

ORIGINS, EVOLUTION, AND PROGRESS:

REFLECTIONS ON A MOVEMENT

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In April I attended a celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Haas Center for Public Service at Stanford University. Founded in 1985 by then-President Donald Kennedy, the Public Service Center (as it was called originally) signaled a resurgence of student interest in community service at Stanford and across the nation. I arrived on campus in 1987, in time to witness a dramatic expansion of programming, a steady increase in student participation, and the endowment of the Center during my undergraduate years. My own involvement with the Haas Center clearly shaped my interests and commitments. Two years after graduating, I found myself promoting campus-based community service as a federal policy-maker in Washington, D.C. During the past two years, this role has shown me how the events at Stanford have been replicated at hundreds of campuses across the nation.

Exactly one year before my visit to Stanford, I was en route to COOL's tenth national conference at the University of Massachusetts at Boston. As I write, Campus Compact is piecing together the chronology of its own evolution in anticipation of its tenth anniversary this fall. There is no law of nature that makes "ten" a psychic milestone, but in April, on the front patio of the Haas Center's new building, I began to reflect on a movement whose contours and effects could not be predicted ten years ago.

This essay stems from my reflections that day. It addresses two main questions: First, what story can we tell to describe the development of the community service movement in higher education over the past decade? Second, is our story a story of progress? In pursuing these questions, I do not intend to provide a chronology or a factual narrative of the movement. Nor do I intend to list every person and organization that has contributed to the field (although I will mention quite a few). Instead, I intend to elucidate the broad currents of change suggested by discrete events and historical details. In particular, I will sketch the evolution of the movement in three overlapping stages -- student leadership, institutional support, and service-learning -- and I will explore how these stages may be interpreted in the context of various theories of progress. The result, I hope, will be a conceptual history of our approaches to and understandings of campus-based community service, a history that critically examines the forces that have and have not shaped the movement's evolution.

At the outset I want to acknowledge that the service movement as we know it comes late in a long lineage of similar national efforts. It inherits the lessons and results of initiatives that go back decades if not centuries, and although the word "origins" appears in the title, this article will make no attempt to provide a complete history. In isolating the past ten years, I hope only to describe the contemporary contexts that gave rise to its internal events, to order the events into conceptual categories, and to evaluate whether the brief evolution constitutes progress. My intent is to provide a relevant starting point for historical inquiry in a field that has generally lacked such perspective. In addition, I aim to bring the benefit of hindsight to bear on our efforts to advance this movement into its next decade.

Student leadership: Catalyzing a movement (early 1980s to early 1990s)

Our story begins with the generational stereotype of college students in the 1980s. The "me generation" label is especially familiar to those of us who came to social consciousness during this period. Whatever its merits as a barometer of student character, its origins may be found in at least two influential bodies of research. The first was the on-going annual freshmen surveys of attitudes, beliefs, and values conducted by the UCLA Higher Education Research

Institute. Over the decade leading up to the mid-1980s, Alexander Astin's data demonstrated a growing materialism and greed among college students, along with a steady decline in expected participation in political life and concern for the interests of others. Between 1972 and 1984, the value showing the greatest increase in importance was "being very well-off financially," while the values showing the greatest decline were "developing a meaningful philosophy of life,"¹ "participating in community affairs," "cleaning up the environment," and "promoting racial understanding" (Astin, 1975-1995; Newman, 1985, p. 37).

Arthur Levine's book *When Dreams and Heroes Died: A Portrait of Today's College Student* (1980) corroborated the UCLA data. When students were asked who their heroes were, the most common response was no one. Athletes and entertainers were mentioned less frequently, and political leaders were hardly mentioned at all. Cynical about politics, government, and social institutions in general, the students in Levine's study appeared to have no outward aspirations; they were most concerned about getting a job and making money. Levine called their outlook the "Titanic ethic": "There is a sense among today's undergraduates that they are passengers on a sinking ship, a Titanic if you will, called the United States or the world [and that] if they are doomed to ride on the Titanic, they ought to make the trip as pleasant [and] as lavish as possible and go first class." (Levine, 1980, ch. 6).

Such stereotypes never provide an accurate characterization of a generation, and it is important to place these findings within the political and economic context in which students were coming of age. Recession and high unemployment in the early 1980s led many Americans (not only students) to be anxious about their economic futures. Media images and corporate glamour glorified the pursuit of material wealth. Cuts in federal welfare programs and human services sanctioned public indifference to growing poverty and lack of opportunity, and deregulation legitimized the market forces and unchecked individualism whose fixations on profit and self marginalized social responsibility.

It was against this backdrop that students of a different sort made their mark. While many young people were riding the tide of materialism into yuppie-dom, others were troubled by the increasingly visible social and environmental decay that the government and free market were unwilling or unable to reverse. Indeed, many students understood that the problems would worsen in their lifetimes if they did not respond. And if they could not trust distant political processes to yield solutions, then they would take direct action closer to home.

Although many campuses had long traditions of student community service before the 1980s, these initiatives enjoyed new publicity in the wake of several catalytic events. One of the earliest and most notable events was Wayne Meisel 1,500-mile walk from Maine to Washington, D.C. in the summer of 1984. Carrying a letter from Harvard President Derek Bok vouching for him and his cause, Wayne, then a recent graduate of Harvard, visited 70 campuses in 13 states and delivered an inspiring call to service that struck a responsive chord among hundreds of students. The walk showed that many students wanted to serve but lacked the opportunities and support. In response, Wayne -- with his friend Bobby Hackett and mentor Jack Hasegawa -- founded COOL, the Campus Outreach Opportunity League, at Yale's Dwight Hall in the fall of 1984. "Sure, some people thought what I was doing was crazy," Wayne said. "But I wanted to show students what someone with a little money and strong ideals could accomplish" (Manning, 1985).

This ethic and its supporting organization galvanized old and new efforts into an emergent national movement. COOL helped focus national attention on students who belied the “me generation” stereotype, and stories about a new wave of student volunteerism began to appear in the press. “As someone who has watched college students volunteer nationally on 121 campus, I can attest to a new attitude of social responsibility emerging among young college people,” said Clifford Goldsmith, chairman of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. “Their increasing philanthropic spirit is helping to replace yesterday’s ‘me generation’ sentiment with a more widespread attitude of ‘we care’” (Goldsmith, 1986). Andrew Romaroff, editor of the Yale student newspaper, summed up the feeling of many students this way: “I think students here are aware that their generation has been characterized as more selfish, pre-professional, and more materially oriented than their predecessors, whether or not it’s true, and I think students resent that characterization” (Carmody, 1987).

The fact that *students* catalyzed the contemporary service movement in higher education is significant in one central respect: It showed that the earlier survey results and labels did not indicate a generational defect in character. The disengagement of college students could not be chalked up to pure apathy and selfishness. Their idealism was intact but buried, and they would find ways to express it if they were given proper support and opportunities. This notion was the defining premise of the movement at its inception.

At the campus level, programs began with simple goals: Get students involved. Make a difference directly and tangibly. Students started recycling programs on campus. They tutored children in local schools and organized after-school enrichment activities. They staffed soup kitchens and homeless shelters, provided companionship for elderly people, counseled battered women, built houses during spring breaks, led holiday drives, and raised funds for local nonprofits. Their activities might be described as traditional “volunteering,” and many campuses began to post increases in participation. At Harvard, for example, 35 percent of Harvard’s graduating seniors in 1983 reported participation in community service; the figure grew to 51 percent in 1985 (Butterfield, 1985).

On many campuses, community service did not occur through coordinated programs *per se*, but through a diffuse array of loosely supervised individual placements. Training was inconsistent, and evaluation was largely absent. Indeed, this period saw many efforts to provide students with basic skills in program development. COOL published a resource book called *Building a Movement* (Hackett & Meisel, 1986) with nuts-and-bolts advice for students on how to start service organizations and programs. A few years later, COOL helped students to balance their attention to recruitment and organizational structure with an emphasis on program quality by developing and disseminating its “Five Critical Elements of Quality Community Service” (1991): community voice, orientation and training, meaningful action, reflection, and evaluation.

But even as students developed expertise in programming, their efforts on many campuses were hampered by inadequate resources and weak institutional support. A lack of full-time administrative staff compromised supervision, quality control and program continuity. Community partnerships waxed and waned as students came and went. Reflection and evaluation were after-thoughts. Shoestring budgets meant that dorm rooms doubled as program offices and that borrowed or donated materials were the norm. With extraordinary creativity and resourcefulness, students turned ideas into action, but sustainability was not a hallmark of their

efforts. The scrappy, impromptu nature of student-driven programming was epitomized by the title of another COOL resource book, *On Your Mark. Go! Get Set* (Meisel & Scatliff, 1988).²

However, it is important to note that many student-initiated programs still exist today. Moreover, the determined, entrepreneurial spirit that first animated the movement persists and now enjoys formal support. Echoing Green's public service fellowships, the John Gardner Fellowships in Public Service, the Points of Light Foundation's YES (Youth Engaged in Service) Ambassadors, Youth Service America's Fund for Social Entrepreneurs, the New Generation Training Program, Southern Community Partners, and many other initiatives have sought to preserve and nurture the legacy of idealism and individual initiative left by the movement's origins. Two additional observations about this early period are important to the later evolution of the movement. First, many students who got involved at the campus level were not motivated to do community service *per se*; they acted out of concern for substantive issues such as homelessness, education, domestic violence, or environmental degradation. They viewed community service as a means of addressing the problems they cared about, not as a defined agenda or movement unto itself. Widespread student identification with a *service* movement did not occur until later, when community service centers were established on campuses and when national organizations gained greater prominence. This tension -- between service as its own agenda and service as a means of pursuing other agendas -- persists today in ways I will discuss later.

Second, the programs most often cited as models during this period were long-standing centers at elite institutions, such as Phillips Brooks House at Harvard and Dwight Hall at Yale. The press, it seemed, liked the spin of America's "best and brightest" reaching out to help poor people in the spirit of charity and noblesse oblige. Regardless of what was happening programmatically, service became associated with this problematic paradigm, and for years to come, the movement would struggle against a perception of patronizing "do-goodism."

Nationally, student leadership in the movement reached a peak in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In 1989, COOL's fifth annual conference at Fordham University drew over 1,000 students for the first time, confirming the arrival of a student movement with national scale. In subsequent years, attendance at COOL conferences has not dipped below that figure. In addition, the national infrastructure of student-run organizations supporting campus-based community service grew to include specialized groups such as the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness (1985), the Student Coalition for Action in Literacy Education (1989), the Student Environmental Action Coalition (1989), and BreakAway (1991).

In recent years, however, student leadership in the movement has been dampened as the field has grown to include other players, and as it has become more bureaucratized nationally and institutionally. During my two years at the Corporation, grant reviewers reported a consistent absence of student leadership in proposed program designs and implementation plans, an observation not unrelated to the fact that campus administrators and faculty members typically do not involve students in writing grant proposals. Similarly, on site visits to dozens of programs across the country, I found student participation in program governance and decision-making to be spotty and sometimes token. Moreover, in the face of a severe budget crunch last year, COOL downsized and nearly dissolved. While surviving its growing pains, its voice in the field no longer dominates as it once did. Today more resources and larger initiatives are at stake, and there is more competition and political calculation. As we shall see, the forces that drive the movement now are different from the forces that brought it into existence. Even as students find

purposeful roles in the changing context (many certainly have³), the character of the movement has not remained the same.

Yet these latter observations should not obscure the significance of the contemporary movement's first stage. If sophistication and sustainability were not the hallmarks of student driven programs, then authenticity and innovation were. From our perspective today, we can say that idealism alone is not enough to sustain a movement. But it was enough to galvanize a movement, and college students did just that. With COOL's leadership, they captured the national imagination with "the vision that young people can make a difference and that they are indeed making a difference in communities all across the country" (Theus, 1988). Most importantly, they compelled us to understand the problem of widespread disengagement not in terms of generational apathy, but in terms of inadequate opportunity and institutional support.

Institutional response #1: Leadership and support (mid-1980s to mid-1990s)

The institutional response students wanted was not far behind, and it occurred within a context worth describing briefly. In the latter half of the 1980s, American higher education attracted substantial public attention concerning not only the "me generation" stereotype, but also rising tuition costs, poor undergraduate teaching, and curricular controversies such as the debate over required courses on Western civilization. In addition, politicians and the media decried expensive and "irrelevant" basic research, and by 1990 popular support for federally-funded research had plummeted amidst a well-publicized controversy over indirect cost recovery. There is rarely a decade in which higher education is not "in crisis," but whether real or exaggerated, this constellation of issues called for clarification if not re-examination of higher education's purpose in American society. In 1985 Frank Newman, president of the Education Commission of the States, authored a prescient Carnegie Foundation report describing the central role of colleges and universities in the nation's social and economic renewal. *Higher Education and the American Resurgence* addressed important issues related to research, general education, financial aid, and minority students, yet Newman centered the report on a single, urgent theme:

The most critical demand is to restore to higher education its original purpose of preparing graduates for a life of involved and committed citizenship.... The need to resolve complex problems intelligently places an ever greater demand on higher education -- a demand for graduates who have a profound understanding of what it means to be a citizen; graduates capable of an interest larger than self-interest; graduates capable of helping this country to be not simply a strong competitor but a responsible and effective leader in a complicated world. (p. xiv)

It was this vision of civic involvement that led to the founding of Campus Compact in November 1985. Newman's leadership was critical, and the Compact remains a project of the Education Commission of the States (specifically, "the project for public and community service").

When the Compact held its first meeting at Georgetown University in January 1986,⁴ Timothy Healy of Georgetown, Donald Kennedy and Catherine Milton of Stanford, and Howard Swearer and Susan Stroud of Brown had assumed leadership roles. Over 100 college presidents had already joined, many of whom were as dismayed by the prevalent generational stereotype as their students were. The meeting convened several dozen presidents to discuss the purpose and structure of the organization, and while the details would continue to evolve for some time, the

essential premise for sustained activity at an institutional level emerged from an easy consensus. Consistent with the students' outlook, the presidents agreed that increasing student participation in community service required visible, high-level leadership and institutional support.

During this stage the principle activity at the campus level was the development of administrative infrastructure to support community service programming. Largely in response to advocacy by COOL, many institutions appointed a staff-level "green dean," usually a recent graduate of the school, to serve as a campus-wide coordinator of service activities (Collison, 1988). On some campuses, institutional support meant the establishment of a center with a mid to high-level administrator as director, several staff members or students in charge of various project areas and a board of directors providing policy guidance and fundraising assistance.⁵ Depending on the school, community service found a home under student affairs, academic affairs, campus ministry, the president's office, or career planning,⁶ but regardless of where it was centered organizationally, it tended to elicit involvement from a broad network of campus units. Whatever the strategy from campus to campus, the defining activity of this phase was the commitment of institutional resources. The Haas Center at Stanford and the Swearer Center at Brown, among others, emerged as models in light of the substantial funding and visible presidential support they enjoyed.

True to the expectations of college students and presidents, many campuses posted an increase in student participation during this period of institutional investment. A 1989-90 study (Levine & Hirsch, 1991) heralded a shift in student attitudes toward "collective optimism" and increased opportunities for community service, citing an array of examples: The number of Tulane undergraduates involved in a student-run community service organization had increased by 50 percent over the past two years. At Oberlin, 300 students were involved in 1990, up from 59 in 1988. The Tufts program grew from 20 students in the 1970s and early 1980s to over 400 by the late 1980s. At Birmingham Southern, 500 students took part in its campus-wide day of service in 1990, up from ten two years earlier, and 72 percent continued to participate through on-going programs. Nationally, the average rate of student participation at Campus Compact schools was well below 20 percent in 1986 but grew to almost 25 percent in 1994 (Ventresca & Waring, 1987; Cha & Rothman, p. 13).⁷

In addition to involving more students, programs also become more sophisticated. Green deans built partnerships with local schools and community agencies, developed placements, provided formal orientation and training for students, and ensured an overall level of quality. Holiday drives, one-time events, and barebone projects were upgraded into on-going programs coordinated by full-time staff or paid students, and service activities often involved students working in teams. Program designs began to incorporate reflection and evaluation components, and program continuity and sustainability became increasingly significant considerations in planning. The Wingspread principles of good practice (Honnet & Poulsen, 1990), reflecting a consensus among various leaders and key organizations in the movement, signaled the arrival of a discrete and substantive field of programming. By providing a widely accepted means of defining quality and accountability, the ten principles further enabled service programs to argue that they were worthy of institutional and outside support.⁸

At the national level, the peer pressure college presidents exerted through Campus Compact complemented the efforts students were making through COOL. The Compact has seen its membership grow five-fold in a decade, from 105 institutions in 1986 to 500 institutions today. The highest rates of growth have occurred in the years since 1991, with 100 new schools joining

during the 1993-94 year alone. Presidential buy-in and momentum at the institutional level secured the status of campus-based community service as a distinct policy agenda.

Reducing financial disincentives to service was an especially significant policy objective, as higher education prepared for an imminent period of fiscal austerity. Campuses looked to changes in Federal Work-Study regulations and national service legislation for funds to support students who wanted to serve but could not afford to volunteer. In addition, private foundations responded with initiatives like the Bonner Scholars, which offers tuition assistance for students who take on a substantial service commitment during college. Many institutions raised funds from local foundations, businesses, and individual donors for public service fellowships and mini-grants for student projects.

The growing coalition also supported state and federal legislation specifically designed to strengthen the service movement and its infrastructure. In California, for example, the nascent state Campus Compact helped promote the "human corps" legislation of 1987, which encouraged four-year public institutions to provide opportunities for every student to serve during college. The passage of national service legislation in 1990 and in 1993 sounded the call for institutional participation at the federal level, which generated strong echoes from several major higher education associations. In addition to its bully-pulpit value,⁹ federal legislation was integral to building the state and national infrastructure that now facilitates peer support and dialogue in the field. In its first two rounds of higher education grants (1991 and 1992), the Commission on National and Community Service provided substantial support to the Campus Compact and its emerging state affiliates. Furthermore, the federal effort located campus-based initiatives within a broader national context of service programs, including youth corps and K-12 initiatives, in order to foster collaboration across the different "streams" of service.¹⁰

There are few indications that this stage of the movement has ended. On the contrary, the defining characteristics of "institutional response #1" are in plain view today. While 50 percent of service programs at Campus Compact schools received institutional funds in 1990, this figure stood at 92 percent in 1994, leading the Compact to conclude: "The strongest trend in member schools is the increased institutional support for service" (Cha & Rothman, p. 12). Increasing student and institutional participation, developing infrastructure at campus, state, and national levels, ensuring a basic level of quality in programming, and defining service as a distinct agenda of institutional and public policy -- these activities continue to comprise much of the work of the movement.

Institutional response #2: Service-learning (late 1980s to ?)

Yet there is a third, more recent stage that has become the movement's defining paradigm. Although I locate the initiation of this stage in the late 1980s, service-learning has many antecedents in the field of experiential education. The term "service-learning" has been used since the 1960s, and it had generated a substantial literature before 1985.¹¹ Even during the early stages of the contemporary movement, service-learning was not a distant concept.¹²

Nevertheless, a constellation of events in 1990 signaled its definitive arrival in the service movement. First, Ernest Boyer wrote a Carnegie Foundation report titled *Scholarship Reconsidered*, which played a role at this juncture of the movement not unlike Frank Newman's report five years earlier. Boyer urged the nation's faculty to expand and update its notion of scholarship in

order to make it responsive to the needs of today's society. Second, as a result of a seminal report by Tim Stanton (1990), Campus Compact initiated its flagship Project on Integrating Service with Academic Study, which continues to assist campuses in building community service into their curriculum. Third, the Wingspread principles legitimized not only service programs in general, but service-learning programs in particular. Finally, the three volume resource book *Combining Service and Learning* (Kendall, 1990a) published by the National Society for Experiential Education did more than any other single publication to establish a recognized field of programming called service-learning. The NSEE books compiled dozens of salient articles that had been written over more than a decade, and gave them a new and timely significance. The three volumes are still widely regarded as the main "textbooks" of the field.

These events crystallized two key notions that were gaining recognition in the movement (see Kendall, 1990b). First, community service is not a self-activating learning experience. This concept is encapsulated in the now-famous story of the soup kitchen volunteer who, after several months of service, tells her supervisor, "Gee, I've had such a great experience working in the soup kitchen that I hope my children and grandchildren have a chance to do this someday!" Critical reflection, deliberately integrated into the program structure, is essential to ensure that service experiences foster real learning, instead of reinforcing stereotypes or perpetuating ignorance. Second, community service will not be institutionalized within higher education unless it is aligned with the core mission of education. The absence of faculty involvement in the first two stages of the movement was a cause for concern (see Kennedy & Warren, 1989), and both presidents and program directors began to share the conviction that demonstrating educational relevance was crucial to moving community service from the margin to the mainstream of their institutions.

With these two ideas as premises, practitioners began to distinguish between "community service" and "service-learning." The distinction mattered programmatically and strategically, and today we find ourselves in the thick of a *service-learning* movement. Significantly, unlike the previous two stages, this mode of institutional response arose within the context of the academy itself. It was a response not to external circumstances in society or to public perceptions of higher education, but to the internal priorities and norms of educational institutions. Relating service to education was a demand the movement made of itself, and I believe this explains the particular vigor with which the field has embraced service-learning. Within this stage, the movement has centered its efforts on making service a part of the educational agenda. Co-curricular service programs beefed up their reflection components into credit-bearing seminars with structured readings, discussions, and writing projects. Yet the dominant strategy has been to build service into the curriculum itself. On campus, programs began working to generate interest among faculty, orienting them to service-learning concepts and enticing them with mini-grants to revise existing courses or to develop new ones. Professors in applied fields like social work, nursing, education, and engineering were among the first participants, as were long-time advocates of internship, cooperative education, and related modes of experiential learning. A key challenge continues to be the involvement of faculty from mainstream disciplines, particularly the humanities and natural sciences. In addition to (or in place of) green deans, service-learning coordinators organize workshops on pedagogy and assist faculty by developing placements appropriate for course learning objectives. At the same time that programs began to select service placements with criteria related to educational value, they also began to envision community agencies not simply as vehicles for placement but also as partners in education.

Organizationally, where service initiatives were housed on campus has begun to matter more than it did before. While most programs continue to fall under student affairs, a growing number report to an academic unit or dean (Cha & Rothman, p. 14). Wherever they are located, programs have sought to develop a unifying educational framework for their activities. The models of this stage include the Citizenship and Service Education program at Rutgers University, with its strong linkage between citizenship and the liberal arts; the Lowell Bennion Center at the University of Utah, with its emerging relation between service-learning and socially responsive knowledge; Project Place at Bentley College, an example of interdisciplinary collaboration at a single community agency; Portland State University's ambitious integration of service-learning into general education; and the Feinstein Institute at Providence College, with its unique and evolving major in public and community service studies. These examples and many others have transformed service from an expression of noblesse oblige into an important mode of civic, moral, and cognitive learning (see Ehrlich, 1995).

Nationally, we have witnessed a number of related developments. Over the past four years, Campus Compact's Project on Integrating Service with Academic Study has worked intensively with 60 campuses through its summer institutes, and it has consulted with 100 more. Most participating campuses report that the number of service-learning courses they offer has doubled in the last three years (Morton & Troppe, 1995). Among Campus Compact schools overall, 81 percent offered service-learning courses in 1994, up from 66 percent a year ago (Cha & Rothman, p. 12). Course examples are abundant (see Kupiec, 1993; Kraft & Swadener, 1994).

Furthermore, three years after NSEE published its three-volume set, the University of Michigan developed a faculty casebook on service-learning called *Praxis I* (Howard, 1993a). It opens with an article that provides ten "Principles of Good Practice in Community Service Learning Pedagogy," a Wingspread analog specifically written for faculty (Howard, 1993b). Similarly, service-learning penetrated the student-led agenda with COOL's Teaming Up initiative and its publication of *Education and Action* (Lieberman & Connolly, 1992). Last year, the field also saw the emergence of a scholarly journal devoted to service-learning, as well as the establishment of a much-used Internet discussion group. In addition, a national corps of faculty committed to service-learning formed the Invisible College. The group, which convened its first "National Gathering" this year, is developing a discipline-specific series of monographs on service-learning.

With funds from foundations and their own budgets, national organizations such as the American Association of Community Colleges, the American Association for Higher Education, the Council of Independent Colleges, and the United Negro College Fund have also launched initiatives promoting service-learning on their member campuses. At the federal level, the Corporation for National Service in 1993 named its campus-based grant program "Learn and Serve America: Higher Education." The \$10 million program explicitly tilts its funding objectives toward service-learning and models its selection criteria on existing principles of good practice.

Clearly, service-learning has struck a responsive chord at the campus and national levels. The sheer magnitude of material and intellectual resources devoted to it distinguishes this stage from the others. Yet its significance in the evolution of the movement has at least two other dimensions. First, as a specific type of community service programming, service-learning has brought into sharp relief the major challenges of practice. While student participation and institutional investment remain important, the movement has taken a distinctively programmatic turn toward issues of quality. These issues have become at once more numerous and more specialized, and quite importantly, even as the field works to resolve its still extensive variation in

practice, it has defined a near-canonical set of challenges that suggests the presence of shared norms.

With sound models for program start-up, attention now turns toward sustainability. In community partnerships, programs are seeking not cooperation but collaboration. Having worked 20 through the issues of recruitment, orientation, and training, practitioners now struggle with the complexities of reflection, curricular integration, and evaluation. Defining standards for quality reflection, creating incentives for faculty participation, connecting service activities with course content, measuring program impacts on students and communities, and developing a research agenda on both participation and outcomes are among the key issues that will preoccupy the field for years to come. These problems are contested and often refined into "sub-" and "sub-sub-" problems through vigorous discourse, *circumscribed* by agreement on a central, specific problematic -- how to combine service and learning effectively -- that narrows the movement and its trajectory. In addition, the typical contexts in which these issues are discussed -- for example, Internet discussion groups and conferences of higher education professionals -- implicitly establish who is important to the discourse.

Second, service-learning has provided the current movement with a wedge into critical issues at the very core of the academy. The rhetoric of service, once reflective of its important yet ancillary status on campus, now invokes nothing less than fundamental notions of scholarship, pedagogy, and educational reform. For example, Ernest Boyer's brief proposal for "the New American College" (1994), arguing for strong connections between scholarship and service and between theory and practice, found its way onto the field's reading list with only oblique reference to service-learning. Within community colleges, service-learning is beginning to gain leverage from the larger agenda of school-to-work transition. Moreover, as not only a way of organizing service but also a way of teaching and learning, service-learning aims to transform the relationship between campus and community out of educational necessity, it broaches the sensitive issue of teaching values, and it even calls into question what counts as knowledge (Palmer, 1987; Liu, 1995). Ten years ago, it would have been difficult to predict that the service movement would penetrate issues of institutional purpose as deeply as it has.

In sum, the ascendance of service-learning continues to marshal significant financial and intellectual resources behind the agenda of connecting service with education. Guided by well-formed notions of program quality, the field has achieved a degree of specialization in its programmatic concerns that reflects its maturity. Even as practice continues to vary, it is anchored within a particular conceptual framework. The many specific issues that remain unresolved will define the substance of publications, conferences, and discussions -- as well as their participants -- for several years. How long service-learning will be the movement's dominant paradigm is difficult to predict, but as a response driven by the norms of its own institutional context, it harbors the potential for longevity.

Interpretation

The three stages described above do not occur as discrete time periods with only those characteristics I have attributed to each. Instead, the stages overlap, and characteristics of all three appear in the movement at any given time. The three-part story I have sketched is an effort to identify and organize, in retrospect, the most salient features of the evolution. Each stage is meant to be a paradigm or conceptual strand, loosely located in time, that defines how service has been

understood and practiced. Historicizing the movement in this way can illuminate the contexts, motives, and norms that have shaped its evolution, while providing a frame of reference for discussing its future. But as an interpretation (not a catalog) of real events, this story is but one. Others may be told from different viewpoints, and I want to elaborate on this in three ways before addressing the question of progress.

First, characterizations of a movement tend to center on the objectives and activities of its most active members. The story told here depicts "a movement in higher education," a generalization that obscures the varying degrees and modes of participation within different sectors of higher education. For example, of the 477 members of Campus Compact in 1994 49 percent were private four-year colleges, 28 percent were public four-year colleges, and 23 percent were community colleges (Cha & Rothman, p. 10). Similarly, of the nearly 300 institutions awarded federal funds through Learn and Serve America: Higher Education in 1994, roughly 40 percent were private four-year colleges, 40 percent were public four-year colleges, and 20 percent were community colleges. Yet among the 3,600-plus colleges and universities in the nation, 42 percent are private four-year colleges, 17 percent are public four-year colleges, and 41 percent are community colleges. Among the 14.5 million college students in America, 20 percent attend private four-year colleges, 41 percent attend public four-year colleges, and 39 percent attend community colleges (*The Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac*, September 1, 1994). I suspect that these different institutional sectors (and sub-sectors within them) have experienced the movement differently (see Bojar, 1989), and how well the evolution described here resonates with each sector merits further inquiry.

Second, in a movement where participation occurs at many levels -- from college students to college presidents -- positional perspective significantly influences story-telling. The evolution I have constructed stems from my experiences first as a Stanford student helping to build a public service center on campus and then as a national policy-maker initiating and directing a new federal program. My account of the evolution tends to reflect the second influence in particular, especially in my choice of examples and events. But would a different story emerge from a campus-based program administrator? from a faculty member? from a university president? from people who were students during various intervals of the past decade? Would the director of a partnering community agency tell a different story altogether? Clearly, the evolution is best described not by one but by many stories, told from the many positional perspectives within the movement.

Finally, as I mentioned at the start, to isolate the last ten years for analysis is to detach the movement from its deeper historical roots. Student activism in the 1980s was not a phenomenon unrelated to student activism in the 1960s. In addition, for many campuses, civic engagement is not a recent response to a well-publicized agenda, but a continuing expression of enduring institutional values.¹³ Similarly, service-learning has clear antecedents in the field of experiential education, dating back to the time of John Dewey.¹⁴ Indeed, each of the three strands in the story told here is quite long in its own right, and the evolution of the current movement surely looks different to those who locate it within longer-running social or educational agendas, or within larger patterns of attitudinal or political change. Such perspectives are vital to any thorough effort to historicize the movement.

Theories of progress

What remains is the question of progress: by what measure, against what criteria, within what theory does the evolution of the movement constitute progress? This question is difficult in light of the changing mix of players, purposes, and activities over the past decade. Various participants at various points in time have had differing views on what the main goal of the movement should be, and the evolution does not readily suggest the operation of a fixed, independent standard of progress selecting for certain types of events and achievements across all three stages. Yet with hindsight and interpretation, we may be able to account for non-linear development within a linear framework. As I discuss below, there are at least two ways we can do this, and there is one important way, we cannot.

Participation. The data in previous sections show that student involvement and institutional support have grown steadily over time. Increasing participation¹⁵ was an explicit objective of the movement's first and second stages, and it is also a byproduct of the third, as institutional participation takes the form of faculty involvement (not just financial support) and as the integration of service with curriculum creates additional opportunities for student involvement.¹⁶ Over the past five years, the infusion of funds from foundations, the federal government, and other public and private sources has boosted both the number of campuses developing new service programs and the number of campuses expanding service opportunities through an existing infrastructure. The advocacy and new initiatives of many higher education associations have had the same effect. Clearly, if participation is the principle measure of progress, then the movement has made great strides throughout its evolution.

Yet few people would center a claim of progress simply on increased participation.¹⁷ The aspirations of the movement go deeper than any practical need to post big numbers, and many would agree that sheer growth is neither a sensible nor a sustainable goal. It does not account for the quality or impact of participation, and it does not guarantee the long-term viability of the movement. Indeed, service has the potential to do harm as well as good, and service movements "tend to be a passing phenomenon in higher education, rising and falling on campuses roughly every 30 years" (Levine, 1994). A theory of progress that does not address these points is somewhat "thin" and unsatisfying.

Institutionalization. A "thicker" theory centers on the increasing institutionalization of service as an important part of the campus agenda. Student leaders in the first stage sought to organize volunteer efforts into coordinated programs that could be recognized and supported by the student government, a campus life office, or some other administrative structure on campus. Students quickly learned that their programs could not be sustained from year to year unless they were housed within an established campus unit, with supervision from an administrator and at least partial funding from the institution. The institutional response in the second stage addressed these concerns. Campuses hired "green deans," initiated or increased funding for programs, and established community service centers. These moves have had lasting effects on many campuses, as institutional leadership and support gave rise to higher levels of student participation, attracted funding from other sources, and created a broad "constituency" committed to service. To further ensure its longevity on campus, especially in an era of fiscal restraint, the institutional response in the third stage has sought to relate service to the very heart of the educational agenda. Faculty involvement and strong connections to curriculum and pedagogy are regarded as necessary if not sufficient guarantors of program sustainability. The rationale for institutionalizing service now invokes the fundamental academic mission of our colleges and universities.

Thus, if institutionalization is the measure, then the field has made progress. In its current form, this criterion of progress is quite substantive, directly linking the sustainability of campus based community service to a specific conception of quality that prioritizes educational relevance. The field continues to strive to put service squarely within the academic mainstream (Levine, 1994; Zlotkowski, 1995), and additional steps in this direction may include increased attention to service-learning within disciplinary, associations and individual departments, revised criteria for faculty promotion and tenure, stronger integration of service-learning into humanities and natural science disciplines, and more widespread evidence of its cognitive impact.

What will count as further progress, however, will require more specific agreement on what institutionalization means. In the movement today, institutionalization is understood within the conceptual and programmatic framework of service-learning, which promises to assimilate service into the conventional norms, objectives, and activities of the academy. But service learning remains at the fringe of many campuses -- not least because its value, in the view- of many practitioners, lies precisely in its *departure* from traditional educational methods and assumptions. On this view, the marginal status of service-learning is what certifies its authenticity, and institutionalization threatens to compromise its integrity as a critique of the establishment. Thus, despite the familiar "margin-to-mainstream" rhetoric, the field is facing the issue of institutionalization with a certain ambivalence. Integrating service with traditional modes of scholarship is not the same as reforming scholarship itself, and on the path toward institutionalization, the movement is now at this conceptual crossroad.

In any case, a theory of progress centered on institutionalization reduces our account of the evolution thus far to a linear pathway of step-wise improvements -- in rough terms, from the transience and follies of student-led initiatives to institutional coordination and support, from the marginalization of campus-based community service to its gradual penetration into the educational agenda. Each stage appears as a response to criticisms of its predecessor, suggesting that the field has experienced uniformly positive transitions. But we must keep in mind that this story is a story of progress in just one dimension. It does not assess changes in the role of student leadership as service initiatives have become more bureaucratized on campus and at the national level. It is indifferent to the continuing development of extracurricular community service programs. Quite significantly, it does not examine the impact of programs on the communities where students serve. These issues are relevant to the question of progress, but they are not the main interests of a theory that prioritizes institutional relevance and staying power. Thus, while institutionalization is inarguably an important criterion of progress, we should consider it alongside other criteria that matter in our judgment of the movement's evolution.¹⁸ In doing so, we may find different and perhaps less sanguine perspectives on progress.

Community impact. Among the other criteria by which progress may be measured, one seems particularly fundamental: To what degree have campus-based service programs made a positive difference in the communities where they operate? In a movement about community service, community impact is surely a criterion of progress that we cannot overlook.

Without much-needed systematic inquiry in this area, our assessment can only be speculative. Anecdotal evidence is plentiful, and in recent years programs have documented their community impacts more carefully, especially in light of the infusion of federal dollars into the movement and the Corporation's fixation on "getting things done." In the future we are likely to see more data not only on children tutored, water samples tested, and patients screened, but also

on higher test scores, reduced pollution, and improved health. But despite these successes, we are less likely to see changes in the structural dimensions of problems being addressed through service. Service programs may expand the capacity of soup kitchens, but generally they do little to address the root causes of hunger and homelessness. Over the past decade, in tackling real problems in real communities, the service movement has flirted with issues of justice and social change, but the relationship has never been completely comfortable.

Indeed, the idea of centering the movement on an explicit agenda of social change has been met with hesitation throughout all three evolutionary stages. Conscious of the prevailing cynicism among their peers toward politics and government, the student leaders who catalyzed the movement were intent on billing service as "apolitical." Yet the issues they addressed on campus and in communities had an unmistakably political dimension, especially against the backdrop of the *laissez faire* ethos of the time. In this way, college students endowed the contemporary movement with a manifest ambivalence toward systemic change: On one hand were the students who viewed service as an inherently activist and political enterprise, while on the other were those who viewed it as a transcendent, non-ideological agenda.¹⁹ In their early responses to student initiative, many colleges demonstrated a similar ambivalence, recognizing the need to encourage students to serve but relegating the activity to the institutional periphery. Cesie Delve, then director of Georgetown's public service center, offered this reply to a 1988 report hailing the hiring of "green deans" at campuses across the country:

I sincerely hope [green deans] are not being touted as the ideal model for staffing [community service] programs. While university administrators would never dream of hiring a recent undergraduate to direct the athletics department or student activities or the counseling center, it is ironic that they don't think twice about it when hiring somebody who will affect not only the campus community, but the community beyond the ivory tower as well.

Even as campuses boasted increases in student participation, many had not built their programs upon "serious consideration [of] their commitment to the community in which their students serve" (Delve, 1989). Today, the ambivalence in the movement takes the form of the oft discussed tension between service and learning. Few would claim that college campuses ought to be social service agencies, yet most would agree that communities should not be laboratories for undergraduate experimentation. Curriculum-based service programs aim to develop among students a lasting commitment to social needs, even as they put social needs on an academic calendar.

Thus, in each evolutionary stage we find contradictions that indicate irresolution in the movement's objectives and expectations with respect to community impact. Current evidence of this point is the fact that, while the field has felt the need to develop a research agenda on how and what students learn through service, it has not felt a similar need (or at least it has not committed similar effort) to develop a research agenda on whether and how communities benefit from campus-based service programs. Within the service movement, as within higher education in general, the notion of accountability typically does not include a consequential relation of responsibility between campus and community. Certainly there are counter-examples to this criticism. But as a whole, the movement has offered no clear answer to the question of whether the communities where students serve are generally better off today than they were a decade ago. That this question does not elicit more discussion and research is quite telling of our assumptions or our priorities.

The difficulty of telling a story of progress at the community level is hardly surprising for at least two reasons. First, the concept of an autonomous movement centered on service, unattached to any specific social issue, tends to reify the activity as an end in itself, instead of advancing it as a means to achieve other ends. Service -- like policy, advocacy, and research -- is but one way to address a social need. These activities cut across the areas of health, education, environment, and public safety, not *vice versa*. To promote service as an independent agenda is to believe that service, as a particular kind of activity, has unique social and educational value. It does, of course -- for it is a powerful antidote to cynicism and disengagement, and it is an effective way to learn the responsibilities of citizenship. However, these functions do not suggest tangible objectives with respect to particular social needs. This need not be disturbing if we understand community impact to be only an idealized goal of the movement. But if we understand it to be a concrete criterion of progress, then we must endow the service movement with a deliberate orientation toward substantive issues,²⁰ and we must locate service within the spectrum of interventions -- including politics and advocacy -- that are required for systemic change. In addition, we must encourage campuses to develop service programs within the context of broader community development initiatives (e.g., school reform, crime prevention, economic revitalization) that give real meaning to the watchword "institutional citizenship" (see Cisneros, 1995).

Second, the difficulty we face in explaining progress in terms of community impact reflects the more fundamental difficulty we face simply in talking about "the community." Ten years into the contemporary movement, we still have not developed a satisfactory language for discussing its (supposed) key benefactor. Who or what is "the community"? Who speaks for it, and who decides what is best for it? In common usage (including this paper), the word typically means nothing more than "the nearby people and locale that are not part of the campus," a plainly negative definition that trades on a rigid dualism between campus and community. While we are quite capable of describing "the campus" in all its constituent parts and processes, we are hard-pressed to describe "the community" in other than monolithic terms. As a monolith, "the community" is reduced to a static image -- needy, deteriorating, inorganic, and powerless. During the initial meeting of Campus Compact presidents in January 1986, Reatha Clark King put it this way:

Somehow it seems to me we are picturing communities as entities to be acted on rather than those that are breathing, living organisms that have interactions with our organizations and with the students and the faculty that will be relating to them.... [C]ommunities are not there standing stagnant to be acted on by our wise institutions and students.

It may be reasonable to argue that community impact is not an appropriate criterion for assessing a movement that appears to be focusing more and more on educational reform. Within the framework of service-learning, the primary rationale for community service is pedagogical, and it is legitimate for educational institutions to adopt this view. However, even if the lack of answers to the question of community impact is not disturbing, the lack of a positive language for discussing "the community" is. Both meaningful service and meaningful learning require an understanding of what communities are, not simply what they are not. While community transformation has never been a deliberate and practical goal of the movement, the idea has never been far from its core aspirations. The overwhelming need to enrich our understanding in this dimension is a profound legacy of the past decade and a key challenge for the next.

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Footnotes

1 The percentage of freshmen who said it was "essential" or "very important" to be very well off financially grew from 41.2 percent in 1972 to 69.3 percent in 1983, while the percentage who said it was "essential" or "very important" to develop a meaningful philosophy of life dropped from 70.8 percent in 1972 to 44.1 percent in 1983.

2 Its sportive title notwithstanding, the book gives students useful advice on how to organize campus-based community service programs.

3 SCALE and BreakAway are good examples of student-initiated organizations that have evolved in step with the field. The founding directors have remained in place since 1989 and 1991, respectively, and they have developed their leadership, fundraising, and management skills to meet real accountabilities. Conceptually, the two nonprofits have adapted their programming interests to the movement's mainstream. Even as the field evolved to embrace service-learning in the early 1990s (as I describe later), SCALE provided assistance to campuses operating curriculum-based literacy programs (Student Literacy Corps), and BreakAway published a book on curriculum based alternative breaks (fondly called C-BABs).

4 At that time the nascent organization was simply called the "Coalition of College Presidents for Civic Responsibility." The name "Campus Compact" did not surface until later in 1986. The transcript of this meeting, which is available from Campus Compact, offers a fascinating glimpse of the movement in its infancy. Many of the issues discussed then are still relevant today.

5 Less than half of Campus Compact's member schools had a center in 1986 (Ventresca & Waring, 1987). The proportion grew to 53 percent in 1990 and to 73 percent in 1994 (Cha & Rothman, p. 14).

6 Campus Compact's 1994 member survey shows 94 percent of community service programs to be housed in these offices in order of decreasing frequency (Cha & Rothman, p. 14).

7 Some have put the national rate of student participation as high as 64 percent (see Levine, 1994). But it is difficult to compare findings of this sort because surveys vary significantly in what they count as "service" or "participation in service," and because data collection on campuses has improved over the years. The Campus Compact figures cited here provide the most reliable longitudinal comparison I have seen.

8 My emphasis here is on the *symbolic* value of the Wingspread principles. Their *substantive* value as principles for combining service and learning affected the movement in a different way, as I discuss in the next section.

9 For example, President Clinton last year wrote a letter to all 3,600 college presidents in the country, urging them to make it possible for every student to serve.

10 See Cha & Rothman, p. 14 for data that supports this point.

11 For example, see the back issues of *Synergist*, a magazine published in the 1970s and early 1980s by the (now defunct) National Center for Service-Learning.

12 In the 232-page transcript of the first meeting of Compact presidents in 1986, the issue of faculty involvement surfaced no later than page 11. More to the point, service-learning made the cover of the September/October 1989 issue of *Change* magazine.

13 I have in mind, for example, historically black colleges such as Spelman and Miles, work colleges such as Berea, and religiously affiliated schools such as Augsburg, Notre Dame, and Warren Wilson.

14 As two long-time service-learning advocates note, "It is alternately amusing and irksome to see touted as 'new' an education idea that has had a respected place in American educational theory and practice at least since the turn of the century" (Hedin & Conrad, 1987). See also Southern Regional Education Board, 1973.

15 Here I use "participation" broadly to mean not only student participation in community service but also institutional participation in the movement (e.g., funding campus programs, joining Campus Compact, adopting policies encouraging student or faculty involvement in service-learning).

16 Service-learning has the potential to increase student participation in community service dramatically, since coursework is an integral part of students' lives. In recent years, efforts to increase participation by making service a graduation requirement have inevitably focused on the curriculum (for example, see White, 1994).

17 The exceptions include policy-makers and advocates for whom increased participation may be a specific policy goal to which they are held accountable.

18 I believe the criterion of student empowerment is especially important, as institutionalization gradually shifts control of resources and decision-making away from students to people who have formal power and bureaucratic authority on campus. Whether or not institutionalization has dampened student leadership on individual campuses is a question that requires serious study. The "core legitimacy" of the movement does not necessarily rest with students, but I find it difficult to wholeheartedly equate institutionalization with progress unless it preserves this source of innovation and vitality.

19 I am indebted to Jack Hasegawa for this observation.

20 Examples we can draw on include the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness, the Student Coalition for Action in Literacy Education, and the Student Environmental Action Coalition, which exist as important complements to COOL. In addition, the 1993 national service legislation recognized this point in requiring the Corporation to establish national issue-area priorities.