

The Unrealized Potential of American Higher Education

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These are not good times for America. With only 5 percent of the world's people, we consume over half the world's illegal drugs. Crime, delinquency, divorce, poverty, homelessness, and illegitimacy are at all-time highs. The proportion of our citizens who are incarcerated exceeds that of any other country in the world. The achievements of our school children are declining. Our economy is in a slump. In just a decade we have switched from being the world's biggest lender to being its biggest debtor; our government now has to borrow more than \$700 million *every day* just to pay its bills. Wall Street swarms with swindlers. Defense contractors cheat the government. Government officials lie to Congress, lie to the people, and break the law.

What is going on? How did we come to this? Is there anything we can do about it?

The malaise affecting America is in part a malaise of our *institutions*: our government, our businesses and corporations, our churches, our families, our legal system, our medical profession, our news media, and even our schools and colleges. They've all caught the same bug. And they all play a part in keeping it alive and spreading it ever more widely among our people.

What ails our society and its institutions is a malaise of *values* and *beliefs*. American society has always been a rich melting pot of diverse and sometimes opposing values and points of view, but in the past

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several decades the policies and practices of our major institutions have come to be dominated by three powerful and interrelated values: *materialism*, *individualism* and *competitiveness*. These values have largely superseded or even replaced many other traditional institutional values, including those for which our institutions were presumably created in the first place.

I want to talk about this national affliction from the perspective of the one American institution I know best: education. I choose education for two very important reasons. First, while most Americans have at least some awareness of the excessive greed and competition that afflicts politics, business, and the law, they are largely unaware of the fact that our educational system also has a full blown case of the same ailment. Second, and more important, is the fact that education, more than any other American institution, is in a position to *do* something about the problem. It is to this unrealized potential that I would like to address my remarks.

Materialism, competitiveness, and individualism have, of course, always been prominent values in American society. For many years the United States has always been regarded as a "land of opportunity," where material success is highly valued and where most of us believe that anyone who is willing to exert enough effort can "make a good living." And the value of the individual and of individual freedom has been emphasized in any number of ways, from the Bill of Rights, where individuals are guaranteed freedom of speech and religion, to the legal system, where anyone accused of crimes by the state is presumed to be innocent until proven otherwise. Competitiveness, of course, has always been basic to our economic and legal systems: people are given an opportunity to compete openly with each other for as much money as they can make in the marketplace or for favorable outcomes in a court of law, and "may the best man win."

But a society that values *primarily* competitiveness, materialism, and individualism cannot survive indefinitely. People would be irrevocably set against each other in a ruthless and deadly struggle for the largest possible share of available material wealth and power. One reason why American society has held together as long as it has is that it has traditionally embraced other values, that, to a certain extent, mitigate and soften our materialistic and competitive tendencies. I am speaking here of our sense of generosity, of fairness, of community, of patriotism, of social responsibility, and of respect for the rights of others. *Some* of our institutions—especially the family, the church, and the schools—have traditionally given high priority to these other

values, thereby providing a countervailing force against our tendency toward excessive greed and competitiveness. The fascinating book, *Habit of the Heart* (Bella, et al., 1986), provides a vivid portrait of the tension between these two opposing sets of American values. In the latter part of this century, and especially in the past two decades, competitiveness, individualism, and especially materialism seem to have gotten the upper hand. From politics to sports to religion to the news media, wherever one looks, one sees the pervasive influence of money. Exit polls conducted after our last two presidential elections indicate that most people "voted their pocketbooks." Prime time television shows feature people who are wealthy, powerful, and ruthless, and one popular show is even called "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous." A new magazine called *Money* has become very popular, and the most prestigious of our several publications that focus on money and wealth, the *Wall Street Journal*, has the temerity to call itself "the daily diary of the American dream."

But the evidence is not merely anecdotal. Our surveys of entering college freshmen during the past two decades have documented a major shift in student values and interests, indicating that making money has become much more important to America's young people than it used to be (Astin, 1991). These materialistic trends show up in every category of student, regardless of gender, race, or social class.

While we in the academy might be tempted to stand back and self-righteously deplore these changes in societal values and the myriad social problems that we see around us, academics are all too prone to forget two basic realities about American higher education. First is the fact that, perhaps unwittingly, we have become an active participant in the societal competitiveness and materialism that we see all around us. Second, and more important, is the fact that we possess a tremendous untapped potential not only for restoring a better balance in societal values but also for alleviating some of our most urgent societal problems such as crime, illiteracy, poverty, urban blight, and environmental degradation. I believe that the key to unlocking this great potential of our higher education system is to face up to our own value dilemmas.

Most colleges and universities operate according to two sets of values. First we have the *formal* or official institutional values or goals, which are usually stated in the institution's charter, in the college catalogue, or in mission statements. These official value positions are also restated frequently by the CEO and other institutional leaders in their annual reports, commencement speeches, and other

public pronouncements. These formal or official statements can be viewed as an expression of the institution's *explicit* values. These are the values that we and our colleagues, and especially our institutional leaders, pay lip service to.

The other set of values is the one that actually drives the institution's policies. These are the values that underlie major policies and decisions such as how to allocate resources, the hiring of faculty and administrators, the admission of students, the establishment of the curriculum, the choice of pedagogical techniques, the establishment of new programs and procedures, and so on. I like to call these our *implicit* values. Some of our most difficult institutional problems arise when there are serious inconsistencies between our explicit and implicit values or, if you prefer, between our words and our deeds.

Let's take the kind of place I work in—a major research university—as an example. The *explicit* values of most, if not all research universities involve the familiar triad of teaching, research, and public service. Universities are usually reluctant to assign formal *priorities* to these values, although when pressed on the matter, most CEOs will say that teaching is supposed to be at least as important as the other two. Yet most people who work in research universities like mine believe that the institution's *implicit* value system involves a distinct hierarchy among the three, with research receiving by far the highest priority.

Contradictions between explicit and implicit values occur in most other types of institutions. Even in the less prestigious universities or in many small colleges, we often find such things as research or grant-raising being given higher priority than teaching. And in the community colleges, where the explicit values focus almost exclusively on teaching, we often find such things as fund raising and the maintenance of enrollments being given priority over educational effectiveness.

The problem with implicit goals and values is that they tend to remain implicit and unstated. Under these conditions, one of the biggest challenges that we face in trying to unlock our latent potential is to figure out how to confront the implicit values that drive our institutional policies and to effect a better fit between implicit and explicit values.

Identifying our *explicit* institutional values or goals is a relatively simple task, since most of us have a formal charter or mission statement that embraces the familiar triad of teaching, research, and service. The really tough challenge, of course, is to find ways to expose our

implicit values so that they can be scrutinized and discussed. One strategy for doing this is to focus on the issue of academic *quality* or *excellence*. Since most academics are strongly attached to the notion that "excellence" in education is a good thing, it becomes possible to expose some of our implicit values by seeing how we go about trying to become excellent. While we all like to talk about excellence, the real question is what we *do* in the name of excellence. It's here that our implicit goals and values come into play.

For several years now I've been arguing that academics have typically pursued "excellence" in two ways (Astin, 1985). For simplicity I like to label these as the *reputational* and *resources* approaches. Under the reputational view, "excellence" is equated with the position of our institution in the hierarchical pecking order that is so much a part of our folklore in American higher education. From time to time academics have attempted to quantify this folklore by means of reputational surveys, and in the past few years we have seen similar attempts to measure institutional reputation or prestige by national magazines such as *US News and World Report* and *Money*.

The *resource* view equates excellence with such things as the test scores of the entering students, average faculty salaries, the size of the endowment, the student-faculty ratio, or the size of the library. Since the reputational and resource views are mutually reinforcing—having a lot of resources enhances one's reputation and having a good reputation helps to bring in more resources—it is not surprising that both approaches yield similar "quality" rankings of institutions.

Our inclination to equate excellence with reputation and resources is perhaps understandable, given today's dominant values. In our highly competitive and materialistic society, there is a strong tendency to define the quality of life or the worth of the individual in terms of status and material possessions.

For some time now I have felt that the reputational and resources approaches to excellence are flawed because they do not directly address our explicit values, and in particular the *education* of the student. If the fullest development of the student's talents and abilities is indeed our principal function, why not define the "excellence" of our institutions in terms of their ability to develop the talents of their students? This *talent development* view of excellence emphasizes the educational *impact* of the institution on the student. Its basic premise is that the truest measure of excellence is the institution's ability to affect its students favorably, to enhance their intellectual and scholarly development, and to make a positive difference in their lives. The

most excellent institutions are, in this view, those that have the greatest impact—"add the most value," as economists would say—to the student's knowledge and personal development.

The resource and reputational approaches not only reflect materialistic values, but they are also manifestations of a *competitive* view of education, whereby our institution competes with others for resources of students, faculty, and money, and for higher and higher places in the reputational pecking order. The talent development approach, on the other hand, reflects more of a *cooperative* value perspective, where we see our institution in more of a partnership relationship, helping students to develop their talents and serving the community and the society.

My critique of our traditional views about excellence is not intended to suggest that resources and reputations are not important. Institutions need resources to function and they need reputations to attract both students and resources. The real issue here is whether abundant resources and excellent reputation are viewed primarily as ends in themselves rather than as means to achieving excellent education ends (that is, talent development and public service).

A less charitable way of looking at our implicit values of resource acquisition and reputation enhancement is to say that they reflect a kind of institutional narcissism, where our sense of excellence or self-worth is defined in terms either of our material possessions or of what others think of us. Our explicit values of teaching and public service, on the other hand, are more transcendent, in the sense that the realization of these values requires us to transcend our institutional egos and to identify our self-worth in terms of how effectively we educate our students and serve the public interest. I believe the key to unlocking the full potential of our American higher education system is to find a means to transcend our institutional egos and to bring our implicit values more closely in line with our explicitly stated mission and values.

In light of the tightening budgets and declining resources that many of us in higher education are experiencing today, it is reasonable to ask whether American higher education really has a significant amount of untapped potential. Many of us already feel stretched to our limits, and the suggestion that we might be able to undertake a significant number of new ventures aimed at strengthening our educational programs or dealing more effectively with our nation's many social problems may sound unrealistic, if not utopian. Why do I believe that our true potential is far from being realized, even in these hard times?

Let's step back for a moment and look at our system. The United States has the largest higher education system in the world. It is also the most open and accessible system. And while I cannot produce any hard evidence in support of the claim, I would also submit that it is the strongest and potentially the most effective system.

Where does this strength and potential come from? Besides its large size and accessibility, I think there are at least three other sources of great potential. First is our *diversity*. Diversity strengthens the system not only by providing a wide range of programs to accommodate the varying talents and proclivities of our students, but also by making it possible to experiment and to try out different educational philosophies and programs. In many respects American higher education constitutes a grand "natural experiment" in higher education, and to a certain extent, the national research program that I have been affiliated with for nearly 30 years now was originally conceived as a systematic attempt to learn from this diversity by determining which kinds of education institutions and practices are most effective, and for which kinds of students.

Another great strength of our system is our *creativity* and our *capacity for critical analysis*. Anyone who has sat through a few departmental or academic senate meetings is acutely aware of the academic penchant for being critical, and of our willingness to display these critical skills on every possible occasion. While some cynics might say that the doctoral dissertation is often little more than an exercise in finding fault with the work of others, I would argue that our creativity and our highly developed skills in critical thinking and analysis have been largely responsible for many of our most important discoveries and advances in the natural sciences, humanities, and social sciences. We are very good, in other words, at analysis and critical thinking.

The third great strength of our system is our institutional *autonomy*. In certain respects this is not only our greatest asset but also our most misused and underused one. While we academics are fond of complaining about external threats to our autonomy, the fact remains that most colleges and universities retain almost complete control over those decisions and policies that matter most: *whom* to admit and on what basis, *what* to teach them and *how* to teach it, what *rules* and *requirements* will govern our students' conduct, how to *test* and *certify* our students, *whom* to hire and the *criteria* for hiring, tenuring, and promoting them, the manner in which we treat each other as professional colleagues, the *topics* we choose for our research and scholarship, and how we faculty use our discretionary time. No other substantial insti-

tution in American society, I would argue, enjoys anywhere near as much autonomy in setting policy and in the conduct of their daily affairs as we do.

Our autonomy may well be our greatest gift, since it leaves us free to change our institutional focus or to modify the implicit values that underlie our actions. Our creativity and our capacity for critical analysis guarantees that we have the intellectual capabilities to tackle almost any social problem, and our diversity means that we have the wherewithal to try out radically different approaches, not only to pedagogy but also to solving the many problems of our larger society. My basic argument here is that American higher education at this point in its development is a long way from realizing its full potential, and that the key to unlocking this potential is to effect a better reconciliation between our implicit and explicit values.

Let's consider for a moment how our continuing reliance on the resources and reputational approaches to excellence thwarts our capacity to take full advantage of the great strengths of our higher education system. Take the issue of institutional diversity. An institutional hierarchy predicated on reputation and resources has the effect of discouraging diversity and encourages adherence to a single standard of "excellence." Thus, when the yardsticks for excellence are narrowly defined in terms of simplistic measures such as the test scores of the entering freshmen or the number of nationally visible scholars and researchers on the faculty, innovation is discouraged and diversity begins to disappear. Harold Hodgkinson (1971) and C. Robert Pace (1974) have both documented the decline in institutional diversity that occurred during the 1960s and 1970s, and there seems to be little doubt that this decline was stimulated in part by increasing adherence to the reputational and resource conceptions of quality. We used to have 250 teachers colleges in this country; now there are virtually none. Specialized technological and agricultural universities have practically disappeared. Most members of these extinct institutional species now model themselves after the prestigious research universities.

Hierarchical systems such as ours tend to be self-perpetuating and to stifle innovation at all levels of the hierarchy. Institutions at the top of the hierarchy resist innovation because they are fearful of losing their favored position. And because institutions at lower levels in the hierarchy seek to elevate their status, they feel compelled to imitate the institutions above them.

Because our resources of prestigious faculty and high achieving students are finite, the competition among institutions for these re-

sources cannot accomplish much except to redistribute the finite pool. If I manage to increase my resources and reputation by recruiting some of your faculty stars or National Merit Scholars, your position in the hierarchy is proportionately reduced. Thus, we have the ironic situation where a resource-based conception of excellence actually reduces our pool of financial resources as institutions try to outspend each other in pursuit of a finite pool of talented students and prestigious faculty. But the main problem with all of this competition, I think, is that it stifles creativity and innovation and reduces diversity by forcing institutions to conform to a narrowly defined and educationally dubious standard of excellence.

What would be the implications for institutional diversity and innovativeness of committing institutions to the talent development conception of excellence? Under this value perspective institutions would have a clear incentive to innovate and experiment with different approaches to the teaching and learning process in order to discover the most effective approaches. Attention would shift away from the mere accumulation of resources to the more fundamental question of how these resources can be most effectively deployed to maximize talent development. Rather than squandering resources in a fierce competition for finite pools of students and faculty talent, institutions could instead learn from each other's successes and failures in trying out new approaches to teaching and learning.

Let us now consider the second latent strength of America's higher education system: the creative and critical thinking skills of the faculty. To what end do most faculty devote these skills? Perhaps the best way to answer this question is to look at the faculty reward structure. Despite all of the hand wringing that we hear these days about the overemphasis on research and the need to attach greater rewards to faculty teaching and public service, the fact remains that the reward system in most universities is still based primarily upon research productivity and scholarly visibility. Why has the "publish or perish" issue been with us so long, and why does it seem so resistant to change? Productive scholars who are highly visible in their academic fields are more highly valued and given greater rewards than other faculty because they bring prestige to the institution and because they are usually better able to bring in resources such as research contracts and grants. Having faculty "stars," in other words, enhances our resources and reputation. If you have any doubt about the accuracy of this claim, consider the following finding that has just emerged from our current national studies of institutional characteristics: when you look at the

average salaries that institutions pay their faculty, the one faculty characteristic which is most strongly correlated with average salaries is their research productivity. On the other hand, one of the strongest *negative* correlates of average faculty salaries is how much time faculty spend teaching and advising students. These findings may help to explain why our studies of talent development have not shown much of a relationship between learning and institutional expenditures: those institutions that pay their faculties high salaries are not paying them to work with students, so that the additional resources are not really being invested in the educational program.

Since scholarly visibility and fame is defined primarily by the academic disciplines rather than by the institutions, most of us devote our creative energies and our critical thinking skills to scholarly endeavors that will gain us status within our disciplines. Moreover, the kind of work that gains us the most prestige within our fields is "pure" or "theoretical" research rather than "applied" research. As a consequence, many faculty are discouraged from doing applied research or from engaging in interdisciplinary research. Those of us who engage in interdisciplinary work that cuts across several academic fields often find it difficult to get a fair review from a faculty committee because the committee cannot find a traditional disciplinary "slot" in which to place us. I think these problems are especially severe in the humanities, the social sciences, and the professions.

Since the principal currency of academic prestige is publications in disciplinary journals, faculty members have very powerful disciplinary and institutional incentives to concentrate most of their creative energies on producing articles for publication in narrowly focused journals. This situation not only results in a proliferation of scholarly journals and of many publications of dubious value, but it also discourages faculty from focusing their creative and critical thinking skills on the teaching-learning process itself. Ernest Boyer (1990) has recently recognized this problem and has called upon institutional administrators to encourage their faculties to devote more of their research energies to studying the curriculum and pedagogy. In last year's McBee lecture, K. Patricia Cross (1991) describes a fully developed procedure for helping faculty to carry out systematic research on their own teaching practices.

In short, it would appear that continuing reliance on the resources and reputational views of excellence will make it difficult for us to encourage more of our faculty to devote their considerable creative and critical thinking skills either to the teaching-learning process or to applied problems in the larger society.

Finally we come to the third great strength of our system, our autonomy. The interesting thing about institutional autonomy is that we continue to enjoy a tremendous amount of autonomy regardless of the implicit values that undergird our policies and practices. The problem with the resources and reputational approaches is that they discourage us from *using* this autonomy. Thus, even though most institutions are relatively free to devise their own methods of hiring and rewarding faculty, their own curricula, their own methods of admitting and grading students, and their own methods of pedagogy, one finds a remarkable degree of homogeneity in such matters across the 3,000 institutions that make up our higher education system. Most of us still admit students on the basis of their high school grades and scores on standardized tests, most of us still rely heavily on the lecture method in our classroom teaching, most of us employ similar methods for recruiting and evaluating faculty and administrators, and more than 90 percent of us employ a so-called "distributional" system in our general education programs (Hurtado, Astin, & Dey, 1991). That there should be so much similarity in these practices can only be explained in terms of the institutional hierarchy which is so closely associated with reputation and resources: institutions at the top of the hierarchy are reluctant to try out new approaches for fear of losing their envied positions, whereas less prestigious institutions that aspire to higher positions in the hierarchy feel that they must conform to the practices of those above them. In this connection, it is interesting to realize that, with the exception of a very few experimental colleges that have been founded in the past 20 or 30 years, most of the truly innovative practices in American higher education have been tried out by institutions that are far down in the reputational pecking order. It may well be that the realization that they can never achieve elite status with respect to resources and reputation has freed up some of these institutions to try out new approaches in their curriculum, pedagogy, and faculty reward systems. Perhaps they feel they have little to lose, and potentially much to gain, from innovation.

Until recently my arguments against the resource and reputational views and my advocacy of the talent development approach have been largely theoretical. That is, the talent development approach is not only more consistent with our explicitly stated values and goals, but it also *seems* more likely to create more effective educational institutions. In just the past few months, however, our Institute has come up with some empirical findings which confirm these speculations and which raise serious questions about the efficacy of the resource and

reputational views. While this is not the place to present technical details about this very complicated research project, let me share with you the essentials of some of our most recent findings. The study involved a four-year longitudinal study of undergraduates attending 159 different types of institutions. One of our environmental measures at each institution was the extent to which the faculty perceived a strong institutional emphasis on resource acquisition and reputational enhancement. As might be expected, institutions that emphasize resources and reputations also have a very strong orientation toward research and make frequent use of teaching assistants in their undergraduate instruction. The faculties at these institutions are paid very high salaries, but they spend relatively little time teaching and advising students. Not surprisingly, institutions with a strong emphasis on resources and reputation display a weak commitment to student development. But the most interesting findings concern the actual *impact* of the resource-reputation emphasis on the student's development. A strong resource and reputation emphasis appears to have a substantial negative impact on student satisfaction with faculty. It also has negative effects on a wide range of other student outcomes including retention and plans for postgraduate study. Placing a strong emphasis on resources and reputations also seems to contribute to racial tension on the campus.

The research shows that a very different pattern of student outcomes is associated with an environment that places a strong emphasis on student development. Students attending such institutions are much more likely to be satisfied with their faculties and with their overall undergraduate experience and report substantial improvements in their cognitive skills and cultural awareness. They are also more likely to complete college and to plan to attend graduate or professional school.

The importance of these findings, which apply to both universities as well as liberal arts colleges, can hardly be overestimated. Among other things, they suggest that our higher education system could free up much of its untapped educational potential if its institutions could be encouraged to place less emphasis on resource acquisition and reputation enhancement and more emphasis on the process of student development.

What, then, can institutions do to begin shifting some of their implicit values more in the direction of talent development and public service? Let's start at the top. One of the keys to unlocking the potential of our colleges and universities is in how we select and train our

leaders. College presidents are fond of saying that they cannot really initiate significant changes because they have "no real power." While many of us in academia have frequently been frustrated by what we see as ineffectual leadership, recent research on leadership shows that educational leaders *can* serve as highly effective change agents. In their just-released book, *Women of Influence, Women of Vision*, Helen Astin and Carole Leland (1991) identify some of the key elements in effective educational leadership: a *passionate commitment* to equity and social justice on the part of the leader, a willingness to seek change through *collective action*, and a *consistency* in performance characterized by a focus on problem identification and problem solution through the mobilization of like-minded colleagues.

These findings suggest that our time-honored methods of recruiting educational leaders are in serious need of an overhaul. Why do we continue to rely on shop-worn criteria such as "prior administrative experience" or on superficial indicators such as the candidate's national visibility or the prestige of his or her prior institutional affiliations? Could it be that we believe that appointing people who are nationally visible or who have held important positions in the past will help to enhance our reputation? In the same vein, I think we are placing far too much emphasis on the candidate's real or imagined ability in fund raising. Rather than continuing to rely on such short-term values, we should begin to look for candidates who have the capacity to get people to work together collaboratively and who have clearly articulated personal and educational *values* that are consistent with our teaching and public service missions. In other words, if we really believe that our institution should seek to strengthen its educational program and to focus more of its energies on helping to solve some of our most pressing social problems, then we need to find leaders who genuinely share such a vision. Practically any college or university in the country has the freedom and the autonomy to make such criteria the primary considerations in selecting its leaders. The only real obstacle to bringing about such a shift in emphasis would be our fear that we might be losing out on an opportunity to move up a few notches in the resource or reputational pecking order.

Let's turn now to what is probably one of the most popular topics in discussions of education reform, the curriculum. Curricular offerings and especially curricular requirements are, after all, a concrete manifestation of what the institution considers to be important. The curriculum, in other words, is a manifestation of our implicit values. If you ever find yourself entertaining the myth that there is any such thing

as a "value-free" curriculum, recall Alan Bloom's *Closing of the American Mind* (1987) or the present debate over attempts to supplement the traditional Great Books requirements with curricular content that incorporates non-male and non-Western perspectives. While I do not fancy myself as a curriculum expert, I think it would be a useful exercise for each of us periodically to take a hard look at our curriculum and to try to figure out what the implicit values underlying that curriculum really are. To what extent does it reflect an awareness of contemporary social problems and a commitment to dealing constructively with such problems? To what extent does it incorporate issues such as environmental degradation, religious fanaticism, nationalism, racism, sexism, poverty, world hunger, social justice, arms control or world peace? To what extent does it merely reflect a miscellaneous conglomerate of the faculty's specialized disciplinary and research interests?

The values of resource acquisition and reputation enhancement can have subtle but important effects on the way we approach curricular reform. Much of the talk I hear these days about reforming the curriculum, especially at the precollegiate level, seems to be focused on the development of practical skills, and especially on skills in science and math. From a purely materialistic and competitive value perspective, this emphasis makes perfectly good sense, since the principal purpose of education from this perspective would be to produce a skilled work force to help our businesses and industries run more productively and efficiently.

On the other hand, if you view the issue of curricular reform from a talent development perspective and from the perspective of what the society really *needs* at this point in its development, you begin to realize that there are many critical "talents" that are being largely ignored in our curricular reform efforts.

Let's take just one of these talents that I like to call "good citizenship." If you look at our explicitly stated institutional values as reflected in college catalogues or mission statements, you often find mention of something like good citizenship. In other words, many of our institutions are explicitly committed to the value of producing good citizens. I don't want to dwell here on the somewhat arcane issue of what constitutes good citizenship, but under a democratic form of government there would seem to be at least two minimal criteria for good citizenship: that the individual be *informed* about the issues of the day and that he or she be *involved* in the political process. Indeed, without an informed and involved electorate, democracy simply doesn't work.

Judging from the quality and quantity of citizen participation in the political process in this country, it seems clear that our citizens are certainly not very involved and probably not very well informed. Being involved and being informed, of course, go hand in hand. It is true that when election time rolls around we hear a lot of talk about participation, but little is said about the critical importance of being well informed, not only about the candidates but also about the issues of the day. As a matter of fact, a true understanding of democracy's dependence on a well informed citizenry would lead voters to reject outright any candidate or politician who deliberately lied to or misinformed them, since such behavior clearly undermines the democratic process. The high level of tolerance that our citizenry seems to have for politicians who distort the facts or who simply lie is just one more indication of how far we still have to go before we have a truly functioning democracy. Indeed, a visitor from another planet might well conclude that Americans either don't understand democracy, don't support the principles of democracy, or both.

But where in the higher education curriculum is there any evidence of concern with developing the talent of citizenship? Where in our teacher training programs is such a concern manifest? Even though our college catalogues and mission statements often mention such things as citizenship and social responsibility, it is difficult to find much in the curriculum of any college or university that seems to reflect such a value. For that matter, the modern college curriculum seems to pay little attention to the development of many other potentially important character qualities such as honesty, social responsibility, self-understanding, tolerance, empathy, and the like. And even if we limit our concerns to the so-called basic skills, our contemporary curricula seem to be exclusively concerned with math, reading, writing, and speaking, with little or no emphasis being given to the very important skills of good *listening*. Being able to listen to and understand the thoughts and feelings of others is obviously one of the basic skills required for the sort of cooperative living that is so necessary in a fully functioning democracy.

What is especially remarkable about our neglect of the citizenship issue in the curriculum is that many of our college catalogues and mission statements include an explicit institutional *commitment* to developing citizenship. Unless we want to revise our institutional mission by omitting such commitments, here is an institutional reform that cries out for action.

It is important to realize that the concept of citizenship goes far

beyond participation in the electoral process. Citizenship has to do with how each of us relates to our families, our churches, our jobs, and our communities. One citizenship issue which has been receiving increasing attention in the past few years is community and public service. Recently our research institute completed a large scale study of student participation in community service activities. Its basic purpose was to answer a series of critical policy questions concerning community service: What are the characteristics of students who participate in community service activities? What kinds of institutions seem to facilitate student participation in such activities? What specific actions can institutions take to encourage more of their students to engage in community service? What was particularly interesting about the results of this study is that the ideal campus climate for encouraging student participation in community service activities in many respects resembles the ideal campus climate for undergraduate education in general: heavy student involvement, close student-faculty interaction, and a strong institutional emphasis on undergraduate education. As you might guess, an excessive emphasis on resource acquisition and reputational enhancement proved to be a negative factor in student participation in community service. These results would suggest that, if some of our institutions are able to succeed in shifting their implicit values more in the direction of teaching and talent development, increased student involvement in community service activities will almost certainly be one of the positive byproducts.

Revising the content of the formal curriculum, however, represents only one of many concrete actions that can enhance talent development and contribute to the public good. As a matter of fact, some of our most important "teaching" may be independent of course content. This "implicit curriculum," as I like to call it, includes the teaching methods we use, how we grade and test our students, and how we treat each other as professional colleagues. It is important to realize that this implicit curriculum communicates to our student a set of implicit *values*. As a matter of fact, students are probably going to be influenced more by what we *do* (as reflected in the way we conduct ourselves as professionals) than by what we *say* (as reflected in our preferences for particular curriculum content).

A close look at this implicit curriculum in a typical college or university reveals that it tends to promote the values of competition and individualism much more than the values of cooperation, teaching, or public service. In the classroom, for example, our predilection for lecturing puts the students in a passive role and encourages them to

view learning as an individual and solitary process where they work independently and compete with each other for grades. These classroom practices are particularly regrettable, given the growing body of research which suggests that cooperative learning strategies—where students work together in small groups and help to teach each other—are far more effective in developing students' talents than traditional competitive approaches are (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). Moreover, the letter grading and norm-referenced testing systems we use do not really tell us much about how effectively we are developing our students' talents; rather, they merely encourage more competition by comparing students with each other. Class grades are primarily relativistic measures, especially when we grade "on the curve." Even our standardized tests reflect this kind of bias, since the normative method that we use to score them doesn't tell us what students actually know or how much they have learned, but simply where they stand in relation to each other. Normative assessment, in other words, is basically competitive in nature rather than educational.

The values of competition and individualism also seem to dominate our faculty personnel policies. I have already tried to point out how an emphasis on resources and reputation skews the faculty reward system (pay, rank, and tenure) disproportionately toward research. Research and scholarship, of course, are highly competitive and individualistic activities. It is not unusual for research universities to hire new faculty without requiring any substantial information concerning how effectively they can teach and work with students or whether they have any capacity or interest to engage in community or public service. Having research "stars" on your faculty is a much surer way to enhance your college's reputation and to bring in more resources than having good teachers and mentors. At the same time, when resources and reputation are given the greatest emphasis, faculty in the sciences tend to acquire disproportionate power and status within the institution, since scientists are in a better position than humanists to attract large research grants. Moreover, since the scientist's research is usually more visible and more glamorous than the scholarly work of the humanist, the scientist is more likely to contribute to the institution's reputation.

Shifting the values inherent in the faculty reward system will not be an easy task. Mere admonitions by administrators that review committees should give more weight to teaching and service are unlikely to make much of a difference, especially in the research universities. My hunch is that at least two things must happen if we are really going to

reorient our priorities when it comes to faculty personnel policies. First, there must be other clear evidence of a general reorientation of institutional priorities, for example, in areas such as the hiring of administrators and the establishment of the curriculum. Otherwise, faculty are not likely to take it seriously or to feel that it is part of a genuine reform effort. Second, mechanisms have to be established which generate better information on the faculty member's teaching, mentoring, and public service and which ensure that this information receives appropriate weight in the decision making process. In other words, we need not only to generate better information, but also to make sure that it receives appropriate weight in the final personnel decision making process. Assuming that we can implement such changes, faculty will be hired, promoted, and tenured only when there is strong reason to believe that they are excellent teachers and mentors for students.

One of the most subtle aspects of the implicit curriculum is in how we view and treat our students. When our sense of institutional self-worth is closely linked to our resources and reputation, the student tends to be viewed more as a *resource* than as a person to be educated. In particular, students with top grades and high test scores are highly sought after, since they tend to enhance our reputation. At the same time, the less-well-prepared student is shunned because having such students around tends to detract from our academic image and reputation. When it comes to affirmative action and the expansion of educational opportunities to minority and disadvantaged students, it may be that the reputational and resource views, more than anything else, pose the greatest obstacles.

Students are viewed very differently when our sense of excellence is linked more closely to our basic educational and service missions. Under this kind of value system, the quality of student life and the effectiveness of the educational program assume much greater importance. The student, in other words, is viewed more as someone to be served by the institution than as a mere resource. At the same time, the less-well-prepared student is viewed as an important educational challenge rather than as a liability that detracts from institutional "excellence."

Let us turn now to one final aspect of institutional functioning that is subject to change and which has substantial implications for our institutional values. I am speaking here of the so-called "assessment movement" that has been permeating higher education during the past decade. We often forget that *the values of an institution are reflected in*

the kinds of information that it collects about itself and pays attention to (Astin, 1991). For example, when we operate according to the resources and reputational views, our student assessments focus primarily on information about the *entering* student, since high school grades and admissions tests scores are viewed as a measure of our excellence. We are excellent merely by *having* bright students, not necessarily by educating them well. Under these traditional views we might also be interested in outcome data on the alumni: how much they earn, how many are listed in *Who's Who*, and so on, as an indicator of our prestige. If our graduates are excellent, then surely *we* must be excellent. Under a talent development view, however, we need entry and exit data on the *same* students, because what we seek to find out is how much our students are actually learning and how they are developing over time. In other words, under a talent development perspective, our primary assessment interest is in how students *learn* and *change* over time.

Our implicit values also play a major role in determining *what* we choose to assess. If we really want to take our charters and our mission statements seriously, then we have plenty of reason to look at our curriculum and our implicit curriculum in terms of the *affective* side of the student's development. If we can begin to focus some of our creativity and critical and analytical skills on our curriculum and implicit curriculum from the broader perspective of what the society really *needs* at this point in its history, we should be able to see that there are many important "talents" that are being largely ignored in our programs. Citizenship, volunteerism, and the cooperative spirit are just three examples of these affective qualities.

This continuing neglect of the affective side of our students' development is lamentable, but perhaps understandable given the spirit of the times. Our cognitive and intellectual achievements have been remarkable: atomic energy, genetic engineering, modern medicine, computers, electronics, and modern transportation and communication systems. What concerns me is that our obvious success in developing new and better ways of understanding and manipulating material things may have mesmerized us into thinking that the solution to the human dilemma depends simply on more and more material and scientific progress. Got an environmental problem? Just develop a better technology. Got a problem with a hostile neighbor? Develop some new and better weaponry. Got a problem with crime? Buy a gun, get better burglar alarms, build more and better jails, and give police more sophisticated crime fighting gadgetry.

This materialistic world view tempts us to ignore the great affective and emotional and spiritual divisions that threaten our very existence: religious fanaticism, prejudice, fear, envy, sexism, racism, ethnocentrism, and nationalism. These are not problems that science and technology can solve for us. What this tells me is that it is time to redress the balance. It is time to begin shifting some of our educational interest and energy in the direction of our affective side—to begin concerning ourselves much more directly with the development of values and beliefs that are going to heal our divisions, and which will help to create a society that is less materialistic, fearful, and competitive, and more generous, trusting, and cooperative.

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