

## MISSION

[Bringing Theory to Practice](#) (BTtoP)'s mission is to encourage and support colleges and universities in developing sustainable campus cultures that support the *greater purposes of higher education*: engaged learning and discovery, civic purpose, well-being, and preparation for a meaningful life. BTtoP is the only national independent initiative focused on attending to the connections and explorations of each of these integral pieces of the mission of higher education together.



## HISTORY & STRUCTURE

BTtoP is an independent Project established in 2003 in partnership with the [Association of American Colleges and Universities](#) (AAC&U). The project makes an annual financial commitment to AAC&U, and is housed within their structure both in physical location and for purposes of human resources and finance; this allows BTtoP to function as an agile and independent project, while gaining the internal capacity-building and external communications and outreach advantages of a larger, nationally-recognized, membership-based higher education organization. BTtoP's and AAC&U's missions and strategic objectives are independent but mutually beneficial and reinforcing, symbiotic in sharing interests and possible collaborations.

## LEADERSHIP & TEAM

The Project was co-founded by Sally Engelhard Pingree, (President of the S. Engelhard Center), and Donald W. Harward (President Emeritus, Bates College, and Senior Scholar, AAC&U); Harward has served as its only Director. In October 2017, announcement was made that Harward would be retiring as of July 2018 and a [search for a new director](#) was open for nominations and applications.

In addition, the project has benefitted from a close group of involved colleague consultants and a small staff, together informally referred to as the [BTtoP team](#). Members have evolved over the Project's history; the current team is comprised of:

- Barry Checkoway, BTtoP Senior Consultant, and Professor at the University of Michigan.
- Jill Reich, BTtoP Project Scholar, and Professor at Bates College.
- Ashley Finley, BTtoP National Evaluator, and Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the Dominican Experience at Dominican University of California.
- Lee Knefelkamp, BTtoP Senior Scholar, and Senior Scholar with AAC&U.
- Caryn McTighe Musil, BTtoP Senior Scholar, and Senior Scholar and Director of Civic Learning and Democracy with AAC&U.
- Jennifer O'Brien, BTtoP Consultant, and Director of Development with the Middle East Children's Institute.
- Caitlin Salins, BTtoP Project Manager.
- Mercedes Yanora, BTtoP Project Associate.

An official BTtoP Advisory Board will be established in spring 2017, to begin tenure with a new Director in July 2018.

## FUNDING & RESOURCES

BTtoP's programmatic and administrative costs are supported through grants. Early in BTtoP's history, funding was made primarily through the Engelhard Foundation, supplemented by multiple grants from additional foundations, including the Endeavor Foundation, Teagle Foundation, Spencer Foundation, Greve Foundation, and the Lumina Foundation. As BTtoP approaches a transition in leadership, the Endeavor Foundation has emerged as its primary supportive resource base through 2020. Securing grant funding and/or developing a supplemental business model for beyond 2020 will be the priority of a new Director and Advisory Board.

## PROGRAMS

In support of the mission to advance higher education’s greater purposes, BTtoP’s programmatic activities fall under three categories:

### ➤ Engagement

BTtoP engages with the higher education community primarily through campus grant opportunities and events. To date, BTtoP has offered [seven categories of grants](#), and funded over 500 projects at over 300 unique institutions, ranging in award size from \$250,000 to \$1,000. Combined with institutional matching, the funding awarded to grant projects totals approximately \$10 million. BTtoP has also held regular gatherings; early years of the project saw participation in conferences; following years saw the development of seminars held for faculty or students, as well as grantee retrieval symposia. This has developed into participation in major invited conferences, including the regular presentation of at least four sessions at [AAC&U’s Annual Meeting](#), and culminated in 2017 in BTtoP’s largest and most complex [national conference](#) to date. In the future, BTtoP will continue to offer invited workshops, and focused conferences (as well as exploring the potential for a BTtoP Summer Institute), as it actively investigates virtual forms of direct engagement – including webinars.



### ➤ Advocacy

BTtoP promotes its mission through collaborations and communications. Though AAC&U acts as BTtoP’s primary collaborative partner, BTtoP has participated with several other nationally recognized higher education organizations, engaging in mutually beneficial advocacy, including Campus Compact, Imagining America, the Council of Independent Colleges, NASPA, and Project Pericles, among others. BTtoP’s regular communication outreach includes social media ([Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#)), webinars, and a triannual [BTtoP Newsletter](#), as well as more targeted campaigns and e-blasts. On behalf of the project, the Director and/or National Evaluator frequently offer invited presentations at regional and national professional gatherings.



### ➤ Reflection

In order to consistently respond to the pressing issues in higher education, grow as a project, and assess program efficacy, BTtoP reflects on lessons gained from engagement and advocacy activities. Reflection is expressed through research and publications. To date, BTtoP has released several [peer-reviewed and published research articles](#), as well as [three major publications](#): *Transforming Undergraduate Education* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2011); *The Civic Series*, a five-volume set of monographs (2012 – 2014); and *Well-Being and Higher Education: A Strategy for Change and the Realization of Education’s Greater Purposes* (2016).

## COMMUNITY

Through AAC&U’s membership-based network, BTtoP has access via e-blast to a group of over 55,000 individuals across the United States and overseas, primarily campus practitioners, but also including contacts at nonprofits, businesses, and government organizations. Among those ~55K, BTtoP has also curated a more immediately involved community of approximately 2,000 colleagues – those who have attended BTtoP events, purchased BTtoP publications, received a BTtoP grant, act as organizational partners, receive the BTtoP Newsletter, etc. Each year, an invitation to BTtoP’s Annual Reception is extended to this active community.

