individuals in key positions within their institutions who are committed to building and sustaining relationships over time.

While service-based programs tend to operate with a degree of autonomy from their sponsoring institutions, organizing strategies revolve around a diverse collective of organizations working together toward a common end. The service approach therefore produces a lot of activity — projects, reports, studies — but it seldom leads to systemic change within the institution, while the organizing approach produces leadership and real change. When it's effective, organizing builds "a powerful constituency of stakeholders that come from different institutions that are willing to work together and ask the hard questions," Donovan said. Organizing is transformational; it upends old assumptions and requires that people think in fundamentally new ways about the work they do.

Asked what makes a good organizer, Donovan observed that strong leaders are curious, open-minded, and "profoundly relational." "Among leaders who we identify in this work, there is a core of anger — relational anger, anger that is rooted in loss and pain and disappointment. But it's an anger that doesn't go inward. It's not violent; it wants to go into action." She added that good leaders have an ego. "They can be taken on, critiqued, disrupted." And they are not overly principled. "We find that people who are overly principled can't have conversation, can't negotiate, can't compromise."

Institutional Change: Two Theories of Action

	Service Model	Organizing Model
Objective	Solving problems	Building Power
Strategy	New projects and initiatives	Leadership development
Key players	Individuals	Institutions
Institutions	Isolated	Diverse collective
End result	Activity	Action

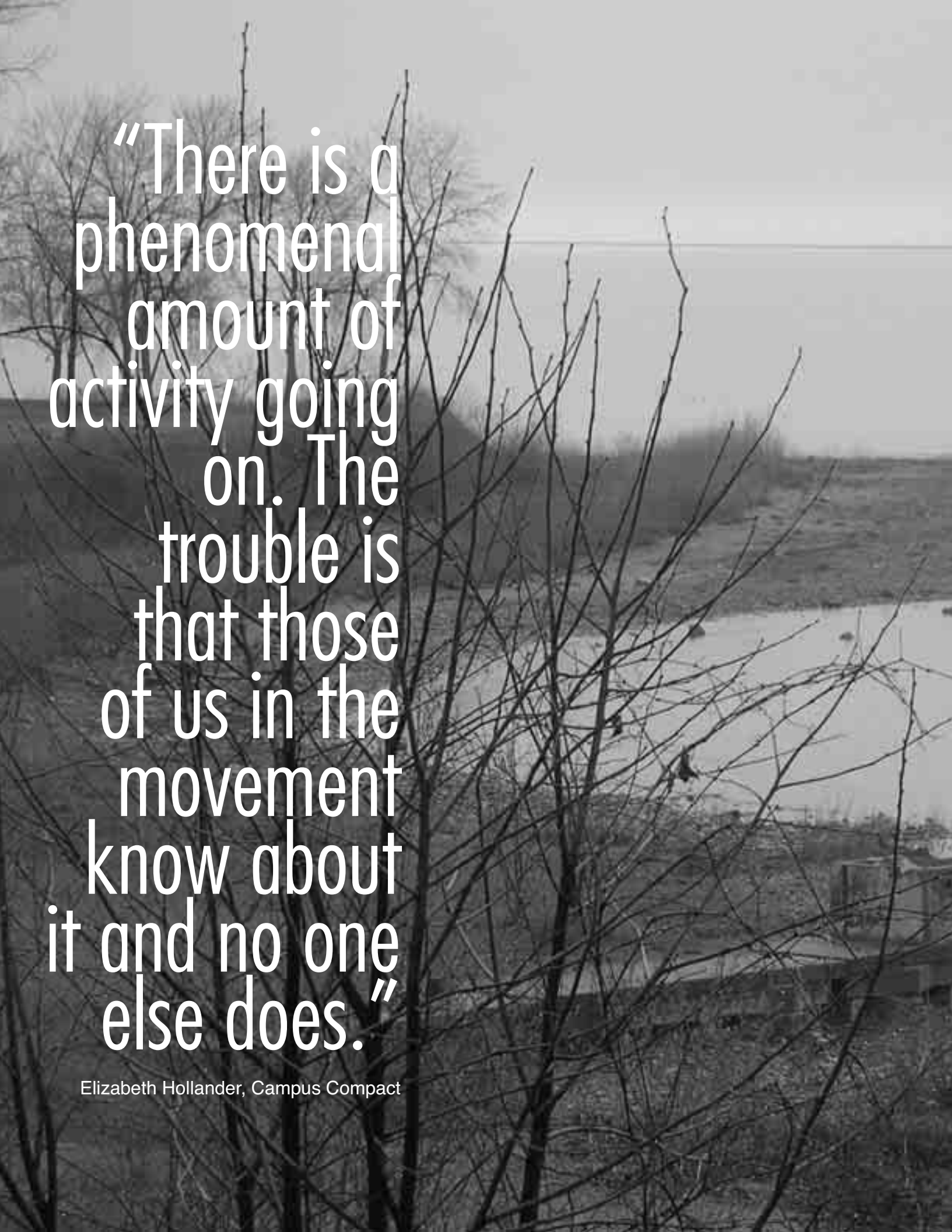
At bottom, organizing is about building relationships and developing leaders, said Gerald Taylor. "The genius of organizing is identifying talent, leaders who have real networks of influence." These people may not always look or speak like leaders, and they may not occupy positions of formal authority within the institution, but they carry influence and have a following. Institutional change hinges on these kinds of leaders because they are the ones who build a critical mass of people within the organization and ensure that changes are sustained over time.

The discussion about organizing prompted strong reactions at the Minnesota dialogue. Some strenuously agreed that power-dynamics cannot be avoided. Others took issue with what they saw as the overly confrontational style of organizing. It is not always necessary to tackle power structures to create change, observed Roseann Runte, president of Old Dominion University. Conflict is certainly one way to effect social change, she said, but you can also move institutions by "a thousand small, positive actions." "We can create positive change through positive discussion, through everybody participating, and through everybody working together."

Others cautioned against using a conflict model in trying to advance the public good. "We need to be part of a movement that tries to contain and limit conflict," said Carmen Sirianni, professor of sociology at Brandeis University. "People are going to have to do this work in institutions with all kinds of partners who are asking us to sustain it and show the good that is being delivered, not just fly off the handle on this or that issue and beat people up just for having a certain way of defining it. I think we can live in both worlds. But if higher education is our venue, I think we have to choose a different model."

The question, perhaps, is not which model is the right one but rather how to find effective leverage points for institutional change. In discussing practical steps toward revitalizing the public purposes of institutions, participants discussed a range of practical strategies:

- Build community dialogue and deliberation into the process of institutional planning and governance
- Develop resource streams that support specific civic engagement activities within the institution
- Institutionalize rewards and incentives for engaged scholarship
- Model democratic values — such as civility, mutual respect, tolerance, and openness to diversity — throughout the institution
- Invite the local residents to take advantage of the institution's resources and to use it as a "community space"
- Create partnerships with civic groups, businesses, non-profits, news media, service clubs, libraries, museums, and other community organizations



"There is a phenomenal amount of activity going on. The trouble is that those of us in the movement know about it and no one else does."

Elizabeth Hollander, Campus Compact

Chapter Three

Promoting System-Wide Change

The late social critic Ivan Illich once quipped that any attempt to reform the university without attending to the system of which it is a part "is like trying to do urban renewal in New York City from the twelfth story up." It goes without saying that innovative programs and entrepreneurial activities at the local level are important and necessary. But a full recovery of higher education's public service mission will require a more coherent effort, one aimed at mobilizing institutions of higher education around a common vision, shared values and ideas, and collective hard work.

The broad outlines of such an effort can already be discerned in the academy. "There is a phenomenal amount of activity going on around the country," said Elizabeth Hollander, executive director of Campus Compact, in an address at the first National Leadership Dialogue. The trouble is that the discussion about civic engagement is still confined to a relatively small minority of academics. "Those of us in the movement know about it and nobody else does. Since they don't know what's happening, they can't applaud it, get behind it, or give it resources."

Drawing on the work of Italian social scientist Mario Diani, Hollander identified four basic characteristics of social movements: 1) they are constituted by networks of informal interaction, 2) they are based on a shared set of beliefs and a sense of belonging, 3) they require conflict or opposition, "something to move against," and 4) their primary activity takes place outside the institutions they are bent on changing. These four characteristics can help us gauge how far we have come, she said, while at the same time calling attention to the work that lies ahead.

Networks of informal interaction. There are already numerous well-developed networks in place working on service-learning, campus/community partnerships, civic education, equity and diversity and other issues. In addition, a wide range of important initiatives have recently been spawned to promote these causes, from the National Alliance for Civic Education and the Democracy Collaborative to foundation-funded partnerships between Campus Compact, the American Association of Higher Education, the American Association of Colleges and Universities and other organizations. Still, very little concrete action has come out of this work and there is still no common action agenda.

Common values and a sense of belonging. In a field dedicated to fine distinctions rather than broad statements, it is quite remarkable to find such a clearly articulated sense of purpose

and direction, Hollander observed. Some of the credit for that goes to organizations such as the American Association of Colleges and Universities and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, to conferences convened by the American Council on Education, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and the Kettering Foundation, as well as to Harry Boyte, Barry Checkoway, Thomas Ehrlich and other scholars who have helped to make a forceful case for change in higher education. The trouble, she said, "is that we haven't managed to communicate those ideas well outside the academy."

Forces of opposition. Unlike other social movements, the impulse to revitalize the academy's civic mission is not a direct response to injustice or oppression. Still, there is no shortage of worrisome trends in higher education "to move against," as Hollander put it. These include the pervasive influence of marketplace values, the indifference of many institutions to their surrounding communities, and the rise of distance-learning programs and virtual universities that allow people to earn a degree without ever leaving home. A recent trend that is especially troubling, she said, is the sudden downturn in federal and state funding for higher education. "Everywhere I go there are terrible stories about cuts. It brings into sharp relief the extent to which higher education has lost status as a public good."

Spheres of activity. The sign of a mature social movement is that its primary activities are no longer independent of the structures and routine procedures of their institutions. At a certain point, successful movements tend to change organizational and societal structures. According to Hollander, there is evidence that higher education has already moved into this second stage. Professional associations have embraced service-learning, several large research universities have engaged in a process of deep self-examination of the civic mission, and "even the 'invisible college' of community-oriented professors who were spark-plugs of the civic engagement movement have renamed themselves Educators for Community Engagement."

Hollander maintained that there are still too many people in the academy debating "the finer points of the civic mission." If we want to push this movement forward, we need to strengthen our own networks, document and disseminate the good work occurring within our institutions, and formulate federal policy recommendations that can galvanize action throughout higher education. Above all, she said, we need "to help the rest of the world understand what we're trying to accomplish and help us get there."An essential part of that work involves communicating effectively with legislators. "We've done a really bad job of communicating with national leaders about the civic mission," she charged. "Let's face it, if a president of a college or university has face-time with a congress-person, it's much more likely to be used on behalf of his or her pork project than to lobby for investment in the civic mission. Because we have been bad at articulating the extensive work going on in higher education, the new administration and the Congress have latched onto federal work-study funds as the vehicle for placing students in the community and have exhibited a deep lack of understanding of service-learning in higher education." Getting beyond short-sighted work-study programs "can only happen if we are better able to articulate to our allies outside the academy the rich variety of ways in which we seek to educate a nation of active citizens."

Hollander's remarks provided an important departure point as the National Leadership Dialogues got underway. Some took issue with the idea that these efforts in higher education constitute a "social movement." Much of the work going on is peripheral at best, they pointed out. Besides, the term "social movement" is better reserved for the sort of broad-based grassroots struggles aimed at securing freedom from oppression or injustice. Others felt that the term itself was acceptable but that it is a mistake to situate the movement *within* the academy. "There are stirrings of a movement across the whole society," as Harry Boyte pointed out. "There is ferment in many sectors. We're not an isolated strand."

Most agreed, however, that the movement model is helpful in distinguishing civic renewal from other reform efforts in higher education — particularly those bent on restructuring or redistributing power within organizations. There is an important role for that kind of change. But in a system as complex, diffused, uncoordinated, bureaucratic and internally competitive as American higher education, what is needed is a change strategy organized around ideas, people, and resources, not just institutions and power arrangements.

In an influential 1992 article in *Change* magazine, Parker Palmer described the movement approach in terms of several distinct phases. In the first, isolated individuals make a personal choice to stop

Higher Learning in a Dramatically Changing World

These are challenging times for higher education, as they are for society as a whole. While our democracy is more than 200 years old, the promise of the truly inclusive society is still in the making. Historically, higher education has been a major factor in the democratization of society. But we now find ourselves grappling with the difficult issue of reinterpreting our work in a dramatically changing environment.

For example, we are rapidly approaching a point where more than 75 percent of high school graduates enroll in post-secondary education. When we have the opportunity to touch so many lives, we have a particular challenge — and a particular responsibility — to make that experience significant to both the student and to society as a whole. When college attendance becomes *ordinary*, we are especially challenged to make the experience *extraordinary*.

Those of us in higher education have a direct hand in shaping the future of our country in a way that we never had before. In order to fulfill our mission on behalf of society, we must continue to cultivate and earn the understanding and support of our citizens for the work we do. This requires a much broader articulation of the role that colleges and universities have in society than we have previously attempted.

— Mary Sue Coleman
President, University of Michigan

acting in conflict with their personal and professional values — they decide to live, in Palmer's formulation, "divided no more." As they reject the prevailing norms of the institution, they eventually begin to form "communities of congruence" with others who share their values. These groups not only sustain people's sense of sanity, they provide opportunities for leadership and influence. Over time, these groups develop a language for discussing and promoting an alternative vision. As the words, images, and symbols originating in these groups become more visible, they attract converts. But the process also invites critics, which in turn leads to a further clarification and refinement of its objectives. Finally, the energies that began with a rejection of institutional norms come full circle and begin to transform those institutions. "The genius of movements is paradoxical," Palmer observed. "They abandon the logic of organizations in order to gather the power necessary to rewrite the logic of organizations. The reform of teaching and learning will happen only if we who care about it learn to live with this paradox."

The general sense at the National Leadership Dialogues was that there is already a broad base of support — a community of congruence — that supports civic renewal in higher education. But a greater effort is needed to articulate the problem at the heart of the movement and to develop a common vocabulary that resonates with academics and non-academics alike.

According to Frank Gilliam, Vice Chancellor for Community Partnerships at UCLA, those who share a passion for this work need to frame the movement in a way that the public can understand and support. In a presentation at the California gathering, he argued that unquestioned assumptions and ways of looking at the world invariably shape the public's understanding of policy issues. Studies have shown that people make sense of new information largely on the basis of pre-established interpretive frameworks. These frames are like mental shortcuts that save people the trouble of repeatedly figuring things out anew. The downside is that they can also lock people into set ways of understanding public issues. As Gilliam put it, "if the facts don't fit the frame, people reject the facts — but not the frame."

The effort to advance a new set of ideas — in this case, the pressing need for civic engagement and social responsibility in higher education — therefore has to begin not by marshalling arguments and facts but rather by "transforming the master frame," as Gilliam put it. "If you can shift people to a different frame of understanding, you can move collective action." An essential first step in mobilizing support is to identify how people inside and outside the academy relate to the concept of the public good and then consider how the idea can be reframed so that it resonates with their core values and concerns.

While many participants stressed the importance of "collective work" and "creating a critical mass," some cautioned against using so-called "top-down" strategies. Jeannie Oakes, professor of education and director of the Institute for Democracy, Education & Access at UCLA, called for a decentralized, grassroots approach. The strength of colleges and universities as instruments of public service, she said, is that they are by nature "idiosyncratic, opportunistic, and differentiated." In her view, the impulse to infuse higher education with a greater commitment to the public good is by nature "counter-cultural, counter-structural, and counter-political." It is *counter-cultural* in the

sense that it challenges the norms of individualism, competition, and separation that have prevailed in American higher education for the better part of a century. It is *counter-structural* because it takes issue with the academy's traditional way of ranking and sorting people. "From the admissions process all the way through post-doctoral study, the process is about social stratification," she said. "It's very contradictory to coming together as a community to serve the public good." And it is *counter-political* in the sense that it stands on the side of those who have the least power. "It puts us in opposition to those with privilege." A movement that runs counter to the prevailing cultural, structural, and political norms of higher education is very difficult to organize in any systemic fashion.

The point was well-taken. Still, many felt that there must be some way to align individual and institutional efforts with a broader movement for change. Besides, they said, the phrase "systems thinking" suggests a false dichotomy between individual and collective effort — they are two aspects of the same process. William Reckmyer, a systems theorist and professor of anthropology at San José State University, pointed out that one of the essential characteristics of dynamic systems is that they are self-organizing. "If you look at the way the universe has evolved," he said, "you see that from the sub-atomic level to the natural level it has come about not through some grand design where everything was put in place, but rather by lots of entrepreneurial activities and lots of different species developing different niches." The metaphor is a good one, he felt, because it suggests that individual efforts — no matter how differentiated — can create system-wide change when they are guided by a common impulse.

Frank Newman, former president of the Education Commission of the States and currently director of the Futures Project at Brown University, observed that the movement, such as it is, has clearly evolved into a more mature phase. "We've come a very long way and we've arrived at a point of considerable progress," he said. The trouble is that many key players in the academy are still approaching the work from an institutional and programmatic, rather than systemic, perspective. "We're still talking in old terms — 'service-learning' and 'institutional change.' We haven't made the leap to thinking about the harder problems that come when you begin to be successful."

The challenge, then, is not so much to spotlight individual institutions and projects, important as they may be, but rather to build strategic alliances and formulate an agenda that cuts across all of higher education. As the University of Michigan's Julie Ellison put it, those who are deeply committed to this work need to "connect the dots" and see their individual and institutional effort as part of a broader impulse for change within the system of higher education as a whole.

"The crisis we face is that we haven't raised the expectations of our students beyond self-interest."

Sylvia Hurtado,
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Chapter Four

Strengthening Public Awareness and Support

Studies indicate that the American public has remained fairly consistent in its support of the broad aims of higher education — particularly its role in training men and women for the professions. In a 1995 report for the American Council on Education, James Harvey and John Immerwahr surveyed thirty studies on public perceptions of higher education and found that most Americans view a college education as a necessity for employment. Beyond that, however, they knew very little about the structure and purpose of higher education, and still less how it functions or how it is financed. A 2000 study by Public Agenda arrived at the same conclusion. "Public satisfaction with higher education is sincere," the report said, "but not fully informed."

In April 2002, the National Forum commissioned KRC Research & Consulting, a Washington D.C.-based polling firm, to take a fresh look at public perceptions of the academy — specifically, how people perceive the individual and societal benefits offered by higher education. In a national random-sample telephone survey and a series of focus groups, KRC Research & Consulting tried to gauge not only how people reason about the benefits of higher education but also the forces shaping that understanding and how they support or weaken the covenant between higher education and society.

The study offered further evidence that the public regards higher education chiefly in terms of its private, economic benefits to the individual. Survey respondents and focus group participants consistently referred to a college education as a means of securing better jobs and career opportunities. It also confers a range of social benefits, they said, such as access to innovative thinkers, exposure to different ideas and perspectives, and opportunities to meet people. But these secondary benefits were also measured in terms of their value to the *individual* rather than society as a whole.

Focus group participants had more difficulty discussing the university's contribution to the community. Institutions of higher learning bring jobs to the region and help support local businesses, they noted, while also uniting the community around sporting and cultural events. But when asked about the broader societal benefits of higher education, they struggled to see a connection, saying that the idea of a civic or public contribution was difficult to conceptualize. Similarly, they were hard pressed to see the connection between higher education and the

democratic process. When prompted, some participants conceded that colleges and universities have a role to play in educating individuals who go on to do good things in society, but the idea that *institutions* can serve as stewards of the common good did not come up in the focus groups.

In a follow-up telephone survey in October 2002, KRC Research & Consulting examined the role of higher education in promoting civic engagement and public discourse. Asked whether colleges and universities are places where important issues facing the nation and the world should be debated, a full 78 percent of respondents agreed. But nearly half — 47 percent — said that institutions ought to be doing more to encourage debate on campus. (It is noteworthy that of those who saw a stronger role for institutions in promoting discourse and debate, the majority were non-white and/or college-age — 18-24 years old — with women leading men by a clear margin.)

These findings, along with similar studies conducted over the last decade, make it clear that the public subscribes to an instrumental or utilitarian view of higher education's role in society. "The mission is to provide a quality product, defined as an education that allows graduates to succeed in

Public perceptions of the benefits of higher education:

	ECONOMIC	SOCIAL
INDIVIDUAL BENEFITS	• Provides better jobs and career opportunities • Leads to higher salaries • Improves benefits • Creates more discretionary income for social activities	• Provides more life choices • Offers opportunities to meet new people and network • Confers a sense of personal accomplishment • Broadens the mind
COMMUNAL BENEFITS	• Stimulates the local economy • Attracts a qualified job pool to the community • Brings new businesses and jobs to the area	• Organizes and draws cultural events • Unifies the community around sports teams and accomplishments • Provides access to public health programs and other services
SOCIETAL BENEFITS	• Creates and sustains business • Increases tax revenues • Boosts consumer spending • Promotes technological innovation	• Encourages appreciation for diversity • Promotes cultural and sporting events • Enables innovative medical research • Advances knowledge and ideas • Develops social, political and cultural leaders

Source: KRC Research & Consulting

the economy," in the words of Jennifer Sosin, managing director of KRC Research and Consulting. "People are happy with that mission and are not looking for anything more. When you ask them to expand that to broader things, you run into some resistance."

For participants of the National Leadership Dialogues, the study reinforced a deepening concern about the disconnect between higher education and society at large. Not only have colleges and universities insulated themselves from the outside world, but they are no longer invested with an animating civic mission. Academic leaders still pay lip-service to the idea of the university as a steward of the public good, but "there is a gap between rhetoric and reality," in the words of Ira Harkavy, associate vice president and director of the Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania. "Our deliverables on the civic side are paltry." Naturally, the public senses this.

Participants also bemoaned the fact that a college education, once seen as a benefit to society as a whole, is now regarded mostly as a boon to individuals. The question is whether the academy is partly to blame for that. People in higher education have themselves communicated a message of instrumental individualism to the point where it has obscured the academy's many other benefits both to the individual and to the community. "The crisis we face," said Sylvia Hurtado, chair of the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education at the University of Michigan, "is that we haven't raised the expectations of our students beyond self-interest."

Some participants maintained that the rift between higher education and the American public was reflected not only in the outcomes of the KRC research but also in the methodology and underlying assumptions of the study itself. Gauging where the public stands requires more than polls and focus group surveys, said Julie Ellison. "We need to move away from mere survey and focus group research and recognize the participatory nature of all knowledge-making."

Harry Boyte echoed the point. What is needed is an attempt to fashion new relationships with the public, he said. That means that any research on what the public thinks about higher education has to be participatory, "not some positivist notion of the outside observer." He went on to say that in a number of University of Minnesota-sponsored forums, people in the community saw a clear role for higher education in addressing public problems. The key was how the question was framed. When asked, "How does the university contribute to the public good?" there was very little response. But when the question was posed in terms of addressing common problems in society, people saw a clear connection. "When we then asked, 'Can the University of Minnesota be involved?' there was a resounding affirmation, a strong sense that the university has a formative, shaping power to impact larger social questions. So it's a question of how these questions are posed."

As the discussion turned to practical strategies for bridging the gap between higher education and the American public, participants gave emphasis to three critical needs: 1) institutions of higher education must foster opportunities for authentic dialogue with the public they serve; 2) academic leaders must address the gap between rhetoric and practice within their institutions and hold

themselves to higher standards of accountability; and 3) an effort must be made to find a common language and a shared vocabulary, one that resonates with academics and non-academics alike.

Fostering an authentic dialogue with the public

Over the last decade or two, many institutions of higher education have sought to build public trust and bridge the town/gown divide by "listening" to the community. They have conducted focus groups, convened public forums, and invited community input. Others have reached out through public service initiatives and local outreach projects. Still others have attempted to engage the community by inviting public input and participation in institutional decision-making. The irony is that many of these attempts, though well-intentioned, have only made the problems in the relationship worse. Instead of narrowing the gap between institutions and the public, they have in many cases widened and deepened it.

The problem, as several participants noted, is that academics too often attempt to learn *from* the public but not *with* the public. In the words of J. Herman Blake, director of the African-American Studies Program at Iowa State University and former president of Tougaloo College, they come in as experts and leave as experts. Bent on "fixing problems" and "dispensing knowledge," they

Questions for Further Research

- Focus group respondents had trouble identifying specific ways colleges and universities contribute to the "public good." How would responses differ if they were offered concrete examples of engagement and outreach?
- Do people who live in a community with a strong college or university presence, such as Boston, Ann Arbor, or Austin, exhibit a deeper understanding of the connection between higher education and the public good?
- The focus groups revealed that public perspectives on higher education are determined to some extent by race and gender. What are the biggest divisions and how do they shape public priorities?
- What types of people are most committed to a broad, participatory role for higher education?
- What could be learned from a pilot campaign aimed at engaging a specific stakeholder group?

Source: KRC Research & Consulting

rarely make the effort to build authentic relationships based on trust and reciprocity. It's only natural that people become jaded when public institutions speak on their behalf but do not in fact represent them.

Colleges and universities need to create opportunities for genuine dialogue with the public, the sort that allows both sides to discover areas of mutuality and common interest and that can give rise to partnerships, collective endeavors and public work, broadly defined. They must shift from an ethos of detachment and guardianship to one of partnership and participation. In Blake's words, academics must learn to "listen eloquently" to their communities.

Some efforts have already been made to engage the public in sustained and deliberative dialogue. Over the last decade, the Kettering Foundation has teamed with a variety of organizations to host forums aimed at exploring the civic responsibilities of higher education. In 2002, Phi Beta Kappa joined with the National Collegiate Honors Council and several State Councils for the Humanities to conduct a series of public forums exploring "the social value of the liberal arts." And the American Association of Colleges and Universities is currently hosting a series of "Campus-Community Dialogues" across the country aimed at discussing a renewed commitment to the liberal arts, as outlined in the recent report, *Greater Expectations*. According to Carol Geary Schneider, president of AAC&U, these dialogues bring together community leaders, business executives, school board members, parents, and other stakeholders in open dialogues to discuss the role of the liberal arts. One of the striking themes of these dialogues, Schneider told participants at the National Summit, is the value the public places on integrity, ethical discernment, civic responsibility, and engagement in public life as outcomes of college learning. "I have been overwhelmed by how positive the response is from the stakeholders who are coming to the table," she said.

Adopting higher standards of accountability

Some of the most eloquent remarks at the National Leadership Dialogues revolved around the pressing need for soul-searching and rigorous self-assessment within the academy. As most participants readily acknowledged, there is still a wide rift between what academic leaders profess and what they actually practice. "If we don't start with ourselves," observed Yolanda Moses, former president of the American Association for Higher Education, "we're not going to be able to reach out to create authentic partnerships with others."

The question, of course, is how to do that in a meaningful and constructive way. Martha Gilliland, chancellor of the University of Missouri at Kansas City, summed up the challenge: "How do you tell the truth without committing suicide? How do you own up to your own shortcomings in a public way?" What is needed, she said, are safe spaces within the academy where failures and limitations can be openly acknowledged and transformed.

But building and strengthening public trust demands more than honest dialogue and appeals to the conscience of academics. At bottom, it requires the adoption of higher standards of public accountability. If colleges and universities want to retain public support and funding, they need to do a better job of documenting the concrete ways by which they serve the public good. As Ira Harkavy put it, "the real change has to be in the delivery of practice. We have to show that we are making a significant contribution to the public and to the democratization of society."

In recent years, the language of accountability has become increasingly bound up with performance measures, accreditation standards, and shrinking state budgets. Ran Coble, executive director of the North Carolina Center for Policy Research, pointed out that the call for increased accountability in higher education is being driven largely by lawmakers attempting to apply the same pressure to higher education that they have been putting on the public school system over the last two decades. To date, most of the performance criteria being used in higher education are *process* measures (enrollment, class size, time-to-degree, etc.) and *output* measures (graduation rates, degrees awarded, etc.), in contrast to *outcome* measures. Moreover, the discussion of performance criteria makes little or no mention of the role that colleges and universities play in serving and advancing the common good. In Coble's view, this suggests that academic leaders still have a small window of opportunity to shape the debate over accountability and identify a range of outcomes that reflect higher education's commitment to public service and social responsibility.

Developing a common language

The focus group study conducted by KRC Research & Consulting found that some people were suspicious of the term "public good," claiming it smacked of high-minded rhetoric. Jennifer Sosin quoted one participant as saying, "It's for the 'public good' when politicians try to sell you a bill of goods." "We didn't expect that language," Sosin acknowledged. "It was a lesson that sometimes the words one uses in one's own bubble — and I use them in my profession too — are not words that outside audiences use in their own conversations, or even ascribe the same meanings to."

Marta Tellado, Director of Domestic Policy Programs at the Center for National Policy, attended the focus group sessions and was struck by people's cynicism. "It was shocking to me that the 'public good' was seen as a negative concept," she said. "Separate focus groups on separate occasions responded to the question about the 'public good' with: 'That's a trick question — there is no such thing.' We didn't anticipate that kind of response."

This finding reinforced the view, expressed repeatedly at the National Leadership Dialogues, that institutions of higher learning must frame their research and service to society in terms that the public can readily understand and embrace. What is needed is a common vocabulary that makes clear what is at issue and what is at stake.

Four Trends Reshaping Undergraduate Education

The American Association of Colleges and Universities is committed to keeping liberal education central as the core of undergraduate education. Our work has brought us into intimate contact with groups of faculty and academic leaders on many hundreds of campuses. As we have worked with institutions engaged in reinvigorating their undergraduate programs we have observed some major trends. Four themes have particular significance to those of us concerned with civic engagement and social responsibility.

First, there is a remapping going on of the knowledge we expect students to acquire as citizens. We have moved away from the twentieth-century assumption that to be well-prepared as citizens students need to know primarily and exclusively about the West. On every kind of campus we are seeing a reengagement with global issues, intercultural and diversity issues, and issues of social justice. Basically, we are saying that students cannot be prepared as citizens unless they know something about people different from themselves. I would argue that this is the heart of the emerging civic agenda.

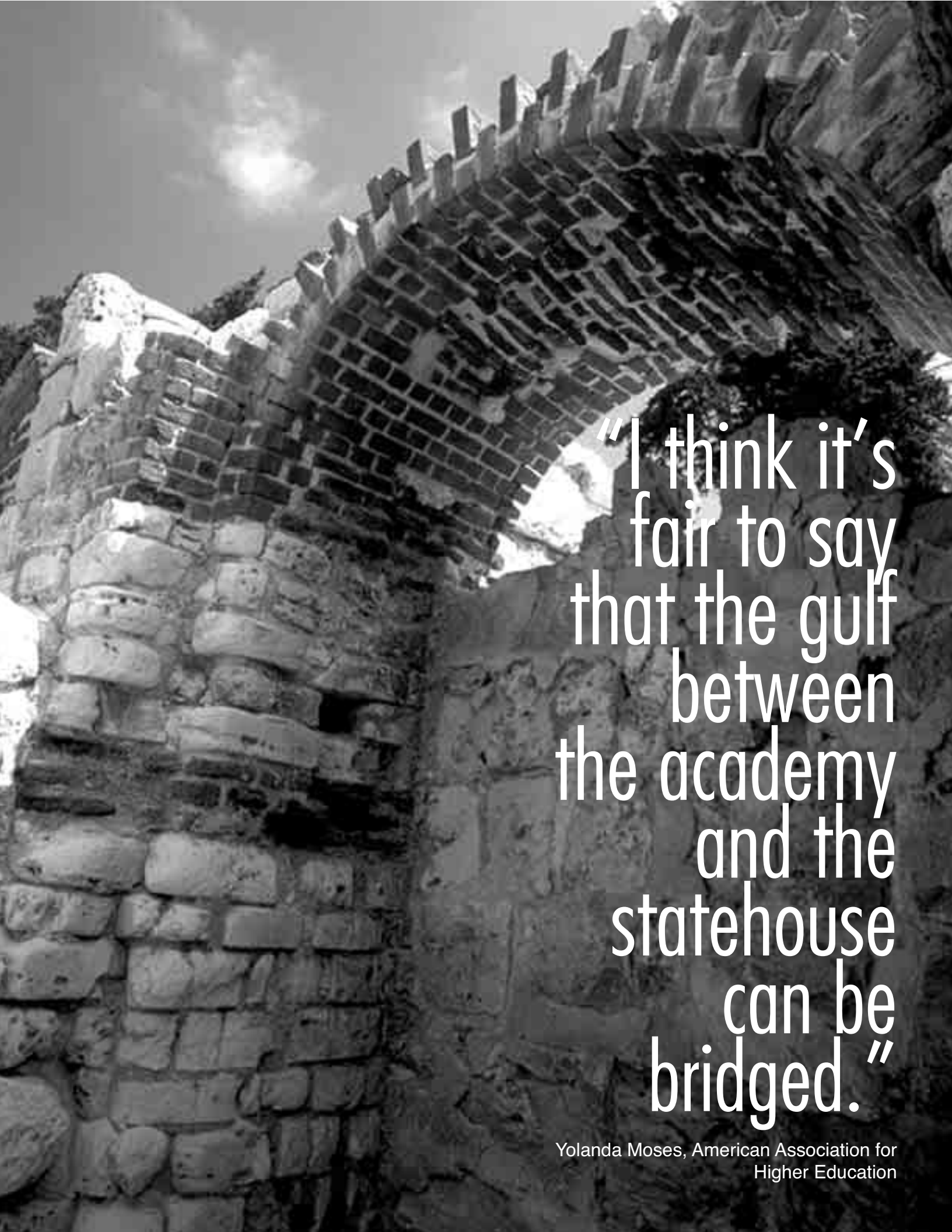
Second, there is a major trend on many, many campuses — public and private, large and small — toward fostering what I call "examined values" as an essential part of an undergraduate education. As institutions go through their requirements for graduation, more and more of them are making examined values a manifest and explicit requirement for students, not just something done in the margin.

The third trend is the emergence of community-based learning. The new National Survey of Student Engagement shows that two-thirds of the students responding reported some sort of service experience during the previous year, and about half of those had service courses that carried credit. There is also a strengthened emphasis on study abroad and junior year at home programs. This suggests that experiential learning is becoming part of the tapestry of undergraduate education.

Finally, there is a very powerful trend toward helping students cultivate the capacity to integrate different parts of their learning — to draw together academic and experiential learning. Some institutions are actually articulating a language of disciplined reflection, or reflective judgment, and helping students self-consciously cultivate the ability to learn from experience and then subject it to further critique.

Every one of these themes has huge implications for those of us who want to think in new ways about educating students for citizenship. They all require that we develop the capacity for practical and collaborative intelligence — to *learn from others*.

— Carol Geary Schneider
President, American Association of Colleges and Universities



"I think it's fair to say that the gulf between the academy and the statehouse can be bridged."

Yolanda Moses, American Association for Higher Education

Chapter Five

Forging Strategic Alliances

Building and strengthening a movement in higher education requires the participation and creativity of all members of the academic community, including faculty, staff, administrators, and students. But mobilizing the various constituencies of higher education is only a start. The next step is to reach out to stakeholders outside the academy — parents, community leaders, foundation officers, journalists, business leaders, and others — and build strategic alliances, networks, and partnerships aimed at advancing civic engagement and social responsibility. Participants gave emphasis to two groups that are especially critical to that effort: government and K-12 education.

Government

There has been a lot of hand-wringing in recent years about the decline of federal and state support for higher education. As budgets shrink and demands for accountability become more widespread and urgent, there is a growing concern that the firm bonds linking the academy and government — bonds that have shaped and defined American higher education over the last century and a half — are beginning to unravel. Public policy discussions focus less on the broad range of social benefits conferred by higher education, as they did in the past, and more on the private economic benefits it provides to individuals.

The problem is exacerbated by the lack of dialogue between policymakers and educational leaders about the concrete ways that universities can advance the common good through training and research. In some states, political leaders and college and university presidents do talk periodically in an effort to link higher education more effectively to public needs. But at the federal level there is little if any systematic effort being made to consider how universities relate to pressing social and civic needs. When public officials and academic leaders meet, more often than not their discussions boil down to money.

A common refrain at the dialogues — especially among the half-dozen or so legislators who participated in the discussions — is that federal and state officials feel barraged by academic leaders who continually blame them for their budget shortfalls. “The legislators I’ve talked to have said, ‘It would be nice if we could talk about issues not around the budget,” observed Yolanda Moses. “If they only see us when we’re coming to get money or resources for our institutions, they say that

sends a particular signal. We need to have ongoing partnerships around priority issues over a longer period of time. That sets up a different kind of relationship."

Peter Magrath, president of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, concurred. "The thing that I've found valuable," he said, "is calling on legislators without an agenda — at least not an overt agenda — and saying, 'What's on your mind?' or 'What are we not doing that we ought to be doing?'"

Beyond nurturing and sustaining relationships with policymakers, academic leaders need to actively and continually put forward fresh policy ideas. Given that legislators are generally responsive to policy initiatives from the academy, a greater effort ought to be made to craft proposals that address broad public purposes. Gar Alperovich, professor of political economy at the University of Maryland, noted there are a myriad of different civic engagement initiatives currently taking place around the country — he and his colleagues at the Democracy Collaborative have identified over 500 projects, he said, and many of them have direct policy implications. "This work can be replicated, and some of it can be translated into specific legislative proposals, in the form of precedents or preliminaries."

In a presentation at the Maryland gathering, Renée Bianco, Director of the Flemming Fellows Institute and External Affairs Center for Policy Alternatives, observed that academic leaders should make an effort to speak to legislators in a language they can understand. "Giving them a lot of materials and articles to read is not going to work," she said. A better approach might be to persuade alumni networks, community groups, non-profit organizations, students, and other stakeholders to help institutions press the case for greater state support.

Another strategy recommended by Marta Tellado is for academic leaders to work with legislators to develop policies with clear incentives for civic engagement. An example of this, she said, is to craft legislation where funding is contingent on collaboration between various stakeholders in the community, such as the college or university, faith-based organizations, and the local business community. This creates incentives for institutions to work together to address community needs. As a policymaking strategy, this approach is very different from working with the mayor or the county commissioner, she pointed out.

K-12 Education

Between the 1920s and 1960s, at least half of American high school students took classes in civics, according to a recent study by University of Rochester political scientist Richard Niemi. By the mid-1990s, that number had fallen to ten percent. But civics education may be poised for a comeback. The *Washington Post* recently reported that a proposal to restore civics to American classrooms was included in a draft of President Bush's 2002 State of the Union address. It was removed, however, after White House officials concluded that the idea "was not sufficiently formed into workable steps."

Four Avenues for Engaging Legislators

I think it's fair to say that the gulf between the academy and the statehouse can be bridged. There are four areas that could serve as entry points to dialogue: access, student learning, accountability, and K-12 education. These issues provide opportunities for working in very concrete ways with legislators.

- ***Access.*** It's very clear that over the past twenty years universities and colleges have been working hard to bring in diverse student populations. The question is, what is the success rate of those students we bring into the institutions? Are the resources that are being put into this really paying off? These are the kinds of questions legislators are asking us and something we are being asked to validate as a policy issue.

- ***Student learning.*** Clearly, student learning is on the agenda of every statehouse in the nation. Our president talks about "leaving no child behind." But higher education is not on the radar screen of the Department of Education. If we are serious about this issue, colleges and universities have to be involved. We can help legislators address questions about what students are learning. High-stakes standardized tests are not the only way to assess outcomes. They need to know what the other ways are.

- ***Accountability.*** The issue of accountability has been hanging over us for the past decade. The surveys that have been done show that people have a lot of questions about the value-added of higher education. We need to talk about accountability in partnership with legislators. In very clear language, we need to link what we are doing with our stakeholders.

- ***K-12 education.*** The reform of K-12 education in this country is something institutions of higher education have backed away from because the issue is so complex and complicated. But unless we tackle this, I don't think we are creating a foundation for the sort of inclusive democracy we say we want. This is not a problem that can be solved by any one sector. But universities have to lead the way. If we were to do this, I think we can win over legislators as partners in the process.

— Yolanda Moses
Former president, American Association for Higher Education

The *Post* reported that John Bridgeland, director of President Bush's national service initiative, is leading a task force charged with developing a strategy to reintroduce civics education. The initiative is part of an ambitious package of policies aimed at teaching the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. The plan is likely to include a range of new programs, including federal incentives for states to adopt civics education classes and standards in public schools, expansion of service learning programs, and use of the presidential bully pulpit to foster civic awareness through competitions, prizes, public television documentaries, and other activities.

"It's clear that John Bridgeland really gets it," Elizabeth Hollander told participants at the Maryland gathering. Reporting on a meeting she and Frank Newman had with Bridgeland the previous day, she said, "He kept stealing our lines. He asked us, 'What will it take to institutionalize service-engagement on campuses and make it a part of their culture?' At the end of the meeting, he pounded on the table and said, 'There is hope! This is the most exciting meeting I've had all week.' What this means is that all our agonizing about this work has been worth it. There is now room on the national agenda, and we need to put one out there."

Civics education is but one avenue for dialogue and collaboration between higher education and primary and secondary education. Other entry-points include service-learning, the training of new teachers, and professional advancement courses for experienced teachers.

Educating for Democratic Leadership

American society has demonstrated a significant capacity for civic innovation, despite what you may read about the decline of social capital. We have a democracy that has the capacity to innovate and recreate itself. The group that first convinced me of this was the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). Over a period of two and a half decades, the IAF has reinvented itself from a form of community organizing to what is today an incredibly rich network that knows how to develop leadership, build relationships, and take power and conflict and turn them into something productive and collaborative.

I stumbled on this by accident about ten years ago while I was working on a book project. As a researcher, I was in some ways reborn when I discovered the work of people like Gerald Taylor, Sister Judy Donovan, Ernie Cortes Jr. and other IAF leaders. They were showing that leadership training, youth development, and community-building can be done. Often this kind of work is not on the radar screen because we are so overwhelmed by the negative evidence.

The IAF is part of broader movement to revitalize American democracy that has begun to emerge. I refer to it as the civic renewal movement, but people call it different things. There are a lot of people operating in different niches with a whole variety of practices. And over the course of a decade a number of organizations, such as the Center for Democracy and Citizenship, the Kettering Foundation, the National Civic League, and the Study Circle Resource Center, have stepped up to the plate and tried to connect these parts and build a movement. It still has a long way to go and there is a lot of work to do.

As a sociologist of social movements, I think we're in the process of creating an elaborated master-frame. A common language has emerged in many different arenas that speaks to the need for "building upon assets," "coming to consensus," "finding common ground," "doing one-on-ones," and "building relationships." Again, a lot of folks who are doing this work don't realize that other people are in fact doing similar work in other niches.

The mission to renew the civic purposes of higher education is a central piece – perhaps *the* central piece – in all of this work. Higher education is central because it can nurture and train people for democratic leadership. Its goal should be to produce tens of thousands of leaders – people with genuine public leadership skills – who can go into every kind of institutional and community setting and work for democratic change.

Higher education has a distinct opportunity and a distinct challenge here because leadership development is central to the work we do. We have to make sure that as people come into the professions they see themselves as *democratic leaders*, not just experts.

— Carmen Sirianni,
Professor of Sociology, Brandeis University

"This is not the agenda of the Forum, it is our collective agenda. This is not something that a single institution can do on its own. We need to come together to rise to a higher level of accountability."

Tony Chambers, National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good

Chapter Six

Framing a Common Agenda

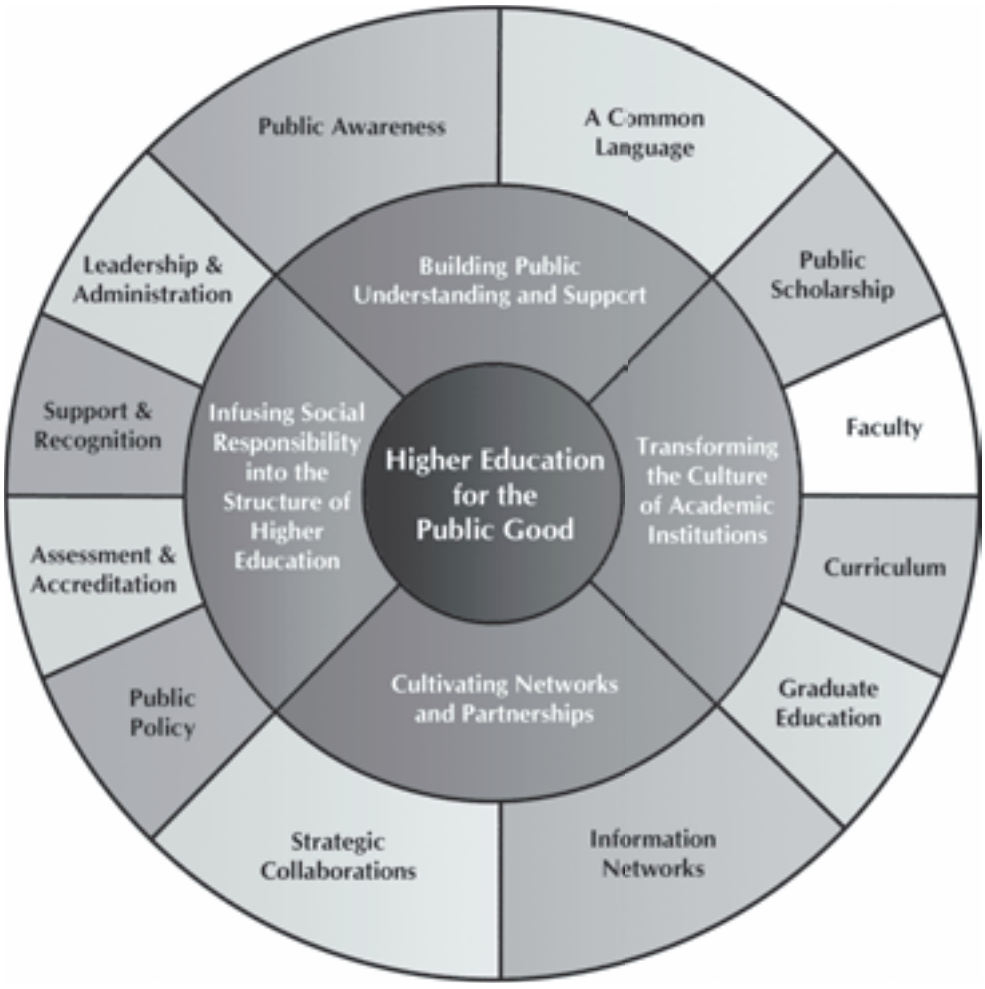
The gatherings in Maryland, California, and Minnesota were organized in the spirit of off-campus retreats, as occasions for open dialogue, deep listening, and quiet reflection on the broad public purposes of higher education. Despite the loosely structured and open-ended format, however, there was a clear sense at each of the meetings that talk alone can only go so far. A commitment to civic engagement and social responsibility, if it is to mean something, must be backed up with concrete action and sustained effort.

This perception was further reinforced in follow-up surveys conducted by the National Forum following the first three dialogues. Participants identified several specific needs that are paramount in moving the work forward: 1) engaging in an exchange of ideas about *specific* ways to promote the public good; 2) developing an action agenda that reflects a common and collective voice; 3) following up the National Leadership Dialogues with further opportunities for collaboration; and 4) promoting broad ownership and involvement in the process

When participants reconvened in late October 2002 for the National Summit, it was for the specific purpose of crafting a common agenda for action, one organized around the rich array of service and engagement efforts already underway in higher education. In his welcoming remarks, Tony Chambers stressed that the National Summit was not so much about agenda-*planning* as agenda-*building*. "Agenda-planning has the connotation of creating something new," he said. "But we're not necessarily asking you do to something new. We're asking you to think in terms of what you are *already* doing. We want to take some of those ideas and build a common framework around them."

Chambers went on to say that a common agenda, if it is to be useful and effective, requires the involvement and support of multiple constituencies; it depends on the leadership and focus of designated individuals or teams; it requires timetables; and it demands if not actual accountability measures then some process by which progress can be determined and evaluated. He also insisted that the responsibility for advancing and monitoring the effort has to lie with those committed to the work, not with the National Forum or some other institution. "This is not the agenda of the National Forum," he said, "it is our *collective* agenda. It would be easy for you to say, 'Why don't you folks at the National Forum do it?' But this work is not something that a single institution can do on its own. We need to come together to rise to a higher level of accountability."

Over the course of three days, participants drafted an ambitious and comprehensive agenda aimed at effecting change within four broad areas: 1) strengthening public understanding and support of higher education's civic mission; 2) cultivating networks and partnerships, both inside and outside the academy, committed to advancing the public good; 3) infusing civic responsibility into the *culture* of higher learning; and 4) embedding civic engagement and social responsibility in the structure of the higher education system (see diagram). The resulting statement — which was refined at two subsequent dialogues at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin — was designed to be a living document, an open-ended and continually evolving expression of our commitment to civic engagement and social responsibility.



A Common Agenda

A COMMON AGENDA

To Stengthen the Relationship between Higher Education and Society

Building Public Understanding and Support for Higher Education's Civic Mission

Surveys show that most Americans equate a college or university degree with good jobs and high salaries. Once seen as a benefit to society as a whole, a college education is now regarded mostly as a boon to individuals. Academic leaders need to broaden public awareness and support of higher education by engaging the public in critical and honest discussions about how institutions of higher learning contribute to the common good.

Goal: Develop a common language that resonates both inside and outside the academy

Action items:

- Develop a common framework and vocabulary for addressing the civic responsibilities of higher education through discussions with stakeholders outside the academy
- Collect scholarship on the public good, identify common themes, and frame questions for further research
- Organize marketing and outreach efforts to promote a national debate about the importance of higher education's civic mission

Goal: Promote broad and effective discourse on the civic responsibilities of higher education

Action items:

- Convene a series of open dialogues with various public sectors about the public purposes of higher education
- Raise public awareness of the institutional diversity within American higher education
- Engage alumni associations in the work of articulating the public good and forging ties between higher education institutions and stakeholders outside the academy
- Develop guidelines of discourse to improve the quality of public discussions about higher education

Cultivating networks and partnerships

Higher education institutions need to make common cause with a broad range of stakeholders, both inside and outside the academy. These strategic partners can advocate for the academy and galvanize public support for its civic engagement work while at the same time informing its strategies and assuring that they are relevant and meaningful to the public.

Goal: Create broad and dispersed communications systems and processes

Action items:

- Create an information and resource network across higher education associations
- Develop information processes that announce relevant conferences, recruit presenters, and encourage presentations at appropriate national conferences
- Foster opportunities for information sharing within and between various types of post-secondary institutions (e.g. research universities and community colleges)

Goal: Bolster strategic alliances and diverse collaborations

Action items:

- Establish and support ongoing partnerships and collaborations between higher education associations, post-secondary institutions, and the external community (e.g. civic organizations, legislators, and community members)
- Engage the public in discussions about the role of the arts in advancing higher education for the public good
- Promote collaboration between higher education and K-12 to address questions of access, retention, and graduation rates

Infusing civic responsibility into the culture of higher education institutions

The characteristic ways of thinking, behaving, and organizing academic life must be brought into alignment with core values and commitments. Higher education institutions need to reexamine the implicit and explicit consequences of their work and structure their research, teaching, and service activities around a clear and coherent mission.

Goal: Emphasize civic skills and leadership development in the curriculum and co-curriculum

Action items:

- Develop and implement a curriculum aimed at strengthening civic engagement among students
- Organize co-curricular student and community programs that build leadership and foster civic engagement
- Create learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom that promote democratic values such as civic responsibility, social justice, and public deliberation
- Establish leadership and service opportunities that stress the importance of ethical behavior
- Provide students with hands-on instruction in community organizing and networking

Goal: Foster a deeper commitment to the public good within the professoriate

Action items:

- Work with faculty to develop a language that reflects their commitment to civic engagement and social responsibility
- Formulate promotion and tenure guidelines that emphasize the value of research, teaching, and service for the public good
- Identify models of faculty development that reflect a commitment to civic responsibility

Goal: Identify, recognize, and support engaged scholarship

Action items:

- Identify models and exemplars of civically engaged scholarship
- Promote action research, community partnerships, and other forms of public work
- Encourage institutions to publicly recognize exemplary outreach activities
- Establish an institutional capacity-building effort

Goal: Bring graduate education into alignment with the civic mission

Action items:

- Work with disciplinary associations (e.g. English, political science, arts, architecture) to explore how graduate training can incorporate service, outreach, and engagement

- Promote "civic engagement" within academic and professional disciplines according to their own interpretation of the term
- Incorporate the concept of civic responsibility into current graduate education reform efforts

Embedding civic engagement and social responsibility in the structure of the higher education system

Promoting the public benefits of higher education requires system-wide efforts aimed at infusing the values of civic engagement and social responsibility into governance practices, policy decisions, and educational processes.

Goal: Align governing structures and administrative strategies

Action items:

- Provide opportunities for student and community involvement in institutional governance and decision-making processes
- Identify ways that institutions can model democratic practices — both internally and in their relationship to the community
- Establish civic engagement units and task forces charged with orchestrating this work within institutions

Goal: Publicly recognize and support valuable engagement work

Action items:

- Offer public awards that reward institutions with demonstrable track records in serving the public good in order to encourage the institutionalization of civic engagement activities
- Develop a comprehensive inventory of funding sources, association activities, initiatives, and exemplary practices that advance the public good
- Identify, recognize, and support early-career scholars who choose to do research on the public purposes of higher education

Goal: Ensure that assessment and accreditation processes include civic engagement and social responsibility criteria

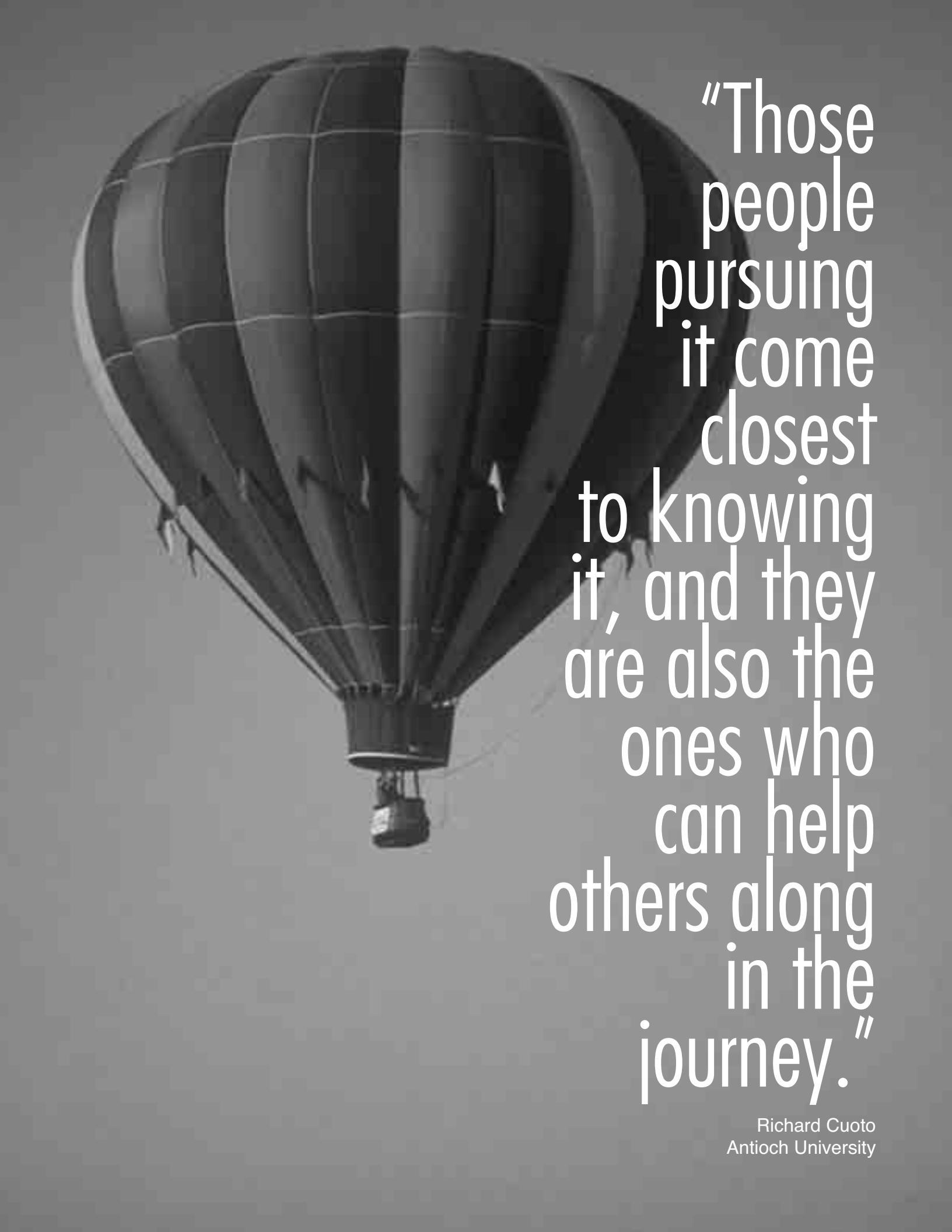
Action items:

- Identify service to the public good as a key component in state and federal educational plans (e.g. master plans, state budgets, professional associations)
- Bring higher education associations and legislators together to broaden current definitions of student outcomes and achievement and develop a plan for assessment
- Develop strategies and processes to refocus system-wide planning, accreditation and evaluation agendas to consider criteria assessing the social, public benefits of higher education

Goal: Cultivate stronger ties between the academy and government

Action items:

- Develop a three-year implementation plan that joins college and university presidents/ chancellors with state legislators to engage in an assessment of the needs of the public by state
- Host a series of dialogues between trustees and state legislators to explore the role of universities in advancing the public good at the local, state, and national level



"Those people pursuing it come closest to knowing it, and they are also the ones who can help others along in the journey."

Richard Cuoto
Antioch University

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Appendix A:

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Robert Caret	San José State University
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Chancellor of the University of California Berkeley
Speech at the National Press Club,June 1999

*Derek Bok
President Emeritus of Harvard University
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