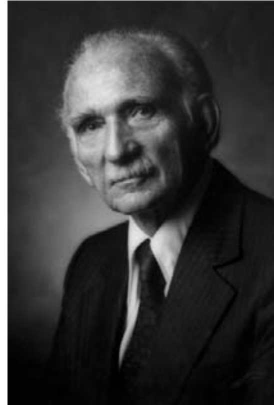
CHARTING THE COURSE: EARL V. PULLIAS LECTURE SERIES ON THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

TWENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL
FALL 2003



Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis

USC
ROSSIER
SCHOOL OF
EDUCATION

In Memoriam

The Pullias Lecture is dedicated to the memory of Earl V. Pullias. Through the lecture series and the publication of Pullias' publications, many people the world over have come to know his ideas.

"You can be no better teacher than you are a human being," he said. Those who knew him or knew of him remember the human being: an inspired teacher, a thoughtful, articulate scholar and a unique friend who continues to inspire.

CHARTING THE COURSE: EARL V. PULLIAS LECTURE SERIES ON THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

TWENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL
FALL 2003

THE FISCAL FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION: AUSTERITY, OPPORTUNITY, AND ACCESSIBILITY - p. 1

D. Bruce Johnstone
Professor of Higher & Comparative Education; Director, Center for Comparative & Global Studies in Education; Former Chancellor State University of New York, Buffalo

"AND THE LAST SHALL BE FIRST": RACIAL DIVERSITY, DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE, AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION - p. 15

Walter R. Allen
Professor of Sociology; Co-director of "CHOICES: Access, Equity and Diversity in California Higher Education" Research Project
University of California Los Angeles

TAKING STUDENT LEARNING SERIOUSLY: RETHINKING THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FUTURE - p. 27

Vincent Tinto
Distinguished Professor of Higher Education
Syracuse University

Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis

USC
ROSSIER SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Introduction

Although there is a great deal of disagreement about how to handle the changes that confront postsecondary education, few will suggest that being wedded to the status quo is sufficient. Many contend that the future of higher education is up for grabs; how those of us in the "industry" respond will determine whether American higher education remains the envy of the world. In order to come to grips with some of the problems confronting academe, the Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis invited three eminent scholars to discuss the future of higher education for the twenty-sixth Pullias Lecture Series.

D. Bruce Johnstone, University Professor of Higher and Comparative Education and Director of the Center for Comparative and Global Studies in Education at the State University of New York at Buffalo, and former Chancellor of the SUNY system, discusses the fiscal future of higher education. Johnstone places higher education within a general framework of austerity and suggests there will be significant changes to the conditions of the workplace and how governance functions. He argues that such a framework need not constrain us. Instead, he suggests, those institutions who are able to adapt will face opportunities that will enable quality to remain.

In Taking Student Learning Seriously, Vincent Tinto, Distinguished Professor of Higher Education at Syracuse University focuses on the key role of the vast majority of postsecondary institutions and suggests that a brighter future is upon us. Although he acknowledges the conditions that Johnstone outlines, he also points out that those in higher education now see learning in a much broader context. Rather than obsess only about what takes place in the classroom, Tinto makes the useful observation that colleges and universities are now utilizing all resources at our disposal to increase opportunities for learning. Whereas the "classroom" was once a geographic entity that connoted learning, Tinto suggests that in the future we will be creating learning environments in multiple arenas in and out of the classroom. Learning communities, argues Tinto, have the potential to dynamically change higher education for the better.

Walter Allen, Professor of Sociology and co-director of CHOICES at the University of California Los Angeles frames his lecture around the historic aims of education as an engine for equity and opportunity. In order to consider what kind of future to create, Allen suggests that we need to consider the historic conditions of those who were long shut out of the American dream. Professor Allen suggests that issues such as affirmative action, 'race-blind' admissions and arguments over who should attend elite public institutions go to the heart of what we believe as citizens trying to enact and extend democracy. From this perspective, the future for Allen is less clear; our actions will return us to a more segregated and less equal world, or move us toward the conditions for greater equality. The strength of Allen's essay is that he places the responsibility in our hands.

These lectures surely do not provide the final word on the future of higher education. Our purpose here was not to offer a single doctrinaire front about the challenges higher education faces, but more to provoke dialogue about the uncharted territory we enter in the early years of the 21st century.

THE FISCAL FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION: AUSTERITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

D. Bruce Johnstone

Professor of Higher & Comparative Education; Director, Center for Comparative & Global Studies in Education; Former Chancellor State University of New York

**Presented at the
Pullias Lecture Series on
the Future of Higher Education
on September 15th, 2003**

The Present: Fiscal Anomalies

To consider higher education's fiscal future, we must begin with its fiscal present, which is full of anomalies. These anomalies emerge from several vantage points: the financial health and wealth of institutions, the parental response to pricing (i.e. tuition), and the attitudes and policies of the federal government toward higher educational finance.

In terms of institutional wealth and financial health, for example, American colleges and universities exhibit an incredible diversity. The most prestigious universities (both public and private) are by almost any measure extraordinarily wealthy, enjoying enormous annual budgets, substantial faculty salaries, hundreds of millions of dollars in annual research support, handsomely landscaped campuses, fine physical plants, endowments in the billions of dollars (even at some of the public universities), campus housing with built-in refrigerators and full Internet connectivity, and facilities enabling students to participate in intercollegiate athletics. Yet even these institutions frequently experience genuine fiscal austerity, requiring a continuous relocation of resources, occasional program discontinuation, and even layoffs.

Meanwhile, other campuses—also both public and private—are lean by almost any measure, enjoying neither the market position to charge premium tuition fees, nor the endowments or levels of current giving to supplement these fees, nor the faculty research prestige to attract grants and indirect cost recoveries. Many of these colleges (and some that call themselves universities) spend a fraction of what the elite colleges and universities spend per-student, getting by with low-paid faculty (many part-time with no benefits), spartan physical plants, and few services for students outside the classroom (and little demand for them from the largely part-time and non-traditional student bodies). And while these institutions suffer from a certain financial precariousness, many are also financially stable, consistently balancing their budgets.

Finally, at the opposite end of the per-student cost continuum are thousands of proprietary non-degree institutions. They attract mainly low-income students who receive little or no parental financial support. They have neither endowments nor annual giving to supplement tuition (which must be kept low enough to be covered by available federal grants and guaranteed loans). But they manage to thrive and return handsome profits to their corporate owners.

American college and university financing presents other anomalies. On one hand, "tuition anxiety" remains high at all levels of family income, and tuitions have increased at rates considerably in excess not only of the prevailing rate of inflation but also of the growth of median family incomes. Yet in 2001-2 the total expenses of tuition, room, and board—as shown in Table 1—took about the same proportion of average family income at the high income quintile (from 4 to 20 percent, depending on the sector) as a decade earlier. These expenses also took *effectively* the same contribution from families in the lowest income quintile, as no contribution is officially expected.

In the 3rd or middle-income quintile, however, college expenses have increased from 59 to 68 percent of the average family income at private universities and from 20 to 23 percent at public universities, and here is where tuition anxiety is most

pronounced and most understandable. Yet these median income families have also been helped by a share of the $105 billion of financial assistance given out in 2002-2003. Because of the ascendancy of merit aid, and the practice of "enrollment management" (which favors families who can pay at least a substantial portion of the total collegiate price tag), such assistance is increasingly in reach of middle and even upper-middle income families. To round out this anomaly, families of the middle income quintile are also among those most favored by the tax-advantaged college savings plans. As a result, these families are virtually lining up to get their children into the priciest private colleges (Farrell, 2003).

Table 1

	Average Total Cost Private University	Average Total Cost Private Other 4-Year	Average Total Cost Public University	Average Total Cost Public 2-Year
Total Cost 2001-02 (Current dollars)	$29,120	$21,285	$9,953	$5,137
Total Cost 1991-92 (Current dollars)	$17,572	$13,201	$6,650	$3,623
Total Cost 1991-92 (2002 Dollars)	$22,530	$16,921	$7,757	$4,645
Percent Increase (Current Dollars)	66%	61%	50%	42%
Percent Increase (2002 Dollars)	29%	26%	28%	11%
Total cost 2001-02 as % of mean family income, top quintile	20%	15%	7%	4%
Total cost 2001-02 as % of mean family income, 3rd quintile	68%	50%	23%	12%

Increase in Average Total Costs (Tuition, Room, and Board) 1991-02 to 2001-02 by Sector in Current and Constant (2002) Dollars and as Percentage of Mean Family Income by Quintile

Source: NCES *Digest of Education Statistics 2002*, Table 312, pp. 354-355;

Finally, the politics of higher educational finance, particularly at the federal level, are as puzzling as the economics. Neither the president nor congress, according to the U.S. Constitution, has much of anything to do with American higher education, public or private. Yet many federal politicians (including presidents and presidential candidates of both parties) have been preoccupied with attempts to "fix" the nation's 4000+ public and private colleges and universities, mainly by trying to hold down the steadily rising tuition fees. (Oddly, politicians seem to care much more about the *rate of increase* in tuition fees—even if the fees themselves are

still low by most measures—than about their *absolute levels*, even when these levels may be in excess of $20,000 per year). Aside from the fact that higher education is not really the business of the federal government, both this preoccupation and its accompanying political petulance fly in the face of a number of facts, including the following:

- Most of the very large increases in public tuitions are directly attributable to the withdrawal of taxpayer support at the state level (rather than to any unusually large increases in the underlying per-student expenditures).
- Tuition anxiety notwithstanding, when it comes to the priciest private colleges and universities, parents are lining up to pay anywhere from $35,000 to $40,000 a year (and more) for their children to receive bachelor's degrees in film studies or English literature (even though such courses of study will require another graduate degree or two to land a job). Presumably this dynamic among parents is informed by a recognition of the extraordinary private benefits accruing to themselves as well as their children.
- The U.S. has the largest and most accessible higher education system (although some might call it a *non-system)* in the world. It is also home to the finest and most productive (also the most costly) universities in the world.
- American colleges and universities, contrary to popular and political misconception, give more attention to the craft of teaching and to the welfare of their undergraduate students than anywhere else in the world.
- The US taxpayer almost certainly gets more higher education for fewer tax payer dollars than the citizens of any other country (a situation not attributable to any overwhelming efficiency of American colleges or universities, but to the extraordinary levels of non-governmental support from parents, students and philanthropists).

Prevailing Austerity

The fiscal future of higher education, like the fiscal present, is dominated in the U.S. (and even more so in the rest of the world) by the prevailing financial condition of *austerity*. I have been studying the fiscal fortunes and misfortunes of higher education for more than thirty years. For most of these years—including seven years as an administrator of a prestigious private research university, nine years as president of a public comprehensive college, and six years as chancellor of a giant (59 campus, 400,000 student) public multi-campus system—I was a participant and a decision maker in contending with, and helping to shape, the fiscal fortunes of these quite different kinds of higher educational institutions. And for the past fifteen years, I have been studying mainly the fiscal fortunes of universities worldwide, particularly in the so-called "developing world" and in the "transitional" countries emerging from communist societies and economies. Drawing on this study and experience, as well as on the wisdom of university leaders, students, and ministry officials from many countries, I have come to the not very profound conclusion that in virtually all of the aforementioned developing and transitional

countries—and, less strikingly, in the US and the prosperous countries of the advanced industrialized world—both higher educational institutions (which are struggling with endemic budget shortfalls) and national systems (which are struggling with a relentlessly increasing demand for higher education) are facing a damaging and seemingly intractable austerity.

In much of the world, this austerity is manifested in horrific overcrowding (in spite of greatly constrained access), deteriorating physical plants, depletion of libraries and laboratories, the loss of faculty, little genuine scholarship from those faculty that remain (not for lack of scholarly ability as much as for the lack of time, resources, and opportunity), inevitable demoralization, and more than occasional corruption. Furthermore, this austerity exists in spite of three important factors: a worldwide shift of higher educational cost burdens from governments and taxpayers to parents and students, a striking and totally unforeseen increase in most of the world of private higher education, and unprecedented increases in entrepreneurial behavior on the part of faculty and university leaders. These factors add dramatically, but still insufficiently, to the available revenues from governments and taxpayers.

Higher educational cost *pressures*—that is, what costs could or even should be if there were only the commensurate revenues—continue everywhere upward, vastly outrunning the capacities of governmental treasuries all over the world to maintain per-student spending, much less to accommodate the enormous increase in the number of aspiring students. This enrollment increase, in turn, is driven by growing populations, and is exacerbated by the fact that most of these new students are focused at the tertiary level. Particularly in most of the so-called developing and transitional worlds—beset as they are with slow or even negative economic growth, a near inability to tax, and huge demands on what little public treasure there may be (for example, consider the need for elementary and secondary education, transportation, public health, environmental restoration, decent housing, and clean water)—this crippling austerity shows little sign of abatement.

Even the United States and the rest of the advanced industrialized countries—most of which are blessed with productive economies, the technical ability and the political willingness to tax and to be taxed, an existing higher educational infrastructure, modest population growth, and enrollment levels nearing saturation—we see the marks of higher educational austerity: terrible overcrowding in Germany and Italy, an utterly demoralized faculty in the U.K., privatization of the great national universities in Japan, and the Austrians breaking the Central European tradition of free higher education by implementing, of all things, a tuition fee.

In higher educational revenue potential, the United States is arguably the luckiest of all countries. In addition to our enormous wealth and our highly efficient tax system, we enjoy a tradition in which parents assume financial responsibility for their children's higher education (at least to the limit of their measured ability to pay, and at least for their children's undergraduate years). The U.S. is also blessed with an academic culture in which students are willing to work and earn while studying, as well as to assume debt that actually gets paid off. These revenues, in addition to the enormous effect of philanthropy (both new giving and returns from long-established endowments) provide the United States with more non-governmental, non-tax revenue for higher education than anywhere else in the world.

Among the G8 most industrialized countries, the US comes in a very close second to Canada in the percent of GDP spent by taxpayers on higher education, but moves to a commanding first place when private expenditures are added—to 2.3 percent of GDP, more than double the percentages in France, Germany, Italy, Japan, or the UK. (NCES, 2000, Table 46, p. 49.)

However, in the U.S. there is also pervasive austerity in many—perhaps most—of the 4000+ degree-granting colleges and universities. (Importantly, this austerity is not the same thing as poverty—though it is related.) The financial resources of American institutions of higher education, as noted at the start of this paper, are enormously varied, from the almost unimaginably wealthy, with endowments and assets in the tens of billions of dollars, to the very lean, with tiny endowments and minimal physical plants, operating on heavily discounted tuition with lots of part-time faculty. But wealth brings no absolution from austerity—although it does make it easier to cope. The reason for this is that austerity is mainly a condition of an institution's flow of expenditures and revenues (that is, of its operating budget) rather than of its wealth in the form of assets (that is, of its balance sheet). In non-accounting parlance, austerity happens when the revenue coming in this year is insufficient to meet the expenditures going out this year, and the institution, however wealthy, must either cut some expenditures or deplete some assets ("dip into capital," as Old Wealth used to call it). And when the stock market has taken a dive, hurting both the return on the endowment and this year's annual giving, and when the very expensive faculty hired last year (when things were better) not only have to continue to be paid but expect a salary increase, and when the cost of journal subscriptions increases for the sixth straight year at more than double the cost of living generally, and when the new computers and servers require constant maintenance and even replacement, cuts may have to be made. And cuts are painful, regardless of the size of the endowment and the replacement value of the physical plant.

The fundamental fiscal problem of higher education—and the reason that even wealthy institutions can feel the pinch of austerity—is that colleges and universities face a *trajectory* of costs, the natural and quite appropriate rate of increase of which is essentially the rate of increase of wages and salaries in the general economy (or, if there is any real growth in the economy, at "inflation plus"). This is the so-called "cost disease," or the phenomenon of the rising relative unit costs in the labor intensive, productivity-immune (or at least productivity-resistant) sectors of the economy, which include both symphony orchestras and colleges. The phenomenon was first articulated by Baumol and Bowen (1966). Accelerating this natural rate of unit (or per-student) cost increase are the following factors or forces peculiar to most of the higher education enterprise:

- Technology: not as a productivity enhancer, substituting for labor and driving down unit costs as it does in the private, for-profit, goods-producing sector, but as an add-on to costs—altering the very nature of the product, and supposedly improving its value as well, but still requiring more, not less, revenue.

- Higher education's incessant change: quite contrary to the popular and political misconception of higher education as altogether resistant to change, quite the opposite is true as new programs are added, new research commenced, and new capacities are acquired faster than old ones can be shed.

- Faculty and administrative ambitions to seek greater recognition and prestige, better and more academically qualified students, and better scores on the scholarly rankings of the National Research Council and the reputational rankings of *US News and World Report*.

- Student and parent demands for nice accommodations, attractive grounds, a new learning center, a totally wired campus, lots of activities, and maybe even some winning athletic teams.

- Socio-economic, ethnic, and gender diversity, as well as price discounts for the very smartest, the most talented, the most interesting, and the most athletic.

The fiscal fortune of higher education, then, is burdened with a natural cost trajectory that in normal years will exceed the average rate of increase of consumer prices generally: that is, *will naturally exceed the rate of inflation*. Thus it is not, as the politicians and journalists would have it, a rate of tuition increase that "just can't continue to rise like this," but a rate of increase that can and probably will continue to rise at these rates—*forever!*

This natural rate of unit cost increase—"inflation plus"—is not a mark of inefficiency or managerial ineptitude. It is not the result of insufficient focus, or of trying to be too many things to too many people (another of the favorite platitudes of the university financial consultants). It is, rather, an entirely natural consequence of the nature of higher educational *production*, as it were—as well as of the fact that in any set of measures that are to be averaged, approximately one-half of them will be above, and one-half below, this average. And since the consumer price index is nothing more than an average of many price increases, it should be no surprise that the cost (and therefore the price) increases of about one-half of these goods and/or services will be in the "greater than" half. And this does not even take into consideration the possibility that the price of the product may be increasing because the *quality of the product is improving*. Or that the *cost* of the product may actually be *decreasing*, as labor costs are cut through wage and salary freezes and the substitution of cheap part-time labor for fully qualified (but expensive) full-time labor, or as productivity is forced to increase simply by "speeding up the line" through larger class sizes or increased teaching loads. Nor does it recognize that the price of the product—i.e., the tuition rate—is increasing simply to compensate for the withdrawal of state aid.

This is all economic theory, but it is also well supported by recent experience. The fiscal condition of U.S. higher education is mixed, but for very many institutions and very many students, it is not good. And the future appears to be more of the same—and probably worse. Consider:

- A combination of rapidly rising college tuitions—especially at public colleges and universities, where there has been a withdrawal of state tax sup-

port—and a stunning increase in the disparity of US incomes has caused average college expenses to rise, particularly for poorer students. While costs remain roughly the same (about 6 percent of the family income) for the most affluent 20 percent of families, for those in the least affluent quintile, costs have grown from less than one half of the average family income, to more than 60 percent of that same income (the latter figure was reached in 2002) (College Board, 2003).

- The maximum Federal Pell grant continues to lose effective purchasing power. Two decades ago it was able to cover some 84 percent of the average fixed costs of a four-year public college; by 2002 it could cover only 42 percent of these costs (College Board, 2002).

- This erosion of the government's major need-based financial aid program parallels the shift of federal financial assistance away from grants to loans, with total federal aid in the form of loans rising to 57 percent of the total (and nearly 80 percent of the Title IV Aid) in 2001-02—up from 47 percent of the total and 69 percent of Title IV only a decade earlier.

- As for public institutions: when I was president of the State University of New York College at Buffalo (and then chancellor of the SUNY system) we experienced 12 budget cuts between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s—a loss of some $200 million dollars, or nearly 15 percent of our faculty and staff (with real layoffs, including some tenured faculty). The extraordinary prosperity of the mid- and late-90s brought some turnaround, but the post 9/11 economic slowdown has once again brought the public colleges and universities of the state of New York, as with the public sectors in most states, back to a practice of regular annual downsizing.

- No prognostication has public higher education in for anything other than further cuts—at least in tax funding. This is because state tax revenues are down, while mandatory spending such as health care and social services) is up. Further, the federal government (which has not shown any inclination to help higher education) is in 2003 literally awash in the red ink of its generous (some say profligate) tax cuts, the war on terror, the pacification of Iraq, and the attempt to provide new prescription drug coverage while securing the fiscal integrity of Social Security.

- Private higher education—not so much the Harvards, Stanfords, MITs and USCs, but the 1000 or so small, financially fragile, minimally selective, tuition dependent colleges—is similarly caught in a long-running financial squeeze, as lower-priced public colleges, adverse demographics, and the financial woes of middle class families (the primary customer base for these institutions) deplete the number of students who can pay the full cost of their college education.

- But even the elite privates—particularly those that have come to depend on a robust stock market, wealthy donors, generous foundations, and what was once thought to be a virtually inelastic price—are not immune from a measure of austerity, but have found all of these one-time financial strengths to be less than secure.

In the U.S., the fiscal future of higher education will see two kinds of austerity: *institutional* and *student* (or *student and family*). The institutional austerity is unevenly distributed but widespread and almost certainly increasing. It will affect, with differing consequences, a wide range of both public and private institutions—regardless of whether they are academically selective or more open, or whether they are research- or teaching-oriented. This institutional austerity will be manifested in a continuing slow but steady attrition in the number of faculty, leading to increased student/faculty ratios and class sizes as well as gaps in the coverage of key academic fields. It will be manifested in some institutions in the "cheapening" of the faculty and staff—the further substitution of less costly part-time and adjunct faculty for the more costly "regular" faculty, the cuts and freezes in faculty and staff salaries, and the consequent loss of talent and experience from those who leave, and of morale and effectiveness from those who stay. It will also be manifested in continuing deferred maintenance, cuts in library expenditures and acquisitions, and generally shabbier buildings and grounds. Whether all of this is tantamount to an increase in institutional productivity—as opposed, say, to an increase in the exploitation of the part-time and the non-tenured faculty, or to a diminution of higher education's quality and thus of its effective output—is difficult to say. It is probably some of each.

There are two appropriate (and challenging) questions to ask regarding this institutional austerity:

- First, what is the actual sustained loss in student learning and/or in scholarship from this presumed austerity? This question will not be answered by anecdotes of student or faculty or administrative aggravation or demoralization, but rather by evidence of genuine losses in learning or research productivity: the kind where the current faculty and the president have to admit (or at least should admit) to potential new students and faculty that "we are really not as good as we used to be, and we will probably continue to slip." And the question must be asked not just of those institutions that have been the hardest hit or the most mismanaged; it should be asked of *all* of those that complain of their continuing austerity.

  To ask this question is not to imply that budgets can be cut year after year with no consequences. However, in too many instances, the main effect of institutional austerity, after all of the pain and turmoil, has been considerable faculty and administrative disaccommodation *but little more than that*—with little or no measurable loss of anything except faculty free time and morale. On other occasions, the main effect may have been to finally shed things which were always lowest in priority—and that arguably should have been shed long ago. It is also important to recognize that institutional pain and turmoil can stem from the disappearance of demand for a particular higher educational product—whether because of a demographic decline in the number of potential students or a change in student interest. In response to such a scenario, restructuring, downsizing, or institutional demise, while painful, are virtually unavoidable. Finally, if one looks for evidence of genuine loss within the college view books and promotional websites, one will look in vain for something that suggests anything other than continuous improvement.

Maybe the problem is just that, because of the extremely competitive nature of the higher educational enterprise, we are understandably reluctant to acknowledge the consequences of our austerity. But in the end, if we are to turn around the loss of public revenue, or otherwise look for public solutions to institutional austerity, we need to find credible and unselfish ways to measure the consequences of this austerity; we must then have the courage to own up to our real losses.

- The second question (or set of questions) to ask regarding the prospect of continuing institutional austerity is whether this austerity is inevitable and natural, or if it can be avoided. If there *are* solutions, why have they not yet been successfully implemented—and who is to blame?

  There seem to be two answers to this last question. The first would be *management*: governing boards, presidents and/or chancellors who are presumably too weak, inept, or lacking in vision to take steps to turn the institution around. This view carries the implicit assumption that what higher education needs are more corporate-type, "turn-around CEOs," who could restructure and save not just a single college (as has already been done) but all colleges and universities—or at least all of the ones that are complaining about their continuing austerity. This is the model that politicians like to fall back on: colleges and universities that are for the most part badly run, inefficient, slow to change, overly subservient to self-serving faculty, and led by uninvolved boards and weak presidents. In short, colleges and universities are troubled (in this view), but do *not* need more ernmental money: just better (and probably corporate) management.

  The other candidate for blame, of course—particularly for the public institutions suffering from the consequences of austerity, but also for private institutions that serve a clear public mission—is government itself, at both the state and the federal level. In this view—favored among college and university administrators, faculty, and students—government is tightfisted, insufficiently appreciative of the importance of (publicly) well-financed colleges and universities, ignorant of the ways of the academy, and sometimes dysfunctionally meddlesome. It is the incessant budget cuts and the bothersome restraints and mandates that are to blame—a fiscal approach caused by misplaced public priorities, the unwillingness of politicians to tax sufficiently, and inept government bureaucrats. Insofar as colleges and universities share some of this blame, it is in their failure to make the proper public case for higher education, or to explain themselves and their need for tax revenues in language that politicians can understand.

A quite different kind of austerity will increasingly meet *students*, faced with rising tuitions and costs of living quite likely outpacing their own or their parents' incomes. As with our critical examination of institutional austerity, there is a set of questions that can appropriately be asked about that austerity borne by the student, especially when that student has been raised in poverty and burdened with poor schools, discrimination, and other elements of cultural disadvantage. First, what are the behavioral consequences of rising tuition prices, and how do these consequences vary not only by family income and other attributes such as ethnicity and gender, but by academic preparedness and interests? Which students, if any, actually abandon their aspirations for further education in the face of increas-

ing college expenses? Which students alter their plans and attend a less costly college, or alter not their choice of college but their lifestyle, commuting from home for a year or two rather than living in a dormitory or apartment? How much ought we or other higher educational policy makers care about precisely how students cope with rising tuitions? Which students respond to increases in tuition by working more hours at their part time job; which of these may also reduce their credit loads from full-time to part-time; which may drop out for a semester or two; which are likely to respond to the increased expenses by additional borrowing—and again, how much ought we or other policy makers care? Finally, and most importantly for the purposes of this paper: which of these behaviors are so undesirable (politically or otherwise) that they need to be countered with governmental policies—in particular, additional governmental spending?

To the economist of higher education this is the familiar question of "tuition price elasticity of demand," expanded to embrace a complex set of possible enrollment behaviors. But for all of the research into this critical question (e.g. Kane, 1995; Heller, 2003), we actually know very little about these more complex responses, and we have thought even less about why we should care. Politicians today seem angry that some students prefer to work part-time or even full-time and take longer to graduate. But they seem not to have considered that this may be perfectly rational behavior, given students' lifestyle preferences, available employment, potential ambivalence about college, and reluctance to get heavily in debt.

Conventional politics says that the increasing expense of higher education makes that goal less accessible. *Accessibility*, at least as enshrined in Title IV of the Federal Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended, has historically meant the ability to access quality *public* higher education—assuming sufficient academic preparation and motivation, and a willingness to work part-time and to assume some student debt—regardless of the financial circumstances of the family (Johnstone, 2001). But does the qualification "sufficient academic preparation and motivation" have enough compassion and generosity to make up, at least partially, for the enormous differences (*the unfair differences*) in the quality of elementary and secondary schooling, and in the quality of cultural capital? Also, should "accessibility" mean more than merely matriculation at (any) college? Should it, rather, embrace matriculation *and success* in the kinds of colleges and universities that can prepare one for positions of maximum earning power, prestige, and influence in America?

According to the U.S. Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance (2001, 2002), we are not at this level of accessibility, and we are almost certainly losing ground. Public policy has also been a little vague about the element of "choice"; i.e., the capacity to allow students to access high-priced *private*, as well as low-priced public, colleges. We have embraced "choice" as public policy, but mainly with the proviso that the option of a more costly private college is to be made possible not by the taxpayer, but by students and their parents (in the form of additional borrowing), or by the institutions (in the form of endowments or other resources that allow them the luxury of substantial price discounting).

We do know that increasing tuition costs, along with the increasing cost of room and board (as well as the "opportunity cost" of foregoing a good job in construction or in a skilled trade), can have different behavioral consequences in different students. We know, furthermore, that these increasing costs are more likely to

alter the behavior of students from lower income families than those from upper or upper-middle income families.

But is this behavior irrational or socially or politically unacceptable, such that public policy and taxpayer dollars ought properly to attempt to alter it? Is it either irrational or otherwise contrary to the public interest for a young adult to decide to forego or drop out of college and learn a skilled trade, take a factory job, or join the armed forces? Or is the *irrational* behavior the decision to go to college in spite of an acute distaste for the experience, a mediocre grade point average, an unpleasant dormitory experience, a large debt, and in the end a qualification for, at best, a low-paying service job? Is the mere fact of a socioeconomic, racial/ethnic, or gender correlation sufficient to conclude that the almost slavish commitment to a college degree exhibited by the sons and daughters of the most affluent is the behavior that ought to be exhibited—at least to an equivalent degree—by the sons and daughters of everyone? Or should we conclude that if attending the right college is clearly possible—as long as the student has a sufficient academic preparation and is willing to work part-time, live frugally, and incur some student debt—then whatever socioeconomic correlation remains is just that: a correlation but not evidence of social inequality?

Higher Education's Fiscal Future: Austerity, Opportunity, and Accessibility

Like many papers, this one raises more questions than it definitively answers. I will close, however, with some thoughts about higher education's likely fiscal future.

- Although the fiscal fortunes of institutions will get wider (with a relative minority of the already elite and wealthy getting more so), most institutions, both public and private, will continue to struggle financially. This struggle will be manifested in increasing student/faculty ratios, smaller proportions of tenured or tenure track faculty, and physical plant problems stemming from accumulated deferred maintenance. At the same time, most colleges and universities will continue to cope amazingly well. In short, there will be nothing like a collapse of any part of our loosely connected higher educational system.

- Traditional shared governance—particularly as associated with elite and selective colleges and universities, and signaled by faculty authority over academic hiring and promotions, the addition or deletion of degree programs, the content of the curriculum, and the method of instruction—will continue to erode at all but the most selective and scholarly colleges and universities. This change will be caused by institutional austerity, and by the more centralized executive authority demanded by governing boards (both public and private).

- Research universities, both public and private, will continue to lose peripheral activities (such as evening and extension-type programs, service activities, mid-career professional training, and regional and applied research) to other institutions, including private for-profit entities.

- Most colleges and universities (except the most traditional and selective) will lose degree credit enrollments, both graduate and advanced professional, to Internet Web-based instruction.

- Public higher education systems will become an arena for competition between two-year and four-year institutions, which will each try to increase the enrollment of undergraduates. Both sectors will reach down into high schools for so-called “concurrent enrollments,” mainly in order to buttress their own student population.

- Tuitions will continue to rise annually at rates in excess of the cost of living. Such increases will be driven in the public sector by the continuing failure of state tax revenues to maintain their historic shares of institutional costs, and in the less-selective private sector by the continuing need to discount tuition (a need caused by weakness in the market).

- The less academically prepared and ambitious undergraduates will continue to drop in and out of, and to change, institutions of higher education—mainly in response to economic circumstances.

- Accessibility will continue to diminish slightly, as more and more assistance will be given with “merit strings.” The less academically prepared and ambitious student will increasingly fall by the collegiate wayside.

- However, higher education—in its essential teaching-learning paradigm, its basic organizational and governance patterns, its structural configuration (along the familiar dimensions of public and private, selective and less-selective, and dominant orientation to scholarship or teaching), and its financial dependence on a sharing of costs among taxpayers, parents, students, and philanthropists—will remain much the same for the foreseeable future.

Higher education’s institutions and its students are survivors. But a little less austerity would still be nice!

References

Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance (2001). *Access denied: Restoring the nation's commitment to equal educational opportunity.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance (2002). *Empty promises: The myth of college access in America*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

Baumol, W. J., & Bowen, W. G. (1966). *Performing arts: The economic dilemma.* New York: The Twentieth Century Fund.

College Board (2002). *Trends in student aid*. Washington, D.C.: The College Board..

College Board (2002). *Trends in college pricing*. Washington, D.C.: The College Board.

College Board (2003). *Challenging times, clear choices: An action agenda for college access and success*. *Report of the national dialogue on student financial aid*. New York: The College Board.

Farrell, E. F. (2003, October 31). Public college tuition rise is largest in 3 decades. *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* p. A1.

Heller, D. (2003, January). *State financial aid and college access. Research report #4: College Board national dialogue on student financial aid*. New York: The College Board.

Johnstone, B. D. (2003, January). *Fundamental assumptions and aims underlying the principles and policies of federal financial aid to students*. *Research report #4: College Board national dialogue on student financial aid*. New York: The College Board.

Johnstone, B. D. (1999). Financing higher education: Who should pay? In P.G. Altbach, R.O. Berdahl, & P.J. Gumport, (Eds.), *American higher education in the twenty-first century: Social, political and economic challenges* (pp. 347-369). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press [revised edition 2004].

Johnstone, B. D. (1998). Patterns of finance: Evolution, revolution, or more of the same? *The Review of Higher Education*, *2*(3), 254-255.

Kane, T. (1995). *Rising public college tuition and college entry: How well do public subsidies promote access to college*? Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

Leslie, L. and Paul B. (1989). *The economic value of higher education*. New York: McMillian Publishing Company.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2000). *Comparative indicators of education in the U.S. and other G-8 countries, fiscal year 2000*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education..

National Center for Education Statistics. (2002). *2002 Digest of Education Statistics*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

"AND THE LAST SHALL BE FIRST": RACIAL DIVERSITY, DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE, AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Walter R. Allen

Professor of Sociology; Co-director of "CHOICES: Access, Equity and Diversity in California Higher Education" Research Project University of California, Los Angles

Presented at the
Pullias Lecture Series on
the Future of Higher Education
on October 20th, 2003

"My mother's grandparents were slaves. My father was a Mississippi sharecropper. I grew up under Jim Crow segregation. Chattel slavery, racial segregation and racism cast long shadows over the Black experience in America. Shadows reaching from the dawn of time, clear to tomorrow's tomorrow."

Walter R. Allen, Address, Conference on Black Education,
W.E.B. Du Bois Institute, University of Pennsylvania,
March 23, 2000

The American Dream lies at the very heart of the American cultural ethos. And at the center of the American Dream is the emphatic conviction that, in this society, education opens the door to success, and that, with talent and hard work, even the poorest American can achieve greatness (Hochschild, 1995). In many instances, talent has been equated with the level of education attained. Education and educational opportunity are part of the essential foundation of democracy; the extent to which citizens are afforded equal educational opportunity speaks volumes about openness and power relations within American society.

Racial discrimination is also part of the American cultural ethos—it represents the darker part of this country's soul. The American nightmare is revealed in this country's stubborn core cultural belief that whites are innately superior to Blacks and other people of color. The United States of America was founded upon a system that institutionalized racial slavery in the customs, mores and laws of the land. This nation grew prosperous and powerful through racial exploitation, racial conquest and racial domination. Our social and cultural institutions have been shaped (should I say warped?) by beliefs, values and practices established and evolved in defense of racial hierarchy. As my opening quote indicates, racial hierarchy is not only a part of this nation's distant, painful past—it is also part of our present, and perhaps even a prologue to our future.

Race and Higher Education in America: A Brief Historical View

Education has long been a dream denied for African Americans—first as slaves forbidden to read and write at risk of death or maiming, and later through a series of societal machinations blocking access to schools and educational resources. Yet despite stereotypes of Blacks as lazy, ignorant and mentally deficient, and despite being faced with history's most elaborate system of institutional barriers to schooling, Black people continued to pursue education. The Holy Grails of education in general, and of higher education in particular, have long embodied the hopes and frustrations of a people seeking the Promised Land of freedom and equality. For Black people, the centuries-old struggle for access and success in higher education has been emblematic of a larger fight for personhood and equality in America. In this struggle, progress has come in fits and starts, interspersed with rollbacks and lost ground (Allen & Jewell, 1995).

For two centuries, the yoke of legalized slavery dominated people of African ancestry in this country. Reflecting this national consensus, the US Supreme Court declared in the Dred Scott case (1857) that Blacks were "beings of an inferior order" and thus that they "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect." The North's victory over the South in the Civil War signaled the dawning of a new day—or so it seemed. Congress ratified constitutional amendments that

outlawed slavery (the Thirteenth Amendment); granted freed slaves citizenship (the Fourteenth Amendment); and extended the right to vote to Black males (the Fifteenth Amendment). But these advances were soon overshadowed by the implementation of restrictive “Black Codes” across the country. These codes ensconced in state laws a racial caste system that stripped Blacks of their newly won freedoms. Ultimately the racial caste system was given legal support by the US Supreme Court and federal law in the case *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which validated the concept of “legal equality” or “separate, but equal.” For the next fifty years, the legitimate aspirations of African Americans for educational opportunity sagged under the weight of a Jim Crow racial apartheid system.

In 1954 the Supreme Court decided in *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* that separate facilities meant unequal facilities, and declared all racial segregation illegal. In the decade following *Brown*, many of the country’s universities and colleges stubbornly resisted the Court’s order to desegregate. The resistance was especially fierce across the deep south, where white citizens, governors and state legislatures in Arkansas,

Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia defied federal law. In the wake of riots and bloodshed, federal troops had to be mobilized. Congress, the president and federal agencies passed legislation, issued orders and enforced laws to overturn the entrenched customs and practices of racial discrimination in education. Even with active federal intervention, the progress towards educational desegregation and expanded educational opportunities for Blacks in K-12 and in higher education was excruciatingly slow. As Blacks became more impatient for their full citizenship rights, the country was on the verge of a second Civil War. Something had to be done.

Affirmative Action in Higher Education

As predecessors of affirmative action programs, equal opportunity programs were rooted in the constitutional guarantees of equal rights to all US citizens. Despite this ideal, for generations Blacks had been denied equal protection under the law. From 1619 to 1865, the enslavement of Americans of African descent was legal and protected by the US Constitution. For 250 years, Blacks were categorized as property, bartered, branded, brutalized and dehumanized. From 1865 to 1965, the next 100 years, Blacks were legally segregated, humiliated and defined as inferior beings. By 1965 the legal barriers to Black progress were torn down, but they were replaced with more subtle forms of opposition, denial and restraint, which were no less potent in denying Blacks equality of opportunity. What remained were the “not-so-blind” hands of structured inequality, market forces, stereotyping and racial discrimination that continued to ensure the subordinate status of the masses of African Americans (Oliver & Shapiro, 1995; Wilson, 1996).

President Johnson’s executive order mandating affirmative action attempted to address the twin heritages of slavery and Jim Crow segregation—historical and contemporary racial oppression—which kept African Americans mired in poverty and despair (Federal Register, 1967). The Kerner Commission report (1968), issued following a period of racial unrest across the nation, made official what everyone already knew: America continued to be a society divided by race, “separate and unequal.”

Johnson invoked the powerful metaphor of a people in chains for 350 years, or ten generations, being required to engage in a foot race with other people who were (and had been) free of restraints. Over the years, the unchained person of course built up quite an advantage or head start. Therefore, Johnson argued, it was not sufficient in 1965 to finally unchain African Americans and to declare the contest fair and even from that point. Johnson said, “You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, ‘You are free to compete with all the others,’ and still justly believe that you have been completely fair” (Johnson, 1965, p.2). Instead, special, systematic corrective actions were required to compensate for the accumulated disadvantages. After years of vigorously enforcing the exclusion of Blacks, as well as women and other people of color, then, it was not enough for agencies and institutions to merely adopt the passive stance of “come if you want (or must).” Rather, Johnson’s Executive Order called for vigorous, proactive steps—*affirmative action*—to broaden and increase access to previously excluded, underrepresented groups.

In one sense, affirmative action as a policy recognized the “root and branch” nature of racism (both personal and institutional varieties) in America. Absent extraordinary efforts, US institutions would continue to do “business as usual,” which translated into continued discrimination against Blacks, women and other people of color. In response to this situation, equal opportunity legislation and policies evolved into “affirmative action” policies, and the subordinate, degraded status of African Americans was inverted. Since the US racial caste system located whites at the top and Blacks at the bottom (historically other groups were arranged between these poles based on various factors, e.g., skin color, physical features, culture, language, US geopolitical interests, etc.), a paradoxical national consensus arose. It declared that “what you would do for the *least* of us [i.e., Blacks], you most certainly should do for the *rest* of us.” Thus, the affirmative action tent was broadened to incorporate white women, Asians, Latinos / Latinas, the physically impaired, those with different sexual orientations, non-native English speakers and many, many others. What this shift signaled was the eventual redefinition of affirmative action away from being a legal remedy or legal compensation for a distinct history of legally sanctioned racial discrimination to the status of a tool for increasing “diversity” or the representation of “underrepresented” groups.

From 1965 to 1995, equal opportunity programs (and later affirmative action programs) represented rays of hope for the disenfranchised. For a relatively brief, shining moment, the doors of opportunity cracked open as never before. Blacks and others (Latinos / Latinas, women, Asians, poor whites, the physically challenged) previously excluded from prestigious universities, corporations and organizations slipped in, although not necessarily in massive numbers. Under the imperatives of equity, inclusiveness and diversity, these institutions brought in African Americans from the tobacco fields of North Carolina, from the Newark ghettos, from the California orchards, and from the Saginaw foundries. Equal opportunity and affirmative action programs gave people of color, women and others routinely pushed to society’s fringes, the chance to prove their worth. These programs did not guarantee success; they only provided the chance to compete and the opportunity to succeed (or fail). Then, having proven their value and effectiveness, affirmative action programs came under severe, extensive attack. Make no mistake about it: affirmative action was attacked precisely because of its effec-

tiveness. Affirmative action programs had made, and promised to continue to make, significant inroads against the established status quo of racial, patriarchal and economic hierarchy. Powerful, vested interests were determined first to stem and then to reverse these gains.

Race, Equity and Higher Education in California

We are currently in the midst of a national debate over affirmative action. The great state of California led the rush to roll back affirmative action. And in what is truly a moment of post-structuralist madness, we see that the chief architect of this anti-affirmative action movement—Wardell Connerly, Regent for the University of California system—is a Black man who readily admits that he was a beneficiary of affirmative action programs (Wallace, 1995). Connerly and others now find reasons to deny similar benefits to Black and Latino / Latina students who greatly need such assistance. Various rationales are advanced for this position: some say that affirmative action has served its purpose and is no longer necessary in our newly "colorblind" society; others say that affirmative action is unfair, that it represents "reverse discrimination" against guiltless whites; and still others return to the old cliché that the poor and disenfranchised need simply to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. In the final analysis, none of these arguments is satisfactory or sufficient.

Affirmative action (and the equal opportunity programs that preceded it) changed the face of America by tearing down the barriers that systematically blocked access and prevented the full societal participation of Blacks, people of color and women. Although the primary agenda of affirmative action was to break down discriminatory structures so that these groups would *all* come to be equally represented in all sectors of American society, the outcomes have been skewed. In point of fact, white women have been by far the greatest beneficiaries of affirmative action (Wilson, 1998; Wise, 1998). Moreover, as a result of affirmative action, white females have realized significant gains in all areas of education, employment, contracting and professions.

This is the history that brings us to the present, a moment where American higher education is in a process of resegregation. For African Americans in particular, low rates of college enrollment and degree attainment have caused concern. Since the rollback of affirmative action in 1995, Black and Latino/a enrollments at the University of California's most prestigious campuses (Berkeley and Los Angeles) have dropped by roughly 50 percent (Allen, Bonous-Hammarth & Teranishi, 2001). A season of gains for Blacks in college enrollment and earned degrees has been reversed in the process. More generally, since the early 1960s, African Americans had made significant gains in enrollment and degree attainment at the university level. The percentage of African Americans who completed four years of college or more rose from 4 percent in 1962 to 15.5 percent in 1999 (U. S. Bureau of Census, 2000). Although this is positive news, the representation of African Americans in this category compared to other racial groups is relatively poor. Although undergraduate enrollment for African Americans increased 8.3 percent since 1993, this is less than half the rates of increase for Latinos / Latinas, Asian Americans, and Native Americans during the same period (Wilds, 2000). Compared to their white counterparts, Black disparities in enrollment are even more pervasive. If we were to remove the positive and disproportionate contribu-

tions of historically Black colleges and universities to total Black student enrollment and earned degrees, then these figures would be even more troubling.

College enrollment rates for Latinos / Latinas follow a similar pattern to those of African Americans. Since 1974, the percentage of both Latinos and Latinas who completed four years of college or more rose from 5.5 percent in 1974 to 11 percent in 1999 (U. S. Bureau of Census, 2000). Moreover, Latino/a total enrollment in higher education increased 79.2 percent from 1988 to 1997 (Wilds, 2000), the highest gain of the four major racial groups. However, although Latinos / Latinas have a 45-percent completion rate at division I colleges and their enrollment rates have increased 8 percentage points since 1990, they continue to trail both Whites and African Americans in the completion of four-year degrees. Further, although Latinos / Latinas represent 9 percent of undergraduate students, they were awarded only 5.3 percent of all bachelor's degrees in 1997 (Wilds, 2000). Asian Americans have made significant gains in enrollment, degree attainment and participation in higher education over the period. Their enrollment in higher education increased 73 percent from 1988 to 1997 and they were awarded 6 percent of all bachelor's degrees in 1997 (Wilds, 2000).

In California, the effects of anti-affirmative action legislation have directly impeded the participation of Blacks and Latinos / Latinas in the University of California system. For example, while in 1997 nearly 50 Blacks and 50 Latinos / Latinas enrolled in the UCLA Law School, the entering class in 2000 counted only 2 Black students and 17 Latinos / Latinas. *This* is the nature of the crisis currently confronting race, equity and affirmative action in US higher education. It is *déjà vu* all over again. We see a return to apartheid higher educational systems that either completely excluded or allowed a few token Blacks (and Latinos / Latinas).

Interestingly, much of this move to resegregate US higher education occurs under the banner of improved academic standards and academic quality. Students of color are implicitly and explicitly identified as "threats" to academic quality; where their numbers grow, it is taken as evidence of lowered academic standards. Thus, the best way to improve academic reputation is to exclude Blacks or greatly limit their presence, or so this line of reasoning would have us believe. We are seeing the proliferation of "high stakes" standardized tests that draw on a set of experiences denied to Black students; this thicket of standardized tests interferes with the educational goals and aspirations of these students.

The state of California provides much of the impetus for the anti-affirmative action movement, largely as a result of poor educational policy and planning. Over the past three decades, the state's population nearly doubled. From 1970 to 1998, California's Black population grew by 71 percent, an impressive rate of population growth under most circumstances. However, this rapid growth was virtually insignificant alongside the astounding rates of increase for California's Latino/a and Asian American populations. From 1970 to 1998, the state's Latino population grew by over 450 percent (2,423,610 to 9,938,776) while the Asian American population grew by over 500 percent (671,210 to 3,724,845) (California Department of Finance, 1999). A series of state administrations did not anticipate or address the consequences of this population boom for the California higher education system, thus contributing to severe demand/supply discrepancies in higher education. Instead of adding beds in college dorms, these administrations invested in exponential increases in the number of prison beds, an investment decision that

made neither sound fiscal nor moral sense. Since 1984, there have been 21 prisons built in California, compared to 3 state university campuses and no University of California campus—despite the fact that an individual prisoner costs the state more than ten times as much as the standard in-state tuition for a college student ($25,000 vs. $2,250) (Families to Amend California's Three-Strikes, 2000). Moreover, due to implementation of the highly controversial "three-strikes law," the California prison population experienced a seven-fold increase—from 23,511 in 1980 to 162,000 inmates by 2000 (California Department of Corrections, 2000). The result of California's radically disproportionate investment in the criminal justice program has been to drastically increase the annual budget for the California Department of Corrections from $728 million in 1985 to $4.5 billion in 1998 (California Department of Corrections, 2000). Alongside these prodigious expenditures in the prison system, the state of California is facing extreme shortages in K-12 and college educational facilities and personnel. In short, misplaced values and mis-investment caused a needless crisis whose unhappy, short-sighted solution has been to erect still more barriers to college opportunities in the form of "high stakes" standardized tests, higher thresholds of "college eligibility," the dismantling of affirmative action and the proposed implementation of high school exit exams.

What Future for Race, Economics, and Educational Opportunity?

In the dawning moments of the twenty-first century, race and ethnicity continue to challenge this society. We still wrestle with whether race and ethnicity will be bases for unity or division. Nowhere is this sobering assessment more vividly portrayed than in California, the "golden state" in the land of opportunity. In this nation's mythology, California is the antithesis of the race relations that characterize Mississippi and the deep south. In the view of many, California was living proof of the possibility of a multiracial, multicultural society, a testament to the declining impact of racial discrimination. So on the face of it, comparison of the status of Blacks in contemporary California to that of Blacks in historical Mississippi would seem to be rather outlandish. However, when one carefully examines the current landscape of race, ethnicity and national origin in California, such a comparison becomes considerably less far-fetched.

Hardly anyone has forgotten recent searing racial images from California: the savage beating of Rodney King by LAPD officers; the raging flames of the 1992 Los Angeles Uprising; a nation spellbound by gavel-to-gavel coverage of the O.J. Simpson murder trial; video clips of the dramatic pursuit and capture of fleeing Mexican illegal immigrants; or recent news stories about white prison guards at Cocoran state prison purposely instigating fights between Black and Latino inmates and then wounding or killing the combatants. By the same token, disturbing evidence reveals patterns of widespread misconduct and corruption by members of the Los Angeles police force, specifically in the form of illegal use of deadly force, police brutality and trumped-up charges against Blacks and Latinos / Latinas. Similarly, few are unfamiliar with the heated rhetoric associated with successful efforts to pass anti-immigrant and anti-affirmative action legislation statewide. In each instance, the language was coded but nonetheless racially charged. This language and these patterns of behavior demonstrate striking affinity with the mores of the segregationist South; in the process they turn back the clock of racial progress, and maintain structures of racial oppression.

Recent developments in California are even more distressing against the backdrop of news coverage and government statistics showing Blacks, Native Americans, and Latinos/Latinas to be massively overrepresented in prisons, among the unemployed and on welfare rolls. As opposed to whites, African Americans are seventeen times more likely to be charged under the “three-strikes law” in Los Angeles County (U. S. Department of Justice, 2000). In California, 39 percent of African American men in their twenties are in prison, on probation or paroled (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000). At the same time, Blacks are woefully underrepresented in college attendance and among those in positions of esteem and power. Between 1989 and 1998, while California’s African American population has remained consistent, the University of California system has experienced an 18.1 percent decrease in that population. Despite this fact, the state of California through Proposition 209 continues to ban affirmative action in college admissions. A clearly ambivalent Supreme Court approved “narrowly tailored,” time-limited affirmative action admissions programs and “liberal” California opposes these. Indeed the sitting chair of the UC Board of Regents recently maligned the admissions process at UC Berkeley, fearing that 381 students admitted in Fall 2002 with SAT scores of less than 1000 might somehow “contaminate” and degrade academic quality for the other 25,000-plus students on campus (Moore, 2003). Will the last ever be first?

These events and patterns alluded to what would occur in sunny, liberal California, not in the deep recesses of the old South. The upshot of all this is to create a previously unimaginable circumstance where African Americans are leaving California in record numbers, seeking better economic, social and political opportunities in Louisiana, Tennessee, Georgia and yes . . . Mississippi. Added to the equation, because of dramatic demographic and identity changes, are the elements of ethnicity and national origin—additional factors with the power to either unite or divide us as a state and as a nation. Contests are currently being waged around these issues across the country; in many respects, these contests are cast in sharpest relief in California, the 35 million-strong subcontinent within a nation.

The economic situation is often the trigger for these contests—certainly, this has been the case in California. When California experienced economic downturns due to the aerospace industry and other manufacturing sectors falling on hard times, the state’s social fabric was severely strained. We should be reminded that since World War II, California has been fueled by an expanding economy, and Californians have experienced great prosperity overall. When finally the state experienced a “bust cycle” to follow the prolonged “boom cycle,” people panicked, resorting to stereotyping, racial hostility, economic exclusion, xenophobia and discriminatory politics. Predictably the psychological and real burden from this “lashing out” fell disproportionately on African Americans, Latinos / Latinas and immigrants as the equivalent of an “untouchable” caste group in this society—but especially for Blacks, since this country’s unique history has defined Blacks as the anchor group in this society’s racial hierarchy: whites at the very top, Blacks at the very bottom. Blacks, people of color and immigrants became convenient targets for fears, anger, and personal insecurity due to economic insecurity. Thus, the beginning of efforts to dismantle affirmative action with the rationale that it was causing reverse discrimination came to fruition. This laid the foundation for future withdrawal of government support to ensure Black and Latino/a student access to higher education.

In this sense, California is a metaphor for the status of race in America during these, the dawning moments of the twenty-first century. California represents as appropriate a metaphor now as Mississippi did at mid-century when struggles for equality brought the walls of racial segregation tumbling down. The focus on California reveals that the problems of the color line are still very much evident in this country, Down South but also Up South, East South and West South. What is valuable about the California case is the state's ability to place in stark relief the complex intricacy of the nation's race problems in the new century. Racial conflict is shown to be bound in race-ethnic conflict and in conflict based on national origin. This complexity propels us to search for alternative models, models that would eventually clarify the roots of other struggles for power and personhood, e.g., around gender, social class, and sexual orientation (Collins, 1998). Ultimately conflicts in California, in Mississippi, in Michigan, across the country, and around the world, e.g., in Iraq, Peru, Kashmir, and the Congo trace back to sociopolitical, economic systems that require and thrive on exploitative relationships.

America struggles with warring ideologies: On the one hand is the shining dream of vast opportunity, limited only by a person's vision, energy and talents; on the other hand is a profound and abiding belief in and commitment to the ideas of racial supremacy. Between these extremes, at the center of the struggle, lies the heart and soul of this country. Will the America envisioned in the US Constitution's sweeping pronouncements of liberty, equality and fraternity for all triumph or will this country continue to indulge its demons of degradation, domination, exclusion and exploitation directed at nonwhites and the less powerful? This struggle is presently being waged in the nation's institutions of higher learning. Perhaps this is as it should be? For more than any other institution, the nation's colleges and universities are charged with visioning and modeling this society's ideals. Colleges and universities in America and in the great state of California can win the struggle for equity, excellence and diversity in higher learning. The society is depending on us to light the way; to do otherwise would be to fail our sacred trust.

References

Allen, W. R., Bonous-Hammarth, M., & Teranishi, R. (2001). *Stony the road we trod…: The Black struggle for higher education in California*. Unpublished research report.

Allen, W. R., & Jewell, J. O. (1995). African American education since "An American dilemma: An American dilemma revisited." *Daedalus, 124*(1), 77-100.

Dred Scott v. Sandford (1857), 60 U.S. (19 How.) 393.

Plessy v. Ferguson (1896), 163 U.S. 537.

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954), 347 U.S. 483.

California Department of Corrections. (2000). *CDC facts: Second quarter 2000*. Sacramento, CA: Retrieved September 6, 2000 from the World Wide Web: http://www.cdc.state.ca.us/factsht.htm

California Department of Finance. (1999). *Race/ethnic population with age and sex detail, 1970-2040*. Sacramento, CA: Retrieved October 12, 2000 from the World Wide Web: http://www.dof.ca.gov/html/demograp/race.htm

Families to Amend California's Three-Strikes. (2000). *Latest statistics*. Los Angeles, CA. Retrieved July 13, 2000 from the World Wide Web: http://www.facts1.com/general/stats.htm

The Federal Register. (1967). Executive order 11246, Equal employment opportunity, by President Lyndon B. Johnson (September 24, 1965). *Code of federal regulations*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Hochschild, J. L. (1995). *Facing up to the American dream: Race, class and the soul of the nation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Johnson, L. B. (1965, June 4). *To fulfill these rights*. Commencement Address, Howard University, Washington, D.C.

Moores, J. C. (2003, October 6). *A preliminary analysis of the University of California, Berkeley Admission Process for 2002*. Prepared for the UC Board of Regents.

Oliver, M. L., & Shapiro, T. M. (1995). *Black wealth/white wealth: A new perspective on racial inequality.* New York: Routledge.

United States Kerner Commission. (1968). *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*. (Introduction by T. Wicker). New York: Bantam Books.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2000). *Population profile of the United States: 1997*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Wallace, A. (1995, January 20). End race-based admissions, UC regent suggests. *The Los Angeles Times*, p. 1.

Wilds, D. J. (2000). *Minorities in higher education 1999-2000: Seventeenth annual status report*. Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education.

Wilson, H. (1998). Does affirmative action for Blacks harm Whites? Some evidence from the higher education arena. *Western Journal of Black Studies, 22*(4), 218.

Wilson, W. J. (1996). *When work disappears: The world of the new urban poor*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Wise, T. (1998). Is sisterhood conditional? White women and the rollback of affirmative action. *NWSA Journal, 10*(3), 1-26.

TAKING STUDENT LEARNING SERIOUSLY: RETHINKING THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FUTURE

Vincent Tinto

Distinguished Professor of Higher Education
Syracuse University

Presented at the
Pullias Lecture Series on
the Future of Higher Education
on November 17th, 2003

Many colleges and universities speak of the importance of student learning. Recruitment brochures use photos of smiling students as well as stories that capture their empowering experiences to highlight an institution's dedication to the enrichment of student learning. Indeed, quite a few institutions invest substantial resources in programs designed to achieve that end. But for all their effort, most institutions do not take student learning *seriously*—treating it, like so many other issues, as one more item to be addressed through what Parker Palmer calls the "add a course" strategy. Need to address the issue of diversity? Add a course in diversity studies. Need to address the issue of student learning, in particular that of new students? Add a freshman seminar, perhaps a freshman academic assistance program with its own dedicated staff—or, if you really want to be seen as innovative, a learning community or two.

The result of this process of adding on is that student relationships with faculty, staff, and each other are becoming narrower and more specialized, while their learning is further partitioned into smaller and more disconnected segments. Therefore while it is true that learning programs abound on our campuses, most institutions have not taken student learning seriously. They have done little to change the essential character of college, little to alter the prevailing character of student educational experience, and therefore little to address the deeper roots of student learning (or the lack thereof). As a result, most efforts to *enhance* student learning have done little to *improve* student learning.

What would it mean for universities to take student learning seriously? How should universities' actions change in order to demonstrate that they take that goal as the centerpiece of their reform efforts? Among other things, universities should stop tinkering at the margins of institutional life, and should instead make the enhancement of student learning the linchpin around which they organize their activities. They should move beyond the provision of add-on services, establishing at the *center* of university life those conditions that promote the education of all students. To be serious about student learning, universities should recognize that the roots of student learning lie not only in students themselves—their attributes and the situations they face—but also in the very character of the educational settings. As opposed to student attributes that, at least at entry, are largely beyond university control, the conditions in which a university asks students to learn are not.[1] They are the reflection of past decisions, and, if necessary, can be changed—at least if the university is serious in its pursuit of student learning.

Before I speak of these conditions, I need to spend a minute or two describing what I mean by learning. Many faculty (perhaps too many) assume that the process of learning is akin to filling an empty container with new knowledge (or at least the knowledge that the faculty deem important). The faculty provide

[1] I should observe here that it is all too easy to dismiss this issue as one that is primarily a matter of student interests and attributes or of the difficult environments they encounter. On all too many campuses one hears faculty talk about the students' lack of interest, skills, etc. Rarely does one hear faculty talk about the stultifying educational conditions in which they place students, or about the skills the faculty bring to help students learn. We hear too much of what in the 1960's was called "blaming the victim."

knowledge, the students receive it. Yet we have come to know a much more complex picture of learning; a picture that, as David Ausubel first pointed out in his 1968 textbook *Educational Psychology: A Cognitive View,* has as much to do with what the learner already knows and believes—that is, what is already "inside the container"—as it does with what is to be put in (Ausubel, 1968). It follows that to think seriously about how we might promote student learning, we have to take seriously what learners already know and believe. In other words, to take *student learning* seriously, we must first take *student learners* seriously.

To do so we have to make public what is inside the container. That is, we have to make public what students already know and believe. This is what Lee Shulman meant when he argued that "learning is least useful when it is private and hidden," and "most powerful when it becomes public and communal" (Shulman, 1999). It follows that our pursuit of student learning requires us to consider how the educational environments or conditions we construct engage students in ways which bring to the fore their understanding, and actively engage them in a communal discourse of what they already know.

Let me add that I do not for a moment believe that such communal discourse does not already occur among students themselves. Of course it does. It takes place in residence halls, along walkways, in cafeterias and coffee shops, and in many other places where students meet (even in fraternities and sororities). But rarely does it occur in an intentional way that is part and parcel of the student educational experience, and reflective of an institution's pedagogical and curricular decisions about how to organize the conditions for student learning.

Nor do I believe that it is enough to construct what are often referred to as "student-centered" conversations, without structure or subject. Such conversations sometimes tend toward mindless relativism: one truth for you, another for you, and never mind the difference. These are not the sort of communal conversations that Kenneth Bruffee had in mind when he said "we construct knowledge […] by negotiating with one another in communities of knowledgeable peers" (Bruffee, 1995, p.9).

In other words, I do not believe that faculty must vacate the field of such conversations, or that such conversations need be devoid of theory and values. We have to find a middle ground between student and faculty knowledge, and between theory and practice. And we have to do so, as Peter Senge (1990) argues in his book *The Fifth Discipline*, in ways that enable us to understand how our values, beliefs, and actions are part and parcel of the world about us, and how they help create the problems we experience. In short, the conditions that help promote the kind of learning I have in mind are those that enable students to continually discover, through communal conversations with other students and faculty, how they create their reality—and how they can change it.

Conditions for Student Learning

So what does research tell us about the conditions (or, if you will, the "environments") that promote student learning? More specifically, what does it suggest about how we should act to promote the type of learning to which we aspire?
As to the first question, research points to five conditions that promote student

learning. The first is *high expectation*. Conversely, low expectations almost guarantee an absence of effort and subsequent learning (as someone once noted, "no one rises to low expectations"). Yet low expectations are apparently the norm for higher education. The just-released results of the National Survey of Student Engagement reported that "only about 13% of full-time students spent more than 25 hours a week preparing for class, the approximate number that faculty members say is needed to do well in college. More than two-fifths (41%) spent 10 or fewer hours a week" (NSSE, 2003).

Expectations are expressed in a variety of ways. In classrooms they are expressed in the level of intellectual work required of students, and in the degree to which students see that work as challenging. At the same time, expectations may vary depending on the student. They may be expressed in the labels used to describe particular groups of students—consider, for instance, the term "remedial"—or, more subtly, but no less effectively, in the way different students are treated according to gender or ethnicity. However expressed, research is clear that students quickly pick up expectations and are influenced by the degree to which those expectations validate their presence on campus.

The second condition that promotes student learning is *support*. Research points to two types of support that promote learning—academic and social support. Unfortunately, more than a few students enter the university insufficiently prepared for the rigors of university study. For them, as well as for others, the availability of academic support (for instance, in the form of academic assistance courses, tutoring, study groups, and academic support programs like supplemental instruction) is an important condition for their continuation in the university. So also is the availability of social support, in the form of counseling, mentoring, and ethnic student centers. Such centers provide a supportive safe haven for minority students who might otherwise find themselves out of place. For new students, these centers can serve as secure ports of entry, enabling them to safely navigate the unfamiliar terrain of the university.

The third condition for student learning is *feedback*. Students are more likely to succeed in settings that assess their skills, monitor their progress, and provide frequent feedback about their learning as they are trying to learn. Immediate and continuous feedback about student progress seems to be key, as it allows institutions to intervene and provide support when necessary; it also enables students to adjust their learning as they learn (see Angelo and Cross, 1994).

Fourth as a condition for student learning is *involvement*. Educational theorists such as Alexander Astin (1993) and myself (Tinto, 1993) have long pointed to the importance of academic and social integration, or what is more correctly referred to as involvement or engagement with student learning. The more students are academically and socially involved, the more likely are they to learn, and, in turn, graduate. A wide range of studies in a variety of settings and for a range of students have confirmed that the more frequently students engage with faculty, staff, and their peers, the more likely—all other things being equal—that they will persist and graduate. Simply put, involvement matters. And nowhere does it matter

more than during the critical first year of college, when both developmental and social issues conspire to constrain student learning.[2]

The final condition for learning is *relevance*. Learning—that is, deep learning, as contrasted with surface learning—arises when a student engages knowledge in ways that he or she perceives as meaningful. Problems or issues that are important to students actively engage those students, forcing them to reflect upon how their understanding can be applied to produce a solution.

Unfortunately, the educational experiences of most university students are not engaging, not seen as meaningful, and rarely informed by frequent feedback. Learning is still very much a spectator sport in which faculty talk dominates and few students actively participate. Most students, especially during their first year, are "isolated learners"; i.e., their learning is disconnected from that of others. Just as important, students typically take courses as detached, individual units, one course separated from another in both content and peer group, one set of understandings unrelated in any intentional fashion to the content learned in other courses. Courses have little academic or social coherence, and offer little in the way of relevance to today's students. It is no wonder then that students seem so uninvolved in learning. Their educational experiences are not very involving, and do little to evoke serious communal conversations about what they are learning.

What should institutions do? How should they reorganize the environments in which they ask students to learn, especially during the critical first year of college? More specifically, what should an elite university such as The University of Southern California do as it moves forward?

To answer that question, I want to first draw on a recent address by Andrew Abbott to the University of Chicago College Class of 2006—a group not unlike the students here. In that address, Abbott argues that the very fact that students are able to gain entry to an elite university is sufficient to explain their predictable success in adult life. In a very real sense, it does not matter, he argues, how well one does in such a university, other than graduate. Except for the understandable variation in adult earnings between those who major in, let's say, Business and English, most of the differences in adult attainments can be explained by individual attributes, talents, and the like, as well as by the college of graduation—not what students do in college. Much to his listeners' delight, Abbott then suggests they forget about grades and not worry about whether their actions in college will shape their future attainments.[3] Rather, they should focus on being *educated*. The point of education in elite universities like The University of Chicago and the University

[2] This does not mean that most students are not already involved. Many are involved with their peers in a variety of activities, especially social activities. But they are infrequently involved in educational activities whose intent is to produce learning. The question then is not whether students are involved, but with whom, about what, in what settings, and with what results.

[3] It should be observed that graduating in a given major does not ensure that one will end up with a career in that field. If past evidence is any guide, then it is likely that no more than half of students will work in the fields for which their majors prepared them.

of Southern California is… education. As Abbott put it, "the reason for getting an education here—or anywhere else—is that it is better in and of itself…It is better because it is better" (Abbott, 2003).

What sort of education does Abbott have in mind? Among other things, it is the habit of finding many and diverse meanings (and ways of making meaning) in any events or phenomena we examine. This should not be confused with the acquisition of different paradigms, schema, disciplines, and so on. Rather, it is the habit of looking for new meanings and questioning old ones, as well as being open to the possibility of yet undiscovered meanings. It is the mindset that asks what role one plays in both the *construction* of meanings and how those meanings may change.

Where am I going with this? What I want to argue is that this idea of education requires that we construct settings that actively involve students—bringing to the fore their current understandings, and calling upon them to constantly negotiate those understandings with peers, faculty, and staff. Such settings should enable students to consider and reconsider how they create (together and individually) their reality—and how they can change it if necessary.

Let me suggest then that an elite university such as the University of Southern California could begin by making interdisciplinary learning communities and the collaborative and/or problem-based pedagogy that underlies them the hallmark of the student educational experience, especially during the critical first year of college.[4] Furthermore, let me suggest that these be connected not only to your residential settings (living learning communities) but also to your service learning initiatives.

Here I am not referring to the so-called "learning communities" that many institutions adopt—these are little more than forms of co-registration that are added on to the curriculum. As someone once observed, co-registration does not a learning community make. Rather, I refer to those types of learning communities whose curricular structure and pedagogical practices establish the very conditions to which I have already alluded—namely, those that enable students to frame meaningful academic and social connections between what otherwise would be discrete experiences, and those that enable students to engage in communal, interdisciplinary, multi-voiced conversations about what is known[5]. Let me add that in a racially and ethnically diverse student population like yours—which, I have learned, is more diverse than that at UC Berkeley—the learning communities I have in mind also enable, indeed require, students to engage in communal conversations with other students whose life experiences are varied and reflective of diverse ethnic, racial, social, and sexual backgrounds.

---

4 Here I distinguish between the more highly structured *cooperative* learning model and the *collaborative* learning model. The latter provides students with more say in the manner in which the group does its work.

5 For more about learning communities, visit the website of the National Learning Communities Project at http://learningcommons.evergreen.edu

When connected to service learning, such learning communities also enable students to consider, in ways textbooks cannot, how their actions help construct their reality, and thus how they might change that reality by changing their actions. Lest we forget, the purpose of service learning is not so much service as it is *deeper learning*. Regretfully, such learning is undermined when service learning, like other initiatives, is implemented as an add-on to, rather than integral part of, the curriculum.

Learning communities like those my staff and I studied several years ago as part of a federally funded research center (and are again studying with a generous grant from the Lumina Foundation for Education) yield important educational benefits. Let me very briefly share with you some of the data from our study. First, we measured student perceptions of intellectual gain and what is referred to as *Quality of Student Effort*. This is a composite measure that assesses student effort (time-on-task) on a range of behaviors, each of which is predictive of learning and persistence. In the chart, which compares the average scores of students in the innovative programs and in the traditional comparison settings, you can see that students in these innovative classroom settings were more involved on all measures of student effort, and saw themselves as having made greater intellectual gains.

Effort Score**	Program	Comparison
Course Effort	3.05*	2.46
Library Usage	2.15*	1.94
Faculty Contact	2.25*	1.99
Student Contact	3.12*	2.85
Writing Effort	2.81*	2.65
Perceived Gain	2.68*	2.46

* Indicates a significant difference between groups at the .05 level.
** Scored on a scale from 1(low) to 4 (high)

Clearly students in learning communities were more involved, experiencing that involvement in a variety of ways. It is significant that student involvement in learning extended beyond the classroom into the corridors and walkways of the campuses we studied. In the following quote, a student expresses his understanding of how classroom interaction with his peers enhanced his learning, even after class:

> You know, the more I talk to other people about the class stuff, the homework, the tests, the more I'm actually learning…and the more I learn not only about other people, but also the subject because my brain is getting more, because I am getting more involved with other students in the class …I'm getting more involved with the class even after class.

More to the point of the present discussion are these comments by a student who found herself in a very diverse learning community:

> I think more people should be educated in this form of education…We learn not only how to interact with ourselves, but with other people of different races, different sizes, different colors, different everything…I mean it just makes it better…not only do you learn more, you learn better.

Another student in the same setting put it this way:

> So you are constantly having to think, re-think, and even re-re-think what's going on in light of all the feedback you're getting from all these different points of view. What it does is lead you to understand things in ways you cannot in a typical class.

It is sad that colleges and universities are among the last institutions where Americans can experience intercultural life. In a society based on the ideals of democratic pluralism but limited by its failure to realize them, the absence of any sustained and meaningful conversations with other cultures and belief systems places a particular responsibility on American higher education to promote such conversations. But increasing the access of diverse peoples is not enough, particularly if our unwillingness to be intentional and educative means that that access simply reproduces the cultural and racial segmentation that we see in our broader society.

Though far from ideal for our purposes here, the above cited comments begin to capture the nature of student experience in collaboratively taught, interdisciplinary learning communities—and particularly those that are diverse in student composition. Parenthetically, this is a quality of student experience that we are seeing again in our current study of learning communities for academically underprepared students.

The Challenge of Learning Communities

Such collaborative, problem-based learning environments are not easily wrought. Their construction poses a series of challenges to universities and to the faculty in those universities. Not the least of these challenges has to do with the faculty's willingness and capacity to develop such settings for their students. Among other things, collaboratively taught learning communities require that faculty develop and employ atypical skills in curriculum and pedagogy. It is ironic that in all of education, from kindergarten to the university, only faculty in higher education are not, as a matter of practice, trained in teaching pedagogies, not trained in assessment of learning strategies, and not knowledgeable of theories of student learning, student development, and the impact of cultures and contexts on learning styles.

At the same time, collaborative learning pedagogies require faculty to de-center themselves in the student learning process; i.e., to become *facilitators* of student learning, no longer obligated to carry the burden of that learning entirely on their shoulders. But such pedagogies do not require faculty to vacate the ground of communal discourse. Instead they must "bring students into a community of learning around the subject itself" (Palmer, 1997). I refer you here to Parker Palmer's *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of Teacher's Life* (1998), Finkel and Monk's "Teachers and Learning Groups: Dissolution of the Atlas Complex" (1983), and Barr and Tagg's "Moving from Teaching to Learning: A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education" (1995).

Of course it can also be said that university reward systems, especially but not only in the elite research universities, are not particularly conducive to the investment of time and energy that such teaching requires. Nor do the disciplines (or

should I say knowledge fiefdoms) in which faculty are housed seem to reward faculty for the types of crossdisciplinary work that such curricular structures call for. One might say that the deck is stacked against the construction of such learning environments.

I do not mean to underestimate the challenges involved here. But just imagine what a powerful statement the University of Southern California could make in the marketplace of ideas if it took student learning so seriously that it required new faculty, who were not already so trained, to be trained during their first year in pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment, and be made knowledgeable of student learning and development theories. Just imagine what a powerful statement the University of Southern California could make if it provided the resources and incentives to ensure that interdisciplinary learning communities and the collaborative pedagogy underlying them would be the hallmark of the first year higher educational experience. Just imagine what a powerful statement the University of Southern California could make if it established an innovative first year college whose curriculum, pedagogy, and structure were designed expressly to promote student learning.

Concluding Thoughts

Let me conclude with several thoughts. First, regarding distance learning and the emergence of a global network society: there is little doubt that we are rapidly moving toward a future in which conversations between diverse peoples and belief systems will be commonplace. We will have (to some extent we already have) immediate access to information of all sorts from all corners and crevices of the world, and from a wide range of belief systems. The possibilities for learning will be immense. But so will the dangers. As the experience of the ERIC database demonstrates, we run the risk of being overwhelmed with so much information of such variable quality that meaningful shared discourse will be constrained, not advanced. All our citizens, but especially those who are likely to occupy positions of influence, must acquire the intellectual capacity to sift and discern, to weigh and consider, re-consider and even re-re-consider what meaning to draw from the forthcoming deluge of voices. Just as the technology of the blackboard led teachers to turn their backs on their students, so too do I fear that the technology of distance learning in a global network society could lead us to turn our backs on meaningful cross-cultural conversations.

I do not mean to dismiss or underestimate the potential of distance learning in a global network society—but potential does not reality make. Further, I worry about our willingness to invest the resources needed to build the sorts of collaborative learning communities at a distance and online that our students' education require. This is not merely a matter of technology, but of our willingness to have our pedagogy and curriculum drive our technology, and not the other way around. Put another way, instant messaging and chat rooms do not automatically make for productive learning communities.

But no distance learning is more powerful than learning at a distance; that is to say in a setting different from that with which one is familiar. As an ex-Peace Corps volunteer and an observer of student experiences in study abroad programs, I can attest to the power of learning outside of one's intellectual and social

“comfort zone.” I am not referring to merely living in a residence hall in an English-speaking country, but to programs where students are required to learn in countries with different languages, if not religious and cultural beliefs. In other words, I am suggesting the value of having students experience, perhaps for the first time, the sometimes uncomfortable feeling of being the “other.” If the University of Southern California wants to take the lead in the global network society, it is important that its students know what it is like to step outside that network—just as so many foreign students do when they leave their cultures to come to the University of Southern California.

I want to close by arguing that when students engage in collaborative learning in diverse settings; in learning communities that are interdisciplinary in nature and whose knowledge base spans racial, cultural, and political boundaries; and in service learning that is community-based, they are engaging in a deeply democratic education. When students come to understand—in ways that lectures cannot convey—that there are multiple meanings to every issue, and that their reality is, in part, of their doing and alterable, they are in fact engaging in an educational process that is essentially moral and civic. It is an educational process that is better because it is better.

References

Abbott, A. (2003). The zen of education. *University of Chicago Magazine*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Angelo, T., & Cross, P. (1994). *Classroom assessment techniques: A handbook for college teachers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Astin, A. (1997). *What really matters? Four critical years revisited*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Ausubel, D. P. (1968). *Educational psychology: A cognitive view*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Barr, R.B., & Tagg, J. (1995). From teaching to learning: A new paradigm for udergraduate education. *Change, 27* (6), 13-25.

Bruffee, K. A. (1995). *Collaborative learning: Higher education, Interdependence, and the authority of knowledge*. Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press.

Finkel, D., & Monk, S. D. (1983). Teachers and learning groups: Dissolution of the atlas complex. In C. Bouton, & R. Garth (Eds.), *Learning in groups*. *Directions for teaching and learning* (pp.83-97). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

National Survey of Student Engagement. (2003). 2003 Overview. Bloomington, IN: Center for Postsecondary Research, Indiana University-Bloomington.

Palmer, J. P. (1997, November-December). Teaching and learning in community. *About Campus*, pp. 4-13.

Palmer, J. P. (1998). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York: Doubleday.

Shulman, L. (1999). Taking Learning Seriously. *Change, 31*(4), 10-17.

Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of college attrition* (2nd Edition). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

PREVIOUS PULLIAS LECTURERS

2003 **Donald Kennedy, Ph.D.**
President Emeritus, Stanford University

2002 **Steven B. Sample, Ph.D.**
Robert C. Packard President's Chair, President, University of Southern California

2001 **Karen Symms Gallagher, Ph.D.**
Emery Stoops and Joyce King-Stoops Dean, USC Rossier School of Education

2000 **Arthur Levine, Ph.D.**
President, Teachers College

1999 **Charles B. Reed, Ph.D.**
Chancellor, California State University System

1998 **Thomas J. Nussbaum, J.D.**
Chancellor, California Community Colleges

1997 **Richard C. Atkinson, Ph.D.**
President, University of California

1996 **Yolanda T. Moses, Ph.D.**
President, The City College of New York

1995 **K. Patricia Cross, Ph.D.**
Graduate School of Education, University of California, Berkeley

1994 **Barry Munitz, Ph.D.**
Chancellor, California State University

1993 **Steven B. Sample, Ph.D.**
Robert C. Packard President's Chair, President, University of Southern California

1992 **John E. Roueche, Ph.D.**
Sid W. Richardson Regent's Chair, University of Texas, Austin

1991 **John Brooks Slaughter, Ph.D.**
President, Occidental College

1990 **Ernest L. Boyer, Ph.D.**
President, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

1989 **Terrel Bell, Ph.D.**
Former United States Secretary of Education

1988 **David P. Gardener, Ph.D.**
President, University of California

1987 **James H. Zumberge, Ph.D.**
President, University of Southern California

1986 **Terry Sanford, Ph.D.**
President Emeritus, Duke University

1985 **K. Patricia Cross, Ph.D.**
Graduate School of Education, Harvard University

1984 **Clark Kerr, Ph.D.**
President Emeritus, University of California

1983 **W. Ann Reynolds, Ph.D.**
Chancellor, California State University

1982 **Dale Parnell, Ed.D.**
President, American Association of Community Colleges and Junior Colleges

1981 **Paul Hadley, Ph.D.**
Academic Vice President, University of Southern California

1980 **Ernest L. Boyer, Ph.D.**
President, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

1979 **Norman Topping, M.D., SC.D., L.L.D., L.H.D**
Sid W. Richardson Regent's Chair, University of Texas, Austin

CENTER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY ANALYSIS
ROSSIER SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
University of Southern California
701 Waite Philips Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90089-4037

(213) 740-7218
www.usc.edu/dept/chepa