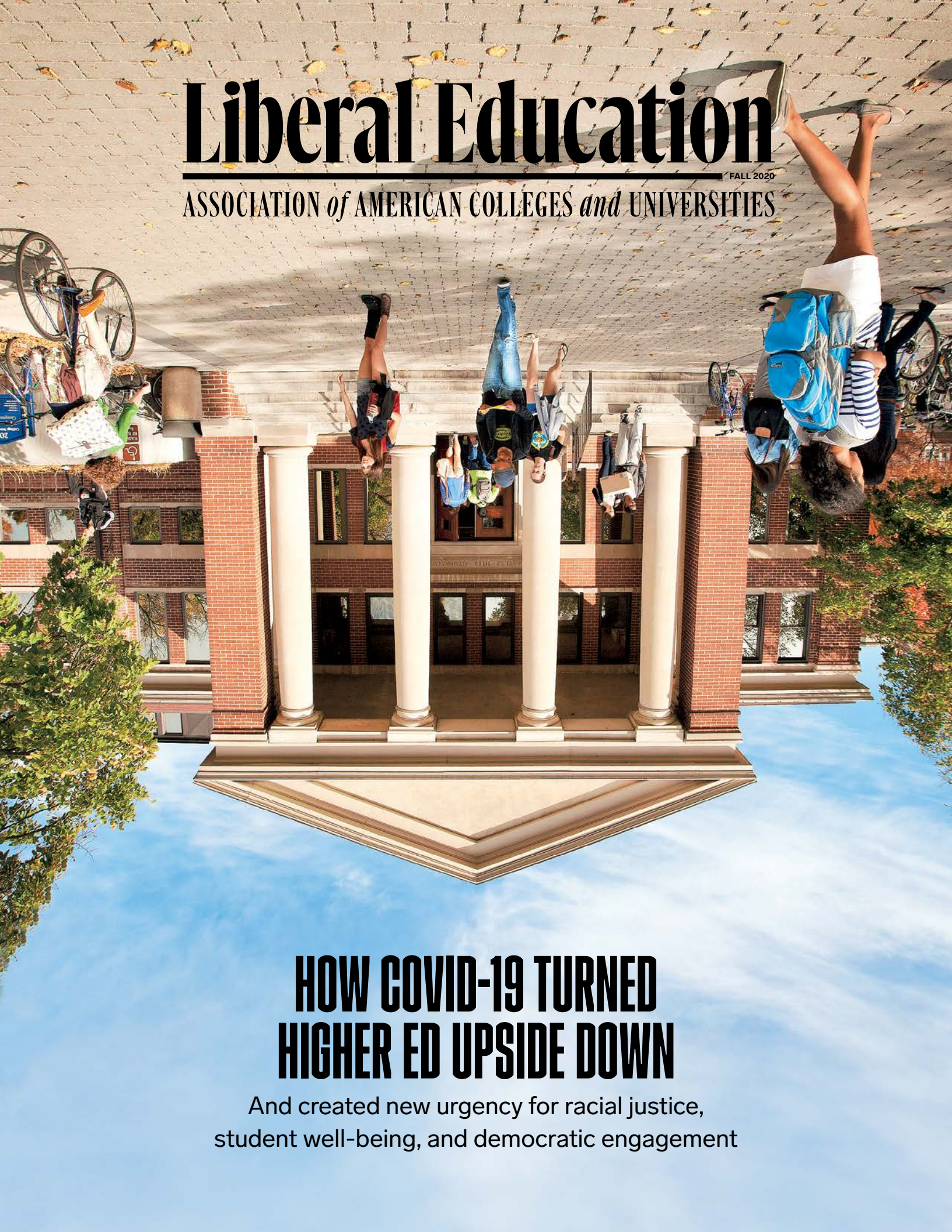# Liberal Education

FALL 2020

ASSOCIATION *of* AMERICAN COLLEGES *and* UNIVERSITIES

HOW COVID-19 TURNED HIGHER ED UPSIDE DOWN

And created new urgency for racial justice, student well-being, and democratic engagement

WHAT
LIBERAL
EDUCATION
LOOKS LIKE

What It Is, Who It's For,
& Where It Happens

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C|&U

AAC&U's Guiding Vision of Liberal Education

What Liberal Education Looks Like presents a guiding vision of educational excellence that is grounded in equity and inclusion. In distilling the principles, practices, and contemporary challenges of liberal education, this signature AAC&U publication clearly describes the learning all students need for success in an uncertain future and for addressing the compelling issues we face as a democracy and as a global community—regardless of where they study, what they major in, or what their career goals are.

Developed in consultation with leaders across higher education, drawing on innovations at colleges and universities of all types, and responding to the most urgent challenges of our time, *What Liberal Education Looks Like* is ideally suited for discussion by governing boards, faculty, students, and other stakeholder groups.

To download the vision or to purchase print copies, scan the QR code or visit www.aacu.org/advocacy.

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Fall 2020

Liberal Education: Quality and Equity in Service to Democracy

Departments

Features

Liberal Education and Threats to Democracy

Fostering independent thought and dialogue across differences
is how we counter authoritarianism

By **Lynn Pasquerella**

In April 2020, AAC&U released a new vision of educational excellence, *What Liberal Education Looks Like: What It Is, Who It's For, and Where It Happens*. Designed to guide higher education at this time of unparalleled transformation, it is a vision that details the ongoing dynamism and enduring relevance of liberal education in preparing students for work, citizenship, and life in a future none of us can fully predict. Foundational to this vision is the conviction that fulfilling our nation's historic mission of educating for democracy will necessitate a renewed and reinvigorated commitment among colleges and universities to higher education's civic and democratic purposes.

Indeed, in the face of increasing polarization and partisanship,

"A liberal education frees the mind from past dispositions, producing independent thinkers who seek the truth unfettered by dogma and ideology."

a global pandemic, economic uncertainty, and protests around a moment of racial reckoning in America, furthering AAC&U's mission of advancing the vitality and public standing of liberal education by making quality and equity the foundations for excellence in undergraduate education in service to democracy is more critical than ever. In this ostensibly post-truth era, when the burgeoning culture wars have accelerated the proliferation of misinformation and incivility, a liberal education offers the best means of ensuring the sustained engagement of a free people who

are united in their quest to preserve the democratic principles of justice, liberty, human dignity, and the equality of all people.

By its very nature, a liberal education frees the mind from past dispositions, producing independent thinkers who seek the truth unfettered by dogma, ideology, and preconceptions. Yet it also has the capacity to foster civility, promote dialogue across difference, and contest anti-intellectualism, producing citizens who are less susceptible to manipulation and prejudice and more disposed to civic and democratic engagement.

AAC&U's positing of liberal education as the form of education most appropriate to advancing democracy was validated in a recent report by Georgetown's Center on Education and the Workforce (CEW). *The Role of Education in Taming Authoritarian Attitudes* examines how colleges and universities can challenge the rise of authoritarianism worldwide and the resulting threat to democracies. A preference for authoritarianism is measured by individuals' inclinations toward, as the report describes it, either "independent thought, respect for diversity, and inquisitive assessment of evidence" or "unquestioning acceptance of authority."

Comparing the attitudes and preferences of people from fifty-one countries, CEW's analysis found that those living in the United States have moderate authoritarian preferences, ranking sixteenth. The report also found that the United States has the strongest association between being college educated and having a lower propensity toward authoritarianism.

Citing the power of liberal education in mitigating authoritarian tendencies, the report affirms that American college graduates at both the bachelor's and associate's degree levels are less likely to express authoritarian preferences than those with less education. Indeed, the researchers found that liberal arts students are less inclined

than those studying business or the STEM disciplines to adopt attitudes of political intolerance, signified by the repression of free speech and by xenophobia, racism, ethnocentrism, and religious sectarianism.

The authors of the report point to the ways in which authoritarianism tends to flourish when social norms and personal security are threatened. Rising inequalities of wealth, the devastating impact of COVID-19, and divisions over issues of racial and social justice have fueled feelings of vulnerability among many Americans, who are then more likely to seek the protection of authoritarian leaders and political systems. And when those with high authoritarian inclinations identify strongly with specific groups, a perceived threat to those groups can result in greater intolerance.

According to the report, liberal education reduces individuals' sensitivities to potential triggers by providing psychological protection in the form of self-esteem, personal security, and autonomy. It also fosters a level of interpersonal trust associated with lower inclinations toward authoritarian preferences. Exposure of liberal arts majors to diverse contexts and cultures diminishes the likelihood that differing worldviews will trigger authoritarian responses and increases the chances of such responses being countered with evidence.

In addition, the findings reveal that postsecondary education leads to greater political participation and civic engagement. Because democracies with higher levels of education have greater levels of political tolerance and are more likely to survive, the report concludes that "higher education is the cornerstone of successful democracies not easily shaken by authoritarian threats."

The articles in this issue offer further incontrovertible evidence as to why championing liberal education is essential for the health of our democracy. I am grateful for the insights and inspiration they provide. LE

Lynn Pasquerella is the president of the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Turning a New Page

We're excited to bring you a fresh approach to AAC&U's flagship quarterly, full of thoughtful insights about this upside-down moment in higher ed—and the world

By Christen Aragoni and Emily Schuster
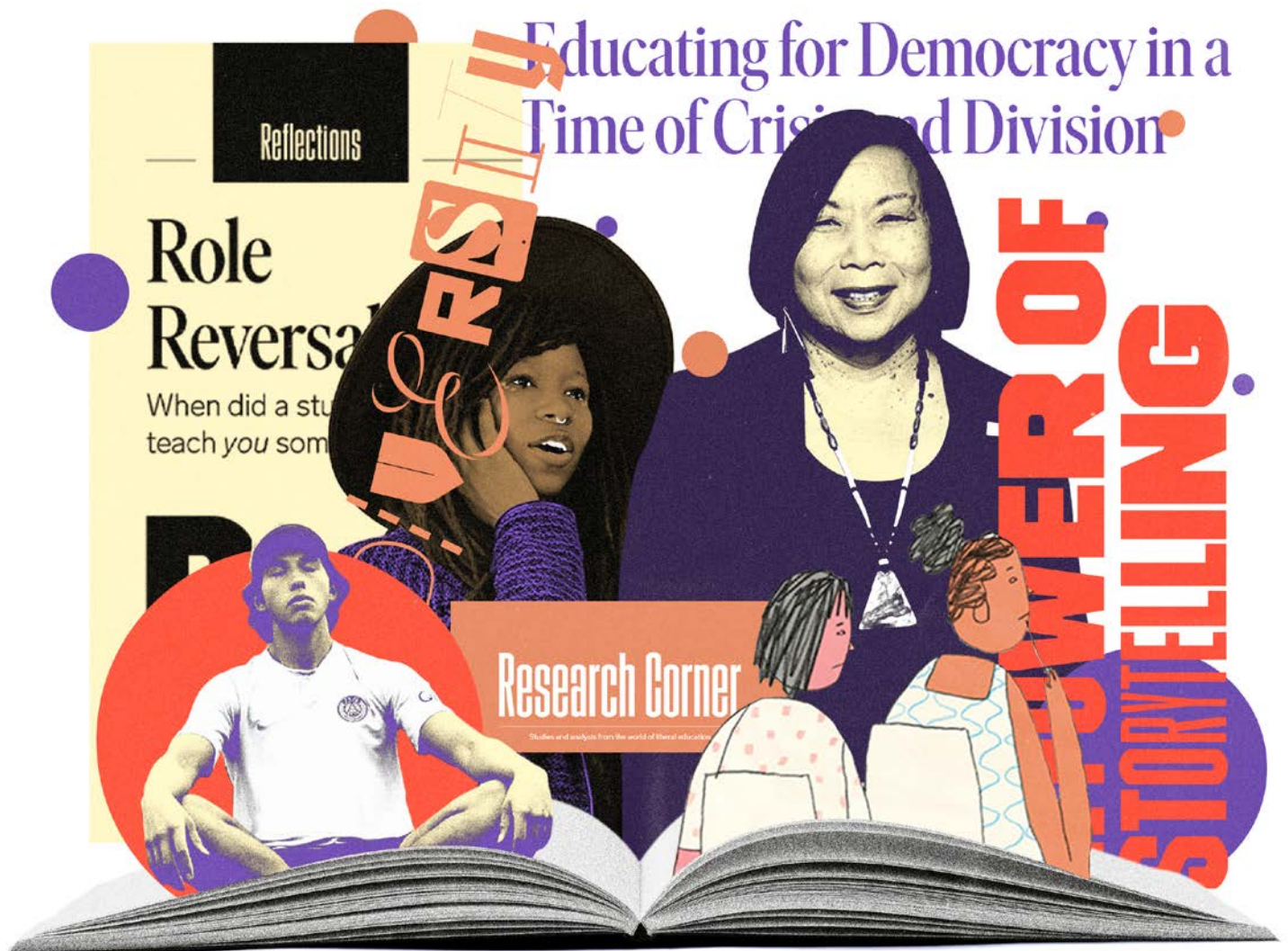
Welcome to the new *Liberal Education,* a reimagining of the original *Liberal Education* that incorporates the themes of AAC&U's now-retired journals, *Diversity & Democracy* and *Peer Review*. The creativity of the design reflects our shift from a journal to an engaging magazine offering in-depth features and short informative takes—all on a mix of topics integral to AAC&U's work. We aim to bring you thought leadership on the challenges facing higher education, as well as practical hands-on ideas for grappling with those challenges and readying students to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

When we began developing this publication, we never imagined that we would launch the inaugural issue during a global pandemic, a moment of racial reckoning, and a time of heightened uncertainty—

politically, socially, economically, and environmentally. But the difficulties of this moment underscore the importance of liberal education and the information and insights we work to bring you in these pages. As Ahmed Bawa says in our cover story, in which eight educators talk about serving students and fostering racial healing as the pandemic continues, "The virus is just a spark—the conditions required for the pandemic to explode were already here. Campus leaders must think deeply about how they deal with the short-term crisis, because those solutions will have significant implications for the way in which universities relate to society down the line."

The entire issue—including new departments we're excited to bring you—grapples with the challenges of the current world reality. With 80 percent of 2,086 college students surveyed in April by the non-profit Active Minds reporting that the pandemic was adversely affecting their mental health, we decided to use our new Research Corner, complemented by two related feature articles, to take a deep dive into student well-being as campuses continue to face the challenges posed by COVID-19. While improving student mental health was already an area that required more attention from higher education leaders before the pandemic, the stress, uncertainty, and disruptions caused by COVID-19 have made clearer the need for improved resources for well-being. In her story on counseling Arab American students, Souzan Naser argues for ensuring campus counselors are trained to work with students from a diverse array of backgrounds. In another article, Linda Yaron Weston describes her for-credit course on mindfulness and how it teaches students tools that can help them better handle the stress of academic studies, as well as life more broadly. As one student wrote in reflecting on how the course has helped her cope with the pandemic,

"Rather than worrying about what could happen and expending energy on stress about things I cannot control, mindfulness has taught me to enjoy the days that I do have with my family and make the most of the additional time I've been given."

Other articles look at considering academic freedom along with diversity, and bringing students, police, and community members together through storytelling. The authors of the Advice section point out that to make progress on diversity and inclusion, administrators need to listen to and work directly with faculty, students, and other community members, focusing on building trust and cultivating respect. And in her Student Voice essay, a Spelman student has a message for educators everywhere: teach more Black experiences.

All these issues, heightened amid the pandemic, also collectively remind us with increasing urgency of the importance of educating for democracy. As Nancy Thomas points out in her interview with us, "We are witnessing a stunning example of the argument over federalism and states' rights. Who makes the decision about wearing masks in an era of COVID? We want individuals to decide to wear masks because they feel a sense of responsibility to each other as members of a community. Yet too many people need to be told to wear masks, advice that many elected officials refuse to give. The combination of a lack of clarity on who's governing and the idea that we are a nation of rugged individualists is causing this pandemic to grow. It's a tragedy, but it's also a teachable moment."

We invite you to read on and engage with the ideas within these pages. Send us your thoughts about the articles, questions for the Advice section, topics for our new Reflections department, and proposals for future articles at **liberaled@aacu.org**. We look forward to hearing from you. ⊞

Featured Contributors

Nailah Reine Barnes
"Please read my piece and be reminded that the most effective way to begin dismantling systems of oppression is to learn about them and the people they negatively affect."
See page 52.

Souzan Naser
"I felt a tremendous responsibility in writing this piece because I want higher ed professionals to have a better understanding of Arab American students' political and personal struggles."
See page 34.

Brian Rea
"When sketching this, I imagined the extreme opposite of my approach of guiding class conversations based on students' ideas—a teacher who overshares his viewpoints."
See illustration on page 6.

Henry Reichman
"Too often we hear that we must choose between defending academic freedom and promoting diversity among students and faculty. I think this is a false choice, and I wanted to explain why."
See page 40.

Kiesha Warren-Gordon
"Working with the Whitely community in Muncie, Indiana, has truly been the highlight of my career. I'm grateful for every community member who has embraced my students and me."
See page 46.

Linda Yaron Weston
"Particularly now, supporting mental health can help students thrive in school and life. This article highlights student voices and data from my Introduction to Mindfulness course."
See page 28.

Speaking Your Mind

Should professors reveal their views on controversial topics?

By Mano Singham

When I was teaching introductory physics classes, where the topics were backed by an overwhelming scientific consensus, my personal views weren't an issue. My goal was to make students aware of that consensus and prepare them to use the basic principles of physics in their future work. I felt comfortable saying that I accepted the scientific consensus, even though large classes invariably had students who, for various reasons (religious or otherwise), did not accept that Earth and the universe are billions of years old, that the speed of light is an invariant, or that the rate at which clocks tick depends on their state of motion.

But things were not always so clear cut in my philosophy of science courses, which focused on more controversial topics, such as whether a scientific worldview is compatible with belief in the supernatural. Social sciences faculty and others may face a similar challenge when discussing topics like race, gender, and sexuality, which can be the source of intense debate, with strongly held views on all sides.

When I served as director of my university's teaching center, I organized a faculty discussion focusing on how much we should tell students about our own views. A faculty member recalled how one of her college instructors had skillfully guided class discussions so that no one knew his views on controversial topics. Her instructor claimed that because of this, students were more willing to express their views, since they were not agreeing or disagreeing with the authority figure. My colleague felt that other educators should follow this model.

Another of my colleagues was in the political science department and specialized in the American elections system. He followed the model of not sharing his viewpoints to an even greater extreme. He kept his political sympathies not only from his students but also from his colleagues—even in his own department—because he felt his viewpoints would reach students through the campus grapevine.

Underlying this approach is the belief that students may fear that going against a professor's views might result in penalties or that agreeing with the professor could be viewed as an attempt at ingratiation to get better grades. In my experience, very few teachers would penalize students simply for disagreeing with them. But that doesn't matter, since all it takes is *one* teacher, or even one rumor, to poison the well for all of us.

> **"When I raised the question, my students favored professors *not* hiding their views on controversial topics."**

I am not convinced that maintaining strict neutrality is a good thing. On the practical side, I am not sure how many of us have the skill to pull off what the professors I mentioned above did. It seems enormously difficult to spend a whole semester leading discussions on topics I care about without revealing, at least indirectly, my own positions on them. So many of us will betray ourselves, by word or tone or nuance, despite our best efforts at concealment.

But I am also not convinced that concealing my views is good even in principle. Those students who

benefit by achieving a deeper understanding of their own beliefs. Some of our views might change, but that is an incidental byproduct of discussions—not the goal.

In this light, I saw my role as *modeling* this behavior for my students, which required me to reveal my views and demonstrate how I use evidence and arguments to arrive at my conclusions. I let students follow along with my thinking as I explored topics such as whether scientific progress is headed toward truth or whether human beings are merely the accidental byproduct of the evolutionary process and have no special status among living things. I felt, or at least I hoped, that students benefited from hearing my views, just as I benefited when they explained the reasoning behind their beliefs.

The fly in the ointment is (as always) the issue of grades. I tried to never think negatively of students who held views opposed to mine and did not let their viewpoints influence how I graded their work. But I was not the one being evaluated. Students might have concerns about a professor's objectivity.

This is why I spent a lot of time at the beginning of my courses establishing rapport with students to build trust that I would objectively gauge their performance. For example, I had students work together to decide on the rubrics used to evaluate papers and discussions. I also built trust by, among other things, meeting with each student privately within the first two weeks of class, going to class early, staying for a few minutes afterward, and finding opportunities to talk informally with students so that we got to know each other better. Because of the relationships students built with me and with each other, they were never uncivil in class discussions. The benefits of that effort extended well beyond the question of revealing my own views, because earning the trust of students also created a congenial and productive classroom environment. IE

speak their minds irrespective of the instructor's views won't care whether or not I reveal my views or whether or not they agree with me. And isn't it better for students who do care about my views to know exactly where I stand rather than for them to play guessing games?

My students seemed to agree. When I raised the question with them at the start of a seminar course, they favored professors *not* hiding their views on controversial topics. Otherwise, students would spend far too much time looking for clues to instructors' opinions and getting

distracted from the real questions they were supposed to be discussing.

A more serious concern is that one purpose of classroom discussions is not to try to change people's views but to better understand why classmates believe whatever they believe. One of the best ways to achieve such deeper understanding is to hear the basis for other people's beliefs. By probing and questioning the reasoning of others, and by having others ask you questions about your own beliefs, participants on all sides of a discussion (both students and faculty) can

Mano Singham is a Fellow of the American Physical Society, former director of the teaching and learning center at Case Western Reserve University, and author of *The Great Paradox of Science: Why Its Conclusions Can Be Relied Upon Even though They Cannot Be Proven.*

Making Responsible Journalists

Newspapers face challenges to a free press on increasingly diverse and polarized campuses

By Juan González

Troy Closson (second from left), editor-in-chief of the *Daily Northwestern*, works with other members of the newspaper's staff at Northwestern University in November 2019.

In 2019, college newspapers became the focus of intense debate over the limits of freedom of the press. Controversies at the *Harvard Crimson* and the *Daily Northwestern* sparked national conversations among professional journalists and mass communication educators. Other controversies at my school, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, received less attention yet also raised important questions about how traditional journalism concepts will fare in an increasingly diverse and polarized society.

At Harvard, a *Crimson* article on a student protest against US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) sparked a firestorm in September 2019 after the reporter noted that the federal agency had not responded to a request for comment. That provoked many students to call for a boycott of the *Crimson*.

"We are extremely disappointed in the cultural insensitivity displayed by the *Crimson*'s policy to reach out to ICE, a government agency with a long history of surveilling and retaliating against those who speak out against them," read a petition from Act on a Dream, the student group that organized the protest. "In this political climate, a request for comment is virtually the same as tipping them off, regardless of how they are contacted."

The outreach to ICE came after the protest, and the paper did not give the agency any student names. Nonetheless, the petition drew

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more than a thousand signatures, the undergraduate student government voted by a slim majority to back it, and current and former editors of the *Crimson* even organized a picket against the paper.

Editor-in-Chief Kristine Guillaume, the first Black woman to head the *Crimson*, defended the paper. "A world where news outlets categorically refuse to contact certain kinds of sources—a world where news outlets let third-party groups dictate the terms of their coverage—is a less informed, less accurate, and ultimately less democratic world," she said in a statement.

At the *Daily Northwestern*, a similar furor arose from a November 2019 article on students protesting a campus speech by former US attorney general Jeff Sessions. Activists tried to push through a door into the lecture hall, and campus police forcibly removed several protesters. The paper's photographer posted photos to social media of students being knocked to the ground, and reporters used the campus directory to seek comment from participating students. The university threatened disciplinary action against some protesters. Within days, the paper's editor-in-chief, Troy Closson, published an apology for coverage that was invasive and "hurt students." Closson was only the third Black editor-in-chief in the paper's history. His apology provoked backlash from conservatives and free speech defenders, with articles appearing in the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times,* and *Newsweek*.

Two similar examples occurred around the same time at the Rutgers *Daily Targum*, the second-oldest student newspaper in the country. In an end-of-semester issue in December 2019, the *Targum* featured an article on the work of the Central Jersey Climate Coalition campus chapter. The photo accompanying the story showed a campus rally held the previous day against racism and for Black solidarity, with the caption noting that Climate Coalition members had endorsed and

Protesters bang on a lecture hall's door to disrupt former US attorney general Jeff Sessions's speech at Northwestern University in November 2019.

participated in that rally. But there was no separate coverage about the anti-racism rally itself. The campus NAACP and Black Lives Matter chapters condemned the paper's slight, and there were even threats of a boycott. In this case, the editors met with the groups, and Editor-in-Chief Priyanka Bansal, the first Indian American to hold that post in the paper's history, issued a statement that said, in part, "The *Targum* takes responsibility and apologizes for the disconnect between the photo and the body text of this article."

A few weeks earlier, the *Targum* had also covered an event on Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement. Many students from China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan attend Rutgers, and they often fall on different sides of the movement. Given the event's sensitivity, organizers stated at the start that the student newspaper was covering the event, and if anyone felt uncomfortable about being photographed, they should make that clear to the reporters. No one did. One student who subsequently appeared in a photo claimed his privacy had been violated and demanded the photo be removed from the paper's website. In this case, the paper declined to apologize.

So, what do these campus press battles signify? Are student journalists becoming complicit, as some argue, in their own censorship? Are they allowing pressure from activists to shape their coverage? Are principles of independent journalism and free speech under assault?

Anyone who has carefully studied the history of US news media knows that partisanship, class, race, and gender biases have always infused the press and that coverage has often been shaped behind closed doors by those with the greatest power. People of color have been systematically excluded from the press, both in general society and on college campuses. But over the past several decades, colleges have become more diverse in their ethnic, racial, and class composition. All three campus newspapers, as I noted, had editors-in-chief of color. Campus diversity has led to more frequent and intense clashes over political narratives. At the same time, the increasing polarization of our society and, in recent years, the clear increase in repressive government actions (whether by police, federal agencies such as ICE, or authoritarian governments abroad) have produced greater fear and insecurity among students of color. These are real issues. They will not go away by repeating rote exhortations to respect free speech or freedom of the press.

Part of being a truly responsible journalist in a world where even advanced democracies have become more authoritarian and xenophobic is learning to report the facts while also protecting the most vulnerable and marginalized from the forces of reaction. In other words, student journalists must be responsible to real people, not simply to abstract concepts. Student journalists, after all, unlike most big-city professional reporters, often live among and socialize with the very people they cover. That reality should cause a greater sensitivity to impacts of their coverage on others. Some simple advice would be to pay attention in any conflict to the concerns of the least powerful. It's not always an easy task to balance journalistic ethics with accountability to all sectors of your community, but we need to encourage and salute the brave students who are struggling every day to get it right. IE

How Do We Lead on Equity?

Hint: Avoid a routine approach—and focus on building trust

By Adrianna Kezar and Sharon Fries-Britt

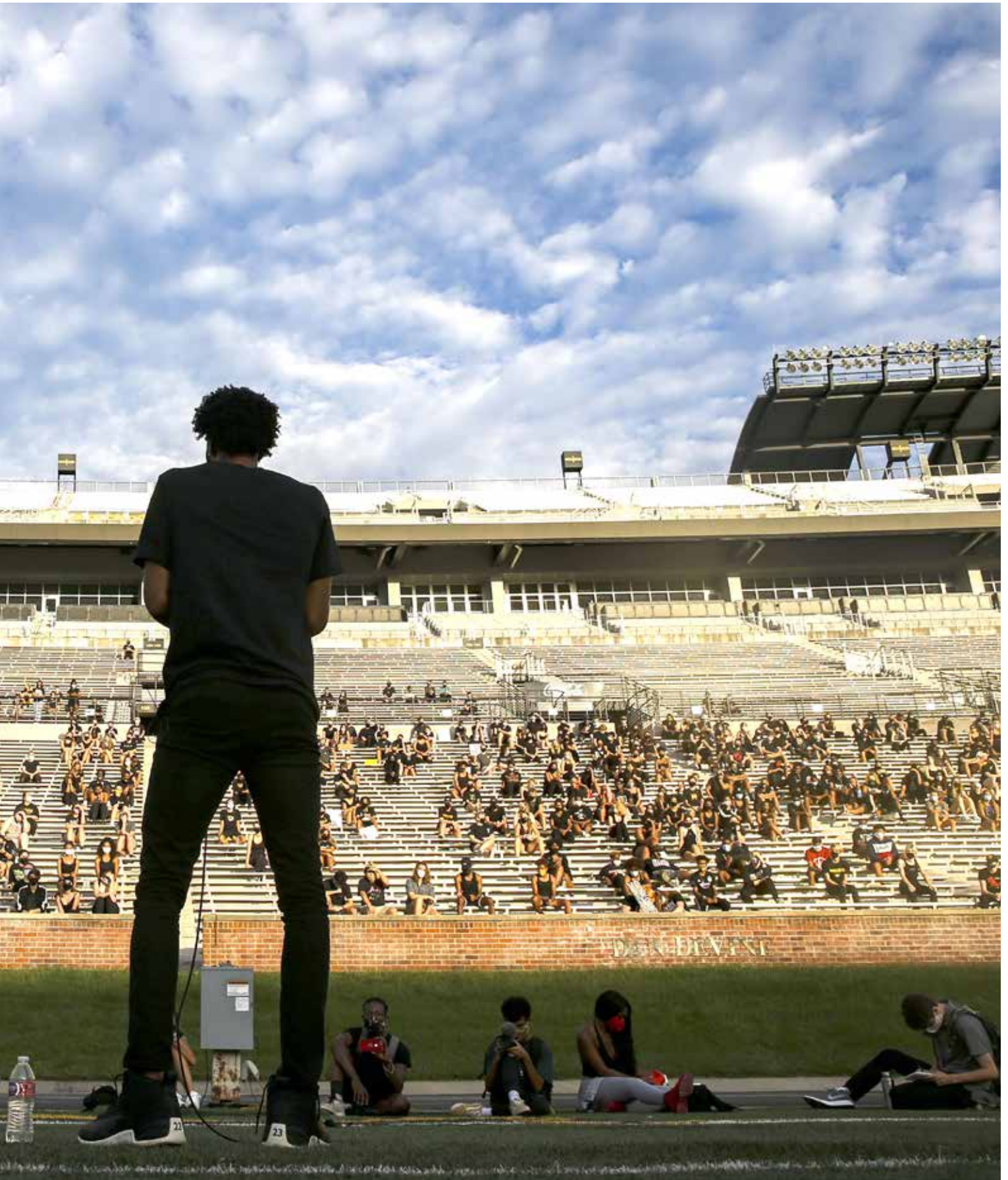**A**mid the COVID-19 pandemic and the protests against racism, students have returned to campuses, virtually and in person, with a renewed commitment to social justice, racial equity, and institutional accountability. This mindset provides an opportunity for colleges and universities to partner with students to advance progress on diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

While campuses vary in their progress, few have achieved an equitable environment. In addressing racial issues, administrative leaders often use a routinized approach—setting up a task force, collecting data, and developing a report with recommendations. We do not encourage leaders to start this way! Rarely do routinized efforts create change; in fact, they can be destructive to campus communities that need authentic engagement in which leaders listen to and work on the ground with faculty, staff, and

After a 2020 social-justice march at the University of Missouri, student Cason Suggs speaks about his experiences as a Black man.

Need advice? Write to us at liberaled@aacu.org with your question on a topic in higher ed, and we'll ask an expert to address it.

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students. Leaders should focus on building trust and cultivating respect if they seek authentic engagement. What does that look like? Our case study research at the University of Missouri has identified two key frameworks that allow for authentic engagement—the collective trauma recovery and weaver-leader frameworks.

Collective trauma recovery framework

The collective trauma recovery framework acknowledges that our campuses have created environments that are traumatizing to non-White students. Dismantling such environments requires active listening, speaking from the heart, and "acting with."

Active listening is a structured form of listening and responding that focuses the attention on the speaker—instead of on one's own perspectives—and improves mutual understanding without debate or judgment. It is a powerful method of responding to stressful and traumatic situations and events. It allows students to share problems and struggles, engage with difficult feelings, gain perspective on the experience, take ownership of the situation, rebuild relationships, find their own solutions, and build self-esteem and resilience.

In times of racial crisis, forums are often held to hear from faculty, staff, students, and community stakeholders. However, most of us have generally poor listening skills, preventing us from benefiting from these kinds of sessions. Many times, administrators and faculty think that they are engaged in active listening when they are not. Campuses should train key individuals to expand capacity for active listening. In forums, for instance, leaders need to be open and not defensive. They need to make governance structures more inclusive, creating more two-way communication channels with students by proactively reaching out to them for recommendations. Administra-

tors should invite a wide range of students beyond student leaders to increase representation. A common refrain from faculty, staff, student, and community stakeholders is that they attend events, forums, and meetings but do not feel heard as administrators act in ways that violate what was shared.

Speaking from the heart means invoking and responding to emotions. It involves honest verbal and written communication from administrators, free from political spin and staff editing or polishing. Too often it is the impulse of leaders to use prepared comments after a tragedy so they do not say anything "wrong" that might further offend students. When leaders speak from the heart, they build the trust needed to overcome fear and fatigue.

Current social justice issues have led more leaders—including college presidents, mayors, governors, and medical professionals—to speak from the heart. This might entail leaders describing their own experiences with discrimination or the experiences of someone close to them. For leaders in higher education, this also means owning their institution's history of racism and creating dialogues on racial healing that focus on all students, particularly those who have been most affected by systemic racism. Administrators should recognize and celebrate those who are courageously leading equity efforts. Students are often overlooked as key players, and leaders should invite them to voice concerns and exchange ideas about dismantling racist policies and practices.

"Acting with" suggests that leaders need to move forward by directly engaging with community members, especially members most affected by traumatic racial events. Too often, leaders rush ahead to "solve" the problem and do not engage with the community, negatively affecting collective recovery from the trauma. "Acting with" requires leaders to move in a measured way that deeply connects with community members and allows them to

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"Students are often overlooked as key players, and leaders should invite them to voice concerns and exchange ideas."

In 2015, Concerned Student 1950 activists fought for changes after racist incidents at the University of Missouri.

inform the strategy going forward. Leaders need to work to exhibit a democratic leadership style and seek feedback; create broad planning mechanisms that include all stakeholders; model difficult discussions; seek out professional development on how to speak about race and power; create collective modes of accountability, such as detailed metrics for each department or division; reward those who support racial healing and an inclusive climate through annual reviews and merit processes; and highlight grassroots community work in speeches and other communications and provide resources for such work.

Weaver-leader framework

Because many campuses have made little progress on racial equity, there will be students who are cynical about the possibility of creating lasting change. Many tensions exist on campus, such as differing expectations about progress on diversity and inclusion work and differing views on which priorities to focus on first. Racial-equity leaders need to be weaver-leaders to help bridge differences and bring people together into a shared vision and set of expectations. The weaver-leader framework connects several foundational leadership activities, including communicating

thoughtfully, setting expectations, and building relationships, all in the service of creating a common ground on which to move forward. This work is particularly salient for developing a shared vision around racial equity work.

Communicate thoughtfully: Weaver-leaders take up the mantle to communicate the progress being made, address the approach taken, and draw on personalized forms of communication. Leaders must enhance channels of communication in ways that are public, proactive, personal, caring, and transparent. The campus can, for instance, provide multiple opportunities for students to meet in smaller groups to share concerns. Deans can give their cellphone numbers to newly hired faculty of color so that they have direct access to them. They can also provide their cell numbers to students to create access and informal communications that convey an ethic of care.

Thoughtful communication is important because it builds relationships and trust. Right now, as campuses struggle with the challenges of educating students during the continuing pandemic, too many students, faculty, and staff are being left out of key communication channels. Massive, impersonal email blasts serve a purpose; however, they are not the most effective approach when handling a situation like teaching and learning during COVID-19. Leaders must consider ways to send personal and individualized messages like text messages with key updates, in addition to sending longer emails and phone messages and scheduling Zoom meetings when possible.

Set expectations: Expectations influence the pattern or design that the weaver is envisioning to create a full tapestry. While patterns

The Road to Recovery

A racial crisis results in fear, fatigue, and distrust, which can fundamentally destroy communities. The collective trauma recovery and weaver-leader frameworks can help campus communities engage in processes that lead to healing.
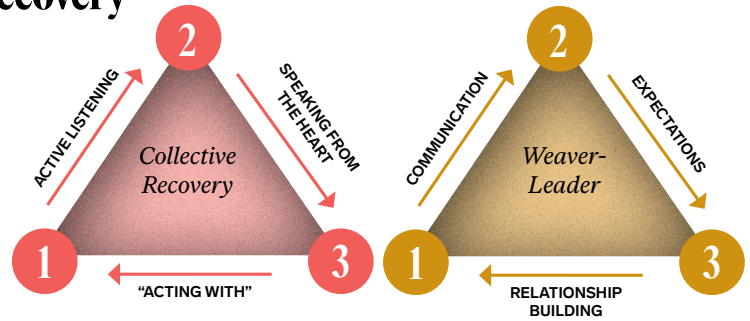
might change as progress is made, they are still useful in setting the overall course and direction. Students, staff, and faculty will likely give varied and potentially conflicting advice about ways forward with reopening and racial equity work.

Some campuses may be able to create an agenda for large-scale changes in relation to the Black Lives Matter movement (dismantling campus policing, for example). Other campuses may be struggling with financial or safety issues that prevent them from immediately working to make changes. Leaders need to be upfront about limitations that might prevent them from addressing demands for change but also set out a timeline for engaging in these changes in the future. Leaders must be aware of the fragmented views about needed progress and help share these perspectives across campus so that various groups can set expectations together. Everyone is disappointed when compromises are made and the rationale for decisions is not explained. For instance, if leaders decide to move courses to flex format (both in-person and online) after faculty have noted that this format causes too many teaching difficulties, faculty will feel that their concerns have been ignored.

Build relationships: Relationship building is a significant aspect of negotiating campus stakeholders'

demands around racial justice, such as improving the climate and outcomes for students. When communities are fractured and feel uninformed about budget, policy, and other decisions, it is even more imperative that senior-level administrators connect with the community through informal conversations. In this way, community members can know who their leaders are, feel comfortable offering them feedback, share their perceptions and experiences, and offer their insights on how the campus can make progress. Faculty, staff, and students have significant expertise about the campus, but too often leaders do not tap it. And many times, students and faculty do not share insights because they are scared to speak up, given the lack of relationships with leadership. Relationship building is particularly challenging during the pandemic. But campuses have been creative in creating forums using virtual technologies. For example, some campus leaders have open (virtual) office hours without agendas to allow people to drop in and talk about issues.

As campuses continue to move forward toward racial equity and justice, leaders must work with students, faculty, and staff to improve policies and practices. The collective trauma recovery and weaver-leader frameworks can help leaders take inclusive action, ensure open communication, and actively listen to make sure that everyone in the campus community has the chance to voice concerns and contribute to meaningful progress. ⒾⒺ

Adrianna Kezar (left) is the Wilbur-Kieffer Endowed Professor and Rossier Dean's Professor in Higher Education Leadership at the University of Southern California.

Sharon Fries-Britt is a professor of higher education at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Research Corner

Pandemic Brain: Not Just Mind over Matter

The COVID-19 pandemic is taking a toll on college students' mental health. While mental health issues were already widespread among students, the prevalence of depression increased by 5 percentage points from fall 2019 to spring 2020, according to a survey by Healthy Minds Network for Research on Adolescent and Young Adult Mental Health. Compared with fall 2019, more students in spring 2020 also said their mental health was negatively affecting their academic performance—though they also noted increased resilience. In addition, among graduate and professional students, major depressive disorder was two times higher in May and June 2020 than in spring 2019, and generalized anxiety disorder was 1.5 times higher, according to a survey by Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) Consortium. SERU also found that in the midst of the pandemic, 36 percent of undergraduates "reported clinically significant major depressive disorder symptoms."

In the News

"When basic needs (physiological, safety, security) are threatened, that threat carries into our mental health. Students' feelings of economic uncertainty may be the larger threat campuses may try to adjust by ensuring continued student employment, internships, and other career services." —David M. Arnold, assistant vice president for health, safety, and well-being initiatives for NASPA, told *Inside Higher Ed* in July 2020.

"Everybody is having anxiety about the pandemic and their financial status and not seeing friends. . . . Wrapped up in all those logistics is an incredible amount of anxiety." —Mary Moskowitz, a student at Northeastern University, told the *Boston Globe* in August 2020.

"My biggest fear from a mental health perspective is that inequality is going to widen, that we're going to see fewer and fewer students of color who are able to access mental health services through their campuses." —Sarah Lipson, a professor at the Boston University School of Public Health, told the *Boston Globe* in August 2020.
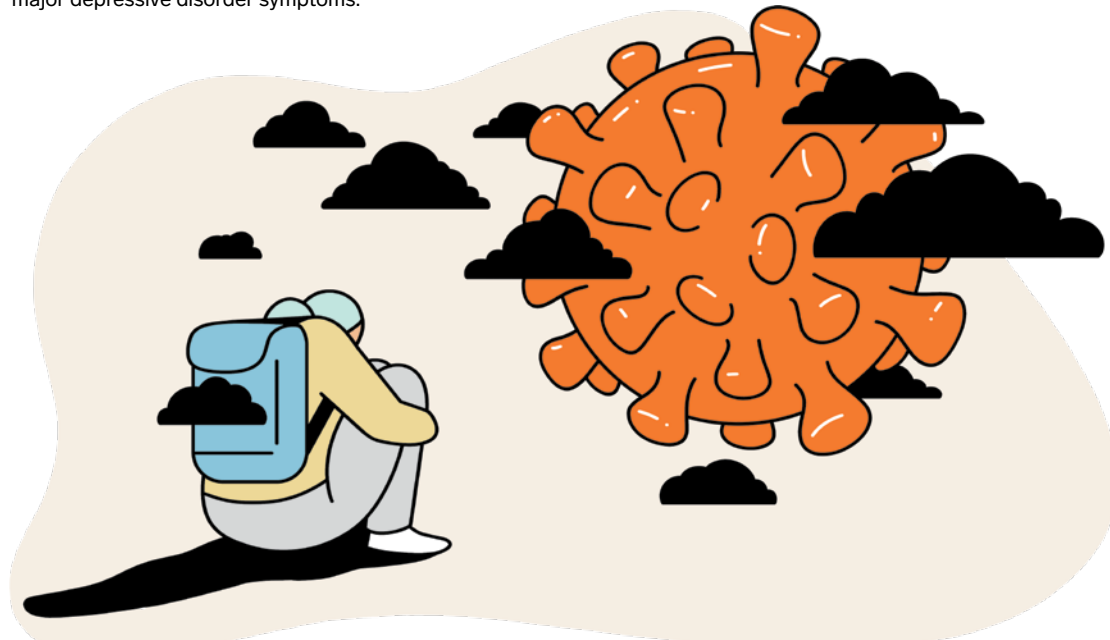
Overheard At . . .

AAC&U's May 2020 webinar "Let's Start with 'How Are You Doing?': How Resilience and Hope Can Shape a New Normal for Learning and Teaching"

"When I think of hope and resiliency in higher ed, I think of our opportunity and responsibility to prepare our new generation of leaders. This is a core of our work, and I think it is important because the challenges we are facing have become systemic."

—Daniel Pascoe Aguilar, associate provost, Drew University

Academic resilience "is the alchemy between the individual's capacity and the context in which they find themselves. In this context, we're talking about school, and societies, and the world at large, and it's the responsibility of each to really look at, how are we fostering resilience and how are we getting in the way of it?"

—Adina Glickman, codirector/cofounder, Academic Resilience Consortium

"Hope is about possibility, not probability. . . . Teachers have the potential to foster hope in very important ways with students. Letting a student know that we believe in them is powerful."

—Denise Larsen, associate dean and professor of counseling psychology, University of Alberta, and director of Hope Studies research lab

Illustrations by Sam Island

Did You Know?

Students say **the top characteristic they value in a professor is approachability**, according to Active Minds, a nonprofit working to improve young adult mental health. To support students with mental health challenges, Active Minds recommends that educators normalize the need for help.

→ Let students know they can talk to you about their struggles and emphasize the importance of self-care—including sleep.

→ List mental health resources on your syllabi alongside academic supports.

→ Tell the class about a time you needed help in school, demonstrating that asking for help shows strength.

→ Watch out for students who miss classes, assignments, or exams; frequently request extensions; don't respond when you reach out; and comment about being stressed or overwhelmed.

→ Check in with any individuals you might be concerned about and refer them to support services.

Help for Finding Help

Active Minds
  activeminds.org

American College Health Association
  acha.org

American College Counseling Association
  collegecounseling.org

Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors
  aucccd.org

Couched in Color
  couchedincolorpod.libsyn.com

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration**
  samhsa.gov

The Jed Foundation
  jedfoundation.org

Surveys Say . . .

From late March 2020 through May 2020, the Healthy Minds Network for Research on Adolescent and Young Adult Mental Health and the American College Health Association gathered responses from 18,764 students on 14 campuses on how the pandemic was affecting their outlook on the future and their financial situation, housing stability, mental health, and experiences of discrimination.
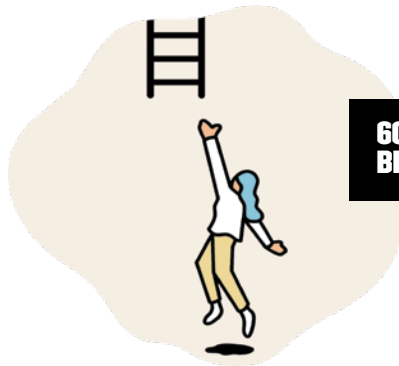
65% of students were "very or extremely concerned" about the duration of the pandemic.

86% said that they were concerned about their safety and security.

64% were "very or extremely concerned" about their loved ones getting COVID-19.

66% said that the pandemic had increased their financial stress.

36% moved to a different housing situation.

60% SAID THAT ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTH CARE HAD BECOME MORE DIFFICULT BECAUSE OF THE PANDEMIC.

6% said that because of the pandemic, they had experienced racial discrimination.

41% witnessed in-person or online racial discrimination.

From April to May 2020, the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth conducted a survey that garnered more than 12,000 responses from people aged 18 to 34 from 112 countries. A large number of responses came from educated youth and those with access to the internet.

35% of young people said that they never or rarely felt relaxed.

31% said that they felt optimistic.

29% reported that they felt "close to other people."

17% of young people were suffering from anxiety and depression.

7.8% was the increased likelihood of young women, over young men, to experience anxiety or depression.

2X MORE LIKELY Young people whose education or work had been disrupted by the pandemic **were 2X more likely** to suffer anxiety or depression compared with those who were still employed or whose education had been ongoing.

What Can Campuses Do?

The Student Experience in the Research University Consortium at the University of California-Berkeley made the following recommendations.

1. Increase mental health resources for students, and reduce obstacles to receiving them. Better communicate about how to find help.

2. Broaden telecounseling services and concentrate on preventative programs.

3. Work with faculty and academic advising staff in addressing student mental health and how it can affect academic achievement and overall well-being.

4. Involve students in developing strategies to improve their mental health.

Educating for Democracy in a Time of Crisis and Division

A conversation about coming together when a pandemic and polarization are driving us apart

Amid a devastating pandemic and increasing polarization, how can US colleges and universities help students bridge divides, make their voices heard, and understand their responsibilities to others in a democratic society? Nancy Thomas, director of the Institute for Democracy and Higher Education (IDHE) at Tufts University's Tisch College of Civic Life, spoke with *Liberal Education* about educating for democracy in this current moment. At IDHE, Thomas studies college students' political learning and participation, overseeing the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement, as well as qualitative studies of campus climates for political learning and engagement in democracy.

—Emily Schuster

In your recent report, *Election Imperatives 2020: A Time of Physical Distancing and Social Action,* you wrote, "Educating for democracy is inherently political." What did you mean by that?

There are many pathways to educating for citizenship, like volunteerism, simulations like Model UN, or campaign work. But it's not enough. Students also need to learn the context for these experiences and democratic principles (like justice) and practices (like policymaking). In a democratic society, people share responsibility for each other.

The COVID-19 pandemic is hitting us with devastating challenges but also providing many opportunities for educating for democracy. We are witnessing a stunning example of the argument over federalism and states' rights, for example. Who makes the decision about wearing masks in an era of COVID? We want individuals to decide to wear masks because they feel a sense of responsibility to each other as members of a community. Yet too many people need to be told to wear masks, advice that many elected officials refuse to give.

The combination of a lack of clarity on who's governing and the idea that we are a nation of rugged individualists is causing this pandemic to grow. It's a tragedy, but it's also a teachable moment.

What is the difference between *political* and *partisan*?

Political refers to governance and how communities make decisions. *Partisan* is linked to parties, campaigns, and candidates.

Faculty members cannot say to students, "You need to vote for this party or candidate," because that's partisan. But they can come down on a side of a political issue.

Academic freedom is in place so that educators can educate for democracy, which is inherently political. We have the freedom to critique, study, analyze, and comment on matters of public concern without external pressure to be apolitical or neutral.

During this time of social distancing, how can higher education leaders and faculty build a socially cohesive campus culture and encourage political engagement?

We know from research that students learn best through discussion, experience, and simulations. All those things are more difficult in an era of social distancing.

On top of that, we are faced with a highly polarized society. One of the best ways to break down polarization is to provide opportunities for students to practice talking to each other about different viewpoints and lived experiences. If faculty want

to have politically charged conversations, they have to invest time in relationship building upfront. It comes down to social cohesion, which is harder to foster remotely.

Successful discussions about hot topics require professors to plan ahead for those quick, in-the-moment pedagogical choices. And to be thoughtful about fostering equitable classroom participation.

In our focus groups with students, both historically marginalized and conservative students said they felt isolated or unwelcome on campus. You don't want to gang up on students for their political beliefs, yet it's appropriate for a professor to say, "Tell me why you think that way, and back it up with evidence." Students of color, on the other hand, experience a thousand tiny cuts of disparaging or racist comments. Hostility or ignorance can come through in a voice.

We always asked students in focus groups, "What's your favorite class?" We saw a real pattern. Students prefer discussion-based classes. They value their relationships with professors. They appreciate the professors who will work with them if they're having a crisis at home. These behaviors are more important than ever now.

How should educators engage with students who feel disillusioned by the US political system?

It's tough, isn't it? *I'm* disillusioned. But I'm not disengaged.

We know from research that activists vote at double the rate of nonactivists. So you can engage people in issue activism and bring them along that way.

If students don't vote, they are invisible. Elected officials don't cater to nonvoters—they cater to voters. Even if you voted against them, they view you as a voter, and you still count.

Young people are a formidable voting bloc, larger now than the baby boomers. Woe to politicians who do not adjust their platforms to meet the interests of young people.

Nancy Thomas

"Getting involved in students' civil right to vote is not partisan. Both parties should want everybody to vote."

What are some of the barriers to voting that students face?

One barrier is proof of identity and residency, two different things. Most of us use our driver's license for both, but many college students don't have a driver's license. It's an added problem if you're in a state that only takes proof of identity from that state. Identification should be portable.

Campuses can work with state and local officials to help students provide proof of residency. The University of New Hampshire created an app that students can use when voting, which shows whether a student is enrolled and where they live. (The app is easy to replicate, and any campus that's interested in doing so can contact us at idhe@tufts.edu.) Other campuses send out utility bills to students at their campus address, which they can use as proof of residency.

A big reform would be some uniformity across states. I once googled "voting machine," and the search came up with twenty-eight different images. Students are mobile, and they have to relearn systems.

Easy mail-in voting, same-day voter registration, early voting, and con-venient ballot drop boxes and polling locations are good for all Americans.

With the congressional redistricting process coming up in 2021, what should higher education leaders keep an eye on?

College presidents need to watch how redistricting affects representation. North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University, an HBCU, had been in one district that was represented by a Black female. In 2011, the campus was split in half. That resulted in the community being represented by two White Republican males. That was by design. This resulted in litigation, and eventually, the district was put back together.

I would love to see colleges and universities mobilize around racial injustice related to where polling locations are placed. College presidents have stature, respect in the community, and a voice. They need to use their position to ensure that students can vote near their campus. Getting involved in students' civil right to vote is not partisan. Both parties should want everybody to vote.

What role can colleges and universities play in bridging polarization in the United States?

We are a siloed nation. We live with people like us. We watch the news that our neighbors watch. Journalist Bill Bishop calls it the "big sort." College is a wonderful opportunity to unsort students.

We visited one campus that took this task very seriously and embedded relationship building and political discussions across difference into the first-year experience. One student in a focus group said, "I can disagree with someone and still care about that person. I still want to be their friend."

That's an important cultural norm for a campus and for our nation. We've got to start caring about each other a lot more than we currently do. College campuses are perfect places to do that. ⬛

Role Reversal

When did a student teach *you* something?

Vivian A. Peralta Santana drew on the power of art for her Local Citizenship in a Global World course.

Despite all I learned after years in leadership roles at Imagining America—a robust network of publicly engaged scholars, artists, designers, humanists, and organizers—I still have to remind myself that the power of the arts, design, and humanities is for real. One of my students, Vivian A. Peralta Santana, a biology major destined to be a leading research scientist, opened my eyes afresh to how important art can be to sense-making. Vivian took the Local Citizenship in a Global World course, which asked students to make a creative learning artifact along with traditional assignments. Vivian's drawing prominently features a young woman drawing the balance of justice on a wall. Community members come out of the shadows and climb the woman's body. Lady Justice weeps as Uncle Sam whispers in her ear. To say the least, it is a visually and metaphorically dynamic expression. "Dean Eatman," Vivian told me, "I must admit I spent most of my time on the drawing as part of the final class project." Her art will soon be a mural in the new Honors Living-Learning Community building at Rutgers University–Newark.

Timothy K. Eatman
Rutgers University–Newark

"I teach my students to choose their words with precision. Now, I'm more scrupulous about modeling what I teach."

The textbook for my introductory, large-enrollment lecture course defines introversion as seeking solitude when you want to recharge. During a lecture, I said, trying to joke, "*Introversion* doesn't mean you're autistic or something." After class, a student emailed me to say, in part, "I was upset when you made a joke of autism today. My brother is autistic, and I'm in school to help people like him." I wrote the student an apology. Then, with his permission (and after removing identifying content), I sent the apology to the class and cc'd the Disability Resource Center, proposing this incident as a lesson for other professors. I have told this story to many colleagues, who almost always say, "Oh, sensitive kid—you were joking, big deal." Actually, it *is* a big deal because I teach my students to choose their words with precision. Now, I'm more scrupulous about modeling what I teach.

David Weber
University of North Carolina Wilmington

On the first day of a cotaught seminar on community, diversity, and faith, my colleague, Al, and I began by teaching an international gesture of peace, a series of symbolic movements accompanied by words: "I wish you peace [arms extended]. I wish you friendship [hands clasped]. I wish you love [hands crossed on the chest]."

Al first taught the gesture with the English narration. Then he said, "Let's take the words away."

Immediately, a student's hand shot up.

"Dr. Al, I'm blind. If you take away the words, I can't participate."

As teachers, we cannot say, "My classroom is inclusive! My community is welcoming!" Rather, those we seek to include and welcome must be able to say, "I am welcomed. I belong." True inclusion in the classroom, as in any other community, must be uniquely cocreated and recognized by its members.

Naomi Yavneh
Loyola University New Orleans
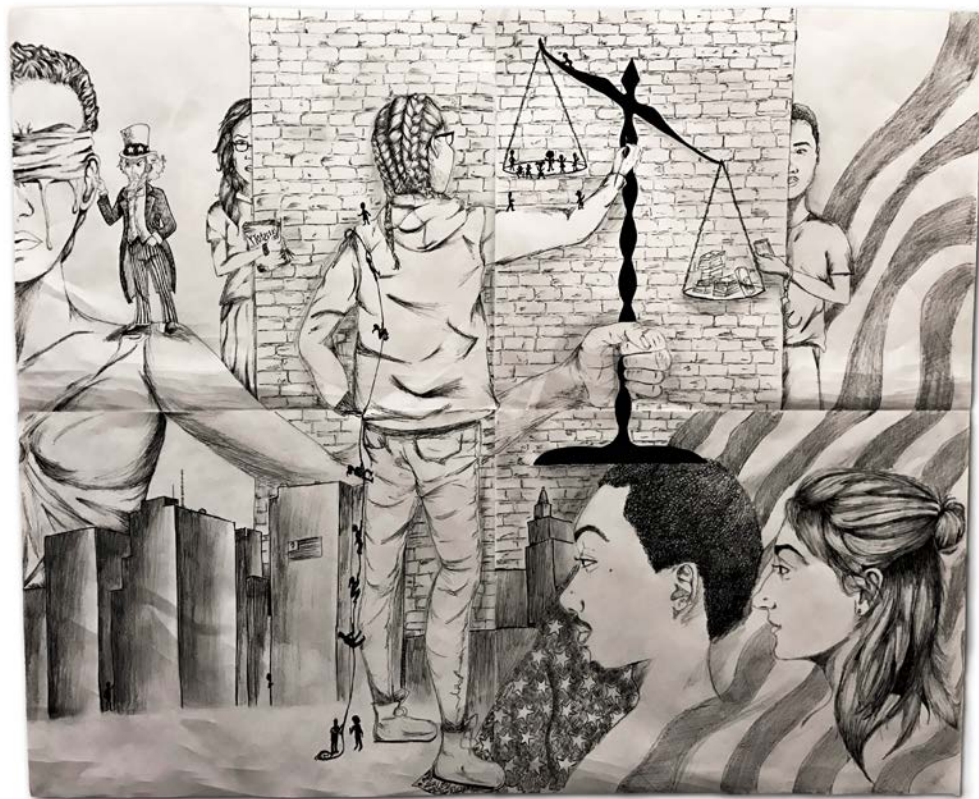
Anything but Normal

8 voices on what the pandemic and protests are teaching higher ed

As campuses across the world grapple with serving their students during the COVID-19 pandemic and racial justice protests, *Liberal Education* asked educators from a range of institutions about their experiences. These educators offered insights into how the current moment is affecting student well-being and community engagement. They also talked about the interconnectedness of the pandemic and racial justice—and what that means for making lasting change.

—Christen Aragoni, Emily Schuster, and Ben Dedman

Laurie Leshin

President
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Public-private partnerships: I was the only person from the education sector serving on Governor Charlie Baker's Reopening Advisory Board, but we rallied public and private institutions from across the commonwealth to develop a framework for campus reopenings. Since safety equipment and PPE are the norm in research labs, we determined it was safe to reopen labs when Massachusetts entered phase one of its reopening plan. We also determined that the repopulation of campuses with large numbers of undergraduates wouldn't happen until phase three, which the state entered before the fall semester. Many people expressed concern that colleges were opening too fast; others said we weren't opening fast enough. I think we've gotten the right balance of figuring out how to live safely and smartly with this virus, but it's certainly too soon to declare victory.

Experiential learning: Almost 90 percent of our students do a global project. In any given term, several hundred students are in a dozen different places around the globe. The pandemic was a real shock to the system, but because we had built strong relationships with different organizations worldwide, many students were able to use Zoom to carry out their project work with a local sponsor—whether in Moscow or Copenhagen.

In the world ahead of us, work will be global, but we may all be traveling less. Figuring out how to have an impact in a community, even from afar, is an extraordinary skill set, and these students are going to have great stories to tell about how they did just that.

A new meaning of equity: Recent crises have shined a light on disparities of all kinds: health and wellness, racial justice, technological access, and educational attainment. Those are not going to be solved overnight. This is where the goals of liberal education—long-term thinking, creativity, and problem solving—are well aligned with the work we need to do.

Ultimately, this may not be about helping students to reach instructors' goals but rather enabling students to set and make substantive progress toward personal and educational goals that are meaningful to them. Ultimately, that's what I think equity looks like in this moment.

Charles Monty Roessel

President
Diné College

Interconnections:
In the Navajo worldview, all things are living—we're intertwined. The circle encompasses everything, including the pandemic. It isn't happening *to* us. It's happening *with* us.

At Diné College, which comes from a perspective of education that values the Navajo tradition, our faculty told us, "Don't forget the human part." It isn't just about safety and academics. It's about the spiritual and the mental health of the student. We talk about *K'é,* relationships. I have a responsibility to you because we're related.

Support for students:
We have students who have lost their parents. We have students who have passed. Students wrote to me saying their mom and dad and younger brother had COVID, and they had to take care of them. They had to haul water and take care of their livestock. They had a job. Yet they were still trying to go to school. One of our students tested positive and was in the hospital. She said, "I want to be in class," so there she was on Zoom in her hospital bed.

We tried to find ways to help students. A huge number of students took incompletes. We left dorm rooms open for students who had nowhere to go.

Remote learning:
Tribal colleges have the worst technology access of any group of colleges in the country. We bought laptops and MiFis, but there was still the gap. Professors delivered content in four different ways for different students: by Zoom, telephone, email, and text. One student only had a phone and had to climb on top of a mesa to connect.

Support for the community: We are very much embedded within the community, but we had to close off to be safe. Before COVID, our library was one of the few places the community could use internet. Our food service used to have surf-and-turf nights with hundreds of people. How do we continue to be a part of that community? We've provided three thousand meals for seniors. We've helped K–12 schools transition online. We reached out to two universities so all these students can move forward. We've got to stop looking at boundaries and look at education collectively.

Resilience:
In Navajo history and origin stories, there are things we've had to overcome, since the beginning. Things have been happening to us—as Navajo, but I think everybody—forever. We have the resilience to continue.

> "We talk about *K'é,* relationships. I have a responsibility to you because we're related."

Kathleen Wong (Lau)

Chief Diversity Officer
San José State University

Support for students:
Since our campus is 41 percent first generation and 37 percent Pell qualified, a lot of students didn't have WiFi and equipment. Many worked in frontline service jobs in retail places that closed. We issued a whole bunch of laptops. Our food pantry stayed open during almost the entire summer. We moved our counseling and psychological services online.

Support for faculty:
We put together a summer teaching institute certificate program on teaching remotely. Faculty had four required modules to get the certificate, and one was on equity, inclusion, and diversity. A lot of it was looking at what engagement means for different communities, especially if your identity is different from your students. More than one thousand faculty participated.

Mobilizing for change:
COVID has magnified the awareness and experience of inequities like systemic racism in police brutality and in the health arena. At this time when people can't see each other face-to-face, attendance of online workshops and advocacy programming is off the charts. Activists have had a chance to reach out to people they wouldn't have met before.

Lessons from the racial justice protests: One of the biggest lessons is to get on board. If you haven't been on board, the train left the station a long time ago, but here's your second chance. Students are demanding that we

understand that just doing additive things is not going to be acceptable anymore. It's time for organizational change at a global level. Students want their syllabi decolonized and systemic racism recognized. They want to see meaningfully framed, equity-based scholarship about different communities that will help them when they go out into the working world. Our students see this as a window that they are going to refuse to shut.

The hard work:
The enterprise of education is to provide experiences and opportunities for people to learn so that they can produce a world that is more just, equitable, and safe. It's time to realize that just doing more of the same things is not necessarily going to get us there. It's going to be very hard work. It often produces conflict and fear. It often challenges us in terms of being experts in our own arena. That's really hard for people in higher ed. But this experience of uncertainty and being intellectually vulnerable is one of the ideal windows in which we do our deepest learning.

> "If you haven't been on board, the train left the station a long time ago, but here's your second chance."

Walter Kimbrough

President
Dillard University

Racial justice:
Everyone is sitting at home because of the pandemic, and then you have this eight-minute-and-forty-second video of somebody dying in a way we had never seen before. People are already tense because of the uncertainty about their jobs and ability to take care of their families, and they are watching George Floyd die, thinking, "This is just too much." It was the perfect storm to get people out in the streets and say, "We're ready to change all of this now."

The role of HBCUs:
We've been places that have not been afraid to tackle racial justice. You have an entire institution that is painfully aware of the issues and works as a collective to address them. For a lot of students, the heightened activism has increased their want to be back in a space with a like-minded group of people.

Student activism:
We need to help students learn to be students of history and see what they can learn from previous generations. John Lewis has been described as the Black Lives Matter of the 1950s and '60s. He was radical but thoughtful and purposeful. In this social media age, people think if they go protest and then post photos on Twitter, they've done all they need to. It's much harder than that.

I also hope that students learn that this isn't a short fight. Getting some

Confederate statues taken down is a quick win. But what about the systemic issues? In New Orleans, a nine-year-old was recently shot, and there's nothing about it on social media. Why are we angrier about an inanimate statue than about this little boy dying?

Real change:
We need to take the energy of the protests and ask, "What laws need to change? What elected people need to go? Do we have a citizen's review board for the police?" Tackling the harder questions isn't as quick a high as going out and protesting.

Community:
Colleges and universities should be neutral places for the entire community to have conversations about the things that matter. I like to hold debates on campus with different groups or people running for office. Facilitating those conversations makes sense for an educational institution. We can create spaces for people to come, really hash out the issues, and figure out what needs to be done. I'm going to be challenging folks around here to deal with the uncomfortable stuff.

"This isn't a short fight. Getting some Confederate statues taken down is a quick win. But what about the systemic issues?"

Lisa Coleman

Senior Vice President for Global Inclusion and Strategic Innovation/Chief Diversity Officer
New York University

A new unusual:
A pandemic or a fiscal or natural disaster—maybe this is not the new normal but a new unusual. Disruption may be part of our working realities. What if we had teams for disruptive innovation? Now is the time to pivot to be less static and more nimble and ready for whatever is next.

Global learning:
There is so much to learn from our global connections. What might we learn from COVID-19? Viruses move, morph, mutate, and grow because we are globally connected. I hope COVID-19 helps us learn, work together, and navigate disruption with more empathy. Maybe then we might avoid the tendency some have to try to annihilate those they find different and instead move toward collaborating and debating in ways that broaden our understandings of our collective humanity.

A new reckoning:
Some in Generation Z have stated that this is a civil rights moment—a reckoning with systemic inequities. This is not to be disregarded. Black Lives Matter, climate shifts, Title IX, COVID-19, and more have affected emerging generations, resulting in new social movements. Elders are not the leaders, and, historically, they mostly never were. However, it's important to note that recent activism and protests are intergenerational, intersectional, multiracial, multiethnic, and global in new ways. This is also a shift and reckoning. People who are not Black, Indigenous, of color, women, queer, or socioeconomically disenfranchised are saying, "It is simply not OK to treat my fellow humans this way, and I am going to take action."

Lessons from this moment: In higher ed, we do innovative work, but we do not always apply it to our own systems and traditions. We have diversity, a lot of it. Institutions will need to engage diversity and the resulting innovation to navigate shifting landscapes. The world is changing—more people of color, more people with disabilities, more women in the workforce globally. Instead of trying to resist our collective future, we might ask: How do we ready ourselves and our partners? How do we colearn with diverse students, colleagues, and stakeholders and unlearn that which is no longer useful? Those most prepared, innovative, and willing to leverage the dynamism of diversity will thrive. That's the best of higher education—leveraging our research, learnings, and intellectual curiosity; cocreating with diverse minds; and generating new questions to innovate again and again.

> "I hope COVID-19 helps us learn, work together, and navigate disruption with more empathy."

Ahmed Bawa

Chief Executive Officer
Universities South Africa

Solidarity in South Africa: Universities South Africa is a representative body of the country's twenty-six public universities, with about 1.2 million students in the system. South Africa is still a deeply unequal society, and universities have a singular role in generating social mobility. Progress is being made, but certainly not sufficiently. When Black Lives Matter and the death of George Floyd hit the headlines, the reaction here was one of solidarity with what was happening in the United States.

Student activism: Between 2015 and 2017, two student movements shook our campuses: Fees Must Fall, a campaign for free education, and Rhodes Must Fall, a campaign to decolonize higher education and, more broadly, society. At a point in 2016, we thought the university system would collapse because of the activism.

The movements were a wakeup call that universities had really priced themselves out of reach of the majority of South African families. A large part of the problem was that state subsidies to universities had declined substantially over the past two decades. And twenty-some years after the demise of Apartheid, students were reminding us that the transition simply did not produce social justice.

Lessons from the pandemic: COVID-19 happened with such a ferocious uncertainty that universities were left scrambling. Because of underfunding, universities couldn't simply buy devices so every student could do remote learning. What government and higher education leaders have to learn from the pandemic and the 2015–17 student movements is that we have to significantly reduce society's inequalities. And that won't happen through some sort of trickle-down effect.

The virus is just a spark—the conditions required for the pandemic to explode were already here. Campus leaders must think deeply about how they deal with the short-term crisis, because those solutions will have significant implications for the way in which universities relate to society down the line.

The role of leaders: We have to build a social compact that recognizes that none of us is safe if one of us is not safe. The Zulu expression *ubuntu* essentially means "I am, because you are." We must use this idea to generate a new, more equal society, and universities have a huge role to play in that—not just in what they do with their students but also in their research engagement. They need to reach out to communities, government, and other sectors and bring them into this notion of building a stronger society.

Mays Imad

*Professor, Department of Life and Physical Science/
Founding Coordinator, Teaching & Learning Center (TLC)
Pima Community College*

Challenges of the pandemic: An immediate challenge that Pima students faced was access to basic life necessities and technology. The Pima Foundation launched a virtual donation campaign to meet students' needs and support their continued learning and success. Community donors also provided computers to students.

Well-being on campus: Since March, our TLC has offered more than 120 workshops and webinars on transitioning to remote teaching, which more than 800 faculty have attended. We also offered weekly "Zen Moment" webinars to help faculty alleviate their emotional distress. As a neurobiologist who studies stress and its impact on learning, I recognize that as educators, we can help students become self-regulated learners by helping them recognize and mitigate the impact of toxic stress— to empower them with knowledge about the

biology of learning. We also provided trauma-informed resources for both faculty and students.

Social justice: The pandemic has amplified challenges in higher education such as mental health. Many of these challenges mirror those in our society and stem from witnessing and experiencing oppression, racism, and poverty. Because Pima is a Hispanic-Serving Institution, these issues are particularly important on our campus. Colleges and universities across the nation have initiatives on inclusion, diversity,

and equity, but educators need to link these initiatives to well-being. Trauma-informed education is intimately connected with restoring justice at the individual and the community levels. We experience trauma when we are placed in a threatening situation that takes away our sense of agency and control, and that trauma undoubtedly affects our ability to learn. A trauma-sensitive lens challenges us to interrogate where our understanding of

rigor comes from and invites us to consider the balance between rigor and grace and how we can engage students in their learning without overwhelming them.

The future: We have an opportunity to forge a post-pandemic higher education that enables *all* students to thrive. What if learning goals included imparting empathy, love, and the cultivation of the moral imagination? Re-envisioning a human-centered approach to higher education is a huge undertaking but not an impossible one. Let us be audacious in how we approach this responsibility and work with scholars, community members, and civil rights activists to create *holistic* programs that become part of the fabric of any learning institution. We often think of emotional health as an issue for only counselors and psychologists, but it is a higher education issue. It is a societal issue. It is a human rights issue.

> "If the social unrest
> this summer was any indication,
> there will not be much—
> if any—patience with a return
> to the status quo."

Christine Navia

Associate Vice President for Student Success
University of Wisconsin System

State systems as social justice advocates: Our systems of public higher education will be pushed to play the role of social justice advocate whether they want to or not. Students are calling for policies that level the playing field to ensure access and more equitable outcomes for students of color, students from limited-income backgrounds, and first-generation students.

How public systems respond remains to be seen. We will have to be problem solvers of the highest order. If the social unrest this summer was any indication, there will not be much—if any—patience with a return to the status quo.

Prioritizing mental health: I am most worried about the behavioral or mental health of our students, faculty, and staff. None of them are going to emerge from this pandemic unscathed.

We recently conducted a systemwide survey of students who used campus counseling services over the past year. Students are shouldering incredible amounts of stress, anxiety, and depression—more than before. Some have trouble sleeping, and some find it difficult to focus on their coursework, while others increasingly turn to alcohol and other substances as a way of coping. The UW system will look closely at how we can provide greater mental health support for the people who live, learn, and work on our campuses.

We also need to take care of the people on the front lines who are ensuring that our students are engaged and supported: staff in student affairs, advising, counseling, housing, dining, student health, multicultural affairs, veteran affairs, and LGBTQ+ services. This pandemic has probably been toughest on them, since they must contend with the impacts COVID-19 is having on our students every day.

What equity means now: Equity in the pandemic means one thing to me: letting go, once and for all, of insisting that the fairest way to operate is to treat everyone as though they are all the same. COVID-19 has exposed how inequitable our society truly is and how deeply that inequality is rooted, particularly in health care, education, employment, and law enforcement.

Homes are the new classrooms, so to speak. Our students need faculty to lean in, preferably at the outset of a course, and learn about their home lives. Faculty don't have to loosen standards or lessen rigor so much as provide students with alternative ways to complete assignments and be flexible about when students get them done. 🆑

MENTAL HEALTH

Mindfulness in Class and in Life

Mental health and emotional resilience alongside academic studies

By Linda Yaron Weston

In the fall of 2019,

at the University of Southern California (USC), nine students died of causes that included suicide and drug use. The campus community was shaken by grief and called for action to support student mental health. It was my second semester teaching Introduction to Mindfulness, a two-credit undergraduate course I developed with the mind-body branch of USC's Department of Physical Education. While the mindfulness course is not a substitute for professional advice, diagnosis, or treatment, it can offer tools for facing challenging situations, and as students in the class grappled with the loss of their friends and peers, they reflected that the class was helping them enhance their mental health, well-being, and resiliency. In interviews, survey responses, and personal reflections, students remarked on the personal growth, coping skills, and the feeling of connection to themselves, others, and the world around them that they experienced as a result of the course curriculum and mindfulness practices.

"It has been an interesting time at USC these last couple weeks with everything going on related to mental health," Noah, a junior majoring in economics, wrote in a reflection. (Unless otherwise noted, names have been changed to protect student privacy.) To cope, Noah consciously applied tools from the course—meditating in the mornings, working on decision making, staying present, and holding his emotions lightly. "I have seen a big increase in my overall well-being, and I am looking forward to continuing the journey," he wrote.

As educators confront the COVID-19 pandemic and systemic racial justice issues, addressing student well-being is more crucial than ever. In addition to ensuring trained mental health professionals and other psychological resources are available to students, campuses can incorporate well-being into the college experience and situate it as a priority by offering specific, for-credit courses that explicitly teach students tools to care for their mental health and navigate life. At USC, one way we do this is through the mind-body branch of the Department of Physical Education, which offers courses in yoga, stress management, and mindfulness, including my Introduction to Mindfulness class. Many students end up taking several mind-body courses, in addition to other department fitness and recreation classes, for a multidimensional approach to health and well-being. These courses foster community and belonging while contextualizing self-care within students' busy college schedules, and the duration of a semester-long class allows for deep learning and accountability as students invest time and effort for a grade.

In April 2020, 80 percent of 2,086 college students surveyed by the nonprofit Active Minds said that the pandemic was negatively affecting their mental health, demonstrating just how much the current climate is magnifying the mental health challenges young adults were already facing. Prior to the pandemic, according to separate Active Minds data, 39 percent of college students reported that they experienced a significant mental health issue, and suicide was the second leading cause of death among college students. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that nearly two-thirds of people surveyed across twenty-five states had experienced at least one adverse childhood experience. These can include violence, neglect, abuse, or death of a family member. Nearly one in six had experienced more than four. Spring 2019 surveys from the American College Health Association found that in the twelve months prior, 13 percent of the 67,972 respondents felt tremendous stress, 24 percent were diagnosed with anxiety, and 20 percent were diagnosed with depression. Thirteen percent said that they had seriously considered suicide. These issues can negatively affect lives and learning, as students may withdraw or have trouble focusing if they are struggling mentally. Indeed, the Active Minds survey from April found that, amid the pandemic, 76 percent of students have had trouble sticking to a routine, 73 percent have had a hard time getting enough physical activity, and 63 percent have struggled to keep connected with others. Eighty-five percent said that focusing on studies has been one of the hardest things about having to stay at home.

These statistics are not our students' destinies. Rather, they reflect a crucial need to implement structured supports. Along with comprehensive campus mental health resources, mindfulness courses—whether in person or online—can offer students tools to thrive and focus on learning by cultivating awareness, processing emotions, and coping with difficult thoughts and stressors, in times of calm or challenge.

One student in my course, Zoey, had to move back in with her parents because of the pandemic and experienced anxiety over the uncertainty of her future plans. A senior business major, she found that sticking to a routine that includes meditation helped her focus on the present and stay productive. "Rather than worrying about what could happen and expending energy on stress about things I cannot control," she wrote in a class reflection, "mindfulness has taught me to enjoy the days that I do have with my family and make the most of the additional time I've been given."

Alongside the difficult emotions that are present amid calls for racial and social justice on campuses, mindfulness can help us compassionately bear witness to suffering and choose a wise personal and collective response. In a presentation and student panel I facilitated during USC's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Week
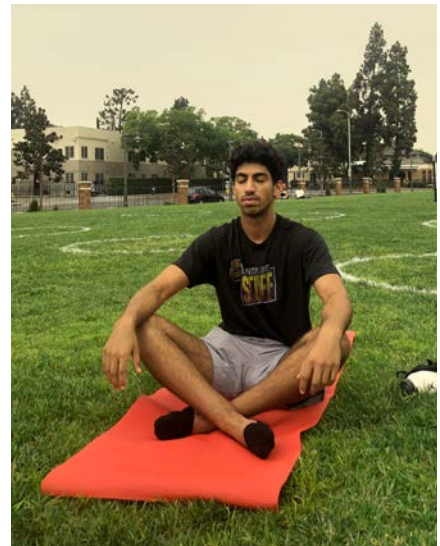
"Mindfulness courses—whether in person or online—can offer students tools to thrive and focus on learning by cultivating awareness, processing emotions, and coping with difficult thoughts and stressors, in times of calm or challenge."

earlier this year, Megan (Mae) Gates (her real name), a junior majoring in public policy who had taken my course, reflected on the role mindfulness can play in strengthening mental health in communities of color. A member of Alpha Kappa Alpha, the first Black sorority on campus, Mae has worked to have honest conversations about mental health in the Black community and ensure it is part of the impact she and her peers have on campus. "We have a lot of conversations among ourselves as Black women," she told the audience. "What does mental health mean to us? What are the disparities that we had growing up? And how can we ensure that this becomes an integral conversation in our community and every part of life that we walk through?"

In the traditional sense, mindfulness is a type of meditation practice, and Introduction to Mindfulness is a secular course in which we explore formal practices of meditation—seated, standing, walking—as well as informal practices of bringing mindfulness into daily life, relationships, and decision making. During the course, students develop a personal meditation practice that progresses throughout the semester. The curriculum comprises five modules through which students explore the principles of mindfulness, the body, working with emotions, working with thoughts, and incorporating mindfulness in daily life. Students submit reflection forms at the end of each module and read a corresponding workbook, which I authored, that covers real-world topics including decision making, communication, relationships, and grief. In book groups, students read a book from the mindfulness field to deepen knowledge of practice and theory. Choices include selections by Jack Kornfield, Joseph Goldstein, Thich Nhat Hanh, Tara Brach, and Rhonda Magee.

Students also work in groups to explore strategies for incorporating mindfulness into an aspect of daily life, such as relationships, technology use, and social justice. This collaborative work creates supportive subgroups within the classroom community. The class has "provided me with a group of people that really care about loving people and building relationships," Lana, a senior majoring in cinematic arts, said during an interview about her experience in the class. Her group explored the topic of relationships and focused on listening to others. "That's been great because that's when we can really talk about it together," she said.

For exposure to a variety of styles and perspectives, students take an outside meditation class, which many do at a local studio (online during the pandemic) and continue to attend after the semester ends. I also invite guest speakers to class to discuss topics such as anxiety, grief, and intimacy and radical consent. Course assessments include a group presentation about their process and the impact of incorporating mindfulness into daily life, an exam on the principles of mindfulness, and reflection forms for each of the five modules—which include questions to deepen students' understanding and application of the content.

(Left to right) Cristian Garcia, Jacqueline Berliner, and Sahib Gill continue to practice the techniques they learned in USC's Introduction to Mindfulness course.

In September 2020, amid the pandemic, students attend USC's Introduction to Mindfulness course online, learning how to work with emotions and thoughts and to incorporate mindfulness in daily life.

Through their work in Introduction to Mindfulness, students build agency, strengthened emotional resilience, and became more open to kindness and joy. They learn practices to help them navigate difficult experiences, everything from a disappointing grade on an assignment to a breakup, the loss of a friend or family member—or a global pandemic. To gauge student growth and learning in the course, I conducted surveys across the three fall 2019 classes at weeks one, five, and fifteen to establish a baseline, initial progress, and end-of-course impact. In the week-fifteen survey, 92 percent of students responded that they felt the course "much" or "very much" affected their capacity to cope with challenges. They also gained confidence and developed a stronger self-image.

Steve, a senior majoring in business who took my mindfulness course in fall 2019, recently sent me an email with the subject line "Meditation saved my life." He wrote about how tough 2020 has been for him, including feeling suicidal, losing friends, and losing his full-time job offer because of the pandemic. In the midst of his difficulties, he remembered the mindfulness lessons, practicing meditation to focus on appreciating what he did have. "I started to regain confidence and happiness in myself," he wrote. "I started to realize that happiness comes from within, and not through external things. I am improving and starting to gain a little bit of hope." In combination with professional help—in Steve's case I recommended he seek such assistance, provided him with resources, and also notified the campus mental health help line—mindfulness can offer tools to navigate challenges students face.

In Introduction to Mindfulness, students learn the RAIN technique to **recognize** what emotion is present, **allow** it instead of pushing it away, **investigate** how it feels in the body, and hold it with **nurturing** kindness and **nonidentification** (treating it as *the* impatience, rather than *my* impatience). Known as affect labeling, the process of naming emotions has been shown to diminish emotional reactivity by stimulating the prefrontal cortex region of the brain and disrupting emotional amygdala activity. Students correspondingly build resilience to cope with stressful thoughts and find that instead of suppressing difficult emotions, they are able to sit with and process them. In the week-fifteen survey, 89 percent of students said the course "much" or "very much" improved their capacity to bounce back from challenges. This capacity leads to more responsiveness—rather than reactivity—when navigating difficulties.

"I'm someone that really feels emotions when they're happening," wrote Mia, a junior majoring in cinema and media studies. "By paying more attention to identifying my emotions, I am able to begin the process of working with them and not letting them just control me." After the death of their classmate that fall, Mia and her friends got together and at one point started laughing about something. They immediately felt guilty. Mia told her friends about our class discussion on the idea that the heart is big enough to hold it all—the joy with the sorrow. In her reflections, she shared that hearing this helped her friends cope with the complexities of grief.

Comparisons of the week-five and week-fifteen

number had decreased to 8 percent—and 81 percent attributed an increase in kind self-talk to the course. "I began to speak to myself with kinder thoughts, and a kinder voice for myself emerged," Lana wrote. "I held each thought lightly and delicately, without judgment."

Introduction to Mindfulness is not a silver-bullet class designed to save anyone, and individuals facing depression, anxiety, or other mental health issues should consult a licensed professional. Rather, the course is an invitation to a field that teaches students tools to navigate their experiences with awareness, curiosity, kindness, and openness. As my students have learned more about mindfulness, they have wanted to share the practice with those they care about. Many recommended the course to friends, shared the workbook with their parents, or took meditation classes with family and friends.

"I'm really taking my hardest classes to date, and I have so much on my plate," Devin, a business major, remarked in an interview. The mindfulness class "is like a weird gap in my really busy schedule today where . . . I'm doing something for myself instead of doing something for my GPA or someone else."

Situating a mindfulness course within the college day provides a safe space for students to build mental health and well-being practices among a community of their peers over a sustained period of time. This can be done in-person or in an online community. Though it may be difficult to be a college student in today's society, no one has to navigate it alone. Institutions can include spaces where students explicitly learn resilient coping skills to manage whatever challenges arise—not as a one-time event but as a structured, proactive, comprehensive response to a clear and continued mental health need. In the wake of the tragedies at USC in fall 2019 and others throughout the country, in the face of the pandemic, in the urgent calls for racial justice, and with unknown challenges on the horizon, it is my hope that more universities, in addition to ensuring their campus offers robust mental health services, situate well-being courses alongside academics. This can even be structured as a well-being general education requirement so all students have the opportunity to build the mental and emotional resilience to fully thrive.

"People run on such high stress, and being mindful isn't usually part of their daily discourse," Mia said in an interview. "Having the opportunity to learn it in a class setting, where you're kind of forced [to learn it] but also it's not demanding or homework-intensive—having every student take this would be so helpful." ⏢
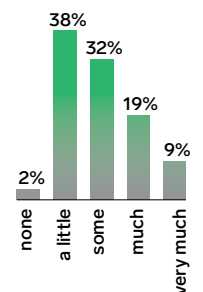
Finding Calm

The levels of anxiety students felt decreased by the end of the fall 2019 mindfulness course.

WEEK 5

WEEK 15

survey responses indicated that high anxiety levels among the students in the mindfulness course dropped from 51 percent to 28 percent. Though the percentage of students who experienced depression didn't change (31 percent), all students who did experience it remarked that the course increased their capacity to cope. The number of students who felt they "much" or "very much" had tools to cope more than doubled, from 15 percent to 41 percent. This was also true for anxiety, with the number of students who felt they could "much" or "very much" cope increasing from 38 percent to 74 percent.

It wasn't that their outer circumstances had changed—rather their relationship to their challenges had. Eric, a sophomore psychology major, wrote that mindfulness helped him alleviate depression and anxiety and that his meditation practice had flourished. Over the semester, and with a therapist, Eric worked through a childhood trauma to gain power in defining his identity on his own terms. "My past doesn't define who I am," he wrote in a personal journal entry he shared with me. "But my past has certainly shaped who I am today. My pain has cracked my heart open wide. . . . There is so much more to me. I am much more than pain."

As students learned tools for improving mental health and emotional resilience, they also noticed they were more open to kindness and joy and more aware of things for which they were grateful. The number of students who responded that they "often" or "very often" engaged in self-criticism decreased from 54 percent in week five to 36 percent by week fifteen. Correspondingly, at week five, 33 percent of students said they rarely spoke to themselves with kindness. By week fifteen, this

Counseling Arab American Students

Are your campus mental health professionals prepared to support students from a variety of backgrounds?

By Souzan Naser

MVCC students hold a vigil for victims of the 2019 terrorist attacks at two New Zealand mosques.

The global pandemic and the

death of George Floyd in Minneapolis police custody have rocked the nation and exposed its deep-seated inequalities and racism. The rebellion in the streets is a justified response to health disparities, racism, white supremacy, and police violence. Across the country, students—especially Black students, Indigenous students, and other students of color—are outraged and are demanding that universities and colleges make changes to address systemic racial injustice.

Arab American college students, like their Black peers, have faced a history of othering, discrimination, and profiling that can lead to psychological distress and exacerbate existing psychological disorders. Anti-Arab and Islamophobic foreign and domestic policies like the global war on terrorism, the Muslim travel ban, mass surveillance, and federally funded racial profiling negatively affect Arab Americans and can impede students' ability to succeed socially, academically, and personally.

Administrators, faculty members, counselors, and other campus leaders must rise to the occasion to offer Arab American and Black, Indigenous, and other students of color a safe and affirming community. To do this, they must ensure that campus mental health specialists can effectively serve all student populations—and that means understanding how the political and social climate, among other issues, affects each of them.

Since 2015, as a counselor who identifies as Arab American, I have been examining the paucity of Arab American cultural competency training available for college counseling professionals. College counselors are responsible for assessing the mental health of students, providing support, and advocating for students' rights. To capture the experiences of Arab American students, as well as those of counselors, I led focus groups and conducted surveys at my institution, Moraine Valley Community College (MVCC), which is located about twenty-five miles southwest of Chicago. Counselors emphasized their need to have more sensitivity to the political climate Arab American students are facing, to develop a deeper understanding of how racism and discrimination affect these students, and to gain more knowledge about how interventions rooted in European and North American values can be limiting when serving this population. Students in the focus groups shared the expectations they have when meeting with a counselor, the contemporary challenges they face, and factors that would increase the likelihood that they would engage in counseling services. These students also offered a rich critique of how the political landscape is shaping their experiences and identities.

A counselor's comprehensive understanding of the challenges Arab American students face can be the impetus for an engaging therapeutic relationship. Making students feel welcome and understood creates a safe social and political space for students who otherwise may not feel secure. Therefore, when we talk about Arab students today, we must keep in mind that they are diverse and have complex needs based on country of origin, levels of acculturation, religious affiliation, and political experiences. The Arab American Institute Foundation (AAI) puts the number of Arab Americans at nearly 3.7 million, and Arab students are just as diverse as the twenty-two countries they emigrated from or have ancestral ties to: Algeria, Bahrain, the Comoros Islands, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Arab American students may be first-, second-, or third-generation Americans. For some, Arabic may be their first language, while others may not speak Arabic at all. The majority of Arab Americans, 82 percent, are US citizens, according to the Pew Research Center, and although members of this community can be found in almost every part of the United States, the largest concentrations live in Los Angeles, Detroit/Dearborn, New York/New Jersey, Chicago, and Washington, DC.

Other assumptions, including those about the religious background of Arab American students, may interfere with the therapeutic process. It is not uncommon, for example, for individuals to assume that the majority of Arab Americans are Muslim when, in fact, only 24 percent of Arabs living in the United States practice Islam, according to the AAI. Estimates range that anywhere from 63 to 77 percent of Arab Americans identify as Christian.

Counselors must be careful not to assume that Arab American students have a fixed or uniform character. Such an assumption would be counterproductive to the therapeutic encounter. These students are distinct from one another, and all students should be regarded as individuals with unique experiences based on their backgrounds and life circumstances.

It's also crucial that counselors, faculty, and administrators understand the political and cultural challenges Arab American students face. A focus on politics is warranted because Arab American students are telling us it is, because it is their lived experience, and because when they turn on the television, read articles online, or listen to the radio, they inevitably see or hear some story that involves them.

Arab American students, for instance, are living in a post-9/11 era in which they are under surveillance and

"Counselors must be careful not to assume that Arab American students have a fixed or uniform character. Such an assumption would be counterproductive to the therapeutic encounter. These students are distinct from one another, and all students should be regarded as individuals with unique experiences based on their backgrounds and life circumstances."

are scrutinized in their neighborhoods and communities, at school, and in other public places. In addition, in 2016, the number of hate groups in the United States rose for the second year in a row, according to a 2017 report by the Southern Poverty Law Center. The biggest increase was in the near tripling of anti-Muslim hate groups from 34 in 2015 to 101 in 2016. And the FBI reported that hate crimes against Muslims grew by 67 percent in 2015.

According to the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, "Such racial profiling and hate crimes not only harm individual students, causing problems ranging from academic difficulties to physical and psychological trauma, but also affect everyone in the targeted group."

The Arab American students who participated in my research indicated that the hostile political climate has magnified their insecurity and left them questioning their place in the United States. Students said they feared repressive policies being shaped by the Trump administration. They also pointed to the Muslim travel ban executive order, which, in its most recent iteration,

As part of MVCC's yearlong Mosaics: Muslim Voices in America project, students perform (bottom) and vocalist Aja Black (top) tells students about using music to combine cultural experiences.

affects people from several countries (Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Nigeria, Eritrea, Tanzania, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, North Korea, and Venezuela), most, but not all, of them Muslim-majority. Students said they feared deportation and worried they might not see their families again, acknowledging that the stress was affecting them academically and socially. "The Muslim ban was very traumatizing," said one student in a focus group, "not just to me, but to people who could not come back to the States when they left for vacation."

"Every counselor should have a basic understanding of Arab culture and information on Islam," another student said. "If they do not understand us, then they are going to believe what they see in the media."

As campus counselors, perhaps we are not as prepared as we would like to be to effectively engage with our Arab American students. Considering today's political climate, it is imperative that we have an awareness of both the historical and current oppressions encountered by this population so that we can help them and advocate on their behalf. For example, in the aftermath of the travel ban, MVCC, like many institutions across the nation, hosted "Know Your Rights" and "No Ban, No Wall" workshops, which gave affected students the opportunity to receive advice from immigration lawyers, community organizers, and activists about their rights and what they could and could not do in the wake of the policy.

Additionally, although they have been immigrating to the United States since the late 1800s, Arab Americans commonly have been left out of the academic discourse, remaining a woefully understudied population for aspiring undergraduate and graduate students pursuing degrees in counseling, psychology, and social work. Sixty-one percent of the counselors I surveyed indicated that their graduate program did not provide adequate multicultural coursework integrating information on Arabs. The counselors reported, however, that information on culturally responsive care for the four major racial/ethnic minority groups in the United States—African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans—was readily available and integrated in their graduate academic coursework.

To address this challenge, institutions of higher education should create more inclusive curricula and provide courses on the sociopolitical experiences that affect Arab American students. Colleges and universities should also consider adding an ethnic category on their enrollment/application forms for Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) students. For instance, MVCC sits in a congressional district that has one of the largest concentrations of Palestinians in the United States. Although a sizable number of Arab American students attend the college, currently no way exists to definitively capture their numbers because US Census and most college forms lack a category for "Arab"—meaning Arabs are often categorized as White. If we truly are committed to fostering a sense of belonging by letting these students know representation matters and that we understand that their experiences in this country are not the same as those of their White peers, then a simple but meaningful remedy would be the addition of a MENA category to our enrollment and application forms.

Moreover, colleges and universities should recognize the benefits of diversifying their faculty and staff to complement the demographics of their student populations. In being more proactive in our recruitment and hiring practices of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, we are providing underrepresented groups with faculty and staff who can be their allies and mentors, signaling to these students that they matter.

It is also our collective duty as counselors to gain an understanding of the innumerable ways in which racism and oppression cause psychological harm to Arab Americans, as we would with any other students of color. Culturally competent counseling skills can be acquired through supervision, consultation, and participation in professional development programs, including one I created, "The Effect of Culturally Competent Counseling Practices with Arab American College Students." (For more information, email me at nasers2@morainevalley.edu.)

When counseling or teaching Arab American students, I frequently hear how relieved they are to have an Arab American counselor to help them navigate their sociopolitical experiences. "Having someone who understands your background when you go talk to them is so important to me," explained a student in a focus group. "I don't want to be judged or misunderstood."

"I had a counselor that would advise me or come up with solutions that [were] more appropriate for a non-Arab," another student shared.

Several scholars have raised concerns about the limitation of interventions rooted in European or North American counseling therapies when applied to Arab students. For example, an Arab student at MVCC was facing a potential suspension due to a persistent decline in GPA, which could have resulted in the student being sent back to his home country. The counselor working with the student was unaware of the political upheaval in that country and did not assess for acculturative stress or the impact of the political climate on the student's academic and personal well-being. Had the counselor operated with a multicultural perspective—learning more about the student's challenges—then she might have more readily considered alternatives to suspension and subsequent deportation. Fortunately, the assigned counselor consulted with me, and exceptions were made so that the student could stay enrolled. This situation is just one example of how important it is for counselors to develop culturally appropriate skills. Indeed, we must create a safe and nonjudgmental space that allows students to navigate their complex issues and connect to counselors who can help them thrive. 𝕝𝔼

Souzan Naser is an associate professor and counselor at Moraine Valley Community College in Illinois, where she has won awards for her work on increasing diversity on campus.

Resources for Support

→ Arab American Action Network
aaan.org

→ Arab American Cultural Center
arabamcc.uic.edu

→ Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
icirr.org

→ Zakat Foundation of America
zakat.org

Academic Freedom
and the
Challenge of

D/VE

Upholding two core values essential to the pursuit of the common good
By Henry Reichman

Typography by Tom Brown

In March 2020, a working group established by the academic council at University College Dublin in Ireland proposed an addendum to the institution's statement on academic freedom. The addendum called on the university and its faculty to address tensions between academic freedom and "the strategic imperative to internationalise higher education." In establishing international partnerships, the group declared, the university should learn about and engage with "other traditions of academic freedom" and establish "whether divergent approaches to academic freedom can be reconciled or accommodated." A faculty petition charged that under the proposed addendum, academic freedom would be "downgraded from a basic principle of academic life to a legal nicety that needs to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis and can be sacrificed" in pursuit of other goals, in this case internationalization.

Thankfully, the proposal was withdrawn, but the

contretemps was revealing, posing in unusually stark terms a question that resonates here in the United States, and not only among institutions with overseas campuses or other academic partnerships in authoritarian states. Academic freedom is undoubtedly a core value of higher education, but should it sometimes be compromised in order to accommodate efforts to tackle the many considerable challenges of the twenty-first century, from fighting climate change and global pandemics to reckoning with the stubborn legacies of institutional racism? More specifically, can American colleges and universities sustain their commitment to serving a more diverse student body, recruited from all classes and ethnic groups and increasingly from around the world, and still rigorously uphold academic freedom?

The conflict is most frequently posed as one between freedom of speech and diversity. In this view, the focus has usually been on the use of restrictive speech codes or the disruption of controversial or "offensive" speakers. But academic freedom is not freedom of speech, although the two are closely related. According to the 1940 joint *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure* issued by the American Association of University of Professors (AAUP) and the Association of American Colleges (AAC, now the Association of American Colleges and Universities, or AAC&U), academic freedom "carries with it duties correlative with rights." It protects the right of instructors to "freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject," but it does not entitle them to persistently introduce material unrelated to that subject or in other ways seek to indoctrinate students ideologically or politically. The statement also famously declares that when faculty members "speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline." Yet it also advises

them to "be accurate," "exercise appropriate restraint," and "show respect for the opinions of others." Should such extramural utterances "raise grave doubts concerning the teacher's fitness for his or her position," the two organizations subsequently declared, disciplinary proceedings may be warranted.

In other words, in key respects, academic freedom is more limited than free speech. A faculty member may have fewer rights to voice controversial opinions or employ provocative language, especially in the classroom, than might an outside speaker, even one with overtly racist, sexist, antisemitic, or homophobic views. Might it then be argued that faculty rights to teach and speak freely can or even should be restricted as part of efforts by academic institutions to recruit, include, and respond to the demands of a more diverse community? Might a caveat like that proposed in Dublin be added to our policies on academic freedom in recognition that a more diverse population may have different notions of the responsibilities that faculty freedoms entail?

The claim that we must choose between academic freedom and diversity is false. Without academic freedom, diverse voices may be stifled. Yet, at the same time, an institution that fails to recognize and address the needs and demands of previously underrepresented groups and individuals may maintain the forms but not the content of academic freedom. For academic freedom is not about the protection of individual privilege. As the 1940 statement declared, colleges and universities exist "for the common good and not to further the interest of either the individual teacher or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition."

That "free search for truth" depends on the protection of diverse voices. As the AAUP declared in January 2020 in the important statement *In Defense of Knowledge and Higher Education*, endorsed by AAC&U, "As more groups gain access to higher education, they bring new demands for the expansion of expert knowledge." Take one striking example. At a prominent American medical school, a professor was lecturing on how to identify initial signs of Lyme disease, illustrating his talk with images of typical presentations of the rash associated with the tick bites that spread the disease. Recognition of that rash is critical to early diagnosis and treatment. The photos were all of pale skin, much like the pictures still used to illustrate the rash on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. A student then asked how one might identify the rash on dark skin. The professor struggled to find an answer, admitting that he hadn't considered the question, although it certainly was an excellent one to pose. Would the question have been asked had the class been all White? What other questions, in medicine and every other discipline, aren't posed when those with a stake in the answer are excluded?

"An institution that fails to recognize and address the needs and demands of previously underrepresented groups and individuals may maintain the forms but not the content of academic freedom."

Similarly, what insults, slurs, demeaning language, or insensitive comments might go unchallenged if those at whom they are directed are excluded? This is not mainly a matter of intent. Take, for instance, the repeated controversies over the use of the N-word in classroom discussions. No one in higher education would tolerate an instructor who employed the word as an insult, but can it even be mentioned? At Augsburg University in Minnesota, a professor repeated the word while discussing a work by James Baldwin in which it appeared, prompting his suspension. At Emory University in Georgia, a faculty hearing committee found that the law school's administration had failed to demonstrate adequate cause for dismissing tenured law professor Paul Zwier for twice using the word in class. In a letter to the Emory administration defending Zwier, the AAUP cited its 2007 statement on *Freedom in the Classroom*, pointing out that ideas germane to classroom discussion can never be censored solely because students might be offended. Doing so "would create a classroom environment inimical to the free and vigorous exchange of ideas necessary for teaching and learning in higher education."

Zwier's use of the term was similar to how University of Chicago law professor Geoffrey Stone, a well-known advocate for campus free speech, had employed it in his teaching to illustrate the "fighting words" doctrine, which refers to the First Amendment's treatment of language that could incite violence. After the *Chicago Maroon,* a student newspaper, published an article that called Stone's use of the word racist, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* reported, he spoke with several Black students who "were very passionate about how hurtful it was even when it's being used without the intention of being hurtful." After that conversation, Stone decided to no longer use the word in class. "I'm persuaded that the value is offset by the distraction and the harm it causes," he said.

It is important to emphasize that Stone's decision was a pedagogical choice of the kind instructors make freely every day, not a product of institutional pressure or threat of disciplinary action. In the Augsburg case, a faculty petition argued that "academic freedom in defense of language that harms students turns the very principle that makes true learning possible into a mechanism for enforcing institutional racism," adding that "further conversations about academic freedom can only take place after we acknowledge that harm has been done to these students." But does the mere mention of a loaded term, used by a prominent writer in a classic work, cause "harm"? As Harvard law professor Randall Kennedy, an African American author of a book on the history of the N-word, posed, must "a central pillar of the academic enterprise . . . be put on hold until everyone agrees to the highly contestable claim that 'harm' has been done"?

The Augsburg professors called on the university to "require meaningful and challenging diversity, equity and justice training for all faculty." Kennedy dismissed that suggestion as "all too predictable," but it is not in principle a bad idea, and certainly not necessarily one that violates academic freedom. To be sure, tales of "diversity training" exercises that are heavy-handed, overly prescriptive, or amount to political indoctrination are widespread and complaints about them frequently justified. Of course, some techniques, which have involved embarrassing or shaming participants, may cause more harm than good. But because a practice may be abused or done poorly is no reason to reject that practice altogether.

I

nstructors and, for that matter, their students may be ignorant of the experiences, customs, and sensitivities of those whose life experiences differ from their own. Patricia McGuire, president of Trinity Washington University, who has been honored
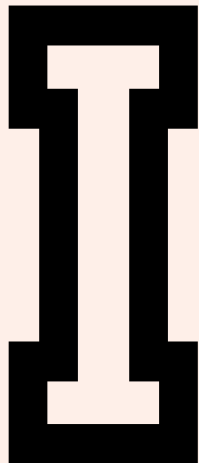
"In creating a culture of welcome, it is frequently essential to 'educate the educators.'"

by the AAUP for her defense of academic freedom, stresses in a piece for AAUP's *Academe* magazine that many of the low-income students of color her institution now serves can best thrive under "a culture of welcome and encouragement to help students navigate the unfamiliar and sometimes alien territories of academic and cocurricular life."

In creating such a culture, it is frequently essential, as the saying goes, to "educate the educators." During the twenty-five years I taught at California State University, East Bay, the student body changed dramatically, so that today no single ethnic group constitutes a majority. In response to the growing diversity of our students, the faculty launched several promising initiatives. For instance, as more Asian and Pacific Islander students enrolled, many faculty members struggled with pronouncing or even remembering names unfamiliar to them, which often made students and faculty alike uncomfortable or worse. To address the problem, a group of faculty produced a guide to pronouncing these names that proved immensely helpful.

Hiring practices also needed to change. It was not simply a matter of increasing the number of candidates who were women and/or people of color. My colleagues and I realized that often the candidate with the more prestigious degree or the most exciting research project might not be as well suited to the job of teaching our students as the candidate from a less well-known university who had taught for several years as an adjunct in a community college. Critics who claim that such an approach amounts to hiring those "less qualified" fail to recognize that it is justifiable and sensible to define qualifications by the open position's demands, which include teaching a diverse and inclusive student body.

This is why a growing number of institutions, including nearly all University of California campuses, have begun to require faculty job applicants and sometimes candidates for tenure and promotion to submit diversity statements. Such statements are supposed to explain how an applicant's experience can support efforts to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion. These requirements have been criticized as "an affront to academic freedom," to quote a widely circulated tweet by a former Harvard medical school dean. Abigail Thompson, a vice president of the American Mathematical Society and chair of the Mathematics Department at the University of California–Davis, called diversity statements a "political litmus test," likening them to the notorious 1950s California anti-Communist loyalty oath. In response, more than five hundred mathematicians signed a letter stating that "diversity statements help assess a candidate's ability to effectively teach a diverse group of students." They added, "If our goal as mathematicians and educators is truly to reach as many students as possible, thinking about diversity and inclusion is necessary."

While it is not difficult to imagine how such statements could be abused, there is so far scant evidence that they actually have been. In its 2011 statement *Ensuring Academic Freedom in Politically Controversial Academic Personnel Decisions,* the AAUP declared that all such decisions, including new appointments and renewals, "should rest on considerations that demonstrably pertain to the effective performance of the academic's professional responsibilities." If such responsibilities include teaching and otherwise serving a diverse student body, such a statement might be one method of determining fitness for a position.

"**F**itness for position" is also the main factor that the 1940 joint AAUP and AAC statement deems relevant to justifying disciplinary action in response to a faculty member's extramural expression. Which raises the issue of those faculty members whose publicly expressed personal views offend significant segments of the academic community. Arthur Butz, an engineering professor at Northwestern University, has long been a prominent Holocaust denier. He has, as far as anyone can determine, never brought up these ideas in his engineering classes nor is the topic relevant to his academic work or his ability to teach engineering. But while his views are and should be protected by academic freedom,

might not Jewish students enrolled in his classes fear they would be treated unfairly? There is, to my knowledge, no evidence to suggest he has been discriminatory, but out of caution, Northwestern stipulated that if Butz ever teaches a course required for graduation, a different section with a different instructor will also be offered.

The University of Pennsylvania Law School took a similar stance in the case of controversial professor Amy Wax. In response to a series of inflammatory and arguably racist comments that she made—including telling a national conservative conference that "our country will be better off with more Whites and fewer non-Whites"—more than a thousand student groups and individuals affiliated with Penn petitioned for her to be relieved of all teaching duties. The law school dean issued a statement condemning her remarks, adding that she would no longer teach required courses.

Princeton University professor of politics Keith Whittington responded that Wax "should be fully protected from employer sanction based on the content of the views that she has expressed in her public writings and speeches. This principle is foundational to the modern protection of academic freedom, and there is no exception for faculty speech that makes students uncomfortable or contradicts a dean's opinion about the values of the institution." Although Whittington acknowledged "little sympathy" for Wax's views, he added that "professors are allowed to denigrate groups of people in such a way that students might fear that they will not be treated fairly in the classroom. Professors are not allowed to in fact treat students unfairly." He continued, "Professors might say things in public that give administrators good cause to scrutinize whether professors are in fact treating students unfairly. But the fact that students are made uncomfortable by the fact that a professor might think badly of a group to which they belong—or even think badly of an individual student!—does not define the boundary of academic freedom."

But could one not argue that Wax's repeated disparagement of people of color, including specifically of students of color at Penn, might create a situation in which such students could not reasonably expect evenhanded treatment, even if the evidence that Wax has in fact discriminated is inadequate? And could it therefore not be argued that this goes to "fitness" for her position? Removal from teaching required classes can be viewed as a legitimate use of institutional authority to assign workload. After all, faculty appointments, including those with tenure, do not guarantee that appointees will always be able to teach the classes they desire. However, could such a reassignment not be seen as punishment? And would such punishment be justified by alleging the relevance of Wax's expression to her "fitness" to teach these classes? Such questions would best be resolved through academic due process at the institutional level.
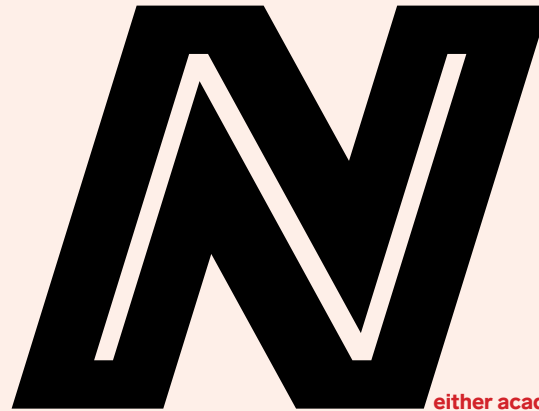
Neither academic freedom nor a commitment to inclusion can be placed in a hierarchy of competing values. Both are core values because each is essential to the pursuit of a broader common good. In April 2018, the Faculty Senate at American University voted without dissent to approve a resolution, *How Academic Freedom Supports Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion,* which gets the relationship between academic freedom and diversity/inclusion right:
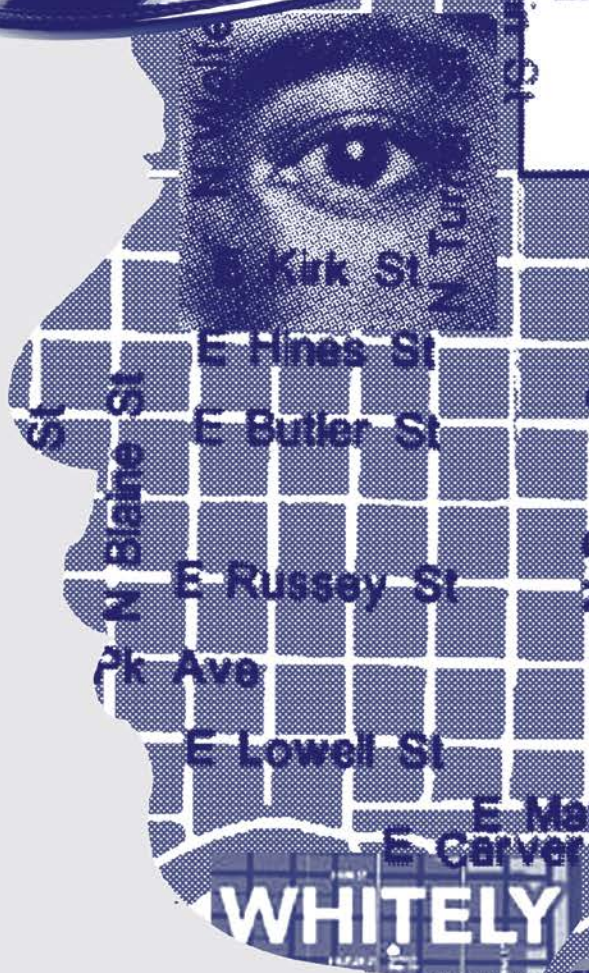
> The Faculty Senate remains committed to initiatives being developed, to provide more mentors from diverse groups, sensitize colleagues to the needs of our campus' communities, cultivate empathy and civility across our community, and reinforce the strengths we all gain from the broadest exposure to the human experience. . . .
>
> At the same time, increased attention to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion need not come at the expense of academic freedom. In fact, a central purpose of academic freedom is precisely to support diversity, equity, and inclusion. The right to dissent—in a civil and respectful manner—must remain sacrosanct in the classroom. . . .
>
> Inclusion and academic freedom go hand in hand at institutions of higher learning in free societies aspiring to generate knowledge and wisdom.

It is easy to defend academic freedom and free speech when everyone is saying pretty much the same things. But diverse communities give voice to diverse experiences, diverse assumptions, and diverse needs. And with diversity comes disagreement. In the wake of sometimes disruptive protest movements against institutional racism and in the context of the country's political polarization, we sometimes hear complaints that universities have become too contentious and hence, we are told, unpleasant places. But the very nature of higher education demands contentiousness. Argument and debate, sometimes polarizing, are at the core of what we do. Both academic freedom and diversity exist to protect and encourage that sort of contention, and together work to render it constructive. ⓘ

Henry Reichman is the chair of the American Association of University of Professors' Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure and a professor emeritus of history at California State University, East Bay.

THE POWER OF STORYTELLING
BUILDING TRUST AND CONNECTIONS BETWEEN COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND POLICE

By Kiesha Warren-Gordon

I AM A BLACK WOMAN WORKING AND TEACHING WITHIN THE FIELD OF CRIMINOLOGY.

My students at Ball State University are predominantly White and have had few interactions with Black, Indigenous, and people of color. I feel that it is important for me to disrupt stereotypes my students may have by introducing them to Black people who hold positions of power within the community. Critical service learning (CSL) is a tool that helps me address this issue.

Through CSL, I bring together my students and community partners to address community problems. Unlike traditional service learning, CSL works to (1) redistribute power, allowing community partners to have a voice; (2) incorporate a social change component; and (3) develop authentic relationships. These components enable my students to have transformative experiences.

I employ this approach because it deepens relationships between community partners and students as they share long-range goals and community values. CSL also helps to meet partners' needs. Unlike traditional service-learning courses, CSL requires community partners to commit time and resources to and invest emotionally in the project. The university must examine the impact on the community partners and assess if they are truly benefiting from the partnership.

My community engagement work focuses on the Whitely neighborhood in Muncie, Indiana. The majority of Whitely's approximately 2,500 residents identify as African American, and many live below the poverty line. This community has faced many problems—such as experiencing high crime rates, being a food desert, and, at one point, having failing schools—but it has proved its resilience by creating an outreach program and getting its members to work together.

I first began working with the Whitely community in 2017 as a member of its safety committee, made up of community members, city officials, and criminology experts. I attended monthly meetings where I met community members and gained their trust, a vital component of the CSL model.

In fall 2018, a fellow committee member approached me regarding a video that had appeared on social media, showing an interaction between a police officer and a young Black man in another community. The Whitely community felt that the video displayed police misconduct, which magnified community members' distrust of the police. Whitely community leaders immediately met with the chief of police to discuss the video.

The author (far right, in red) with her spring 2019 Capstone class, which helped organize a community forum between police and residents.

Because I had previously partnered with the community, my fellow committee member asked me to have my students work with community leaders to develop a program to bring the community and police together. This type of project would require extensive relationship building beyond even what I had already established with the Whitely community and would require student involvement beyond the traditional sixteen-week semester class.

Whitely community leaders told me that residents did not know what their personal rights were when it came to interactions with the police. They also did not know what police were allowed (or not allowed) to do in their interactions with the public. Community members were also concerned that their voices were not being heard in interactions with the police. The project with my class would help build trust and improve communication.

The project required buy-in from the Muncie Police Department, the Ball State Police Department, the mayor's office, and other local agencies. I also had to ensure that the project would meet learning outcomes for the students, such as demonstrating an understanding of culturally sustaining and responsive practices. Once everyone was on board, Whitely Community Council leaders Ken Hudson and Frank Scott and I decided that the class would work with the Facing Project to tell stories of interactions between police and community members and help us bridge the gap between the two groups.

Founded in Muncie by Ball State alumnus J. R. Jamison and author Kelsey Timmerman, the Facing Project is a nonprofit that partners with community

groups, classes, and other organizations nationwide to create understanding and empathy through storytelling. They provide tools, a platform, and inspiration for individuals and communities to share their stories, connect across differences, and begin crucial conversations. Writers and storytellers collaborate with participants on first-person narratives that are converted into books or performances and are archived in the Facing Project collection at Ball State University.

When seeking volunteer storytellers from the Whitely community, we did not frame our request for positive or negative stories but instead asked for "individuals who have had an experience with the police that had a lasting impact on their lives." We used similar phrasing to recruit police officers "who have had an experience with community members that had a lasting impact on their lives." We also decided that students and community members should organize a community forum to provide police and residents with an opportunity to engage with each other. I worked with Hudson and Scott to develop the course syllabus, and we agreed on assigned readings, due dates of papers and projects, and dates of community engagement events.

We decided that the project would be divided into two semesters, one for the storytelling project and one for the community forum. The students in the fall 2018 Human Services in Criminal Justice course would collect the Facing Project stories, and students enrolled in the spring 2019 Capstone course would develop the community forum. This would allow students to take part in both projects if they chose.

In fall 2018, twenty-one students enrolled in the Human Services in Criminal Justice course. At the beginning of the course, Hudson and Scott visited the students to provide an introduction to Whitely, and they led the students on a tour of the Whitely community soon after. During the semester, students took public transportation to Whitely. This gave them a true sense of how many people in the Whitely community must travel, as well as a firsthand look at the effort and time it takes to shop and get around when you live in a food desert.

The Facing Project provided facilitators who helped students gain the necessary skills to develop questions for interviews with community members. They also walked the students through the narrative process of telling the stories. The community partners recruited participants from the community, and the chiefs of the city and university police departments recruited officers. We ultimately recruited twelve participants.

Students worked in teams of two to conduct interviews, coordinating times to meet with the storytellers in public settings. After the students had collected, transcribed, and edited the stories, they sent the pieces back to the storytellers for an accuracy check. Another group of students in a graphic arts independent study course then developed the layout for a Facing Project book featuring the stories, with support from the university's Graphic Design Services department. The university printed 1,500 copies that were handed out in the community and during the spring 2019 forum.

In the book, one community member told how an interaction with a police officer who had arrested him ten years before helped him turn his life around. "One of the officers said to me, 'You are going to be all right,' and he prayed for me. After they took me to jail, I stayed for about two weeks. I had been in jail before, but this really woke me up," the community member said. "To this day I still have contact with that officer. Now he is my pastor. . . . I wasn't arrested; I was rescued." The community member explained that he is now active in the Whitely community, working "beside the police to keep our youth out of trouble and help them form a good positive relationship with our law enforcement."

One police officer described how he formed relationships in the community. When he worked at the jail, he got to know some of the inmates and let them vent their frustrations to him. He explained that after he was hired by the police department, "I'd go out and see some of the guys I met at the jail and would just stop to talk to them. . . . Some of the younger guys around them were kind of standoffish for a little while until they got to know me. . . . They learn that you're not out to get them. You're just there to make sure the neighborhood's good, make sure nothing's going on." He continued, "In order to bring justice to families or to clean up the crime in the streets, we need help. We need help from the community."

At the end of the semester, Hudson, Scott, and I sat down with students for a final reflection session to gauge what students had learned. Students were surprised that none of the stories from community members or police had negative overtones and that both groups had been eager to share their stories. The students also discussed how this learning experience dismantled their stereotypical thinking that all Black people dislike the police.

Twenty students, five of whom were in the fall course, enrolled in the spring 2019 Capstone course. We divided the class into four groups, which oversaw advertising for the forum, securing sponsorships, developing the program of events, and creating informational materials for attendees. The students worked with members of the community, university police, and city police to carry out each of the tasks. The students spent the first five weeks of the semester learning the theoretical and policy implications of police community engagement. For example, they considered the differences between CSL and traditional service learning and looked at how policies that police are required to follow can affect community engagement. The rest of the semester, students worked with their groups to carry out their responsibilities for the forum.

Hudson and Scott did not want to host the forum on the Ball State campus because parking and navigating a

"THE COMMUNITY FORUM HAS BEEN FORMALIZED INTO AN ANNUAL PROGRAM THAT ENGAGES POLICE AND OTHER AGENCIES IN DIALOGUE WITH RESIDENTS."

college campus can be intimidating for people who are not familiar with it. Instead, students secured a donation of meeting space from Cornerstone Center for the Arts in downtown Muncie, which is easily accessible by public transportation from Whitely and has ample parking nearby. In addition, students reached out to the Culinary Arts program at Ivy Tech Community College and received 150 box lunches for the event, sponsored by various donors.

The students and community partners wanted to have a series of panels with guest speakers who could address the importance of police-community relations. They invited various members of the local criminal justice system, as well as Officer Tommy Norman from North Little Rock, Arkansas. Norman has more than one million followers on social media and is known for his approach to community policing, in which he spends time getting to know community members and working to support their basic needs. Norman described his approach in a 2017 speech to the Camden, Arkansas, Chamber of Commerce: "If you see my police car in North Little Rock, it's probably going to be empty because I'm not going to be inside of it. I'm going to be sitting on a front porch. I'm going to be having dinner with a family. . . . As a police officer, your badge should have a heartbeat and not an ego."

Students also worked to develop informational materials for the forum. The community partners requested a pamphlet to inform citizens of their rights when interacting with the police. The pamphlet also explained why the police use certain procedural practices when engaging with citizens. Police officers, attorneys, judges, and a member of the prosecutor's office vetted the pamphlet for accuracy.

About eighty people attended the community forum. As they entered the venue, they received a bag that contained the Facing Project book, the police engagement pamphlet, and informational materials about the City of Muncie. The forum offered panels that focused on police-community engagement, juvenile justice issues, and broader criminal justice issues. In addition, during a question-and-answer session, a trained facilitator managed the dialogue between community members and panelists, which included officers, judges, and attorneys. Attendees could also take part in the Muncie Police Department's police simulator training, which

replicates real-life scenarios in which users learn to make appropriate decisions regarding a range of use-of-force options. The simulator enables citizens to learn, from a police officer's perspective, how and why certain tactics are used based on various encounters.

After the forum, students and community partners debriefed on the event. Our partners expressed gratitude to the students for their professionalism and commitment. Students reflected on how working with community members changed their ideas of what a community can do when it is organized and willing to make changes. Some students expressed excitement about creating new friendships during the process.

Members of the university's Office of Immersive Learning also attended the forum. They continue to support my classes' work in the Whitely community, helping to ensure that the community's needs are met. The community forum has since been formalized into an annual program, "Better Together," which engages police and other agencies in dialogue with residents over community issues.

Using the CSL model has been the highlight of my career. It has allowed me to work with community partners to create change and to provide transformational learning experiences for my students. In an article I recently coauthored with Hudson and Scott in the *Journal of Community Engagement and Higher Education*, both community leaders reflected on their experiences working with my students. Hudson recalled that "students often start off very uncertain of me and the community. However, as time progresses, they begin to become more comfortable with me, and they become more honest regarding their attitude toward the community."

Scott wrote that the students "get to know me and my community members as people, not just stereotypes. I enjoy working one-on-one with the students and having the opportunity to change someone's ideas regarding living and working in predominantly Black communities."

After the fall 2018 semester ended, one student emailed me to say, "I loved getting to interact with all of the people we interviewed. . . . You are a wonderful example for all of your students on what it means to be involved and give back to the area. I'll carry the lessons I learned in your class for the rest of my life." A few years later, I still receive notes from students expressing their gratitude for having the chance to work with people they once perceived as "other" but now see as friends. LE

Kiesha Warren-Gordon is an associate professor of criminal justice and criminology and director of the African American Studies program at Ball State University. She is also a senior faculty fellow for Indiana Campus Compact.

Walking the Talk

Black experiences need to be an integral part of college curricula

By Nailah Reine Barnes

During my first year at Spelman College, I completed an audio narrative project for my African Diaspora and the World (ADW) program. I looked at how the contemporary artist Amy Sherald uses portraiture—as in her painting *Mama has made the bread. (How things are measured)*—to challenge hierarchies of race, class, gender, and sexuality. I then drew connections between Sherald's work and the Harlem Renaissance literary magazine *Fire!!,* published by a group of Black American authors including Zora Neale Hurston and Gwendolyn Bennett. *Fire!!* challenged the 1920s identity politics, informed by white supremacy, that made it difficult for Black Americans to feel comfortable writing and talking about sexuality, interracial relationships, and color prejudice.

Looking back on my first two years at Spelman, a historically Black liberal arts college for women, I can see that ADW has been paramount to my development as a culturally competent scholar with a nuanced understanding of systemic racism. In the majority-White schools I attended for much of my

Amy Sherald's *Mama has made the bread. (How things are measured)*, 2018; oil on canvas, 54 x 43 x 2.5 in.

Nailah Reine Barnes is a student in the class of 2022 at Spelman College.

life, Black history and literature were an afterthought. But my mother, a Spelman alumna and brilliant cultural anthropologist, constantly reminded me of Black people's achievements, planting the seeds of my love of myself and my people. At Spelman, and specifically through ADW, those seeds have blossomed.

ADW provides a multifaceted foundation based on Black people's histories everywhere, while taking the necessary care to not portray Black experiences as monolithic. The resilience, triumph, and genius of Black people in the United States and worldwide are awe-inspiring yet vastly understudied and misunderstood. As Black Lives Matter demonstrators continue to protest racial injustice, and as we witness the racial disparities in the communities hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is clearer than ever that

the need for a curriculum like the one taught in ADW is needed at all colleges and universities.

Spelman College implemented the required two-course ADW program for first-year students in the early 1990s. The program aims to center histories of Africa and its people, prepare students to perceive themselves as global citizens, heighten the awareness of diverse cultural and historical experiences, and emphasize the connection between education and social change.

In the ADW program, my classmates and I learned to challenge systems, beginning with the education system, by analyzing Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. We were introduced to Négritude, Pan-Africanism, and Negrismo and learned the names and dates of independence of African countries. I applied my learning of Pan-Africanism and the "Back to Africa" movement to my research prospectus for the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship and spent summer 2020 preparing to conduct ethnographic research on Black American women expatriating to Senegal.

Imagine how different our world would look if all of us were offered a gender-informed, interdisciplinary study of Africa's histories, cultures, and diaspora, and by extension if all of us valued Black life. Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Elijah McClain, Sandra Bland, and George Floyd might still be with us. My grandparents, and thousands of other Black people—who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic—might not have caught and suffered from COVID-19.

In addition to issuing press releases declaring solidarity with Black students and expressing condolences for the loss of innocent Black lives, I urge leaders of American colleges and universities to make coursework similar to that in the ADW program a mandatory part of their curricula. ⎩E⎭

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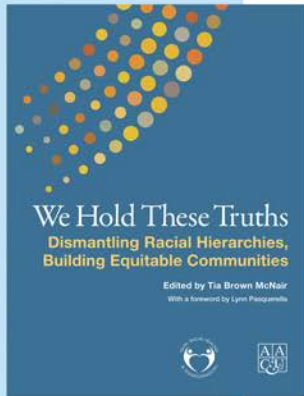
We Hold These Truths: Dismantling Racial Hierarchies, Building Equitable Communities
Edited by Tia Brown McNair

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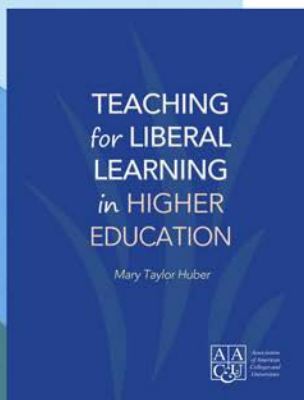
Teaching for Liberal Learning in Higher Education
By Mary Taylor Huber

Conversations about liberal education typically focus broadly on mission, goals, curricula, cocurricular educational opportunities, or overall student outcomes. Conversations about teaching and learning, by contrast, are more granular, focusing on what happens in the classroom, the teaching practices that faculty individually or collectively elect to use, or how a course or learning experience is designed, delivered, assessed, and improved. This ebook brings these discourses together to explore what is known about teaching practices that promote liberal learning in higher education.
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