THE NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION

FALL 2009 VOLUME XXIV, NO. 2

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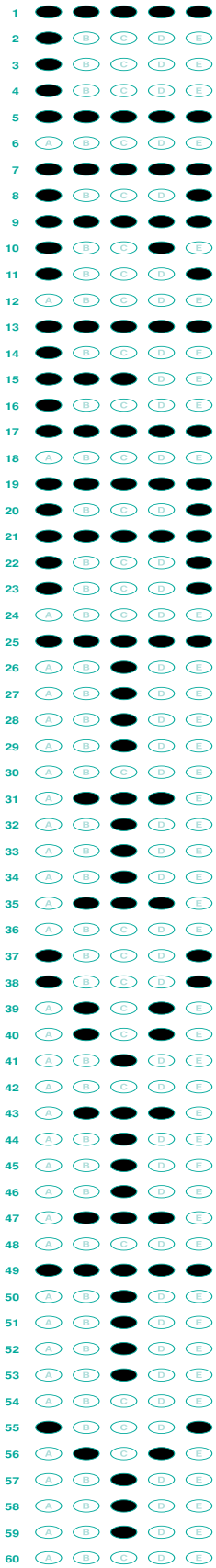

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE TEST 2009

As New England's Economy Becomes More Knowledge-Based, How Will We Be Sure Our Students Are Learning What They Need To Know?

According to the Nellie Mae Education Foundation's latest report, ***What It Takes to Succeed in the 21st Century – and How New Englanders Are Faring***, the success of our region will depend in large part on how proficient our residents are in the skills necessary for success in New England's increasingly knowledge-based economy - skills like communication, creativity, problem-solving, critical thinking, the ability to work as part of a team, and the use of modern technologies.

Standardized tests still play an important role in an accountability system by providing assessments of certain skills. However, we must recognize that knowledge is obtained in various ways, through different methods in different places, and we must begin to measure competency accordingly.

In order to produce the well-rounded citizens New England needs, we must utilize performance-based assessments that are rigorous, valid and revealing of what learners actually know.

At the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, we know that institutionalizing and implementing this effort is a test we can and must pass.

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The New England Journal of Higher Education (formerly *Connection*) is published five times a year by the New England Board of Higher Education, 45 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111-1325
Phone: 617.357.9620 Fax: 617.338.1577
Email: nejhe@nebhe.org

Vol. XXIV, No. 2 Fall 2009

ISSN: 1938-5978

Publisher: Michael K. Thomas
Executive Editor: John O. Harney
Managing Editor: Charlotte Stratton

Design and Production: HM Studios, Boston, Mass.

Back Issues: Back issues are accessible on the World Wide Web at www.nebhe.org/nejhe/archives. Hard copies of regular issues may be purchased from NEBHE for $3.95 each; annual directory issue, $20.

For advertising information, contact Charlotte Stratton at cstratton@nebhe.org.

The New England Journal of Higher Education is printed in New England.

The New England Journal of Higher Education is indexed and abstracted in EBSCOhost's Academic Search Elite, Academic Search Premier and Professional Development Collection, and indexed in the MLA International Bibliography and ERIC's Current Index to Journals in Education.

The New England Board of Higher Education is a nonprofit, congressionally authorized, interstate agency whose mission is to promote greater educational opportunities and services for the residents of New England. NEBHE was established by the New England Higher Education Compact, a 1955 agreement among the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.

EDITOR'S MEMO

Campus Visiting

It's amazing how little a career of reading and writing about higher education has equipped me to offer meaningful help on my 17-year-old son's college search. Recently, my family and I went visiting colleges, and my main observation was how, when you're rushing to see as many campuses as possible, even my beloved New England can look like a jumble of impersonal highways laced with chain hotels and chain restaurants.

Another observation is how proud New England colleges are of their Division I athletic teams. Despite all the griping about high schools being out of sync with colleges, the sports fantasy is an area where they align well. My son's school offers four "academic days" when students can be excused to go visit colleges. One parent asked, "What if they play a sport? Will they be excused from practice that day?" The guidance director answered sheepishly: "Most of the coaches are OK with that, but it varies." (*An afternoon of sprints may be worth more to some students, especially if they're scholarship material, than finding the perfect college match.*)

We diverted from the New England tour with a ferry ride to Long Island from Bridgeport, Conn. The American Institute for Economic Research recently identified Bridgeport as America's second best "small metro" in which to attend college—above such known powerhouses as Ann Arbor, Mich., Madison, Wis., Durham, N.C., and New Haven, Conn. Gritty Bridgeport is home to a university dogged by controversy since it was rescued from the financial brink in the early '90s by an affiliate of Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church, but the honored small metro also includes ritzier Fairfield County towns, where high college degree attainment and high per-capita income pump up overall rankings.

At one university, a tour guide aimed at anxious parental hearts by gloating about the campus's new escort service and security measures. During a quiet moment, I asked the guide if the security steps followed a wave of campus crime. "No," she conceded, "I'm a petite woman and I've never had to use an escort during my time on campus." We also saw lots of dorms, not the fancy type hyped up by the media, but the stale kind I remember from college days … enhanced with wireless, of course.

Also every school wants to outdo the next with its commitment to the environment. The new public enemy No. 1 is the plastic lunch tray. The trays are nonrecyclable and thus destined to clog landfills. Trays also encourage overuse of water for dishwashing, and tempt students with more space for cafeteria junk food, destined to clog arteries. Some colleges boast about going trayless. But not bottomless: One vowed to keep the trays for protection during winter sledding.

To be sure, competition for college has colored my view lately. On an afternoon train out of Boston, one woman signs off her cell phone call with a child, saying, "OK, study your butt off." Another says, "Alright, now you just have your project to do." You'd think we were racing to the moon again.

But the college search also reminded us of the advantages we enjoy. At the time, the Connecticut Better Business Bureau was warning that "consumers looking to get ahead are being taken-in by so-called diploma mills" … paying up to $1,400 to earn a diploma by taking an online test or through "life experience" only to learn that college admissions departments and employers didn't fall for the credential. And my son is downright privileged, compared with the dozens of migrant workers we saw waiting for busses along the farmy end of Long Island. The question for him, like so many others, will be less about *access to* college and more about *success in* college.

* * * *

Our college search began with solid advice from friend Bob Woodbury, whom I wrote about in this space in the Summer 2009 *NEJHE*. In September, Bob lost his battle with cancer. Anne Woodbury, Bob's wife of 50 years, emailed friends assuring us, "He was his usual upbeat positive self who was educating right to the end. He taught us how to live fully and to die peacefully with dignity."

John O. Harney *is executive editor of* The New England Journal of Higher Education. *Email: jharney@nebhe.org.*

The Downbeat Goes On

In the Fall 2008 issue of *NEJHE*, we reported on the Center for American Progress study attributing declining middle-class financial insecurity to falling incomes, rising prices for necessities and the decimation of personal wealth.

What a difference a year *doesn't* make. Despite late-summer signs of a slow economic recovery, the center's August 2009 economic snapshot co-written by center senior fellow and University of Massachusetts Boston associate professor of public policy Christian E. Weller finds:

- In June 2009, only 68% of the country's industrial capacity—factories, mines, power stations and people—were in use, the smallest share since the Federal Reserve started to collect these data more than four decades ago.
- The U.S. economy lost 6.7 million jobs between December 2007 and July 2009, though job losses declined after the economic stimulus package passed in February 2009.
- The total unemployment rate was 9% in July 2009, but nearly 15% among African-Americans and 12% among Hispanics. Youth unemployment stood near 24%. Unemployment for people without a high school diploma remained at 15%, compared with 9% for those with a diploma and 5% for those with a college degree.
- Total family wealth decreased by 24% from June 2007 to March 2009—a steeper dive than in any 21-month period since the Fed started collecting these data in 1952.

Riding Out the Higher Ed Crisis

Some New England universities made tough choices to survive a tumultuous 2009, but they'll have to make more, according to "Leading Through and Beyond the Crisis: How Four Institutions Are Navigating the Economic Downturn," a symposium held this past September by Bedford, Mass.-based Maguire Associates.

Boston University President Robert Brown, University of Vermont President Daniel Fogel, Harvard University VP of Finance Dan Shore and Worcester Polytechnic Institute VP of Enrollment Management Kristin Tichenor proudly told of the tough but measured changes their campuses made to ride out economic storms in 2008.

Brown noted after a year of everyone working shorthanded, BU expected to post one of its best-ever fiscal years, but warned that need for student financial aid funds will continue to grow. Fogel assured listeners that despite "noise" on campus including rumors that faculty would vote no confidence in the president, UVM busted records for applications and research awards, managed to limit layoffs to 16 staffers (and cut two sports) and Fogel survived. But the crisis did bring fear in the community. "As a leader," Fogel noted, "you have to lay your hand on this trembling beast and calm it."

Speakers warned that while the trouble isn't over, it will be harder to gird institutions to tighten their belts further. "You can't keep an organization on high alert indefinitely," said Brown.

Tichenor suggested that when the crisis hit in 2007, the students WPI courted were so far along in the admissions process, they decided to proceed as planned. But WPI trends suggest it's the third year after a recession begins that recruitment and enrollment behavior are most directly affected; that's next year.

Meanwhile, Jack Maguire, the founder of Maguire Associates and self-described "father or enrollment management," noted that the tough past year showed it's possible to plan for the bad, build on a conservative budget and ride out a "down," but successful year. The old *monthly* enrollment planning, he quipped, has changed to *weekly* or *daily* planning.

For-Profits: Definition from Webster

ITT Educational Services, the Indiana-based for-profit company that runs ITT Technical Institutes, took over Daniel Webster College of Nashua, N.H., in June 2009.

By August, ITT had ousted the president and vice president of institutional advancement and at least 20 other Daniel Webster employees, according to the *Nashua Telegraph* newspaper.

Daniel Webster was among 114 private institutions that the U.S. Department of Education included on a June list of colleges with fragile finances, and was carrying an estimated $28 million in debt.

Zzzz ....

"Sleep technologists" work in sleep labs, usually associated with hospitals, helping diagnose sleep disorders. Registered sleep technologists are in high demand and earn starting salaries of more than $40,000. Because of the nature of the work, they often work at night. This fall, Northern Essex Community College began making its Sleep Technology Program available almost entirely online to accommodate the needs of working professionals.

Students in this two-semester program also attend clinical instruction one Saturday a month in the sleep laboratory on Northern Essex's Lawrence, Mass., campus, and will be required to complete a clinical experience at one of several Greater Boston sites.

Northern Essex is offering the hybrid program in collaboration with Bunker Hill Community College, where sleep patterns are a hot topic. With day and evening classes filled with surging enrollment, and adult students working longer hours, Bunker Hill this fall began offering a new breed of "night" classes: introductory psychology and writing from 11:45 p.m. to 2:30 a.m.!

A Squid Bites Man Story

Talk about a feeding frenzy. International news outlets went to town this past summer over a story of scuba divers off San Diego being menaced by jumbo squid.

University of Rhode Island biologist Brad Seibel calls it a fish story. He told URI colleagues that when he dove at night in the

Gulf of California, he was surrounded by many Humboldt squid, but his flashlight seemed to scare them away. In any case, the Humboldt squid's man-eating reputation is exacerbated by private dive companies in Mexico who insist that customers wear body armor or dive in cages while in waters where the squid are found.

Seibel says that unlike certain sharks that feed on large fish and marine mammals, jumbo squid use the suckers on their tentacles to feed on small fish and plankton. He's preparing a formal report with his recommendations for safely diving with the squid and the assurance that "they aren't the aggressive man-eaters as they have been portrayed."

Preparing Teachers of Color

Wheelock College joined with Eagle Academy for Young Men in the South Bronx and Boston Public Schools on a new initiative to increase the number of African-American and Hispanic male teachers in schools.

Of the nation's 4.8 million teachers, only 2% are black men, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The shortage of male teachers of color compounds the academic difficulties many Hispanic and African American boys face in school, according to Wheelock.

Wheelock's Leadership Academy for Future Educators opened this past summer with 10 male high school students of color from Boston and New York who have expressed interest in pursuing a career in education.

In August, the young men attended classes on leadership and teamwork, and spent a weekend at the Sportsmen's Club of Greater Boston. The private club on Lake Cobbosseecontee in West Gardiner, Maine, was founded in 1915 by African-American Pullman porters where they could vacation free of the segregated U.S. society.

Wheelock has dedicated financial aid resources for program participants who apply to college there.

NEBHE Sees Green in PBL

In 2006, NEBHE was awarded a three-year National Science Foundation (NSF) grant to develop a series of "challenges" to help teachers use problem-based learning (PBL) to teach about photonics. This past September, NEBHE received a three-year, $900,000 grant from NSF to apply PBL to sustainable technology.

Many colleges have begun offering continuing education courses on sustainability in building, transportation, energy and economic policy. NEBHE's new PBL project will develop courses for both pre-service and in-service teachers, plus six problem-based challenges to meet the need for instructional materials in college and high school classrooms. The principal investigator is NEBHE's Fenna Hanes. Co-principal investigators are professors Michele Dischino of Central Connecticut State University, Judith Donnelly of Three Rivers Community College and Nicholas Massa of Springfield Technical Community College.

PBL is a learning-centered, rather than instructor-centered, approach in which the problem situation drives the learning. PBL has been limited in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education because of a lack of instructional resources and lack of opportunities for teachers and faculty to learn how to incorporate PBL in their existing courses.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that by 2010, the number of jobs in STEM-related occupations will grow at three times the rate of all other occupations. But the U.S. lacks homegrown talent to fill these occupations and must rely on foreign workers. One reason for declining U.S. enrollment in STEM programs is that naturally problem-solving students are turned off by dry classroom lectures followed by cookbook-style lab experiences that provide little interaction.

NEBHE's project will develop a series of industry-based challenges in hot sustainability fields to stimulate PBL in the classroom and help lower the dropout rate from engineering technology programs.

A Whole New U

MICHAEL K. THOMAS

With its blessed regularity, fall has come again to New England. Despite concerns among college and university leaders about the impact of the economic downturn on admissions and student decision-making, the students have come again to New England, as well. Though many institutions had to increase the level of "tuition discounting" needed to help students and parents commit, a small sense of relief is apparent—a collective sigh to acknowledge making it through another period of uncertainty.

The reality, of course, is that the admissions cycle never ends, so colleges are back to work quickly. And while the chairman of the Federal Reserve recently pronounced the "technical end" to the economic recession, higher education leaders know that significant challenges linger. With no more federal stimulus funds to back-fill higher education appropriations, many observers agree that if the FY10 state budget cycle was bad (and it was), the next cycle will be worse.

Higher education will make it through another round of budget cuts, staff reductions and tuition increases to welcome another fall and another generation of students, young and old.

Year-to-year and budget-to-budget survival must not overshadow the need for significant reinvention however. The imperative facing higher education leaders is to look at the major trends confronting us—fiscal, demographic, financial and other—and to question whether the enterprise as we know it can be sustained. Moreover, state and federal governments must give institutional leaders greater cause and incentives to look beyond annual survival to the critical role of generating degree-holders. Consider these key challenges:

First, for the region to maintain its higher education attainment advantage and for the U.S. to regain its leadership role in having the highest percentage of 25- to 34-year-olds with postsecondary degrees, New England would have to generate an additional 665,000 college degrees by 2025—41,500 additional degrees on an annual basis. This must occur despite having 20,000 fewer high school graduates during the same period due to demographic shifts. Moreover, even projecting significant increases in high school graduation, college-going and postsecondary completion rates, over 65% of new degree-holders will have to be adult students.

Second, given economic realities, New England will likely remain at the lowest end of public investment in higher education and the highest end in terms of tuition prices and cost-per-completion. In education and related spending per student completion, New England spends well above the national average at nearly all types of institutions, according to the Delta Project on Postsecondary Education Costs, Productivity and Accountability. At community colleges, for example, New England spends in excess of $52,000 per student completion—nearly $9,500 more than the national average. Even with $9 billion in proposed new federal money to spur community college completions, assuming an additional 5 million community college degree-holders, such funding amounts to an additional $1,800 per completion.

Significant resource misalignment and a tendency to tinker with full-cost, traditional models are significant threats to our success. Only significant reinvention of the New England and U.S. higher education enterprises will suffice. There are innovative and quality- and success-driven approaches to increasing efficiency and productivity. Technology continues to offer compelling and student-centered alternatives that can enhance new academic calendars, innovative program formats, course delivery and counseling and online learning.

New England has numerous pockets of innovation in both public and independent higher education. Student populations are willing to participate and experiment, but a new attitude among higher education leaders, trustees and faculty is needed. Much can be learned from agile independent and for-profit institutions, as well. Lastly, it will require significant reconsideration of the structure of state higher education systems and of the mission, role, function and admissions requirements of two-year institutions.

In political, educational and economic change, New England has often been a leader. As far as higher education is concerned, we must reignite that innovative heritage and recapture our leadership role.

Michael K. Thomas *is president and CEO of the New England Board of Higher Education and publisher of* THE NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION. *Email: mthomas@nebhe.org.*

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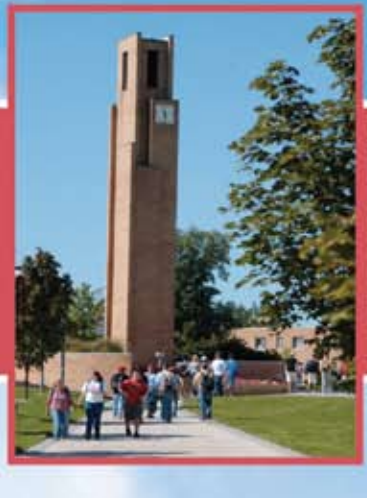

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Waging War on Illiteracies

JOAN MENARD

America has fought so-called "wars on illiteracy" in various forms since the late 1970s. In fact, President George W. Bush was talking up a new war on illiteracy at a Florida elementary school on the very September 11 eight years ago when attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon ushered in nearly a decade of hotter wars on terrorism and stole attention and resources from the war against illiteracy.

Literacy has been described historically as a cognitive activity generally involving reading and writing. But literacy demands have increased with the complexity of tasks, and many different kinds of literacy are needed to sustain a prosperous and democratic society.

Among other critical kinds of literacy:

How well do students do at reading the newspaper and comprehending what is being written? How many lives has lack of *visual literacy* cost the United States over the decades of misrepresented war photographs and deceiving tables and charts packed with agendas?

Interest in *financial literacy* and the subset of *credit literacy* skyrocketed as the economy collapsed. But how many Americans can manage their own household finances, let alone intelligently monitor business and government financial operations?

The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth requires cultural and artistic literacy for incoming students as well as increasingly important *information literacy* and *computer literacy* for graduation.

Boston's Museum of Science became the first science museum in the country to introduce a comprehensive strategy and infrastructure to foster *technological literacy* in science museums and schools nationwide by developing technology exhibits and programs and integrating engineering as a new discipline in schools via standards-based K-12 curricular reform.

The Maine-based Institute for Global Ethics is promoting *ethical literacy* to equip school-based teams to build a school culture where "doing the right thing" is top priority.

Literacy demands have increased with the complexity of tasks, and many different kinds of literacy are needed to sustain a prosperous and democratic society.

Literacy is all relative. Much has been said about declining newspaper reading's impact on literacy. But when the widely respected *Boston Globe* reported this past September on the former Taiwanese president being given a life sentence for corruption under the headline "Former Thai president gets life sentence," *Globe* readers flooded the paper with "comments" to give their own lesson in geographic literacy: "I know the paper has been having difficulties," one wrote, "but does that mean the knowledge of simple geography is no longer required for the editors on international desk?"

New England has the educational resources to lead the nation and the world in literacy. It will require a new level of commitment among the six states to work together closely and a new spirit of productive collaboration among the region's 250 colleges and universities and countless schools and nonprofit education organizations to make sure everyone reads and thinks up to high standards.

Ten years ago, the late Massachusetts higher education Chancellor Stanley Z. Koplik estimated that at the time, as many as 2 million Massachusetts residents were unable to read and write at a high school level. "We need to marshal our forces—to declare war on illiteracy," Koplik urged. "But higher education cannot fight this war alone. It must be fought by government, nonprofits, chambers of commerce, businesses and all organizations that care about economic prosperity, and more importantly, about our social fabric."

Joan Menard *is chair of the New England Board of Higher Education. She is assistant majority leader in the Massachusetts state Senate and has served in the Massachusetts Legislature for 31 years. Email: catherine.donaghey@state.ma.us.*

From Paternalism to Self-Advocacy

Obama's community college graduation strategy and students with disabilities

NEETA P. FOGG AND PAUL E. HARRINGTON

President Obama recently asked community colleges across the nation to take on a central role in his economic policy by awarding 5 million new associate degrees over the next decade. Those familiar with community college data know this is a daunting task for the nation's public two-year college system. America's community colleges collectively award fewer than 800,000 associate degrees per year, so an increase of 5 million over the decade implies that the system will have to increase degree awards at a rate of 60% per year to meet the president's goal. [See Forum: Higher Education Attainment, *The New England Journal of Higher Education*, Summer 2009.]

The president's strategy to create long-term economic growth by asking community colleges to award more degrees is well-grounded. The National Commission on Community Colleges, a study commission established by the College Board, has noted that emerging job market requirements have made postsecondary certificates and degrees the "minimum required for productive entry in the nation's economic life." Researcher Thomas Bailey at Columbia University Teacher's College has found substantial economic returns to earning an associate degree. Bailey and his colleagues find that *finishing* a degree program is critical to capturing the economic benefits of a two-year college experience. Indeed, the "sheepskin effect" of an associate degree is quite large. Our own analysis of the lifetime earnings of associate degree-holders in New England also reveals strong and persistent earnings advantages for those who earn an associate degree. So policies aimed at getting students to earn a community college degree are an essential ingredient of the administration's economic growth strategy.

In order to meet the challenge, the nation's community colleges will have to shift their focus from *access* to *retention* and ultimately *graduation*. Success at retention means understanding the diverse nature and needs of the entering freshman cohort at different institutions and organizing programs of study and services designed to bolster degree completion among entering students. It means ending the old organizational ethos of "look to your right, look to your left, one of you will be gone in a year." It means developing an organizational culture and business strategy tied to the objective of retaining students to graduation.

Successful retention strategies are almost always grounded in research on how student characteristics and experiences in high school and college impact the likelihood of students completing their undergraduate course of study. Indeed, this type of research and analysis is the work of enrollment management organizations that have been established at many four-year institutions who are working to reshape their 1960s-70s organizational and business models of high student turnover into high-retention and completion models. Based upon this research, specific services are provided to bolster retention among the student body.

For example, our recent research has found that community colleges appear to enroll disproportionately large shares of students with disabilities. To meet the president's challenge of increasing the number of associate degree awards, new organizational designs, programs and incentives are needed to increase retention and graduation of students with disabilities.

Unlike their four-year counterparts, community colleges do little to vet new students with respect to their academic and related school-persistence capabilities.

Access and retention

Community colleges, especially in New England, have regarded student *access* into the postsecondary system as a fundamental organizational mission. Since their inception, community colleges have used open admissions strategies to position themselves as the gateway for all into American higher education. Students can enroll initially at a community college then transfer to a four-year institution to earn a degree, opt to stay at the community college and earn a degree or certificate, or just take a few courses without completing a degree. By the measure of access, American higher education and especially community colleges have been quite successful. Record numbers of students are now enrolling in college. Our recent look at graduates from 24 Massachusetts high schools found that 78% of their graduating senior class had enrolled in a postsecondary education program. But by the measure of degrees awarded, our institutions of higher education, particularly community colleges, are found wanting. Only a small fraction of students who enroll in community college earn a college degree.

James Rose, chair of the National Council of State Directors of Community Colleges, summarized the problem most succinctly when he noted in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*: "We have great capacity for open access, for getting them in … [the] challenge for us is getting them across the stage to get their certificate or diploma."

The ease with which community colleges enroll students is connected to the open enrollment nature of these institutions. Community college enrollment has two characteristics that are generally not found among four-year schools. First, the level of enrollment appears elastic: As the number of students who attempt to enroll in a community college increases, the level of actual enrollment rises, seemingly regardless of funding or other limits in physical capacity. Indeed, over the past two years as the national economic crisis has ravaged state budgets and state support for two-year colleges has declined, community colleges in a number of states have seen their enrollments grow. Second, unlike their four-year counterparts, community colleges do little to vet new students with respect to their academic and related school-persistence capabilities.

Many community colleges never see new students' high school transcripts, letters of recommendation or student essays or even standardized test scores measuring student achievement. Instead, many community colleges rely on the Accuplacer test as an inexpensive substitute for a more rigorous and personalized review of the strengths and needs of applicants. While the rest of the higher education system moves toward a more rigorous and holistic assessment of applicants, community colleges continue to rely on one-dimensional measures such as the Accuplacer to screen new students.

Even while maintaining the goal of access with open enrollment, the adoption of more thorough assessment and screening procedures can provide community colleges with information they can use to design strategies, programs and service delivery to improve retention, persistence and graduation. These colleges need better information about their student body to better understand the reasons for student success as well as failure in completing their education and earning a degree. Such information can be used to design appropriate interventions to effectively bolster student retention. For starters, we need to examine students' experiences in high school and how they predict enrollment and retention in college.

Students with disabilities

Over the past two years, Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies, with support from the National Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation Research and the Boston-based Institute for Human

Centered Design, has undertaken the first systematic study in New England that tracks high school students into the region's and the nation's postsecondary system. The primary purpose of our research is to gain some understanding about the nature of postsecondary access and retention of students with disabilities.

Our study includes 24 schools from 18 school districts across Massachusetts that agreed to provide us with key information about all their recent high school graduates including data about students' socioeconomic background, educational performance, high school course of study, special education status, diagnosis and treatment and in-school behaviors such as attendance, truancy and suspensions. These figures are part of the student information management system (SIMS) data that are regularly reported to state officials. Consequently, the concepts and measures we have used in this study are routinely employed and well-understood by all participating school districts.

The overwhelming majority of college-bound high school graduates with disabilities during their senior year in high school initially enroll in a community college.

We have amassed data for more than 20,000 recent high school graduates from a variety of both comprehensive high schools (community high schools with a curricula primarily, but not exclusively, structured around college) and career and technical education (CTE) high schools. Combining the postsecondary enrollment and retention data from 3,300 U.S. colleges and universities through the National Student Clearinghouse's StudentTracker System with the SIMS data files we gathered from the cooperating high schools, we were able to measure the actual college enrollment and retention outcomes of graduating high school seniors based on a variety of their characteristics.

The combined database allows us to track the initial enrollment, transfer, stop-out, drop-out and graduation activities of the individual seniors that have graduated from each of the participating high schools for all students, as well as students with and without disabilities during their senior year in high school. Furthermore, the SIMS-based data provided by the cooperating school districts allows us to measure college enrollment and retention behavior for a variety of race-ethnic, income, academic performance and related variables that are known to influence college enrollment and retention.

Historically, high school graduates with disabilities have not accounted for very large shares of the nation's undergraduate population. The UCLA freshman surveys in the mid-1980s found that about 6% of the entering undergraduate freshman class reported a disability. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) estimates from the mid-1990s also found that about 6% of the undergraduate population had a disability. Some NCES estimates developed during the mid-1980s indicated that 10.5% of all college students had a disability of some type. But the latest UCLA freshman survey for the entering class of 2008 suggests that the number of entering freshmen with a disablity is more likely in the 8% to 10% range. Virtually, all these data sources are based on student self-reporting and this may in part explain some of the inconsistency in estimates of the population of post secondary students with disabilities.

College-going among students with disabilities

Our analysis of data on Massachusetts students going from high school to college measures the disability status of college students based on their special education status during their senior year as indicated by a disability diagnosis on the high school record and existence of an Individualized Education Plan or "IEP," as mandated by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Thus our approach eliminates self-reporting error and identifies the existence of a disability on the basis of a well-understood diagnosis and treatment process. These data suggest that the share of high school seniors with a disability who enter college is quite large and they make up a substantial share of the total undergraduate degree-seeking cohort of entering students at community colleges.

Community colleges are in the business of serving large numbers of students with a variety of disabilities, but their knowledge of these students—who they are or even how many of them are enrolled—is often quite limited.

Our data reveal that 55% of all college-bound students with disabilities who graduate from a comprehensive high school enroll in college within about three years of high school graduation. Among non-disabled graduates from comprehensive high schools an astonishing 80% enroll in college. To place these findings in historical perspective, as late as 1985, the share of *all* recent high school graduates who enrolled in college was 55%—the same college-going rate as observed today among students with disabilities who graduate from comprehensive high schools. Postsecondary enrollment is also quite common among graduates of CTE schools in Massachusetts. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1: College Enrollment Rates of Graduating Seniors from Selected Massachusetts High Schools, by High School Type and Graduate's Disability Status

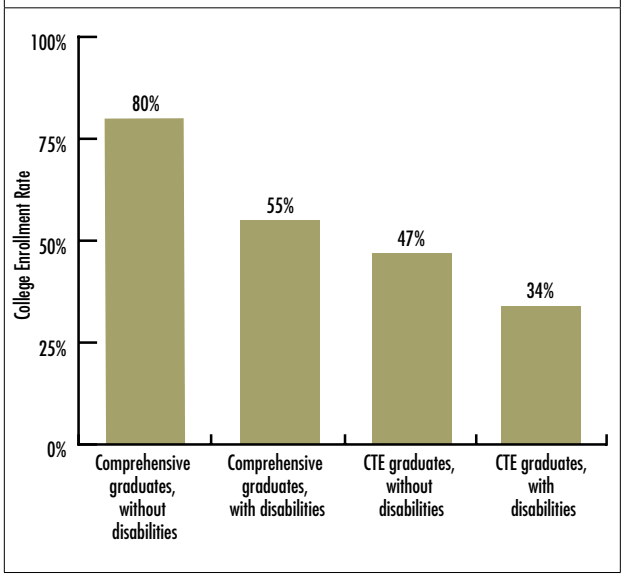
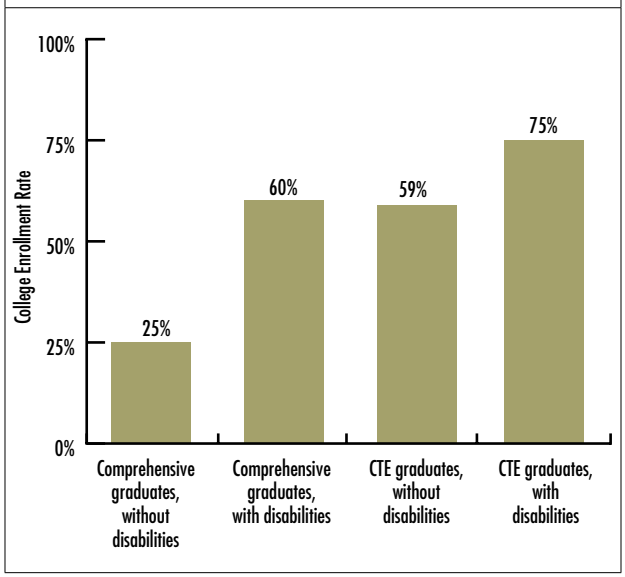


Figure 2: Shares of College-Bound High School Graduates from Selected Massachusetts High Schools Who Initially Enrolled in a Community College, by High School Type and Disability Status



Among graduates of CTE schools, where the majority of graduates do not opt for college, we still found that about one-third of the graduates of these schools who had a disability during their senior year in high school, had enrolled in college, with most enrolling right after high school.

Disabilities and community colleges

The pattern of enrollment of college-bound high school graduates with disabilities is much different from that observed for their counterparts without disabilities. Our analysis reveals that the overwhelming majority of college-bound high school graduates with disabilities during their senior year in high school initially enroll in a community college. The data reveal that among college-bound comprehensive high school graduates with disabilities, 60% initially enrolled in a community college. Among college-bound graduates of regional CTE high schools who had a disability during their senior year of high school, 75% enrolled in a community college. In short: Community colleges serve overwhelmingly as the primary pathway into the postsecondary system for a now-large number of college-bound high school graduates with disabilities. (See Figure 2.)

These data make clear that community colleges serve large numbers of students with a variety of disabilities in their entering freshman cohorts, but the institutions' knowledge of these students, including the nature of their potential sensory, physical, cognitive or emotional limitations, is scarce. Yet understanding these limitations may help community colleges adopt broader-based universal design strategies capable of serving large numbers of students with disabilities. Whether they are cognizant of it or not, community colleges are in the business of serving large numbers of students with a variety of disabilities, but their knowledge of these students, who they are or even how many of them are enrolled is often quite limited.

We estimate that between one-sixth and one-fifth of the entering freshman cohort in the Massachusetts community college system were students who were diagnosed with a disability and had an IEP during their senior year of high school. The estimated incidence of disability among first-time entering students at community colleges is three to four times greater than the incidence found among students in the entering freshman cohorts at both public and private four-year colleges and universities. Indeed our analysis found only between 3% and 4% of the students in the entering freshman cohort at four-year colleges (as well as two-year *private* colleges) had a disability during their senior year of high school.

These findings suggest that community colleges face a large, but largely hidden challenge, not found in other sectors of higher education. This enormous quantitative difference suggests a need to adopt a fundamentally different approach in working with these students to ensure solid academic performance and persistence to graduation as the president envisions.

Paternalism to self-advocacy

Perhaps the most important difference between disability at the high school and college level is who bears the responsibility for identifying a disability and seeking a services strategy to respond to the limitation. At the

elementary and secondary level, the IDEA statute makes clear that it is the responsibility of the local school districts to identify any disabling conditions of students and develop a treatment plan or IEP that must be funded primarily by state and local resources. In short, teachers, school administrators and parents and local taxpayers are primarily responsible for providing and financing appropriate learning or educational services and accommodations related to a disability that a student may have. Even during their senior year of high school, many students with disabilities receive a high degree of personal care that is not likely to be commonly available at a college campus.

The transition from high school to college is particularly challenging for students with disabilities because of the markedly different environment they face in college. In high school, students with disabilities are in a protected environment compliant with IDEA legislation, where their disabilities are diagnosed, IEPs are designed and services specific to their disabilities are provided. In college, the responsibility for disclosing disabilities and seeking services falls squarely on the student. Many students with disabilities do not even disclose their disabilities while attending college.

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In a report for the Institute for Higher Education Policy, researchers Thomas Wolanin and Patricia Steele recently wrote "K-12 policies are based on a paternalistic model appropriate for minors … but this model is not transferable to higher education." Colleges, unlike high schools, are only required to engage in non-discrimination toward students with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act and are under none of the obligations of the IDEA statute to provide educational and support services financed and delivered by elementary and secondary school districts. The most typical accommodation made by colleges would be to allow extended test time to those students who self-identify their disability and provide some documentation to that effect.

At the college level, students with disabilities, like any other students, have to take responsibility for their progress in school, and this represents at times a sharp break from the relationships that often characterize the high school experiences of special education students. As anyone who has gone to college well knows, the challenges of navigating the academic and bureaucratic complexities of college rest squarely with students. As part of our study on postsecondary access and retention of students with disabilities in Massachusetts, we ran a series of regression models to understand the determinants of retention among college students. For graduates of CTE programs, we found a strong positive connection between college retention and participation in "full-inclusion" special education programs in which a special education student spends a minimum of 80% of his or her time in the regular high school curriculum. Indeed, our regression models revealed that students who were enrolled in full-inclusion special education programs during their senior year in high school were more likely to be retained during their freshman year in college, compared with non-disabled students.

Initially this finding puzzled us. But it did not surprise special educators across the state with whom we met. Full-inclusion special education programs, we were told, are designed to wean students from the paternalistic system that characterizes much of high school education. Full-inclusion programs teach students self-advocacy skills that enable them to be more effective and assertive advocates for themselves. The improved retention performance of these students in college is in part the product of effectively making the transition from a child-centered high school system characterized by handholding and paternalism to an adult higher education system where self-advocacy is a key determinant of persistence and success.

Community colleges will have to shift their mission from access to retention in order to meet the ambitious degree goal set by President Obama. Understanding the characteristics of the student body, particularly their disability status, and conducting research on the strategies that successfully retain these students will go a long way toward designing successful retention strategies.

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This research was supported by DBTAC-New England ADA Center, a project of the Institute for Human Centered Design (formerly Adaptive Environments) funded by the National Institute on Disability Rehabilitation and Research (NIDRR) Grant #H133A060092.

Why the Student Experience Matters

Listening to the voice that's been missing from education reform

MELISSA WITHERS

If the conversation about innovation in education were a cocktail party, the room would be filled to capacity with advocates, scholars, administrators and college and university leadership who all care very deeply about the future of higher education in America. The talk would be lively, with fervent debate over issues like distance learning, student readiness, class size, tenure, course load, state funding and financial aid. There would be bursts of raucous solidarity and an equal measure of passionate dissent about where we are, how we got here and what we need to do to move forward.

What you would not hear is the voice that matters most: the voice of the student. To hear this voice you must tune into a different channel altogether and listen at a frequency that most institutions and policymaking bodies do not understand.

Many institutions seek to capture the student voice through market research, including surveys and focus groups. These are worthy exercises and institutions that use these methods deserve credit.

Still, most conversations about education reform reflect the perspective and agenda of the institutions that provide educational services, rather than the needs of the students they serve. Institutions don't typically see it this way and take great offense at the suggestion that they do not have student's best interests at heart. Most of them do. But what is true in life is true in higher education: Despite our best intentions to give students what (we think) they want and need, we often miss the mark.

The reality is that the student experience is all but lost in our current conversations about the future of higher education. As we struggle with shrinking endowments, abysmal cuts in state funding, changing student demographics and a growing awareness that it is nearly impossible for the current system to educate enough Americans to produce the workforce we need to remain globally competitive, it is no surprise that the student experience takes a backseat to these seemingly more urgent issues.

The nonprofit Business Innovation Factory (BIF) recently received a grant from the Lumina Foundation for Education to bring the student experience to life in a new way and make the student voice more central to our conversation about transforming higher education. With this investment, BIF launched its "Student Experience Lab" in spring 2009. In alignment with Lumina's focus on postsecondary degree attainment, the lab's initial phase of work focuses on illuminating the college student experience and creating a platform to increase college-attainment levels, enhance the college student experience and improve the effectiveness of the U.S. higher education system.

We embarked on this endeavor under the premise that the current U.S. postsecondary education system does not deliver—at sufficient scale or at an affordable price—a high-quality college experience that prepares all students with the skills they need to fully participate in the 21st century global economy. As a result, too many current and prospective students are left with their educational and economic needs unmet.

We are not the first to draw this conclusion. Many articulate education advocates and forward-thinking business leaders have expressed grave concerns about the cultural and economic impact of America's failure to move more students through an effective postsecondary education experience. What is unique about BIF's approach is our belief that transformational innovation in education begins with a deeper, more personal understanding of the student experience and a willingness to experiment with new models of delivering education that put the students—not the institutions who serve them—at the center.

Most conversations about education reform reflect the perspective and agenda of the institutions that provide educational services, rather than the needs of the students they serve.

In our first phase of work, the Student Experience Lab team is creating an "experience map" of the environmental and human factors that are the most significant drivers of the postsecondary student experience. This approach has been used for many years to design better consumer products, yet is not typically used to inform efforts to innovate in education. You wouldn't design a new iPhone without talking to college kids, yet we design whole educational experiences with only the slightest awareness of what students want and need.

The good news is that techniques for understanding "user experience" are validated from years of use in industry. Our challenge is to transfer those approaches to the world of educational research and embrace what

they have to offer. In this way, we can view the student experience through a new lens that offers an invaluable complement to the insights most institutions and experts bring to the table.

BIF's approach

Central to BIF's nonprofit mission is our work to help partners from across the public and private sectors focus on solving problems by designing and testing new solutions in a real-world environment. BIF's Elder Experience Lab is a good example of our methodology in action. In the Elder Lab, BIF's team works directly with elders to conduct deep research into their everyday experience, using these insights to illuminate opportunities for transforming the elder care system, and with help from the lab's elder participants, put new ideas to the test in a real-world environment. With Lumina Foundation's support, it was a natural transition for BIF to apply the methodology it had developed to understanding the student experience.

In this approach, the BIF Student Experience Lab team uses a combination of observational and ethnographic research, self-reporting and surveying, in conjunction with an analysis of secondary research drawn from today's best and brightest scholars to characterize the experience of current, former and prospective postsecondary education students at various ages and from diverse racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. To bring the first-person perspective to the fore, the team captures its primary research on video, empowering students to take an unapologetically personal stance on the issues that enhance and hinder their higher education experience. Take, for example, what the team learned about the issue of readiness from a young man named Sean. In an interview, Sean says, "Educationally I was ready to go to college. Personally I wasn't ready to go to college. I needed to figure out who I was before I made that decision." Sean saw college as an important investment of his time and money and felt that the decision on when and where to go to school should be a well-informed one. The challenge, he noted, was that it became increasingly hard to enter the system later, as options narrow for learners who do not enter the system as 18-year-old undergraduates.

A deep understanding of the student experience enables BIF and its partners to identify specific elements of the experience where investment in innovation is likely to yield the greatest return.

This primary research is supported by secondary research and the team has invested more than 200 hours

talking with education experts and advocates from all sides of the debate. But the strength of the work hinges on the time the team spends working with students, engaged in interviews, informal meet-ups and visits to students' homes and classrooms.

Lab Design Director Chris Finlay has deployed a savvy network of researchers across the country to capture the experiences of students at a variety of schools and at many stages of life. Students are recruited through social media outlets like Twitter, via referrals from teachers and advisors and from flyers posted in coffee shops and grocery stores. In the first three months of the project, Finlay and his team conducted more than 40 deep interviews with students from all walks of life and garnered input from dozens more. They met with high school students considering their higher education options, students already in the system, adult learners navigating the school/work divide, students who have failed or dropped out for personal and financial reasons and everything in between. They talked with students at elite colleges, community colleges and trade schools. They met with students in BIF offices, held group conversations and whenever possible, met with students on their "turf." And we captured all of it on video.

Leveraging the approach BIF has used in other Experience Lab work, the team will package its findings in a highly visual and interactive form that uses video, audio, photography and first-person narrative to tell the story of the postsecondary student experience in a manner that allows experts and non-experts to understand the human, environmental and systems-level factors that most impact degree attainment.

This approach enables stakeholders to see the experience through the lens of the student, better appreciate the dynamics of the whole system and more readily identify opportunities for innovation and intervention. This deep understanding of the student experience also enables BIF and its partners to identify specific elements of the experience where investment in innovation is likely to yield the greatest return.

The team is on track to have its first phase of work completed by December 2009. This work will lay the foundation for an even more valuable asset: an actionable platform for experimentation. Through our work, we are creating a national network of individuals, organizations and students who share our belief that experimentation is key to creating deep transformational change in the education system. This network, in conjunction with BIF's platform for real-world experimentation, will form a living laboratory where new ideas for improving the college student experience can be designed, tested and refined with direct student engagement. The team hopes to move into active experimentation in spring 2010.

We need in education, as we have in most industries, R&D platforms that enable systems-level experimentation, where disruptive ideas can be tested in real-world conditions but in a manner where risk can be managed and the scale-up of proven ideas accelerated. Imagine if we worked to understand the student experience with the same vigor that cell phone companies worked to understand youngster's mobile computing preferences? There are some glimmers of this spirit of experimentation in education, but we need to multiply the effort.

Bringing this vision to life is what motivates the BIF Student Experience Lab to make the real-life experiences of students more visible and elevate the student voice in the conversation about innovation in education. BIF's ambitions will not be easy to fulfill, but offering Americans more affordable, more effective and more flexible options to get educated and improve their economic prospects is well worth the labor.

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A Modest Invitation

How colleges can help advance secondary school reform

DAVID RUFF AND STEPHEN ABBOTT

Last fall, the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont formed an unprecedented collaboration committed to rethinking the traditional American high school on a regional scale to more effectively mirror the lives and learning needs of today's students. Our partnership, the New England Secondary School Consortium (newenglandssc.org), is dedicated to fostering forward-thinking innovations in the design and delivery of secondary learning across the Northeast. With funding from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, we have spent the past year laying the groundwork for an ambitious schoolhouse-to-statehouse effort to create equitable, 21st-century systems of public secondary education in each of our member states. As we move into the next phase of our work, collaborating with New England's higher education community will be one of our top priorities.

Working with collegiate leaders is critical because we know that postsecondary expectations are a major driver of educational decisions and actions at the secondary level. Many students select their high school course of study based on their perception of what colleges want to see on a transcript. High schools, in turn, design certain courses and programs to prepare students for college-level curricula. And the SAT and ACT remain major sources of pre-collegiate adolescent and parental anxiety, even as experts in and out of higher education debate the merits of these tests in the application process.

In some cases, the expectations communicated by the higher education community—particularly explicit admissions policies and implicit preferences—have a beneficial effect on secondary education. They encourage high schools to maintain high academic standards, help to elevate adolescent ambitions and preparation for collegiate learning and provide specific academic and experiential goals for students. In other cases, these same expectations, which are often ingested along with a heady cocktail of persistent myths, have unintended consequences. Too many courses are designed not to truly prepare students for success after high school, but to meet perceived postsecondary expectations; high-achieving students avoid exploring personal interests or taking academic risks that might adversely affect their grade point average or class rank; anxious parents exert excessive pressures on their children to excel; and—perniciously and tragically—talented and intelligent students, nearly always from disadvantaged backgrounds, choose not to attend college because somewhere along the way they have internalized the belief that they are not "college material."

For decades, our high schools have been engaged in an earnest campaign to improve, innovate and evolve. Many of these efforts have petered out or failed, some have succeeded admirably, and a few have surpassed expectations and redefined the concept of what our high schools can and should be. The core values that motivate these efforts will be immediately recognizable to any college educator: an enduring belief that a high-quality education, if properly administered, will have a salubrious effect on our citizenry, our social inequalities and our democratic institutions, while also warding off the more unsavory symptoms of multigenerational illiteracy—including systemic poverty, perennially low aspirations, civic disengagement, and increased rates of crime and disease. Although this underlying truism is typically obscured as we go about our professional responsibilities, postsecondary and high school educators are nevertheless engaged in the same fundamental project. We are all playing for the same team, and it's critical that we remind ourselves from time to time of this overlap in purpose.

Acknowledging connection

So how might higher education assume a more active role in advancing secondary reform? The first step forward is to acknowledge that our two systems are deeply and inextricably connected. The decisions made by our nation's higher education leaders will directly, if not always obviously, impact our secondary schools and students. Secondary education's influence on higher education is similarly profound, given that colleges endeavor to educate the students our high schools produce, and success in this venture is contingent, in many ways, on the effectiveness of the systems that precede it. The next step is to start making decisions—and changing policies—that take this symbiotic relationship into consideration.

Consider an example: What if New England's colleges and universities announced their endorsement of standards-based grading and reporting practices in high schools? (Even though states have adopted secondary learning standards into law, high schools continue

to use traditional grading and reporting practices—letter grades, number averaging, credits—that do not require students to demonstrate mastery of standards. Consequently, most high school diplomas remain unreliable indicators of student achievement. Some students graduate from high school knowing calculus, for example, while others acquire only rudimentary math skills.) What if they also announced that class rank would no longer be a factor in admissions decisions? And what if a variety of unconventional though proven pathways to the demonstration of student achievement—performance-based assessments, senior theses and exhibitions, rigorous career and technical programs, early college experiences, internships—were given equal weight alongside standardized test scores, grade point averages and honors courses on college applications? What impact would these new policies have on our high schools? What innovations would they drive?

We need to take successful local collaborations—ranging from enhanced support for first-generation college students to flourishing dual-enrollment models to innovative school-university partnerships to linked professional development opportunities to improved transparency and sharing across our data systems—and reproduce them at scale.

The ripple effects of such an announcement could bring about a paradigm shift in our high schools. Overnight, these pedagogical strategies would be endowed with far more intellectual and cultural credibility. Many centuries-old traditions in our high schools would come under a new level of scrutiny. And the resistance faced in advancing secondary reforms—the uphill political battles, the doubts of an uninformed public, the outspoken anxieties of concerned parents—would be considerably mitigated, as attention shifts from an unreasoning attachment to the past toward a new and more innovative vision for secondary learning.

This is not to argue that the example above is the right next step for higher education to take, but it does illustrate that postsecondary policies and public positions have a potent influence on secondary education, and that collegiate institutions can leverage their cultural authority and prestige to advance the cause of secondary reform.

So where do we start? We can begin by addressing the traditional disconnect in learning expectations, curriculum alignment, pedagogical philosophy and data exchange among our high schools and institutions of higher education. College educators don't want to be besieged by unprepared students every year, and high schools don't want to produce graduates who are so unequipped for collegiate study that they drop out or never bother to apply to college in the first place. But it happens every year and in nearly every high school and college. And it will continue to happen at alarmingly high rates until higher education and secondary education come to common agreement on what, specifically, constitutes college readiness and which pedagogies are most likely to produce the outcomes desired by both parties. Working to address this disconnect may not immediately produce a silver bullet, but it will result in an improvement over the status quo, in which only 70% of ninth-grade students graduate from high school nationally, only 34% of young adults ages 18-to-24 are enrolled in college, and only one in five New England undergrads succeeds in earning a postsecondary degree or credential.

This deep-rooted disconnect is no longer acceptable in 21st-century America. A college degree has become too important; the challenges we are facing—as a region and a country—are too great.

Scaling up

The good news is that examples of effective collaboration between collegiate and secondary educators abound at the local and state levels. But the large-scale improvements in educational outcomes that both systems desire remain elusive. We need to take successful local collaborations—ranging from enhanced support for first-generation college students to flourishing dual-enrollment models to innovative school-university partnerships to linked professional development opportunities to improved transparency and sharing across our data systems—and reproduce them at scale. We need to think more ambitiously, strategically and systemically, which means we need to work together regionally. We need to impact more students more substantially. And we need to act now before another generation of wide-eyed youth pass through the doors of our high schools.

The New England Secondary School Consortium is now midway through its initial phase, and we are looking to enlist the region's higher education community in creating a plan to address the issues raised here. We are ready to move, and we want your ideas. Let's get started.

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Looking for Dialogue

The first step is for academics to check attitudes at the door

STEPHEN J. RENO

Over a 40-year career as a professor of religious studies, a university president and, more recently, a system chancellor, I have taken counsel from the third-century apologist, Clement of Alexandria, who, wishing to speak engagingly to a "pagan" audience about the Christian gospel began by acknowledging, as we would say today, "where they are coming from."

"Come, I shall show you the Logos, and the mysteries of the Logos, and I shall explain them to you in images that are known to you."

Higher education's audience today is no less skeptical than that Clement faced 1,800 years ago. It is large, varied and diverse in its expectations. As Paul Lingenfelter, president of the national association of State Higher Education Executive Officers, notes, today's audience includes:

- Students who (regardless of age) want choice, convenience and quality. The higher the price tag, the greater the expectations for all three.

- Students (and sometimes their parents) who want low prices, generous financial aid, admission to high-status schools, convenient class schedules, good food, housing, recreation, freedom (students), safety (parents), small classes, contact with faculty, access to the latest technology, and cheap, ample and convenient parking.

- Faculty members who are highly qualified professionals and who expect: well-prepared students, above-average salaries and benefits, control of working conditions including schedules, office space, respect, academic freedom, a strong voice in governance, secure employment and good retirement.

- Policymakers who expect to deliver for their constituents: efficient operations, low tuition, access for in-state students, an ample supply of well-prepared graduates, satisfied parents, well-behaved students, docile faculty and staff and generous alumni.

So what do we do? One challenge as I see it is for us in higher education to work with our several audiences to develop a *shared language of expectation*. One of our most articulate colleagues, the late Bart Giamatti, challenged us to open a dialogue between ourselves in the academy and those outside it. He bid us to acknowledge that ours is—to the outsider—a truly strange world, more ecclesiastical than corporate. To paraphrase Giamatti, the university is where values of all kinds are meant to collide, to contest, to be tested, debated, disagreed about—freely, openly, civilly … the place where the seeds of speech first grow and where most of us first began to find a voice. It is neither a paradise nor the worst spot we have ever been in; it is a good place that continues to want to make her children better.

In short, our colleges and universities are enclaves society has created—and indeed has attempted to safeguard with protections—in which messy things can and should happen. They are places where mistakes can be made relatively free of the potentially devastating consequences had they been made in the so-called "real world." They are truly testing grounds. Yet the very existence of such enclaves sets up a challenge we in the academy must embrace. We understand this; indeed we take it as given, but the risk is that we fail to understand how we appear to those outside. Our most urgent challenge is to serve as translators across that frontier of colliding expectations.

We know *what* we are to do. The real question is *how* to do it, specifically, how to begin. I am convinced the way to do so is by opening a conversation both *within the academy* and *with those outside it* with a goal of identifying true intersections of interests across both constituencies.

To begin developing a shared language of expectation with those outside the academy—policymakers, business and professional constituencies, the media and others—we need to confront the many "attitudes" of the academy. These are rarely voiced but they often seep into our public writings and statements nonetheless. They may take the form of mild impatience, subtle condescension, an ill-disguised petulance or an ever-so-cleverly concealed suggestion that the questioner really doesn't know what she or he is talking about and that we'd much rather they didn't poke their noses into our highly technical affairs. Whether we engage in a long, complicated, jargon-filled, statistics-laden monologue or fire back curt responses that have overtones of "shouldn't you have known that?" we not only miss an opportunity but most certainly close off future ones. (For example, there were many moments when "attitude" on the part of those appearing before the Spellings Commission hearings in 2005 and 2006 frustrated the very dialogue on transparency and accountability that the commission was established to foster.)

I also believe we must be willing to resist our highly developed proclivity to say everything—with as much completeness as possible at the expense of saying something simple, direct, and hopefully even provocative. As scholars, we abhor sound bites, yet a readiness to put our arguments in straightforward language—unadorned with such qualifiers as "my learned colleagues would agree …" or "expert research clearly demonstrates that …"—we might be able to move the conversation to a more mutually satisfying plane. And yes, it takes care and patience.

We must also be willing to put away the time-honored argument from authority and engage personally and directly in discussion at a level of sophistication that may be quite different from our scholarly exchanges with colleagues. This is especially hard for us to do because we expect to be (and believe we are expected to be) masters of our discipline, whether it is an academic field or the more general area of higher education administration. Regardless of whether we are a specialist on student financial aid, institutional accreditation, curriculum development or new teaching and learning technologies, we need to draw on that expertise without calling undue attention to our possession of it. The potential for intimidation and all it can provoke remains a danger for which we should be on the lookout. We are often perceived by our publics as being so supremely self-assured that the potential of crossing the line into arrogance is very real and we miss out on informed but non-academic perspectives.

And lastly, I believe a common language of understanding is possible only if we genuinely try to see the issues as our publics see them, unfiltered by *our* years of experience, by *our* values and assumptions, and couched in *our* "academese." We might ask ourselves when was the last time we tried to crawl into the persona of a legislator or a trustee, an angry taxpayer or a reporter. To fail to have at least tried is to fail to recognize the other end of the log on which we and they sit in these conversations that are not always of our choosing.

What I am saying is that a common language of expectation is possible only if we are willing to build a relationship. And we all know relationships take time to develop. They are not achieved simply by writing a position paper, though they can start there. They are not sustained by our simply deciding what our publics need to know. The recently developed Voluntary System of Accountability is an example, I think, of a work in progress. Its eventual efficacy as a trustworthy source for reliable and useful information on the value-added of higher education will be realized only through an ongoing dialogue among academics and other stakeholders in which its components and formats are further refined.

To foster that relationship we must do what fundamentally we do best, namely teaching. We all know that the most effective teaching begins with respect for the other person, a genuine effort to understand his or her position, and a humility that allows us to learn from the other even as we seek to be understood.

Recently, Jim Lehrer, host of the PBS program, *The NewsHour*, spoke at a dinner celebrating the 50th anniversary of New Hampshire Public Television. His core message was one that resonated with me: "You trust us and our knowing *that* drives us to keep on earning it."

I would respectfully submit that such a bond of trust is neither less important nor indeed less timely in our enterprise of higher education. As stewards of our publics' trust, not to mention their resources, our relationship with them must be founded on no less than this.

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From Silicon Valley to Phoenix Industries

Higher education in local and regional development

JAANA PUUKKA

The regional dimension of innovation is crucial to promote economic growth and competitiveness. Not every region can be a Silicon Valley, but all regions can improve their capacity to adapt knowledge for their regional innovation needs. Universities and other higher education institutions can play a critical role in making their cities and regions more innovative and globally competitive. To take full advantage of higher education for regional development, bridges need to be built between higher education institutions and the small companies that are creating the industries of the future. The OECD reviews of higher education in regional and city development help mobilize higher education institutions for economic, social and cultural development of their cities and regions.

As university leaders have long argued, the contribution of higher education to national and regional economies is considerable. For example, according to a 2009 economic impact statement by Tipp Umbach and Associates, Penn State is an economic powerhouse in Pennsylvania generating more than $17 billion in overall economic impact. For every $1 invested by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to support the operations of Penn State, the university returned more than $25 in total economic impact to Pennsylvania. (See http://econimpact.psu.edu.)

Although the importance of universities in their local economies is not usually contested, much more should and could be done to take full advantage of higher education in regional and city development. Why have the connections between the higher education institutions and their regions and the local industries been bent or broken?

In Europe, many higher education institutions developed to serve traditional industries in their regions during the first half of the 20th century were later incorporated into national systems of higher education. Universities focused on their national standing which weakened their local ties. In the United States, the "land grant" institutions connected their own welfare to that of the regions, and served the regions through industrial extension services. Over the years, these links were weakened as universities focused on technology transfer and diversifying their funding streams from products with limited relation to the local economy. In many cases the benefits of university inventions leaked out to other regions. What could be done to capitalize on these innovations within the region?

From Silicon Valley to "Phoenix Industries"

We are all familiar with the totemic examples of Silicon Valley and Route 128. The "Silicon Valley" approach is not only risky, but also more and more challenging since countries and regions throughout the world are focusing on the same few fields. Imitation and adaptation may sound like good ideas but they are no longer successful strategies in regional development. Unique advantages have to be actively constructed, and they have to be constructed on innovation.

Most regions have an industrial and economic base dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises. Under such conditions, economic growth will depend on upgrading the manufacturing base or diversifying it to nascent industries that can translate innovations into products for global markets.

Industry links with higher education institutions, particularly with research-intensive universities, are often in a few high-technology fields including information and communication technologies (ICT), health and biotechnology, and they often focus on multinational companies. But there are also other types of examples. They build on the competitive advantage of the region and "initial advantages" based, for example, on long-standing networks and technological skills.

In the province of Castellón in the Spanish region of Valencia, the ceramics research institute of the University Jaume has helped restructure the traditional ceramic-tile production cluster, which now employs 36,000 people in 500 small and medium-sized enterprises. To do this, the university had to build close links with these enterprises and support the growth of the ceramic cluster through multiple ways, including: technology transfer, quality-certification tests, spinoffs and work-based learning by students. The upgrading of existing technologies has enabled the region to become a global leader in the tile and ceramics industry.

In the United States, new advanced technology companies have emerged in the Rust Belt cities. They have witnessed the rise of what Susan Christopherson of Cornell University, has called "phoenix industries." She has noted, for example, that while Pittsburgh may have lost Big Steel, it has retained a globally engaged industry based on small and medium-sized steelmaking firms, now comprising more than 800 companies employing 13,000 workers. Another example is Rochester, N.Y., ranked as a world leader in optics,

producing almost six times as many patents per 1,000 workers as the U.S. average. These industries have initial advantage in their regions: longstanding networks, technological skills and links to higher education institutions.

Supporting industries of the future

The scope and extent of the regional engagement of a university depends on the role that the institution chooses for itself. The regional agenda is a tough challenge particularly for research-intensive universities, which often have a stronger focus on national and international excellence than on local utility. Still, there is a win-win situation for universities and regions. A thriving regional economy benefits universities in innumerable ways.

Industries of the future are built by small companies. Innovation is often seen linked to science-based research and intellectual property. But it could also be seen as the first step in a process of job creation. This would entail working closely with small- and medium-sized enterprises to improve their productivity and diversify and upgrade existing industries.

OECD's reviews of policy and practice were launched in 2004 to help build capacity at the national, regional and institutional levels and to make higher education institutions more active in and responsive to their cities and regions.

The OECD work, which started with 14 regions in 11 countries, has grown into a multiyear activity involving regions on five continents. The reviews offer mounting evidence of the need for closer links between higher education institutions and their regional economies.

The OECD reviews are interested not only in business-related competitiveness but also in the wide contribution of higher education institutions to their cities and regions. They look into the contribution of higher education institutions to regional innovation, learning and skills development as well as contribution to social, cultural and environmental development and capacity-building.

The reviews follow a standard four-step OECD methodology and have a strong element to boost partnerships in the regions. First, the region conducts a self-evaluation process following OECD guidelines. Second, the region establishes a regional steering committee of representatives from the higher education institutions and public and private sectors to oversee the review process and "take ownership" of the regional self-evaluation report. The idea is that the reviews bring together universities and other higher education institutions and the public and private stakeholders in the region to identify strategic goals and work together toward them. Third, international experts led by the OECD visit the region and assemble their findings and recommendations in a review report published on the OECD website at www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/regional development. Finally, knowledge-sharing meetings are organized to bring together the stakeholders at different levels.

From Nordic countries to Americas

The first set of regions were reviewed in 2005-07. The first 14 regions to be reviewed included Atlantic Canada, Busan Metropolitan City in Korea, Canary Islands in Spain, Jutland-Funen in Denmark, the Jyväskylä region in Finland, the northeast of England, the state of Nuevo León in Mexico, the Sunshine-Fraser coast region in Australia, Trøndelag in Norway, Twente in the Netherlands, the region of Valencia in Spain, and Värmland in Sweden. In addition, the cross-border region of Öresund between Denmark and Sweden and Northern Paraná in Brazil, the only region outside the OECD area, were reviewed between 2005 and 2007.

The ongoing second round of reviews in 2009-10 has a wider geographical focus. It is reaching out to 15 regions in 11 countries and also includes non-OECD economies. Two regions in the United States—Southern Arizona and the Paso del Norte area, a cross-border region with Mexico—are involved. There are also regions in Australia, Chile, Brazil, Mexico, Malaysia and Israel that will participate, as well as European regions and cities, including Andalusia, Amsterdam, Catalonia, Berlin, Lombardy and Rotterdam.

The OECD is now inviting applications for the third round that will take place in 2011-12. The call has already attracted a lot of interest, despite—or perhaps because of—the economic downturn. Regions and their higher education institutions are keen to identify industries of the future, to build on their competitive advantages and to learn from one another.

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Success and Failure in the College Presidency

Emerging profile supplants notion of presidents as executive leaders with the idea they should be intellectual forces

Stephen J. Nelson, assistant professor of Educational Leadership at Bridgewater State College and senior scholar, Leadership Alliance at Brown University, recently released his third book on the college presidency: *Leaders in the Crossroads: Success and Failure in the College Presidency*. Following are some of Nelson's observations on the state of the presidency:

On which presidents have succeeded and which have failed …

Highly successful presidents have included: Rob Oden of Carleton (and formerly Kenyon) College; John Sexton of New York University; Judith Rodin, recently retired from the University of Pennsylvania; and David Skorton at Cornell. To these leading figures, one could easily add: Amy Gutmann, Rodin's successor at Penn; Ruth Simmons at Brown; and Nan Keohane, now retired from two highly successful presidencies at Duke and Wellesley.

On the other hand, Richard Brodhead was at the least a failure in his presidency at Duke, primarily for his handling of the lacrosse team fiasco that consumed more than half of his first three years. Though he survived, Brodhead severely marred his tenure and Duke's reputation. Larry Summers is also considered a failure by most observers for his short-lived presidency at Harvard. Still, I suggest a more balanced view of the Summers presidency than is often assigned to him based on his confrontation with professor Cornel West and his remarks, taken out of context, about women in the sciences. Summers was shown the door at Harvard and his relatively short time there created immense turmoil. But he forcefully asserted the basic tenets of the university, the need to embrace debate and argument (more frequently and aggressively than might have been wise), and the role of the bully pulpit, which he generally used well.

On the demands of the college presidency …

The job of the college president is as demanding as that of the CEO of a corporate giant or entrepreneurial venture. Presidents have to manage highly politicized environments populated by tremendously bright people including faculty, but also trustees, alumni, friends and, not least, students. They handle massive physical plants and the financial wherewithal and fundraising that keeps the enterprise going. They must be leaders and shapers of communities, speak eloquently, and in the case of public university and college presidents, manage the slings, arrows, disasters and fortunes of government and the taxpaying populace.

Some presidents suffer overwhelming cases of "beware what you wish for," often having to find other lines of work, in some cases, returning as professors or lower-level administrators. Some presidents get hedged in by circumstances that, if handled differently, might have been controlled or minimized. In some cases, presidents are too slow on the uptake of a gathering storm and are roundly criticized for not having seen disaster coming. Elizabeth Hoffman at the University of Colorado comes to mind, because she permitted charges leveled at a high-profile football coach to go unanswered and unaddressed until a building head of steam led to calls for her ouster. Other presidents have been abject failures due to malfeasance mostly around financial shenanigans and in some cases plagiarism of speeches and public writings.

On the presumed importance of fundraising …

College presidents must raise money and conduct major capital campaigns. But when fundraising is the only focus, presidents fail on other essential responsibilities for which they must be held accountable. The presidential voice in the public square must not fall by the wayside simply because so much time is invested in the hunt for dollars. Even worse, the capacity of a president to speak publicly and engage ideas on and off campus should never be muzzled by a donor forcing silence as a *quid pro quo* for financial support. This is a form of blackmail, and no president should sit idly by and let that stand.

I subscribe to an earlier model that *development* and *fundraising* should be delegated primarily to pros in those areas, while presidents use their office to engage the larger development enterprise that underscores the value and importance of the school, what it is doing, why it should exist and what difference it is making. This is the "case" that draws supporters forward with their dollars and contributions.

On college presidents of the future …

There has been a presumption for decades of presidents climbing the ladder—moving early on from faculty positions and working in academic (and other administrative) positions to provostships, deans of major schools or colleges and the like—in order to be perceived as

"ready" for a presidency. By contrast, appointments such as Amy Gutmann at Penn (after a brief couple of years as provost at Princeton but more as a faculty member) and Drew Faust at Harvard (again following a brief time as dean of what was at the time Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study) indicate that colleges are seeking presidents who are intellectual and academic forces. In some cases these presidents come to office at younger ages. After all, we have a U.S. president in his late 40s who is surrounding himself with many advisors of his age cohort. Other college presidents of the scholar-intellectual type include: David Skorton at Cornell, who, though he had previously been president at Iowa, maintains his research and teaching and some of his practice as a physician; John Sexton at NYU who was dean of its law school for a few years before becoming its president; and Michael Roth at Wesleyan University, who was "only" an institute director at Scripps College before being launched into the presidency. This "trend" of public intellectual and scholar presidents has been with us since the early 20th century. Indeed, this emerging presidential profile supplants the misguided notion that presidents must carry themselves as executive leaders with the idea that they can and should be intellectual, academic forces and voices.

On where colleges will find new presidents …

We are going to see more colleges and universities find their future presidents in faculty members, including those who have been in dean or other upper-level administrative positions, even for relatively short tenures. Presidents need to be able to be true leaders of faculty colleagues, to be seen as dedicated to the world of the professoriate and able to embrace and convey to many publics the educational, academic, scholarly, intellectual, inquiry and research foundations at the heart of the academy. Along those lines, presidents need to make broad contributions to the fundamental foundations, beliefs and values of the university writ large. That is, the university stands for something in society. Presidents must not be exclusively riveted on the business side of the university. More and more presidents will try to continue teaching even if only one course per year. President Lee Bollinger teaches a first-year seminar at Columbia. John Sexton teaches somewhere between a course per term and a full load of five or six courses per year (recently commuting weekly to teach a seminar at NYU's campus in Abu Dhabi). One major test of presidential success or failure is whether they secure and build up through their leadership these foundation stones of the university, or wittingly or not erode that foundation—one that presidents have an incumbent responsibility to uphold.

NEBHE's Regional Student Program "Tuition Break" saves New England college students an average of $7,000 a year on tuition when they enroll at out-of-state New England public colleges and universities and pursue one of 700 approved degree programs not offered by any public college in their home state. New England students and families save about $48 million annually. And the states save money because they don't have to operate academic programs offered in other New England states. The NEBHE program has launched careers for pharmacists, meteorologists, occupational therapists and many other specialized professionals. But it's not the only example of cooperation in New England higher education. Higher education consortia dot the New England landscape with benefits ranging from cross-registration to shared shuttle busses to transfer articulation between two-year and four-year colleges. Funders increasingly hinge grants on evidence of collaboration. We asked New England college presidents to submit short pieces on ways regional collaboration can expand student access and success, bolster the competitiveness of New England's higher education enterprise at home and internationally, and advance regional workforce development.

Crossing State Lines

New models for cooperation in the 21st century

SELMA BOTMAN

American higher education is the envy of the world, and it also is the world's most democratized system.

But originally, colleges and universities were created for affluent students ages 18 to 22. They were socially, racially and ethnically homogenous. These young people attended full time, and they matriculated and graduated from the same institution in four years.

We all know that this is no longer the case. In fact, this world has long passed. Today, our universities are filled with students of all ages, social classes, races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations and abilities. They are mobile and technologically sophisticated, and not surprisingly, they often live very complicated lives.

Yet we maintain the same higher education infrastructure that came into being in 1857 when U.S. Sen. Justin Smith Morrill of Vermont submitted the Land Grant Act to Congress. Signed into law in 1862 by Abraham Lincoln, this law enabled the creation of the land-grant university system that led to the establishment of the great public research universities that serve each individual state.

Our challenge in the 21st century is to figure out how to break out of that outdated box, to create partnerships and articulation agreements with educational institutions not only within but also across states. We must think of new ways to reach students. One approach that works, and is being employed at colleges and universities throughout the United States, is the early college program that provides college courses and credits for qualified high school students, building the K-16 pipeline. Another strategy is to work more closely with community colleges. When I was executive vice chancellor and university provost of the City University of New York (CUNY), we developed 2+2 programs designed to provide community college students in that system clear pathways into its four-year colleges. This work was important not only because it translated into natural transitions for students between the two- and four-year institutions, but also because it brought faculty together to discuss curricula and pathways from the community college to more advanced study. Similarly, it drew together academic support professionals who would act as advisors to the students.

We need to start thinking of ways to extend models like these across state lines in our region. That is the only way to enable the success of today's typical student, who attends multiple institutions on the path toward graduation. The National System for Educational Statistics (NSES) found that as of 2001, 59% of first-time bachelor's degree recipients had attended more than one institution. More recent data from NSES confirms this trend, offering a compelling rationale for prompt efforts to address the needs of such students. In response to growing awareness that today's college students are typically multi-institutional, the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) has received funding from the Lumina Foundation for research into articulation and transfer between two- and four-year institutions. This 20-month-long Lumina-funded WICHE project,

entitled *Best Practices in State Transfer and Articulation Systems*, will review policies and practices of all 50 states.

How might we apply these insights into student mobility across institutions in New England? Students could be admitted to specific degree programs that span universities across New England and that guarantee smooth transitions between those institutions, dependent on a student completing a prescribed set of courses. This coursework would include agreed-upon classes in the major discipline, a set of general education courses and acceptable electives. Students would have to pass all courses and maintain an approved grade average in their major. Faculty at the participating universities would co-design the curricula and agree to accept all courses from their partner institutions in the major as well as general education coursework. This substantive cross-institutional collaboration would ensure that the approved curricula and designated courses would be accepted seamlessly to fulfill the requirements of the given major. The chief academic officers of each institution would oversee this process, reporting back to their presidents.

At CUNY, 2+2 programs brought together faculties in such areas as criminal justice and business as well as in general education areas to ensure that specific courses corresponded in their rigor and learning outcomes. Overseen by the chief academic officers of collaborating CUNY institutions, these efforts provided revealing insights into the many ways in which differing institutional cultures and disciplinary expectations inadvertently placed obstacles in the way of student transfer and degree attainment. The 2+2 approach moves beyond the conventional articulation agreement since students are co-enrolled in both the community college and baccalaureate programs, and they earn direct admission into the bachelor's program upon the successful completion of their associate degree. They carry their credits from their community college coursework and they have demonstrated to faculty that they have met expectations about their learning and academic performance.

New England's challenge—and an arena in which it can play a nationally important leadership role—is in truly placing the student at the center of our work, not only within universities or within university systems but across the whole region. We can do that by enabling our faculties and disciplines across our institutions to collaborate creatively in service of the intellectual substance of their programs as well as the academic aspirations of our students. That is how we can best ensure the success of our students.

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Interstate Collaboration: Is Everybody a Winner?

First determine the stakeholders, then ask honestly what the benefits are to each

NANCY CARRIUOLO

The bedrock of my career has been collaboration. With little or no funding in my pocket, I have urged, poked and cheered colleagues into working together in partnerships from K-12 through graduate school, a skill I first developed while employed at the New England Association of Schools and Colleges in the 1990s as director of the association's Office of School-College Relations. I am, nevertheless, looking askance at some interstate partnerships under discussion now.

Long-term, successful collaborations are always based on equal, respectful relationships where each party brings resources and gets benefits. Cost savings are sometimes one of the benefits, but now I worry that cost savings are too often the driver. If the financial bottom line is the primary benefit of a given agreement, the collaboration will collapse in better fiscal times.

Let's give the sniff test to NEBHE's "Tuition Break" Regional Student Program. The program might seem to be driven simply by finances, but more benefits exist for all partners.

The states exporting students save money. They provide quality academic programs to students in their state without having to build new facilities or hire new faculty. The exporting state also does not have to worry about screening a program's quality or brokering the agreement. Both are taken care of by NEBHE.

The receiving institution also benefits. Empty seats fill with students who add geographic and sometimes racial and economic diversity to a classroom. Everyone is a winner, including the students who enter the program at no more than 175% of the *in-state* tuition rate—much lower than full out-of-state rates. Best of all, if someone is dissatisfied, any of the main stakeholders can withdraw from the program without penalty. The Tuition Break program has all the criteria for an equitable, longstanding partnership among its basic partners: the sending and the receiving institutions and NEBHE as the broker. Everyone is a winner.

NEBHE's collaboration is longstanding and clearly successful. Let's look next at a collaboration that has only reached the discussion stage, where benefits to all the potential partners might not be so clearly equitable. Periodic exploratory discussions of a Providence-based life sciences center have envisioned a collaboration of Rhode Island universities, colleges and organizations with interests related to the life sciences. Some have even suggested inviting higher education institutions from nearby states to partake of the facilities. Administrators have been considering the possible advantages for nursing programs in a new center. Nursing faculty would be able to teach their high-demand classes in newly renovated shared classroom space close to hospitals. Clearly, sharing high-cost facilities and equipment has a cost benefit. Furthermore, medical professionals from various institutions of higher education and from hospitals can interact in a research setting and spawn new ideas. Clinical placements of students at nearby hospitals would be convenient. Many benefits are possible when faculty leave their campus offices and classrooms and relocate closer to hospitals.

Some disadvantages also exist, however, for academic institutions that are located at some distance from the life sciences center. Many years have been spent urging faculty from professions such as nursing to leave their silos and interact on campus with faculty from the arts and sciences and with faculty from other professional disciplines. What happens when nursing faculty are sent off campus to interact primarily with others in the life sciences in a specialized center? The college loses the faculty's valuable input on curriculum, governance and strategic planning committees. The college also loses the synergy that takes place when nursing faculty collaborate with other faculty such as the social work or psychology faculty in offering interdisciplinary programs and instruction. The students lose access to advisement by expert mathematics and science professors, as well as tutoring services in mathematics and science for students whose ardor to heal exceeds their ability to cipher. Other student services and extracurricular opportunities are also left behind as the nursing faculty and their students move off the home campus.

When considering a long-distance relationship, everyone should first determine the stakeholders and then ask honestly what the benefits are to each. They should also ask another important question: Is every collaborator giving and receiving equally? If not, the relationship is not likely to be sturdy enough to endure over the long term and be worth the time, money and energy poured into beginning the project.

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NEASC: A Clearinghouse

Leveraging local successes for the regional stage

ELSA M. NUÑEZ

Every 10 years, colleges and universities across America go through a labor-intensive review of their operations as faculty, staff and administrators prepare for *reaccreditation*—the all-important credential that serves to ensure the public's trust in higher education. During this time of self-reflection, institutions discover unexpected opportunities to improve educational quality, supported by a unique network of volunteer experts: peers from schools of similar size and purpose.

In our region, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) is the governing structure that oversees the accreditation process for colleges and universities. In addition to the assessment and support provided by CIHE's cadre of 1,500 peer reviewers, member institutions benefit from a myriad of scheduled events and informal sharing opportunities. Indeed, higher education may be unique among industries and professions in the degree to which information and resources are shared without regard to competition. Of course, they are always mindful of antitrust concerns as they relate to financial aid and tuition-setting.

NEASC's annual meeting and other workshops provide a wealth of information on mission-critical issues facing all of higher education, among them: standardizing assessment of student achievement while taking the needs and learning styles of individual students into account; first-year programs; working with the media; keeping abreast of legislation; sustainability on campus; and supporting at-risk students.

Along with its conferences, NEASC also encourages member institutions to develop summer institutes, such as the one for new secondary and college counselors held this past July in Burlington, Vt., which provided advice and networking opportunities to budding professionals. A special program planned for next year's celebration of NEASC's 125th anniversary called "Listening to Students" will give college students an opportunity to reflect on the history and purpose of higher education in the United States, particularly New England.

Other resources available to NEASC members include reports from the Council on Higher Education Accreditation and accrediting agencies from other regions like New England, discipline-related organizations, as well as transcripts from NEASC annual conference presentations. All of these documents help institutions access the latest thinking on critical issues facing higher education while benefiting from best practices at colleges and universities across America.

In addition to offering comprehensive programs, NEASC has advocated for greater collaboration and sharing among its members. Each institution is working on its own campus and community to find ways to do more with less, and to connect with other educators to share resources. In Connecticut, our state university and community college systems have a comprehensive transfer program in place that includes all 16 institutions. Eastern Connecticut State University is working with two other universities to offer degree-completion opportunities in nursing, one of many similar shared programs across New England. We are also partnering with our local community college on an exciting dual-enrollment project for inner-city youth.

At the regional level, groups such as the New England University Coalition are sharing best practices for sustainability on our campuses as they champion green initiatives throughout the region.

The Northern New England Collaborative, composed of the Campus Compacts of Vermont, Maine and New Hampshire, used a four-year federal grant to build civic skills and advance service learning partnerships in local communities. Project highlights included a partnership between Bates College and the University of Southern Maine's Lewiston-Auburn campus to address community nutrition, the creation of a consultant corps of 161 faculty members taught to train other service-learning faculty throughout northern New England, and a doubling of service-learning courses on the 26 participating campuses.

A New England Regional Computing Program began more than 50 years ago with 20 schools. Today, as an affiliate of EDUCAUSE, the Northeast Regional Computing Program serves more than 240 member institutions, with benefits ranging from professional development to technical assistance and licensing agreement discounts. A more recent creation is the New England Area Librarian E-Science project led by the University of Massachusetts, involving dozens of health-science libraries throughout New England.

To the degree we continue to share such successes at the regional level, all of us will benefit. New England's geographic proximity and shared history also can serve as catalysts for greater collaboration. All members of the New England higher education community should consider how we can further leverage local successes on the regional stage, and how NEASC can facilitate that process.

Elsa M. Nuñez *is president of Eastern Connecticut State University and chair of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education at the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Email: nunez@easternct.edu.*

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