

Priorities



A membership service of the Association of Governing Boards to help trustees and chief executives identify and address strategic policy issues.

Fulfilling the Promise of Civic Engagement

BY TONY CHAMBERS
AND JOHN BURKHARDT



THE MOST IMPORTANT responsibility of a college or university, according to a national opinion poll released in 2003 by the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, is to “prepare its undergraduate students for a career.” While fully 71 percent of respondents ranked that responsibility as No. 1, only slightly fewer, an impressive 65 percent, said the most important obligation for higher education was to “prepare students to be responsible citizens.”

The difficulty of picking a single purpose of a college education mirrors the complexities inside the minds of college students. We all know young people on campuses who are preoccupied with everything from trigonometry to dating to late-night bull sessions to sporting events. Yet these same students

are at an age when thoughts of those less fortunate, of their institution’s place in the “real world” of their communities, and of the urgency of rem-

edying injustices in the larger society combine to stir emotions close to the surface.

That is the basis for the civic-engagement movement, a three-decade-old effort that builds on traditions that go back to the founding of the republic. Civic engagement was defined by Thomas Ehrlich and colleagues at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as follows: “Working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and nonpolitical processes.... A morally and civically responsible individual recognizes

Tony Chambers is associate director of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good and an adjunct associate professor at the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education at the University of Michigan. **John Burkhardt** is director of the Kellogg Forum and a professor at Michigan’s Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education. Research assistance for this text was provided by **Penny Pasque** and **Chris Rasumssen**, both doctoral students at the center.

How can boards stimulate the benefits of mission-driven civic engagement?

E*nthusiasts see civic engagement as a multidimensional movement that goes deeper than simple off-hours community service or volunteering for good causes.*



himself or herself as a member of a larger social fabric and therefore considers social problems to be at least partly his or her own; such an individual is willing to see the moral and civic dimensions of issues, to make and justify informed moral and civic judgments, and to take action when appropriate.”

Enthusiasts see civic engagement as a multidimensional movement that goes deeper than simple off-hours community service or volunteering for good causes. While we’re all for encouraging students and faculty to tutor the illiterate and deliver “meals on wheels,” many colleges and universities are beginning to focus more systematic attention on the public benefits of the work of individuals, academic disciplines, and institutions in addressing social issues writ large.

That means going beyond issuing exhortations to get involved and applying civic engagement in research, the curriculum, and classroom instruction. And it means ending the tendency of institutions, in the words of Caryn McTighe Musil of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, to “inadvertently model a mode of civic involvement that occurs offstage or after hours,” prompting students to move into adult life with an expectation that one should “care about community after 5 p.m. or on weekends.”

To many in the movement, the commitment extends to implementing the U.S. Supreme Court’s June 2003 decisions largely upholding the practice of affirmative action to achieve racial diversity and prepare leaders from all walks of life to advance democracy. It also might encompass restoring the role of the university president as the “public intellectual” that was so influential during much of the 20th century, when higher

education leaders were expected to comment on the issues of the day.

The broader goals for civic engagement, as one might expect, can be controversial. In recent years, a school of critics has taken to the opinion pages to decry the “politicization” of American education. Stanley Fish, the respected dean of liberal arts and sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago, warned in a May 2003 *Chronicle of Higher Education* article that the movement’s “emphasis on broader goals and especially on the therapeutic goal of ‘personal development’ can make it difficult to interest students in the disciplinary training it is our job to provide.”

Writing in the Fall 2003 issue of *Education Next*, Dartmouth University government professor James B. Murphy worries that “the academic pursuit of knowledge will be corrupted if truth-seeking is subordinated to some civic agenda.”

And the tendency of “good works” to devolve into political or even partisan action to influence government recently was bemoaned by writer Drake Bennett in the October 2003 *American Prospect*. “If you volunteer in a soup kitchen or help the homeless, you should also be working to eliminate the causes of homelessness,” Bennett wrote. “That enterprise necessarily leads to social change and to politics as the necessary instrument of change.”

Another barrier to boosting civic engagement is student apathy. Only 32.9 percent of freshmen in the annual survey done in 2002 by UCLA’s Higher Education Research Institute said that keeping up with politics was “very important” or an “essential” life goal. Although that figure has risen for two consecutive years from a low of 28.1 percent in 2000, it is barely half the figure reported in 1966, during the tur-



bulent days of antiwar and student rights protests on campus.

Given the varieties of opinion, the role of “referee” in determining the style and importance of civic engagement on any one campus may fall to the board of trustees. The responsibilities for trustees in this area are at least threefold: (1) to work with their chief executive to determine whether their institution’s mission provides guidance or a framework for civic and social engagement; (2) to determine the relative priority, among the many priorities, of their institutional commitment to engagement (including the commitment of resources and degree of public articulation of the commitment to engagement); and (3) to determine the most effective ways to promote and inspire engagement on their respective campuses and beyond.

Results will vary by institution. This issue of *Priorities* explores the generally shared issues, challenges, and practices of civically engaged institutions so that trustees and academic leaders can guide their own institution’s choices.

The Modern Movement. College and university engagement to address social issues has a history going back to the days when Thomas Jefferson spoke of educating for civic virtue. Modern civic engagement, however, grew out of

Questions Trustees Can Ask

- What is the level of enthusiasm at our institution for civic and social engagement?
- Would an enhanced commitment to civic and social engagement fit well with our mission? Our strategic plan?
- Does the faculty understand and support the institution’s civic or social mission?
- Is the number of students involved in service-learning courses, volunteerism, community service, voting, and/or social activism growing?
- Are civic and social engagement themes adequately presented in the curriculum?
- Does our institution set student-learning goals centering on civic and social responsibility themes?
- Is the board prepared to make the necessary financial commitment to make civic and social engagement a major priority?

the civil-rights movement and other challenges to the established order during the 1960s and 1970s. The federal government’s antipoverty programs and society’s post-World War II goals of extending access to higher education broadly and to include minorities shook up the agendas in America’s “ivory towers.”

Colleges and universities in urban centers discovered that they could not insulate themselves from the economic decline, crime, and violence that often plagued their adjacent neighborhoods, leading many institutions to appoint community liaison officers and develop outreach and development programs. An increasingly diverse and empowered student population demanded curricular and program offerings they considered more relevant to their experiences and needs and that reflected a more multicultural and international perspective. And the ever-present shadow of the Cold War and conflicts in Southeast Asia led many to reconsider the role and place of the United States in the world, leading to the expansion of international education and study-abroad programs.

Case Study

Marrying Theory and Practice at the University of Pennsylvania

Working with campus leaders, the board of the University of Pennsylvania has been instrumental in advancing Penn as a positive presence in its West Philadelphia community. The Penn board helped craft a strategic vision that celebrates the university's urban context and states with pride that, in the words of a 2002 declaration, "Civic engagement in all its multifaceted forms has become the norm and hallmark of Penn's faculty and students, as it has of the university itself."

Such was not always the case. Like many urban universities, Penn has often seen its interests diverge with those of its surrounding community, much of which is disadvantaged. During the 1970s and 1980s, only incremental steps were taken to turn that perception around. With the appointment of Judith Rodin as president in 1994, civic engagement became central to Penn's self-perception as a world-class university and to the realization of founder Benjamin Franklin's vision of a university that marries theory and practice in service to society.

The board endorsed the "Agenda for Excellence," Penn's strategic plan for 1995-2000, which encouraged engagement of faculty and students in West Philadelphia. The Center for Community Partnerships (CCP), established in 1992, became the focal point for development of academically based community service, as well as direct traditional service of faculty, staff, and students. Civic House, dedicated in 1998, created a permanent space for student-driven volunteer programs that had been growing for a decade.

Today, more than 140 CCP courses engage more than 60 faculty members and 1,200 students from various disciplines in the community, particularly the public schools. As a result of this emphasis, Penn was ranked No. 1 in service learning in *U.S. News & World Report's* 2003 edition of *America's Best Colleges*.

The board also turned its attention to quality-of-life issues in West Philadelphia, forming a standing committee on neighborhood initiatives in 1997. The board committed Penn's financial

resources to promote five goals: (1) clean and safe streets, (2) housing and home ownership opportunities, (3) improved public education, (4) economic development, and (5) commercial development. These goals were implemented after ongoing consultation with community leaders.

In the University City area, volunteers for a project dubbed "UC Green" beautified 25 blocks, planted 400 trees and 10,000 flower bulbs, and created seven school and community gardens. "UC Brite" installed 2,500 sidewalk lights, with costs shared by property owners, Penn, the local energy company, and the local electrician's union.

Penn sought partners—other higher education institutions, medical centers, private corporations, and community-based organizations—to create a structure to sustain these efforts over the long term. A special business district called the University City District (UCD) was formed through voluntary contributions of its member institutions. UCD has hired safety ambassadors who patrol the streets and

In 1970, the Hampshire College Board of Trustees became one of the first liberal arts colleges to implement a universal community service requirement. (In 1993, the Hampshire board would vote to match, dollar for dollar, Corporation for National Service scholarships, and in 2000, the board established a subcommittee to provide oversight for service activities.)

The 1980s brought new major community action organizations to higher education. The Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL) began in 1984 when recent college graduate Wayne Meisel visited more than 70 campuses on a walk from Maine to Washington, D.C., to motivate students to become involved in their communities and counter the prevailing student

apathy and materialism. Now based in Boston, the national nonprofit organization assists in the development of campus infrastructure, resources, and support for effective student engagement and campus-community partnerships.

Then in 1995, the presidents of Brown, Georgetown, and Stanford universities, along with the president of the Education Commission of the States, joined to form Campus Compact, a coalition of college and university presidents whose primary purpose is to help students develop the values and skills of citizenship through participation in public and community service. Based at Brown University in Rhode Island and with nearly 1,000 college and university presidents holding member-

Priorities

employs personnel who clean sidewalks and remove graffiti. UCD promotes West Philadelphia as a tourist destination and is working on streetscape, signage, and other public improvements to welcome visitors.

The board expanded an existing guaranteed mortgage program so that more faculty and staff would be encouraged to buy homes in the University City area. More than 300 individuals affiliated with Penn have purchased homes through the enhanced mortgage program, and well over a hundred have taken advantage of a Penn-sponsored home-renovation program. Penn also rehabbed and then sold 20 vacant properties as a neighborhood stabilization measure.

In addition, the board also approved development on Penn-owned land of a new public school in collaboration with the school district, the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, and Penn's Graduate School of Education. Additional support also was provided to a nearby elementary school to help meet its infrastructure needs and improve instruc-

tion. The district also has contracted with the graduate school to manage three elementary schools, in addition to the 13 that are assisted by the CCP.

The Penn board understands the enormous leveraging power of the institution in purchasing and hiring, and this has made economic and commercial development key components of the West Philadelphia initiatives. The \$90-million University Square project provided \$18 million in construction contracts to local minority and female-owned businesses, creating 400 permanent jobs along the way. In 2002, Penn purchased \$65.7 million in goods and services from West Philadelphia vendors, bringing the seven-year total to more than \$300 million. Penn also helped create a new fresh-food supermarket and multiscreen cinema to revitalize a key commercial corridor near campus, which in turn has attracted new businesses that serve Penn and the community.

Penn's current plan, "Building on Excellence," was the result of a sustained dialogue among trustees, faculty, students, staff,

and community representatives. It outlines a multifaceted agenda to strengthen Penn's leadership in civic engagement by further expanding the Center for Community Partnerships and academically based community services. The board also has approved a new five-year plan to support the West Philadelphia Initiatives.



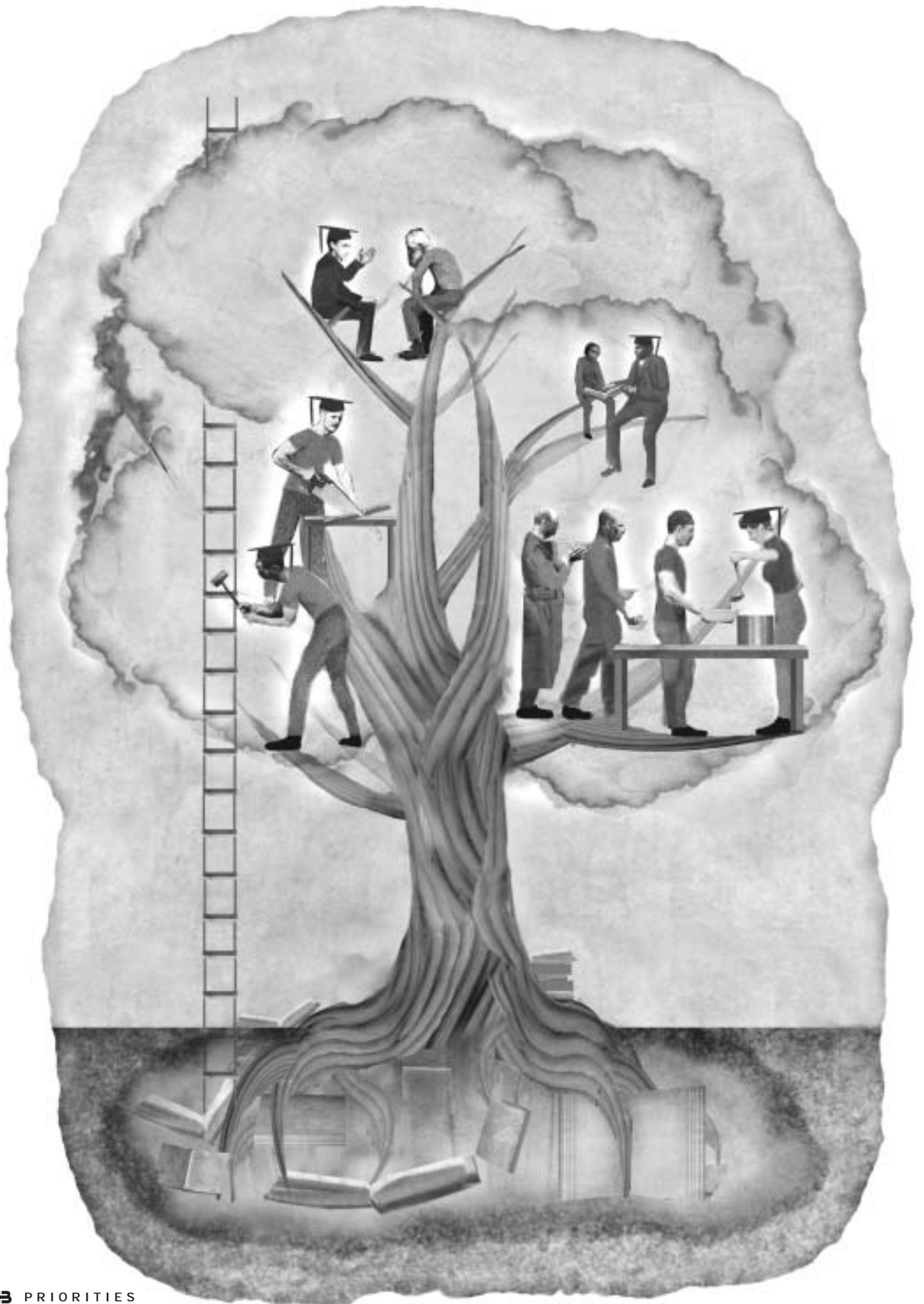
ships, Campus Compact has since broadened its mission to include faculty, presidential, and institutional involvement in community service and civic engagement.

Both COOL and Campus Compact served as catalysts by providing the resources, infrastructure, technical assistance, and, perhaps most important, the imprimatur to enable hundreds of colleges and universities to develop programs of varying depth and scope in student volunteerism and service learning.

The 1990s brought additional programmatic initiatives and scholarship in the area of service learning and other forms of civic engagement, including federal support for the AmeriCorps program, which provides tuition

Though few institutions are integrating the essence of civic engagement into courses, research, and faculty work, that is where the movement is heading.





grants to young people in return for community service, and the involvement of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and other philanthropic organizations in encouraging state and land-grant universities to return to their roots of public and community service.

Integration With Mission. Today, nearly every campus can claim some form of community outreach initiative or service-learning program. Fewer, however, are integrating the essence of civic engagement into the foundational elements of the institution: courses, research, and faculty work. That is where the movement is heading, adapting itself to current trends such as technological and communications innovations in higher education, as well as confronting obstacles such as tight state and federal budgets and shifts in geopolitical relationships.

More campus leaders nowadays are embracing the conception of higher education as a major part of a larger system of social institutions that collectively will redefine what democracy will come to mean in the 21st century. Higher education, in this view, is not limited to what we observe on our campuses but extends to the debates and challenges that rage across communities and the larger society. These debates are informed by the various institutional centers of society that influence, and are influenced by, higher education—elementary and secondary education, the law, the media, business and industry, political systems, health-care systems, and religious organizations.

The values, processes, and relationships that are unique to higher education and that bind colleges and universities to one another and the communities surrounding them are critical to sustaining and advancing the causes of liberty, justice, security, opportunity, and economic productivity.

Civic engagement requires reciprocal and supportive arrangements among multiple stakeholders across the social landscape. From the perspective of higher education, civic engagement involves teaching, research, and active

involvement by students, faculty, staff, and institutional leaders. Higher education's special responsibility is to provide an accessible and safe space for authentic conversations, intentional and focused listening, and collaborative problem solving that engages diverse publics in pursuit of common purposes.

The movement builds on the belief that colleges and universities should devote more of their educational resources to the improvement of critical social issues and to broaden and deepen a collective understanding of democracy at home and across the community of nations.

An Uphill Battle. Interest and participation in higher education currently are at historic highs. But some powerful forces, both internal and external to the campus, may be working at cross purposes with the civic-engagement movement. Consider these trends:

- In the public's eyes, the personal and economic benefits of postsecondary education are what matter most, according to data collected independently by the Kellogg Forum, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the American Council on Education, and the Institute for Higher Education Policy. A broader social role—including the impact on civics and democracy—often is further down the list. There is much to be gained when young people pursue higher education in search of better economic prospects. But when colleges and universities are judged solely or principally on the basis of their workforce preparation, and when these considerations blindly drive the curriculum, the larger “public good” is not necessarily well served.

- When higher education is treated as a cyclical balancing wheel for state budgets, a social cost is imposed from which it is difficult to rebound: Many would-be students are excluded based upon their ability to pay. Just after higher education opened its doors to more members of society, the accelerating cost now prevents many capable students from attending.

- Legislation linking state funding to the achievement of specific benchmarks in some

Priorities

states reflects higher priorities being placed on economic “outputs” and ignores public service, public engagement, critical thinking, and democracy-building activities. A recent comparison of such legislation introduced in 27 states suggests that while the direct and immediate economic benefits of colleges and universities are counted in performance measures, benefits that might accrue to other aspects of society’s well-being often are not.

- Although surveys indicate increasing numbers of students are involved with volunteer and service activities, they also show voting among young adults, particularly college students, has steadily declined since 1972, as has their interest and participation in the political process. While many young people are interested in helping others and generally making the world a better place—engaging in vol-

cult sell. But by limiting the anticipated outcomes of college primarily to individual economic gains, we reduce the expectation—indeed, the very idea—of the deeper role for the university in society. The numerous public benefits are all but negated as universities compete with one another for students and funding on the basis of expected career and financial success.

What Trustees Can Do. When asked, “What would you like to see trustees do to reconnect their institutions to the public?” William Hubbard, a board member of the University of South Carolina, told the Kettering Foundation’s Higher Education Exchange:

Trustees must better articulate the importance of higher education to the grass roots of their communities and states. We do not adequately describe the importance of academic work as an increasingly essential component for economic success. We need to describe the research, emphasize the importance of scholarship, and prove to the public that it is the preservation and the creation of ideas that drive our progress, and thus make the case for the university. Trustees should also develop and clearly state policies for their institutions that reflect the expectation that universities must lead the social, cultural, intellectual, and economic progress of the states they serve. Trustees must be the liaisons between the public and the academy—in effect, bridges between the two that help legitimize the university to the public and connect the institution to the public it serves.

As in most of their endeavors, boards pursuing civic engagement depend greatly on the leadership vision of their president.



unteer activity at rates higher than adults 26 and older—they believe less and less in the integrity and relevance of political institutions.

Higher education has contributed to shaping these trends. Since the 1970s, colleges and universities have marketed themselves as tickets to economic well-being for their graduates. The argument that college attendance shapes character, increases critical thinking, exposes students to individuals from different backgrounds, and enhances citizenship is admittedly a more diffi-

As in most of their endeavors, boards pursuing civic engagement depend greatly on the leadership vision of their president. But with strong guidance from their board chairs, boards can do much to further such commitment when they hire a president, examine the institutional mission, confirm a strategic plan, and approve the annual budget.

Board chairs also can ensure that presidents are supported in their efforts to create a campus ethos of civic engagement; they can ask that board meeting agendas include time for discussions on institutional engagement; and where appropriate, they can speak for the institution

Priorities

on this topic within the community.

Board committees also have a function in this regard. Student affairs and academic affairs committees can examine curricular and cocurricular efforts at building civic engagement. Academic affairs committees can ensure that a faculty member's work in civic engagement—such as service learning—contributes to progress toward tenure and promotion. Budget and development committees can ensure adequate funding is available for institutional and instructional work in this area, and marketing committees can look for ways to get the word out to the community. In short, for institutions intent on making civic engagement a central part of their work, there is much the board can do to be helpful.

As individuals, trustees can send a message of high regard for civic engagement through their earmarked gifts to their institution and through the campus events they choose to attend. And trustees may count as a step toward the furtherance of civic engagement every time they help bridge the perceived gap between higher education and the larger society by advocating the general economic and social benefits of creating a highly educated society.

Institutions that embrace civic and social engagement as core values help a range of stakeholders—students, faculty, institutions, and community and regional entities—in a variety of specific and mutually beneficial ways. The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) identifies these benefits in “Stepping Forward as Stewards of Place,” the report of a task force of member presidents and chancellors that examined the issue of public engagement. The report offers strategies to help achieve more integrated and sustained involvement of institutions with their communities. Examples include:

- building and strengthening the requisite relationships with local partners,
- working proactively with these partners to identify needs and opportunities for academic engagement,
- encouraging students and faculty to engage with community needs and rewarding such engagement, and
- increasing awareness of local partners regarding opportunities and resources available through the institution.

Differing stakeholders benefit in different ways, the AASCU report notes. For students, a strong civic-engagement program can, for example, provide a clearer link between theory and practice, make the curriculum more current and responsive, and bring stimulating ethical questions and problem-solving challenges into the classroom. For faculty, greater civic engagement can provide opportunities for the application of knowledge, serve as a vehicle for fulfilling a professor's service responsibilities, and open new interdisciplinary linkages. For the college or university as a whole, engagement can mean a chance to demonstrate the value of the public and private investment in higher education, help improve the community, and enhance the institutional leader's role as a voice on important local issues. And for the community or region itself, the civic-minded campus can provide new resources and serve as a “neutral ground for discussion of controversial issues.”

Thinking more concretely, trustees might do the following:

- work with campus leaders to institute campus or systemwide dialogues and programs on the educational and social benefits of campus-community civic engagement and teaching for social responsibility,
- ask that printed and Web-based materials from the campus (including job announcements and other advertisements) reflect the value of civic engagement and social responsibility,
- provide financial or time incentives for faculty to incorporate civic and social engagement in courses,
- ask that civic and social engagement be stressed as a valued quality in the faculty and staff evaluation system, and
- include time at board meetings to discuss the institution's responsibilities to the community (perhaps inviting community leaders to share their concerns and ideas).

Long-Term Goals. The problems, challenges, and opportunities for change in American society are complex and related to many other changes already under way. To achieve the impact needed to stimulate civic and social engagement between higher education and society, changes simultaneously must occur at several levels. The following themes represent a

starting point for trustees to pursue the long-term expansion of the civic-engagement efforts of their institutions.

Changes within and between individuals:

- choosing trustees who understand their responsibilities to represent society to their institutions as well as their institutions to society;
- selecting presidents who understand and advocate for higher education's public-service mission and supporting those presidents who lead from that understanding;
- protecting the academic freedom of individual faculty members and students;
- ensuring that the use of institutional resources—fiscal, human, and physical—are aligned with the civic and social mission of the institution; and
- seeking opportunities to remain informed about the value of institutional civic and social

engagement and the needs of the community, state, and region that the institution serves.

Changes within and between institutions:

- setting institutional policies that recognize and reward public service,
- making sure that the institution promotes itself for its civic as well as its economic mission and contributions, and
- protecting the integrity and independence of research conducted within the institution.

Changes within the system of higher education and between higher education and other social institutions:

- cooperating with trustees on the board and from other colleges and universities in advancing the importance of higher education as a public benefit;
- discouraging competitive practices that erode higher education's values and principles;

Case Study

Hiring for Civic Engagement at IUPUI

Relating academic work to surrounding communities in ways that benefit all parties is the name of the game at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). University leaders believe that collaborative work in and with communities makes IUPUI a respected model of a public institution that integrates service with teaching and research in order to better engage educators, staff, and students in civic action. Because civic engagement is part of the campus mission, the Indiana University Board of Trustees provides oversight for civic engagement and has received regular updates and reports. In addition, a board of advisers, composed of local community leaders, provides guidance.

In 2000, the IUPUI Civic Engagement Task Force was formed by William Plater, dean of the faculties, to document civic-engagement activities, eval-

uate the quality of those activities, and envision a civic-engagement agenda for the campus and its surrounding communities. The task force defined civic engagement as "active collaboration that builds on the resources, skills, expertise, and knowledge of the campus and community to improve the quality of life in communities in a manner that is consistent with the campus mission." The concept includes teaching, research, and professional service in and with all sectors of society: nonprofit, government, and business.

Specific civic-engagement efforts at IUPUI include such traditional activities as service learning and community outreach programs as well as such innovative initiatives as formal assessment of engagement activities through performance indicators that are part of a Web-based institutional

portfolio (www.iport.iupui.edu). This portfolio was the basis for accreditation review by the North Central Association. As an accountability document, the electronic portfolio is more focused, evidence-based, authentic, and accessible than traditional paper self-studies. Constructing the portfolio served the purpose that self-studies are meant for—to present evidence of accountability and effectiveness that leads to clearer understanding of shared purposes and contributes to organizational development and learning.

Beyond programmatic initiatives, IUPUI leaders seek out and create opportunities to publicly demonstrate advocacy and support for civic engagement in all parts of the institution. This is done through publicity, speeches by institutional leaders, publications, op-ed columns, and public

It is doubtful that the disparate elements of the civic-engagement movement will ever be the same on every campus or be free from charges that higher education is overly politicized.



forums. The university aims to increase community awareness of and access to campus assets and resources.

The university's Office of Neighborhood Partnerships promotes the sharing of institutional resources and works strategically to build campus-community partnerships with neighborhoods in close proximity to IUPUI. It also facilitates connections with individual university offices and departments through a federally sponsored outreach center.

The university also is committed to recruiting faculty, staff, and students who advocate for civic-engagement activities in the mission and life of the campus. Faculty members in several academic units have been hired specifically because of a disciplinary specialization or applied research agenda that supports a civic mission. IUPUI has commit-

ted institutional funds to hire "public scholars" who will have interdisciplinary academic appointments and joint responsibilities with community organizations. Other faculty or professional employees have been hired whose primary or sole responsibility is to coordinate community outreach, partnerships, service and service-learning activities, or student internships. As part of student recruitment and retention, scholarships totaling \$140,000 recognize the merits of past community service and engage students in service and service learning during the academic year.

In addition, IUPUI's Center for Philanthropy, one of the few programs of its kind in the country, collaborates with academic departments to hire faculty members in various disciplines who possess special interest in philan-

thropic studies and/or the non-profit sector. The university's promotion and tenure guidelines and annual administrative reviews also assert the legitimacy of scholarship based on community engagement, something not seen in many institutions where service and service-related academic efforts receive only nominal recognition.

Priorities

T*rustees can send a message of high regard for civic engagement through their earmarked gifts to their institution and through the campus events they choose to attend.*



- building connections between higher education and K-12 schools; and
- actively seeking out partners in other social institutions to collectively address problems affecting the communities, states, and regions in which the institutions exist.

Changes in the larger society:

- putting institutional resources to work in addressing society's most pressing problems,
- protecting access to colleges and universities for aspiring students, and
- encouraging graduates and alumni to use their education in ways that promote society's ongoing improvement.

The Next Steps. It is doubtful that the disparate elements of the civic-engagement movement will ever be the same on every campus or be free from charges that higher education is overly politicized. But the stakes facing higher education are too great to allow momentum to flag. If civic and social purposes are not elevated in our priorities and practices, Americans may lose sight of some important functions of higher education. For one thing, financial resources, research support, and young talent will continue to flow into schools and academic programs favored by the demands of the corporate sector. For another, disciplines and colleges less favored by the marketplace may languish (relative to their counterparts) with fewer resources, fewer students, and fewer outlets for research. Inexorably, our scholarship, conceptualization of knowledge, and sense of purpose toward the larger society eventually could become distorted.

Most faculty members enter their professions with a commitment to serve their communities and society as a whole. Many believe that the current system of incentives and

rewards within the academy robs them of a sense of service. Plenty of students enter college expecting not only to become prepared for a career but also to develop the habits and values of citizenship. Divorcing the “work of the mind from the welfare of the world” develops only a fraction of the human potential needed in the world and distorts our sense of purpose in the work we have chosen.

By promoting the value of higher education primarily for its economic benefits, we invite competition from for-profit providers and among ourselves on the basis of efficiency and convenience—a losing proposition. Higher education must define and defend its mission as transformational for individuals and society. If we allow higher education to become relegated to a commodity, we may find that our “product” will be provided more cheaply and to more students—and their degrees will not reflect the real, measurable, internalized personal changes that a college education should offer.

If we recoil from our civic-engagement responsibilities, the ability and willingness of presidents and faculty to speak out on important issues will deteriorate. If this occurs, society and our communities eventually will stop paying attention altogether. Higher education's responsibility to encourage social analysis and the role of educators as leaders of such discussion will fade.

To help head off that sad outcome, board members need to be sure they understand their responsibilities and the challenges they face as they work to protect the financial, educational, and social health of their institutions. By adding civic and social engagement to the prescription for institutional health, trustees can help expand the benefits of higher education to the broader society for generations to come. ◆

Selected Civic and Social Engagement Projects

Adapted from *Peer Review*, Spring 2003, published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities

National Projects

Campus Compact

Campus Compact is a national coalition of more than 850 college and university presidents committed to the civic purposes of higher education. To support this civic mission, Campus Compact promotes community service that develops students' citizenship skills and values, encourages partnerships between campuses and communities, and assists faculty who seek to integrate public and community engagement into their teaching and research.

www.compact.org

The Center for Liberal Education and Civic Engagement

Designed as a catalyst and incubator of new ideas, research, and collaborations, the center seeks to deepen understandings of the relation of liberal education to service and civic responsibilities. The center is the result of a partnership between the Association of American Colleges and Universities and Campus Compact.

www.aacu.org/civic_engagement

Democracy Matters

Democracy Matters informs and engages college students and communities in efforts to strengthen our democracy. With campus-based chapters throughout the country, it encourages the emergence of a new generation of reform-minded leaders.

www.democracymatters.org

Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life

Imagining America is a national consortium of colleges, universities, and cultural institutions dedicated to supporting the civic work of university artists, humanists, and designers. Its mission is to facilitate a national coalition of artist, humanities, and civic groups working at the intersection of higher education and community life. Imagining America supports campus-community projects that promote new levels of engagement between artists, scholars, and their communities.

www.ia.umich.edu

The Democracy Collaborative

Hosted and sponsored by the University of Maryland, the Democracy Collaborative is an international consortium of more than 20 of the world's leading academic centers and citizen-engagement organizations. Through programs of theoretical and practical research, teaching, training, and community action, the collaborative works to strengthen democracy and civil society locally, nationally, and globally.

www.democracycollaborative.com

Kellogg Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good

The Kellogg Forum operates as a national progressive research and program unit housed at the University of Michigan. Its mission is to "significantly increase awareness, understanding, commitment, and action relative to the public service role of higher education in the United States." The Kellogg Forum has advanced a range of unique strategies to foster a social and professional movement that strengthens the relationship between higher education and society. Included among the forum's strategies are national and local dialogues with education leaders, state legislators, and key supporters of education; research on education's public-good role; public-policy discussions and action; and grassroots community deliberation about education's role in service to society. All of the Kellogg Forum's work is conducted in partnership with other organizations and committed individuals.

www.kelloggforum.org

Project Pericles

Project Pericles encourages and facilitates commitments by colleges and universities to include education for social responsibility and participatory citizenship as an essential part of their educational programs, in the classroom, on the campus, and in the community. This learning experience is intended to provide students with a foundation for social and civic involvement and a conviction that democratic institutions and processes offer each person the best opportunity to improve the condition of society.

www.projectpericles.org

continued on page 14

continued from page 13

The American Democracy Project
The American Democracy Project is a multi-campus initiative that seeks to create an intellectual and experiential understanding of civic engagement. The project targets undergraduates at institutions that are members of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). The project grows out of a concern about decreasing rates of participation in the civic life of America in voting, advocacy, volunteerism in local grassroots associations, and in other forms of civic engagement.
www.aascu.org/programs/adp

Campus-Based Projects

The Arts of Citizenship Program
University of Michigan
The Arts of Citizenship Program is an effort to build bridges between the university and the larger community in the arts and humanities. The program's mission is based on the belief that the work of scholars and artists can enrich civic and community life and that pursuing such work in public, and in dialogue with the public, can enrich university research, teaching, and creative expression.
www.artsofcitizenship.umich.edu

The Center for Community Involvement
Miami-Dade Community College
The Center for Community Involvement's mission is to enhance student learning, meet community needs, and foster civic responsibility and a sense of caring for others. The center is housed within the academic division of the college and is responsible for all its service learning and America Reads activities. In addition, the center functions as a volunteer clearinghouse for students, staff, and faculty who wish to get involved in community service.
www.mdcc.edu/ci

The Center for Sustainable Community and Civic Engagement
Daemen College
The Center for Sustainable Communities and Civic Engagement partners the college and its students with communities to promote civic responsibility that leads to communities that are healthy, safe, and vital.
www.daemen.edu/sites/CSCCE

The Feinstein Institute for Public Service
Providence College
The Feinstein Institute provides students with

an educational experience that prepares them to become responsible citizens. At the core of the institute is the major and minor in public and community service studies. The program is built on the pedagogical model of service learning, and nearly all of the courses students take in the major integrate service into the course.
www.providence.edu/psp

The Harvard Center for Community Partnerships
Bates College
The Harvard Center consolidates and unites existing components of the college's academic and service mission—activities involving community collaboration, service learning, and applied research—in a community context.
www.bates.edu/harvard-center

The Howard R. Swearer Center for Public Service
Brown University
The Swearer Center believes that service is a central concern of a liberal education and offers many opportunities to commit to direct action and to integrate action with intellectual inquiry and scholarship.
www.brown.edu/Departments/Swearer_Center

Theory Practice Learning
Emory University
In an effort to influence the future of pedagogy at Emory, Theory Practice Learning aims to strengthen the connection between academics and contemporary social issues, train Emory teachers to effectively implement experiential education, and create an intellectual environment of learning by doing.
www.emory.edu/TPL

The University College of Citizenship and Public Service
Tufts University
The mission of this initiative is to ensure that Tufts graduates are prepared to be committed public citizens and leaders who take an active role in building stronger communities and societies. Its strategy is to catalyze civic engagement and community building by identifying, generating, and supporting Tufts students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners who develop creative, effective approaches to active citizenship at the university and in communities around the world.
www.uccps.tufts.edu

Additional Reading

- American Association of State Colleges and Universities. "Stepping Forward as Stewards of Place." Washington, D.C.: American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 2002.
- Association of American Colleges and Universities. "Educating for Citizenship." *Peer Review*, Spring 2003.
- Brown, D. "On the Role of Trustees: An Interview with William C. Hubbard." *Higher Education Exchange*, (No. 9946), Dayton, Ohio: Kettering Foundation, 2001.
- Ehrlich, Thomas, *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education*. Phoenix: Oryx Press, 2001.
- Fish, Stanley, "Aim Low," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 16, 2003.
- Institute for Higher Education Policy, *Reaping the Benefits Defining the Public and Private Value of Going to College*. Washington D.C.: Institute for Higher Education Policy, 1998.
- Murphy, James, B., "Tug of War," *Education Next*, Fall 2003.
- Spalding, Matthew, "Principles and Reform for Citizen Service," *The Heritage Foundation Backgrounder*, No. 1642, April 1, 2003.
- University of Minnesota's Civic Engagement Task Force. "Civic Engagement: Renewing the Land Grant Mission." May 15, 2002. Available online at www1.umn.edu/civic/reports/report02.html.

AGB

Priorities

Number 22, Winter 2004

Priorities is published as an AGB membership service to help trustees and chief executives identify and address strategic policy issues. It is published three times a year by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, One Dupont Circle, Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20036. Telephone: 202/296-8400. Fax: 202/223-7053. Web: www.agb.org. All board members and the chief executive and other administrative officers of AGB-member institutions receive *Priorities*. Additional copies are available exclusively to individuals at AGB-member institutions for \$10 per copy. Please call for bulk discounts. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the institutions that employ them or of AGB. Copyright © 2004 Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. All rights reserved.



**Association of Governing Boards
of Universities and Colleges**

Richard T. Ingram
President

Richard D. Legon
Executive Vice President

Daniel J. Levin
Vice President for Publications

Richard Novak
Vice President for Public Sector Programs

Susan Whealler Johnston
Vice President for Independent Sector Programs

BY CHARLES S. CLARK

It has become almost a cliché to note that today's campus is "not your father's university." The demographic revolution—foreseen decades ago—that has now traversed the gates of higher education is bringing us a dramatically altered student population.

In the decade that began in 1999, the nation's high school graduating population is expected to grow by more than 10 percent. Ethnic minorities will represent 80 percent of the increase in college-age students between 1995 and 2015, and 45 percent of them will come from families in the lower rungs of the income ladder.

Couple this new student body with the increasing importance of a college degree to the average American's hopes of earning a comfortable living—individuals who hold at least a bachelor's degree earn a median household income double that of high school graduates—and you get a sense of the urgency confronting higher education leaders today.

To lay out both the changing nature and increased needs of the emerging student body and relate these to the responsibilities of boards of trustees, AGB commissioned one of the top consulting firms serving higher education to prepare this issue of *Priorities*. Noel-Levitz has pursued enrollment management strategies with more than 1,600 universities and colleges

throughout North America, working closely with presidents, administrators, and boards.

The firm's most recent president, Thomas Williams, observes that the dynamism of today's higher education market requires institutions and their boards to abandon traditionally static enrollment management techniques and become nimble enough to react to accelerating change. That means aggressively seeking out new student-recruitment pools and strategies, establishing active campus programs to improve student retention and persistence (the old "sink or swim" approach is long gone), and in some cases, revising the institutional mission.

TK

Board members need to understand these trends to fulfill their responsibilities for ensuring their institution's long-term health and higher education's obligations to provide an educated citizenry and workforce. Specifically, that means active input from the academic affairs committee, the student affairs

committee, and most important, the finance committee, which has central responsibility for planning, resource allocation, and budget-implementation strategy.

Strategic enrollment management requires that boards, working through their presidents and administrators, probe at the deepest level, to where an institution's strengths and goals will intersect with broader societal trends, needs, and goals.

None of us watching today's scene can know which institutions ultimately will fare best



Association of Governing Boards
of Universities and Colleges
One Dupont Circle • Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20036

NONPROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Woodbridge, VA
PERMIT NO. 535