

Well-Being and Higher Education

Edited by Donald W. Harward

Bringing Theory to Practice

Washington D.C.

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INTRODUCTION

Well-being Essays and Provocations: Significance and Implications for Higher Education

Donald W. Harward

Welcome to this collection of essays.

You have most likely encountered in recent print and in discourse numerous mentions of well-being, perhaps including some similar to the following quotes and contexts:

- “. . . we are studying the well-being of people around the world. Our research reinforces the fact that the ultimate outcome of an education is fundamentally about well-being.”¹
- “Gauging people’s well-being is one of the central political issues of our time. It is time we admitted that there is more to life than money and it’s time we focused not just on GDP but on GWB—general well-being.”²
- A philosophical or historical tracing might reveal that the notion of well-being is not peripheral—rather it has been and continues to be a nuanced concept at the very core of Platonism, Aristotelianism, the work of Cicero, the explorations of its relation to pleasure in Stoicism, Bentham, the Utilitarian tradition and J.S. Mill, the heart of the Enlightenment and Humanism, the work of Dewey, contemporary pragmatism, and such recent moral and political Theorists as Nozick and Rawls.³
- Improving higher education means focusing on the quality of a student’s relationships . . . [I]f the ultimate purpose is the individual wholeness, flourishing, sense of direction and agency [well-being], then the various practical applications of liberal learning are—or should be—woven together in the person of the student.⁴

In contrast to the frequency of multiple references to well-being, however, there has been only modest consideration given to its connection to higher education—what that connection means, what it suggests, and why it is important. This collection of essays offers to explicate and convince why attending to well-being and understanding its complexity is to realize a fundamental dimension of the purpose of higher education—a dimension so connected to learning and its associated outcomes as to be rooted in a shared analysis of their meaning.

Well-being and higher education are connected, and those connections matter. They matter for the individual lives of the student and those who teach; they matter for the institution; they matter for the promise of a democratic civic society; and they matter for whether or not the unique and full promise of higher education—its greater purposes—can be advanced and realized. Analyses of the meanings of well-being, their multiple expressions or manifestations that affect learning, and what institutions must do to facilitate greater connections among them point to the direction of changes that will make possible the recognition and the realization of well-being as a dimension of the greater purpose of higher education and to the wholeness of those participating.

That there has been scant attention given to an adequate theoretical foundation that connects learning and well-being has meant that well-being has often been dismissed as “not what we are about” within the college or university or has been set aside to the periphery—theoretically disconnected and thereby structurally disconnected to the core purposes of higher education. The essays in this volume offer redress, provide a theoretical basis with which to explore the essential connections of learning and well-being, and point to the evidence that confirms those connections.⁵

Initiating a more theoretical framework begins by finding reference to well-being nearly ubiquitous in those writings in which the authors consider the ultimate questions of a purpose for “the good life.” Whether it is found in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, or *the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*—whether it is found in the Declaration of Independence, the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, or the parent extolling the core hope for her child—it is the pursuit, hopefully the gaining, of happiness and well-being found across time and across cultures that is the objective of the life well-lived. It is not wealth, or power, or superior gain in competition, but happiness—well-being!

DEFINING WELL-BEING

If it is to be more than a frequent and easy figure of speech, what does well-being mean? Happiness, well-being, can be framed conceptually as a complex construct but one that is analyzable. It can be parsed, and a nuanced understanding of its complexity can be presented. Framing the examination of well-being as conceptual is important. Its full analysis reflects a necessary conceptual connection to learning, to the knowledge and discovery purposes of the college or university—regardless of the scope of the course or tutorial, regardless of whether the context is academic or student affairs, regardless of where it is expressed in the curriculum, in pedagogy, or in the institution’s structure or priorities.

Like the construct *the weather* (which allows reference to multiple meanings—rain or shine, storm or calm), there is no specific, single designation or referent for *well-being*. Rather, there is a weave of meaning, a braid-like connection of uses with no one thread running throughout. Each thread (among them, for example, purposefulness, identity, flourishing, mindfulness, a sense of belonging, grit and persistence, which themselves are often complex and without a single common referent) in such a weave emphasizes dimensions of meaning—uses that fits a context—and provides an opportunity for analysis and understanding. The braid of well-being intersects with that of health, for health too is a complex construct.⁶

The braid of uses of the languages of health, physical or mental, is most often positive, not diagnostic. Health is not the absence of something, such as pain or suffering. *Health* and *illness* are not oppositional terms of a common category. *Illness* is the language of diagnosis, limitation, even foreboding. *Health* is characterized by flourishing, by wellness—beyond feelings or emotive states of pleasure—to being well, being aware of identity, of one’s commitment to the integrity of others, to persisting, and to being resilient. Being well can characterize a person or a community, an economy (supplementing GNP), or social and political vitality, and it can be used as the criterion for determining public policy objectives (see the J. Bronsteen’s essay).

Recognizing well-being as a construct—not as a concept with a single referent—is to understand that well-being has two major emphases or dimensions, each manifest in particular contexts or traditions of use. The *hedonic* tradition emphasizes well-being as *feelings*—non-cognitive expressions referring to an individual’s (or a community’s) special state,

experience, or condition—all of which can be discerned and measured. In the hedonic tradition, well-being or happiness is real in the only sense that anything is real—it is an item of empirical study (see the J. Pawelski and S. Dahill-Brown & E. Jayawickreme essays). The *eudaemonic* is an alternative tradition that contends that well-being may be understood not as a feeling, or a mental act, or even a state of mind, but as a relational activity (a long term practice) of being well—even being fully well, or more fully human, as in a *life well-lived* (see the C. Ryff, E. Minnich, W. Sullivan, and C. Keyes essays).

Both of the traditions of analysis of the strands of meaning of well-being have direct bearing on higher education—their relevance to the campus culture, and the power of that culture to provide transforming opportunities for those participating. Seeing well-being as inextricably connected to learning is to see that both dimensions or emphases of well-being are relevant—the hedonic because it captures occasions for the stimulation and receptivity of feelings that reinforce participation in learning opportunities and the eudaemonic because it is at the core of what learning means.

It is this second dimension that is often overlooked but is essential. It is this connection of well-being to learning that is found in their sharing of a fundamental analytic feature of being *relational* and not simply descriptive. Learning, or coming to know, is essentially a relational concept. An agent (learner) stands in relation to an object of inquiry (for example, a fact, or a state of affairs, or an experience). The relation is not a description of special acts or feelings; rather it is the *occasion of engagement*. This engagement may or may not subsequently involve acts (such as memory or judgment, contemplation, or the repetition of a pattern of acts and behaviors—e.g., acquiring a skill), but it is not itself an act. It is the complex relation of being engaged with. It is learner in relation to object, learner being engaged, learner as agent in the midst of multiple learning opportunities that is at the core of the analysis. What and whether such engagement results in subsequent memories or behaviors (Did she remember the sequence of English kings? Did he learn how to serve in tennis?) can be assessed, but the relationship is distinct from those effects.

Whether it is learning something or learning how to do something, the analysis of learning involves a relationship—that of engagement—and the outcomes of those occasions of engagement may be acts or behaviors. Standing in relation to an object (what is *other*, some object independent of learner) brings with it self-awareness as well as the responsibility to honor and preserve the integrity of other, be it fact, person, community, or nature.

These features are what separate our being learners from the rat in the maze or the machine's software. We are self-aware of our learning, and we can make the judgment to honor the integrity of (i.e., value or respect and want to sustain) what it is that serves as object and our relationship to it.

Well-being and learning, each a complex construction, are both in part relational concepts—the nexus of their connection is in engagement—learner to object, learner to respect for the integrity of other. And standing in relation to other requires self-awareness—recognition that *I am engaged; it is I, an agent, so engaged*—that can link learning to self-identity, to being purposeful and whole. Learning, whether in the classroom, the lab, or the community,

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is an opportunity to be engaged, and it is equally an opportunity to support the learner's well-being. They are inextricably connected.⁷

There are occasions in which it is clear that well-being, in its hedonic dimension, describes feelings, and in doing so does reinforce, even make possible, profound learning experiences and the willingness, the disposition, of the learner to participate or engage. The student who has her contribution to the class discussion honored may have an immediate feeling of belonging—"I do belong here"—that is indeed a most important well-being *feeling* directly connected to engaged learning. Such a feeling has duration, intensity, and can be compared to other feelings (see T. Seifert's essay). Understanding some dimensions of well-being as feelings or states—because as feelings they have demonstrable, often immediate, effects—helps to understand why some students persist and others do not. Receiving commendation is connected to a feeling of acceptance, even self-efficacy. Those feelings (see J. Pawelski's essay) of belonging are identified by empirical positive psychology as a key to *grit* or a willingness to progress. They are well documented in the scientific literature (see the S. Dahill-Brown & E. Jayawickreme essay) and have become a part of popular culture as captured in the metaphoric musical lyric *walk on* (persist, keep going) *with hope in your heart* (feel hopeful) *and you are on a path to happiness* (well-being).

To sum up, the argument is that learning and well-being are complex constructs connected by an analysis of what they mean—not peripheral or accidental but core and essential. We go deeper in understanding them by considering their relational dimensions. Those connections, how to draw and sustain them in multiple and frequent opportunities, and how to encourage agency and participation in those opportunities can define a campus culture that attends to whole persons.

MAKING THE CASE FOR ATTENDING TO WELL-BEING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Regardless of interpretations of the complexities of well-being or learning, critics may reply, "my well-being is my responsibility, not the college's" and "my learning is my responsibility, not the college's." If both are correct, what *is* the college's responsibility or role? What connects well-being and engaged forms of learning to higher educational institutions—their structure, their curricula, their practiced pedagogies? Where are they found? How is their importance promoted as essential, not accidental? What links individual, institutional, and community well-being?

If students choose to free themselves, emancipate themselves from ignorance, prejudice, or conventionality, the institution must create the context in which they can choose to learn, to engage, and to be well. The academy and the public at-large can champion the expectation that institutions make the changes needed to realize well-being as among their greater purposes, to understand the connections to the civic and to the preparation for meaningful life-choices (including but not limited to work), and to make explicit their direct connection to learning in any discipline, with any pedagogy. Clarifying purpose may be necessary, but it is not sufficient for making change. The hard part is hard! It requires re-directing resources and re-aligning priorities. But while hard, it is not mysterious. Attention to well-being and its multiple connections to learning and being fully whole can begin the campus conversations needed to initiate collective interest in change. And it is now—in this period of challenge regarding what the future of higher education must be—that it is timely to do so.

Attending to well-being is not a therapy for those who are ill. Attending to well-being is to realize a fundamental dimension of the purpose of higher education! And it is the unique responsibility of higher education to provide the multiple opportunities for the manifestation of greater purpose. Beyond schooling and acculturation, *higher* education is the context that most clearly reveals the interdependency of learning and the civic, the paths for realization of self and its dependency on other, as well as skills and values connected to work and service, leadership and meaningful life choices. It is the unique role, responsibility, of higher education—not the family, church, social club, or training—to serve that function.

Attending to well-being is to realize a fundamental dimension of the purpose of higher education!

Attending to the multiple strands of meaning of well-being for all students, privileged or underserved, regardless of how the opportunities are crafted in institutions of varying type, has documentable results. It directly connects to student persistence, the development of clearer senses of purpose for all constituencies, as well as emphases on feeling valued, and succeeding. Honoring the well-being of all of our students can be a core motivation to provide access to higher education (see the L. Schreiner essay). What facilitates well-being at De Anza Community College (see B. Murphy's essay) and generates for most of its first generation students a developing sense of agency and civic awareness may not be what facilitates the sense of purposefulness and resilience gained at a different institution which requires a senior thesis or expects that students participate in international study, but each is honoring and facilitating the well-being of its students.

THE OVERARCHING CHALLENGE OF PURPOSE

Many contend that higher education's purpose is essentially utilitarian—that if the purpose of higher education means anything at all in the 21st century, it means that institutions must emphasize forms of learning that can be efficiently expressed with uses of technology and information transfer modalities. Higher education must provide the information, skills, and credentials needed for success in the work place. In this view, disruptive forces (technological, social, economic, and demographic) will insist that higher education provide a *fix* for this societal need, or higher education as we know it should disappear.⁸

Others claim that the distressing evidence of the devolving weaknesses of higher education is to be found in its retreat from its unique purpose in an open society to be counter-normative—to be critical, if not contrarian, of convention. They contend that higher education has become mute on real social problems and is now the handmaiden of a corporate culture—considering students as customers, faculty as labor (service providers), and in which ultimately, individual gain is prized over any public good.⁹

Each of these firmly held contentions regarding purpose is partially on target—but only partially. A full response to the overarching challenge of “What ought the purpose of higher education be in the 21st century?” could be: a renaissance of attention to the whole—the full and greater purposes of higher education, the inextricable connections among them, and the identification of their sources in the opportunities and culture of engagement unique to and inherent in higher education. The outcomes of each core purpose are linked to learning; to civic development; to preparation for meaningful life choices and values, including work; and to self-realization, identity, purposefulness, and

well-being (see Figure 1). Determining learning outcomes involves consideration of well-being and civic outcomes; they are linked in meaning and in practice.

Amidst the clamor is the need to recognize well-being as an inextricable, but not sole, dimension of higher education's greater purpose. We know that on any campus, a strategy of attending to well-being by participation in engaged forms of learning could be emphasized, opportunities made available, and expectations met (see the H. Elmendorf, J. Riley, and N. Lucas & P. Rogers essays; J. Wilson addresses a special institutional mission). The individual learner could be valued as a whole person. If the campus exhibits clear commitments to what is beyond it—to some notion of public good or social justice—then evidence confirms that a measurably greater expression of participants' learning, their civic development, and their preparation for making meaningful life choices, including purposeful work, can be realized.¹⁰

Colleges and universities can (and many do) take advantage of hard-earned achievements in curricula development, in deep-learning pedagogies, and in strengthening the complexity and diversity of their populations. As reflected in the hundreds of campuses that are recipients of small grants from Bringing Theory to Practice and that subsequently report the data of their initiatives and persisting work, if supported, faculty and staff want to

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broaden and deepen what it means to be engaged with persons and communities, ideas and discoveries, the crafted and the natural environment, in and out of classroom, directly and with the use of artifacts and technology. They want to provide multiple, intentional opportunities for engaged learning experiences and a campus culture that expects involvement, including opportunities for participants to realize a deeper understanding of the connection of learning to action. And if they are respected, valued for what they bring to the relationship, and encouraged and expected to engage, students will encounter their own individual identities and agencies, grasp their obligations beyond themselves to a greater good, take risks and have the resilience to try again, gain their own sense of purposefulness, and flourish (see T. Seifert's and C. Ryff's essays).

Students can be told that this is the purpose, that this is what the mission and vision of the institution promise them. But for how many is the promise empty? Perhaps for reasons that they did not choose to or were not expected to engage, higher education could seem to many learners empty and hollow save for the acquisition of the credential. One can assume that many students conclude: *If that's all it is, I'll get it for the cheapest cost or effort. I'll find the least burdensome route to the credential.*¹¹

Realizing and connecting purposes is not asking campuses to add on or to do more; it is asking them to *be* more. It is asking them to be intentional regarding a renaissance of full purpose—re-distributing resources, altering expectations, and realigning practices and priorities so that learning opportunities are maximized and engagement is expected and supported. A more meaningful understanding of costs would follow. Being respectful of the intensity of a need to lower costs does not require lowering quality. What is required is agreement to debunk the either-or mindset. A call to the renaissance of full purpose is

Figure 1.

THE GREATER PURPOSES OF HIGHER EDUCATION.



not an appeal to being irrelevant—it is a strategy for being more relevant.¹² The renewal or renaissance of purpose brings with it a radically different organizing metaphor—not one of sequestration (a retreat to the ivory tower in order to gain, i.e., receive knowledge), not a simple understanding of learning as information transfer, but a complex one of deep and guided critical inquiry, immersion in and off campus, sometimes *from* but more often *in* the world, that addresses connections as well as separations, knowing and discovering as relational concepts that link judgment to agency in behavior and future disposition.

Such a case and its promotion could begin to change conversations: those around the board table, those around campus seminar tables, those around the media editorial table, and those around the family kitchen table. Attitudes could be altered and expectations changed, then policies, practices, and priorities could be changed in light of those expectations. Real problems that affect the lives of students and communities could be

addressed as central rather than peripheral topics (see the J. Riley & H. Elmendorf essay). Value could be placed on creating environments of *safeness* in which engagement, critical thinking, and academic risk-taking could thrive (see J. Metzler's essay). Retention could be affected positively as levels of reported student satisfaction are boosted. Admissions could be enhanced by the reality of the institution's cultivation of a context that is supportive of individual attention and that clearly indicates that commitment is beyond individuals to the public good—to a bolder view of agency (that one must act to make a difference) that affects a more just social order, the sustainability of the planet, and the real existential issues of living together. Institutional relationships with their local communities could grow and flourish as intentional and defined partnerships. Faculty and campus administration could feel a greater sense of purpose and meaning in their work—that they truly affect the lives of their students, create contexts for the manifestation of well-being of the campus, and imbue culture with the expectation of engagement (see the T. Wolf & A. Rodas and the W. Sullivan essays).

Given its history and culture, the demographic conditions of its audience, and the specific emphases of its particular mission, a campus may require re-thinking about what facilitates well-being—what manifestations of well-being are most important for its participants. For example, resiliency to the challenges of balancing work and study or supporting identity formation for many who are first generation may be among the higher-order issues for a campus as it examines and adjusts to how opportunities for engagement remain paramount—contextualized but necessary (see the M. Phillips, D. Scobey, and J. Wilson essays). In her Provocation, Phillips warns of compartmentalized judgment and implicit dismissal of who the students are and the intellectual traditions they are part of and expect. Scobey explores the relevance of self-authorship, its connection to under-served students' self-efficacy, and how they build capacity to transform the circumstances that impede their learning and well-being. Wilson provides an example of how community well-being that is developed in a sustained campus culture directly affects individual well-being and how students at historically Black colleges and universities understand the purpose of their participation.

Current discussion of the Black Lives Matter movement and related emphases on social justice underscore an emerging sociological analysis of well-being. Such a view explores, in part, the effect of hegemonic social conditions on an individual's sense of self-worth, identity, and purposefulness. Enduring conditions of racism, poverty, and political and social oppression reinforce the barriers to actualization and being well.¹³

THE PATHWAYS TO CHANGE

Even if greater purposes and their realization in ascertainable outcomes are theoretically clear, what are the manifestations and expressions of well-being that connect to strategic changes? How do they become more widely appreciated, evidence-based, and thereby capable of directing expectations from broad audiences of those involved or those who will be involved? And if well-being is an implicit dimension of higher education, what explains the expressed tension when those on campus are being asked to consider attending to the well-being of its constituents?

These matters are complex; however, the route to credibility, the path to change, has all to do with convincing those now within the academy—with a theoretical and compelling

rationale that cuts across disciplines and is reinforced with established evidence of successes—that practices crafted on individual campuses by their engaged constituents are rewarded for being so engaged.

...higher education does more than give students the skills and capacities to be productive members of the workforce. It gives them the confidence, the self-esteem, and sense of purpose that will enable them to find meaning in their lives and careers. These outcomes can seem foreign to faculty until the idea of empowerment in the classroom, or the idea that students should take ownership of their learning is raised. We often disconnect the assessment of student learning from the very outcomes that could be the most predictive of student success: the confidence and perseverance to want to stay in school, to want to take on an internship, to stay the path of graduation. What if the connection of learning to student development in well-being wasn't just the purview of student affairs? What if how learning helps students feel about themselves and others is what matters most?"¹⁴

The essays in *Well-Being and Higher Education* collectively present an argument for change that gives priority to and support for those experiences that make learning and well-being connected objectives. The essays can be used at institutions of all types as the campuses shapes their own agendas and take positive, affordable, and purposeful steps on their own paths—their own arcs of change—connecting theory to practice and moving within their own histories and cultures to make and assess changes.¹⁵

Along those arcs of change, institutions, faculty, students, their families and communities will be examining what affects their thinking and steps of action. Some of those steps may result from addressing or debunking unsupported categorizations or assumptions (myths), some of which are found in prevailing narratives.

Myth 1: There is an irreducible and categorical distinction between the cognitive and the non-cognitive (thought and feelings) and the related sub-myth that the academic is wholly separated from the non-academic. Thus, faculty and academic affairs are structurally separated from student services and student affairs.

Myth 2: Learning takes place only or primarily in the class room, and engaged learning opportunities are constructed only, or primarily, by faculty,

Myth 3: Learning is deepened by developing only vertical content. Rather, the axes of learning are multiple. Vertical axes champion disciplines and authorities expressing, if not controlling, their boundaries. Horizontal axes champion relational interactions, interdependencies, and the inter-disciplinary. *Deepened learning* means exploring the conceptual landscape and discovering connections, rarely boundaries. It means that deepening by association and connection require collaboration—learning, finding, or seeing in relation to what others find or see.

Myth 4: Learning and action are independent. Rather, they are more often interdependent. Theory links to practice; knowing obliges learner to act. It is the ethical imperative of learning and part of why higher education connects the learner to acting in order to achieve a common good. For instance, it is why we, with Aristotle, Kant, John Dewey, Elizabeth Minnich, Derek Bok, and moral thinkers of many traditions argue that it reasonable to declare that to come to know the face of (e.g. desperate poverty) is to adopt the imperative

to act to address it. Directly or indirectly, many of the essays in this volume suggest the importance of demythologizing these assumptions, questioning their veracity, weighing their implications, and then promoting the reduction of their influence.

Well-Being and Higher Education does not assemble or prescribe best practices—to do so would generalize the unique character of each institution of higher education and undermine our argument that learning, well-being, civic engagement, and preparation for living meaningfully in the world are relational and contextual. The essays do, however, by dealing with *how, why, what, and for (and by) whom* (see the K. Kruger & S. Gordon essay) present and discuss pedagogy, practices, and curricular design that help make manifest opportunities for campus-wide attention to the meaning, manifestations, and facilitation of well-being that opens pathways to change. Consider D. Scobey's presentation of a large category of underserved students whose well-being is rarely considered; or L. Schreiner's detailed account of the manifestation of well-being in thriving; or A. Seligsohn's consideration of whether well-being can be sought in contexts of pernicious inequalities; or C. Keyes' answer to the question "Why well-being?"

Actual campus discussions and actions that attend to well-being could be initiated by asking questions most relevant to one's own campus and institutional history. Those questions and the campus responses could help begin the change in the conversation on campus that can result in real consideration of and the taking of steps of action—even transformation.

- Is student well-being an explicit, core purpose *at this institution*? Are well-being objectives linked to learning objectives?
- Was well-being inadvertently (or perhaps intentionally) de-emphasized as a core objective or aim of higher education at this institution? What specific strategies will make it (or return it to) an expected and achieved objective?
- What do we *at this institution* think that a deeper and broad understanding of well-being should include? And in what contexts can it be realized—in the classroom, in relationships, in the community, through local and international engagement?
- How can we *at this institution* understand well-being as integrative of multiple dimensions of being unique as well as whole, contextually influenced, with some elements developmental and others not?
- What evidence supports changes in *our* curricula, pedagogy, structural and practiced collaboration between academic and student affairs as co-educators, policies and rewards that would maximize opportunities and their use for well-being? What would initial projects or changes look like (e.g., in advising, curricular infusion, participatory and action-oriented research)? What would more advanced projects or changes look like? How would any project or change be assessed and how would the results be used and shared?
- In what specific ways would changing the predominant conversation *at our institution* regarding well-being as a core aim result in substantive change? How would implementing those changes be afforded, even if well-being were to be understood as a core objective?

Beyond grounding manifestations of well-being in the specificity of a particular campus climate, the discussion of what facilitates well-being will likely move to such questions as the following:

- Is this the right time to push this initiative given the concerns regarding the cost of higher education?

- Can we maintain conditions of choice of opportunities for students, if well-being is emphasized?
- Can we adequately and efficiently prepare students with the skills needed in a work force, if we broaden purposes and outcomes?

However important, if consideration is given *only* to questions of cost and structure, the institution is likely to overlook the examination and assessment of the evidence for well-being outcomes directly connected to learning and thereby miss how purposefulness does connect to *why*: the institution is invested in providing students with costly research or performance experiences; on what bases it justifies investing in radical alteration of its advising systems; what evidence it has that well-being is linked to learning, and is being achieved by maintaining or lowering the ratio of full-time students to full-time faculty, even when the pressure to cut is prevalent;” why it invests (structurally and financially) in students engaging diversity and confronting their own privilege; and why it is important to connect the civic value of a public good with the institution’s provision of skills need for meaningful choices such as work.

These are the some of the outcomes that make a difference to the education and to the lives of students. Intentional connection of learning and well-being outcomes results in campus consideration of how the most effective of the opportunities could be scaled and given priority. They would not be add-ons to what is already done or offered; they would result in the institution being more—providing a campus climate of engagement and opportunities to connect deeper learning and the well-being of all students.¹⁵

Planning change and planning *for* change are defining features of any organization. Changes can be stimulated by directional nudges, or they can be cataclysmic. They can be characterized as the result of bottom-up activities (a groundswell or grassroots effort) or the championing of a committed few. They can be the result of top-down declarations or adopted policies. Change is contextualized. For many within higher education, we have seen changes occur effectively when they draw their source from and connect to prevailing institutional values deeply rooted in its culture.

Historically, external factors have significantly affected institutional change. The passing of the Morrill Act, the GI Bill, the 1965 Higher Education Act, the Carnegie Commission Report, and many other very public declarations shaped purpose and supported change within and outside of higher education. And clearly, increases or decreases in Federal funding, aid policy, State support, and philanthropic support, have been relevant if not decisive to institutions making change. Not to be overlooked, however, are changes that are stimulated and supported internally—the pebble in the pond that results in waves of influence. They have an effect. Those effects often contribute to conversations that when reinforced lead to altered expectations—expectations of families for their children, expectations of what constitutes a career or a profession, expectations and aspirations of how the institution should be promoted and evaluated.¹⁶

The essays that follow contribute to altering prevailing conversations. They include examination of a model for understanding change in the enterprise of higher education by comparison to the dynamic of change in the enterprise of health care (see E. Lister essay). Others present the use of the curriculum and technological innovation to alter conversations and expectations among faculty (see P. Leyden’s look into the future and the C. Schneider essay). Some voices of those leading the discussion of the role of technology in creating

change (one of the disruptive forces common now in why higher education must change) present a view that sees disaggregation as a paradigm for learning that is in a struggle for prioritization with an integrative paradigm for learning. Who is lined up on either side of such a tension of paradigms, and is there a prospect of resolution (see the R. Bass essay)?

Change in higher education may be seen and understood not simply as adjusting to disruptive forces, but also as a result of using a strategy of collective conversations to champion a renaissance of its greater purposes, the power and appeal of those greater purposes, and the necessity to attend to their actualization.

BEING “MORE”: FINAL WORDS REGARDING COMMUNITY AND INSTITUTIONAL WELL-BEING

Institutional or campus well-being can mean seeing the community also as a construct—not some *thing* of physical description, not something static, but an organic and developing whole that exhibits dimensions of its relational character, including how the actions of its members connect to its purposes and values. *Institutional well-being* can also be understood as an expression of its engagement—the internal opportunities it provides to its participants and the patterns of its engagement to the external community.

An institution’s commitment to well-being is exhibited by having connections with multiple communities be present and involved in the accounting of real and difficult matters—locally, nationally, and well beyond. The well-being institution serves to encourage students and faculty to welcome being challenged, to persist in addressing those challenges, and most importantly, to be open to receiving something as opposed to thinking they are offering something—replacing privilege with the humility of valuing and respecting diversity and difference.

There are multiple manifestations of the well-being of the institution, and they could be documented well beyond the dashboard of conventional comparative characteristics with peer and aspiration institutions. They should include indicators of where and when the institution offers opportunities for deep learning and engagement, where and when students are expected to risk taking challenges and considering contrarian ideas, and how offices and services function collaboratively. A *prima facie* obligation of the well-being institution is to craft challenging, frequent, and persistent opportunities for learners to be in relation to facts, evidence, risks, doubts, others, difference, the community, alternatives, the conventional and the contrarian, and the expanding boundaries of what counts as real. To cultivate the learner’s expectations to be so engaged and to value that engagement are central to the institution’s mission—its purposes.

An institution attending to the fullness of its purposes, including well-being, can be a place connected and a place apart. It can understand and value its connections to community, connections that are reciprocal and beneficial to both, and it can have the capacity and courage when needed to be apart from what is accepted as conventional to, indeed, critique it—the courage to support engaged contrarians.

The biochemist who sees the importance of using class or lab time to engage students in understanding what is at stake in why certain research is supported or sponsored and others is not is civically engaged. The mathematics faculty member determining how to mathematically express the pace of drug absorption by liver tissue explicitly connects learning and well-being as much as the community member or college counselor who

guides a student to persist through a failure. These examples are often thought to be on the periphery—not to be at the core of the purpose of higher education—nice but not essential. The argument of this volume of essays, however, offers an understanding of the viable and important strategies of engagement in learning, research, teaching, advising, acting, and serving that are at the core, that serve the full purposes of higher education, that place the institution in the lives of its students and in the life of the community. Such deep and guided critical inquiry, immersion in and off campus, sometimes *from* but more often *in* the world, addresses connections as well as separations, knowing and discovering, links judgment to agency in behavior and in the future disposition of its constituents.

The well-being institution can be a context in which students, faculty, and the community flourish—they are *parts of* something greater, but they retain their identities as members of a partnership capable and critical, supportive and contrarian. The external community understands the intent and promise of being a partner in a meaningful collaboration—to create, sustain, and evaluate opportunities and experiences of full engagement—independent, not tokenized, not an object of good will for volunteers, not the recipient of *noblesse oblige* but a partner engaging purposefully with another. The community is a partner and has its own integrity, identity, and value; engagement is the vehicle of connection for institution and community to be well.

The well-being institution can be a context in which students, faculty, and the community flourish—they are parts of something greater, but they retain their identities as members of a partnership capable and critical, supportive and contrarian

Granted, the work is hard—how to provide multiple opportunities for relational engagement from first to final years? How to make these opportunities available for distinguishable sets of students—part-time, first generation, or international? How can technology enhance relational engagement and sense of personal agency and identity? How to ensure that students expect to connect campus experiences to off-campus forms of engagement? How to offer opportunities for signature work that reveals greater understanding and possible action? How to insist on honoring the integrity of partners in the community?

But the dominant challenge will be to develop the means to provide the *more* in the promise of higher education—to establish why this effort is valuable in deeper and more lasting ways. And how, as educators and as a community, do we guide students to realize such promise in their own lives and future communities? A university can beat the drum of why and how it can in its policies, and in its practices be *more*—not less. *More* that is not the result of addition but the result of realigning, relying upon the relational features of higher education's full purposes, championing how higher learning is inextricably connected to the civic, to well-being and the forming of greater purposefulness and self-identity, to exploring the larger world and what it will take to live meaningfully in that world.

To be *more* gives priority to justly distributed opportunities and expectations for real engagement across/among the strands in the weave of a network of purposes—engagement that is more than just available—engagement that is guided and supported in the multiple expressions of those connections, opportunities for engagement that are promised and delivered.

NOTES

1. Brandon Busteded, "Is College Worth It?" *Gallup Business Journal*, August 27, 2013, <http://www.gallup.com/businessjournal/164108/college-worth.aspx>.
2. Allegra Stratton, "David Cameron Aims to Make Happiness the New GDP," November 14, 2010, <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2010/nov/14/david-cameron-wellbeing-inquiry>.
3. Sissela Bok, *Exploring Happiness* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011).
4. Daniel F. Chambliss and Christopher G. Takacs, *How College Works* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).
5. Framing well-being as only a descriptive, even developmental, construct would require assent to the theoretical bases and evidence for developmental hypotheses about maturation as well as learning. These bases appear less widely shared and are less likely to affect the thinking, scholarship, or teaching of most discipline-based faculty. Whereas a conceptual construct and arguments for it that rest on epistemic bases do so. Presenting core meanings of well-being and of learning as sharing an analysis of being relational concepts and not simply descriptive ones opens the conversations across disciplines and divisions.
6. The connections of individual physical health to learning and to higher education objectives can only be mentioned here. See C. Ryff's essay, however, in which she examines why a biological risk factor known as interleukin 6 is implicated in the etiology of various physical health outcomes that are correlated with education levels and inversely correlated with reported levels of well-being. Well-being might, therefore, afford some buffer or protection against physical health risks. Undeniably, physical health, its development, encouragement, and the measurement of its implications, are among the threads in a full examination of the meaning of any complex construct of health, but, regrettably, doing so is beyond the scope of this volume. Ryff's essay includes multiple leads—over 50 citations—as to where that research might go.
7. This insight, the necessary connection of learning to civic engagement, was the early source of the multi-year work of Bringing Theory to Practice and its contribution to the on-going conversation. The success of promulgating the use of the five volume *Civic Series* (2012–2014) aided campus efforts to bring attention to the civic and higher education's consideration of purpose in a democratic society. Emerging has been the cultivation and support of civically minded campuses, each considering what that means and what changes are needed to deepen understanding and local practices and opportunities if higher education is to serve that mission.
8. See Kevin Carey, *The End of College: Creating the Future of Learning and the University of Everywhere* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2015).
9. See Michael Nevradakis, "Henry Giroux on the Rise of Neoliberalism," *Truthout* Interview, October 19, 2014, <http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/26885-henry-giroux-on-the-rise-of-neoliberalism> and Kwame Anthony Appiah, "What Is The Point of College?" *The New York Times Magazine*, September 8, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/13/magazine/what-is-the-point-of-college.html?_r=0.
10. Ashley Finley, Well-Being: An Essential Outcome for Higher Education, *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, May 11, 2016, 14–19.; Joshua J. Mitchell et al., "Perceptions of Campus Climates for Civic Learning as Predictors of College Students' Mental Health," *Journal of College and Character* 17 (2016): 40–52; Corey L. M. Keyes and Jonathan Haidt, eds., *Flourishing: Positive Psychology and the Life Well-Lived* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2003); Constance Flanagan and Matthew Bundick, "Civic Engagement and Psychosocial Well-Being in College Students," *Liberal Education* 97, no. 2 (2011): <https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/civic-engagement-and-psychosocial-well-being-college-students>. In addition, there are multiple, campus-based research projects available on the Bringing Theory to Practice website. An example of the studies that arise from such work is Kathy Graff Low, "Flourishing and Student Engagement," *Bringing Theory to Practice Newsletter*, Spring 2010, <http://www.bttop.org/newsletters/flourishing-and-student-engagement>.
11. Bobby Fong, "Cultivating 'Sparks of the Divinity': Soul-Making as a Purpose of Higher Education," *Liberal Education* 100, no. 3 (2014); "As learning is privatized, treated as a form of entertainment, depoliticized, and reduced to teaching students how to be good consumers, any viable notions of the social, public values, citizenship and democracy wither and die. I am not suggesting that we must defend a rather and sometimes abstract and empty notion of the public sphere, but those public spheres capable of producing thoughtful citizens, critically engaged agents, and an ethically and socially responsible society" (Henry Giroux, "The Curse of Totalitarianism and the Challenge of Insurrectional Pedagogy," *Counter Punch*, November 29, 2015, <http://www.counterpunch.org/2015/09/29/the-curse-of-totalitarianism-and-the-challenge-of-an-insurrectional-pedagogy/>).
12. See Derek Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look at How Much Students Learn and Why They Should Be Learning More* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006): 56–82 and Busteded, "Is College Worth It?"
13. Shawn Ginright, *Hope and Healing in Urban Education: How Urban Activists and Teachers are Reclaiming Matters of the Heart* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2015).

14. Finley, *Well-Being: An Essential Outcome for Higher Education*, *Change*.
15. See Busted, "Is College Worth It?" Several university counseling centers, e.g., Ohio State University (<https://swc.osu.edu/about-us/9-dimensions-of-wellness>) and Wake Forest University (<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/04/29/wakeforest-u-tries-measure-well-being>) provide students with similar taxonomies of well-being as guides for choices and where to locate services.
- Surveys of types of well-being, such as those reported by Gallup, polling of attitudes, and responses to key questions across time periods and cultures include the following: career well-being, social well-being, financial well-being, physical well-being, and Community well-being. Of those five elements, Gallup surveys indicate that those interviewed select career well-being as most important to them followed by financial well-being.
- While it remains to be determined what gains in understanding will be made based on the well-being results from those studies, they do provide important insights and suggest hedonic attitudinal evidence. The tested survey questions regarding well-being could be administered on a campus and repeated at time periods during which various interventions are administered (for example, learning community engagement, deep learning experiences etc.). Then changes in attitudes (feelings) could be measured or even compared to broad-based data banks.
- Attitudes, feelings, and behaviors are individual experiences that can be calibrated. For example, they bring immediate pleasure, have intensity, and can be induced, measured, and compared, even cross-culturally.
- But quite separate from these measurements of attitude are the strands of individual and community flourishing, purposefulness, identity formation, persistence, mindfulness, willingness to risk, and the recognition of the value of the other. These are manifestations of eudaemonic well-being that are less likely to be quantified, may have little to do with immediate pleasure, cannot be induced or easily measured, but are expressed in a life well-lived.
- "We are not suggesting mollicoddling students, but rather providing them with the skills and experiences for both academic and personal success. Emotional health [well-being] at age 26 is the most important indicator of life satisfaction at age 36. And if higher well-being is linked to academic achievement, it will have consequences in the labor market and for broader health and life outcomes . . . All universities market themselves on preparing young people for life—but that means more than leaving higher education with a good degree or being in work six months after graduation. It means making sure that students have the skills and attitudes to be successful, responsible members of society . . . important for their own future and for that of the country," David Bell, Marina Della Giusta, and Antonia Fernandez, "Why We Need New Measures of Student Well-Being," *Times Higher Education*, August 6, 2015, <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/opinion/why-we-need-new-measures-of-student-well-being>.
16. Donald W. Harward, "From the Director: Advancing the Greater Purposes of Higher Education," *Bringing Theory to Practice Newsletter*, Spring 2016, <http://www.bttop.org/news-events/director-advancing-greater-purposes-higher-education>.