

1992 AAHE Research Forum

**Reclaiming the Public Trust**  
**A Research Agenda to Explore the Validity of**  
**the Criticisms**

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

The 1992 AAHE Research Forum comes to grips with a number of paradoxes that are captured in our new awareness of how others see us, and the public's concerns that we are not living up to our potential. Does this signal the traditional rub between a current public vision and higher education's future-oriented mission or have we really lost our reputation through neglect of society's interests? Is the call for new connections with the National Goals across levels of education in sync or in conflict with higher education's responsibilities? How can common commitments reflect the diversity we prize? Can we really cut costs while meeting higher standards?

What do we need to know to resolve the conundrums we face as we head toward the year 2000? This agenda taps our ability to engage in the kind of collective inquiry that can help direct the national interest and energy currently focused on higher education toward an informed consensus around where improvement is needed and where our efforts are meeting national goals.

This agenda challenges us (1) to examine ways we enact our mission in relation to our constituencies (*Seeing Ourselves as Others See Us: Remaking "The System"*), (2) to probe the meaning of quality, and the interactions among costs, cuts, and how we work (*The Search for Quality: Changing the Way We Work*), (3) to connect assessment in higher education with national needs (*Assessment, Accountability, and the Public Trust*), (4) to explore ways to enhance scholarship, strengthen curricula, and improve teaching (*The Professoriate, Scholarship, and Teaching*), and (5) to recognize diversity as an essential component of the academy's call for community (*Achieving the Promise in Diversity*.)

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**What is the Purpose of the Research Forum?** Involvement and critique from educators in dialogue with researchers is a critical element for achieving clarity about what research will benefit educational policy and practice. The AAHE Research Forum is convened annually to involve individuals committed to research and scholarship in higher education. The Forum stimulates educators' involvement in creating a research agenda that speaks to current educational concerns. Since each year's agenda is developed around the conference theme, educators and researchers can continually rely on the Forum agenda as an up-to-date source of research questions of common interest that flow from the year's most central educational issues. The Forum enables educators to provide leadership and support for those researchers who share educators' interests, who speak clearly to educators about their findings, and who actively respond to educators' most pressing questions.

Since 1985, the AAHE Research Forum has provided leadership from educators for bridging the gap between research and practice. The Forum creates a culture of inquiry that is both sustaining and purposeful: new knowledge and practice introduced at the annual meeting is discussed, connected, transformed, and put to work within the Association by its individual members, or across AAHE's field of influence through the research agenda.

**Why AAHE?** AAHE has traditionally brought together a wide range of interested educators, and has been successful in defining current issues that stimulate a broad spectrum of higher education constituencies. A recent survey shows the AAHE annual conference to be the most stimulating meeting of its kind. There are other forums where research results are presented and discussed, but many of them are not regularly attended by or directed toward higher education administrators and educators. AAHE membership has the desire and potential to stimulate research among its members, and to engage the research community in continual dialogue about research questions and findings that directly relate to educational practices for governance, for teaching and learning, and for student development.

### **What is the Forum Process and Product?**

- 1. The invitational pre-conference session.** Educators (selected from conference presenters) generate research questions on topics that emerge as central to the conference theme through a specially designed group process. Experts on each topic serve as group leaders and synthesizers. Each topic group reviews the current issues around the topic and dialogues with those who currently, or are likely to, research the year's agenda. For the 1992 agenda, 58 conference presenters who work in one of five topic areas generated questions for the agenda on April 5. Questions are synthesized in each group, and two session leaders edit and prepare them that evening for distribution the next day.
- 2. The all-conference panel and discussions.** Forum leaders bring the questions generated in the preconference session to the attention of the conference membership and involve the larger audience in discussion. Forum leaders also elicit discussion of research questions by a panel comprised of experts on the year's conference theme. The 1992 theme was *Reclaiming the Public Trust: Costs, Quality, Commitments*. The April 6 panelists were *Helen S. Astin*, Professor of Higher Education and Associate Director, Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles, and *Frank Newman*, President, Education Commission of the States. Group discussions on each topic follow the panel and allow for more focused critique and discussion of the pre-conference questions. Experts on the topic serve as leaders and synthesizers in each group. In 1992, 86 persons attended this session. Of these, 60

participated in the topic groups, for a two-session total of 118 individual contributions to the final agenda.

3. **The research agenda.** Following the session, two Forum leaders edit and integrate questions from topic group syntheses and individual worksheets for a final agenda. Thus, AAHE's annual research agenda is a timely, collaborative product of interactive, on-the-spot discussion. It is another way of knowing about the professional interests of a wide range of educators. The research agenda is a product of a process that captures and articulates the informal conversation that occurs at AAHE meetings about what should be researched. Conference presenters generate research questions on emerging topics in higher education, elicit questions from their colleagues, and then synthesize all questions. Dissemination and discussion of the agenda with researchers follows.
4. **Dissemination:** The agenda is disseminated to all contributors; participants are credited. Advisors to the Research Forum process and other associations/groups in higher education also receive the agenda. The history and rationale for the American Association for Higher Education Research Forum are described in M. Mentkowski and A. W. Chickering, Linking Educators and Researchers in Setting a Research Agenda for Undergraduate Education, *The Review of Higher Education*, 1987, 11(2), 137–160. The 1987 agenda, "*The Classroom Researcher's Research Agenda*;" the 1988 agenda, "*A Research Agenda in Support of Our Highest Calling*;" the 1989 agenda, "*Improving the Odds for Student Achievement: A Research Agenda*;" the 1990 agenda, "*The Future of the Professoriate: A Look in the Mirror*;" the 1991 agenda, "*Achieving the Promise in Diversity: A Research Agenda to Inform the Issues*;" and the 1992 agenda, "*Reclaiming the Public Trust: A Research Agenda to Explore the Validity of the Criticisms*" are available from Marcia Mentkowski, Office of Research and Evaluation, Alverno College, 3401 S. 39<sup>th</sup> St., P.O. Box 343922, Milwaukee, WI 53234-3922.

## 1992 RESEARCH FORUM LEADERS

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## SEEING OURSELVES AS OTHERS SEE US: REMAKING “THE SYSTEM”

How do business, government, the press, and the American people regard higher education? We believe higher education is held in high esteem, yet, institutions seem to be taking more than their share of criticisms and budget cuts. Are these criticisms and cuts related to differences among public visions of higher education’s purposes and accomplishments, and that of the academy? If so, to what parts of the public vision should higher education attend?

Some may argue that we have given away our leadership role through neglect of society’s interests. If so, how did we lose our reputation? Does this presumed loss of the public trust signal significant change on our part, or is this loss just a matter of getting new information to the opinion-makers? What part of the criticisms are within our control?

If we have lost the public trust, how do we go about rebuilding it? What are solutions that respond to problems we have identified? How do we deal with the mixed message to produce more, meet higher standards, and simultaneously cut the costs? Even if we agree to better meet the public interest, where does it really lie?

What is higher education’s mission and how might we frame it in ways that meet society’s current interests and future needs? For example, an institution may be meeting an important piece of the public interest through teaching, or through adult and/or alternative degree programs. What does this imply for the incentive structure for those faculty and programs? How do *success criteria* within institutions match up with those of the public they serve? What difference does that make to our definitions of quality?

Who and what is *best* and how do we define it? What are the indicators? What is the evidence that these indicators are related to substantive institutional change or individual student development, rather than surface symbols that fluctuate with institutional awareness of what the public wants to hear? Do we intend to remake the system? If so, on what grounds?

### On Losing Trust

Have we really lost trust? How do we know?

If we *have* lost trust, is it due to individual abuses or to something more fundamental?

How do we know if public trust/distrust of higher education has, in fact, changed over the years?

Has the public lost faith with education in general? How has the kind of questioning that education brings forward effected the loss of faith in education by society as a whole? To what extent is the public’s distrust of higher education tied to loss of confidence in public schools?

### On Public Perceptions and Expectations

How have the perceptions of various publics toward higher education varied over time?

To what extent has the information age shaped the perceptions of the public about higher education?

Have colleges created expectations that we cannot fulfill?

Are the public's criticisms about what we are not doing for *students*, or about what we are not doing for the *public*? For example, to what extent is the entry of large numbers of adult *students* contributing to criticism and distrust? To what extent is the specialization of knowledge hampering our ability to synthesize what we know for *public* use?

Are we adequately relating to new shapers of public opinion in society?

Which of higher education's many publics should colleges serve? Who really determines what are the purposes of colleges and universities?

If we wish to rebuild public trust, who should lead the charge?

Which publics ought to have the most input into shaping institutional mission, policies and the like? which publics are currently most influential?

### On Remaking the System

How do we assess the effect of our institutions in terms of the ability to solve society's problems?

Can the traditional academic culture survive?

How can we operationalize the newly defined scholarship?

What kinds of institutional structures are needed so that teaching institutions better fulfill their mission?

How do we re-design institutional structures so that institutions focus on the development of persons? For example, what kinds of structural changes are needed so that students become capable of functioning in a democracy?

What institutional structures move us away from the idea that tenured faculty do research and that teaching is done only by non-tenured faculty and graduate students? How do we reshape the faculty role so that we achieve an appropriate mix?

How do we encourage universities to become more learner centered? What kinds of learning environments are we creating, and how do we hold ourselves more accountable for both institutional resources and student achievement?

How can we redefine productivity?

How do we teach to transform? What is transformational teaching? What inhibits curricular transformation?

How might faculty best become more aware of and responsive to the external environment?

How can faculty and students best be included in institutional decision-making?

If a minority decides on a purpose, what reward system is most likely to encourage carrying out that purpose?

## THE SEARCH FOR QUALITY: CHANGING THE WAY WE WORK

Reclaiming the public trust may be, in part, an issue of improving the quality of our institutions, and how they effect educational outcomes. How the public defines quality has become increasingly important to consider in communicating higher education's concern for improved performance. How are other sectors in society approaching the quality issue? When are concerns about quality more likely a function of economic cycles, and when do they reflect the public's deeper concerns about how higher education does its work? What, then, does "quality" mean, and what should it mean?

We expect that our institutional structures work to achieve quality, but what does it mean to implement them in ways that consider our academic traditions, as well as newly identified goals and standards? When new definitions of quality emerge, how do we change the way we work? How do leaders become collaborators, and how do we introduce and carry out more informed ways of creating campus communities?

A good deal of attention has been focused recently on quality-driven management systems. What are implications for investments in Total Quality Management (TQM)? Which TQM principles are most important for higher education, and how should these principles be formulated to serve educational institutions? What does it mean to *do* TQM, and what are likely costs and benefits for higher education?

The search for quality and the implications for management in higher education involve addressing issues around state and federal funding, and the ways in which current funding formulas work for and against quality and change. Are issues around quality related to public criticisms and budget cuts? If so, how? What are the implications of shifting an increasing portion of the costs to the student? How should we structure relationships among schools, community colleges and universities so they reduce redundancy and maximize quality per dollar invested?

When we do make cuts, should we make them across the board, or is it better to cut specific areas or programs? What are implications for building coalitions across departments, and across institutions in a state, in order to resolve budget-cut issues? What is ethical and fair? What "economic development" arguments might be made for higher education and what is the evidence for these?

### On Defining Quality

What are the goals of higher education with respect to quality, i.e., the critical outcomes? How do these goals vary across institutions?

How are the questions of quality related to mission? Who sets the goals of each institution?

What are the critical indicators of quality? Do different groups have different indicators? Where in the list of quality indicators do student learning needs fall?

What are the critical processes of quality?

How do different groups/publics/constituencies define quality? Who are these critical groups?

What are the differences in definitions among the various groups? What variables explain these differences? Do these definitions change over time? In what ways?

### **On Affecting Change**

How might institutions best assess how well they are doing with respect to quality?

How might institutions best demonstrate their successes?

To what extent do institutional goals and systems change in response to changing student populations?

How do we collaborate to agree on definitions? Forums? How do we adjudicate differences?

How do we communicate these definitions with external publics?

How will agreement on definitions of quality change the way we work?

How does the TQM movement relate to higher education?

What will force definitions to change? How do external realities (state-mandated budget reductions, etc.) affect change in definitions?

How can we better study and understand the impacts of change?

How does the changing professoriate affect our definitions of policy?

How can quality be driven by attention to needs of students rather than by the needs of the faculty?

Can change occur without the demands of external forces? Is the focus now on reflecting societal concerns, rather than on transforming society, as in the 60's and 70's? What is the traditional role of the university in society? What should it be?

## ASSESSMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND THE PUBLIC TRUST

There is a strong and emerging public interest and energy around national goals and standards, initiated in part by *America 2000: An Education Strategy*. What are some elements of this interest and what is driving it? Where does higher education connect now and where should it connect in the future?

The National Goals do include higher education to a degree (e.g., “The proportion of college graduates who demonstrate an advanced ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and solve problems will increase substantially”). How would such a goal be best realized?

There are efforts underway to design a national assessment system that would involve college students. What issues arise within such an effort, and what have we already learned from the assessment movement that should be considered? What questions frame a research agenda that would accompany such an effort? For example, the press for institutional accountability is stronger than ever; so is the press for improvement of individual student learning. How do we bring these somewhat contradictory purposes together in our design of institutional assessment systems? How might these work in tandem, so information from each informs the other? How can we maximize both of these goals as we implement our designs, and still afford assessment?

A multitude of definitions surround our search for *quality*. What institutional criteria define quality, and which of these should drive our future connections to accrediting agencies? to state legislatures? to our other constituencies?

Where is higher education as a player in the school reform movement? As high school graduation requirements change, colleges will need to adjust theirs, and should be concerned about what standards will be set and who will set them. What are other implications of K-12 reform efforts? What do we need to know to better connect to efforts of colleagues who work at other levels in the educational system?

### On Theory and Practice of Assessment

How can we achieve focused definitions of key concepts and terms so that we can pursue research in this area?

What is the actual impact of assessment efforts and activities on educational practice?

Has assessment had real impact? Can assessment be formative as well as summative? Positive and negative? What maintains the rigor in assessment when assessment becomes faddish, or considered a panacea?

Can a set of reliable indicators of student learning and good practice (e.g., process) be devised such that they contribute to improvement of educational effectiveness rather than disrupt or impede it?

What are *processes* of learning that can be assessed, and how can we do it? *Should* we do it? How should we best assess processes that lead to outcomes?

How might national assessment be done in ways that acknowledge concerns for diversity?

What is the correlation between product measures that may be more directly observable, and root intellectual processes that are often subtle and difficult to detect?

Under what conditions is assessment developed most successfully? When mandated by legislatures? When the result of grass-roots efforts?

### **On Accountability and the Public Trust**

To what extent has assessment been successful in persuasively documenting educational quality, and thereby enhancing the public trust?

Has assessment helped to erode the public trust?

What kinds of institutional indicators satisfy *both* empirical and perceptual concerns by the public and policy-makers?

Can we define a meaningful set of national goals for K–12 and higher education that satisfies the public’s views of the quality of education?

How can assessment address the need to protect the “public investment” in higher education and still be useful for institutions to improve teaching and learning?

What should institutions do to demonstrate their responsiveness to what the public wants or needs? What does the public want?

How can we show that segment of the public that is resentful/distrustful that we are doing useful work?

What questions calling for accountability should be asked of institutions by external constituencies?

What are critical indicators of quality for higher education? How do we focus public attention to assessment of educational processes, as well as to outcomes and inputs?

When designing an assessment system in order to demonstrate accountability, how might we build in consequences so that the system contributes to educational reform?

What is an appropriate funding formula for education that will reward good educational practice?

### **On Assessment of Students**

How can indicators of student learning at the levels of the classroom, the department and the discipline be summarized for state or system-level purposes?

What are the particular intellectual capacities students should demonstrate? How do we ensure valid measurement? What measurement techniques apply to portfolios?

What are best methods to assess students in order to make decisions about admission?

How do we refocus attention to enhancing learning and minimizing time to graduation, instead of defining productivity as the number of students that are taught?

### On Assessment of Teachers

How can we engage teachers in the process of self-assessment? How involve them in teaching portfolios? How do teachers become effective assessment designers, and learn to use assessment productively as part of their teaching?

Can we broaden criteria for success to include, for example, broad measures of teaching and service?

### On Assessment of Programs and Institutions

What are the critical assets of an institution? How are they best maintained or enhanced?

How can assessment be built into program structures? How can faculty gain ownership of program assessment? How can formative assessment affect teaching and programs?

What kinds of assessment information are most closely related to programmatic change?

What *works* in shaping teaching and educational programs that can be attributed to assessment activities?

To what extent is this statement true? “What is funded is what is valued, and what is valued is what is measured.”

### On Connections Across Levels of Assessment

What are ways to connect assessment across various levels (e.g., individual student, classroom, program, major, campus, state, nation) so that information generated at one level benefits adjacent levels?

How might we generalize assessment results *across* levels of assessment, and still remain true to the notion that assessment designs should benefit a *particular* level?

What intra-institutional structures promote connections across levels of assessment? What inter-institutional structures enable generalization across institutions?

### On Connections among Educational Purposes and Assessment

One of the most important values of assessment (as an activity of a campus community) is its role in forcing/enabling the community to examine or question its basic premises concerning the purposes of education. There are a number of educational assumptions the community may need to resolve. What are the reasons we educate? What are the abilities that we as educators want our students to be acquiring as a result of our teaching and their learning? What should a well educated person be able to know and do? What are we hoping students are learning?

Given these education purposes and assumptions, what is the meaning of quality? What are the real differences between assessment, evaluation, and measurement? How might the relationships among educational purposes and assessment questions be researched?

## THE PROFESSORiate, SCHOLARSHIP, AND TEACHING

Major criticism has been focused on the quality of teaching. What are the sources of these criticisms, and how valid are they? How does the public view how we use our *teaching time* (our work-load, if you will), and what does the public expect the benefits to be? How best might we communicate the faculty role to our constituencies, so that we engage their insights and support for teaching?

Recently, higher education has been engaged in a search for renewing teaching as a purpose in the academy, for emphasising it in the reward structure, and for improving its connection to learning. Where are we in this search? To what degree is the conversation about teaching-for-learning systemic? What evidence do we have? How well do current system incentives reinforce our intentions to improve our teaching? What are next steps if we are to rebuild the public trust?

There is more and more conversation in higher education about new definitions of scholarship, but how are these making a difference? How do these definitions interact with public concerns about what faculty actually do and how they do it?

How are the disciplines contributing to the reform of teaching and learning, and what kinds of leadership are they exerting in the public arena? How might each discipline and professional area consider valid criticisms in defining the student knowledge and abilities that make up their respective fields?

### On Perceptions of Faculty Work

How have the trends of perceptions of higher education productivity changed over time--on the part of students? on the part of various community sectors? on the part of members of the academy?

How can we better understand *public* perceptions of what faculty do, and productivity? *Faculty* perceptions of what faculty do, and faculty productivity? What are current trends?

What can we learn from public criticisms to improve what we do and how we communicate about what we do?

### On Influencing Public Perceptions of Faculty Work

If we researched student satisfaction, would the results influence public perceptions of faculty? What other variables might influence public perceptions?

How might we best document time faculty spend on task?

How might changing the way we define and describe faculty workload affect public perceptions? How can we effectively communicate to the public that we are concerned and working on improvements?

We are a closed group (profession). How do we learn to open up as a group? to engage in collaboration with others (e.g., public school teachers) toward building public trust?

How might teaching portfolios be used to influence public perceptions?

How can we make teaching more visible and classrooms more open to public view?

What analogues can help us explain teaching to the public (e.g., pianists do more than perform in public, legislators do more than cast votes on issues)?

### **On Faculty Involvement in Teaching and Learning**

What strategies for improving faculty performance might we extract from existing research?

What are prevailing attitudes and beliefs about teaching among faculty? How do these influence teaching practices?

Under what conditions are faculty motivated to engage more fully in teaching-learning issues (e.g., developing more flexible teaching styles)?

What forums are effective for faculty dialogue around issues of teaching and learning?

How can we foster community in and outside the classroom?

What innovative methods are particularly effective toward aiding retention, cross-cultural friendships, and academic achievement?

What are appropriate indicators for assessing good teaching? How do we assess it in different contexts?

Are there critical stages of development for effective college teaching? What are they? What types of interventions and support systems should be in place? for new faculty? for undergraduate faculty? for graduate faculty?

What interventions overcome faculty fears (e.g., fear of failure, not achieving tenure, dealing with innovation/change)?

What prevents faculty members from trying new things?

How might we involve faculty in the dialogue about teaching and learning that could result in a clearer articulation of our work to the public?

### **On Larger System Support for Faculty**

How can institutions support faculty during the process of trying out new behaviors, attitudes, and approaches (i.e., while faculty are experimenting with a paradigm shift)?

How might people (faculty, administrators, students) best be influenced to want to assess good teaching? How should this relate to the reward system?

How central are faculty development and recruitment efforts in infusing multiculturalism into the higher education curriculum?

How might adjunct faculty be better integrated into the academic community?

How might campuses better use the perspectives of academic support personnel (e.g., tutors, librarians, academic computing, media personnel) in assessing student learning, faculty productivity and teaching abilities?

How might accrediting agencies help support faculty involvement in teaching and learning concerns? How might accrediting agencies help influence our public image in positive ways?

How might faculty engagement in alternative forms of scholarship affect their mobility? If alternative scholarship is seen as negatively affecting mobility, what will be the reaction of faculty to continuing such work?

How do institutions reestablish faculty allegiance to institutional goals?

How might institutional rewards structures be changed to encourage and support faculty involvement in teaching and learning concerns?

What strategies will be most effective in helping faculty overcome their resistances to fuller engagement in teaching and learning issues? whole system changes across higher education? modeling of prestigious institutions?

What kinds of support systems do institutions have in place to help faculty enhance their own teaching?

What needs to change in institutions to get faculty to establish public standards for reviewing, evaluating and rewarding teaching and scholarship?

How might faculty be rewarded for their efforts to improve/increase public trust?

The public starts from within. How do we create collegial trust between professors and students, professors and academic support personnel, across departments, across institutions, for taking risks in developing teaching to learning environments, as a precursor to working on the public trust?

### **On Student Involvement in Teaching and Learning**

How can we best ensure that student perspectives are included in research questions? How can adults, who often drop in and out of various institutions, develop a coherent, meaningful curriculum and sense of unified achievement?

How can faculty help students to develop higher expectations for their teaching and learning? to become more intelligent consumers of education?

How can students help faculty to set high expectations for teaching and learning?

### **On Outcomes**

What life-long skills and content knowledge should our students possess? What are the tensions between these domains? How might these tensions be reconciled?

How can we foster lifelong learning as part of the faculty role? What lifelong learning skills are central for faculty to model for students? How is this contribution for student learning documented and assessed?

How do we relate teaching and curriculum to desired student outcomes?

How might we generate and track student portfolios (over their academic careers) to serve as a means of evaluating and assessing both students and faculty? How might we best incorporate the concept of value-added education?

### On Linking Scholarship, Service and Teaching

How might alternative forms of scholarship be used to advance the public service mission of the institution? What are appropriate links between public service and scholarship? What examples and options would help to illustrate the professoriate in “scholarly service roles”? What outcomes of public service and scholarship connections could help rebuild the public trust? How might collaborative inquiry (faculty-student, faculty-faculty) be encouraged, supported, and evaluated? What are appropriate links between teaching and scholarship? between service and teaching? How might teaching, service and scholarship connections to the community rebuild the public trust?

## ACHIEVING THE PROMISE IN DIVERSITY

Conflicts on campus, curricular debates, and the effects of student background on access to and performance in college have been widely discussed in the popular press. These discussions have influenced public perceptions about higher education and its effectiveness. What are next steps in our continuing efforts to conceptualize *diversity* in ways that resolve some of these controversies? What information do we need to discourage polarization and to help ourselves *sit beside* the issues?

Traditionally, higher education has been a place where larger societal conflicts are examined. What kind of information will best communicate higher education’s role in constructing “diversity within community” on campus? What models might build the public trust in campus communities as places where societal dilemmas are not only examined, but also resolved? How might we extend this community to groups off campus?

How are efforts to build campus community faring and what can we learn from them? Will the search for identity among marginalized groups interfere with or contribute to building campus communities? How do ethnic and gender studies figure into developing community on campus?

Several curricular debates continue to command our attention. These involve adhering to a core/common curriculum, incorporating key perspectives (e.g. gender, ethnicity, class) across the curriculum, including multicultural perspectives, and dealing with “political correctness.” What new information is needed to move these debates forward?

What are our goals *now* for achieving the promise in diversity, and what are the research questions that could focus us and our constituencies on important problems and issues?

## On Understanding Diversity

What is the relationship between diversity, quality, and community? What ought it to be? How best might we integrate the study of diversity with such closely related topics as quality and community? Can any of these be achieved in the absence of the others?

What does diversity mean? Is it an objective, a starting point, or a process? How might we clarify our use of the term? How do we achieve coherence in campus discussions of diversity?

What are the sources of resistance to diversity? Why do issues around diversity elicit resistance when the notion of individual differences is so in keeping with our national character?

Are some disadvantaged by attention to diversity (white Anglo-Saxon males, for example)? What is our obligation to acknowledge and study such concerns?

How do outcomes change as a function of the level of analysis? What is the impact on second and third tier institutions when more attractive institutions step up their efforts to recruit “well-prepared” minority students?

Is the promise of diversity better stated as, “How do we overcome and make the most of diversity?” How does diversity present a promise? If diversity means differences, isn’t it something that has to be overcome in the search for shared values?

## On Communicating About Diversity

What is the impact of statements about the “promise of diversity” on the skeptical? Do these statements persuade, polarize, neither?

What do faculty mean when they say the system of rewards does not support efforts to achieve the promise of diversity?

## On Conflict

Where might we find new or more helpful paradigms for conceptualizing diversity (e.g., conflict theory? feminist theory?) Can we develop paradigms in which diversity will not be described in terms of conflict or zero-sum relationships?

Is racial and/or ethnic-related conflict on campus a sign of progress or a pathological condition to be eliminated?

What kind of diversity breeds conflict? What kind of diversity breeds strength? What are the commonalities between the two?

## On Achieving Diversity

What are the criteria against which claims of achieving diversity can be made? What are the “minimum” standards higher education should consider in regard to achieving diversity? Does attracting students with few differences from white students, other than skin color or surname, meet the “minimum” criteria? What are the “maximum” criteria?

To what extent are institutional efforts to achieve diversity motivated by self-interest (e.g., attracting funding) vs. moral and ethical principles of justice and care?

What is the role of leadership in achieving diversity?

To what extent are we committed to being challenged and changed by others' experience? To what extent are we willing to accept long-term change and then model the change to students and community?

How can colleges empower those who have ideas and aspirations that challenge the conventional power structure? How can we be diverse in common endeavors, that is, hold on both to our own individuality and contribute to the synergy of a larger group?

What might lie beyond diversity? Is diversity a transitional condition that lies between group isolation and some transcendent state?

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