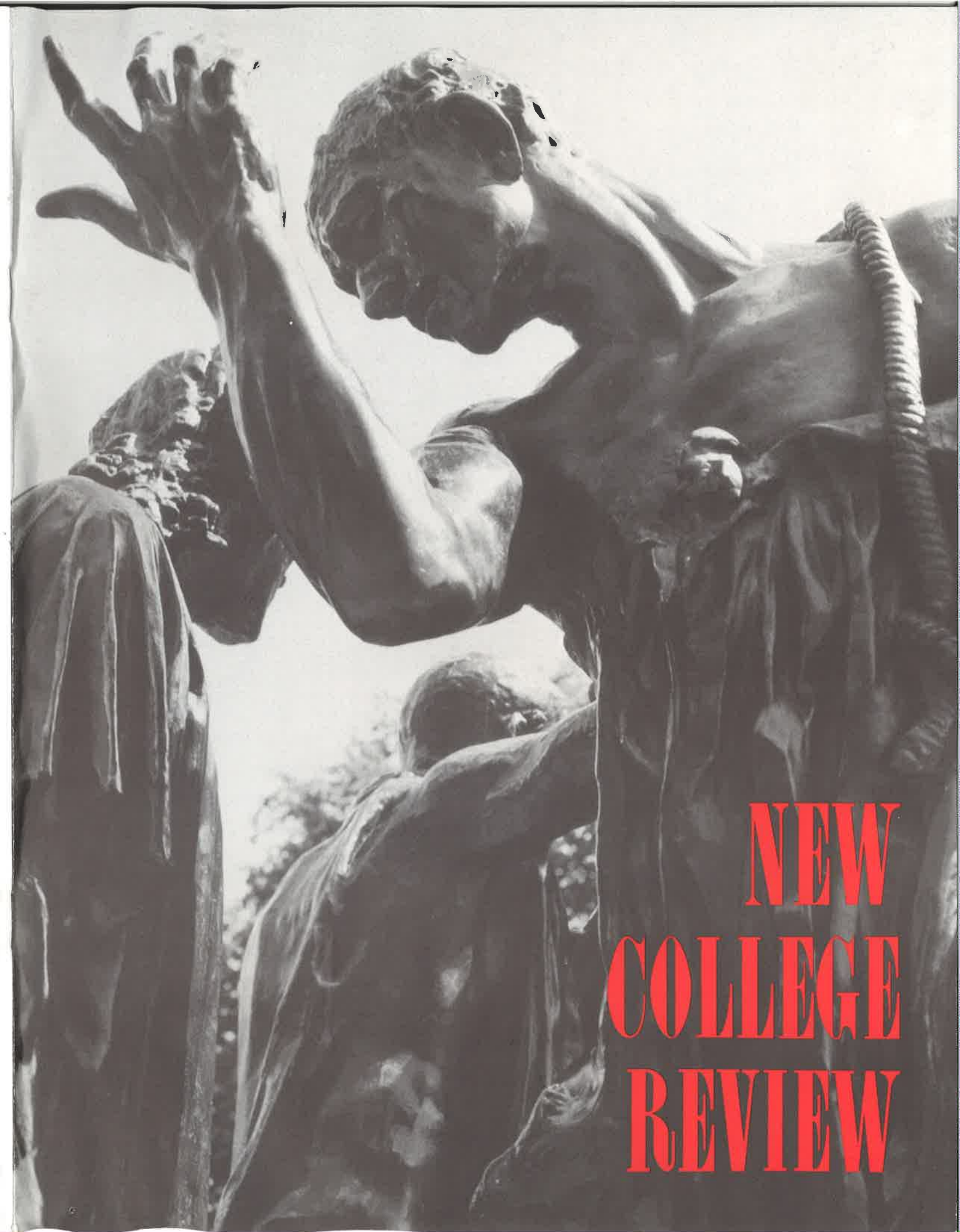


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**NEW  
COLLEGE  
REVIEW**

# The New College Review

FALL 1992

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Cover: In the push and pull of daily life, decisions must be made in the face of ambiguity. This sculpture symbolizes the citizen's deliberative efforts to achieve this end while living with strangers.

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## A Letter From the Dean

Bernie Sloan

The Theme for this issue of *The New College Review* is "Living With Strangers." An often understated ideal of higher education is to facilitate a deeper understanding of many world views—an ideal, however, often ignored or neglected by the academy. When I was an undergraduate at Stetson University, a distinguished French professor of mine had a very interesting yet



disturbing definition for an "educated person." She held that, "An educated person was anyone who knew how to use a semicolon and the subjunctive mood correctly." Over the years, I have related this definition to a number of faculty members, and almost all liked it. Its simple

elegance and precision is alluring, for it provides measurable instrumentation sufficient for most faculty members to separate the washed from the unwashed with a high degree of accuracy. Universities often confuse the certification of an esteemed skill with erudition.

This definition troubled me, and I felt an obligation to attempt a substitute. A better definition, I submit, would give the accolade "educated person" to anyone who is ready to consider the point of view of an adversary, even a repugnant adversary, as the correct one. This definition attempts to determine an attitude rather than a skill. It does not demand an acceptance of another's view, but for an "academic moment," it requires a serious consideration. This would demand from the "educated

person" certain other highly regarded academic skills such as attending, such as analysis, such as synthesis, and the not-so-academic skill of compassion. It would further demand more than "existing with strangers."

## A Word about Our Theme

by The Editors

Our theme of "Living with Strangers" is a simpler way of expressing the statement with which we began developing our articles. That longer initial statement was "General Education for Civic Effectiveness." Living with strangers is a simpler way of stating the object of general education for civic effectiveness.

The statement, "living with strangers," comes from the Quaker theologian, Parker Palmer. Living with strangers is Parker Palmer's definition of politics.

Understanding the meaning of politics is essential to understanding the articles in this year's *Review*. Especially is that understanding needed in thinking about the relationship of general education to civic effectiveness. Although many if not most college catalogs speak of developing citizens as an object of their institutions, little discussion of how this development can be achieved actually takes place.

When that discussion does occur, it often occurs within the context of a view of politics that is only partial. The dominant understanding of politics in our culture is that of a process that is expressive, majoritarian, and adversarial. This is a view of politics that emphasizes government and other bureaucratic structures as its instruments. This is a very true view of much political activity. It will not go away, as much as it is being villified or ignored by today's citizenry. "Politics as usual" does not have high standing or participation in our nation today.

"Politics as usual," however, is not the whole of politics. When asked how they have made decisions with other people with whom they had to live, many people give different characteristics of how living together effectively takes place. These characteristics are deliberative, integrative, and communitarian, not merely expressive, majoritarian, and

adversarial. This other dimension of politics comes closer to the original meaning of the word. "Polis" refers to the community.

This sense of living together is behind Parker Palmer's definition of politics. This sense of living together more effectively is behind the student articles in this issue of the *Review*. In a time when "multi-cultural understanding" is a buzz word for campus concerns, the phrase "living with strangers" becomes even more meaningful. Civic effectiveness is related not to debate skills but to deliberative skills; not to partial, special interest concerns, but to public, community concerns; and not to learning how to be right, but to learning how to choose in the face of not knowing for sure what a right answer might be. These are elements of exercising judgment. Political choices are about living together, and they are about uncertainty.

Judgment, imagination, and courage are elements of civic



effectiveness. If we knew for sure, we wouldn't have to judge. Not knowing for sure means we have to exercise imagination to find how others who also have to live with the judgment may see the choice. Both judgment and imagination require courage. These elements are necessary points in discussing the purposes of general education and the possibility that civic effectiveness provides a much needed central theme for developing general education in an undergraduate curriculum.

In approaching the need for general education for civic effectiveness, the student articles in this issue deal more with how to develop imagination, courage, and understanding than they do with how to learn more about government or about specific policy issues. Government and policy issues are indeed important, but just as important are the general skills and purposes we bring to them. Therefore, it is crucial in developing general education for citizenship that we understand the full nature of politics toward which we direct that citizenship and the educational assumptions that go into that direction.

Our students, of course, live on a particular campus, The University of Alabama. Their thinking about our theme has

been colored by conditions that exist on this campus. Their articles have been edited somewhat to take out specific references to this institution.

What they otherwise have to say has been much left as they said it. The objective is to let you see how they think about higher education, not only as its consumers in a student role but as those who will have to go out and live with others using the tools higher education provided to them as citizens. They were aware in our group discussions of their papers that constructing college curricula faces three main competing tensions for overriding purpose: personal autonomy, economic competitiveness, and civic virtue. They have opted in line with our theme to think mostly about civic virtue. They are not unaware, however, of the other two concerns.

Our first article by Amy Chasteen and Laura Marshall looks at the first-year college experience and its impact upon the way students may think about their civic capacities and responsibilities.

We are honored to have as our second article the annual address given at The University of Alabama's Phi Beta Kappa chapter initiation. In 1991, this address was given by James D. Yarbrough, Dean of the College of

Arts and Sciences. Dean Yarbrough shares our deep interest in general education.

Dean Yarbrough's remarks and those of students Chasteen and Marshall provide an interesting juxtaposition of how two diverse perspectives view the undergraduate experience and its relationship to society as a whole.

In keeping with our own tradition, the next three articles concern the three arenas of general education used as the organizing base for general education seminars in New College. In our humanities article, Michele Brogden takes on the difficult task of relating the performing arts to civic effectiveness. Stacey McDuffa addresses the role of the social sciences. Andrew Laurence provides thought on the relationship of the natural sciences to civic effectiveness.

Finally, Andy White offers a piece on the final objective of general education for civic effectiveness, the capacity to exercise public leadership in living with strangers.

We hope that you will enjoy these brief articles and that they will provoke some useful deliberation for you with your colleagues.

# Civic Education and The First Year of College

by Amy Chasteen and Laura Marshall

Civic awareness and activity are areas vital to the creation and development of a democracy. Consequently, each citizen within a democratic society must work to increase the level of broad understanding and responsible participation in every facet of the social structure. This heightened awareness and activity should be reflected in the academic realm. The ideal collegiate educational experience in a democratic society would incorporate civic goals in every educational undertaking, both inside and outside the classroom.

However, the modern first-year student, particularly at large institutions, often feels a lack of efficacy and of understanding of issues and processes when faced with civic choices. Neither the classroom nor extracurricular aspects of the first-year experience fully prepare a student for responsible social consciousness and consistent civic participation.

Students need to be encouraged to participate in and to question their society and their

learning environment. Such individuals become successful, responsible contributors to society; individuals must continuously inform themselves about local, national, and international activity. Along the pathway of knowledge, one makes many choices and asks countless questions. In a university setting, these questions need to be thought provoking questions of self-definition and the ideologies in which one believes instead of only "Will this insure that I will earn at least \$60,000 annually" or "Will I be tested on this." One must focus more on self and one's responsibilities to society. How will an individual develop as a result of the first-year college experience?

Upon entry into college life, the roles of public self and private self undergo significant alterations. These two factions of selfhood determine how we define our lives. The public self is determined by the private self in a psychologically healthy adult by reflecting inner attitudes. This

public self is based on interaction between activity and awareness. Unfortunately, some students become less active and aware as they experience their first year at a large university; the change from the high school environment is drastic, and students can have difficulty finding new channels through which to become an involved part of the community.

For many young people, high school is a time of active academic, social, and community involvement. Classes are usually small enough to give students opportunities for direct teacher-student interaction and advising. This environment provides a challenging setting for discussion of many different topics. Social clubs sponsor dances and parties to enable students to meet and develop friendships. Community and political organizations provide easily accessible vehicles for experiencing office holding, making changes, and bettering their communities. Parents, religious organizations, and schools encourage activities of this

sort. Students are in a familiar setting, and others expect them to make contributions of time and energy to community life.

Transition into college life disrupts this comfortable environment. Suddenly, a student is thrust into an unfamiliar environment of larger classes and larger organizations without much knowledge of routes to involvement or vehicles for activity. The unity of high school is severed. Fraternities and sororities separate their pledges from the people who decide not to pledge a social organization. A division between "Greek" and "non-Greek" students may develop. The academic advising system may also foster division, as students are quickly asked to decide "majors" and to follow separate channels of study. Large classes and few advisors increase a sense of isolation.

Campus organizations may not help relieve this feeling. If leaders do not inform first-year students of opportunities and make special efforts to rally them to their organizations, the new students may fall by the wayside of involvement. A student may belong in theory to several active clubs but have little way to develop meaningful involvement.

The nature of the student political environment on campus can have a great influence on the attitude of the students toward their responsibilities. If that system is built upon an ingrained system of connections among a few organizations, first-year

students can become disheartened. "Politics is politics" becomes an excuse for lack of involvement in student government activities.

The nature of social organizations is also important. Sororities and fraternities may center on finding dates, making friends, going to athletic events, etc., rather than community involvement and reaching out to broader segments of the student body. Even when social organizations also emphasize projects to help individuals and groups in need, the more pervasive attitude of service involvement with a community of which one is a part that was generated in many high schools can be lost at the college level.

In all this change, a university usually sends but one clear signal of purpose for new students: acceptable maintenance of grade point average. Many students thus adopt the belief that success in this area excuses them from the civic responsibilities they practiced so often in high school. An "I'm-a-student-now" attitude discourages many people who were active in high school from becoming civically active now.

These structural factors within universities are but half the problem. The other half consists of the attitudes first-year students bring with them from high school. Most expect the routine with which they are familiar and the organizations which provided that routine will

again be available.

They may be shocked to find that the absence of parental and community influence leaves much of the organizational framework to the students. If this organizational framework is closed and the great mass of opportunities expected by all go only to a few, many previously motivated first-year students may be shocked and disillusioned. The result may be a break from senses of responsibility to the community and a greater drift toward a more self-centered lifestyle built upon personal success and pleasure.

The time a student spends studying in pursuit of the success of good grades becomes an acceptable substitute for the feeling of being a good, productive citizen that may have been more pronounced in high school. Partying may become both the relief from and the reward for the effort a student puts into studying, the university equivalent of "good citizenship." Many students believe if their grades are good, nothing else matters. Often, when a student enters the classroom, he or she is most concerned with career preparation and with passing grades rather than with increasing general citizenship effectiveness. Faculty often perpetuate this focus by limiting class material to very narrow perspectives of a topic chosen for a specific future occupation. Students often feel none of these limited classes relate to any other academic subject. The result is a fragmentary education which

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"I think everyone needs to be educated. No one in our society can function without an education. The fulfillment of the American Dream is based, at least in part, on this idea of being generally educated."

Jane Batson  
Computer Science  
New College 1978

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makes assimilation into a coherent world view difficult.

For example, two common majors are English and biology. When students choose either of the curricula, they virtually exclude the other, at least in classes relating to their majors. A more holistic approach would bring literature and writing into the biology classroom and scientific material into the English department. A biology student could benefit from actual readings of science texts, such as *Origin of the Species*, and a composition student could incorporate scientific studies and data into writing assignments.

This process could continue throughout the several years of college, but it could begin in first-year composition courses. An instructor in an introductory English class could choose essay topics which interrelate several disciplines and which focus on understanding connections among disciplines, developing a world view and fostering civic activity. By simply using examples from other disciplines, faculty in writing courses could help create more fully developed perspectives in the minds of the students, enabling them to make more connections among their different classes into a more complete and workable world view. With learning experiences of this sort, students would be more prepared at the end of the first year of college to become involved in the community and in the world.

Unfortunately, most first-

year students have problems relating one class to another and seeing the relevance of material to their lives as a whole. The result for many students is indifference to matters beyond their private interests and vocational majors, and increased reliance on a narrow prescribed path to a chosen career.

When faculty do not actively involve students in their own educations, they increase this feeling of apathy. Faculty may often perceive students as "passive." However, when a class provides no encouragement for participation, no opportunity for discussion, and no requirements for extracurricular experiences, a student will inevitably have difficulty developing the motivation to extend beyond prescribed limits. Incentives for personal exploration, educational interaction, and intellectual alternatives are not commonly found in first-year courses. As a result, too many students are uninvolved in their educational experiences, and too many faculty are frustrated with classroom attitudes.

These problems are rooted in both student and faculty attitudes toward educational approaches. Students sometimes perceive their learning to be the teacher's responsibility. They sit in class, expecting to be given everything they need to know. A common question heard from students in any given lecture is "Will this be on the test?" The insinuation of this question is that students want only to learn the

bare minimum needed to pass an examination. Such students seem to avoid any extra effort or independent work.

Faculty contribute to this negative situation by not challenging students to extend themselves intellectually or to develop ideas critically. Often, faculty give short answer or multiple choice tests that require a simple regurgitation of what class lectures contained. This format communicates to the student the information given by the professor is the only relevant material, and opinions held by the students are not important. One reason given by faculty for this use of shorter, objective tests is that they are often more pressured to write and to publish than to teach. Research takes up so much time and classes are often so large that grading essays or other long tests becomes an impossibility.

These problems can easily overwhelm the role of a university in developing a first-year experience. Still, people ask, what obligation should the educational system have to the civic growth of the new student?

Although some faculty may feel encouraging civic effectiveness is not their role and presenting knowledge about the world is their only function, an education must promote not only factual information about the world but an understanding of each individual's role and responsibility within that world. All disciplines must focus on more

than just facts by branching out into interaction with each other and with society. College work should encourage each student to become an active part of the culture and to gain a holistic understanding of the world. Education should be an interactive experience, pulling together aspects of different realms of thought, cultures in the world and nation. The student must, of course, be exposed to various ideas, theories, and facts, but he or she must also learn to develop information into effective modes of action. The classroom, therefore, should serve not only to introduce new material, but also to initiate creative civic action.

One option for developing these kinds of experiences would be to introduce experiential learning requirements in all disciplines, not just natural science laboratories. Students could be required, in both humanities and social science classrooms, to develop independent projects focusing on problems in the subject areas, on combinations of disciplines, or on creation of different educational approaches. By participating in learning activities as well as listening to presentations, students would learn the importance of utilizing what they have heard in the classroom and seen in their society. This first-hand experience would help students develop connections between themselves and their educational experience.

Another way to involve students could be easily instituted

within the present classroom setting. The professor could simply set aside five minutes each day to announce outside events which relate to civic activity and education, such as a debate, lecture, forum or rally, in which students could participate. Students could also share with the class upcoming activities of interest. By encouraging and emphasizing participation in national and local events, faculty can help prepare students to be not only effective workers, but also active citizens.

Further, in order to act capably in society, an individual must be able to relate to others effectively on a personal level. The social aspect of the first-year experience is also important to the development of the individual, and this should include interaction between different groups within the university. While in college, the student will be exposed to different people with myriad perspectives. For the democratic system to function effectively, each citizen must be able to interact with other people and to allow different opinions. Obviously, the development of interactive communication skills is imperative. Because of this need, a classroom environment should allow for student discussion with both the professor and other students. By having this dimension, the classroom can become a place where a student develops skill in searching for common ground on issues. This part of education is vital to



prepare the student for future political action as a responsible citizen.

Unfortunately, this interactive dimension of education is sorely neglected in the first-year experience. Most students do not sufficiently associate with people outside their circle of personal interest and beliefs and remain in the narrow but comfortable niches provided by a system. The result is more separation and increased fragmentation. Students do not increase their ability to work cooperatively with others, a skill that is fundamentally necessary to the functioning of a democratic system. Students instead often limit their social experience to "partying" with

people who are most like themselves. Students, administrators, and faculty members must create a more well-rounded first-year experience, and more channels must be provided in which they can.

The first-year experience in too many institutions is not serving to increase the intellectual independence, world consciousness and civic empowerment of students. Many classroom changes need to be made, both in material presented to students and in the structure of its delivery. Many social changes must occur to foster increased communication and easily accessible opportunities for interaction. In a society dependent upon the

activity and knowledge of its constituents, the education of individuals must be developed to foster the most beneficial and active students possible. The current structure of the typical first-year experience needs amending — in the role of the faculty, in the responsibility of the students and in the structure of the system — to strive for a more holistic, civically aware learning experience.

**Amy Chasteen and Laura Marshall are both New College graduates. Amy is now in graduate school at the University of Michigan, and Laura is a graduate student at York University in Canada.**

## Education for Change

by James D. Yarbrough

Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

There is today in our society a great uneasiness and concern that our system of education, from grade school through college and university, is not performing well. It is simply not educating our young people. We are continually told that Johnny and Mary can't read, and they certainly cannot write. We are told that high school students when given a grocery list and sent to a supermarket cannot perform the simple task of comparative shopping, a math skill which should have been mastered by the 8th grade. In 1979, American adults were surveyed in an attempt to gauge their scientific literacy. These individuals were asked to demonstrate their understanding of what a scientific study was and to give a definition of selected basic scientific terms and to demonstrate an understanding of science policy issues:

- Only 14% could supply a minimally acceptable

definition of what a scientific study was.

- Only half of those polled thought they had a clear understanding of the term radiation and one in five of DNA.
- Interestingly, although only 7% of all respondents were certified as science literate, 26% of those with graduate degrees were literate.

In 1985, a similar survey found that 12% of those with bachelor's degrees and 18% of those with doctorates were found to be "science literate." When asked to agree or disagree with certain science related statements some very interesting results were obtained:

- 39% agreed that astrology is scientific.
- 40% believed in lucky numbers.
- 46% disagreed that humans evolved from earlier species of animals.
- 53% agreed with the

statement "Scientific researchers have a power that makes them dangerous."

- 57% agreed with the statement: "In this complicated world of ours, the only way we can know what is going on is to rely on leaders and experts who can be trusted."

Assuming that these estimates are correct—that the overwhelming majority of the American adult population is scientifically illiterate—what are the implications for our political system? How is science policy to be made? Can the basic tenets of a participating political system be maintained?

A recent survey by *National Geographic* indicates an appalling lack of understanding of geography. Although 95% of Americans know the capital of their nation, 1 out of 4 don't know north from south or east from west, and 1 out of 3 couldn't read a simple map. A substantially similar Gallup poll

conducted 41 years ago produced essentially the same results. The findings were dismal then; they are dismal now. So if the problem isn't new, what's all the alarm and panic about? Well, things are somewhat different now, than then. Since 1947, the world has changed and dramatically so:

Consider that the world economic balance has been turned upside down in our lifetime. Our nation is no longer the only economic giant; as a matter of fact by the end of this decade, about the time your careers are solidly underway, we may fall to second place as a world economic power.

Your standard of living, my standard of living, is declining. There is a real possibility that your children will not live as well as you have. The country you are inheriting is a debtor nation.

Might may still mean right, but the might of nations no longer depends solely on the size of its armies. The Soviet Union, a third world country with a world-class army—is now disintegrating before our eyes.

Consider this—in the future, a nation's ideology is more likely to be judged on its gross national product than on its moral beliefs.

"What is the bottom line?" is no longer an accountant's question; it is a

world motto. The *Wall Street Journal* summed it up this way: "While U.S. manufacturers in 1969 produced 82% of the nation's television sets, 88% of its cars and 90% of its machine tools, [in 1988] they made hardly any TVs and gave up half the domestic machine-tool market and 30% of the auto market. Even in a new industry like semiconductors, this country's world market share has shrunk to 15% from 85% in 1980." And the best we can claim for ourselves is that we lead the world in rock music (slightly ahead of the British), consume 40% of the world's natural resources and have developed an insistent trait of attempting to talk our problems to death as opposed to acting to solve them.

The rapid changes of the past few years have raised basic questions about this nation: questions about our economic vitality and viability, our competitive technological edge—indeed—basic questions about our national character. Some would go so far as to suggest that we have lost our will as a nation to meet the challenges and opportunities that rapid change presents.

Our critics would say that at the base of our problems is a flawed sense of who we are as a people—an inability to focus on the most critical issues we face as a nation.

The great paradox of our time is that this nation, that has traditionally valued education and has led the world in public education for all of its people, appears to have lost the will to continue that tradition. This at a time when economic viability is increasingly based on the use of technology which demands an educated and free people. In simple terms, future successful nations will be those that maximize educational opportunities for its people and provide the freedom to explore the possibilities that education creates.

If education is the key to the future, what must education be? In general terms, education must be a process by which our young people, you, and the students who will follow in your footsteps, are equipped to deal with change: technological change, social change, and political change. Our survival as a people and a nation will be based on how well we understand our world and how well we can adapt to changes in our world.

Let me give you some specific examples: university graduates are dealing every day with social issues largely unheard of twenty years ago: counseling people at risk for AIDS, dealing with extensive child sexual abuse and helping its victims, treating crack cocaine addiction, working with medical teams to provide

prospective parents with genetic counseling and helping families cope with the presence of very old and infirm members in their household.

You are expected to compete in the world market. That means you must understand the continually evolving language, history, culture and traditions of other regions of the world.

Those of you in the natural sciences and mathematics will be involved in addressing problems basic to survival—acid rain, deforestation, and ozone depletion of the atmosphere. Genetic engineering will bring remarkable opportunities to explore the most basic questions of biology. In the not too distant future we will be able to manipulate the human genome intrauterine.

There is now, and will continue to be, an ever-increasing array of scientific information that can be applied through technology to better the human condition.

Thus, in simplistic terms, education must be a process which facilitates a lifetime of change! The old model which treated students as empty vessels which professors attempted to fill with knowledge is no longer valid. Students are not merely computers in which facts are collected, cataloged and

stored for later recall when needed. Too often educators have left the impression that education is just a simple matter of getting the facts correct. In such a system the joy and excitement has been taken out of learning and the educational process has been reduced to an exercise in methodology. Too often the message delivered is that education is just a process of "getting it right". Right in this case is defined as what you need to know—the facts—the correct answer. Now facts are important, but what is more important is how to deal with the facts. To what use do you put these "learned" facts?

Education must be an enterprise in which students are active partners in the process of learning. Education must prepare students to educate themselves throughout their lifetime.

It is my belief that a liberal education—which includes the humanities, the arts, the social sciences, and the natural sciences and mathematics—is the best preparation for the future. For no matter how dramatically the world may change in the coming years, reading, writing, and arithmetic will still be the basis of dealing with the world in which we live—and history, sociology, psychology, and music (to mention just a few) will still give an "educated" person an edge in

a job, and more importantly, an edge in living. It is from the base of a liberal arts education that we come to understand our world.

Dr. Henry Rosovsky, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University, put it this way:

We must not just produce competent professional technocrats. I want my physician to understand and master the technology of the profession of medicine—but I also want my physician to have a grasp of pain, love, laughter, death, religion, and the limitations of science... up-to-date information can always be acquired without too much difficulty; human understanding cannot be reduced to asking the computer a few questions.

From the mid-60s to the mid-80s, universities produced business majors who possessed the technical skills to manage money with great facility and with considerable efficiency accumulate profits for their companies. But they had no comprehension of the long-term consequences of their management decisions (junk bonds, and now failed companies—deregulation followed by failed S & Ls and now a cascade of bank failures) and worse yet, they displayed little concern for the human cost of their actions.

If higher education is to serve us, it must contribute not



only to the intellectual development of its people but to their moral growth as well, because the conduct of nations and peoples is governed by their beliefs.

Today most colleges and universities have come to acknowledge that a solid foundation in the liberal arts is central to the development of critical thinking. In the 7th book of *The Republic*, Plato presents a parable of life. Men sit chained in a cave such that their back is to the cave opening. Above and behind them a fire is blazing, and in front of them there is a high wall such that the fire behind them casts shadows of what passes between the fire and the chained men. Prevented from turning to the opening of the cave, they know the world only through the shadows of images cast on the wall before them. In this parable, mankind would perceive the world through shadows projected on a wall distorted by a flickering fire. But what would happen, Plato asks, if an individual were released and climbed out of the cave into the sunlight? At first he would be confused, he would be in a world totally alien to him. People would ask the names of things, and he would not know, but eventually he would begin to see the truth and understand that the shadows on the wall were not the truth but only vague perceptions of the truth. Now how would he go back and

explain the world to the people in the cave?

There are many interpretations of this parable. I do not wish to deal with its extensive philosophical and metaphysical implications. Instead, I wish to make a very simple correlation to today's world. Too many of us accept our world through a flickering image on a screen. Too many of us are chained to perceptions of a world which are based solely on vague images—images which are imperfect shadows of the real world.

We accept what we see and hear at first glance—we don't think, we don't explore, we don't analyze. We are too hung up on the "image," the public relations approach to problem solving—if it looks good, it must be right. When we do not think critically, we readily accept style for substance.

Education is the "sunlight" of Plato's parable. An education in the liberal arts and sciences is a process by which we come to gain direct knowledge of the world in which we live. Through the humanities, we make contact with our history, language, culture, and the moral and ethical values of our society, and we find our place in the world. Through the social sciences, we come to understand human relationships, and through the natural sciences, we come to understand something of

the forces which govern the physical and biological processes by which we are constrained. This kind of education brings perspective and balance, the framework on which critical thinking skills are based.

The expectations of a liberal arts and sciences education may be expressed in terms of what you should be able to do:

- (1) communicate effectively by written and oral means.
- (2) draw reasonable conclusions from information found in various sources, to comprehend, develop, and use concepts and generalizations.
- (3) distinguish between fact, fiction, and opinion.
- (4) appreciate the cultural richness and variety of this nation and have some understanding of other cultures in our world.
- (5) understand something of, and have been exposed to, moral and ethical values of our culture.
- (6) understand something of the physical nature of the world.
- (7) possess a working knowledge in a particular subject area.

These are the qualities of an educated person, and they represent the ideals of Phi Beta Kappa. I close with a passage from Phi Beta Kappa's handbook for new members:

Election to Phi Beta Kappa has been a recognition of intellectual capacities well employed, especially in the acquiring of an education in the liberal arts and sciences. The objective of humane learning encouraged by Phi Beta Kappa include intellectual honesty and tolerance, range of intellectual interests, and

understanding—not merely knowledge. John Henry Cardinal Newman's conviction that "the test of education lies not in what a man knows but in what he is" gets at the heart of the matter.

I am pleased to be a part of your initiation into Phi Beta

Kappa. I congratulate each one of you for your hard work, and "on intellectual capacity well employed." I wish you every success. Thank you.

I believe that—we do not owe our people a brighter future—we owe our future a brighter people.

**James Yarbrough is Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Alabama.**

## Civic Implications of the Performing Arts

by Michele Brogden

Elizabeth Douvan, a psychologist, once noted that students rarely learn about working with one another to solve problems in classrooms. They learn about working with one another on the athletic fields and in drama and artistic performances. These are the arenas in which we learn more about what the "real world" is like in its demands for teamwork and solving problems together to meet common objectives. We also learn a great deal about competition and about ourselves in group athletic and artistic endeavors.

Athletics have a central place in our culture for teaching us the mysterious relationship of competition and cooperation. Both competition and cooperation are important, and both must be used to develop individual capacities and group capacities. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer observed, no one is fit for community unless he or she can live in isolation and no one is fit to live in isolation, unless he or she can live in community. Not everyone has

the interest or the ability to be active in group athletics. The performing arts offer a large arena for learning civic skills that we too often neglect in our society.

We should remember the heritage of the performing arts. The philosophy that the performing arts is a property of education is a product of Europe's age-old humanistic traditions. The modern belief in this affinity is supported by the history of great human ideas. The concepts of performing arts and education were closely allied in classical Greek civilization. Aristotle expected education to lead man, with the help of the noble arts, out of his rude state of nature to an ethical and intellectual culture. Plato subordinated art to the good of the state. He interpreted the performing arts as a tool of social enlightenment and believed that true teaching reveals which forms of the arts serve best and which ones are necessary to the morale of the citizens. Therefore, it is imperative that the performing arts of our society to be promi-

nently included in the education of all students.

However, the traditions of the performing arts do not correspond to the outlook of numerous Americans. There are those who claim the arts to be only entertainment. Most arguments on this issue are wasted. Because they result from a vague usage of terms, their meaning is obscured by a reliance on clichés and their reiteration. The performing arts do have an interest in convincing audiences to relax, to be diverted, or merely to be amused. There can be no serious quarrel about the role of entertainment in the arts; it would be as absurd to repudiate this concept as it would be to challenge the very pleasure principle itself.

To settle a dispute about the nature of the performing arts, Plato once said, "the excellence of music is to be measured by pleasure. But the pleasure must not be that of chance persons; the fairest music is that which delights the best and best educated, and especially that

which delights the one man who is preeminent in virtue and education."

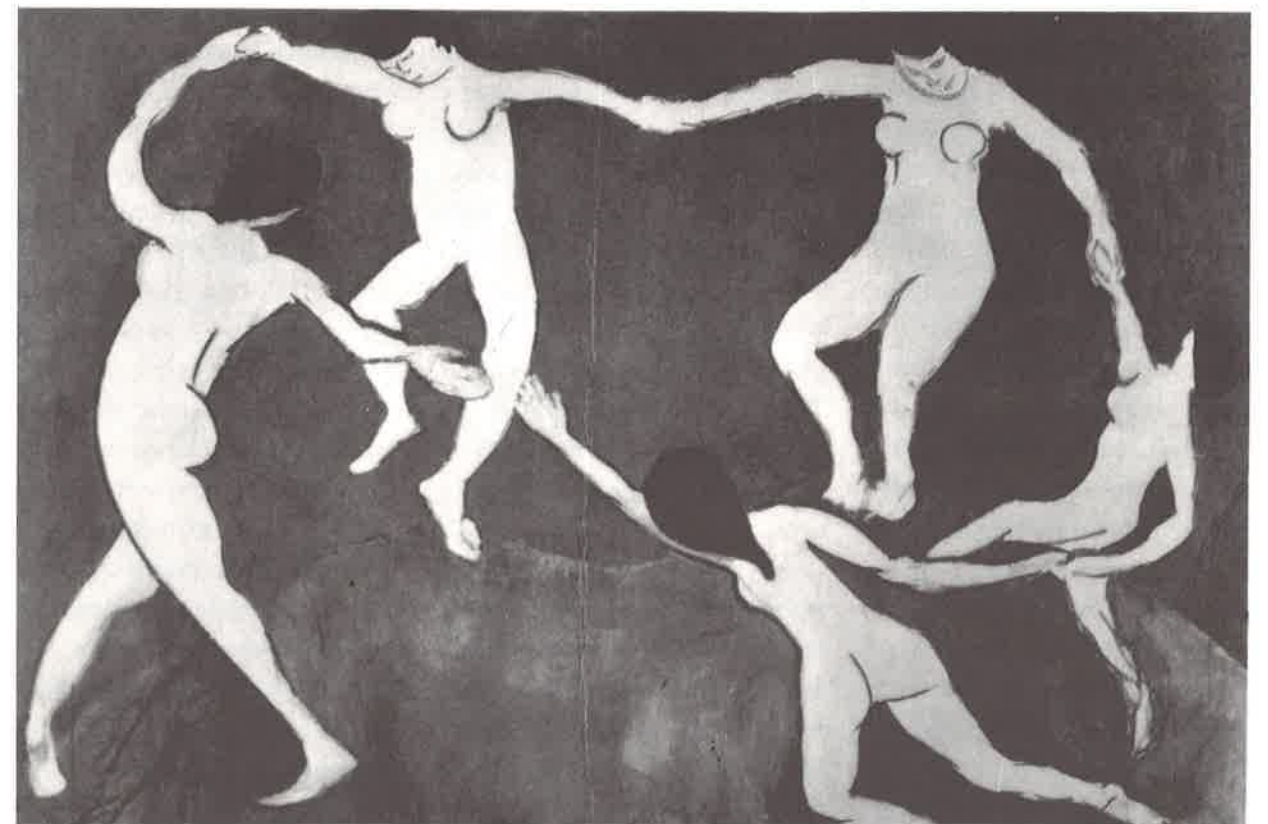
In a related sense, we should distinguish between what Mozart so handsomely called "delight in music" and the kind of "entertainment" which certain commercial interests sell to the people at the expense of legitimate arts. Furthermore, we must revise a widespread skeptical notion concerning the manner in which education may function. For too many, education becomes a grim image of Puritanical bleakness, of a strict schooling that kills the very joy of learning on mere contact. Those who have such assumptions are understandably antagonistic to a tie between education and art. But true teaching is an art in itself. It

gives light. It communicates. It creates aesthetic pleasure and enchantment. Horace expressed this thought by saying "teaching while delighting."

European governments do not think of the arts as a luxury, as an entertaining addition to their lives. They interpret the arts as a necessity in the living organism of a civilized society. And so they are willing to pay for art, not only as performance in theaters, concert halls, or television, but also as an important part of education in the schools. The basic concept of arts education is extended as a nationwide task inside schools and other educating institutions. This concept is motivated by the conviction that every child and adult should benefit from the

experience of art in its enriching aspects.

The United States pays very large sums for education. About one-fourth of the American population is at present registered for education, full-time. The arts are finding their rightful place on every level of the school system. Progressive curricula offer scientists, engineers, and various other groups of college students valid courses in art appreciation. As a result, American youth, exposed to such learning, are becoming more art-conscious than previous generations. The key word in this expansion, however, is "offer." Very few universities "require" a study in the arts. Colleges are quick to say how well-rounded and influential their campus performing arts are becoming.



Yes, they are much more apparent and prestigious than ever before. Yet, only a small group of people are exploring and learning in this field of study. The performing arts as a humanity should be a required field of study for every college student whether their major is English or architecture.

The advantages of European art patronage become self-evident if we turn to the urgent problem of the young artist and his future in America. We lack what certain European countries have in such abundance: sufficient performance opportunities in the field of serious art to absorb the flow of talented students graduating annually from our schools. Ironically, foreign visitors who come to our campuses are amazed by the drama and opera departments in our universities and praise the technical equipment of the best of these workshops and quality of their performances, which at certain schools attain professional standards. The college theaters fulfill, at least in part, the historic function of the European court, stage, and city theaters. Unfortunately, only those who expressed an interest in the performing arts on these campuses were exposed to such a cultural and learning art experience; not everyone chose to engage in the performance.

No nation anywhere in the world can afford to waste its talent. The artistic and intellectual endowment of our youth represents the kind of capital that

can never be replaced. By building and maintaining theaters and opera houses throughout the nation, we could not only give employment and opportunities to gifted young artists, but we could simultaneously open the doors for performing art education and performances to be viewed. Those

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"...academic freedom allowed me to find my niche and allowed me to become a productive individual. The ability to have that freedom has enabled me to become a well rounded individual.

I can't tell you how many times I've thought back on my education and realized how I wouldn't be here today if it weren't for that freedom."

*Thomas Blackwell  
Music/Computers  
New College 1976*

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objecting to cultural and performing art education will say that people don't want this type of art; they enjoy only light entertainment. The fact is that the American people, at large, have not really been given a choice. They have not yet had the same opportunities as Europeans for developing a taste for first-rate art.

A recent trend of promise is that listening to records and building record libraries of fine music, poetry, or drama are no longer hobbies of the few. They have become an integral part of the lives of countless art-loving

American college graduates. There are numerous other positive signs, proving beyond doubt that America is ready for an art life equaling the scope of the performing arts in Europe. These positive signs indicate in a strong way the need for college students to experience some type of performing art study within their curriculum.

Europeans have long recognized their cultural assets as sources of income, and their public art support takes this into consideration. Visitors to the United States do not come only to see the Grand Canyon, the Lincoln Memorial, or the United Nations. They are also attracted by cultural events. They attend theaters, concert halls, art exhibitions, and festivals. One cannot overlook this contribution of American art life to the domestic income. A college graduate from any university in the United States should have all the exposure and education of those coming to visit and participate in our performing art events.

Education in the performing arts can promote civic effectiveness by helping citizens acquire a broad knowledge from many areas of their community. Community performance of the arts is one of the fundamental ways in which a group of people create a community. All areas of the performing arts involve participation from many different persons whether they are the performing members or not. A ballet production not only has the

prima or soloist dancer, but also has the supporting cast as well as lighting technicians and stage manager. Not every citizen has the talent to be a leading performer, although there are many other roles that are necessary to create a successful production. Many people working together promote involvement, a positive aspect of civic virtue. A performance forces everyone involved to participate in positive group decision-making processes where individuals can grasp and record effectively (for future reference) the ideas of others.

Another area of effectiveness in which a citizen can grasp knowledge through the performing arts is competition. Our society thrives on competition. One must know the objectives of competition and experience them through competitive activities in order to be a successful contributor to society. The performing arts are centered on competition. One who doesn't have the ability to compete will never be in the "surviving realm" of the arts. Experience in competition promotes networking for personal advancement with internships, co-op positions, and personal career goals. Not everyone can always be the winner or the one who receives the job. Competition also teaches one to accept failure and learn from the experience. The

performing arts offer citizens the opportunity to engage in competitive activities. These experiences motivate and create new learning experiences in appreciating one's personal strengths and weaknesses.

The last area in which the performing arts aids in promoting civic effectiveness is in developing autonomy. Autonomy is a term derived from the Greek *autos* ("self") and *nomos* ("rule"). It was first used to refer to self-rule in Greek city-states, where citizens made their own laws rather than having them imposed. Autonomy has since been used to refer to a set of diverse notions including self-governance, privacy, individual choice, liberty, and responsibility. Each individual has a special sense of creativeness. Art develops creativity. The movements to a piece of music for a dance can be taught to twenty people by a choreographer. Although each person will basically be doing the same steps, personal autonomy is reached when the performance occurs, because individual persons expresses themselves differently. One movement might feel light and peaceful to one performer. The dance will then become separate and dissimilar. This permits the performers to specialize in their own strengths and weaknesses, and present

their own personal autonomy through movement. Citizens must also be able to do this in everyday life. Here the mystery of competition and cooperation is engrained into patterns of behavior. These patterns permit growth of both the private self and the public self.

Some people find it hard to effectively express themselves through writing or speaking. The performing arts provide a unique way in which citizens can express their emotions and reach social self-awareness in a different form of education. Sometimes people can be lectured about a certain topic many times and never understand the point trying to be made; but if the message is viewed through movement, sculpture, or dialogue, the point is sometimes much more clearly defined. Education through the performing arts enables one to understand what they observe and to engage in the art itself. Civic virtue, competition, and autonomy are all necessary to become an effective citizen. Each model aids in understanding non-verbal or written communication through the performing arts. The European example of the arts as a cultural asset and the models mentioned earlier, exemplify the "difference" the performing arts could contribute to every American citizen.

**Michele Brogden is a graduate of New College with a depth study in Marketing and Dance.**

# Civic Education in the Social Sciences

by Stacey McDuffa

The role of citizen is imperative to enacting the idea of democracy. However, many observers feel that not enough emphasis is being placed on the critical role of citizenship in making deliberative democracy work. These warnings seem accurate when one reads voter statistics and sees the widespread inattention to organized political activity in our country today. Even more alarming is the fragmentation that has driven the body politic into numerous special interests with little notion of community or common good.

To deal with what many interpret as civic apathy in the United States, some are targeting higher education as a cause of the ill health of America's citizenry. Those who see higher education as a cause of the decline of civic health complain that universities have become just another part of the economic system of America. Students are molded into specialized instruments to perform specific tasks. Critics charge that professional schools limit students

to narrowly focused educations. Specialization is undoubtedly necessary for certain vocations, but during this educational process, civic education is too often neglected. Specialists are also citizens who must live and decide matters together.

The preparation of students for citizenship is a stated goal in the catalog mission pronouncements of most universities. This goal is a difficult task. As more scholars have turned their attention to civic education, colleges and universities have attempted to make their students more "well-rounded." They have done this by requiring students to take courses outside their major area of study. This "well-rounded, common-store-of-knowledge" approach is often referred to as a core curriculum.

In theory, a core curriculum is designed to give students a basic understanding of the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. However, many core approaches operate through a distribution system in which a

student is presented with an array of courses in specific disciplines from which to choose to fulfill core requirements. These courses are rarely designed to accomplish a common goal such as civic education. For example, a student who chooses biology to satisfy a natural science requirement and a student who chooses physics for the same purpose have little commonality in the way they might view the way science figures in public policy decision making. Similarly, a student who takes psychology to satisfy a social sciences requirement and another who takes political science for the same purpose will have very different experiences in how human beings relate to one another in making mutual decisions.

Civic education is not just comprised of the mechanics of government; it includes the understanding of human beings. Civic education, therefore, is not simply the property of courses in political science, no more than it

is the property of courses in psychology.

The social sciences do, however, have the most direct claim upon being included as a necessary part of education for citizenship. The social sciences consist of the study of human behavior and its varying manifestations in human institutions. The scientific method is used in research that deals with relationships and concerns of human beings. Although not as accurate a predictor as the natural sciences, the social sciences do try to anticipate human behavior.

The social sciences are often divided into six major subfields: anthropology, economics, history, political science, psychology, and sociology. Multidisciplinary fields include areas such as management, criminal justice, and communications. Within the social sciences there are theories dealing with needs, power, ethics, diversity, and influences on behavior. A basic understanding of these theories alone would aid one in the art of living with others, which is the essence of politics, and therefore strengthen a student's ability to act as a better citizen.

Because these disciplines often share concepts, theories, and terminology, they are inter-related. Knowledge of one of the subfields improves one's ability to understand others, much like putting pieces of a puzzle together. Whereas psychology may explain needs and why people act

as they do to secure them, anthropology explains cultures, and therefore sheds light on cultural influences on behavior. In an elective system, a student who randomly selects courses that are designated as social sciences may not realize this. Also, random choosing of disciplinary courses means a student may well miss vital parts of a civic education. To remedy these problems, interdisciplinary social science courses should be implemented.

In addressing civic effectiveness, a fundamental problem becomes what should be a unifying theme in developing an interdisciplinary approach to social science education. A possible and often popular theme is power. A more promising theme, even broader in its implications, is the search for identity. Identity can be woven into a discussion in every subfield of the social sciences. The search for identity can be turned inward to self-exploration. This would help one discover the deepest motivators that prompt personal actions. This search can also be turned outward to understand how identity can be gained from one's experiences and how the search for identity creates institutions and affects the use of power.

A related theme is community or the nature of a civil society. This theme helps students examine their actions in relation to the whole, whether that be the campus, the local areas, or the entire United States. An intent of this approach would

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"...sometimes the rules we work under are not cast in concrete, sometimes we need to test the glass walls and ceilings.

I was taught that we do not have to work within the paradigm we were given.

I am constantly questioning what I hear against my paradigm. Education can show you that this is allowed."

*Janice Kay Pruett  
Computer Science  
New College 1974*

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be to heighten awareness of social responsibility.

By fusing themes of this nature with the application of power and the different fields of the social sciences, a class that fosters appreciation for diverse individuals and civic responsibility can be created. Requiring all students to take this type of course before going into the elective smorgasbord to fulfill the rest of the social science core would provide students with a common civic basis for further study.

In order to provide a context for this type of civic thinking to thrive, deliberative

democracy should also be stressed throughout a university environment. Deliberative democracy is a way in which participants intelligently work through fundamental tradeoffs in dealing with issues of national importance such as abortion and free speech. An activity such as this is beneficial in the search for identity and in understanding the importance of community. This type discussion could take place as a forum in a lecture hall with many students or in small study circles with smaller numbers of students. The object of such programs in deliberative skills, both in class-

rooms and in extracurricular activities, would be to make intelligent deliberation on political issues a trademark of a college education.

Adding interdisciplinary social science courses focusing on civic effectiveness and expanding opportunities for students to work through issues deliberatively would provide for more effective civic education. The role of citizenship is more than pulling a lever in a voting box or obeying speed limits. Citizenship is taking an active role in a community in order to make the community healthy.

**Stacey McDuffa is a 1992 graduate of the New College. Her depth study is in Political Deliberation.**

## Science and Citizenship

by J. Andrew Laurence

I think most of us go through our lives without ever having truly understood why it is we get an education. It is easy enough to see that through education we learn skills which will help us earn a living, as well as, enable us to interact effectively with other members of society throughout our lives. Through education, we are also enculturated, to some extent, with a sense of the history and higher achievements of our civilization so that we may enjoy the intellectual and cultural climate of the era in which we live. But, there is something more to it than just this. There is a deeper purpose being fulfilled through education all the while, despite the fact that we remain almost completely unaware of it.

To realize what this deeper purpose is, we look back to the ancient Greek civilization where Western education has its roots. At that time the true reason for schooling was much clearer.

Schools were begun because, in their efforts to build a civilization, the Greeks came to realize that the most valuable resource they could have in developing their communities was a solid foundation of individuals who had developed their own personal skills and talents to the highest potential. Undisputably, the contributions to the improvement and development of the community these individuals would be able to make would be of a much greater value. As these developments and improvements came about, the quality of life for humankind would be enhanced, thereby creating an environment in which individuals could more easily work to improve themselves and achieve the highest potential of humanity, as well as a higher purpose for being.

Thus, in striving to create the environment which would best promote that which is highest in humankind, the Greeks realized how vital it would be to have a society of "citizens": people

who felt a sense of duty for their community and were dedicated to the development and upkeep of the desired environment through the valuable contributions they could make as informed people. The Greeks realized that only a community of citizens would be able to create the necessary environment, an environment in which people could work together to solve their problems rationally and learn about themselves and others.

And so the basic purpose of education has remained the same right up to modern times: to promote citizenship. Something happened in the 1970s, however. A trend developed in which educational systems seemed to become little more than a vehicle by which individuals could realize their own personal self interests, rather than institutions in which the development of citizenship was promoted. Thus, it became apparent to many that the current educational systems were failing miserably in promoting

new generations of citizens and a society in general who understood the price of living together.

The situation called for a back-to-the-basics approach, in which students would be required by law and school regulations to take a certain number of specific kinds of classes in the various disciplines of education. Thus, in the early 1980s, many schools began to implement core curriculum programs in an effort to get back to the practice of turning out well-rounded citizens.

These first attempts at improvement through a core curriculum succeeded in modifying the current educational systems. They proved that, despite objections to its implementation, students could, in fact, be exposed to a wider range of knowledge without necessarily

sacrificing any of the personal goals and aspirations they sought to achieve.

Now the time has come to take the next step. Many schools are re-evaluating their current curriculums in an effort to see how the purpose of promoting better citizens through education can be augmented. One of the major areas of the system which is under scrutiny is the area of the natural sciences. Because today's world is so strongly influenced by each new scientific development, the natural sciences are arguably one of the most important aspects of modern education. The reason the natural sciences are undergoing such scrutiny is that the nation's educators have, in recent years, come to learn that a shocking 94% of the American population has little to no real

understanding of even the most basic aspects of the natural sciences. In other words, they are "scientifically illiterate."

This is most disturbing given the fact that science plays such an extensive role in the lives of even average citizens, not to mention the extent to which scientific issues must be dealt with by the nation's politicians, business people, and others working in technically advanced fields. According to a recent estimation by Gerald Holton, a noted physicist and historian of natural science at Harvard University, even a few years back, over half of the bills before Congress involved some question of scientific complexity.

The natural sciences play such a vast role in the lives of today's citizen that they are an

absolute must in any modern educational curriculum. And how could it be otherwise? How can we have a truly effective citizen body if our people have no real understanding of something which has the power to alter human history and our quality of life so dramatically? Developments in the sciences have given us new building materials, household cleaners, and medicines. They have also changed our perceptions of the universe and our place in it through the exploration of deep space, studies of evolution, and research into the sub-atomic particles. Not only that, but it is only through further scientific research and understanding that we will be able to remove some of the ambiguity surrounding the most pressing moral and ethical issues of our time. After all, what citizen can make truly rational decisions about things like abortion or environmental issues if they have no real understanding of the situation or the trade-offs involved. In fact, the biggest questions facing the scientific community today are no longer the technical questions of what is possible, but rather the questions stemming from these moral and ethical issues. Therefore, it is obvious that the natural sciences are a critical aspect in educating for citizenship.

This idea is nothing new, of course. That is why we have courses in the natural sciences in the current educational systems in the first place. But, when the

population of a country which has given the world so much in the way of science and technology is itself 94% scientifically illiterate, something has obviously gone wrong.

There is actually a good reason for why science is taught the way it is today. The system is a very manageable one. Given the vast stores of knowledge in the sciences today, this is important. And, our current system is actually very effective in turning out specialists. For example, the U.S. still produces its share of nobel laureates in the sciences each year. However, there is a basic mismatch between what today's citizen needs and what is being taught. This is the case at all levels, from elementary schools all the way to the universities. And therein lies the flaw.

In order to produce students who have a thorough understanding of the natural sciences, what is needed is a system which promotes "scientific literacy." Scientific literacy, according to Hazen and Trefil in their book *Science Matters*, is simply a basic understanding of the general facts, concepts, vocabulary, history and philosophy of a number of different sciences. For instance, people should understand things like the theory of general relativity, the foundation of all modern perspectives of science. They should understand how the natural and geological systems work, so that a general understanding of the nature of our environment and

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"Any undergraduate education gives you a broader perspective in dealing with political, social, environmental, and other such issues. Because problems can be attacked in so many different ways, it is important to be able to have a wide range of technical and theoretical approaches to the issues.

*Patrick O'Neil*  
*Natural Science/Environment*  
*New College 1976*

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our impact on it is shared by all. Also, a working knowledge of scientific terminology and current developments is a necessity for any scientifically literate person. Understanding science is critical for citizens who hope to make rational decisions on pressing issues and make valuable contributions to the community.

In order to achieve this outcome, experts are now suggesting that the nation's natural science programs undergo a complete renovation. Instead of teaching separate disciplines each year, these educators recommend a "science-for-everyone" approach to teaching the natural sciences by developing several interdisciplinary courses. Students would take one science course of this type each year or semester for whatever the specified number of years is decided to be. In each course the students would be exposed to information from a number of different disciplines and shown how it is interconnected with the other sciences. Not only that, the most important aspect would be to show students how these matters have direct bearing on their lives through hands-on projects and discussions of the scientific material involved in current events. Such a change in our approach to teaching the natural sciences will be the much needed remedy for effectively educating students for citizenship.

The importance of taking such steps obviously comes back

to the difference it will make to society on both a personal and civic level. On the personal level, individuals will be able to better attain the purpose of developing their own personal skills and talents. They will also benefit from their greater understanding of the world in which they live. And on top of that, citizens will be able to understand more fully new technological developments, how they came about, and the likely impact they will have on society, thereby allowing the citizen to be more connected with the intellectual climate of the times.

Civically speaking, individual citizens will be able to take part more fully in the decision-making process concerning issues of community importance, thanks to their deeper understanding of the issues. They will also be able to make greater contributions toward the betterment of society. As a result, the individual communities, and thus society as a whole, will benefit from more improvements in the quality of life, and the environment in which citizens live with each other. Also, there would be a lessening of the likelihood of making costly mistakes by virtue of the fact that more intelligent citizenry will make more educated decisions on matters of social importance.

Despite the fact that the educational system in this country lost some of its efficacy in the fulfillment of its most basic purpose, especially in the area of

the natural sciences, it is by no means too late to improve upon the current situation. The development of core curriculum programs helped. They proved that something could be done. Now is the time to take further steps. In this day and age especially, society is in dire need of an empowered, knowledgeable citizen population. Given the fact that with each new development in science and technology the world we live in is changed, it seems that steps toward improved science education will only help. How effective can a society's citizens be? How close can we come to creating that environment which will be most conducive to the development of individuals to their highest human potential? We will certainly see. The important thing to keep in mind now as we attempt to improve on our current situation is that a general education for citizenship will go a long way towards producing individuals who will be most able to accomplish this goal.

**Andrew Laurence is a senior in New College pursuing his undergraduate degree in Environmental Law.**

## Public Leadership

by Andy White

*"...And Development of Enlightened and Thus More Responsive Citizens."*

In the catalog of almost any university, you will find some version of the words that appear above. Examining the words in this phrase leads one to ask some questions. What is an enlightened citizen and how do we, as a university and as individuals, develop that person? To whom or what is the citizen responsive? What difference do the successful "completion" of these goals make, or put another way, why even worry about the issue at all?

What I propose is not so much a startling revelation as a reflective judgment on the concept of public leadership. This judgment is that we should progressively develop the individual into an effective citizen and public leader while contributing to the betterment of his or her community.

Citizenship is participatory and deliberative. It seems like a pretty simple concept, yet

Americans seem to have the most difficult time dealing with this point. Most students are accused of apathy, but how much of their inaction is attributable to apathy and how much is attributable to their feelings of inability, ineffectiveness, and uselessness? Many people feel the victim of a faceless system that works against them at every opportunity. Many people doubt their own abilities and throw their hands up in disgust before the race even begins. Worst of all, people many times feel that the welfare of the community is not relevant to their lives and do not see value in participating. Likewise, they have no idea as to how to go about creating real change; how to go about organizing people into a common cause in order to benefit themselves and the community.

With business-as-usual leadership, which is reactive as opposed to proactive, the citizen can become confused and overwhelmed by bureaucratic systems as well as those in power whose interests lie in the deception of

the public. The end result is feelings of inability which degenerate into apathy. However, rather than succumb to the system as it is presented today, why not search out ways of joining the system and changing it to better fit and reflect your and the public's needs? If interested, there are numerous avenues to follow. However, before doing so, the citizen needs to adopt a flexible view of public leadership and acknowledge the scope of his or her proposed involvement.

When trying to contribute to society or lead a community, we must first recognize that we need not be supercitizens. A prevalent view of public involvement is that in order to participate in public deliberations and to create substantive change, we must be masters of all trades, so to speak. At the least, people feel that one must be an expert in one's field in order to be given a platform from which to address the issues. This view effectively leaves the discussions and decisions in the hands of those "experts" who debate

their points in such a fashion as to keep the public at bay in a spectator role.

This neo-Renaissance view of the citizen, or public leader, is misleading. While it is necessary to have experts and so-called jacks-of-all-trades, the majority of people are those whose lives are busy and hectic. They hardly have time to manage their own sphere of influence, let alone contribute to the public good. It is all too easy, therefore, to become overwhelmed by the seemingly monumental task of developing into a citizen.

In a society with such a strong emphasis on the individual, the quest for power and rights is so pervasive in our daily lives that it becomes difficult to make time for enhancing community and cultivating our own skills as citizen. It is then little wonder that Americans find it difficult to resolve differences, encourage tolerance, and live with one another. Recognizing this point is one of the first steps along the path towards the realization of the nature of the citizen's relationship to his or her community.

For a student to begin to be effective, he or she must approach civic development with a different philosophy. One such approach can be developed out of what has come to be known as the Living Systems Theory (LST). One of the basic aspects of this theory is an explanation of the relationships between the systems, or entities, of society. The theory comprises two lists of

functions that every living creature must perform to survive. These functions involve processing matter and processing information. For brevity's sake, I will concentrate on the list that deals with the processing of information as it applies to the development of the citizen leader.

To paraphrase, there are nine functions related to processing information and two functions that apply to both matter and information. For my purposes, I will ignore the two shared functions. Basically, the processing of information involves various functions: receiving information, monitoring it for relevance, channeling it to the proper place and time, making it usable, relating it to other information, storing it, deciding on its uses, assembling meaningful recommendations, and communicating it back out to society. What we find, then, is a general list of abilities that an effective citizen leader must possess. But can we all be this perfect leader, and do we even need all citizens to be this type of leader?

The answer is a resounding no. If the task of being a "good" citizen seems too daunting at first, start off slowly. Act on your strengths. For example, if you are particularly adept at relating information, then do so. Take it upon yourself to point out the interrelatedness of issues and alternative points of view to others within a forum setting. The forum setting that I am referring to applies to any group

deliberation within a community. Likewise, if you have skills in communicating with others due to an understanding of their interests and personal/organizational procedures, then do so. Become the person who can mediate differences between parties both external and internal.

The civic applications of these abilities continues in depth, but I will refrain from that activity at the present time. The point of the matter is that to become an effective citizen doesn't take mock heroics or flashy speeches and approval ratings. It takes an individual acting on what they understand and putting personal abilities to use for their own development and society's benefit. It takes the personal initiative to begin the journey, doing one thing now, and actively allowing other skills to develop.

One conception of citizenship, stated by Dr. Mary Stanley of Syracuse University, pertained to the "need [for] future citizens who can think well, act prudently, judge compassionately, and imagine innovatively in the context of real community." What can be deduced from this statement? For one thing, the responsibilities of the citizen are roughly presented, but these responsibilities don't look like the topics we covered in high school civics class. Perhaps then there is another, larger vision of the citizen of which we are not aware. Perhaps, closer to the truth it is that we are not in touch with

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"Now I see my voting, my teaching, and my background as a journalist are not compartmentalized, they are all integrated...everything in my life is connected."

Jackie Bell  
*Literature / Journalism*  
*New College 1982*

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whom the responsibility and ability lie. We are not aware of the pervasiveness and applicability of civic philosophies, the necessary civic qualities, the incentives to enact civic programs, and the procedures available to assist our development of these mystery people, our public leaders. These mystery people turn out to be ourselves.

A citizen must be able to think well. What does it mean to think? In order to think, one must be able to compare and contrast one's thoughts to other's thoughts based on strong foundation of the principles of group interaction and problem resolution. This approximate definition applies not only to issues of leadership, but to all integral disciplines that comprise the diversity of the community.

Through a thorough exposure to the basic concepts of the various disciplines and the theories of public leadership, one can begin to see the interrelatedness of the segments of society. For example, one cannot understand the implications—economic, social, and ecological—of the construction of a permanently manned space station or moon base, if one has never taken an astronomy or other natural science course. We would tend to value the short-term effects of the project and information supplied by the media. Whether swayed by popular opinion or personal interest, we would most likely lock into positions favoring personal benefit and, in this case,

fight for funds for our own special interest, thus possibly forsaking the larger community interest. In short, as the old adage goes, we would not be able to see the forest for the trees.

The disciplines are not meant to exist in isolation from one another. They compliment each other by working, whether conscious of it or not, in concert to strengthen themselves and each other and to contribute to the development of the citizen and the community as a whole. For example, consider the development of a brand new automobile. If each department (discipline) works separately, what you find is uncoordinated and time-inefficient plans. Unrealistic demands are placed on departments by other departments who lack the knowledge and insight into the other department's activities. Finally, with all the aggravation and wasted energy, each department is further isolated and prejudiced toward the other departments. The result is a flawed product, even lost competitive advantage.

This example is not so far removed from the collegiate setting as it may seem. Imagine the preceding example as an analogy for general education involving the issues of core requirements and majors in a university. The point in both examples is lack of interrelatedness.

The next stage, which does not occur sequentially but more in conjunction with all other



stages, is that of learning how to think together in deliberative discussion groups. For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on the student's role; however, the same processes can be applied to corporate boardroom and lunch table discussions. Civic learning tends to take place more effectively with interaction, so I will proceed with the optimal learning situation as being the seminar or group interaction discussion.

Within the forum setting, students have the opportunity to apply their diverse but related backgrounds to the issues of the day as well as learn more about the specific concepts of an academic discipline. Everyone has opinions and experiences, some individually exclusive. In the discussions, these views would be brought out into the open and reflected upon. However, there is a strong tendency to evaluate others and their thoughts based solely on one's own perceptions and the impact of a concern on one's own life. Positional bargaining defeats open discussion, and unsolvable debate results.

Effective citizenship extends further than the classroom. Citizenship is thought turned into action. Being a part of public life implies this fact. By leaving the comfort of academic isolation, whether it be on or off campus, the student confronts "the issues" and is forced to deal with them and with other people. The greater tolerance and understanding, as well as practical

knowledge gained from such experiences, are obvious. There exist many ways in which a student may go about exercising this duty. The point to note is that action and deliberation go hand in hand. The citizen must continuously address both aspects in order to keep perspective and maintain effectiveness.

The ways in which this experiential learning takes place are as varied as the imagination. Most students who take part view their experiential learning as coming from co-ops or internships. Additionally, students hold the belief that the more organizations to which one belongs, the greater the learning will be, or at least perceived to be by others. This belief is encouraged by the nature of scholarships, graduate school admissions criteria, and employment competition. Is there another set of experiences thus far underutilized? Is there another approach the student can take?

The experiences are roughly the same with possibly a few additions of experiences based on social issues. The main point is that students must approach this learning with a different emphasis. The emphasis is not so much on what type of power can this knowledge attain for me, although this view does have a rightful place. Likewise, the emphasis is not on how the student can address the superficial interests of society and those considered to be powerful. Students must not only approach

learning with a betterment-of-the-self philosophy, but also with a betterment-of-the-community philosophy. Through the self-improvement experiences, students should maintain awareness of the learning's applications toward helping become better informed and effective citizens.

A citizen must be able to judge the issues and views both intellectually and morally, keeping in mind a decision's implications for the short term and long term. Where students receive their information comes predominantly from three sources: the classroom, friends, and the media. The extent of influence each source has on the student is dependent upon the individual's characteristics, attitudes, and personal interests. All too often, most student's main source is the media, followed by their class experiences and friends. All three sources, however, are flawed by bias. This bias can be subtle or obvious. We receive one view of an issue without significant insight into alternative views. To distort the issues even more, we possess the ultimate filter: our personal perceptions. We will hear mostly what we want to hear, especially if packaged right. As Michael Porter wrote: "Change is an unnatural act. Powerful forces are working against it."

How do we overcome such bias then? Interaction, deliberative discussion, and intellectual reflection are the keys. Don't wait for information to encounter you.

Search for it. Maintain an open mind and research an issue academically, socially, and practically. We must take what we have learned in the classroom as well as in other experience and confront our views with those of others. The point is not to debate who is correct, but rather to discover the best course of action for both the individual and the community.

To discover this best course of action, a citizen must not lock into positions and defend his or her point of view at all costs. To the contrary, the citizen must be able to value other people's opinions in a light as unbiased as possible. Likewise, a citizen must be able to approach the discussion with a different mind frame, one that allows the citizen to be able to recognize societal deficiencies and set about trying to correct them, not necessarily for personal interest but for the common good of society. However, it is quite difficult to discipline ourselves to take on battles that do not personally affect us or at least do not affect us for a lengthy period of time.

The final characteristic of an effective citizen is the ability to imagine new and better methods for dealing with issues. If we keep our learning to ourselves or a select group, then society benefits little. If, on the other hand, a group collectively comes to build common ground based on its shared learning, experience, and deliberation, it has set the stage to make a positive change in

society. The beginning is to take a concern and discuss its many possible solutions. Any group must create its own solutions out of the fullest range of possibilities. This search requires that we be innovative. If common ground can be found within the group, the next step is to connect positively with others who share power to effect solutions. Keep in mind that choices are hard and that hard work is necessary to implement choices. The goal is a world in which we can live together effectively.

In retrospect, have we accomplished the tasks established at the beginning of this paper? The enlightened citizen that we referred to is comprised of many qualities. We mentioned the need for society, the university, and the individual to cultivate the following abilities: the ability to think, to reflect intellectually, to deliberate with others, and to be able to state and act on the recommendations of the group. Coupled with this approximate definition is a philosophy with an emphasis on the betterment of the community while bettering the self. Public leaders must be able to move away from personal views of an issue, listen to others' opinions, and "see the forest." A public leader's philosophy is centered on the common good of the public and seeks participation by all the parts. This approach remains open to new thoughts, seeks understanding through thoughtful communication, and is reflection

oriented. It encourages both feedback and action from the public.

The citizen is responsible to himself or herself and to his or her community. In order to encourage this responsibility, society must instill the philosophy of the citizen leader into its citizens. In order to instill the belief, society must understand and internalize this philosophy. In order to understand the philosophy, society must ask, would the philosophy really make a difference. Since we are society, each of us must ask ourselves if we are satisfied with the nature of society today: its emphasis, its structure, its results. Our answers will tell us where to proceed. In all probability our honest answers would tell us not to complain about the state of the present but to enter into the process, begin public deliberations, and make our contributions as citizen leaders.

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