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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses whether liberal arts colleges are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain their traditional curriculum as they compete for students, as well as strategies that may enable these institutions to survive while maintaining their liberal arts identity. It observes that many liberal arts colleges award less than 40 percent of their degrees in the liberal arts, and that such institutions are really becoming "professional colleges," emphasizing business or education. It argues that for liberal arts colleges to maintain their liberal arts identity, they need to: (1) redefine the institutional mission so that it accurately reflects the types of degrees awarded; (2) establish or modify a core curriculum and make it an integral part of professional programs; (3) use popular and cost effective career programs to support traditional programs and courses in the liberal arts; (4) promote a shared mission with cooperative institutions; (5) utilize components of the college community that go beyond the classroom and curriculum; (6) establish an optimum student enrollment; and (7) build bridges between liberal arts colleges and professional program faculty. (Contains 18 references.) (MDM)

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SURVIVAL STRATEGIES FOR LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES

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# Survival Strategies for Liberal Arts Colleges

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## Survival Strategies for Liberal Arts Colleges

by Spence Stober  
August 8, 1995

ABSTRACT - It is becoming increasingly difficult for liberal arts colleges to maintain their traditional curriculum as they compete for students. For those who lament the loss of traditional Liberal Arts colleges, it is possible that a liberal arts curriculum may survive as part of professional programs and in this form make a liberal education more accessible. If a liberal arts education in the traditional sense includes fundamental reflection, basic inquiry, and knowledge generation (Logan and Mannino, 1988), and if an institution is able to foster these basic components beyond the typical liberal arts program, then it may be possible for Liberal Arts colleges to maintain their identity.

The following strategies are suggested to assist these institutions as they struggle to maintain their liberal arts identity: (1) redefine the institutional mission so that it accurately reflects the types of degrees awarded, (2) establish or modify a core curriculum and make it an integral part of professional programs, (3) use popular and cost effective career programs to support traditional programs and courses in the liberal arts, (4) promote a shared mission with cooperative institutions, (5) utilize components of the college community that go beyond the classroom and curriculum, (6) establish an optimum student enrollment, and (7) build bridges between liberal arts and professional program faculty.

Although the value of a liberal arts education is often debated, many agree that a liberal arts education should be available to all. The way in which Liberal Arts colleges respond to market pressures may determine future accessibility of a liberal education. More selective and financially able Liberal Arts "I" schools may be less likely to employ strategies that increase access, thus as Rhoades (1990) cautions, "continuing forms that privilege the privileged" (p.533). But efforts to attract students are changing the character of Liberal Arts "II" colleges as they blend professional and liberal arts programs. This could be the beginning of a process that will increase access to a liberal education.

## Survival Strategies for Liberal Arts Colleges

### Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to consider two questions. First, is it becoming increasingly difficult for liberal arts colleges to maintain their traditional curriculum as they compete for students? Second, what strategies may enable these institutions to survive while maintaining their liberal arts identity?

Liberal arts institutions according to the Carnegie classification are those that award more than half of their degrees in the arts-and-sciences, with Liberal Arts "I" colleges being more selective than Liberal Arts "II" colleges (Bowen and Sosa, 1989). David Breneman (1990), former President of Kalamazoo College in Michigan, provides this qualitative description.

Among the nation's 3,400 colleges and universities, only the liberal arts colleges are distinguished by a mission of providing four-year baccalaureate education exclusively, in a setting that emphasizes and rewards good teaching above all else. These colleges tend to enroll small numbers of students; they emphasize liberal education over professional training...Their "privateness" means that certain values--religious and otherwise--can inform their mission in ways not possible at state institutions. (p.17)

Breneman goes on to say that "marketplace pressure accounts for the shrinking number of liberal arts colleges [and that] continued erosion would be a national loss" (p.17). The value of a liberal arts education is beyond the scope of

this paper. But are Liberal Arts College as Breneman describes, an "endangered species" (p.18)?

Breneman (1990) reviewed the Carnegie list of Liberal Arts colleges and removed institutions that awarded less than 40 percent of their degrees in the liberal arts--more than 300 Liberal Arts II institutions did not meet his criterion. He then applied financial criteria to exclude liberal arts institutions that offer significant graduate or professional programs. A sample of the kinds of schools that remained on Breneman's list are the Pennsylvania Colleges shown in Figure I.

Figure I. Pennsylvania Liberal Arts I and II colleges according to Breneman (1990)

<u>Liberal Arts I</u>	<u>Liberal Arts II</u>
Albright College	Immaculata College
Allegheny College	Lycoming College
Chatham College	Rosemont College
Chestnut Hill College	Seton Hill College
Dickinson College	Theil College
Franklin and Marshall College	Wilson College
Gettysburg College	
Haverford College	
Junata College	
Lafayette College	
Lebanon Valley College	
Muhlenberg College	
Neumann College	
Swarthmore College	
Ursinus College	
Washington & Jefferson College	

Schools that Breneman deleted from the Carnegie list of Liberal Arts I and II colleges are, according to Breneman, more appropriately described as "professional colleges" (Breneman, 1990). The way that we classify these institutions is important as we consider student enrollment

trends and how these trends might influence programs offered by Liberal Arts colleges.

Bowen and Sosa (1989) report that "Liberal Arts I" institutions have maintained a relatively constant share of student enrollments; "2.4 percent of all FTE students in 1976 and 2.3 percent in 1986" (p.45), and they predict that these liberal arts institutions will continue to maintain a similar market share of about 3.5 percent of the FTE student enrollments to the year 2,012 (p.46). This projected maintenance of student enrollments may lead us to believe that education in the Liberal Arts tradition is alive and well. But Bowen and Sosa (1989) also provide enrollment data by field of study to support what they call, "the flight from the Arts and Sciences" (p.47). During the fifteen year period from 1970 to 1985, degrees conferred in the arts-and-sciences declined nearly 15 percent, while degrees in business and engineering increased by a similar amount. Bowen and Sosa suggest that economic conditions during the '70s and '80s, coupled with parental and student concerns regarding employment prospects for graduates may have contributed to this "flight from the arts and sciences"--the "relevance" of so-called esoteric subjects became an issue. Breneman's (1990) study did consider the work of Bowen and Sosa, and he notes that they combined Liberal Arts II and Comprehensive II schools into a category called "Other Four-Year Institutions." These classification

problems may reflect the changing curricula in Liberal Arts colleges.

The following example demonstrates the kinds of forces at work to drive curriculum. Since financial management and resource allocation is a primary governing board responsibility, it follows that the college community may in a financial emergency rely heavily on those board members having business experience. This was the case at Stanford University. Mike Walsh, a Stanford board member and CEO for Union Pacific, was largely responsible for the successful restructuring of the Union Pacific railroad during the '80s. As a Stanford board member, Walsh also played a significant role in "repositioning" Stanford University for the '90s. Viewing the student as a customer or client, who can demand and refuse service, helped to make the restructuring process successful at Stanford (Gardner, Warner, and Biedenweg 1990). Institutions in financial crisis may be forced to design a curriculum to match student consumer preferences. The redesigned curriculum often includes less liberal arts (Paulsen, 1990) as colleges respond to a demand for "relevance" in the curriculum (Bowen and Sosa, 1989). Should we be concerned that many curricula include less liberal arts courses?

The Value of a Liberal Arts Curriculum is being Debated.

The value of a liberal arts education was the central issue at a conference held as part of William and Mary's



300th anniversary celebration; the theme was "America's Investment in liberal education: What, How Much, and For Whom?" (Shea, 1993, p.A16). While participants agreed that a liberal arts education was of value, some were concerned about what they perceived to be an elitist attitude of those defending the traditional liberal arts curricula (Shea, 1993).

This elitist attitude may be far reaching. Gary Rhoades (1990), an Associate Professor of Higher Education at the University of Arizona, deconstructed and interpreted four authoritative and representative reports on the status of Higher Education<sup>1</sup>--these reports have informed the debate regarding higher education in America. Rhoades describes the results of his analysis of these reports below:

The reform quest for the collegiate ideal is framed and constrained by transcendent ideas drawn from the antebellum liberal arts college. The ideas are unstable, political constructions. Yet they create parameters that delimit our discourse and detract from our ability to explore alternatives. Structuralist thinking structures our options and future. It ensures that we will continue to genuflect at the altar of a collegiate ideal, trying to reform undergraduate education by incorporating curricular and organizational vestiges of that ideal and continuing forms that privilege the privileged. (pp.532-533)

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<sup>1</sup> The four reports are as follows: (1) "Integrity in the College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community" by the Association of American Colleges, 1985; (2) "To Reclaim a Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education" by the National Endowment for the Humanities, 1984; (3) "The Undergraduate Experience in America" by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1987; and (4) "Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education, by the National Institute of Education, 1984.

The way in which Liberal Arts Colleges respond to market pressures could influence future accessibility to a liberal education. Gordon Davies, director of the State Council for Higher Education of Virginia, said that "the great educational experiment of America is to determine whether it is possible for an entire population to be educated liberally, [and] he said the country should not give that ideal up." (Shea, 1993, p.A16).

The debate regarding the value of a liberal arts education is likely to continue for some time, but further discussion is beyond the scope of this paper. Strategies to be discussed here assume that a liberal arts education should be accessible to everyone. However, the changing character of Liberal Arts "II" colleges may begin the process to increase access.

#### Liberal Arts or Professional College?

The call for "relevance" in our curriculum, coupled with a need to attract students in an environment of declining enrollments, may explain the transition from a traditionally Liberal Arts college status to what Breneman (1990) calls the "professional college." As evidence of this transformation Zammuto (1984) cites Birnbaum's extensive study of colleges and universities in an eight states, which revealed that although the number of liberal arts institutions remained fairly constant during a twenty year period from 1960 to 1980, those "with comprehensive and

professional-technical program emphasis increased by 92 percent, and 52 percent, respectively" (p.185). Zammuto (1984) also conducted a study to determine if, in his words, "the liberal arts [are] an endangered species?" (p.184). Borrowing heavily from the study of "population ecology" and using Higher Education General Information Surveys (HEGIS) data<sup>2</sup>, Zammuto studied how liberal arts institutions are adapting to the higher educational environment. He concluded that,

"[program] diversity has decreased in the [overall] institutional population [which includes all types of institutions] over the past decade or two...and that growth within the institutional population was a result of the replication of existing institutional forms rather than from the development of new types of institutions...[this was]...[1] to meet the increasing demand for professional and technical education and [2] from the migration of existing institutions to these areas as they have attempted to track changes in student demand for fields of study." (p.207)

In contrast, Zammuto observed that, diversity remained constant in the liberal arts sub-population. His conclusion is based on his statistical analysis<sup>3</sup> of variables used to distinguish 108 institutional types. Furthermore, he observed that attrition within this group served to reduce redundancy--larger institutions with adequate resources

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<sup>2</sup> Zammuto studied liberal arts institutions as a sub-population of a larger sample colleges and universities contained within the HEGIS data bank. HEGIS data for 1971-72 included 2,881 institutions, and for 1980-81 included 3,266 institutions. HEGIS is now called the Integrated Post-secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) (Bowen & Sosa, 1989).

<sup>3</sup> Zammuto used Lorenz curve analysis and Gini coefficients.

could diversify into professional fields of study to meet the student demand for professional fields of study.

Zammuto (1984) goes on to argue the value of program diversity in higher education, drawing many parallels to the value of diversity in biological populations. He argues that the "equivalent of genetic material in social evolution is knowledge," but that "the knowledge possessed by an organization is not fixed as are genes in a biological organism"<sup>4</sup> (p.208). Thus attrition of institutions from the liberal arts sub-population may enable remaining liberal arts institutions to gain knowledge relevant for survival in the higher educational market. He concludes that Liberal Arts "I" schools may be alive and well. But on the other hand, as Zammuto states, "even though liberal arts education is alive and well, the future of the traditionally defined liberal arts college, particularly the Carnegie classified Liberal Arts II institutions, is much more problematic" (p.209). Some Liberal Arts "II" colleges offer less than half of their degrees in the arts-and-sciences, but are too small to be considered comprehensive colleges (Bowen & Sosa, 1989). As we have seen earlier, according to Breneman (1990) these colleges are more appropriately called "professional colleges."

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<sup>4</sup> As a biologist I am forced to comment on this. While Zammuto's analogy is appropriate, genes are not necessarily fixed. Genes are stable enough to reliably transmit information, but at the same time capable of producing variation (e.g. via mutation).

Thus it appears that many Liberal Arts colleges have already begun a transformation that includes more professional programs as part of their curriculum. This brings us to the second question, what strategies may enable these institutions to maintain their liberal arts identity?

### Strategies to Maintain a Liberal Arts Identity

In this section I will discuss several strategies that Liberal Arts colleges might employ while attempting to maintain student enrollments.

Strategy 1. Redefine the institutional mission so that it accurately reflects the types of degrees awarded. As demonstrated earlier, many Liberal Arts colleges are already becoming so-called "professional colleges" (Breneman, 1990). If institutional constituencies define the institution as a Liberal Arts College while more than half of the degrees awarded are career oriented or professional degrees, then the mission should be modified to resolve this apparent inconsistency. The mission of sponsoring agencies should also be considered. Colleges should continuously juxtaposition the missions of their institution and that of a sponsoring foundation to assure consistency.

For those who lament the loss of traditional Liberal Arts colleges, it is possible that the liberal arts curriculum may survive as part of professional programs, and in this sense make a liberal education more accessible. In his book, Universities and the Future of America,

Derek Bok (1990) argues that it is necessary to have a balance of applied intellectual pursuits and pure inquiry. He acknowledges that universities have changed dramatically since Cardinal Newman's time (e.g., the development of strong professional schools), but Bok reminds us that learning a profession does not preclude learning to understand oneself more deeply. Since World War II, higher education has increasingly become an instrument for change in our nation. Bok argues that our society is increasingly dependent on the new discoveries, the highly trained personnel, and the expert knowledge that our universities provide. "Possessed of these special capabilities, higher education cannot turn its back on human needs" (p.11), and should therefore play a role in helping to solve social problems.

Strategy 2. Establish or modify a core curriculum and make it an integral part of professional programs.

Professional and career oriented programs such as business, nursing, and physical therapy may help liberal arts colleges compete for students, but a core curriculum may demonstrate a commitment to the liberal arts. Derek Bok (1990) suggests that professional programs should make students understand that as they acquire expertise, they also acquire power, and that expertise can be dangerous if not used responsibly. Traditional liberal arts curricula may help, but Bok believes that they do not go far enough. Many of these courses are "deliberately non-vocational" and are unlikely

to adequately consider professional ethical dilemmas. Courses in applied ethics and professional responsibility attempt to fill this gap. For example, if six credits of philosophy and/or theology are a core requirement, a nursing student might elect a three-credit introductory philosophy/theology course followed by an upper level course in medical-moral philosophy/theology. This would serve to provide both a basic liberal arts component of the curriculum, and at the same time provide a course relevant to the student's career goals. And as Bok (1990) supposes, these courses in addition to helping students see more clearly the reasons for acting morally may also influence behavior.

Strategy 3. Use popular and cost effective career programs to support traditional programs and courses in the liberal arts. This support can take two forms. The first is financial support; career programs that are cost effective should provide additional revenue for the college. Additional revenues generated by popular career programs such Physical Therapy or Nursing could enable a college to continue funding programs and courses in liberal arts tradition. The second form of support is to maintain enrollments in liberal arts courses. Integration of a liberal arts core into the professional curriculum will, in addition to keeping a liberal arts program alive, help students develop, as Bok (1990) suggests, ways of seeing more clearly the reasons for their actions as professionals.

Strategy 4. Promote a shared mission with cooperative institutions. Professional programs often require certification and internships or other cooperative institutional arrangements. While it can be more difficult to persuade professional program certification agencies to expanded the liberal arts program component, the business community may be more receptive to an expanded liberal arts core. For example, businesses might be better able to compete globally if, to offset our parochialism, language requirements and international studies are emphasized (Bok, 1990). "Offsetting parochialism" continues to be a challenge for Liberal Arts colleges. A major concern raised by participants at a recent conference on the value of a liberal arts education is that liberal arts curricula are not keeping pace with Americas growing racial and ethnic diversity (Shea, 1993).

Johnnetta Cole (1991), as President of Spelman College, suggests that "trustees have a central role to play in the struggle for a more diverse and equitable educational experience for all Americans" (p.12). Although faculty have primary responsibility for curriculum, the Association of Governing Boards reports that the typical college trustee is a white, middle-aged, businessman (Andersen, 1985). Thus it is the college community's responsibility to educate these "typical" board members to the value of a liberal arts education, and to how the liberal arts curricula can be made more "multicultural." This may help, as Bok (1990)



suggests, to offset our parochialism. This should be one of our goals as we promote a shared mission with cooperative agencies, and as our curricula interface with the larger society.

Strategy 5. Utilize components of the college community that go beyond the classroom and curriculum. If a liberal arts education in the traditional sense includes fundamental reflection, basic inquiry, and knowledge generation (Logan and Mannino, 1988), and if an institution is able to foster these basic components beyond the typical classroom, then it may be possible for a former Liberal Arts college, now a "professional college," to maintain its liberal arts tradition. According to Palmer (1987), "we need a way of thinking about community in higher education that relates it to the central mission of the academy--the generation and transmission of knowledge" (p.21). Palmer advocates interdisciplinary studies and more ethical- and value-oriented work. He suggests that, "knowing and learning are communal acts. They require a continual cycle of discussion, disagreement, and consensus over what has been and what it all means" (p.24). For example, although the university environment may often appear anarchic and permissive, when ethical dilemmas are encountered (e.g., earlier debates regarding investments in South Africa), "campus debate often clarifies moral choices and improves the quality of official decisions" (Bok, 1990 p.90).

Bok (1990) advocates the use of extracurricular activities, community service, and self-government as valuable opportunities to accomplish this task, but he emphasizes that it is important that experienced advisors are available to counsel students as ethical challenges arise. Since it may be more difficult for graduate and professional schools to use extracurricular programs for this purpose, Bok recommends that faculties of professional and graduate schools build cooperative work into the curriculum. Bok proposes that the best way to help students develop a genuine concern for others is,

[for students] to experience situations in which one can appreciate the effects of one's actions on others and understand how one's own interests are affected in return (p.87-88).

Cooperative work experiences may help students develop these skills. However, as noted earlier, it is important to be sure that the mission of cooperative agency corresponds to the mission of the institution.

Strategy 6. Establish an optimum student enrollment.

According to Sean Rush (1992), a partner in Coopers & Lybrand's Higher Education Consulting Services,

"in aggregate, higher education in the United States has reached a programmatic and cost size that can no longer be supported with available resources. As fewer and fewer resources are distributed across a broad programmatic base, institutions risk a slow deterioration in quality" (p.40).

Institutions should consider "rightsizing" to programmatically and administratively match available

resources to the institution's mission and quality standards (Rush, 1992).

Hoke Smith (1986) suggests that colleges plan for declining enrollment by considering "downsizing" as a positive planning tool. (Smith uses the term "downsizing," however "rightsizing" may be more appropriate.) Smith suggests several points to consider while "downsizing." It is important to maintain academic quality. Since faculty morale is closely linked to a "climate of quality," every effort should be made to protect job security for tenured faculty and long term employees. The most challenging task may be deciding what to cut. For this task, Smith suggests that "institutions can reduce the scope of their programs using the legitimate goal of increasing curricular coherence" (p.40). (This objective could be considered along with a strategy to integrate the curriculum.) A thorough analysis is also important to determine the right student/faculty ratio for the institution, but Smith cautions that using declining enrollments to lower student/faculty ratio may only appear to improve instruction while impoverishing the institution. A slightly higher average student/faculty ratio (e.g. 20:1 instead of 15:1) may provide greater financial support for programs, thus offsetting the effect of slightly larger classes. Enrollment declines may result in an overabundance of costly-to-maintain buildings, thus options such as alternative uses for extra space must be considered as part

of a colleges facilities plan. In all cases, Smith emphasis that we should approach "downsizing" as a positive planning tool.

Zemsky, Massy, and Oedel (1993) examined four independent liberal arts colleges and two independent research universities in their effort to design a model that enables colleges to compare "best" and "current" practices regarding class size and teaching loads. While they believe that a simpler curriculum with fewer courses and less specialization can optimize the use of faculty, their model does appear sensitive to variability across disciplines and to what faculty consider "best" practice. But most importantly, as their model unfolds, it may enable institutions to ask questions that encourage results.

An example of planned "downsizing" (or in this case "rightsizing") is at Franklin and Marshall College (F&M), a small tuition dependent liberal arts college located in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. According to James L. Powell (1987), the college community at F&M recently concluded that the college "would come closer to achieving its educational goals were it smaller [by about 300 FTE], and that there were no attractive alternatives to this conclusion. The question then became whether the college could give up significant tuition income without going broke" (p.28). At F&M, two strategies were developed to increase revenues. First, noting that F&M was less expensive than other comparable colleges, the planning team

developed a strategy to systematically increase tuition by about \$150-\$250 per year for five years. Since F&M is largely tuition driven, past practice was to maintain a relatively low endowment cash draw when compared to other institutions ("endowment income actually spent, expressed as a percent of market value" p.29). This was intended to build the college's endowment fund. However, in order to brace for a planned decrease in enrollment, F&M's second planning strategy was to increase endowment cash draw as necessary to a level in line with other similar institutions. The net result of this plan is that F&M, a largely tuition dependent college, will be able to be more selective in an environment of declining student enrollments.<sup>5</sup> (Powell, 1987)

The strategy as employed by F&M is not one that increases access. F&M is a Liberal Arts "I" college according to Breneman's list on Table I. If other Liberal Arts "I" schools employ similar strategies, it is possible that we will see as Rhoades (1990) cautioned, "continuing forms that privilege the privileged" (p.533). However, this approach may not be an option for many Liberal Arts "II" colleges.

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<sup>5</sup> For a recent update as to how these and other strategies are strengthening F&M's academic programs, see "Repositioning for the Future: Franklin and Marshall College," by Richard B. Hoffman in New Directions for Institutional Research, Fall 1992, n75 v19 n3, pp89-101.

Strategy 7. Build bridges between liberal arts and professional program faculty. If an institution intends to fully integrate a liberal arts core into professional curricula, then it is important to foster collaboration among liberal arts faculty and professional program faculty. Jean King (1987), in her article "the uneasy relationship between teacher education and the liberal arts and sciences," suggests several ways to promote collaboration. Although referring specifically to education programs, her suggestions (with slight modification) are also appropriate for other professional program faculty. Some examples include the following; (1) liberal arts faculty could serve on professional advisory committees (e.g. a biology professor on a nursing program certification committee), (2) liberal arts faculty could serve as academic advisors for students in professional programs (e.g. a liberal arts math professor could advise an engineering student), (3) liberal arts faculty could assist practicums or internships (e.g. a political science professor may be a valuable resource to a student teacher), (4) liberal arts and professional program faculty could team consult various agencies, thus representing the college to the larger community (e.g. a biology professor and a professor of landscape architecture may team to advise developers on proper land use). In addition to fostering collaboration among liberal arts and professional program faculty, these types of activities would serve to integrate the disciplines.

Jerry Gaff (1994), Vice President of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, reminds us that most colleges and universities encourage and support faculty development in areas including scholarship, teaching, and "campus citizenship," but he cautions that few new faculty are prepared for this challenge. If liberal arts colleges are to provide an education "in a setting that emphasizes and rewards good teaching above all else" (Breneman, 1990, p.17), and if "learning is a communal act" (Palmer, 1987), then campus citizenship is a necessary skill for liberal arts (and should be for all) faculty. Gaff provides several examples of efforts to develop graduate school programs that go beyond a research emphasis by preparing students for academic careers.<sup>6</sup> Such programs incorporate training for teaching and service to the profession as part of their graduate school curriculum. Liberal arts colleges are likely to benefit from these programs as they hire new Ph.D.s, but not all new faculty will have training in these areas. Therefore, it is important that faculty development programs continue at the institutional level to build on whatever experiences a new faculty member brings to the institution. Programs should promote a campus climate that

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<sup>6</sup> Program grants have been provided by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), and The Pew Charitable Trusts. For example, some of the schools receiving implementation awards are Arizona State University, Howard University, the University of Minnesota, and the University of Washington.

involves all stake-holders (new and old) across disciplines in "a continual cycle of discussion, disagreement, and consensus over what has been and what it all means" (Palmer, 1987, p.24).

### Summary

It is becoming increasingly difficult for liberal arts colleges to maintain their traditional curriculum as they compete for students. For those who lament the loss of traditional Liberal Arts colleges, it is possible that a liberal arts curriculum may survive as part of professional programs, and in this form make a liberal education more accessible. If a liberal arts education in the traditional sense includes fundamental reflection, basic inquiry, and knowledge generation (Logan and Mannino, 1988), and if an institution is able to foster these basic components beyond the typical liberal arts program, then it may be possible for Liberal Arts colleges to maintain their identity.

The following strategies have been suggested to assist these institutions as they struggle to maintain their liberal arts identity: (1) redefine the institutional mission so that it accurately reflects the types of degrees awarded, (2) establish or modify a core curriculum and make it an integral part of professional programs, (3) use popular and cost effective career programs to support traditional programs and courses in the liberal arts, (4) promote a shared mission with cooperative institutions,



(5) utilize components of the college community that go beyond the classroom and curriculum, (6) establish an optimum student enrollment, and (7) build bridges between liberal arts and professional program faculty.

Although the value of a liberal arts education is often debated, many agree that a liberal arts education should be available to all. The way in which Liberal Arts colleges respond to market pressures may determine future accessibility of a liberal education. More selective and financially able Liberal Arts "I" schools may be less likely to employ strategies that increase access, thus as Rhoades (1990) cautions, "continuing forms that privilege the privileged" (p.533). But efforts to attract students are changing the character of Liberal Arts "II" colleges as they blend professional and liberal arts programs. This could be the beginning of a process that will increase access to a liberal education.

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