

CHAPTER 9

## Putting Students at the Center of Civic Engagement

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There has been much progress toward institutionalizing civic engagement in higher education, as the Democracy and Higher Education colloquium at the Kettering Foundation and chapters in this book illustrate. Over the past decade, a laser-like focus on faculty and staff development has produced notable gains in the capacity of higher education to accomplish civic engagement outcomes, for students as well as the campus as a whole. Yet we agree with the central premise set forth by the editors of this volume, who are concerned that the civic engagement movement has “struggled to find conceptual and operational coherence.” As the editors note in the first chapter of this volume, a narrow approach to civic engagement “that accommodate[s] the status quo” does not challenge the “dominant institutional culture.” Thus, for higher education to realize its full civic potential, it must focus on transformational, rather than strategic, advances.

In this chapter, we argue that in order for civic engagement to successfully address second-order changes, practitioners must reframe the way they think about and collaborate with their students in community-based work. This involves not only including students in conversations about the engaged academy but also changing the way civic engagement is conceptualized, taught, and practiced on campus. In short, democratic-minded practitioners who care deeply about the civic engagement agenda in higher education must now focus on putting students at the center of their efforts.

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## INSTITUTIONALIZING ENGAGEMENT

Ironically, the most recent surge in the movement for increased civic engagement in higher education began with students in a central role. In writing about the dramatic founding of the Campus Outreach Opportunities League (COOL) in 1984 and other student-led efforts on campuses during that time, Goodwin Liu (1996) notes tellingly that “*students* catalyzed the contemporary service movement in higher education” (p. 6; original emphasis). Yet in the late 1980s, Liu argues, faculty and administrators began taking over the leadership of the movement in the interests of consistency and sustainability. This focus on institutionalization has only deepened in the more than ten years since his writing.

The success of community engagement’s institutionalization is exemplified in the growth of Campus Compact, an organization dedicated to promoting the civic purposes of higher education. In a little over twenty years, Campus Compact’s membership has grown to nearly 1,200 campuses served by thirty-four state offices. Moreover, there are centers of service-learning and civic engagement at perhaps as many as three quarters of colleges and universities, along with majors, minors, and a new career track for directors of community engagement in higher education, and a rubric has been created that allows campuses to judge their own progress toward the institutionalization of service-learning (Furco 2002). There is also significant financial support for community engagement, including federal funding through the Corporation for National and Community Service; a growing number of refereed journals dedicated to service-learning and community engagement; the impressive twenty volumes in the American Association for Higher Education’s series on service-learning in the academic disciplines, edited by Edward Zlotkowski (1997–2004); an international research association that recently held its eighth annual conference; and countless conferences, books, and new initiatives by national and international associations in higher education.

In terms of the development of *civic* engagement efforts, more specifically, institutionalization has been equally impressive. By the late 1990s, concern about citizen disengagement from public life (Galston 2001; Keeter et al. 2002; Putnam 2000) and an ever-deepening feeling that our educational institutions were leaving students unprepared for a life of engaged, democratic citizenship had reached their apex. The effort to change higher education, to make it more civically responsible, began with the development of conceptual understandings of civic engagement in higher education, ones that could then be translated across the curriculum (Battistoni 2002), across academic departments and programs (Kecskes 2006), and into indicators of institutional engagement (Hollander, Saltmarsh, and Zlotkowski 2002). Out of this initial conceptual framework came the work of scholars, most notably John Saltmarsh (2005), who defined a set of civic learning outcomes for students based on three elements: civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic values.

With a concrete articulation of specific sets of knowledge, skills, and values, campuses have been able to develop courses and curriculums, while “engaged department” initiatives have moved entire disciplines and interdisciplinary programs on campuses to restructure their courses and faculty roles with student civic engagement outcomes in mind. This has created significant first-order changes in many colleges and universities.

But while institutionalization at the curricular or departmental level is essential to sustaining civic engagement, these kinds of changes have not had a particularly positive effect on student leadership and voice. What Liu (1996) argues about service-learning more generally can be applied to civic engagement: “Institutionalization gradually shifts control and resources away from students to people who have formal power and bureaucratic authority on campus” (p. 18, note 19). While students continued to lead on the margins, mainstream academia denied them a major role in defining civic engagement or determining how it would be implemented on campuses. With a few exceptions to be discussed later—the Wingspread Conference that produced “The New Student Politics,” and Campus Compact’s Raise Your Voice and Students as Colleagues initiatives—students have been largely left out of leadership roles in institutional civic engagement. Liu questions “whether or not institutionalization has dampened student leadership on individual campuses” (p. 18), to which one respondent replied rather bluntly, “This is surely not progress” (Bastress and Beilenson 1996).

A look at the literature on the engaged academy reveals a significant tilt toward faculty development and a lack of thinking about how to strategically include students in the implementation and development of civic engagement initiatives. Consider, for instance, the Institutional Assessment Model, developed by Sherril Gelmon and her colleagues (2005), which provides a useful and detailed twelve-page rubric of characteristics of what the engaged academy looks like. The model’s rubrics are largely focused on the role of faculty and chief academic officers (with brief mention of community partners). Students are included primarily as recipients of community-engaged initiatives; their potential role as agents in the engaged campus is largely omitted (Fretz and Longo 2010). The same can be said of the self-assessment rubric developed by Andrew Furco for institutionalizing service-learning in higher education. One of the rubric’s five dimensions does include students, but it mainly measures student support for and awareness of opportunities for involvement in service-learning courses and activities. Even the “student leadership” portion of the rubric is thin on voice and decision making, merely measuring students’ roles in “advancing service-learning” on the campus (Furco 2002). This is also true of the self-assessment rubric developed by Kevin Kecskes for Community-Engaged Departments (which builds on Furco’s), in which the student dimension is titled “Student Support for Community Engagement,” and only one component examines student leadership (Kecskes 2006). The only real exceptions to this rule of neglecting students as agents in the civic engagement of higher education can be found in

the 2008 framework for the Carnegie Foundation's Elective Classification for Community Engagement, which requires campuses to show how students have a leadership role in community engagement, and in the Campus Compact Indicators of Engagement initiative, which values "student voice" as a distinctive component (albeit the final one) of measuring campus engagement, and whereby campuses are judged on how much students participate in campus decision making and have opportunities "to discuss and act upon issues important to them" (Hollander, Saltmarsh, and Zlotkowski 2002).

### REFRAMING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: VOICE, PRACTICE, AND MOTIVATION

The language of campus institutionalization, as exemplified in the rubrics above, casts students primarily as passive agents of community engagement. Measuring students' awareness of community engagement is most often a matter of "informing" students about community engagement opportunities as faculty or staff "lead" community-engaged initiatives. Institutionalization efforts rarely judge themselves on the level of student participation in the development and implementation of community-engaged projects and courses. They stop short of asking institutions to imagine their students as "colleagues" or "coproducers" in the process of civic engagement.

So while civic engagement efforts have enabled faculty, staff, and administrators to create new programs and courses across the curriculum, and then to assess a wide range of institutional indicators of civic engagement, they have not done much to transform traditional notions of epistemology or pedagogy. Ninety years after John Dewey referred to a "static, cold-storage ideal of knowledge" (1916/1993, p. 158), fifty years after Margaret Mead spoke about a "vertical cultural transmission model" (1958, p. 24), and almost forty years after Paulo Freire criticized the "banking model of education" (1970, p. 72), hierarchical methods of conceiving and conveying civic knowledge still dominate. We have created centers for community and/or civic engagement on most of our campuses, but we have not *put students at the center* and given them opportunities to cocreate in real democratic spaces within the academy.

This issue goes at the very core of the engagement agenda in higher education: we can choose to reinforce the dominant way of knowing in higher education, which tends to ignore the capacities and experiences of the very people we most want to engage—in this case, our students (and community partners)—or we can take student empowerment seriously as part of the larger civic mission of higher education. When this happens, the goal of engagement becomes second-order transformation.

Arguably, the mainstream civic engagement framework—using the tripartite definition of "civic learning" as knowledge, skills, and, to a lesser extent, values—is itself part of the problem. The idea of *imparting* knowledge, *developing* skills, and *instilling* values is completely consistent with traditional pedagogies that treat students as passive receptacles rather than civic

agents. Missing from the theory and definition of civic learning articulated in the literature and in campus practices are elements necessary for a fuller understanding of democratic civic engagement and for transforming institutional structures with student leadership in mind. To create space for student leadership in civic engagement efforts on campus, practitioners need to begin by adding what we argue are three key missing elements to the conceptual framework: voice, practice, and motivation.

### *Student Voice*

Researchers have long documented the positive impact of student voice—understood primarily as a student’s choice of the kind of community service placement he or she takes on in connection with a course—on service-learning outcomes (Billig, Root, and Jesse 2005). But in thinking about voice as an essential component of democratic civic engagement, we consider two elements as central: (1) allowing students to define civic and political engagement for themselves, and (2) allowing students to contribute to campus decision making on the issues that impact and matter to them.

In a 1993 report for the Kettering Foundation titled “College Students Talk Politics,” David Mathews makes a statement about the complicit role of higher education institutions in actually depressing student political engagement: “Sometimes [students] learn what politics is in class. Most of the time they learn politics from the way it is practiced on campus” (qtd. in Creighton and Harwood 1993, p. xi.). Mathews goes on to say that

higher education runs the danger of perpetuating a narrow and constricting understanding of the political, of modeling, rather than challenging, the conventional wisdom. And it appears to leave students without concepts or language to explore what is political about their lives. (qtd. in Creighton and Harwood 1993, p. xii)

The corrective for this tendency among higher education institutions to constrict student understandings of civic engagement is to allow students to define politics and civic engagement for themselves. This was a major conclusion we reached in an earlier essay examining the lessons learned from the Raise Your Voice initiative and a course that was part of the Carnegie Foundation’s Political Engagement Project (Longo, Drury, and Battistoni 2006). In our interviews with students, the notion of “voice” emerged quite strongly as a key dimension of a “new politics” on campus.

The Wingspread Conference that resulted in “The New Student Politics” is a good example of what happens when students are allowed to give full voice to their ideas about civic engagement. In 2001, thirty-three college students met at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin, to discuss their “civic experiences” in higher education. This conversation led to the student-written report “The New Student Politics” (Long 2002), which

forcefully argues that student work in communities is not an alternative to politics but rather an “alternative politics.” This new politics enables students to blend the personal and the political and address public issues through community-based work. While many of the students at Wingspread expressed frustration with politics-as-usual, they were not apathetic or disengaged. To the contrary, they pointed out that what many perceive as disengagement may actually be a conscious choice; they argued that, in fact, many students are deeply involved in nontraditional forms of engagement. These students saw their “service politics” as the bridge between community service and conventional politics, combining public power with community and relationships.

This new student politics attempts to connect individual acts of service to a broader framework of systemic social change. The students at Wingspread further noted that they see democracy as richly participatory, that negotiating differences is a key element of politics, that their service in communities was done in the context of systemic change, and that higher education needs to do more to promote civic education.

Empowering student voice also means that administrators and faculty need to be ready to be challenged. There is another dimension to Mathews’ notion that students learn about politics from the way it is practiced on campus: when students become engaged, the campus is often where they turn their attention. For instance, in addressing civil rights, apartheid in South Africa, sweatshop labor practices, and the working poor, students have organized politically in ways that might have threatened some administrators.

Former Duke president Nannerl Keohane experienced this when she was confronted by one of the nation’s first antisweatshop campaigns. She speculates that the protests at Duke—asking that university apparel manufacturers provide a living wage and independent monitoring of their workers—grew out of the students’ sensible and relational approach, along with their interest in seeing the impact of their efforts, which often gets credited for the rise in community service. “This generation is one where there’s a strong sense of personal responsibility to make a difference for immediate, real people you can see and touch,” Keohane said, adding, “My own hunch, as a political theorist, is this sweatshop movement is a direct outgrowth of this practical mindset” (qtd. in Greenhouse 1999, A14).

In the 2007 follow-up study to the Kettering Foundation’s original focus groups, students reported that they sought a civic landscape that allowed them authentic opportunities to voice their ideas and deliberate about what should be done to improve campuses, communities, and the larger world (Kiesa et al. 2007). One student contended that because of manipulation and polarization in most public debate, “people don’t feel like their voice matters because rarely do we see discussions or something where you feel non-threatened and able to voice your opinions” (qtd. in Kiesa et al. 2007, p. 27). Our conclusion is that student voice, which includes an understanding of what Langston Hughes (1968) once called “listening eloquently,” needs to be included in any definition of civic engagement in higher education.

### *Practice: Opportunities for Direct Participation*

Theorists going from Aristotle to John Stuart Mill and John Dewey have argued that education for engagement in a democracy requires practice, and opportunities for direct participation are essential to civic engagement. More recently, Malcolm Gladwell (2008) has advanced the “10,000-Hour Rule,” suggesting that success in any field requires 10,000 hours of practice. Civic engagement, like athletics, music, and many other endeavors, is best learned through practice. Thus, civic educators must find ways to allow students to practice politics through public work.

By claiming that politics is learned through practice, we mean to challenge the approach that seems to dominate contemporary American politics, whereby politics is a “spectator sport” played by the experts and passively watched by ordinary citizens. Our study of the Raise Your Voice initiative revealed that students want to be active producers of political change. In the process of such change, students develop a diverse set of democratic skills—working in teams, speaking in public, and thinking strategically. In particular, democratic practices seem to lead, as the study suggests, to the establishment of horizontal relationships and accountability between students, which in turn produces positive political learning outcomes (Longo, Drury, and Battistoni 2006).

The recent *Educating for Democracy* (Colby et al. 2007) details findings from the Carnegie Foundation Political Engagement Project (PEP), which examined twenty-one college and university courses and co-curricular programs that address preparation for democratic participation. The study found that (1) participation in PEP courses resulted in greater political understanding, skills, motivation, and expected future political action; (2) contrary to claims that education for political development will indoctrinate students, increased political learning did not change student party identification or political ideology; and (3) students with little initial interest in political issues made especially substantial learning gains. The authors of *Educating for Democracy* contend that high-quality education for political development increases students’ political understanding, skill, motivation and involvement while contributing to many aspects of general academic learning.

As students become cocreators, as opposed to customers or clients, they develop “the broader set of capacities and skills required to take confident, skillful, imaginative, collective action in fluid and open environments where there is no script” (Boyte 2008a)—or what Harry Boyte has referred to as developing “civic agency.” Involving students as coproducers in civic engagement initiatives, then, means that we will need to go beyond offering them opportunities to participate in focus groups and surveys or even inviting them to sit on boards and task forces. When we talk about building student civic agency through the practice of democracy, it means including students in the planning, development, and implementation of civic engagement opportunities. Education, like politics, is not a spectator sport, and seeing students as

coproducers is about including them in the central effort of higher education—the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge.

In one powerful example of practice, Colgate University organized a multiyear campaign led by the then dean of students, Adam Weinberg, to rebuild campus life around a rich conception of civic learning, including using residence halls as “sites for democracy” (Weinberg 2005, 2008). Colgate redefined the role of residence advisers from rule enforcers to coaches who catalyze teams of students; in addition, student leaders in the residence halls are trained as community organizers, fostering a mentorship, rather than programming, model. In trying to move from a culture of student entitlement to a culture of student responsibility, they also created community councils that function as neighborhood associations within residential units. “This required a lot of faith in our students, a keen and specific sense for what we are trying to accomplish, and an eternal vigilance to educate for democracy across the campus,” concludes Weinberg (2005, p. 44).

Like Weinberg’s work at Colgate, our work with students at Miami University in Ohio and Providence College also provides insights into the challenges and possibilities for practice and is detailed elsewhere (Battistoni 1998; Fretz and Longo 2010; Longo and Shaffer 2009).

### *Motivation: Finding “Civic Calling”*

By concentrating too much on civic knowledge and skills, faculty and administrators have neglected the important impetus of civic motivation. A person can have all the knowledge and skills in the world, but if he or she isn’t motivated or “called” to participate in public life, these capacities will take that person nowhere. Beginning in the 1990s, when civic engagement efforts grew in response to the seeming lack of engagement among traditional college-aged youth, young people’s seeming disengagement and lack of care about public life was often blamed on civic apathy and ignorance—that is, a lack of motivation. Some attributed this lack of motivation to a failure of politics and the public realm to connect with students’ interests, passions, or values, but many chose to blame or write off young people themselves (see Bauerlein 2008). But since then, a number of studies clearly suggest that motivation to participate comes from opportunities to participate and to be engaged in the first place. Motivation, it seems, may be the *result* of engagement rather than the cause (see Colby et al. 2007; Kiesa et al. 2007; Youniss and Yates 1997). This is another reason why opportunities to participate on students’ terms are so important.

But there is evidence to suggest that motivation to participate in public life also comes from a deep and profound sense of “civic calling” or “vocation.” Ninety years ago Max Weber (1918) gave an address titled “Politics as a Vocation,” in many ways playing on the notion of vocation, which normally has religious connotations, to describe those who are politically engaged. But stripped of the sectarian religious undertones, there is something in the



language associated with spiritual vocation that can be translated into the civic sphere. When students say they want to “make a difference” in the world, they are, in effect, saying that they feel “called” to “respond” to a problem or injustice they perceive in the world. As a recent study of youth civic engagement put it, “To be called to ‘make the world better,’ to ‘make a difference’ in the public sphere, is to be and to do citizen” (Roholt, Hildreth, and Baizerman 2008).

Jim Wallis discusses this understanding of vocation in his 2004 Stanford Baccalaureate Address, in which he encourages students “to think about your vocation more than just your career. . . . Consider your calling, more than just the many opportunities presented to [you], connecting your best talents and skills to your best and deepest values.” This response to the world’s call, as each of us hears it, is powerful: We clearly saw it evoked in college-age youth in the United States during the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, and, in more recent years, the response to Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. This notion of civic calling or vocation also comes through in *Habits of the Heart*, a now classic exploration of civic engagement (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton 1985), and more recently in CIRCLE’s report “Millennials Talk Politics” (Kiesa et al. 2007).

The notion that “one can be called to live life in particular ways best suited to oneself . . . in response to a call or to the world’s address” (Roholt, Hildreth, and Baizerman 2008) also comes through in studies based on interviews with graduating students and alumni from longer-term engagement programs, such as Providence College’s Public and Community Service Studies major, Miami University’s Acting Locally, and the Jane Addams School for Democracy, which is now housed at Augsburg College in St. Paul, Minnesota.

One study of Providence College’s unique interdisciplinary Public and Community Service Studies major, for example, concluded that the program, “centered on the clarification of personal values and greater understanding of who [students] are as people. Often these ideas were framed in terms of how one will make a difference in the world” (Grove 2006). Students involved in Acting Locally at Miami University, a two-year curriculum in American Studies focusing on civic engagement, likewise talked about the ways in which this intensive program gave them a profound shift in their sense of vocation and the type of professionals they plan to be in the future. One student, who went on to participate in Teach for America after graduation, explained:

Before Acting Locally I had never even heard the words “community organizing”—I didn’t know what any of that kind of thing was. I just planned on using foreign affairs to make the world a better place and go into the state department. But I really found out a lot more about change from the bottom up. And so that changed my interests and what I studied and the classes I took, and it’s leading to me doing Teach for America on the Mexican border, which I never thought to do. (interview, 2008)

As seen in this student's reflection, to be called to involvement in public life is often the result of opportunities for civic practice in which students' voices are valued.

The notion of democratic practice leading to a sense of civic calling is also central to the efforts of the Jane Addams School for Democracy in St. Paul, Minnesota, one of the most innovative campus-community collaborations. Founded in 1996, the Jane Addams School involves immigrant families, college students from multiple institutions in the Twin Cities area, and faculty in reciprocal learning and public work projects. A guiding tenet of the school's method of collaborative learning is that citizenship is not a fixed idea; it is a "life's work." At the school, diverse people come together to "craft a common purpose, transform their lives, and make a difference in the world" (Kari and Skelton 2007, p. 14). In reflecting on her many years as a participant in the Jane Addams School—first as an undergraduate student and later as a graduate student in education at Columbia University doing research during summers—Terri Wilson reflected on how engagement in this project shaped her work. Wilson writes that the space "was where I found my way into capacities I wasn't quite sure I had, where I tried out ideas, tested my voice, became a better listener, [and] learned to ask questions." In the essay, aptly entitled, "A Call to Vocation," Wilson concludes, "I learned, above all else, that asking questions implies a commitment to respond" (2007, p. 92).

## ADVANCING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: CONCRETE IMPLICATIONS

We have argued that civic transformation for students requires practitioners to adjust conceptual frameworks of democratic citizenship education to include voice, democratic practice, and motivation (or civic calling). But there are also concrete implications for how faculty and administrators do things on an everyday basis on their campuses. The remainder of this chapter will point to lessons learned from models of promising practices we have located in our own work and experiences.

Before addressing these practical implications, however, we need to issue two important warnings to those seeking to harness increased student voice and leadership. The first has to do with the potentially stifling effects of institutionalizing student leadership. In a multi-institution study examining institutionalization efforts on campuses, Matthew Hartley, Ira Harkavy, and Lee Benson (2005) heard the caution that "our students can do remarkable things all on their own" and that more formal initiatives might, in the words of one administrator, put a "pin [on] the butterfly" (p. 218). Thus, in bringing students into the center of efforts to institutionalize civic engagement, there is rightly the concern that this might suffocate the unpredictable and creative work students are already undertaking on their own, often outside of the classroom and on the margins of the campus.

This concern was evident in past student movements, as well. For example, during the civil rights movement, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating

Committee (SNCC) was careful not to simply become a “student wing” of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the organization headed by Martin Luther King Jr. Ella Baker, an early adviser and mentor for the students advocating for civil rights while she was working for SCLC, warned that becoming part of SCLC would suppress the creativity of the students. Baker played an important coaching role “guarding the student movement” against those who would push them in an undemocratic direction, but student autonomy was an essential component to the founding of SNCC (Ransby 2003, p. 243). This same approach is often seen in efforts to preserve student autonomy for student groups, learning communities, and residence halls on college campuses. It is also apparent in an innovative “professorless classroom” at the University of Massachusetts–Amherst, where students lead a course and several alternative break trips as part of the UMass Amherst Alliance for Community Transformation (UACT) (Addes and Keene 2006).

Another concern involves the too often elusive goal of addressing community-identified needs. Empowering students in campus-community partnerships means giving ownership of civic engagement efforts to the most transient and least experienced people involved in the partnerships. In his essay “Michelle’s Quandary,” Richard Cone (1996) raises this issue in a response to Goodwin Liu’s essay on the history of the service-learning movement. The ethical dilemma for “Michelle,” which Cone shares, is the uncertainty about “how to engage students in a way that they [acquire] a sense of humility and a respect for those they ‘serve.’” Cone questions the privilege associated with many students in institutions of higher education, who, he fears, “would use their service experiences to acquire skills and knowledge they could use to further disenfranchise those already disenfranchised” (p. 21). In giving students more responsibility for civic engagement, do we run the risk of exasperating the privileges of students and at the same time shifting control of the learning even further away from the community?

With these concerns in mind, we conclude by considering three key areas necessary to advance new models for civic engagement that put students at the center: (1) empowering students to name their work on civic issues, (2) creating opportunities for longer-term engagement, and (3) reconstituting faculty roles to develop “students as colleagues.”

### *Empowering Students to Define Civic Issues and Public Work*

Tapping the talents and energies of students will necessarily involve empowering students, especially in the area of defining their civic work. This is also an essential component for connecting voice, practice, and motivation. If we want students to “respond” to their call in the world, we need to give them the opportunity to figure out what that might entail.

If we are able to create more open-ended spaces between campuses and communities where students and community members are involved in the cocreation of knowledge, there are sure to be dramatic shifts in the very way

we understand such ideas as “democracy,” “politics,” “service,” “public,” and “leadership.” Famously, John Dewey (1916/1993) stated that “democracy must be reborn in every generation” (p. 122). This can occur rather naturally if we give the next generation opportunities to wrestle with and then rewrite democracy’s very meaning.

This can happen if we create multiple opportunities for various forms of dialogue and deliberation, especially in connection with service and community engagement. In this process, space must also be created for ongoing reflection and evaluation, along with real public products. And student voice needs to go beyond giving students space; students should be given opportunities to define politics and civic engagement for themselves.

Civic educators must use their roles and authority to create space for students to authentically voice discussions of the issues that impact them. This also requires being strategic: educators must find the places where student voice will be most effective in colleges and universities, community institutions, and government agencies. In courses, this can mean finding ways for students to partner in creating the curriculum, developing the grading criteria, and leading class discussions.

Beyond the pedagogical processes in the classroom, faculty can create substantive content in courses that encourages students to work on issues that matter to them. A great example here is the model for curricular innovation around community organizing begun by Marshall Ganz at Harvard and now replicated on a number of campuses (see Ganz 2010 for further details). Outside of classes, on campuses, this can mean that students have a voice on college policy issues, service-learning programs, and community issues. It also means immersing students in the communities that surround campus so that they can learn to “listen eloquently” themselves (again, a key component of voice) and bring the voices of the community to campus, as they themselves deliberate on key community issues.

### *Creating Opportunities for Longer-Term Engagement*

There have been increases in youth participation in public life, most especially through volunteering in communities (Longo and Meyer 2006). And colleges and universities offer implicit and explicit incentives to be involved in community service—not least of which are the criteria for admissions. Indeed, a recent study from CIRCLE finds that “resume padding” is a major reason why young people volunteer. One of the authors of the study, Lew Friedland, writes, “Much of the reported volunteerism was shaped by the perception that voluntary and civic activity is necessary to get into any college; and the better the college (or, more precisely, the higher the perception of the college in the status system) the more volunteerism students believed was necessary” (Friedland and Morimoto 2005).

It is now time to build upon this interest in volunteering by developing new kinds of programs that invite long-term participation in civic engagement

projects. The evidence seems to illustrate that developing programs that invite long-term relationships are more likely to lead to the kind of transformation we are hoping to accomplish. This has been the experience with students and community partners in the Public and Community Service Studies major at Providence College, and the work of Dan Butin suggests that, nationally, academic service-learning programs that allow students to major or minor enhance rigor, critical reflection, and the ability to shape for themselves an understanding about what constitutes community engagement (Butin 2008). The priority of faculty and administrators should be to create long-term developmental programs, with both curricular and co-curricular components, that allow students to develop deep relationships and establish more integrated public work projects. These types of approaches to the engaged academy help civic engagement transform, rather than simply accommodate, higher education.

Not every college or university may be able to create academic majors or minors as a vehicle to advance longer-term civic engagement. But every campus should be able to create scholarship programs for students who have a passion for service and civic engagement connected to sustained community work or leadership roles on campus. Models for these kinds of scholarship programs exist at campuses like DePaul, Bentley, Providence College, and Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis, and at other campuses through the Bonner Scholars Program. Students also need more opportunities to get credit, funding, and pay for providing leadership in service-learning courses on campus, such as acting as teaching assistants leading reflection in the classroom or community assistants serving as liaisons for their peers in the community. Campuses should also rethink undergraduate research funding and expectations; specifically, this entails asking that the substantial research funding that colleges and universities provide to undergraduate students *always* include a public dimension. Finally, in light of increasing levels of student debt, colleges and universities need to provide more post-graduate opportunities that enable students to continue to act as social entrepreneurs, while getting debt relief and/or money for graduate school in the process.

### *Reconstituting Faculty Roles: Faculty Members as Coaches; “Students as Colleagues”*

Our final and most important area for advancing civic engagement—around reconstituting faculty roles—may seem unlikely for an essay about reframing students’ roles. But student voice, practice, and motivation are integrally linked to the practice of faculty. We are framing this final insight around faculty roles because we believe that faculty members and administrators who are interested in engaging students as coproducers in civic engagement initiatives will need to find new models for involving students in their community-based teaching and research practices. An earlier study of three educational interventions designed to create political engagement outcomes showed that

the metaphor of “faculty as coach” or “maestro” may be the best model for working with students in the area of civic engagement (Longo, Drury, Battistoni 2006). The knowledge and skills necessary for political engagement are more akin to what is learned through athletics or music performance than the traditional academic model, so the role of the educator needs to adjust to this reality.

As in athletics and music, the main lesson of democratic citizenship is learned through practicing democracy; the “teacher” is one who sets up the practice routine and is there to guide the student through tasks and in reflecting upon the performance afterward. This doesn’t diminish the role of educators at all; in fact, it enhances their place in setting the ultimate goals and context for practicing politics, and in providing tools and opportunities for reflection on student practice.

This argument is rooted in the new professional practices associated with the scholarship of engagement as developed by Ernest Boyer (1990, 1997), William Sullivan’s emphasis on “civic professionalism” (1995), and Harry Boyte’s (2004, 2008a, 2008b) notion of “public work.” Boyte (2008b), specifically, argues that for our institutions of higher education to become “agents and architects” of democracy, a radical shift is required in the way scholars see themselves and their work. Scholars cannot simply be dispassionate researchers, critics, service providers, or educators of future leaders; rather, they must also be “engaged public figures” who “stimulate conversations to expand the sense of the possible, and to activate broader civic and political energies” (p. 79). Engaged scholarship should also include the energies and talents of our students as we include them as partners in this effort.

Some of the best programmatic, research, and course-related models for including students as “colleagues” in academic service-learning and civic engagement programs are presented in *Students as Colleagues* (Zlotkowski, Longo, and Williams 2006), an edited collection that includes nineteen chapters (most of which are coauthored by students) and numerous vignettes that document examples of student collaboration with faculty, staff, and community partners. Among the growing practices highlighted in the volume is the way students at campuses like Marquette University and Providence College are given responsibilities as staff members in service-learning centers and as community liaisons to community partners in service-learning courses. Chapters by students and staff from the University of Pennsylvania and Duke University reveal the possibilities of student-generated, community-based research. Finally, the chapter from University of Massachusetts–Amherst, mentioned earlier, describes “the professorless classroom,” part of an innovative program in which students teach courses with embedded alternative spring-break service trips that are supported by training and mentoring from a distinguished faculty member.

The civic engagement movement has grown out of the desire to connect learning with real-world problem solving. It has also aspired to transform the very nature of higher education. This requires a radical restructuring in the

dominant ways of knowing and learning. And while there have been substantial changes in the academy that offer opportunities for engagement to students, faculty, and staff, these efforts are not nearly sufficient. Change will not occur by asking the same people to keep doing the same thing. As Peter Senge and his colleagues (2008) explain in *The Necessary Revolution*, “All real change is grounded in new ways of thinking and perceiving” (p. 10). If the civic engagement movement is to meet its greatest aspirations, colleges and universities will need to reconstitute the roles of faculty and community partners, and practitioners will need to recognize the assets their students bring to this effort. At the same time, we believe this only can happen if the notion of “civic learning” is expanded, giving students opportunities to use their voices, practice democracy, and ultimately, find their civic callings.

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