Feature

Civic Education in a Time of Crisis

By Brian Murphy, President, De Anza College

On March 14, 2018, students at De Anza College joined high school students in a walkout protesting gun violence. Many among our faculty and students joined the earliest protests against the proposed Muslim travel ban, demonstrated their solidarity with the hundreds of undocumented students who are their classmates, and publicly supported our governing board’s declaration that our community college district will not cooperate with federal immigration initiatives without a valid court order or warrant.

This advocacy is growing across the country as young men and women ask themselves if their voices can matter in the emerging crisis of American democracy. But what about our colleges and universities, as institutions committed to learning, dialogue, and the development of the practical skills of democracy among our students? Are we neutral in the emerging crisis, aiming to foster open debate and the rule of reason? Or are we neutral in what appears to be a clash between two cultures: a resurgent white supremacist tendency and a newer culture of inclusion and tolerance?

If seen only through the lens of partisan politics and the traditional commitments of higher education to open debate between opposing views, the answers are straightforward and conventional: we are nonpartisan. We do not declare for

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Editor’s Note

Higher Education’s Role in Advancing Social Justice

By Caitlin Salins, Project Manager, Bringing Theory to Practice

On March 24, 2018, thousands of people across the United States took part in the student-organized March for Our Lives in protest against the lack of effective legislation to counter issues of gun violence, and especially the recent string of mass shootings at institutions of learning. Over the past year and a half of extreme divisiveness, organized protests have almost become commonplace; yet, the March for Our Lives movement seems to hold a special power—likely due in part to the fact that it is strikingly led by a new generation. Their age and passion are notable, not just because they dare to speak truth to power, but because they represent the future of our society.

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As such, it is critical that higher education builds environments that support students’ ability to participate as civic activists, to advance the public good, to break down systems of inequality, and to foster empathetic relationships with the “other.” However, we know that the work of forging higher education’s institutional culture toward the long arc of social justice is fraught with many barriers—ranging from lack of structural support, collaboration, and resources, to active pushback from various campus constituents.

In this issue of the BTtoP Newsletter, we explore what these efforts to stand for forces of social justice look like in different contexts: through the lens of a faculty member using dialogue to address “master narratives” of institutionally embedded racism; through the voice of a community college president urging leaders at colleges and universities to proclaim (and support with action) their democratic commitment to and support of student activism efforts; from the executive director of a nonprofit organization enabling global relationships and cross-cultural understanding for students, despite their varying levels of inherited privilege and access; and from BTtoP’s outgoing director as he affirms the core purposes of higher education, having witnessed over five decades of campus activism and societal progression.
Civic Education
(continued from page 1)

a candidate or a party. We provide the space and the protocols where debate between parties and positions can be heard, policy arguments can be framed and analyzed, and the habits of critical thinking can be exercised within the framework of civilized debate. In this context, we celebrate the activism of our students and the commitments of our faculty, and we make our own positions clear on public issues—all

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while insisting on the need for dialogue, the respect for opposing views, and the necessary compromise of democratic culture.

This approach—nonpartisan, open to debate, and institutionally neutral except when policies directly affect education itself—depends, of course, on an understanding that (1) the protocols and practices of democratic debate are not under attack, (2) democracy itself is not up for debate, and (3) policy differences do not reveal tensions between democracy and, for example, totalitarianism.

But what if the current crisis is not narrowly about our two parties and their positions? What if the current crisis is about democracy itself?

Recent studies suggest that less than a third of millennials believe it’s important to live in a democracy, and one in six Americans think that army rule is a good system of government. They join a chorus of men and women across the hitherto democratic world who are drawn to totalitarian systems and who prefer a retreat from the growing diversity that marks much of the West to a nationalistic monoculturalism.


Where does, and should, higher education stand in this struggle—one stretching from the United States to Europe, Turkey, Russia, China, India, and beyond? If our institutions’ mission statements mean anything, we are partisan in this struggle: we are on the side of a cosmopolitan diversity and on the side of social justice. Our institutions are not simply the “space for dialogue,” but rather a space for mobilization and organizing.

In this view, universities and colleges do not abdicate their commitment to reasoned debate by being clear about institutional commitments. As institutions, we can accept multiple views and yet be considerably clearer about our own. Or, put another way, we can simultaneously provide space for debate between positions and take (continued on page 4)
positions as an institution. In a more benign period we might mute the latter and accentuate the former, but in this current time we need to be clearer about where our institutions stand on democratic culture and social equity.

But we need more than formal statements and declarations of virtue. We need classes and programs that support the students who march and organize; we need a renewed focus on the history of totalitarianism and the structures of government and social movements that create it. We need active support—programs, staff, and legal representation—for the most marginalized students and their communities, not because we are providing “access,” but because their communities are bearing the brunt of the violence and hatred unleashed by the current nationalistic moment. Examples of this in practice at De Anza include official statements from the president’s office in support of student activist efforts; a CivicsWatch Toolkit page with links to credible and fact-checked news outlets and community partners through which students can become involved; and a site dedicated to providing resources for undocumented students, with the explicit statement that De Anza is “reaffirming its commitment to treat all students with equity and respect” regardless of their immigration status.

Finally, to be clear: we need to support political engagement itself, not simply “preparation” for politics. This means a significant investment in voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts, a renewed focus on current policy debates on immigration, taxation, housing and food insecurity, race and gender issues, and gun violence. Here, paradoxically, we can be intentionally and necessarily nonpartisan: we want students engaged and active, confronting power and policy—whatever their partisan bias. In a context where democratic participation is under attack and young people are too often told to stay silent, promoting activism is a defense for democracy.

It’s easier for me to write this as the president of an institution from within the relative “safety” of California, with a governing board that supports undocumented students and DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), a governor and legislature who actively oppose the more reactionary policies and initiatives of the current federal regime, and a cultural milieu defined by diversity. The ability to take a stance and expect institutional and community support will be more difficult in campus environments where a resurgent and militant racism has governing power—so I’m not romantic about how easy the work will be or how it can emerge in all places.

Yet, the difficulty of supporting causes of social justice in higher education must not deter our work; indeed, higher education will be defined over the next decade not only by our aspirations to be schools for democracy but by our actual efforts in promoting and defending it.
Campus Highlight

The First Step toward Equity and Inclusion: Using Critical Dialogue to Unfreeze

By Chantae Recasner, Dean, Faculty and Instructional Development, Austin Community College

Editor’s Note: At the time of writing, the author served as director of the Center for Teaching and Learning at Cincinnati State Technical and Community College. This piece represents her personal experience at the institution; as with all issues of our newsletter, we welcome generative conversation, which may express a different perspective.

2016 was a banner year for change in the United States. We witnessed the rise to presidency of a nontraditional candidate, and with that came upheaval about status-quo politics. The nation spoke, and what it said was, “We want something different.” Yet, that desire for difference was, somewhat ironically, gilded by a mantra of longing for the past: “Make America Great Again.” If the country’s sociopolitical realities are understood as macro representations of who Americans are, then educators should understand how profound and prolific contradictions are in organizational operations. Moreover, we should recognize that change—especially cultural change—is a process. Lewin’s theory of change suggests organizational behavior undergoes unfreezing (recognizing and letting go of established behaviors that may have impeded growth), changing (deploying efforts to shift practice), and refreezing (establishing and sustaining new practice as normal). Thus, for Cincinnati State, our journey toward creating a more inclusive and safe campus had to begin with conscientious “unfreezing.”

Background

Cincinnati State Technical and Community College’s receipt of a Bringing Theory to Practice Greater Purposes Campus Dialogue Grant in 2016 was the starting gun for our efforts to grow a more inclusive and safe community. But first, we had to unfreeze.

The context for our grant proposal highlighted regional disturbances that had (have) potential to impact our campus. Particularly, we acknowledged racist and ethnophobic incidents on nearby campuses as catalysts for our work. The 2016 campus-based headlines read as warning cries to the Ohio higher education community. The story of a “free speech” wall at Ohio University that included drawings of a lynching and a rallying cry to “Build the Wall” became a topic of discussion on our campus. Just north of Cincinnati at the University of Dayton, two black students’ dorm room doors were vandalized with racial slurs. And just south of Cincinnati at Northern Kentucky University—one of Cincinnati State’s transfer partners—students were confronted with (continued on page 6)
fliers that welcomed them to “White Week.” The challenges faced on these campuses aroused concerns about safety on our own. Moreover, these incidents conjure memories of civil unrest that continuously haunt the residents of Cincinnati. Since the early 1900s, the sinister underbelly of Cincinnati has been its racial tension. From the 2001 riots that ensued after an unarmed teenager, Timothy Thomas, was killed by a Cincinnati police officer, to the killing of unarmed Sam DuBose in 2015 by a University of Cincinnati police officer who stopped him for a minor traffic violation, the city has lost its identity as the beacon of Northern freedom.

Community identity and the socio-political challenges of our communities inform our campus realities. Our first concern is always our students and their well-being, but we often ignore how directly employee satisfaction is related to “customer” satisfaction. Thus, for our grant project, we focused on faculty and staff impressions of inclusion and safety on campus. Particularly, our goal was to use counterstorytelling as a framework for unearthing truths about our organizational culture that have systematically and historically been overlooked. The plan was to host five critical dialogue sessions to reveal concrete opportunities for growth that would inspire action steps for a diversity and inclusion strategic plan. Invited participants included faculty members (adjunct and full time), associate deans, the director of human resources, the director of student activities, the provost, and transfer partners. Years of service to the college among this group ranged from three years to more than twenty years. Thus, this change effort was strengthened by the presence of a healthy cross section of perspectives and institutional power.

Thawing Out the Frozen—Stories of Race-Based Exclusion and Incivility

Our approach to dialogues was intentional: we would examine master narratives about our campus and talk about how true they were for our experiences. Master narratives are dominant claims about an organization that are often encapsulated in mission statements, accreditation reports, branding campaigns, and cultural norms of the organization. These narratives can, even if they are unintentional, hegemonically silence those whose experiences don’t affirm them as truth and create barriers to building a just, inclusive, and safe community.

Here’s an example: Cincinnati State has had an African American president since my hire (eleven years ago). This matters. On the surface, this visual representation suggests that Cincinnati State values diversity and always has. With a more critical eye, however, we can recognize that tokenistic positional representation is NOT synonymous with inclusion and equity. In fact, in response to an internal 2017 employee satisfaction survey administered to sixty-four African American employees at Cincinnati State, one respondent shared, “You have to do more than pay honor to diversity and inclusion in words. Systems must actively engage...”

change that makes everyone feel included.” In addition, only 21 percent of survey respondents believe that Cincinnati State is committed to including the voices of all employees in key decision making, and only 27 percent of respondents believe that promotion and advancement opportunities are equitable. By opening spaces for true dialogue, we also learned that our international colleagues’ cultural identities are not always honored. We all gasped in one of our dialogue sessions as we heard our facilitator share a quote from campus interview data: “I am American at work and [my cultural identity] at home.”

So from the beginning, our intention was to use the campus dialogue grant to have what we understood as uncomfortable conversations. Uncomfortable, but purposeful. The grant helped to call attention to the need for these conversations on our campus, and it helped to contextualize the value of such dialogues to quality educational leadership and practice. We gave each dialogue a theme to provide focus: leading inclusively, inclusive communication, gaining global perspective, and programming for inclusion. Having leadership as the first point of focus allowed us to not only critically examine leadership practice but also to discuss our divergent and convergent thoughts on what the concept means. We established a list of terms that captured the group’s perception and allowed that list to serve as a reminder of how we as leaders of change should work within the space of these dialogues, in our employment areas, and in our communities.

The lessons learned about our organization from the dialogue participants were numerous, but these were particularly profound: even in conversations about diversity on our campus, (1) the topic of racism is avoided and (2) in-group/out-group politics are real and hostile. If our goal as an institution is to educate our students to thrive in the current contentious landscape—or to shape it through democracy and engagement for the better of all humanity—we must model the very basic elements we hope to instill in students. Thus, identifying that the structure of our college at the faculty and staff level could lack core concepts like civility, empathy, intentional engagement with the ‘other,’ and an understanding of intersectionality, is critical.

So Now What?
Our dialogue discoveries are not the truth about the organization, but they are some truths—truths that cannot and should not be ignored. If higher education is to fulfill its purpose, leaders must attend to the emotional well-being of organizations, as well as their economic viability and sustainability, as they grow. These campus dialogues provided the heat needed to thaw our frozen understandings about who we are as an organization. There is a long road ahead, but it’s one that must be traveled, because too few people feel empowered, and we know that empowered employees are more motivated to engage with change efforts.

We must keep talking, and then we must act. The past may well be prologue, but it is not prohibitive. We can do things differently. We must do things differently, not just to advance diversity and inclusion, but to advance equity and social justice.

3 Data taken from an internal campus survey. This survey had a return rate of 36 percent, which is on par with other survey return rates at the college.

Recent discussions and essays have been clear as they explore themes underlying and undermining public trust in higher education, including “skepticism about the value of a college degree, belief that academe promotes values at odds with those of many Americans, and concern that our institutions are driven by self-interest rather than a commitment to improve society.” The thrust of these claims is that colleges and universities should recognize that higher education’s purpose is to prepare students for the workplace by moving faculty incentives and rewards (and the value they see in being an educator) away from research and individual advancement to the ethic of serving the public’s social and economic interests.

These claims are among several other elements—including accelerating costs (which mask issues of value) and the overall anxiety and negativity regarding all societal and political institutions—that led the public to lose their trust and confidence in colleges and universities.

However, rather than weighing in on the complexity of the public’s diagnosis, I suggest we give greater attention to prescriptions for what we in higher education should actually do. What is needed, I believe, is much more than a set of patterns of change in faculty incentives and rewards for teaching. What is needed is the most robust articulation, defense, and alignment of priorities and practices that express and realize higher education’s (and the educator’s) greater and core purposes—and the inextricable linkages among these purposes. If as institutions, or as educators, we attend to any one of our core purposes, we will be attending to the others. None are “not our job.” None are the work assigned to a campus silo. Realizing them, and crafting opportunities for their realization, are the responsibilities of being an educator—whether faculty or administrator, teacher, or staff.

I have often reflected on the admonitions to students from Tim Healy, the late president of Georgetown, that education is “soul-sized”—that if a college is any good, its purpose is to stretch you until you squawk, and if it doesn’t, transfer! Or from Martin Luther King Jr.’s mentor, Benjamin Mays, who was a graduate of Bates College and president of Morehouse College, that the purpose of higher education is not to liberate you (from ignorance and prejudice), but rather that it must cultivate an environment for self-liberation—ensuring a context in which one can choose to be free. Both, for me, have provided keys to understanding purpose: the power of education and its promise to students to welcome, embrace, and support them, while also challenging them to risk doubt and celebrating their discovery—to the end not of self-satisfaction or entitlement, but to serve a general, just, and public good.

Based on my years of serving as learner and educator, and with insight and support from BTtoP cofounder Sally Engelhard Pingree and our community of colleagues, we assert that the following four central, greater, and intertwined purposes should be at the heart of any higher educational experience:

1. **Learning and evidence-based discovery.** Engaging students in acts of thinking critically, assessing alternatives, applying judgment, taking risks, becoming self-aware, and being conscious of the levels of understanding that can be gained—and the joys of gratification gained—in any truly open inquiry.

1. **Commitment to civic purpose as part of higher education’s democratic promise.** Helping students understand why respect, compassion, and engagement with difference, and the public nature of inquiry, are democratic values inherent in learn-
ing and central to the shared rights, privileges, and civic responsibilities of education.

3. Well-being, both in a sense of feelings and of Aristotle’s concept of a “life well-lived,” for students of all intersectional backgrounds.

Providing opportunities and context that anticipate, cultivate, and expect individual liberation—including expressions of identity, self-realization, and aspirations (both achieved and failed), as well as the development of an integrated whole person capable of agency and flourishing.

4. Meaningful lives in the real and changing world.

Preparing participants in higher education for making purposeful choices, including preparing them for shifting notions of what “work” can mean. The future of work is not clear; even in the short term, jobs now are not likely to be the jobs of tomorrow, so job preparation alone is not sufficient. Instead, students must be taught how to take warranted risks, how to prepare for rapid change, and how to think both locally and globally. These are not “soft or hard skills”—they are the consequences of linking learning, well-being, and an ethic of the civic good beyond self-interest.

The integration and mutual dependency of these core purposes require understanding them as connected—that a campus pursuing opportunities for more engaged learning connects students to the realities and practices affecting civic life and leads to their self-discovery as participants. The connections among these purposes are both theoretically based and carried out in practice, and they do not call for educators to “do more” but to realize that educating and learning means “being more.” That is education’s promise.

The public, I believe, has not dismissed the promise of higher education. Rather, we in the academy have not done well in articulating and championing its core purposes, and many of us have been complicit. The voices of our campuses, and our voices as individual educators, must insist on remaining apart from conventionality while remaining a part of the greater community. It is essential that we retain this contrarian voice as well as the role of being a local champion—our campuses must be understood as both places “away from” and places inextricably connected to ideas, people, forces, communities, and influences beyond our walls. And our individual voices as educators must be distinct, separate, informed, clear, and also intent on blending in a chorus.

We in higher education learned this lesson when we marched in Washington, DC, with Dr. King in 1963 for civil rights, with anti-war protests in the 1960s and ’70s, and with the student protests urging campuses to divest in apartheid in the 1980s. We learned new lessons from the Women’s March in 2017 and from Black Lives Matter this year. And, most recently, we learned from the marches organized by students protesting gun violence. We understand the moral imperative of education to connect values to action, theory to practice.

We in higher education can, and should, influence expectations in multiple ways—those of our selves; those of our students, their families, and their sponsors; those in the academy; and those beyond it who will support the fullness and interconnectedness of education’s purposes. Altering expectations is the most effective and lasting way to realize transformational changes to priorities and practices in our work and in our institutions.

BTtoP’s resources and leadership are directed toward altering expectations—those of ourselves and those of the hundreds of institutions and thousands of individual learners and educators attendant to BTtoP’s mission and accomplishments. It is in that light that I am delighted to welcome David Scobey as BTtoP’s next director. It is with great pride that we anticipate his voice and vision in leading BTtoP in the coming years.

With gratitude and in anticipation of our collective and continuing effort to achieve the full promise of higher education,

Donald W. Harward
Guest Perspective

**Building Equitable Pathways to Student Global Consciousness**

*By Heather Halstead, Executive Director, Reach the World*

“Painfully enough, traveling still seems to be a privilege for the few—but two messages from Reach the World (RTW)’s mission have the power to change that: First, we can leverage technology to give people access to lessons from traveling, without the need for them to physically relocate; and second, travel is not quite as inaccessible as people think—especially through initiatives such as scholarships.”

This powerful statement was written by a twenty-year-old Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholar who volunteered to connect her study abroad journey to a K–12 classroom through Reach the World’s virtual exchange program. The US Department of State’s Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship is a grant program that enables students of limited financial means to study or intern abroad. However, these grants are limited—and her remarks are true: travel is sadly the provenance of the few, instead of the many.

This lack of access to global knowledge, skills, and networks is a serious barrier to self-determination for less advantaged youth. How can institutions of higher education confront this critical global gap?

This student’s statement can actually be understood as a “Eureka!” message for higher education institutions. Higher education can easily provide so many more students with authentic opportunities to engage beyond the local. How? Through virtual exchange.

Virtual exchanges—sustained, technology-enabled, people-to-people education programs—can vastly expand the number and diversity of young people who have access to profound cross-cultural experiences as part of their education.”

Virtual exchanges can be complex, but they need not be; they can be as simple as an exchange of stories. Human storytelling has been the glue that has bound us together since the dawn of time. Present-day communication technologies have radically changed how humans communicate with each other—and in some ways, have weakened our communities by diminishing human-to-human storytelling. Virtual exchanges confront these more negative impacts of technology, connecting us to each other via the

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oldest human tradition.

When higher education students participate in virtual exchanges, three main outcomes occur. The first is that students are exposed to and interact with a culture that may be “other,” allowing them to engage in deeper and more consistent reflection and synthesis. As one RTW Gilman Scholar remarked, “Through RTW, I was asking locals questions about the country’s history and culture, information that I would want to know either way, but might not have asked if not prompted by virtual exchange.”

The second outcome is that students gain a sense of autonomy, agency, and global identity, along with a profound feeling of being of service. As one RTW Gilman Scholar explained, “In the beginning, I didn’t always think that this type of adventure was possible for me. When I was younger, I was in foster care, and I even spent several months in a shelter when I didn’t have a home. I believe the experience of travel not only opens the mind and heart, but also opportunity. Youth deserve to know that their options are so much broader than they can imagine and that there is a big, beautiful, and diverse world beyond their city limits. I think I can help deliver that message by sharing my journey.”

The third outcome is that students develop new pre-professional skills and ideas about their future pathways as well as a sense of purpose and life meaning. As another RTW Gilman Scholar shared, “I completed my Reach the World journey with a group of sixth graders in Brooklyn around December of 2017. I absolutely loved the experience, and after returning home from India I decided to apply for a tutoring job through AmeriCorps.”

Reach the World’s virtual exchange mechanism adds value to any study- or intern-abroad program, benefiting K–12 youth and higher education travelers in equal measure—with particularly salient learning and well-being benefits for underserved students, who otherwise face systemic barriers to this type of high-impact practice. Indeed, higher education institutions are sitting atop a virtual treasure trove of potential. By engaging their students in virtual exchange, higher education institutions can bring benefits to the lives of individual students while also combating the global gap that limits underrepresented individuals and many communities as a whole. To learn more about Reach the World, visit: http://about.reachtheworld.org/.

Equitable Pathways
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photo courtesy of Reach the World
In Brief: BTtoP News and Notes

NEWS

BTtoP Sponsored Retreats: Preparing Professors for New-Majority Students in Higher Education

Led by BTtoP consultant Barry Checkoway and our colleague Chad Berry, academic vice president and dean of the faculty at Berea College, BTtoP is pleased to highlight a series of scholar retreats, “Preparing Professors for New-Majority Students in Higher Education.” With the support of a BTtoP grant and matched by funding from Berea College and the University of Michigan, twenty participants including faculty, independent scholars, and administrators joined students at an initial gathering at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky, from November 10 to 12, 2017. At this gathering, participants reimagined a higher education wherein immersive programs, pedagogies, and inclusive campus cultures would support the flourishing of all students. A second gathering was held at the University of Michigan–Ann Arbor from April 13 to 15 with a goal of building materials, such as a collection of narratives, that could be shared with administrators and faculty nationwide in order to deepen and broaden knowledge about and commitment to new majority student well-being. These materials include creating a new-majority student clearinghouse of information for having conversations and fostering positive change in higher education settings.

BTtoP Well-Being Grantee Research Collaborative

On June 1, Ashley Finley, BTtoP national evaluator, and L. Lee Knefelkamp, BTtoP senior scholar, led a day-long “Well-Being Research Collaborative” seminar convening researchers and project leaders from BTtoP’s 2015–17 Well-Being Research Grantees. With representatives from over fifteen diverse campuses across the country, attendees discussed the connection between interventional educational practices that facilitate social and emotional learning and the related effects on assessable well-being and success outcomes, particularly for students who have been traditionally underserved within higher education. The goal of the collaborative is to examine effective campus-based models in relationship to empirical findings to identify the most transferable and scalable models for linking well-being with underserved student success and campus commitments to equity.

TRAVELS

BTtoP Director and Project Manager Attend Retreat on Promoting Thriving in Colleges and Universities

From March 18 to 19, Don Harward, BTtoP director, and Caitlin Salins, BTtoP project manager, attended a retreat in New York City organized by the Milken Institute’s Center for Strategic Philanthropy and funded by the Citrone Family 33 Foundation. Titled “Promoting Thriving in Colleges and Universities,” the all-day seminar examined philanthropy’s role in promoting aspects of well-being, with particular focus on thriving in US higher education, and it included perspectives and presentations from researchers, academic leadership, philanthropists, practitioners, business leaders, and designers. Harward presented on the differences between eudaimonic and hedonic well-being and the importance of understanding these contrasts in relation to student thriving.

BTtoP Director Don Harward Represents Bates College at Maine Campus Compact Awards

As president emeritus of Bates College, BTtoP director Don Harward traveled to Bates’s campus on April 25 to represent the institution at the annual Maine Campus Compact Awards ceremony. The ceremony recognizes exceptional work in public service and civic engagement by Maine faculty members, campus organizations, students, and local community and corporate partners.

BTtoP Project Associate Represents BTtoP at AAC&U’s General Education and Assessment Conference

From February 15 to 17, 2018, Mercedes Yanora, BTtoP project associate, attended the Association of American Colleges and Universities Network for Academic Renewal Conference (continued on page 14)
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Ashley Finley, BTtoP’s National Evaluator, Leads Workshop on Student Well-Being

As part of a series of inclusive pedagogy workshops organized by the University of Colorado Boulder’s Office of Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement, Ashley Finley, BTtoP’s national evaluator, offered three presentations asserting student well-being as an essential part of high-impact practices and inclusive excellence. The workshop included linking aspects of the Ryff Model of Well-Being—including self-acceptance, personal growth, positive relationships, autonomy, purpose in life, and environmental mastery—to essential learning outcomes such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and intercultural competence. To learn more and view the PowerPoint slides from Finley’s presentation, visit: https://www.btttop.org/resources/research-and-presentations.

What We’re Reading

Transforming the Academy: Faculty Perspectives on Diversity and Pedagogy
Edited by Sarah Willie-LeBreton

“In recent decades, American universities have begun to tout the ‘diversity’ of their faculty and student bodies. But what kinds of diversity are being championed in their admissions and hiring practices, and what kinds are being neglected? Is diversity enough to solve the structural inequalities that plague our universities? And how might we articulate the value of diversity in the first place? Transforming the Academy begins to answer these questions by bringing together a mix of faculty—male and female, cisgender and queer, immigrant and native-born, tenured and contingent, white, black, multiracial, and other—from public and private universities across the United States. Whether describing contentious power dynamics within their classrooms or recounting protests that occurred on their campuses, the book’s contributors offer bracingly honest inside accounts of both the conflicts and the learning experiences that can emerge from being a representative of diversity.” https://www.rutgersuniversitypress.org/transforming-the-academy/9780813565657

What Would Socrates Do? Self-Examination, Civic Engagement, and the Politics of Philosophy

By Joel Alden Schlosser

“Socrates continues to be an extremely influential force to this day; his work is featured prominently in the work of contemporary thinkers ranging from Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss, to Michel Foucault and Jacques Rancière. Intervening in this discussion, What Would Socrates Do? reconstructs Socrates’ philosophy in ancient Athens to show its promise of empowering citizens and non-citizens alike. By drawing them into collective practices of dialogue and reflection, philosophy can help people to become thinking, acting beings more capable of fully realizing the promises of political life.” http://www.cambridge.org/us/academic/subjects/politics-international-relations/political-theory/what-would-socrates-do-self-examination-civic-engagement-and-politics-philosophy?format=HB&isbn=9781107067424#jzxHjVtomAOI97kC_97

Transformative Civic Engagement through Community Organizing

By Maria Avila

“Maria Avila presents a personal account of how, from her experience as a teenager working in a factory in Ciudad Juarez, she got involved in community organizing and how she

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has since applied its distinctive practices to civic engagement in higher education. Her premise is that community organizing can help create a culture that values and rewards civically engaged scholarship and thus advance higher education’s public, democratic mission. Adapting what she learned during her years as an organizer with the Industrial Areas Foundation, she describes a practice that aims for full reciprocity between partners and is achieved through the careful nurturing of relationships, a mutual understanding of personal narratives, leadership building, power analysis, and critical reflection.”


The Evil of Banality: On the Life and Death Importance of Thinking
By Elizabeth Minnich

“How is it possible to murder a million people one by one? Hatred, fear, madness of one or many people cannot explain it. . . . In The Evil of Banality, Elizabeth Minnich argues for a tragic yet hopeful explanation. ‘Extensive evil,’ her term for systematic horrific harm-doing, is actually carried out, not by psychopaths, but by people like your quiet next door neighbor, your ambitious colleagues. . . . In periods of extensive evil, people little different from you and me do its work for no more than a better job, a raise, the house of the family ‘disappeared’ last week. So how can there be hope? The seeds of such evils are right there in our ordinary lives. They are neither mysterious nor demonic. If we avoid romanticizing and so protecting ourselves from responsibility for the worst and the best of which humans are capable, we can prepare to say no to extensive evil—to act accurately, together, and above all in time, before great harm-doing has become the daily work of ‘normal’ people.”


Teaching and Learning Together in Higher Education
Edited by Alison Cook-Sather

“Teaching and Learning Together in Higher Education (TLTHE) serves as a forum for the reflective work of college faculty and students working together to explore and enact effective classroom practice. Published three times per year, the journal is premised on the centrality to successful pedagogy of dialogue and collaboration among faculty and students in explorations and revisions of approaches to teaching and learning in higher education. The journal has several aims:

• To include student perspectives and voices in analyses, affirmations, and revisions of educational practice at the post-secondary level
• To offer windows onto the development of pedagogical insights that faculty and students gain when they collaborate on explorations of classroom practice and systematically reflect on that collaboration
• To create forums for dialogue between faculty and students whose work is featured in this journal and others engaged in similar work
• To explore in particular the challenges and possibilities of such collaborations”

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