Feature
Creativity-Infused Pedagogy to Foster a Civic Consciousness
By Carol-lynn Swol, Project Associate, Association of American Colleges and Universities

Art and design curricula empower students to be thoughtful and engaged with society. The creative process, course assignments, and studio practices help cultivate students’ ability to explore civic dimensions through their message, craftsmanship, and materials. The act of creating art in their classes not only nurtures creativity and communication skills but also gives students a way to reflect on and express compelling ideas that have social impact, and it fosters the courage and resilience to put those ideas into the public realm.

It was based on these concepts that Adrienne Hooker, assistant professor at James Madison University; David Wang, assistant professor at James Madison University; and I presented a workshop, “Focusing Creative Energy in Shaping Society: Practical Examples for Project-based Curriculum,” at the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (CLDE) annual conference this past summer.1

A few weeks after the CLDE conference, I traveled to Amsterdam and Berlin. I spent much of my time in museums and seeking out maker spaces and

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Editor’s Note

The Power of a Creative Mindset in Higher Education

By Caitlin Salins, Project Manager, Bringing Theory to Practice

A “robot-proof” education, [Joseph E. Aoun] argues, is not concerned solely with topping up students’ minds with high-octane facts. Rather, it calibrates them with a creative mindset and the mental elasticity to invent, discover, or create something valuable to society—a scientific proof, a hip-hop recording, a web comic, a cure for cancer.

In Robot-Proof: Higher Education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence, Joseph E. Aoun, president of Northeastern University, posits that the imminent rise of intelligent machines will irreversibly reshape our cultural landscape, most notably replacing many current jobs and making the proficiencies previously needed to complete them obsolete. His argument is that higher education, if its mission is to prepare students to live meaningfully in the world, must then adapt to create “robot-proof” learners, competent not just in what they’ve memorized but in new literacies and mental capacities, often previously considered “soft” or “superfluous” skills like entrepreneurial thinking, empathy, imagination, and a creative mindset.

The concept that higher education has a responsibility to do more than simply transfer knowledge aligns with BTtoP’s mission. We advocate that colleges and universities should be proving grounds not only for workplace preparation but as spaces that promote contextual, collaborative, and publicly minded learning; that support the well-being and personal development of students from all backgrounds; and that inspire them to engage with the “other,” with their community, and with the world at large.

In this issue of our newsletter, our authors explore through three different lenses how “robot-proof” qualities like imagination, creativity, and artistic expression can be embedded at all levels in the higher education enterprise to foster holistic and transformative learning experiences. In our Feature article, Carol-lynn Swol explores how a “creativity-infused pedagogy” can cultivate students’ engagement with the public good; in our Campus Highlight, BTtoP grantees Sarah L. Hoiland and Tere Martinez describe how they used approaches from theater and improv to encourage student agency and civic engagement; and in his inaugural Director’s Column, David Scobey sheds a light on both BTtoP’s history and his own—and how we might learn from innovative and imaginative partners, both within higher education and beyond, to develop a community of creative collaboration.

Creativity-Infused
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“fab labs” (fabrication laboratories). Though it was an entirely new context, the themes that arose from the exhibits I saw and events I participated in mirrored many of the same issues presented at the conference—explorations of anonymity, identity, freedom, migration, and equality. I do not believe this thematic cluster is accidental or by grand design. Artists and designers respond visually to society’s “wicked problems” to elevate these issues for the world to ponder through a new perspective. The material culture that artists and designers produce as expressions of social commentary (see work by Banksy, Icy & Sot, Barbara Kruger, Robert Mapplethorpe, Sally Mann, Richard Serra, Kara Walker, and many more) sometimes causes discomfort in viewers, which can lead to calls for censure. Although the viewing public can debate the merits of the message or seek to censor visuals that bring discomfort, there is much to be gained by exploring social issues visually.

ICY and SOT are artists in Brooklyn, New York. Originally from Tabriz, Iran, the brothers’ murals, interventions, videos, and installations—which depict “human rights, capitalism, ecological justice, social and political issues”—have appeared in Iran, Germany, China, Norway, and the United States (see fig. 1). According to their website, the artists “transcend their histories of artistic and political censorship by using public art to envision a world freed from borders, war and violence.”

As faculty in the art and design fields, or as advocates for civic education, it is our responsibility to meet the needs of budding artists and designers in their quest to respond to the wicked problems they are motivated to highlight. We are tasked with helping students develop the best way to visually create their messages, master the technical skills to manipulate their materials, and participate in ongoing dialogue to explore ideas and share feedback with classmates and others to refine their work.

As such, art/design project-based studio courses are often structured to support the development of civic consciousness. In our workshop at the CLDE conference, Adrienne, David

Figure 1. Icy and Sot Artworks at the Moco Museum in Amsterdam

ICY and SOT are artists in Brooklyn, New York. Originally from Tabriz, Iran, the brothers’ murals, interventions, video, and installations—which depict “human rights, capitalism, ecological justice, social and political issues”—have appeared in Iran, Germany, China, Norway, and the United States.

2 http://www.banksy.co.uk/
3 https://icyandsot.com/
4 https://art21.org/artist/barbara-kruger/
5 http://www.mapplethorpe.org/
6 https://www.sallymann.com/
7 https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-1010/minimalism-earthworks/a/richard-serra-tilted-arc
8 http://www.karawalkerstudio.com/
and I posited that the creativity model often used in project-based studio courses can be used in other academic disciplines. As illustrated in figure 2 below, we recategorized the civic knowledge, skills, and values that had been charted in A Crucible Moment and CLDE’s Emergent Theory of Change blog series into three new areas (content, ambiguity, and dialogue) to make them clearer and more applicable for other fields seeking to infuse a creativity model that inherently cultivates a civic consciousness into their curricula. Mapping some of the best practices used in project-based art and design curricula, we were able to determine how the approaches in the art and design fields aligned with the established and emerging nomenclature for civic learning. This was an exercise in translation for us and might also be useful for others in higher education seeking to foster a civic consciousness while stymied by language barriers between silos. Although terms used for civic learning and democratic engagement are not regularly used in art and design departments, we found related vocabulary in terms such as social impact, solutions, personal and original approach, risk, and constructive critical analysis.

The Creative Energy Model encourages student agency and engaged learning in the content they explore (see fig. 2). In art and design project-based courses, assignment instructions push students to create work based on the topics they are interested in pursuing, and, in doing so, students are encouraged to engage their curiosity and deploy their internal catalyst. Because students must initiate content, there is a level of ambiguity that needs to be nurtured and guided throughout the semester and subsequent courses. Faculty and students must build trust to allow creative, technical, and conceptual risk. Creating a visual culture for public audiences requires vulnerability, humility, and courage, but it also requires dialogue. The iterative dialogue process is ongoing in a project-based course as faculty guide students through a multistep process of creating and analyzing multiple resolutions.

The foundation-level visual communication course at James Madison University, taught by Adrienne Hooker, assistant professor in the School of Media Arts and Design, includes one example of a project using self-initiated content, iterative dialogue, and the ambiguity that comes from the creative energy model. Once students are accepted into the media arts and design major, usually during their sophomore year, this course sets the stage for building civic capacity throughout the major. The forty to sixty students taking this course each semester not only address topics of social importance in their own work at their level of expertise, but also critique and revise with their peers in an environment of trust and exploration, building a space that reinforces feelings of belonging and promotes autonomy and self-expression. Students select a local nonprofit to research, and they develop a meaningful call-to-action campaign based on that organization. The project’s parameters require that the various media used for the final products be intentionally chosen.

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Artists and designers have been at the forefront of instigating change throughout human history as their work reflects on and stirs society. Faculty teaching creativity-infused courses have a wonderful opportunity to help students foster a civic consciousness throughout the academic program and beyond. critique multiple resolutions that inform the students’ ultimate design.

Not every student in an art/design course creates work with socially conscious content or themes. Even when the work itself does not feature such content—for example, work based solely on formal design principles—the process of creating and communicating, and of sharing and being critiqued, still educates students in the skills needed to be civically engaged. Artists and designers have been at the forefront of instigating change throughout human history as their work reflects on and stirs society. Faculty teaching creativity-infused courses have a wonderful opportunity to help students foster a civic consciousness throughout the academic program and beyond. Learning and practicing how to put curiosity to work by initiating projects intended for the public sphere—particularly projects that address social problems—is a skill not readily forgotten, which can be drawn on for a lifetime.

Campus Highlight

Community Arts for Dialogue, Reflection, and Energy (CADRE): The Evolution of a Drama in Education Program in the Bronx

By Sarah L. Hoiland, Assistant Professor of Sociology, and Tere Martínez, Playwright and Adjunct Professor of Theatre—both of Hostos Community College

Hostos Community College, part of the City University of New York (CUNY) system, was established in 1968 in the South Bronx “to meet the higher educational needs of people from this and similar communities who historically have been excluded from higher education.”¹ Our namesake, Eugenio María de Hostos, a Puerto Rican intellectual, educator, agitator, and proponent of education for women and Puerto Rican independence, is a constant reminder of our roots. Our student body is small (7,000 students) and incredibly diverse—only 1.5 percent of our students identify as white; one-third are male; and only 16 percent fall within the eighteen to twenty-one age range.² Over half (52 percent) of CUNY community college students are first generation and 71 percent come from households earning less than $30,000 per year.³ They are also moms, dads, grandparents, friends, community members, gifted artists, musicians, orators, and actors.

Despite the diverse and inclusive campus, many students don’t feel like they belong in higher education—and this sense of isolation and exclusion has been compounded by the rhetoric of the 2016 election and subsequent divisive language and policies. Students fear they don’t belong, not only on campus, but as citizens of the country. A sociology student wrote, “Presidential candidate wants me out” as part of a five-word novel exercise.

With this tension among an incredibly diverse, artistic, resilient, and capable student population who have a palpable sense of anger and frustration with few avenues for action, the idea for Community Arts for Dialogue, Reflection, and Energy (CADRE) was born, stemming from two cross-institutional collaborations. Our focus for the project was on (1) building full participation in higher education in the Bronx and (2) using the arts to promote dialogue and collective action to advance racial and social justice. We hoped, through CADRE, the arts could be a vehicle for understanding, communicating, and promoting a culture of belonging in higher education through embedded dialogues. We wanted to make students the centerpiece of activities that generate concrete public dialogues, institutional outcomes, and long-term culture change and cross-institutional impact by embedding reflection, research, and artistic collaboration.

In addition to our consortium as three unique New York City campuses, our project’s principal investigators—Susan Sturm, a professor at Columbia Law School (CLS); Simone Rodríguez-Dorestant, a dean from Bronx Community College (BCC); and Sarah L. Hoiland, an assistant professor of sociology at Hostos—also wanted to intentionally partner with a non–higher education entity to broaden opportunities for outreach beyond our campuses. Adjunct faculty Tammy Arnstein (BCC) and Tere Martínez (Hostos) were also involved from the outset. Building on our experience with previous collaborations and our students’ excellence in the arts, we partnered with three Broadway artists who were dedicated to using the arts as a vehicle for understanding, communicating, and promoting a culture of belonging.

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Within a few weeks of receiving Bringing Theory to Practice (BTtoP) funding through their Greater Purposes Campus Dialogue Grants, the CADRE team mobilized and created a written application for students at Hostos and BCC in addition to forming informational workshops on each campus. Since our funding allowed us to award small student stipends to CADRE members, we reviewed each application and selected as many students (six to eight from each campus out of ten to twelve applications) as our resources allowed. It was important to us to open CADRE to any students on campus rather than handpicking performing arts students or students involved with leadership initiatives. From the beginning of the project, it was critical to involve students as stakeholders in order to holistically design the dialogues to fit their lived experiences.

During the rehearsals in February and March at Hostos and April and May at BCC, CADRE students held informal dialogues with the Broadway artists, faculty, and students from CLS who served as dramaturges and listened, took notes, and assisted the artists in creating a script based on the overarching question, “Who am I?” One of the Broadway artists who served as the creative director of the project in spring 2017, Ben Wexler, composed original music to accompany the student narratives. Broadway artists Britton Smith and Zhailon Levingston worked closely with students during weekly rehearsals. CADRE students at Hostos and BCC were inspired by working so closely with young, talented Broadway artists.

With dance, rap, spoken word, and song, students shared their stories with several diverse audiences. On March 27, 2017, Hostos’s CADRE members performed for the first time at New York City’s Council Chamber as part of the National Conference on Sanctuary Cities. In May, the Hostos group performed at two professional development events for faculty and staff and in an English as a second language classroom at Hostos. The on-campus activities were received well by faculty, staff, and students and the CADRE student performers were thrilled to be part of the event at City Hall and for the opportunity to work with Broadway artists.

Though phase one of the project exemplified a burst of creativity and action, it also presented challenges. There were many moving parts, and it was incredibly time-consuming to coordinate the people, rehearsal spaces, venues for performance and dialogue, student stipends, and independent contractor payments. It was a challenge to maintain consistent student participation once they received their stipends and as the end of the semester approached. Several students graduated, which made it difficult to sustain the core group from one academic year to another. We also struggled to incorporate dialogues with the various audiences after student performances since they were embedded into preexisting events with structured agendas. We realized that to grow and sustain the project, we needed to simplify, utilize existing artistic resources, and shore up support among stakeholders, especially campus faculty and larger numbers of students.

Part of involving more students meant attending to the context of their everyday lives. The devastation of Hurricanes Irma and María in fall 2017 deeply impacted students, faculty, and staff, and we felt the need to incorporate this into phase two of our campus dialogue series. Tere Martínez was already working on (continued on page 8)
collaborating with Puerto Rican schools and psychologists struggling from the Puerto Rican fiscal crisis to develop an educational theatre project that would bring drama in education techniques into high school classrooms to teach students critical thinking and leadership. The hurricanes and their aftermath increased the urgency of this work, and Tere Martínez spent six weeks in Puerto Rico from December 2017 to January 2018 implementing a pilot project to assess the needs of students and their communities. This experience brought a new perspective to the CADRE Project. We wanted to continue to explore issues of identity and belonging within the classroom that would motivate students to critically examine social justice issues and take action.

We enlisted support from faculty who saw the benefits of using the arts as a teaching tool and asked them to tell us what they thought were the most pressing issues within their students’ communities. Faculty said that issues like racism, sexism, and anti-immigrant rhetoric were impeding student success. Martínez then used these topics to craft unique drama in education workshops. At the beginning of each workshop, she enthusiastically greeted Hostos classrooms with a brief introduction before asking the question, “Who am I?” She then asked students to line up around the classroom facing each other in a U-shaped formation and respond in rapid-fire succession with a noun or adjective to describe themselves. If the noun or adjective was a “repeat,” Martínez would smile and say, “OUT!” until there was only one student left in the game. Students had to think on their feet, listen carefully to each other so they wouldn’t repeat a word someone else already said (and also to help Martínez “catch” the repeats), exercise critical thinking, and move outside of their comfort zone. They were able to see how similar they were to their classmates and express various components of their identity. The last student standing was applauded by their classmates, which elevated a sense of belonging.

We continued phase two in this vein, using Hoiland’s existing service-learning partnership with Patterson Senior Center, located within the New York City Housing Authority’s large Patterson Houses complex a few blocks from Hostos. Hoiland and Martínez conducted a pilot workshop with a dozen seniors who participated in the warm-up exercise with the prompt, “What is community?” In English and Spanish, seniors said things like, “familia, neighbors, el respeto, and love” amid giggles; like Martínez’s earlier sessions, when a senior paused and didn’t respond quickly enough, Tere Martínez said, “OUT!” Then Martínez gave a brief lesson on the components of a drama (e.g., characters, setting, and conflict) and seniors formed small

groups and created dramas to respond to the question, “What are some issues in your community?” Several groups acted out scenarios in their community that involved young people, drugs, and guns. Informed by Martínez’s lesson and inspired by our warm-ups, these exercises served as safe spaces for students and seniors to share their feelings of helplessness and frustration, not only on campus but in their hallways, common spaces, and families.

Looking forward, we are currently working with one of the CADRE students from spring 2017 and the president of the Patterson Tenant’s Association to (1) bring CADRE to young people at Patterson through additional drama in education workshops led by Hostos students, (2) create Hostos community activism workshops and classes for seniors with encouragement from one of our deans, and (3) teach students and seniors to advocate for policy changes that will address some of the issues raised by the seniors. Thus, we hope to use performance as a tool to increase access to higher education for our neighbors (from youths to seniors) at the Patterson Houses and to foster a sense of belonging at Hostos and in the South Bronx among current students.

The future of CADRE will involve a partnership with Hostos’ Service-Learning Committee, which works closely with Hostos’ Center for Teaching and Learning to disseminate best practices for drama in education workshops, and by collaborating with theatre and performing arts faculty who would support faculty from other disciplines who want to use these techniques to ignite authentic dialogues about issues such as identity, belonging, and community to advance social justice in New York and around the world.

CADRE also seeks to raise awareness and support efforts to advance racial, economic, and social justice in the United States and abroad and to bring students and communities together in dialogue and action.”
Director’s Column

Looking Back, Imagining Forward

By David Scobey, Director, Bringing Theory to Practice

This newsletter marks the start of the sixteenth year of Bringing Theory to Practice (BTtoP) and my fourth month as its new director. It’s truly an honor to follow Don Harward and build on the remarkable work that he and cofounder Sally Engelhard Pingree have led. In this first Director’s Column, I’d like to look back on their record of achievement and to tell you a bit about my own journey here. (As it happens, the theme of this newsletter—the public work of artistic and cultural creation—played a crucial part in that story.) Finally, I’ll point forward to some next steps for BTtoP.

I've been an enthusiastic participant in Bringing Theory to Practice almost from the start, but it wasn’t until this year’s director’s search that I saw the full range of our work. We’re sometimes typecast as a project for liberal arts colleges, but out of nearly six hundred grants awarded by BTtoP since 2003, only about one-fourth have gone to baccalaureate institutions. Another quarter were given to research universities and more than 30 percent to comprehensive public universities. Our network includes some thirty community colleges and forty-five minority-serving institutions (numbers that I hope we’ll increase). We’ve worked in and with nearly every sector of higher ed.

The themes and key organizers of the work have been similarly diverse. Nearly half of the principal investigators on BTtoP grants were administrative leaders; faculty oversaw one-fifth of the projects and staff educators (mainly in student affairs) about one-quarter. Our requests for proposals have supported waves of projects on integrative learning, student mental health and well-being, community partnerships, and civic dialogues. We’ve published seven books on these issues, showcasing programmatic creation, pedagogical innovation, research, and thought leadership across the network.

Beneath the numbers, Bringing Theory to Practice has staked two deeper claims that seem key to its achievement. First, that all of this work contributes to an overarching, shared goal: a model of holistic, transformative education in which all students can flourish intellectually and personally and develop their capacity for meaningful work and democratic citizenship. And second, that such a transformative education requires the transformation of academic institutions and higher ed.

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education as well.

Our commitment to change has included Bringing Theory to Practice itself. I admire the project’s capacity, under Don Harward’s leadership, to assess itself, evolve, and respond to new issues and critical challenges. Our initial focus on issues of student disengagement—spurred by rising concerns about depression and binge drinking—has developed into a larger exploration of student well-being and flourishing. Our commitment to civic engagement has increasingly foregrounded issues of equity and inclusion for underserved students and communities. Our vision and our work have grown, and they will continue to do so.

For me personally, BTToP’s commitment to both core purposes and educational change, both integrative thinking and innovative action, is compelling. The opportunity to serve as director weaves together many threads of my own career: as an interdisciplinary historian at the University of Michigan (UM), a leader of community partnership programs at UM and Bates College, the dean of an experimental division of public engagement at the New School, and a scholar-advocate for the needs of nontraditional students. I’ve had the chance to teach in liberal arts colleges, doctoral departments, and professional schools; to publish work on the historical cityscape of New York and the current landscape of higher ed; and to help organize national consortia on civic engagement and adult education. All of these experiences have led me, in one way or another, toward Bringing Theory to Practice. All of them, I hope, will benefit our work as we build the next chapter of the project.

It’s serendipitous that I’m able to introduce myself in a newsletter issue devoted to the role of art and creativity in civic and community life. This was formative to my own growth as an engaged scholar and teacher. Twenty years ago, at the University of Michigan, I launched the Arts of Citizenship Program, which fostered the public work of the arts, humanities, and design through community partnerships. Working with brilliant community-engaged artists and teachers like the poet Sekou Sundiata and the choreographer Liz Lerman, I learned how the process of creative collaboration can model democratic community-building (continued on page 12)
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and engage social change. Alongside artists, humanists, and designers from across higher education, I also helped to organize Imagining America, a consortium of academic institutions and cultural organizations committed to strengthening communities and democratic public life through the cultural

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and creative disciplines. It is wonderful that such work is represented in this newsletter. The essays by Carol-lynn Swol and the CADRE partnership from Hostos Community College underscore the indispensable value of the arts and artistic pedagogy to democratic culture, civic learning, and the mission of Bringing Theory to Practice.

For me, one crucial lesson of these essays—and of my own work in Arts of Citizenship and Imagining America—is the role of community building in change work and of creative collaboration in community building. In a sense, Bringing Theory to Practice is engaged in similar creative collaboration as we embark on the next chapter of our project. I’m eager for BTtoP to strengthen the collective bonds among our remarkable network of campuses, practitioners, and researchers. Working as a community of practice and launching new, multi-institutional projects, we can amplify our voice and influence in the national conversation on higher education at a moment when that conversation is often corrosive to our values. The first step in such community building is precisely the kind of shared visioning modeled by the visual artists, performers, and culture makers featured in this issue.

Let me invite you to take part in imagining and cocreating this community of practice. Elsewhere in the newsletter, we describe an important opportunity to do so: three “fishbowl” conversations that BTtoP will hold at the annual meeting of the Association of American Colleges and Universities in Atlanta this January. These sessions—focused on student well-being and equity, on work and the purposes of college, and on the future of BTtoP itself—will be open forums for thinking, talking, and working together. Please join us.
**In Brief: BTtoP News and Notes**

**NEWS**

**Well-Being Grantee Research Collaborative**

Led by BTtoP national evaluator Ashley Finley and BTtoP senior scholar L. Lee Knefelkamp, the Well-Being Research Collaborative, a convening of BTtoP’s 2015–17 Well-Being Research Grantees, brought together twenty-two researchers and project leaders from thirteen campus projects for a one-day workshop to discuss the connection between social and emotional learning pedagogies and the related effects on outcomes of well-being and success for traditionally underserved students within higher education. At the workshop, participants collaboratively developed principles of excellence for research on well-being and student success, conceptualized strategies for conducting multi-institutional research, and established foundations for future collaborative projects. See the full list of advisory board members, visit https://www.bttop.org/about/advisory-board.

**BTtoP Establishes New Formal Advisory Board**

Summer 2018 marks the start of a new chapter for BTtoP, both in welcoming David Scobey as director after Don Harward’s fifteen years of leadership, and in reimagining our mission to link BTtoP’s core purposes of holistic learning, student well-being, and civic engagement to the needs of underserved and nontraditional students and to the growing challenges of equity and inclusion in a stratified academy. Part of this transition means turning our focus to connecting, curating, and lifting up the wealth of innovation, practices, and research distributed across BTtoP’s community. In this spirit, BTtoP established a new formal advisory board to include veterans and newcomers, administrators, association leaders, faculty, and staff from a diversity of fields, backgrounds, academic sectors, and regions. It is a board that embodies BTtoP’s commitment to both foundational academic values and creative change and that will enable us to integrate established and emerging priorities. To see the full list of advisory board members, visit https://www.bttop.org/about/advisory-board.

**BTtoP 15th Anniversary Celebration**

On Friday, September 14, BTtoP hosted a celebratory dinner at the Kreeger Museum in Washington, DC, to commemorate the project’s fifteen years of achievements under the leadership of cofounders Don Harward and Sally Engelhard Pingree, and to welcome new director David Scobey. Joined by long-time friends and colleagues of the project as well as voices of scholars and thinkers more recently involved with BTtoP’s work, the gathering served to both lift up BTtoP’s accomplishments and look forward to an exciting new chapter. Thank you to all who were able to join us, and to all who were there in spirit and solidarity—BTtoP is so grateful for the friendship and support of our community, without which our work would not be possible.

**BTtoP’s Former National Evaluator Named Senior Advisor to the President and Secretary to AAC&U Board**

BTtoP is thrilled to announce that longtime friend, colleague, and national evaluator Ashley Finley has been announced as AAC&U’s new senior advisor to the president and secretary to the board. Coming from a position as associate vice president for academic affairs and dean of the Dominican Experience at Dominican University of California, and prior to that as senior director of assessment and research at AAC&U from 2009 to 2015, she brings a wealth of experience “on engaging faculty and staff in developing student-centered, sustainable practices that enable the advancement of student success and learning with an emphasis on equity and evidence-based standards for improvement.” Read more in the official press release: https://www.aacu.org/press/press-releases/aacu-announces-appointment-ashley-finley-senior-advisor-president.

**BTtoP’s Former Director Don Harward Published in Inside Higher Ed**

BTtoP’s former director and president emeritus of Bates College, Don Harward, published an article entitled “Risking Silence” in Inside Higher Ed this past August, inciting educational leaders to speak out against bigotry and falsehoods, even when that means speaking truth to the highest governmental power. “The challenges and warnings that people make upon exiting higher education—in my case, as a retiring nonprofit associa-
tion director and former college president—are as expected as the admonitions for aspiration that we made upon entering it. But when, after more than 50 years of engagement in higher education, one encounters the normalization of deceit and the dismissal of reason and evidence, even a retiree should gain voice. Anyone who champions the values of self-worth, reason and the truth is obligated to speak out on issues of obvious misogyny, racism, intentional falsehoods and flaunted ignorance—even when it is coordinated and expressed by the highest powers of the executive office of our nation.” Read the full article here: https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2018/08/28/higher-education-has-responsibility-speak-out-against-current-administrations-false.

**BTtoP’s Executive Project Manager Begins Learning and Design Graduate Program at Georgetown University**

BTtoP is honored that Caitlin Salins, executive project manager, was accepted into the newly established master’s of learning and design (MLD) program at Georgetown University and began this fall while continuing in her BTtoP role full-time. The program, which is intended “to give our students a deep foundation in the tools and theory of learning design, technology innovation, learning analytics, and higher education leadership, a foundation on which they can create engaging and innovative learning experiences for all students,” is offered through Georgetown’s Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship (CNDLS).

CNDLS is also the home of the Engelhard Project, which uses curricular infusion to embed well-being into the classroom and was initially developed through a BTtoP development grant over a decade ago. To learn more about CNDLS and the MLD, visit http://learninganddesign.georgetown.edu/.

**BTtoP Hosts Strategic Retreat at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County**

Twenty-five participants, including members of the advisory board and a number of other key thought partners from both within and beyond the BTtoP network gathered from October 25–26 for a strategic retreat at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County’s Student Community Center. Recognizing the project’s former accomplishments, the retreat addressed how to build on these achievements while sustaining the project’s core mission and values and developing priorities and tasks for its next chapter. The retreat served as an opportunity to strengthen the project’s network as a community of practice, amplify its voice in the national conversation, and confront new and urgent challenges of equity and change in higher education.

**TRAVELS**

**BTtoP Director David Scobey Attends Great Colleges for the New Majority Institute in Chicago**

David Scobey attended the third annual Summer Institute of the Great Colleges for the New Majority Network in Chicago from August 27 to 30. The Great Colleges Network (https://greatcollegesfortheneumajority.wordpress.com/) is a collaborative of adult-serving bachelor’s programs and colleges dedicated to offering excellent, transformative education to adult, working, and nontraditional students. The summer institute was cohosted by two Chicago-based programs in the network, DePaul University’s School for New Learning and National Louis University. It was attended by educators from a dozen colleges and programs and focused on themes such as best practices for mentoring and supporting students, building peer-to-peer student communities, faculty development, and redesigning high-impact practices for adult, working, and parenting students. David Scobey—who was among the original organizers of the network—took part in this year’s keynote conversation.

**BTtoP Staff Attend the National Gathering of Imagining America in Chicago**

Caitlin Salins, Mercedes Yanora, and David Scobey attended the annual national meeting of Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life in Chicago from October 19 to 21. Founded in 1998, Imagining America is a consortium of nearly one hundred academic institutions and cultural organizations dedicated to the civic and democratic role of cultural and creative disciplines. Its annual national gathering is an important occasion for civically engaged artists, humanists, designers, and culture makers to share work and build a movement for public cultural engagement. This year’s gathering, cosponsored with Illinois Humanities, focused on the theme of “Transformative Imaginations: Decarceration and Liberatory Futures.” Scobey, BTtoP’s director, has been involved with Imagining America for several years, and BTtoP has worked with the consortium on a variety of projects.

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Look for BTtoP at the AAC&U Annual Meeting

Bringing Theory to Practice will again be participating in AAC&U’s Annual Meeting, to take place January 23–26, 2019, at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, 265 Peachtree St. NE, Atlanta, GA 30303.

Unlike previous years, when we have hosted panel discussions, this year our three presentations will be organized in a “fishbowl” format:

1. “Student Well-Being and the Equity Imperative”
2. “Work and the Purposes of College”
3. “Building the Community of Change: An Open Call to Envision the Future of Bringing Theory to Practice (and Higher Education)”

An inaugural circle of four or five discussants will unpack the theme in conversation for twenty to thirty minutes, with the surrounding audience “overhearing” their dialogue. Then, we will invite individual audience members to tap into the fishbowl, replacing discussants and offering their own questions, comments, disagreements, and stories. We hope the resulting conversation will be wide-ranging, expansive, and also focused, with room for disagreement and unexpected connections and insights. To learn more about our sessions and speakers, visit https://www.bttop.org/news-events/events/2019-aacu-annual-meeting-bttop-sessions.

BTtoP also will be hosting an informal reception on Thursday evening, January 24, 2019.

We welcome friends and colleagues to attend for the opportunity to engage in discussion, share ideas, and connect with each other and the BTtoP team on current and future directions of our work together. Look for our Save the Date in your email soon—if you are not signed up for our mailing list you can do so on our website homepage: www.bttop.org. We hope to see you there!

For more information and updates on the 2019 Annual Meeting, please visit: https://www.aacu.org/AM19
The Bringing Theory to Practice Project (BTtoP) is an independent national effort. It is funded by The Endeavor Foundation and functions in partnership with the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) in Washington, DC.

The Endeavor Foundation is dedicated to efforts that foster independent thought, ethical understanding, deep appreciation of the arts, and reverence for the natural world. The Endeavor Foundation supports and catalyzes excellence in liberal arts education and related fields, and has supported the curricular and pedagogical development of a significant number of liberal arts colleges in the United States.

Now Available from Bringing Theory to Practice

Well-Being and Higher Education: A Strategy for Change and the Realization of Education’s Greater Purposes

Well-Being and Higher Education is a book about well-being and its multiple connections to higher education—and why those connections matter. The thirty-five-piece volume of essays and provocations responds to the current landscape of challenges higher education faces today and the need to preserve and revive the institution’s role of looking beyond itself to a greater good.

For more information: www.bttop.org/resources/publications