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CHAPTER 7

Deliberative Democracy and Higher Education

Higher Education's Democratic Mission

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American higher education has always had an ambivalent relationship to democracy. On the one hand, colleges and universities have long asserted that a principal purpose of higher education is to prepare young people to be responsible and informed citizens. Thomas Jefferson, for example, advocated for a strong public education system and founded the University of Virginia because "whenever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government; that whenever things get so far wrong as to attract their notice, they may be relied on to set them to rights" (quoted in Lipscomb and Burgh 1903–1904, p. 253). Perhaps the relationship between democracy and education was best described by Robert M. Hutchins, then Chancellor of the University of Chicago, in 1950:

> In a democratic community every citizen should have as much power of understanding and judgment as he can develop, because every citizen has a voice in the management of the community. The progress, and even the safety, of a democratic community depends in part upon the intelligence of the citizens, and by this we cannot mean the intelligence of some citizens, but the combined intelligence of all. (Hutchins 1950)

At that time, access to college had begun to broaden, with the land-grant system, the GI Bill, the creation of community colleges, and the civic rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s all marking important steps on the path to equality.

On the other hand, American colleges and universities have always selected and served a privileged class and have made choices about whom to admit and what to teach on the basis of values that have not been strictly democratic. The college-attendance rate has stalled since the 1980s at about half of all young adults. About half of those who do attend college fail to graduate, and those who do graduate have very different experiences depending on the institution that enrolls them.

James Fallows of the *Atlantic Monthly* (2001) noted the "insane intensity" of the modern college-admissions process; applicants are sorted into institutions of varying resources and prestige depending on their success in high school, which in turn usually reflects the resources of their parents and neighborhoods. An institution gains the market position to select competitive students because of its reputation, which depends substantially on its endowment and the fame of its faculty. Professors rarely become famous for teaching or modeling democratic citizenship. In 1996, Ernest Boyer, then president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, wrote:

> What I find most disturbing . . . is a growing feeling in this country that higher education is, in fact, part of the problem rather than the solution. Going still further, that it's become a private benefit, not a public good. Increasingly, the campus is being viewed as a place where students get credentialed and faculty get tenured, while the overall work for the academy does not seem particularly relevant to the nation's most pressing civic, social, economic, and moral problems. (Boyer 1996, p. 1)

Students do learn in college. They score higher on tests of knowledge and critical thinking near the end of their undergraduate careers than at the beginning. But what seems to affect their success after college is not the way they were taught (as measured, very roughly, by the mission, size, and type of their institution); rather, it is the degree to which their college or university was selective in its admissions. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005, p. 591) conclude, "These findings could be expected because in the areas of career and economic achievement, the status-allocating aspects of a college and what a degree from that college signals to potential employers about the characteristics of its students may count as much if not more than the education provided."

The previous paragraphs refer to the overall impact of college education. On the specific question of *civic* skills and engagement, college graduates are more involved than community-college graduates, who are more active than non-college graduates (Levine and CIRCLE Staff 2006). For example, in the 2008 presidential primaries, one in four young Americans who had attended college (even for one course) voted. But those young people who had no college experience voted at a rate of only about one in fourteen (Marcelo and Kirby 2008). College graduates are also most active in community service (Marcelo 2007).

We might like to think that the positive relationship between college attendance and civic participation arises because students learn about democracy in college. But studies of civic learning in higher education are disappointing. (The Intercollegiate Studies Institute's 2006 report "The Coming Crisis in Citizenship: Higher Education's Failure to Teach America's History and Institutions" is methodologically imperfect but still presents troubling data.) It is more likely that the correlation between college attendance and civic engagement reflects class inequalities: colleges are serving the empowered and enfranchised but missing the rest of the population. Among colleges, there are huge differences in opportunities for civic learning that mostly reflect differences in institutional endowments and prestige (Kiesa et al. 2007). The disparity seems to be present even before enrollment in college: college-*bound* teenagers and students in successful high schools are already the most likely to experience any interactive and engaging forms of civic education (Kahne and Middaugh 2008).

In short, social stratification is one outcome of higher education. That outcome is antidemocratic and antideliberative insofar as young people of different backgrounds are effectively separated when they are still at a formative developmental age at which they might learn from one another. Despite the increasing racial and cultural diversity of students at some institutions, the system as a whole is highly efficient at segregating young people by future social class. At Harvard, students from families that earn less than $180,000 are considered rare and automatically qualify for financial aid. (In the United States, less than 4 percent of families earn that much.) Only 7 percent of high school sophomores whose families are in the bottom fourth of the income distribution finish four years of college, compared to 60 percent of those from the top quarter of the income distribution (Dynarski and Scott-Clayton 2007).

These facts are compounded by political efforts to reduce higher education's role as a social and economic equalizer. The 1980s were a period in which colleges and universities changed their admissions policies and campus climates in response to the end of legal segregation in the 1960s and lingering de facto discrimination. Campuses overcame legal challenges and considered race (and other "protected classes" such as ethnicity and gender) as one of many admissions criteria. By the 1990s, many colleges and universities offered interdisciplinary programs that considered gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and global issues, and institutions began to view diversity not as a legal mandate but as something integral to academic quality. We are now witnessing backlash against the earlier efforts to provide equity and access to historically underrepresented groups, manifested by assaults on affirmative action and state referendums mandating race-neutrality in college admissions. There appears to be little public understanding of how diversity is an asset and an educational resource in any learning environment, as well as a weakening in public will to correct persistent patterns of racial and class disparity.

Even though colleges and universities do not educate all kinds of young people, they certainly have a responsibility to help their own students

develop civic behaviors and values, including habits of participation, tolerance, and collaboration. In doing so, they must respond to the particular needs of the time. In the last 30 years, Americans' civic engagement—as measured by attendance at meetings, membership in groups, working on community problems, and trust in people and government—has declined (National Conference on Citizenship 2006). Concurrently, public schools decreased the number of required civics and current events courses, resulting in a high level of civic illiteracy among Americans, particularly knowledge of Constitutional values, how they evolved, and where they currently stand (Lane 2008).

To their credit, colleges and universities have responded to these declines with a flurry of activity aimed mostly at their own undergraduates. They have rewritten mission statements to emphasize service and citizenship. They have supported a commendable upsurge in optional student community service and community-based learning. Students now volunteer in record numbers. Faculty members offer courses with service-learning experiences or community-based research. Many campuses now have offices of community-university partnerships or centers for civic engagement that facilitate for-credit and co-curricular student learning experiences in community building and service.

These efforts, however, have been less than perfect, and there are many criticisms of civic engagement and education. In particular, three problems directly impact the overarching goal of educating for democracy. First, a strategy of educating undergraduates for democratic civic engagement is inherently limited since, as noted earlier, about half of young adults do not attend college, and the vast majority of Americans are past the conventional college years.

Second, within higher education, there is little connection, and arguably an inverse relationship, between diversity and civic learning. Responding to changes in the law and attitudes about civil rights in the 1960s, colleges and universities started exploring ways to accommodate changing populations in American society. Initially, campus diversity goals centered upon access (numbers) and hospitality (a welcoming, equitable climate) for previously underserved populations. In the early 1990s, diversity advocates worked to shift those goals, or at least add to them, and focus more on academic programs, scholarship, cultural perspectives on academic content, and the value of diverse perspectives to a learning community. As civic engagement grew as a mission, it failed to complement and even took some of the wind out of the diversity movement. Responding to this disconnection, in 1999, the late Edgar Beckham, senior scholar at the Association of American Colleges and Universities and former director of campus diversity initiatives for the Ford Foundation, challenged proponents of the civic engagement and diversity movements to work together to foster citizen engagement that is attentive to the needs of a free society, one in which *all* citizens enjoy social, economic, and political equality.

A third and related problem is that higher education does not consistently or automatically increase students' civic or political knowledge or participation. Colleges and universities provide a range of opportunities that might be expected to achieve those outcomes: courses in political science and other social sciences, service programs, extracurricular organizations such as student newspapers and student governments, foreign travel, and prominent speakers. But evidence that any of this actually works is weak at best. Perhaps the reason is that many of these experiences are not well designed to enhance democratic behaviors or values. One often-used example is that of students who volunteer in a soup kitchen. Their experience rarely includes a broader discussion of the underlying causes of and the need for the soup kitchen in the first place. It cannot be assumed that students who work in a soup kitchen will wonder why hunger persists in one of the world's wealthiest nations or that they will be moved to action to address poverty more broadly.

In the meantime, local, national, and global issues in public life seem even more daunting. One could mention such current global challenges as climate change, terrorism, financial crises, and two wars, but even closer to home for American educational institutions is a high-school dropout rate of almost one in three. More than any time in history, the United States needs a well-informed and engaged citizenry so that Jefferson's vision is realized, that "whenever things get so far wrong as to attract their notice, [citizens] may be relied on to set them to rights." The challenge for colleges and universities is to bring things that are "so far wrong" to the attention of students and to provide them with the skills they will need to "set them to rights." It is a call to provide students with opportunities to practice democracy as a means to realizing the American dream of a free, just, and equitable society.

The task is not simply to educate citizens for democracy but to educate citizens for a democracy envisioned a certain way.

The Deliberative Democracy Movement in American Public Life

There has always been conflict and division in America, but there is evidence that in the last twenty-five years, polarization worsened; traditions of everyday collaboration weakened; and public leaders provided poor models of civil discussion and problem solving. Since colleges and universities are centrally devoted to discourse, it makes sense for them to take a leading role in improving public discussion.

Discussion is not all there is to democracy. A strong democracy also involves negotiations among interest groups, competitive elections, resistance (in the form of strikes and protests), careers that contribute public goods, and rights that can be defended in courts. Yet public discourse is the element of democracy closest to the purposes and expertise of academia.

The term "deliberative democracy" became popular in the 1990s in response to a debate over the roles of reason and inclusion in public life and governance. In their 2004 book *Why Deliberative Democracy*, Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson define the term as

> a form of government in which free and equal citizens (and their representatives), justify decisions in a process in which they give one another reasons that are mutually acceptable and generally accessible, with the aim of reaching conclusions that are binding in the present on all citizens but open to challenge in the future. (p. 7)

According to the ideal of deliberative democracy, citizens should treat each other with respect, even if they disagree. Policy makers and citizens alike must be able to justify their decisions and viewpoints on the basis of mutually acceptable reasons (Gutmann and Thompson 1996, p. 55). They need not be impartial, but citizens and policy makers need to cooperate and find mutually acceptable ways to resolve disagreements (Gutmann and Thompson 1996, p. 2). Most importantly, reasons must be acceptable not to a few but to all citizens equally. Stated another way, "The cultural force behind renewed deliberation is a confluence of multiculturalism and a renewed civic impulse" (Gastil and Keith 2005, p. 14).

Meanwhile, outside academia, a significant group of civic organizations and leaders have emerged as advocates for democracy based on civil discourse that includes diverse citizens. This group includes organizations such as Everyday Democracy, Demos, Public Agenda, America*Speaks*, Public Conversations Project, the Kettering Foundation, and members of the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (see Additional Resources). These organizations approach democracy building from different perspectives, but most fall into the categories of electoral reform, community development and building, and deliberative democracy (America*Speaks*, Everyday Democracy, Demos, and the Ash Institute 2009).

Advocates of a more deliberative democracy promote democratic dialogue as critical to the health and sustainability of American democracy. Dialogue is more than "just talk" or casual conversation, and it is not a "feel-good" or meaningless exercise. Dialogue is a process of talking and listening with the express purpose of building relationships and fostering mutual understanding. Effective dialogue is a foundation for personal and collective commitment and action; improved intergroup relations; stronger communities; and reasoned and deliberative decision making, action, and sustainable change.

Other theorists and practitioners prefer to use the term *deliberation* to describe this work. *Deliberation* often brings to mind the judicial process and the role of juries: a small group of people charged with the responsibility of listening to evidence, giving that evidence careful consideration, weighing choices, and making decisions. A *public deliberation* operates in much the same way: people come together to study a social or political issue, give

careful consideration to the facts, identify possible solutions, weigh the pros and cons of each choice, and them make a decision as to how that issue should be addressed (University of New Hampshire 2007).

While it can be helpful to explore distinctions between dialogue and deliberation, in the end, they may be unnecessary. Well-designed democratic processes involve a number of skills, such as analysis, communication, problem solving, and collaborative decision-making. Democracy is not simply a form of government or a procedural process for policy making. A deliberative democracy is often described in terms of the attitudes, skills, and habits of its citizens. What works has been determined by many years of civic experiments in public participation and discourse. From these experiments, deliberative democracy has come to be described, by the Democracy Imperative (University of New Hampshire 2007), in terms of these key characteristics:

- A reflective and informed citizenry
- Vigorous participation of ordinary citizens in matters of public concern at the local, national, and global levels
- A public process of reasoning and deliberation for decision and policy making
- Political and social inclusion
- An understanding of and appreciation for different cultural or ideological perspectives
- Involvement in decision making by those most likely to be affected by the outcome
- Public officials who are responsive to ideas generated through public discourse and who are accountable to the public for their decisions
- Respect for free expression
- An openness to multiple viewpoints, dissent, and criticism
- An understanding that when disagreements arise, citizens will continue to work to overcome differences to reach more acceptable outcomes

Deliberative democracy is values-driven in two ways. It derives from Constitutional principles of freedom, justice, and equity, *and* it relies on a collective commitment to core principles of inclusion, reason, and respect as guidelines and aims of public discourse.

Inclusion

Public decisions are legitimate only when a broad group of people with diverse perspectives—particularly those most likely to be affected by an outcome—participate in the process. At the very least, the composition of public participants should mirror the social identities, beliefs, and ideologies

of those in the community. Dissenting views are welcome. Political scientist Iris Marion Young (2000) explains:

> On a deliberative understanding of democratic practice, democracy is . . . a means of collective problem-solving which depends for its legitimacy and wisdom on the expression and criticism of the diverse opinions of all the members of the society. Inclusive democratic practice is likely to promote the most just results because people aim to persuade one another of the justice and wisdom of their claims, and are open to having their own opinions and understandings of their interests change in the process. (p. 6)

Inclusion calls for an examination of a number of things: Who is "at the table," and who is missing? How can a process be truly inclusive if some constituencies are unable or refuse to participate? Are individual opinions or beliefs appropriate in the public square, or should citizens "check their personal views at the door" and contribute only views that are in the best interest of the community? If a group is represented but they do not have free and equal opportunities to speak (real or perceived), how can the process be managed to ensure equal voice? When community dynamics include a history of inequality, oppression, or subjugation, how can a group establish equal footing for all participants? The challenge is to identify and appropriately manage power inequities.

Reason and Respect

Political theorist John Rawls promoted the idea that the public square should be a place of reason. Responding principally to attempts to introduce religious beliefs into public policy making or efforts to base public principles on religious morals, John Rawls expressed the view that American democracy is based upon secular ideals, a public morality that needs no religious grounding. Democratic ideals of justice and freedom, Rawls contended, are "self-supporting" (qtd. in Macedo 2000, p. 169). He began with the premise that justice is critical to a constitutional democracy (Thomas 2007). Given the diversity of populations and perspectives in the United States, conflict is inevitable. Citizens should seek to introduce only ideas and views that are reasonable and politically acceptable in a just society. In more practical terms, Rawls viewed public reason as almost a ground rule for meaningful and effective democratic dialogue and deliberation.

Reason and *inclusion* as guiding principles for public engagement can lead to conflict. Reason as a limitation to discourse arguably inhibits free speech and restricts the free exchange of ideas, new perspectives, insights, and innovations. It limits the consideration of multiple viewpoints, often by those "at the margins of the dominant culture" (Macedo 1999, pp. 3–4). It "trivializes" religious perspectives (Carter 1993) and privileges, for example, secularism.

It is much harder and less effective to be "reasonable" if one is oppressed or marginalized rather than satisfied with the status quo and comfortable with the processes and norms that prevail in a community. In many countries, some residents contest the claim that they are even part of the political community; they strive to secede, gain autonomy, or return to an independent status that they or their ancestors held in the past. It can seem particularly egregious to expect them to join a reasonable dialogue or deliberation with the very groups they do not want to be joined to. For all these reasons, many social activists believe that "deliberation" is actually harmful to people who have serious grievances and who contest the standard forums and procedures of any given society (Levine and Nierras 2007).

Part of the response to this view is that deliberation practitioners actually define "reasonableness" much less narrowly and stringently than academic theorists such as Rawls and Gutmann and Thompson do. Moderators of real deliberative forums appreciate expressions of emotion, personal testimony, and storytelling (Mansbridge et al. 2006). They do not expect consensus but are often pleased by increased mutual understanding and social capital. People will not always agree, but they can agree to enter into a discussion with a willingness to be civil and open-minded, to listen to the viewpoints of others, to entertain questions and critique, and to allow for adequate time for not just the expression of all viewpoints but for a reciprocal exchange of ideas. For these reasons, a third critical principle in a deliberative democracy is that of mutual respect.

A Vision for Higher Education

Colleges and universities serve as (1) institutional citizens in local communities and, more broadly, society; and (2) educators of citizens, both enrolled students and the public at large. In both capacities, colleges and universities should participate in this broader movement for deliberative democracy. Planning how to participate requires assessing the strengths and weaknesses of higher education as a sector, compared to other crucial democratic institutions such as K–12 schools, the news media, political parties, and labor unions. The strengths of academia include substantial resources (such as professors and other highly skilled employees, buildings, libraries and other collections, and endowments); nonprofit status; a tradition of political independence; and excellence in research, dialogue, deliberation, and civil discourse. It is also an advantage that colleges and universities exist in thousands of communities in the United States. Because (unlike most corporations) they are unable to relocate, their interests are intertwined with those of their neighbors.

The weaknesses of higher education include a focus on one slice of the population (basically, young adults who were successful in school and who can afford tuition); tight budgets and a dependence on private and state funds; a hyper-competitive market for students, grants, and faculty; pressure to educate students for personal and professional career advancement

and not for social responsibility; narrowly tailored disciplinary silos that do not lend themselves to applied, interdisciplinary problem solving; and a limited mission. It would, for instance, be inappropriate for a college to support a political party, yet parties play important roles in almost all democracies. This example underscores the fact that colleges cannot restore democracy on their own.

The broader democratic civic education agenda challenges the academy to make hard choices about who gets an education and what counts as success in student learning and faculty scholarship. Colleges and universities cannot serve every citizen directly, but they should explicitly recognize that their admissions decisions contribute to social stratification. This issue should be openly discussed on campus. Appropriate responses might include adjusting admissions criteria to increase fairness, without jeopardizing excellence; rewarding democratic and civic skills of both students and faculty; inviting the public onto campus for deliberative processes; and producing knowledge, culture, and information collaboratively with outside citizens for public purposes.

Colleges and universities can replace daily newspapers as providers of high-quality information and spaces for discussion on matters of public concern, now that the newspaper industry seems threatened with economic collapse. They can serve as conveners, bringing together members of the campus community, citizens, experts, and policy makers to address local concerns such as health care, poverty, public transportation needs, or public safety. Likewise, colleges and universities can help to strengthen civic education in K–12 schools. And in their business practices, they can model relations between employers and workers and between customers and clients, and take seriously promises of shared governance and democratic decision making.

The full agenda goes far beyond what we can discuss in this chapter. What follows is a sampling of some promising practices in teaching and learning for deliberative democracy. These activities are contributions to the democratic movement, and they would become even more important if higher education began to play a more significant civic role.

Intergroup Dialogue

Nearly twenty years ago, the University of Michigan–Ann Arbor developed a program in response to several racially charged incidents on campus. As Schoem and Hurtado (2001) explain:

> In a sense, intergroup dialogue is a *diverse* twenty-first-century version of the *homogeneous* nineteenth-century town hall meeting: sleeves rolled up, talking directly, honestly, and sometimes quite harshly about the most difficult and pressing topics of the day, and then moving forward together with solutions to strengthen the community and the nation. (p. 4)

Intergroup dialogue (IGD) is now offered on campuses nationally. How IGD is implemented varies, but most programs share certain characteristics. IGD programs are for credit. They are designed to bring together groups of twelve to eighteen students from diverse backgrounds to engage in in-person, facilitated dialogues over an extended period of time. The express purposes of IGD are to help students "understand their commonalities and differences, examine the nature and impact of social inequalities, and explore ways of working together toward greater equality and justice" (Zuniga et al. 2007).

Like community dialogues, IGD programs are anything but superficial. Students study the difference between dialogue and debate. They practice interactive communication skills such as active listening, clarifying, synthesizing, and paraphrasing. They study terms such as discrimination, racism, prejudice, affirmative action, and oppression. They practice participating in and facilitating difficult dialogues such as conversations about religious beliefs in public life, immigration, structural racism, and white privilege. They develop action plans for meaningful community change. They challenge students to reflect on their own social identity, beliefs, and perspectives.

Comparisons between students in control groups and in IGD programs show consistent positive effects in three categories of desired outcomes: intergroup understanding, intergroup relationships, and intergroup collaboration and engagement. Students in IGD programs gain awareness of inequality and its relationship to structural factors (e.g., economically disadvantaged schools, unequal access to jobs or education, and income disparities), as well as increased empathy and motivation to bridge differences in order to work collaboratively (Biren et al. 2009).

The Difficult Dialogues Initiative

In 2007, the Ford Foundation gave forty-three colleges and universities grants to start "difficult dialogues" on issues of each campus's choice. The goal of the program was to promote academic freedom and religious, cultural, and political pluralism on college and university campuses. The projects addressed a wide range of issues such as religious freedom and public life, racial and ethnic tensions, Arab American conflicts, sexual orientation, and academic freedom (Thomas Jefferson Center 2008). Clark University, for example, organized four months of activities over the course of two semesters, starting with broad issues of American democracy and citizen participation before moving to issues of religious tolerance, race, climate change, and power. The program hosted panel discussions, presentations, and films, all followed by facilitated, small-group dialogues. Faculty developed nine courses ranging from communication and culture to environmental politics. The program is continuing in 2008–2009, long past the grant period (Clark University 2008). As another example, LaGuardia Community College, located in the borough of Queens in New York City, pursued three activities: an ongoing faculty dialogue and development initiative on the role of religion in its classrooms, the

collection of digital stories by students, faculty, and staff about their perspectives on faith, and community study circles on the role of religion in public life. For the community study circles, the campus trained over forty facilitators, faculty, staff, and students. The college hosted over fifty small, interfaith dialogues involving most of the 150 faith communities in Queens (LaGuardia Community College 2008) and worked with Everyday Democracy to design the program and create a discussion guide (see Additional Resources).

Sustained Dialogue Campus Network

Sustained dialogue is a change process that brings the same people together repeatedly and often over a long period of time to discuss conflicts. The Sustained Dialogue Campus Network (International Institute for Sustained Dialogue 2008) involves students from dozens of campuses nationally who work to improve race relations and campus climate. Campuses that support sustained dialogue programs include Princeton University, the University of Virginia, Dickenson College, the University of Notre Dame, Vanderbilt University, Colorado College, and the University of Hawaii. These are student-driven, extracurricular initiatives that continue over a long period of time, more than a year. As part of the program, students train to become facilitators and then train others on campus to continue the work. Annually, the Sustained Dialogue Campus Network hosts a national meeting where students can attend workshops, training sessions, and dialogue sessions.

The focus of a sustained dialogue is usually relationship building. Dialogues are facilitated, but because they are relaxed and long-term, there is less pressure to move to action or identify a transformation on the part of the participants. Participants not only discuss an issue. They also study the process of and attitudes about change more broadly. Participants probe the dynamics of group relationships and weigh the consequences (in the same way an issue forum does) for addressing and ignoring those group dynamics.

Centers for, and Programs in, Deliberation

One trend on university campuses is to open centers or start programs in deliberation. Where these are housed varies by institution. Some, like the Center for Public Deliberation at Colorado State University, are linked directly to academic disciplines such as communication. Others, such as the New England Center for Civic Life at Franklin Pierce College, are interdisciplinary.

Some centers focus on civic learning more broadly but include in their student learning agenda opportunities to engage in public deliberation, often in partnership with surrounding communities. The Laboratory for Public Scholarship and Democracy at Pennsylvania State University manages multiple learning experiences. Students work in local communities, organize community dialogues, and conduct community-based research. The center hosts Constitution Day activities and runs a course for the first-year experience.

Some campuses are experimenting with Democracy Lab, a series of courses that teaches students the art of deliberation as they discuss contemporary political issues. Regis University in Denver, Colorado, offers an online Democracy Lab course using National Issues Forums books on health care, ethnic tensions, civic disengagement, and international affairs.

Many of these centers start as hubs for National Issues Forums (NIF) and the work of the Kettering Foundation, which launched and continues to support NIF as a nonpartisan, nationwide network of organizations that sponsor public forums training institutes for public deliberation (Melville, Willingham, and Dedrick 2005). The NIF approach to public deliberation is somewhat like a facilitated town meeting: people come together to examine an issue and carefully weigh the pros and cons of particular policy choices to address that issue. Issues are framed in advance, and forum participants read previously supplied "issue books" or framing materials. While weighing the pros and cons, participants are asked to identify the values that drive their particular viewpoints. Participants complete a survey at the beginning and end of the forum, and, where appropriate, the results of the surveys are forwarded to policy makers.

Centers that serve as hubs for NIF might run forums on previously framed issues, or they might host a Public Policy Institute, a multiday workshop for people interested in learning how to organize and moderate a forum. These centers also host Issue Framing Workshops in which participants study an issue and learn how to frame choices in public policy and write issue books.

Programs in Conflict Resolution

Universities such as George Mason University and Portland State University support large and well-known programs in conflict resolution. Historically, these programs focused on interpersonal and private disputes from a stakeholder perspective. They offer a variety of concentrations, including

- Theory and practice
- Mediation, negotiation, arbitration, and alternative dispute resolution
- Problem solving and moral reasoning
- Consensus building and other models of decision making
- Community mediation and community building
- Social identity and conflict
- Intercultural learning and communication
- Global and international conflict
- Policy making at the local and national levels
- Peace and social justice, violence prevention, and peacekeeping

Sometimes, programs are combined with other disciplines like social work, philosophy, or the health professions.

Most of these programs provide education and training for people interested in serving as third-party mediators or adjudicators—consultants brought in to analyze, manage, resolve, and occasionally prevent conflict, usually between easily identified stakeholders. The idea is that problems can be solved by individuals or groups who work out their differences face-to-face.

More recently, schools are expanding programs in conflict resolution to apply to public settings. The theory is that the skills, expectations, and approaches to stakeholder conflict management can also apply to communities. The distinction is in purpose: the goal of a public conflict management process is to identify common ground and shared, community values and to facilitate the process so that people can work together to realize those community ideals. With this as a goal, the process does not support the aspirations of an individual or a particular group (Dukes, Piscolish, and Stephens 2000), and the scale is usually larger than most conflict management work. Educating graduates of conflict resolution programs for this kind of work involves courses in the theory and practice of dialogue; models of deliberation; facilitation; and organizing safe, thoughtful forums where people can come together, talk, exchange ideas, and collaboratively seek solutions. Students also study theories of dialogue and how dialogue can enhance more traditional conflict resolution or peace building work.

THE COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE MOVEMENT

"Collaborative governance" is a growing effort by governments to work with other government branches (and sometimes with nongovernment organizations, including private corporations and nonprofit organizations) to increase efficiency, make public decisions, and implement changes in public policy. In addition to their typical role providing expertise and data on public issues, some units at colleges and universities facilitate collaborative governance by serving as third-party mediators, organizers, conveners, and facilitators. These centers offer a broad range of outreach services, such as helping public officials address conflict or serving as third-party mediators. Those that are exclusively consultative might be funded by the state. Others run programs and educate students in third-party negotiation and mediation, consensus building and policy making, and conflict management. Most do both.

More and more, these centers are working to advance collaborative governance by providing neutral forums where citizens can engage in dialogue and deliberation on public matters. Many of these centers also provide training in public deliberation, facilitation, and intergroup dialogue.

It is interesting to see where these centers and programs are housed on campus. They can be part of schools of public policy, public administration, law, urban and regional planning, communication, conflict resolution, and environmental sciences. They are sometimes linked to cooperative extension programs. Only a few operate out of offices of civic engagement or

undergraduate programs; those are generally part of government departments. Some are freestanding centers, such as the Institute for the Common Good at Regis University or the Fanning Institute at the University of Georgia.

LEADERSHIP EDUCATION

Images of the ideal leader have evolved significantly, shifting how leadership education is designed. Top-down, hierarchical models of leadership have been replaced with models of participatory and facilitative leadership. At the University of Richmond's Jepson School of Leadership, the nation's first degree-granting student leadership program, students are required to take courses in leadership theory and models, group dynamics, critical thinking, and ethics. The school also offers more advanced courses in conflict resolution, change and policy making, cultural and international contexts, social movements, and political leadership. Central to student learning are the arts of democracy: democratic dialogue, deliberation and reason, conflict management, and collaborative change.

Organizational change and leadership experts such as MIT's Peter Senge and Harvard's Ronald Heifetz advocate for democratic methods to facilitate organizational change. Both point to dialogue as a cornerstone for effective and sustainable organizational change (Senge 1990, pp. 238–257; Heifetz 1994, pp. 113–121). Senge outlines the necessary conditions (analogous to ground rules) for dialogue in organizations—for example, that participants should "suspend" their assumptions and regard each other as equal colleagues, and that the dialogue should be facilitated by a neutral individual (Senge 1990, p. 243). Both Senge and Heifetz point to other elements of effective change initiatives: assessment, careful framing, collaborating, listening, and cultivating a shared vision; involvement of constituents most likely to be affected by the outcomes and seeking diversity of perspective; viewing conflict as an opportunity. Heifetz promotes "orchestrating conflict" through dialogue (Heifetz 1994, pp. 117–121).

Consider the work of two exemplary consulting firms that design and facilitate change initiatives for both corporations and governments: Viewpoint Learning in San Diego and the Interaction Institute for Social Change (IISC) in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Both emphasize dialogue as the foundation for sustainable organizational change. IISC offers public workshops in "facilitative leadership" and "facilitating change," both of which emphasize dialogue and collaboration as central to organizational decision making, strategic planning, and change. Viewpoint Learning suggests a three-stage dialogic approach to "organizational learning" and change. Stage I involves "consciousness raising," the exchange of personal perspectives and facts. Stage II involves "working through" sticky problems. In this stage, organizations identify all viewpoints on an issue and employ a "choice" approach (see the description of National Issues Forums and the work of the Kettering Foundation, above) to weighing the pros and cons of each viewpoint. Stage III involves decision

making and action. Both organizations advise clients to establish ground rules for all dialogue stages, such as "listen with empathy" and "look for common ground" (Viewpoint Learning 2010).

Most organizations, governments, and communities know that at some point during a change effort, they will need to do some assessment. They will have to consider, for example, their readiness for and barriers to change, organizational or community culture and understanding of core values, the nature of the problem, and the likelihood that a change initiative will succeed. Assessment can be accomplished through dialogue processes. Consider, for example, evaluating institutional culture. Organizers of a change initiative would want to know how people feel about prior change efforts. Are they cynical? What are their anxieties about change? How much institutional inertia do they need to overcome? Is inertia due to a high level of comfort or a lack of awareness of the need to change, or something else? Consider evaluating institutional values. Organizers of a change initiative might want to ask, what adjectives describe this campus culture? What subcultures exist and what adjectives do they identify as core? What stories do people tell to describe the culture of this campus? In both lines of questioning, these are best answered through qualitative research, through a process of dialogue and inquiry.

Dialogue as Pedagogy

Democratic dialogue is not only an important skill to be learned. It is a good *way to learn*. The educational research over the past twenty-five years has led to new conclusions about what and how students learn. The predominant teaching method—lecturing—does not seem to result in lasting learning. What students learn in a lecture is forgotten, by some measures, after a week, and by others, after five years (Finkel 2000). In "experiments involving measures of retention of information after the end of a course, measures of transfer of knowledge to new situations, or measures of problem solving, thinking or attitude change, or motivation for further learning, the results tend to show differences favoring discussion methods over lecture" (McKeachie 1994, p. 54). Students might relearn material to prepare for exams, but in general, by a few months later, they retain barely half of what they have heard through "teaching as telling" (Garvin 1991, p. 4). This view is consistent with the educational philosophy of Paulo Freire, who argued that "banking education"—a form of education that treats students as empty containers into which the teachers "pour" knowledge—fails to stimulate curiosity, creativity, and the production of knowledge (qtd. in Gadotti 1994, pp. 10–13). Quality study is not an act of consuming ideas, but rather one of creating them (Gadotti 1994, p. 12).

Nor does abstract or generalized learning result in the kind of deep, contextualized understanding that educators view as an important learning outcome. Students who learn through passive listening, memorizing, and

repeating back what they have memorized do not learn to apply that learning to practical or social contexts. Further, lecturing fails to advance skills in critical thinking, moral reasoning, problem solving, or intercultural sensitivity and competency.

Researchers exploring new teaching methods have found that students learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning process and when they, not the teachers, do the talking. Research shows that when students learn through carefully designed opportunities for collaborative inquiry and discussion, they retain what they learn and have more of an understanding of how to apply what they have learned in life (McKeachie 1994, pp. 32, 279–286).

This model challenges the traditional classroom hierarchy, placing the professor in the roles of facilitator and learner rather than that of the sole classroom authority conveying knowledge. Of course, professors and their students are not equals—the professor identifies the course learning goals, designs the curriculum, and evaluates student performance. In a discussion-based classroom, however, the professor works to overcome assumptions about authority. Discussion-based learning is "predicated on the belief that the most powerful ideas can be produced when people are expressing their ideas on a topic and listening to others to express theirs" (Hess 2009, p. 14). The professor invites students to think, manage their own learning, and contribute to the learning of everyone—including the professor—in the room.

This is not to say, however, that learning environments should be so democratic that the professor is irrelevant or invisible. Quality discussion-based learning experiences require careful planning by teachers who provide information and structure, frame issues, ask thought-provoking questions, and prompt students to pose their own questions. C. Roland Christensen (1991), who developed case-method teaching for Harvard's Business and Medical Schools and, eventually, Harvard University more broadly, described the discussion-based teacher as the "planner, host, moderator, devil's advocate, fellow-student, and judge—a potentially confusing set of roles. Even the most seasoned [discussion] leader must be content with uncertainty, because discussion teaching is the art of managing spontaneity" (16). Indeed, creating effective discussion-based learning environments takes more time and effort. Teachers "must consider not only *what* they will teach, but also *whom* and *how*. And the classroom encounter consumes a great deal of energy; simultaneous attention to the process . . . and content . . . requires emotional as well as intellectual engagement" (Christensen 1991, p. 15). In his Harvard course on discussion leadership, Professor Christensen warned his students that for every hour of a discussion-based class, he typically prepared for three hours.

Student Political Engagement

Political education and engagement are powerful ways to prepare students for their roles as citizens and leaders in a diverse and complex world. In "The

Place of Political Learning in College," author Ann Colby (2008) defines political engagement broadly, inclusive of

> the wide range of ways that people . . . participate in American democracy, without making the definition so broad that it includes all of civic voluntarism. Political engagement, therefore, includes community and civic involvement that has a systemic dimension and various forms of engagement with public policy issues . . . Political activities are driven by systemic-level goals, a desire to affect the shared values, practices, and policies that shape collective life. (p. 4)

The scope of political learning includes education in democratic ideals and practices; social change and public policy making; public dialogue; deliberation; and models of public participation, democratic leadership and organizing skills, and community involvement at the systemic level. These are all critical dimensions to education for deliberative democracy.

Political learning on campus happens through multiple student political education and engagement efforts such as the following:

Voter registration drives
Advocacy work and debates
Summer institutes
Semester-in-Washington
    programs
Internships with political offices
Residential theme-based learning
    communities
Invited speakers
Mentoring programs
Deliberation about political issues
Panel discussions
"Political Awareness Day"
Leadership training

Campaign work
Constitution Day activities
Political research and action projects
Structured reflection on political
    experiences
Courses in democratic values and
    process
Peer-leadership programs
Informed Voter programs
Political learning outcomes in
    particular departments
Polling, exit poll studies, research on
    voting patterns
Voter registration rights initiatives

The Next Form of Democratic Education

We began this chapter by expressing our concern that through exclusive decisions about who gets admitted and who has access to institutional resources, colleges and universities fail to remedy—and arguably perpetuate—persistent patterns of social and economic disparity in American society. Responding to concerns in the early 1990s about the "disconnected" academy, a steady decline in citizen engagement in public life, and deepening social and political divides, colleges and universities complemented existing diversity and service programming by adding civic and community-based learning experiences. More recent additions include programs in intergroup dialogue, public

deliberation, and political engagement. To circumvent entrenched disciplinary silos in academia, many campuses increasingly support interdisciplinary centers and research institutes. All of these are promising developments—as was the 2008 presidential election. Renewed enthusiasm for political engagement manifested in the months approaching the 2008 election, and the election of the first African American president, were indeed causes for celebration. Perhaps more to the point, President Barack Obama came from a background in deliberative community organizing and spoke consistently on the campaign trail about "active citizenship." As he said in his 2007 "A Call to Serve" speech, "This will not be a call issued in one speech or program; this will be a cause of my presidency" (qtd. in Organizing for America 2007).

Nonetheless, higher education cannot point to additional programs or to the 2008 election as evidence of a civic mission accomplished. Although college students turned out to vote at near-record levels, their same-age peers not attending college remained on the sidelines in the election itself. Those who did vote may easily lapse back into complacent, distant relationships with policy makers, as demonstrated by the low turnout in 2010. Surveys showed low levels of political knowledge: for example, only 46 percent of the public knew, after the 2010 election gave the Republicans control of the House of Representatives, which party would control that body (Pew Research Center, 2010). Civic leaders agree that the task of revitalizing democracy calls for reform. American democracy needs to be more equitable and inclusive, and it should be characterized by active, everyday citizen participation in public discussion, governance and policy making, and community development.

Programs that previously affected a small number of students can be assessed, and those that are effective can be broadened to reach all students. No student should graduate without knowing how a bill becomes a law; what freedoms are protected by the First Amendment; the history of civil rights movements in this country; the role of religion in public life; and the effectiveness of political processes, including community organizing, protest, voting, and public deliberation. Students should develop what Eric Lane (2008) calls a "constitutional conscience," an understanding of the institutions, processes, ideals, and principles of American government and democracy (p. 55). Critical issues and current events should be explored from an interdisciplinary perspective, and students should learn how to solve real public problems, not just theoretical problems, in collaboration with each other and with citizens from outside the campus.

Academic affairs and offices of diversity and civic engagement should unite under one roof or work collaboratively. Campuses need to *get political*. Students need to talk about the things that divide us as a nation: race, gender, ethnicity, class, religion, and ideology. They need to grapple with deeply personal matters of exclusion, injustice, power, structural racism, and privilege. They need to examine free speech and how it can be uncivil, unproductive, and even oppressive. They need to consider rules of discourse such as respect, open-mindedness, and inclusion and how those intersect and perhaps

conflict with reason. They need to know how cross-cultural dynamics can stifle the free exchange of ideas, and how those dynamics can be enhanced when managed honestly and openly.

The responsibility for these changes rests with the faculty members who oversee the curriculum and with leaders who help establish institutional priorities. Yet we can envision faculty or academic leaders responding with concerns that deliberative democracy is "just one more thing" in the litany of education reforms. We don't agree. We believe that educating students to be informed about and protective of democracy is not an add-on. Educating for democracy *is* higher education's central purpose—why colleges and universities were established in the first place.

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