Multiplicity, Belonging, and Free Speech in US Higher Education

THRIVING THROUGH CURRENT CRISES

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To the academic part of my family—Jessica and Bradford, and coming up, Cloe and Winona—and to Alex for fame and fortune.

Contents

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Naomi Zack
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Introduction

A crisis is a time of indecision or shock in reaction to drastic change. Problems and challenges in US higher education during the 2020s amount to crises for different schools and the institution as a whole. It's an exciting time! These problems and challenges result from new realities that require new ideas if higher ed is to emerge stronger after the crises are resolved. The new ideas suggest new policies, and the result of facing crises is a revision in how higher education functions and is regarded. But the new ideas have to be morally principled. US higher education occupies a distinctive niche in economic, social, cultural, and political society. Economically, it's always more expensive than anticipated just a few years ago. Socially, it confers status and earning power. Culturally, it preserves and creates knowledge, which are surely public goods. But politically, skepticism abounds about its economic worth and ideas issuing from it that are disruptive to the social status quo. New ideas and policies that can reorient the whole institution of US higher education need to be egalitarian, just, and capable of fulfilling traditionally lofty missions in practical ways. In accomplishing this, members of the higher ed community, from college presidents to faculty to students to staff, each and all have to feel that they belong to something that is not only bigger than they are but also worthy.

Belonging, in every case, involves the real affirmation of those who should belong, in addition to traditional students and full-time faculty and administrators, who already belong. Real affirmation does not rely on the false ideas of race that the US Supreme Court relied on in its 2023 takedown of racial admission preferences in a couple of elite schools. Instead of race or ethnicities, we need to think of *multiplicities* that go far beyond these categories. All existing and potential students—adults, parents, veterans, prison inmates, recent immigrants, people with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ people, and poor students on the verge of dropping out—need to

be affirmed. The adjunct faculty who teach so many also need real affirmation through support for belonging. All members of the multiplicities that make up college communities need to belong—and feel that they belong.

Higher ed leaders need to ask themselves what their purpose is, and for whom. Many faculty are so focused on our research that we forget that we are also hired to deliver education, and sometimes employed mainly or only to teach. We teach one another through our specialized projects, but the raison d'etre of the whole enterprise is to teach students and sustain academia as a complex, supportive community. This means that students need to be invited to intellectual engagement so that they can be better citizens with more fulfilling lives after graduation. Higher incomes with college degrees are only a small part of this story. Faculty and administrators need to reconsider basic questions.

Since a lot of academic research is mainly for our peers, what good does it do if the outside culture does not trust us as experts, and how can trust be regained? What exactly are the humanities, for our own time, and why are they so devalued? Higher education cannot survive on a mass level without clear, persuasive answers to questions like these. It may not even survive on elite levels if politicians succeed in raising doubt about its value. The elite stratum of US higher education has always been tied to the top of the socio-political-economic class, and if enough doubt about its necessity for great wealth or power is raised, why would even the 1 percent continue to esteem it? Some multi-millionaire elites may begin to wonder if they and their children are benefitting from attendance at schools where yearly tuition is cracking $100,000.[1]

American college is expensive! Even less expensive US public education is facing competition from corporate certificates and paid internships that rival entry jobs for college graduates. Most of higher education in the United States is no longer elite, and the majority of colleges are feeling the crunch of declining enrollment, rising costs, falling funding, and both political and commonsense criticism of their very necessity. Elite schools (the Ivy League plus the University of Chicago, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford University, and Duke University) favor well-prepared students typically from wealthy families. According to *Forbes*, those students make up 0.8 percent of all college students, but they constitute 13 percent of the highest earners, and 12 percent of Fortune 500 CEOs.[2] For those who can attend them, elite schools remain desirable and financially stable. But for the 99 percent, less expensive schools are no longer a sure thing.

Faculty involved with their own research in schools that are now financially stable may not notice how the academic world has changed around them as they live through market conditions in a consumer society. New conservative interventions politicize progressive academic views on cultural

progress. Learning and respect for the learned remain viable ideals for the cognoscenti, but they may be too abstract and highfalutin for the general public. Political criticism can be anticipated, which means that higher ed representatives should learn how to speak in ways that all sides can recognize as politically neutral—to the extent that remains possible. Student expectations of fairness, respect, good prospects, and on-campus concern for their well-being should be anticipated, articulated by college leaders, acknowledged, and met. Indeed, student needs and demographic changes motivate much of the new ideas and policies presented in this book.

All too often, college and university presidents and provosts cheerlead their institutions without connecting what is good for their institution in the short term with fundamental societal and intellectual insights that will ground long-term success. Academic leadership has for too long failed to take advantage of new scholarship within its own walls. Some of these new ideas can bring higher education up to date, in principled ways toward the public good. The chapters of this book offer new ways of thinking for tackling some of the most pressing new realities: adapting to and thriving from the judicial end of affirmative action by turning to what we already know about race and ethnicity (chapter 1); developing expansive strategies for recruitment and retention that benefit students as well as colleges (chapter 2); understanding and then correcting the unjust situation of adjunct instructors (chapter 3); resetting the humanities to return to informed political neutrality (chapter 4); making the social part of class accessible to college "Firsts," without challenging their original identities (chapter 5); enabling student anti-racist, moral injury, antisemitism defense, and loneliness self-help for mental health (chapter 6); understanding free speech in terms of societal movements and the politicization of cultural disagreements (chapter 7); considering better communication for both student protests and recent antisemitism (chapter 8); addressing the need to prepare for all hazards to campus life in ethical ways (chapter 9). And finally, tying these threads together toward "College Smart, Now," in the conclusion.

Higher education generally, and particular institutions within it, are professionally studied by specialists in the social sciences—economists, sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, historians, statisticians, cross-disciplinary scholars in the field of education itself, and also journalists who focus on pressing contemporary problems and solutions. Outside influences can be analyzed by other experts, such as legal scholars and political and cultural critics. But these empirical studies often leave out big-picture views and normative/ethical considerations. For instance, What message is being conveyed if college is touted mainly as an engine for making more money? Are colleges selfish in how they enlarge their recruitment? Why are adjunct faculty treated so badly compared to full-timers? How can political

interventions be managed? What moral obligations do campus leaders have regarding disasters?

In a time of crisis or change, a philosophical approach can make a vital contribution. This is not traditional philosophy of education, the subfield in philosophy that attends to what should be taught and learned, and how—from Plato to John Locke, to John Dewey, to Alain Locke, to Nel Noddings, and in-between—but philosophy of the actual institution(s) of higher education. The content of this book is the identification and analysis of how the real institution of U.S. higher education has already changed, on an accelerating trajectory that renders traditional models, policies, and paradigms out of date. (This philosophical approach coincides with theoretical approaches in many other fields.)

Philosophically speaking, "higher education" is an *imaginary*, a shared idea in people's minds, which, as such, has a problem of reference. The general abstract idea of "US Higher Education" refers to a vague amalgam of all colleges and universities. Within that "amalgam," there are distinct types of institutions: elite, second-tier, public or state schools, smaller liberal arts colleges, historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving colleges, Native American colleges, community or two-year colleges, and for-profit, often distance-learning colleges. Reality plays out in specific institutions, with many exceptions to the generalities. Indeed, this is a classic philosophical case of "the one and the many" or a universal and its particulars. Not only does reality play out in specific institutions, but the problems of different types of institutions, in different places, with different student demographics, need to be considered distinctly.[3] We could say, without fetishizing a popular term, that the methods of *intersectionality*, now opened up to mean both contextualization and complexity, as well as new liberatory factors in identity, are highly relevant here.[4] Nevertheless, how academic leaders think about the whole is very important for broad public aspiration, because higher education is the main source and resource for informed citizens, fulfilled individuals, and reliable experts.

Multiple adaptations will require moving on from previous models of academic excellence and normal or ideal participants. It will not be enough to "include" the formerly excluded. They will need to be welcomed as belonging, and that welcome must be backed up with meaningful policies and programs. This extends to college employees also—staff, part-time faculty, and junior faculty. Along the way, the educational class system, both within academia, and in relation to its status—real or imagined—in society, will need to become more fluid and democratic. It should be recognized that superficial categories of race and ethnicity are not necessary for multiplicities to enter and belong. The social aspects of socioeconomic class should be understood as free for students to appropriate, without being disloyal to their origins.

We all need to sincerely envision college for everyone, genuinely without prejudice and discrimination. And we all need to understand or recreate our individual roles in being able to deliver that, in principled, politically neutral ways. The result could be a renaissance of prestige in college degrees that realistically promise fulfillment in life, in addition to more money. The need for this has been made more urgent in light of 2024 student protests on college campuses. This book strives to interpret and address that disruption, as well as quieter problems and real disasters.

Chapter 1

Multiplicity and Belonging

Replacing Affirmative Action and DEI

Along with law, education has long been considered a fulcrum for racial equality in the United States. Changes in law, such as the emancipation amendments to the US Constitution and the 1960's civil rights legislation, provided formal racial equality. Education is considered the institutional process by which racial minorities, immigrants, and others who are disadvantaged in society can better their lives and civic participation.

However, US education is not uniform in structure, resources, or affordability. In primary school, most students attend their neighborhood schools, which must admit them, for free, based on where they live and without regard for race, ethnicity, or family income. But, apart from community colleges that draw students from immediate locations, higher education is selective over competing applicants, who in principle may come from all over, but in reality are more likely to reside in the states or regions of institutions. Until the 1960s civil rights legislation, colleges discriminated against nonwhite applicants. But since the 1970s, college admission practices have included preferences for racial minorities in programs and policies of Affirmative Action, Diversity, and DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion). These progressive programs and policies have been consistently attacked by political and judicial conservatives.

Although college education is generally the last common stage of preparation for informed citizenship, societal leadership, and individual flourishing in life, postgraduate specialized academic and professional training is needed for leadership positions in key societal institutions, such as law, government, and higher education itself. Progressive preferences for racial integration in higher education have aimed for racial representation in student bodies that mirrors the percentages of different groups in the population at large. This goal has been more attainable for public colleges and universities than elite

private institutions whose proportion of minority graduates tends to mirror their proportions in top government and corporate institutions.

Policies as actual directives for admissions, hires, and institutional advancement are motivated and described by concepts that come down to names or labels that people can latch onto, positively or negatively, both inside and outside of higher ed. The labels have changed after the 1960s anti-discrimination civil rights legislation—first, integration, followed by Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). These changes have been responses to negative reactions in society, politics, and the US Supreme Court, which have chased racially progressive policies and concepts to what now seems like a wall of status quo or unspoken retreat or regress.

Higher ed leadership now needs to again revise the concepts behind its progressive policies—and give them new names—because conservative politics and judicial rulings have mainly attacked the concepts motivating and describing the policies, rather than their physical results. That is, the present attacks are ideological rather than practical, and they begin as battles of words and meanings. For instance, during the 1950s, positive efforts toward racial integration in schools involved moving actual people into places where they were previously excluded, and attacks on integration were often physical barriers and violent personal aggression against new entrants.[1] But the present attacks on Affirmative Action, Diversity, and DEI do not involve physically removing actual students from places in higher education or blocking them from attending. The negative attacks begin as discourse and then influence judicial and legislative action. If ideological attacks can be thwarted on the level of discourse, then their influence on regressive forces might be forestalled. Rethinking the ultimate goals of progressive racial preferences could both expand inclusive progress and deflect ideological attacks.

The concepts of *multiplicity* and *belonging* could be the new vehicles toward racial equality, which deflect recent attacks on Affirmative Action, Diversity, and DEI. Beyond that, these new concepts could further racial and ethnic egalitarianism in principled ways that better match the new realities on college campuses. Changing targeted concepts in principled and factually backed ways may thereby be an effective strategy for defeating both ideological attacks and their practical results.

The sections of this chapter begin with working definitions of important recent and present progressive labels and their underlying concepts, many of which, after political attacks and judicial rulings, are now in the rear-view mirror. But we have to understand the progressive history of ideas, as well as the history of events, to move the history of ideas forward, and with that, maybe events. A brief history of affirmative action realities and US Supreme Court rulings follows in the second section. Finally, the current, real,

scientifically, and logically supported meanings of "race" and "ethnicity" are applied to present constrictions and opportunities on campus toward the conceptual results and practical goals of multiplicity and belonging. Traditional binary male/female gender categories have also been destabilized by recent scientific research and cultural changes, in ways that need ongoing recognition in higher education.

WORKING DEFINITIONS, CONCEPTS, AND LABELS

Since the 1960s Civil Rights Movement and resulting legislation, leaders in US higher education have committed to, and stated goals for, racial equality within their institutions. According to the NAACP, in 1970, college enrollment was 91 percent white. By 2021, white enrollment had decreased to 50 percent, with black students accounting for 12.6 percent of college enrollees, Hispanic students 21.4 percent, and Asian students 7.1 percent.[2] This half-century demographic change is largely attributed to the effectiveness of affirmative action policies, although other factors such as rising family income, enabled more minority students to attend college, as did increases in financial aid. Moreover, although affirmative action policies in higher education were most relevant to elite schools, which enroll less than 1 percent of the US college population, minorities among the 99 percent have directly benefitted from legal prohibitions of discrimination, together with progressive commitments throughout higher ed leadership.

Affirmative Action policies for college admission allow for minority racial identities, as well as female gender, to in some ways boost an applicant's chances of being admitted. These policies have not been necessary for the achievement of population-proportional minority admissions to HBCUs, and Hispanic- and Native American-serving institutions. Although, on national levels, minority-serving institutions may have benefitted from funding motivated by a general spirit of affirmative action as a broad cultural and political view that the education of racial minorities is an important public good.[3] For instance, after George Floyd's killing, philanthropic donations to HBCUs skyrocketed.[4] Still, many colleges that already have integrated applicant pools and admit more than 50 percent of applicants have not needed to rely on affirmative action for racially proportional student bodies.[5] And neither have almost all two-year community colleges, with open-admissions policies for anyone with a high-school diploma or GED.[6] But elite colleges and others that are highly competitive do need to prepare to expand the goals of affirmative action, along with Diversity and DEI, to remain progressively integrated by race and ethnicity, as well as gender. Such expansion to allow for more categories, some of which may be unknown but form in the future,

will co-incidentally include the traditional categories. Also, less competitive schools with DEI offices and programs need to re-conceptualize their efforts. This preparation for welcoming expanded, distinctive, human categories is important to maintain a viable conduit for future societal leadership of all racial and ethnic minority and gender groups.

The general motivating idea for affirmative action is that it allows racial minorities to compensate for generations of comparatively lower educational opportunities over a history of slavery followed by Jim Crow and other forms of anti-nonwhite discrimination. The civil rights legislation stated that there could be no racial discrimination in employment or education. But this formal right alone was not sufficient to ensure that racial minorities had an ability equal to that of whites to successfully take advantage of equal opportunities for higher education. Obstruction included standard-test racial bias and inter-generational poverty that precluded prior family college enrollment. To counter these obstructions, affirmative action policies took evolving forms: numerical quotas for minority admission; positive points for admission applications from racial and ethnic minorities, as well as women; and holistic consideration of minority applicants when their qualifications were equal to those of majority applicants and their minority identities were positively viewed as an added factor.

Diversity has been posited as a goal and studied as an existing reality regarding an entire unit that has racial or gender variety. Whereas affirmative action specifically pertains to minority individuals and women, diversity is a result of variety within a whole, made up of minorities and majorities. That result could be achieved with some amount of affirmative action. When affirmative action, as quotas and points, was struck down by the US Supreme Court, diversity became the *modus operandi* for achieving racial and gender integration among those enrolled. The change from affirmative action to diversity policies, insofar as the former seemed to affirm, that is, approve of, those who benefitted, and the latter simply included those erstwhile beneficiaries in a larger whole, was an important but little remarked change. It was an important change in focus, from minority students to the totality of students, who would remain mainly white. Beyond diversity as an enrollment practice, after racial and gender minority students were admitted, colleges and universities established *DEI* practices that included support services, visible offices on campus, and anti-racist training.

The idea of *equity* came to refer to practices after enrollment, which amounted to post-admission affirmative action, because they were intended to benefit minorities. Although educational resources were already equally available, minority and women students may not have had the capabilities, equal to majority students, to take advantage of the equal resources.[7] The practice of equity provided tutoring and life-skill-related practical programs

to create equal capabilities. The concept and practice of *inclusion* were intended to enable general equalities in outcomes. Those who came from groups who had previously been excluded would be assisted and supported in becoming full members of the student body and college community, with an emphasis on their academic success. DEI offices might offer anti-racism/bias training to majority students, faculty, and staff. Overall, in both the United States and globally, DEI, and especially its component of equity, came to mean all of the above—affirmative action, diversity, and DEI.[8]

However, this positive, enthusiastic conflation was eventually recast by political attacks that were equally equivocal and interwoven, but posited the positive conflation as divisive, destructive, and unpatriotic. The US progressive, egalitarian agenda has always featured new ideas, but regressives often do not match such creativity and instead mirror/caricature those ideas in distorted malign ways. (Indeed, as Naomi Klein has explored in *Doppelganger*, much of the conservative or politically right side of current culture wars outside of higher education takes shape through such dark glass.)[9]

During the presidential administration of Donald Trump, the reality that racial inequality divides members of US society was distorted by extreme Conservative Republican political claims that studies of the history of US racial inequality and DEI trainings in federal government offices and throughout higher education were divisive. Politicians who vowed to block *critical race theory* from primary school curricula—where it had never been taught—were handily elected. Books deemed to be racially "divisive" were banned from primary schools and local libraries throughout the United States. This has been a national ideological convulsion fueled by willed fundamental ignorance about US history and race relations, which remains subject to the arbitrary decisions of local politicians on state levels, or those higher up, depending on the results of presidential elections. It is difficult for those targeted to directly engage this kind of ideology because there is no agreement on what kind of mutually agreed truths could settle differences in attitudes and basic principles. The conservative ideologues may reject or distort basic principles of secular democracy, as well as knowledge from the human social and biological sciences.[10]

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND RULINGS AGAINST IT

After racial discrimination was banned by the 1964 US Civil Rights Act,[11] discrimination was inferred when general equal human competence and aptitudes were assumed to hold across racial difference, but outcomes in hiring or admissions did not reflect racial/ethnic proportions in applicant pools. However, proving discriminatory intent was difficult and took years

to move through the courts. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy created a Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity and issued Executive Order 10925 that used the term "affirmative action" for rules and policies intended to block discrimination. In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson issued Executive Order 11246 requiring federal contractors to take "affirmative action" to ensure equality of employment opportunity without regard to race, religion, or national origin. (In 1968, gender was added to these categories.)[12] The adjective "affirmative" in "affirmative action" meant positive, active steps, rules, or hiring policies that would bypass discrimination or make it impossible to practice. *That is, the actions taken were affirmative as actions, without affirming those who benefitted from them.*[13] Of course, culturally, throughout higher education, there was plenty of affirmation of minorities themselves, in celebratory special events and support for scholarship about race. But that was an interpretation of what the law permitted.

The use of numerical quotas of those who were not previously hired or admitted, in proportion to their part of the population, was a form of affirmative action that was hugely unpopular from the beginning. Opponents assumed that the minorities newly hired or admitted were not as qualified as their white competitors. There was also a general presumption of scarcity according to which new people of color hired or admitted would deprive qualified white applicants of the places they deserved, hence the term "reverse discrimination." (The idea of reverse discrimination can seem to accept the existence of discrimination to begin with and merely object that perpetrators and victims of "normal discrimination" have been forced to change places.) Affirmative action was never required outside of federal restrictions placed on government contractor employment. But neither was it not permitted and many institutions throughout society, including business, nonprofits, and the military, implemented it. Recent focus has been on admissions in elite higher education. We should now consider highlights of the history of US Supreme Court Affirmative Action cases that pertain to higher education.

In 1971, two years after Affirmative Action policies began to be adopted in higher education, Marco DeFunis, a white student who had not been admitted, cited reverse racism in a lawsuit against the University of Washington Law School. The US Supreme Court dismissed his case because he was only one semester away from his law degree from Cornell University Law School, by the time the case reached them.

In 1978, the court's ruling in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* set its policy for reviewing affirmative action in higher education, with the terms "narrow tailoring" and "strict scrutiny." *Narrow tailoring* meant that policies could not exceed their intended goals when they were applied, and *strict scrutiny* required that in contexts of alleged discrimination, policies fulfill a compelling institutional or government purpose, if

they deviate from the US Constitution. In recent decades, the court has not distinguished between racial discrimination against racial minorities and racial discrimination against white people. Allan Bakke, who was white, sued UC Davis after his application to its medical school was rejected. The UC Davis Medical School had guaranteed sixteen out of one-hundred admissions for minority students. The court found that this quota system violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. (Since racial protection was the issue, it was white people who were not equally protected on the ground of race.) However, the court allowed that race could be one factor among others for admission, because the diversity that resulted would benefit the whole student body and such diversity was a compelling interest for institutions of higher education. This landmark case set the stage for rejecting affirmative action policies with stated aims of making society overall, more just.

In 1986, in *Wygant v. Jackson Board of Education*, the Supreme Court provided guidelines for affirmative action concerning public school teacher hires. There had to be a compelling government interest at stake that was achieved in a way that was *narrowly tailored* under *strict scrutiny*. This meant that affirmative action was a last resort that interfered with the freedom of nonminorities as minimally as possible. Without evidence of prior discrimination in an institution, it was not permissible to hire minority teachers as a remedy for wider social discrimination or to serve as role models. Here again, as a principle with implications for higher education, the court discarded the idea that societal discrimination should or could be corrected by affirmative action. The requirement of evidence of prior discrimination undermined the initial purpose of affirmative action as an end run against present discrimination, for which it was difficult and lengthy to provide evidence. Also, how could past discrimination in an institution be proved, given difficulties with proving it in the present, which require lengthy court processes?

In 1996, the US Supreme Court upheld the doctrine that affirmative action could not be used to correct broad societal ills, if that was its motivation. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals had ruled against affirmative action in *Hopwood v. Texas*. The UT Law school used GPAs and LSAT scores to categorize candidates under "presumptive admit or deny" and "discretionary." Cutoff scores for these categories were based on race, favoring nonwhite applicants. The appellate court ruled that the UT Law School could

> not use race as a factor in deciding which applicants to admit to achieve a diverse student body, to combat the perceived effects of a hostile environment at the law school, to alleviate the law school's poor reputation in the minority community, or to eliminate any present effects of past discrimination by actors other than the law school.

The Supreme Court did not grant *certiorari*, so the appellate ruling stood.

In 2003, rulings in two University of Michigan cases further specified the *Bakke* decision. In *Gratz v. Bollinger*, the court struck down the undergraduate admissions policy that automatically awarded points to applicants based on minority race. The court thought that this policy was too close to the quota system that had been banned in *Bakke*. However, in *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 2003, the court again referred to the Fourteenth Amendment equal protection clause to not prohibit the University of Michigan Law School's narrowly tailored use of race to further the compelling interest of a racially diverse student body. This did not harm nonminority applicants because race itself did not automatically favor admission; rather, each candidate was reviewed "holistically." Presumably, white candidates were not harmed if race were merely an addition to qualifications. (This continued emphasis on the importance of not harming nonminority candidates—the eggs that could not broken in making the diversity omelet—was to ground the court's culminating rulings in the 2023 Harvard and UNC cases.) In 2003, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor famously predicted that even such holistic affirmative practices would no longer be necessary within a generation, that is, in twenty-five years, by 2028. O'Connor wrote:

> We take the Law School at its word that it would "like nothing better than to find a race-neutral admissions formula" and will terminate its race-conscious admissions program as soon as practicable. . . . It has been 25 years since Justice Powell first approved the use of race to further an interest in student body diversity in the context of public higher education. [O'Conner was here referring to *Bakke*.] Since that time, the number of minority applicants with high grades and test scores has indeed increased. . . . We expect that 25 years from now, the use of racial preferences will no longer be necessary to further the interest approved today.[14,15]

After *Grutter*, two University of Texas cases seemed to uphold the holistic version of affirmative action. In 2013, in *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*, Abigail Fisher first sued the university over her rejection, but the court remanded the case to the appellate court for further application of strict scrutiny. When the case returned to the Supreme Court in 2016, UT's holistic admissions policy was upheld, with an emphasis on the importance of individual review of applications.[16]

However, the court did not wait to see if affirmative action that it had revised as the necessity of diversity in law schools for future US leadership (in *Grutter*), would no longer be necessary in 2028. In *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College* and *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc., Petitioner v. University of North Carolina, et. al.*, the court struck down what was known as affirmative

action in higher education, whereby minority racial identities could be positive factors for admissions. The court's targets were elite colleges and universities that accept less than 25 percent of their applicants and practice racial preference to achieve a racially diverse student body. Some have interpreted this ruling as a disruption to the tacit bargain within elite higher education institutions that affirmative action made up for the real affirmations of inherited privilege and wealth that favored white student admission. Education consultant Richard Kahlenberg told the *NYTimes* that there was a "symbiotic relationship" between affirmative action and legacy preferences:

> Supporters of racial affirmative action liked that they could point to legacies [children of alumni] as evidence that college admissions was not about meritocracy. And supporters (and beneficiaries) of legacy preferences liked racial affirmative action because the racial diversity it produced gave the superficial appearance that the system was fair and open to all.[17]

It is ironic that what thwarts the highest opportunities for minorities, in the same fell swoop threatens what some (mostly white) elites could take for granted. (Although, this may not be surprising insofar as recent Republican US conservatism has demonstrated an ability to go after societal elites, as well as people of color.)

The court did not strike down affirmative action admissions in military academies. The top five federal service academies—West Point, Annapolis, the Air Force Academy, Coast Guard Academy, and Merchant Marine Academy—have an acceptance rate of 17 percent (8 percent less than elite colleges and that much more competitive). In 2003, in *Grutter v. Bollinger*, the court had quoted retired military generals in support of affirmative action, writing "a highly qualified, racially diverse officer corps . . . is essential to the military's ability to fulfill its principle mission to provide national security." Justice Sonia Sotomayor noted in dissent to the *Harvard* and *UNC* 2023 ruling that national security interests were also at stake in civilian higher education.[18]

Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. threw another sop to Cerberus besides exempting military schools from the court's take down of affirmative action, namely, the application essay. He wrote, "Nothing in this opinion should be construed as prohibiting universities from considering an applicant's discussion of how race affected his or her life, be it through discrimination, inspiration or otherwise." But he also warned, "Despite the dissent's assertion to the contrary, universities may not simply establish through the application essays or other means the regime we hold unlawful today," "What cannot be done directly cannot be done indirectly." And

Roberts then revealed his own narrow understanding of race and racial identities, writing:

> A benefit to a student who overcame racial discrimination, for example, must be tied to that student's courage and determination. Or a benefit to a student whose heritage or culture motivated him or her to assume a leadership role or attain a particular goal must be tied to that student's unique ability to contribute to the university. In other words, the student must be treated based on his or her experiences as an individual—not on the basis of race.[19]

A new industry of advisement for how to present and assess the character of college applicants quickly underwent development.[20]

The problem with Roberts' qualification of the role of application essays is that centuries of experience in life and literature have shown race to be the basis of much that individuals have experienced. However, there is irony here, as well, because advocates for affirmative action have argued that it is not skin color or race per se that makes students of color deserving of preferential treatment, but what they can contribute based on their experience, some of it in common with all humans and some of it, cultural, aesthetic, historical, and familial, because they are people of color. Clearly, Chief Justice Roberts has a "thin" view of race, as nothing more than a biological marking system that affects all members of a racial group the same way. Strategies for separating character from race in Roberts's thin sense, while conceptually possible, will require considerable finesse for their articulation and implementation. College admissions staff and the courts that assess complaints against their results will need to become skilled in rhetoric, literary criticism, and philosophical conceptual analysis.

In the Roberts Court ruling on the Harvard and UNC cases, majority (white) students were held to be protected by the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteeing equal protection under the law. Never mind that this amendment, passed by the US Senate on June 8, 1866, and ratified by the states on July 9, 1868, like all the post-Civil War Reconstruction Amendments, was intended to protect the civil rights of newly freed African American slaves. The Fourteenth Amendment granted citizenship to all persons "born or naturalized in the United States," including formerly enslaved people, and it provided all citizens with "equal protection under the laws." On a theory of color-blind constitutionalism, the Roberts Court invoked the equal protection clause to protect white applicants at elite schools from racial discrimination. Thus, with reference to numerous previous rulings striking down anti-nonwhite racial discrimination, Roberts wrote that the Fourteenth Amendment "proscri[bes] . . . all invidious racial discriminations."[21]

According to the Roberts Court, now contra *Grutter*, advantages based on race, are a zero sum gain. In other words, there can now be no advantages granted on the basis of race, because granting them to minorities automatically entails taking something away from nonminorities. No matter that affirmative action would not have been deemed necessary had there not been centuries of advantages granted on the basis of white racial identity. The rationale for ignoring those centuries of societal anti-nonwhite racism is that the court had earlier ruled that affirmative action cannot be used to correct societal racism. To back that up, somewhere in the constitution, there should be a clause that there may be no policies or laws to correct societal ills. If there were, Roberts would undoubtedly have referred to it. But as it stands, matching the court's narrow conception of race is an even narrower conception of law as a closed system, subject to judicial interpretation, but not to what is good for society as a whole, or good for those disadvantaged by social injustices, or even good for those unscathed by social injustice when they interact with those scathed. That is, justice, or justice as fairness, was not an ideal applied to racial minority college applicants in the Roberts Court's *Harvard* and *UNC* rulings.

MULTIPLICITY AND BELONGING

Before the US Supreme Court's erosions and now ban of Affirmative Action in US higher education, beginning in the early 1990s, ten states banned affirmative action before the 2023 decision: California, Florida, Washington, Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, and Idaho. Among nineteen public universities, average gaps between high-school graduates and college enrollments for black, Latino, and Native American students increased from 15.7 percent to 17.9 percent. However, some schools saw much larger underrepresentation gaps. For instance, at the University of California, Berkeley, the 14.9 minority underrepresentation gap before affirmative action was banned, grew to 34.4 percent by 2015.[22]

Observers have consistently suggested that affirmative action admissions could be replaced with attention to economic social class (family income) and the 2023 Roberts Court emphasis on the college application essay as a way to describe character could add to college admissions criteria, a new dimension of moral or ethical identity. However, neither of these options specifically captures minority racial and ethnic status and experience. Numerically, more white applicants are economically disadvantaged than minority groups, because minority groups are also numerical minorities in US society. Character as associated with struggles against racism may require college experience in order to fully develop. If affirmative action policies are to be coherently replaced, something about the identities of minority applicants

needs to be captured, not in the way the Roberts ruling banned, but in a better-grounded empirical sense, as supported by contemporary biological and social science. The new approach would entail a focus on real multiplicity instead of false ideas of "race," particularly as signified by skin color. Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act already allows for such specificities, not only concerning race or ethnicity but in "Dear Colleague" advisory letters specifying many detailed characteristics of groups who cannot be discriminated against, including not only "shared-ancestry" groups but groups subject to discrimination for purely social reasons such as whether parents are fluent in the English language.[23] This "proof of concept" for the idea of multiplicity suggests that in the wake of affirmative action based on census-type protected classes, institutions can proceed by naming the specific groups relevant to their recruiting efforts and local demographics. An umbrella concept of multiplicity could allow for focus on groups and their members who do not fit into existing diversity or census categories of a few protected classes, but is responsive to new claims of harassment and discrimination, such as asserted by some Jewish college students during the 2024 Pro-Palestinian college protests (see chapter 8).

To recognize the power of the concept of racial difference, and how it has been misused, let's return now to Chief Justice Roberts's thin view of racial identities. He not only focused on biological markers as a general indication of racial identity, but seems to have limited them to skin color, writing: "Many universities have for too long wrongly concluded that the touchstone of an individual's identity is not challenges bested, skills built, or lessons learned, but the color of their skin."[24] In other words, Roberts seems to believe that race-based affirmative action was based on skin color, solely. Incredible as it may seem, Roberts appeared to be unaware of the biological emptiness of ideas of race as human categories or taxonomies. Researchers in the biological sciences have since the late twentieth century rejected the idea that "race" has any independent biological foundation, apart from social designations or "social constructions." All of the biological markers of race, including and especially skin color, have been found to vary more within what are believed to be races, than between or among them. No racial essences or special blood types or distinctive race-related DNA have ever been identified.[25] Roberts may or may not be aware of the emptiness of "race" as a concept in the human biological sciences. But one may hope that leaders in higher education are aware that even physical, biological race is a social construction.

The falseness of the idea of race as something that could be lined up with skin color is not an objection to the idea of physical human differences and identities based on groups with such differences or distinctions from other groups. But without biological races, we are left with ideas of human ethnicities to distinguish among groups and even that does not do full justice to the

range of physical and cultural differences and distinctions among contemporary US college students and their potential cohorts. Ethnicities do not neatly fall into a taxonomy similar to race, because the hundreds of global ethnicities cannot be compared according to any one or several traits, as was the case with taxonomies of race. Some ethnic groups are distinguished by religion, others by physical appearance, language, customs, geographical origins, and so on. A taxonomy of ethnic groups cannot be coherently defined. All we can do is list them. The result of that in terms of categories for diversity is an idea of *multiplicity* or *multiplicities*.

A taxonomy of multiplicities would be even more elusive and unwieldy than a taxonomy of ethnicities. Unlike ethnicities, the idea of multiplicities allows for new identities as the result of unfolding political and social history. For instance, until the twenty-first century, substantial college-age populations of transgender people, or those subject to deportation because their parents had illegally brought them into the United States when they were children (i.e., DACA or Deferred Action Childhood Arrivals) could not have been anticipated. Roberts was generally correct in gesturing toward experience in his view of the importance of the college application essay, although he may not have realized how varied the experience of members of marginalized applicants can be. His restricted view may have been formed because affirmative action categories generally lined up with US Census categories for race and ethnicity. Here are the census categories:

> OMB [Office of Management and Budget] requires five minimum categories (White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander) for race. OMB permits the Census Bureau to also use a sixth category—Some Other Race. Respondents may report more than one race.[26]

But the census is limited by not allowing for a standalone category of mixed race or indicating how many possible categories could be formed by mixed or multiple combinations of the races listed.

In addition to their race, census respondents are expected to indicate their ethnicity, as Hispanic/Latino or not, as follows:

> People who identify with the terms "Hispanic," "Latino," or "Spanish" are those who classify themselves in one of the specific Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish categories listed on the questionnaire ("Mexican, Mexican Am., or Chicano," "Puerto Rican," or "Cuban") as well as those who indicate that they are "another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin." People who do not identify with one of the specific origins listed on the questionnaire but indicate that they are "another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin" are those whose origins are from Spain, the Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, or another Spanish

> culture or origin. Origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality group, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before their arrival in the United States. People who identify their origin as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be of any race.[27]

As comprehensive as the Hispanic/Latino ethnicity option is, left out are many other ethnic groups in the United States who may be marginalized, such as members of groups of any nationality for whom English is not the language of their origins.

Multiplicities extend beyond affirmative action/census designated races and Hispanic/Latino ethnicity. Additional marginalized groups would include: people who are intersexed; people who are gender nonbinary; war veterans; people with disabilities, either physical or mental; students who are older than the typical college range of ages 18–24; recent immigrants. If leaders in higher education take advantage of new tools of identity produced by their own scholars in recent decades, they might also consider categories of people who experience multiple forms of oppression or have *intersected* identities. Some multiplicities might be co-incident with older categories of race and ethnicity, but others may be newly emergent intersections, such as American Jews in a time of re-emerging antisemitism.[28] Racial and ethnic categories that were used under affirmative action policies, like the categories listed in the US census, are static, as well as procrustean.

Colleges need a richer view of real human differences within their own present and prospective communities. Gender is an important factor within multiplicities. In ways similar to how the lack of a biological foundation for human races has destabilized traditional racial taxonomies, the egalitarian recognition of LGBTQ+ people has destabilized both cultural traditions of gender orientation and gender identity. Since 1976, over the same time that minority student enrollment has increased, out of a sample of 1.2 million college applicants for Fall 2022, 2.2 percent or over 26,300 students identified as transgender or nonbinary and 3 percent or over 36,800 referred to themselves as using pronouns beyond "she/her" or "he/him."[29] This 3 percent rate projects more than half a million students out of the 18.6 million total of US college students but the relatively low numbers are more than symbolic.

Neither actual gender preferences nor transgender identities line up with traditional male–female or man–woman binaries and that destabilizes the traditional sex/gender—male/female—man/woman system. The destabilization of gender may be even more salient than the destabilization of race, because it involves greater numbers of people, overall, not only members of the LGBTQ+ communities but also cis males and females. Of course, in principle, something similar could be said for the destabilization of biological racial assumptions and taxonomies, namely, that it destabilizes systems

of race for white people, as well as people of color. But the majority of white people are less likely to believe they are affected by racial destabilization than gender destabilization. Everyone has both racial and gender identity, but white racial identities are a comfortable norm that allows white people to ignore nonwhite racial identities. By contrast, gender/sex identities permeate white racial identities. Thus, while racial multiplicities are already the actual, although unrecognized, norm on college campuses, the widespread use of pronouns after names shows that gender has also already moved beyond an unquestionable binary.

The complexities and changes in both race and gender are important for college leaders to keep in mind, for designing programs and curricula, as well as recruitment and retention. Along with replacing the subjects of affirmative action with multiplicities, if inclusion and equity as part of DEI are retired, because they are derived from affirmative action, they could be replaced and expanded through the concept of *belonging*. Before US higher ed became integrated by race and gender, traditional white male college students had no reason to wonder if they belonged to their institution. When nonwhite races and nonmale genders are added to populations, it can be seen that traditional white male college students traditionally belong, because of their race and gender. When college students were primarily all white males, the question of belonging on the basis of race or gender would not have arisen, except perhaps, for white males of disadvantaged socioeconomic class.

The idea of *belonging* needs no specialized definition, although it has specific importance and applications within contemporary higher education. Ideally, there needs to be a bond between individuals and everyone else, as well as with the mission, structures, and policies of their institution. This bond enables ease for all to participate in the same whole, with mutual respect, welcome, and affirmation. As noted in the previous section, affirmative action policies were not motivated by a desire to affirm new entrants but was merely "affirmative action" in the sense of being "positive action" or a form of direct, deliberate action. But *affirmation*, as acceptance and approval, is especially important for minority college Firsts—if they feel they belong, they will have been affirmed. Affirmation extends to policies and institutional attention and concern that tells Firsts that they matter and are being supported, economically, academically, and culturally.[30] The affirmation attendant with policies to foster belonging, as both how Firsts feel and the realities of their lives on campus, would in practice be similar to DEI policies, but the underlying concept is different. Retired would be the ideas of diversifying a whole, providing equity for those with challenged capabilities, and including Firsts into existing college life. The focus would now be on Firsts, themselves, so that they are able to view themselves and develop plans and action that flow from their being part of their institutions, and of course, their institutions as

part of them. Affirmation is also important as new groups become aware of their vulnerabilities, for instance, Jewish and Palestinian students during the student protests of 2024 (see chapters 7 and 8).

In other words. affirmative action, diversity, and inclusion have not made a broadly persuasive case for themselves. As these ideas are replaced, the idea of equity can go with them because it is an attempt to fill gaps by affirmative actions that have already failed. All programs for equity aiming to create equal capabilities for minorities can simply be replaced with programs that support improvement in skills and access to resources, which are open to everyone.

Leaders in US higher education should revise their regret over the demise of judicially approved affirmation action or diversity, toward ideas and policies that can address and support the real multiplicities of all members of their academic communities, in a general sense to deflect ideological conflict, and in specific practical ways that attend to relevant multiplicities within their actual and potential populations. Multiplicities would be more than "varieties," because their identities in the college community would signal that they needed specific kinds of support that were not necessarily related to racial and ethnic identities, although in cases of specifically race-related physical or mental harm, that connection would be salient. Racial and ethnic labels that have been deemed "invidious" would not take up all of the oxygen in rooms that include traditional, that is, racially white, members of the academic community. If white members require support, they would not be competing with racial minorities, labeled as such, to receive it. Multiplicities would vary greatly depending on geographical location and academic focus, but the net result is *Belonging in Multiplicity*.

Chapter 2

Recruiting and Retaining

Raising Enrollment and Serving Students

US College enrollment is scheduled to peak in 2025, due to falling birth rates during the 2007–2009 Great Recession. There was a 9.8 percent decline after 2010 when enrollment peaked at 21.02 million.[1] Schools in the US Northeast and Midwest are projected to experience a 15 percent drop in enrollment between 2025 and 2029.[2] This is "the enrollment cliff" that is precipitating a scramble throughout non-elite higher education to recruit and admit more students including new nontraditional ones.

The Ivies and Ivy-plus schools do not seem to be facing this precipice, although as a matter of liberal principle, they also strive to admit new kinds of students. Historian Craig Steven Wilder has documented in *Ebony and Ivy* how and why elite schools can take responsibility for their historical practices of black slavery and suppressing indigenous culture, as well as imposing Christianity. The now-elite founders of American higher education also promoted the authors and ideas of racist ideas of race, based on nineteenth-century science that has since been scientifically falsified.[3] The rest of the liberal principle held by elite schools is a genuine commitment to social equality regarding race and ethnicity, which has been challenged by the 2023 US Supreme Court takedown of affirmative action admissions policies (See chapter 1). The commitment to correcting social inequality is understood by all schools to not require the sacrifice of merit. Although, what constitutes merit is in the process of expanding throughout US higher education, beyond high grades and test scores, to include life and work experience, and character.

The drop in college enrollment affecting large public and small private institutions is deepened by reactions to rising tuition costs and the reality that a college degree is no longer necessary for well-paying jobs. Corporate America is willing to offer no-degree-required certificates, apprenticeships,

boot camps, and on-the-job training, and twenty states have removed college bachelor's degree requirements for employment. This change for state government employment is important for STARs or Workers Skilled Through Alternative Routes, such as community college, military service, some college credit, and on-the-job-training. STARs, who already constitute 50 percent of the US workforce, will soon become eligible to join the 2 million already employed by state governments.[4]

Another factor in falling college enrollment is the political and public disaffection with higher education associated with political opposition to perceived Left-leaning progressivism throughout colleges and universities and more traditional popular anti-intellectualism. During the Spring of 2024, campus protest disruptions further fueled political opposition to higher ed, evoking new threats to cut funding (see chapters 7 and 8).[5] As a result of cost, strong employment opportunities, politics, tradition, and simple aversion to the work involved in learning after high school, over half of Americans think that a college education is unnecessary and not worth the money, time, and effort. This general belief decreases the number of candidates for college, beyond the Great Recession drop in birth rates.

The first section of this chapter focuses on holistic admissions, mirrored in holistic retention. The second section considers the multiplicities in the post-traditional demographics of college students and their needs. The third section focuses on new methods for recruitment that take into account the disadvantages of K-12 youth from low-income families who live in poor neighborhoods with under-resourced schools. The final section suggests how the recruitment and retention of new multiplicities could be reframed toward student as well as institutional benefit.

HOLISTIC ADMISSION AND RETENTION

Holistic Admissions

Belonging is an intrinsic good that is more important than the instrumentality of boosting enrollment and retention, so that colleges can survive or even thrive, as goals centered on themselves. One way to achieve the intrinsic good of belonging that is also a societal good is to revise mission statements to match new enrollment messages, practices, and enrollees, and then implement the new missions. Revised mission statements can be used to generate admissions criteria, such as emphasizing values of helping or serving, and the new criteria can be matched to identification of these qualities in admissions applicants. Matching aspects of applications to mission statements has been captured in the idea and practice of "holistic admissions" that take non-academic skills and personal qualities into account. Today, holistic admissions

standards are geared to attracting more students whose socioeconomic disadvantages have made them less competitive according to purely academic merit-based admissions criteria. (It should also be noted that holistic admissions have a less progressive background, when they were used to exclude. For instance, after World War II, elite schools excluded Jewish students by evaluations of applicants' "personality" and "character" in "whole man" evaluations that favored white, Protestant, male applicants.)[6]

Medical and healthcare-related schools have been leading the way in holistic admissions criteria that match their missions, thereby expressing their motivations to find precise and principled ways to increase healthcare providers who can serve long-underserved minority populations in urban areas. However, more than half of healthcare profession schools surveyed in 2017 focused on rural populations and one-quarter focused on international populations. (This survey organized responses from 104 universities in 45 states, representing 228 healthcare professions with 66 nursing schools, 44 medical schools, 43 dental schools, 39 schools of public health, and 36 pharmacy schools.) Research is not neglected in holistic approaches since 33 percent of those surveyed target students in accord with their institutional research missions, compared to 31 percent for primary care applicants (also in accord with their stated missions).[7]

Holistic enrollment is part of Systemic Enrollment Management (SEM)—a growing administrative field in US higher education. SEM is more comprehensive than simply aiming for numerical increases in enrollment, because it includes attention to financial aid, revenue, and institutional access and prestige, as well as students' complete higher educational career. In addition to an application essay, non-academic qualities can be quantified when relevant surveys and tests are part of the application process. Applicants are given opportunities in health and medical-related fields to express their commitments to helping and serving, which align with institutions' stated missions to help and serve. Student commitments may refer to related studies, previous and ongoing employment, personal aspirations, and community service.[8]

As represented by the American Association for Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), the development of SEM that was established since at least 2014 should blunt some of the sharper criticism against the increase of administrators in higher education.[9] SEM, which is plausibly replacing both affirmative action and DEI, can guide enrollment in progressive directions in ways that faculty may not understand and cannot attend to, because they are primarily hired to teach. Faculty participation in SEM programs and policies is part of their service, whereas for administrators, it is part of their jobs. When expanded administrations serve egalitarian societal goals, care should be taken in criticizing the mere fact of administrative expansion.

Quantifiability is important for assessing holistic applications, because it can provide precision, objectivity, and the avoidance of bias. The US Supreme Court's emphasis on the importance of the application essay as an alternative to affirmative action policies (see chapter 1) is too vague to withstand scrutiny as its intended test of character. While the court named "overcoming obstacles" as an important component of desirable character, character can also be evident in patience, persistence, concern for others, self-esteem, accomplishments, doing one's duty, taking responsibility, and many other desirable traits or virtues. If good or strong character is to be part of admissions criteria, it is important to specify how it can be evaluated. Also, what qualifications do admissions reviewers themselves need to have to score "character"? Do they need to have good character themselves to recognize it in others? Should they be trained in virtue ethics? And how do evaluators know that applicants are being truthful? Complexity in answering such questions and the lack of consensus about satisfactory answers underscore the need to approach holistic admissions criteria in specific ways that can be scored, to compare or rank competing students.

Holistic admissions criteria can check off certain desirable attributes such as life experience as evidence of maturity, cultural experience and travel beyond one's place or family of origin, relevant hobbies, general life goals, and stated life purposes. More specific to what institutions have to offer, and perhaps more amenable to quantifications are: work experience, specific educational goals, achieved and aspired contributions to community well-being, and reasons for choosing the institution to which an individual is applying. These metrics can be considered together for the coherence and consistency of applications (which are likely to be based on the absence of glaring inconsistency).

Retention

As of 2021, about 40 percent of all enrolled students in colleges and universities drop out. For four-year schools, 56 percent drop out after six years. This seems not to affect the Ivies where graduation rates are 85–90 percent over four years and over 95 percent over six years.[10] The long-term income effects of not completing a college degree range from about 35 percent lower earnings compared to those who graduate, to actual poverty.[11] Also, the nonmonetary rewards of college are attenuated. Thus, admission is only part of the equation and retention to graduation completes the whole.

After students are holistically admitted, colleges and universities need to be open to learn what changes they have to make to support retention. Many of these changes can be implemented in new rounds of recruiting, especially recruitment of those who have already left institutions without completing

their degrees. One reason to concentrate on retention as a policy that is played forward is that it takes time to identify and implement new programs that provide services and support for multiplicities. Still, colleges and universities can learn a lot from communicating with students who are on the verge of dropping out, before they drop out. Campuses seeking to improve retention often do not attend to students at their point of dropping out, but instead concentrate on innovations that will support students while they are attending and tally up their retention figures after the fact. But some schools may employ "retention specialists" who work with students before they drop out, so that they stay.[12,13] However, even this does not provide information about those who actually do leave. Colleges and universities could offer small monetary incentives for participation in exit interviews and surveys, which would produce additional innovation for holistic admissions programs, as well as re-recruiting those who have already dropped out.

Altogether, what works for retention before students drop out can become policies for all students, both to retain those admitted and recruit new students. That is, what is learned as preventing students from dropping out can suggest new policies that are assets for recruiting. And what is learned from students who really do drop out can also suggest new policies for both retention and recruitment. Administrators have to become even nimbler because recruiting and retention are dynamic processes that may call for rapid institutional changes. Compared to the inertia of more usual policies for stable student bodies, recruitment and retention policies may need to change from year to year or even within academic years.

Perhaps worth considering in environments with external alternatives to continuous four-year college enrollment might be yearly partial degrees that can be added to resumes and given credit if students return to college after dropping out. Such certificates, applied for each completed academic year, could make a commitment to four-year college enrollment less risky and expensive for many potential enrollees. And if unforeseen circumstances or events make it urgent for students to drop out, their money, time, and effort already spent will not be wasted or consign them to employment for those with no college experience or diminish their sense of personal worth. In recent years, although enrollment is down, rates of graduation have been increasing. In 2023, the eight-year graduation rate at public four-year schools was 71.6 percent[14] (a figure to be reconciled with the 6 year 56 percent dropout rate in 2021, referenced above). In such recent increases, while white students have higher rates of graduation, compared to racial and ethnic minorities,[15] no one enrolls in college with the intention of not graduating. Assuming that students do not drop out casually, the will and means to graduate should be supported. Therefore, partial degrees could symbolize the good faith of all students who enroll, to the benefit of their future prospects.

Post-Traditional College Student Demographics

In *We Demand*: *The University and Student Protests*, Roderick Feguson describes how the student protests of the 1960s and 1970s aimed to bring poor people and racial/ethnic minorities into the academy.[16] Backlash against these efforts resulted in the lopsided managerial and governance pyramid of current colleges and universities, with administrators on top and faculty lower down, while donors and political instigators ply their influence among the layers. Administrators have been concerned with issues involving affirmative action, diversity, and community and societal service, but their primary goals have not been those egalitarian ideals of 1960s and 1970s. Ironically, the enrollment cliff may present those administrators, who now control admissions policies, with opportunities to realize those 1960s and 1970s socially egalitarian goals. Only this time, institutions would not only be acting charitably or because they believe in social equality, but for the sake of their own survival as they face the looming enrollment cliff. In other words, open and egalitarian college is no longer only or mainly a progressive utopian dream, but a flotilla of lifeboats for US higher ed, itself. The political caveat is that admissions policies that would admit new multiplicities need to jettison their present paradigm of identity politics in favor of race/ethnic-neutral holistic admission. And after admission, there will need to be universal practices for supporting all of the students who will make up the new multiplicities on campus. This is not merely a pragmatic response to political criticism, but acknowledgment of real human differences.

If non-elite colleges do not reconstitute (or revitalize) their student bodies through greater holistic admissions of new multiplicities, it will not likely diminish the elite schools, but make them bigger and even more attractive as other options shrink over the rest of academia. It remains to be seen whether such expanded elite schools could or would include the same multiplicities that would sustain the rest of US higher education. Because their current enrollment is about 1 percent of all college students, even their enthusiastic, committed expansion would take decades, especially if they are not eager to relinquish their highly competitive and highly expensive status and avoid apparent dilution of their vaunted academic excellence. During that period of potential elite college expansion, those who are not competitive for elite school admission and have non-elite higher educational opportunities foreclosed will simply not attend college. They will make do with employment with certificates, apprenticeships, on-the-job training, state government jobs, gig jobs, and so forth—all well paying, at least at the outset. Missing will be the cultural components of four-year educations, which might be the ultimate justification for their continued existence as societal institutions that educate (see chapters 5 and 6).

A vast increase in community college terminal associate degrees geared to practical forms of employment could widen the gap between four-year college graduates and everyone else. Regardless of initial income equalities for those well-trained, without the four-year degrees, eventual income and cultural gaps will widen societal inequalities. The enrollment cliff could be mitigated by community college enrollment expansion, to feed transfers to four-year institutions. But, affecting both transfer potential and the number of terminal associate degrees, the community college enrollment decline over the decade ending in 2022 was almost twice that of four-year schools (7.8 versus 4.1 percent).[17] If that trend continues, community colleges are unlikely to be either a reliably robust source of students through transfer to four-year colleges for bachelor's degrees. Four-year colleges thereby own the obligation to face their own enrollment cliff.

In 2024, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* published a report on the taxonomy of new enrollment demographics of the kinds of college enrollees who could mitigate the looming enrollment cliff.[18] Noted in a preamble to the report was that these would be nontraditional students, or adult learners who are typically, but not always, over the age of twenty-four and do not reside on campus or near it. (By contrast, traditional students are 18- to 24-year-old undergraduates who live on or near their campuses.) The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) provides these criteria for nontraditional students: over the traditional age, attending college part-time, financial independence from parents, working full time, having non spousal/partner dependents, being a single parent, and/or having a GED or high-school completion certificate. There is already documented experience throughout higher education, about what does and does not work for the academic success of such nontraditional students, although the *Chronicle* report clearly intended to direct the attention of academic admissions leaders to a renewed focus on these groups, in terms of the enrollment cliff. *The Chronicle* offered discussion of academic experience with adult learners, incarcerated or formerly incarcerated students, veterans, students with disabilities, especially intellectual disabilities, and student parents, as summarized below:

- *Adult learners* who left higher education amounted to over 40 million in 2023 and colleges have been trying to re-enroll them. One-third of them reside in Florida, Illinois, New York, Texas, and California. Adult learners already make up 27 percent of the college population but only one-third of private four-year colleges match that rate. The needs of adult learners include support programs that provide life and academic advice, career planning, and material help that traditional students already have from their families, such as transportation, childcare (if needed), clothing, and access to mental health services. Convenience of physically accessing college

can be met by satellite schools and digital opportunities for learning or some mix of the two. Programs of PLA (prior learning assessment) and CBE (competency not based on course credits) aim to recognize their non-academic qualifications, such as work experience.

Some schools have implemented multi-disciplinary degrees to accommodate students with varied prior courses and different kinds of employment. Prior Fs and Ds have been excluded from new GPAs and prior holds due to library fees or small unpaid balances for tuition have been lifted.[19]

For many adult learners, the financial burden of long-standing student debt, which is an obstacle to re-enrolling, may be alleviated by pandemic and post-pandemic federal forgiveness programs that have been based on service employment such as teaching or a solid history of repayments.[20,21]

- *Incarcerated or formerly incarcerated students* who have taken college courses, with access to Pell grant funds, are more likely to find employment with higher wages and less likely to experience recidivism. But they may have family and debt obligations that preclude college enrollment. Colleges are themselves wary of the risks and optics of enrolling formerly incarcerated students. Parole may preclude travel to study out of state and felony status may prove a barrier to attaining housing.

  Educational opportunities within prisons also restrict opportunities for women who, as a fast-growing population at 7 percent of prisoners, are separately incarcerated in small or remote facilities that often do not support opportunities to take college classes in prison. They may take a decade to achieve a degree while incarcerated, due to logistical obstacles of moving within the prison system to take classes.[22]
- Many *military veterans* are eligible for college enrollment under the Post 9/11 provisions of the GI Bill. Their graduation rates are high and many businesses are eager to employ them. Two-thirds of veterans who enroll in college are first-generation students, although both administrators and faculty in four-year colleges may require training in how to support them. Satellite centers for commuters are often necessary. Pre-enrollment boot camps may be needed to make veterans ready for college work, especially since they face stereotypes of being incapable of higher education, and college leaders often fail to recognize their skills. Many veterans have enrolled in community colleges and online for-profit schools, without experiencing the greater benefits of four-year institutions. Although 2.6 million veterans and their dependents have taken advantage of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, only 10,000 have attended Ivy league colleges.[23]
- Federal law has increased the percentage of students with physical disabilities who attend college but *students with intellectual disabilities (ID)* seem to have so far been left behind. Out of over 4,000 US colleges, only 320 accept students with ID. The Intellectual Disability (ID) Movement is now

over twenty years old! Included in this cohort are potential students with Downs Syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Fragile X, other genetic conditions, birth defects, and Autism. With adequate individualized support, equal access to campus resources and focus on employment and increased independence as outcomes, ID students can both thrive in college and find meaningful jobs after graduation.

Autism diagnoses are often not disclosed but estimates place enrollees at four-year colleges at 167,000 and most have already had social-skills classes in their prior education. Some schools have developed support programs, but the vast majority of these students have to learn how to fulfill their individual needs on their own.[24]

- *Parents, pregnant, and breastfeeding students* are protected by the 1972 Amendment to Title IX of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which included "sex" for non-discrimination in educational institutions receiving federal funding. Seventy percent of student parents are mothers and 40 percent are single mothers. They face lack of affordable childcare programs, lack of lactation space, and a shortage of family housing on college campuses. Rules pertaining to valid academic excuses for pregnancy or its related medical conditions and child illness are usually vague and left up to the discretion of individual instructors. Colleges still need to figure out how to make parents feel that they belong, beginning with keeping records on the parenting status of their students, allowing children on campus, and providing flexibility in scheduling.[25]

In addition to the Chronicle categories, some DACA (Deferred Admission Childhood Arrival Program) recipients who were brought to the United States as minors by undocumented parents, and also more very recent immigrants, are eligible for college attendance. The DACA Program which protected those youth from deportation and provided limited access to employment and continued residence, although without a path to citizenship, was terminated during the 2017–2021 Trump administration. As of 2023, its 579,000 membership remained frozen through ongoing litigation and self-shrinking by leaving the country, going underground, or dying.[26] In 2021, out of an original group of over 700,000 DACA, about 427,000 were enrolled in college. DACA do not qualify for federal financial aid or work-study programs, although some states, such as California and Minnesota, have provided state funding for some DACA.[27]

During the Biden Administration, legal immigration outpaced pre-pandemic levels and asylum seekers/refugees grew to numbers not seen since the 1990s. There were over 6 million immigrant encounters at US ports of entry and over 2 million asylum seekers have been legally admitted, pending court decisions about their continued stay in the United States.[28] These increases

are politically fraught and thereby subject to changes in policy. Nevertheless, while immigrant youth do reside in the United States, their citizenship status is irrelevant to their eligibility for education, in college, as well as K-12. In 2021, students from immigrant families made up almost a third of all students enrolled in US colleges and universities, up from about one-fifth in 2020. Enrollment of undocumented students has been reported at almost 2 percent of total college enrollment.[29] Immigrant student groups need both general and contextualized support services. Not only are their numbers an asset for increasing enrollment, but their international cultural "capital" can benefit traditional US-centered institutions.[30]

Also left out in the Chronicle categories are LGBTQ+ students. In states that have passed legislation against gender-affirming care for trans youth, some schools might not want to explicitly welcome this group. But the US LGBTQ+ population is already in college as one of its multiplicities. If colleges don't want to explicitly welcome them, they can take care not to emphasize messaging or enact policies that are unwelcoming to members of this complex and strongly intersected group. Supportive measures would entail providing mental health services, including gender-affirming care in their insurance policies (when legally possible), respecting individuals' chosen names, and implementing gender-inclusive housing options.[31]

It is important to keep in mind that both the *Chronicle*'s renewed nontraditional categories and the addition of recent immigrants do not line up with census categories of race and ethnicity. Also, each category may have racial and/or ethnic members that proportionally add up to greater numbers than their total presence in the US population or the populations of traditional college students. But these facts are coincidental in a post affirmative action and beleaguered DEI recruiting climate, if they are not admitted based on their racial or ethnic identities. Many of the schools likely to recruit and admit them did not need affirmative action recruitment policies to achieve diversity on their campuses, when affirmative action was permissible. Student multiplicities are likely to respond to policies that make college attendance desirable for them at the points of admission and enrollment. Once they are on campus, if their groups of affinity, shared national origin, or culture, have unmet needs compared to other student groups, their voices will propel their institutions toward more egalitarian and progressive support policies.

NEWER AND YOUNGER PROSPECTS FOR RECRUITMENT

In Fall 2022, 61 percent of 18–24-year-olds were not enrolled in a degree-granting institution. But 62 percent of those who completed high school,

or had a GED, or about 2 million, did immediately enroll in college.[32,33] In 2023, there were about 18 million enrolled in college, with 15 million undergraduates and 3.1 million graduate students. About 2.4 million were first-year students. Each year, there are about 40 percent of high-school graduates or about 1.3 million, who do not attend college, which means that if half of them enrolled on a yearly basis, college enrollment could increase by about 65 million or almost one-quarter.[34] The *potential* group for college attendance is actually larger than the 1.3 million high-school graduates who do not attend college. The high-school dropout rate decreased from 9.7 percent in 2006 to 5.1 percent in 2021.[35] But even if that downward trend continues, high-school dropouts could be recruited for eventual college attendance.

Regardless of how many high-school students end up going to college, their enrollment appears to be the culminating stage of an academic process that begins at about age fifteen. Brookings has identified ninth-grade GPA as a predictor of success in high school, high-school graduation, college attendance, and life well-being after that.[36] There is a wide consensus that some of the circumstances of poor children, especially, but not only, racial and ethnic minorities in urban areas, do not support college enrollment. Eighty-five percent of US counties with low educational achievement are in rural areas. Higher education opportunities there include community colleges, religious colleges, private liberal arts colleges, branch campuses of public universities, and tribally controlled colleges.[37] All of these institutions face under-funding and declining enrollment, and their closures diminish communities. As a result, K-12 high-school students in rural areas, where resources are underfunded at far-flung distances, should not be overlooked.

Overall, students from low-income families face several obstacles that need to be addressed on an ongoing basis. They are more likely be the first in their family to enroll in college and may not be encouraged to pursue higher education by family members. Financial pressures may take precedence over enrollment, if they must work to support themselves or others. They are more subject to the *summer melt* (they are admitted but don't show up to enroll and may require ongoing intervention until they do enroll).[38] Also, the college preparation of Firsts may be disadvantaged in several ways: K-12 schools in poor areas are under-sourced due to less funding from property taxes and they tend to employ less qualified teachers;[39] standardized tests are biased in favor of traditional white middle-class family experience, which perpetuates social, cultural, and economic inequalities;[40] *stereotype threat* (reminders of how their identities as associated with low performance) may cause high achievers to under-perform on tests.[41] These obstacles may result in low-income students not fully understanding what college is, apart from leading to higher incomes (which is not always true) or believing that the status of a college degree is out of their reach. Needed is more higher education reach-out to

K-12 schools in their communities, as well as to other local service groups, such as churches, and sports and agricultural clubs.

Since there is currently no way to estimate how many primary and middle-school students could and would attend college if effectively motivated—except that some would—all that we know is that there is a substantial yearly pool of high-school graduates who could be recruited for college enrollment every year. Those who do not complete high school and can't go to college and those who do complete high school and do not go to college are members of a group whose untapped contributions to society and their own well-being, as well as their potential to build enrollment for the sake of colleges' survival, should be considered for college recruitment.

At present many admissions and enrollment officers report high-stress expectations from college presidents and burnout from trying to do too much with too little resources.[42] Needed is a better understanding by top administrators of the obstacles that admissions and enrollment officers face, and serious attention to augmenting their resources, especially salaries for low-paid junior staff. Recruitment of high-school and junior high-school students could be assisted by existing students in institutions who are enrolled in the Federal Work Study program.[43] Some colleges have resisted spending their work-study funds on community services such as primary school mentoring.[44] However, deploying existing college students to recruit applicants for college enrollment, including coaching them about the application process, would combine both community service and the fulfillment of institutional needs. Work-study students already enrolled in a college or university are natural personal ambassadors for the benefits of their existing college attendance. And, as enrollees in work-study programs, their own economic circumstances could make them role models for potential college students from low-income families.

Most non-elite colleges and universities already have proportions of 40 percent racial and ethnic minority students and about 60 percent female students.[45] The recruitment and retention of non- or post-traditional students already has a foundation in these numbers and does not represent anything earthshakingly new, although the needs of such students may require further support services and administrative and faculty training toward delivering education to them. The tasks are to not lose numbers already vouchsafed in a climate of falling enrollment, by retaining them until they graduate, and to figure out how to appeal to student cohorts, within the 60 percent of 18–24 year olds who do not attend college. Some of that work will require strengthening or beginning college recruitment programs that reach out to middle school, as well as high-school students who do not see themselves as college bound.

For all student groups—traditional four years, new college firsts, and community college transferees—although the cultural capital developed through

college study is life transforming long term, every higher education institution will have to pay greater attention to job placement after graduation. This includes advanced study post-graduation and immediate employment. Colleges and universities are already well-equipped to focus on graduate study applications but immediate first jobs for graduates will require stronger alliances with corporate and nonprofit employers, including those offering paid internships. There is already corporate interest in recruiting community college graduates.[46] Not to imply that four-year schools should help their graduates compete with community college graduates for desirable jobs, but that they should better acquaint and prepare them for the kind of jobs their degrees can still command, as well as make them aware of how college augments their cultural capital.

The last year of high school may be too late for students to become viable applicants to college without prior preparation. Analogously, institutions should pay increasing attention to job skills and relevant job knowledge offered in their curricula across varied fields, beginning in the first year of enrollment. This would match the trend for employers to demand such capabilities and their increasing willingness to consider nontraditional learning experience, as well as their renewed focus on recruiting among community college graduates.[47]

However, efforts to boost enrollment and retention may not effectively solve institutional financial problems. Colleges are more than businesses because the education they deliver and research they support extends into the future. The experiences of those in a specific college community become important memories for individuals and their relations and associates, which are a form of cultural capital that is invaluable and cannot be given a price or sold. But this transmission of cultural capital occurs in specific institutions that operate as businesses—they cannot outspend their revenue.

Enrollment with tuition payments are a major source of college income. This means that college budgets have to be skillfully managed in anticipation of individual enrollment cliffs. Financial loss, accompanied by cuts in programs and reduction of faculty and staff, may accelerate falling enrollment as word gets around and present and prospective students lose confidence that an institution has the resources in faculty and courses for their majors, to graduate them. At some point in time, if projections to avoid this spiral are not positive, even though everything has been done to boost enrollment and retention, then college leaders could avoid closure through buyouts from stronger institutions or mergers with others in similar circumstances.[48]

College closure is the worst unwanted outcome because it is a kind of institutional death through which important parts of living individuals also expire. Before then, financial exigency can be avoided if cuts are made and efforts to rebuild occur at the same time, with full transparency among administrators,

faculty, staff, students, trustees, alumni, and relevant external constituents.[49] Renewed, continual focus on new forms of recruitment and retention, can be part of such rebuilding.

REFRAMING NEW RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Concerns about the enrollment cliff have motivated widespread efforts by college leaders to pay more attention to low-income students and those who are also racial/ethnic minorities, incarcerated, adult, disabled, veterans of military service, or parents. In time, more attention will also be paid to very recent immigrants. This overall project can only work if its cynical institution-serving aspects are outweighed by genuine motivations and effective policies toward the well-being of these new groups. Until recently, it could have been said that they should be included. However, the mindset of inclusion is an insufficient impetus, because it presupposes that all is fine with those already "in" so that more can be expected to join without change for new arrivals (see chapter 1). Needed is affirmation, an institution-broad recognition and expression that those so far not included in higher education need to experience belonging. Their minds, aspirations, and autonomy need to be recognized, just as they are, and from there, college can be presented as their choice. In meeting them where they are, so that they can belong to their institutions, and their institutions belong to them, higher education can support these new multiplicities in developing their life journeys, while college itself is fulfilling. This means that *remediation* is not the right approach, because if students are admitted in part for non-academic qualifications, then those qualifications need to be taken seriously as foundations upon which to build, through college study.

College leaders will probably continue to mine for new enrollees based on (racial and ethnic) identities associated with disadvantage. But such identities cannot be used for legal reasons as well as their incomplete representation of real non-academic qualifications. "Multiplicities" as introduced in chapter 1 go vastly beyond the census categories of race and ethnicity. But individual identities as part of multiplicities would be inchoate as the result of quantifiable admissions processes that after affirmative action are scrupulously neutral or blind concerning race and ethnicity. It is now left to students who are admitted to identify themselves in distinctive ways through student groups, after they are admitted.

Colleges need to learn how to represent themselves as beneficial for all members of communities from which they hope to increase enrollment, as their enrollment paradigm shifts from students attracted to them among whom they can make selections, to students they have to go out and get and

persuade to stay. Adult learners of varied demographics and especially the 18–24-year-olds who do not attend college need to be "sold" on the project of college as both a profitable investment and a worthwhile experience. Given competing jobs from corporate and state employers and negative political and popular attitudes toward "experts" and higher education, generally, this is not an easy "sell" during the last year of high school. Creative college recruiters will need to learn how to reach out to middle-school students. New, enthusiastic and open-hearted welcomes, as well as new student-centered supports and services will be required, budgets will have be re-adjusted and new sources of funding explored. Surviving and thriving will be arduous for many institutions, but the stakes are very high, for their potential students, the institutions themselves, and society, overall.

Chapter 3

Correcting Adjunct Injustice

Conversion to Lecturers

Adjunct faculty in US Higher Education make up 40–75 percent of college teachers, depending on the institution. At community colleges, adjunct instructors made up two-thirds of faculty in 2022. By 2024, the proportion was one-half, although likely because of falling enrollment rather than changes in adjunct status.[1] The situation of adjuncts is a moral problem, which consists of their lower pay for the same work as full-time faculty, their unstable "fire at will" employment, and their exclusion from normal academic faculty life.

On average, full-time faculty (both lecturers and tenure-related) earn over $70,000 a year starting salary, plus health, pension, and other supporting benefits. Administrative salaries are well over $100,000 and some college presidents are paid $1 million or more.[2] Adjuncts as contingent part-time faculty are a financial underclass, averaging one-quarter to one-third of full-time faculty pay in most institutions, even though they may teach more courses over several institutions. In 2020, the average adjunct pay was about $3,500 per course for a yearly salary of about $25,000.[3] That low pay results from the use of market forces to alleviate budget shortfalls from falling enrollment, increasing institutional expenses, and falling state financing. Low pay of adjunct faculty has disadvantaging life consequences for them and precludes their pursuit of a stable academic or scholarly career. This situation renders hypocritical the professed liberal ideals expressed in institutional mission statements and accepted by most members of academic communities. The situation of adjuncts is not deliberately unfair or discriminatory, but the ongoing adjunct situation, because it is well known and goes on uncorrected, is unjust.

In this chapter, the overall financial structure of US higher education is summarized, first. The second section focuses on the adjunct situation. Practical solutions to the adjunct situation are then proposed. Next, moral reasoning for those or similar solutions are provided to motivate academics

to undertake the work toward concrete solutions. And finally, the last section is a proposal for what can be done while the situation of adjunct faculty continues.

THE OVERALL FINANCIAL STRUCTURE OF US HIGHER EDUCATION

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), there are 6,606 institutions of higher education in the United States, of which 4,360 grant degrees, including 2,863 four-year schools and 1,538 community colleges. In 2020–2021, their total expenses were $702 billion, as follows: $450 billion at public institutions; $239 billion at private nonprofit institutions; $14 billion at private for-profit institutions. To put the $702 billion in total higher ed expenses into perspective, the US GDP (gross domestic product) was about $23 trillion in 2022 and money spent on sport recreation was about $700 billion or equal to higher ed, while money spent on health care that year was $4.3 trillion or over six times higher ed.[4]

Higher education expenses decreased about 2 percent during the 2020–2021 pandemic year. after increasing by 2 percent in 2019–2020. The largest *single* expense was faculty salaries and benefits. However, the largest *core expense category* included academic support, student services, and institutional support for noninstructional activities such as admissions, student activities, libraries, and administrative and executive payments.[5]

Most public, state, regional, and minority-serving institutions are under financial pressure in the 2020s, because their source of funding has fundamentally changed in recent years, especially after the Great Recession of 2008–2009. Loud alarms began sounding just before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, when a number of institutions made drastic cuts in operations. In an October 2019, Issue Brief, PEW (Pew Charitable Trusts) noted changes in state and federal funding. Historically, states paid the lion's share, so that in 1990, they were contributing over twice that of the federal government. But after the Great Recession (2008–2009), federal funding grew through Pell Grant Fund (named after US Democratic Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island) financial aid paid directly to students, while at the same time, state funding, which goes to institutions' general operations, dropped from more than double to only 12 percent more than federal totals. In 2017, combined government support equaled about 34 percent of public college expenses.[6] The rest of higher ed income is made up of endowments, gifts, and student tuition, and fees, including payments from international students.

Endowments, as based on donations, are closely watched funds that support tuition and scholarships, among other needs. The most highly rated and

prestigious colleges and universities have the highest endowments and are the most solvent. For instance, Harvard University's 2023 endowment was estimated at $50.7 billion and Stanford University had $40.9 billion. Large state schools may have $30–40 billion endowments but the size of their student population amounts to less per student. Among HBCU's, Howard University's endowment was $863 million and Spelman College's was $459 million. From a 2022 study of 687 participating schools, the US mean college endowment was $203 million for the 2020–2021 academic year, but that mean inflates endowments of schools that are under $1 million.[7]

Except for the Ivy and Ivy-Plus schools, all of US Higher Education is now in a financial vice, with influential political attacks, on one side, and falling enrollment, on the other. By 2023, it was evident that declining enrollment and revenue, combined with competitive pressures against raising tuition, and higher costs due to inflation, would represent challenges for at least the rest of the decade.[8] At the same time, American confidence in higher education had drastically declined. Reasons cited by GALLOP pollsters were rising costs and politics. While Democrats were concerned about costs, Republicans objected to the perceived Democratic and Progressive politics and bias within higher education.[9] This lack of public confidence in the knowledge and skills of experts in higher education can become a real financial factor when conservative politicians attack and influence federal, as well as state, funding. For instance, while Pell grants have steadily increased after the late 1960s, and are hugely popular among the US population, there has been periodic congressional resistance to proposals for Pell increases that would fill students' "unmet needs" after all financial aid and their own and family payments.[10]

THE SITUATION OF ADJUNCT EMPLOYMENT

According to a 2021 Report from the American Council of Trustees and Alumni Institute for Effective Governance (ACTA) noninstructional spending, including student services, grew 29 percent and administration 19 percent, compared to instructional spending that grew 17 percent. Also, from 2012 to 2018, colleges and universities "prioritized hiring less expensive and often less-credentialed instructional staff and more expensive administrative staff." ACTA's report, "The COST of EXCESS: Why Colleges and Universities Must Control Runaway Spending," focused on the taxpayer and student cost of mounting college loan debt, because such increases in spending drive up tuition and boarding costs to unaffordable levels.[11] Somewhere in the increase in core costs, along with the comparatively low increase in instructional spending, the increase in adjunct faculty hiring, at lower pay

than full-time faculty, became baked into budget calculations and expenses. However, over the time period covered by the 2021 ACA report, according to NCES:

> The total number of faculty at degree-granting postsecondary institutions was 4 percent higher in fall 2021 than in fall 2009 (1.5 vs. 1.4 million). From fall 2009 to fall 2021, the number of full-time faculty increased by 15 percent (from 729,200 to 837,100) while the number of part-time faculty decreased by 7 percent (from 709,900 to 662,100)

In 1970, full-time faculty were 369,000 and part-time 104,000. Part-time faculty numbers peaked at 762,400 in Fall 2011 but decreased to 652,900 in Fall 2020, for the first full academic year of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Fall 2021, the number was higher than in Fall 2020, but lower than in Fall 2019, which was before the pandemic. Overall, part-time faculty decreased from 49 percent to 44 percent between 2009 and 2021.[12] It is not clear if this decrease was the result of falling enrollment that led to immediate drops in adjunct hiring or deliberate institutional reorganization to increase the numbers of full-time faculty. In either case, the number of adjunct faculty remains substantial overall.

Returning to the ACA report, the question hovers of whether prioritizing "hiring less credentialed instructional staff"—read, "adjunct or contingent faculty"—is related to "more expensive administrative staff." Obviously, if costs can be cut on instructional staff, there would be more money for administrative staff, and vice versa, but beyond that, the increase in "less expensive" instructional staff and "more expensive" administrative staff merit separate consideration. The more expensive administrative staff could be necessary, and the less expensive instructional staff could be both adequate for a specific institution and satisfactory for that staff. Or, the more expensive administrative staff could be unnecessary and money saved, there, would not necessarily affect adjunct pay scales. Or, there could be cost increases related to adjunct pay scales, with no effect on administrative expense.

Market forces steer people to become employed as adjuncts. They cannot get better paying and more secure full-time academic jobs, because there are more qualified college teachers seeking full-time jobs, than available jobs, overall. And in specific academic "job markets," such as tenure-related jobs in the humanities and liberal arts, the imbalance is greatest. Some adjunct faculty may not want full-time jobs or they cannot get them and have chosen adjunct employment to retain their connection to higher education and fulfill their desires to teach in their areas of expertise. Others may not want to leave a particular geographical area. No one can say that adjuncts are not motivated to work as adjuncts or that they have not chosen their employment. So choice is not the issue here, just as choice is not the issue in considering

US manufacturing and assembling labor that is outsourced to countries with lower wage scales and less stringent worker protection laws. People may freely choose a situation that is not good for them, and it can remain possible for others to assess that situation and advocate ways to change it so that it is not their perceived best (or only) choice.[13]

As those unfamiliar with academic culture understand the title, "Professor" refers to everyone who teaches in higher education, including adjunct or contingent faculty. Full-time faculty and administrators may address or refer to adjunct faculty as "Professor," as do students. But "Professor" as a term of address for adjunct faculty is at best a hollow honorarium, and at worst, a mockery, for several reasons. Tenure-related faculty (those who have tenure and those who are in position to get tenure) in higher ed belong to cultures that include collegiality among themselves, both on campus and throughout their fields, and a shared sense of economic and professional security through their positions in a respected general institution. They are also rewarded with recognition that results from their individual work, within their departments, throughout their institutions, and throughout their fields of specialization.

Full-time faculty are expected to participate in institutional governance or "service" and despite its tedium, this gives them a democratic voice to decide or advise, in most areas of institutional operation, including searches for hiring colleagues and administrators, curricula evaluations and changes, grounds, parking, and architectural additions and changes. They can design their own courses and have institutional support for fair grades to which students might object. They can count on health and pension benefits. They may receive additional funding to support their research and professional travel or to develop new courses. They can apply for and receive sabbatical time off, usually with full pay for one semester or 60–80 percent pay for a full academic year. They have their own offices, and if the space is sometimes shared, it remains permanent from year to year as a place to work and meet with colleagues and students.

While adjunct instructors teach the same courses as tenure-related faculty, and the grades they give students are recorded and counted in the same ways as grades given by full-time faculty, adjuncts are neither fully integrated within academic professorial cultures, nor have access to their advantages. They generally have no say in institutional governance and frequently have either no office space or else share office space that may change from semester to semester. Evidence suggests that adjuncts are motivated to give higher than deserved grades because student satisfaction in course evaluations may count toward their rehire. Grade inflation in adjunct-taught introductory courses, especially in health and STEM fields, may mislead students as to their abilities when they enroll in more advanced courses.[14] Student advisement by adjuncts is not ongoing. Everyone employed in academia is aware of the professional status of adjuncts, but students are usually quite ignorant of

the adjunct situation. Students may rely on adjuncts for reference letters for awards, internships, or applications to graduate programs, unaware that the status of adjuncts is less likely to make positive letters from them effective, compared to references from full-time faculty.

There are rarely systems for full-time faculty to mentor adjuncts and support their career development over time. Observation of adjunct teaching tends to be cursory and superficial, so as not to fully address, or even avoid, real issues of instructional quality. The exclusion of adjuncts from normal academic life impacts their ability to do any kind of research, which is not expected, supported, or typically even recognized. Someone who teaches seven, eight, or more courses a year, to barely make a living, usually has little time and energy to pursue scholarly research, and if they do, there may be bias against their career status that hinders publication. Also, travel to professional conferences is typically not funded.

The population of college adjunct instructors of concern, here, does not include MA or PhD students who have reason to be confident of more secure academic positions, after they complete their degrees. Also irrelevant to present concerns are adjuncts who have retired from full-time teaching careers or who have tenure-related jobs and seek adjunct employment to supplement regular paychecks or practicing professionals who teach on adjunct bases in law and medical schools. The adjuncts of concern are those who are employed as adjuncts for a de facto career, with no hope of advancement or real participation in academic life. They are included among faculty but do not belong to their institutions as full-time faculty do.

Over two-thirds of all adjuncts are older than age forty, and most sources agree that about 60 percent are white (although statistics about minority percentages vary), with about 55 percent female and 45 percent male.[15] According to a 2015 TIAA-CREF Institute report, over two-thirds of adjuncts are employed in the humanities.[16] This is not surprising insofar as the humanities and liberal arts have been hardest hit by budget crunches, and more recently, political attacks. (See chapter 4 for how some of these departments could reset themselves.)

The preponderance of adjunct instructors in an academic field is positively correlated with fewer full-time hires over time. Once a pool of candidates for adjunct employment is available for an academic department, the rise in adjunct employment is supported because full-time employees who leave or retire can so easily be "replaced" by adjuncts to spare the energy and expense of hiring full-time employees. In this way, knowledge of a pool of available adjuncts constitutes a moral hazard and perpetuates that pool.

On its face, salaries and awards in higher education are positively correlated with merit. Successful scholars have higher salaries than those less productive and administrators with more responsibilities are better paid than

those who report to them. There are systems of rank, among administrators, within faculty, and between tenured and untenured faculty. Tenure-related faculty typically begin as assistant professors, move up to associate professors, and then the rank of full professor, which is usually terminal (except for distinguished professors.)

So even among the tenure-related professoriate, all are not "professors" with the same official rank, and official rank is important to academics. But because tenure is such a valuable form of job security not paralleled in other economic sectors, different salaries for assistant, associate, and full professors are not strongly disputed. It is understood that assistant professors can move up in rank, with salary increases. Promotion is based on merit, mainly in research, but also on teaching quality and service to the institution. But the low pay, job insecurity, and low status of adjunct faculty is unfair to them, because they are typically hired to teach the same courses taught by tenure-related faculty or full-time lecturers, regardless of merit or the potential to achieve merit that junior tenure-related faculty already have. This situation goes beyond pay numbers and what adjuncts experience on the job—it affects their lives. Let's consider three recent concrete examples, as reported in national media, of exactly how the job and life situation of adjunct employment can end lamentably:

Margaret Mary Vojtko's death in 2013 sparked a debate about the status of adjunct instructors who had been attempting to unionize at Duquesne University. Vojtko had taught French on an adjunct basis for twenty-five years. Her earnings had been about $10,000 a year and she had cancer, with no medical insurance. She died of a heart attack at age eighty-three, "destitute and nearly homeless." Vojtko attended a meeting between union officials and adjunct instructors just months before her death. She made it clear that her situation was not a demand for charity but for a basic living wage, with medical benefits. After her death, a nation-wide debate ensured on Facebook, Twitter, and varied listservs. But a Duquesne University representative stated that there were no plans to allow adjuncts to unionize.[17] In 2020, a federal appeals court ruled that Duquesne University was not obligated to allow unionization, because its status as a religious institution provided an exemption.[18]

Thea Kai (T. K.) Hunter died at age sixty-two of heart failure and multiorgan damage in 2018 in New York City. Her 1978 BA was in biology, art, and history. In 1996, she earned an MA in art history from Hunter College. She went on to earn a second MA and then a PhD at Columbia University in 2005. Hunter specialized in the eighteenth-century histories of enslaved peoples in the Atlantic world. Before her death, she was co-editing *The Politics of History: A New Generation of American Historians Writes Back*, for Columbia University Press. She was hired for and resigned from a tenure-track assistant

professorship at Western Connecticut State University in 2006. Hunter was African American, and students there assumed she was part of the janitorial staff. For the next twelve years, Hunter taught history and art history at Princeton University, Columbia University, Montclair State University, the Horace Mann School, Manhattan College, Brooklyn College, the New School, and the City College of New York. Mounting untreated health issues resulted in her death by multiorgan failure. Her friends and colleagues attributed her decline to the stress of making a living on an adjunct basis.[19]

Marc Lamparello graduated from Boston College, Phi Beta Kappa, in 2004, after a year of studying abroad at Oxford University in England in 2002–2003. He earned an MA from the University of Pennsylvania in 2006. He was lead pianist and choir director at Saint Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in East Rutherford, N.J., for several years. At age thirty-six, he became a philosophy PhD student at the CUNY Graduate Center, in 2013. He published a book on philosophy and religion written in aphorisms in 2016, *Reason and Counterpoint*.[20] Lamparello lived in New Jersey and was employed as an adjunct instructor in the General Education program at Lehman College, CUNY, in the Bronx, and at Seton Hall University, in New Jersey, during the 2018–2019 academic year.

Lamparello had been treated for depression and obsessive compulsive disorder as far back as 2007. Some years later, he began to have psychotic symptoms. In May of 2018, he stopped seeing his psychiatrist. In October of 2018, Lamparello went to the police headquarters in Hasbrouk Heights, N.J., and reported that people were trying to kill him. Three months later, he went to the White House in Washington, D.C., and told Secret Service agents that he wanted President Trump to go ahead and give the State of the Union address in the House chamber, despite the threat of a government shutdown. Days later, Secret Service agents turned up at his mother's house in New Jersey and searched his room. His mother begged him to take his medication, but he refused. He returned to treatment in March 2019 and was diagnosed with schizophrenia.

On April 15, 2019, Lamparello was arrested for defiant trespass when he refused to leave the Sacred Heart Cathedral in Newark after closing time. He was examined by emergency medical services personnel, who determined that he did not pose a threat. On April 17, Lamparello cancelled his classes and purchased a one-way plane ticket to Rome, as well as a room reservation for a hotel near the Vatican. Later in the day, he drove his van into New York City and parked it near St. Patrick's Cathedral. He entered the cathedral grounds with two two-gallon cans of gasoline and starter devices that could ignite the gasoline. This was the same week as the fire at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. After being turned back by ushers who smelled the gasoline,

he left the cathedral, but was stopped on the street by NYPD officers who questioned him about the cans of gasoline. After determining that his parked van was not out of gas, he was initially charged with resisting arrest, defiant trespassing and interfering with the administration of the law. His arrest was widely reported in the media that night. On the following day, April 18, he was fired from his jobs at Lehman College and Seton Hall University.

Lamparello was assessed unfit to stand trial, and he received psychiatric treatment in jail. About eleven months after his arrest, he was released from Riker's Island jail, as part of a program to alleviate overcrowding from the COVID-19 pandemic. His psychiatric treatment was curtailed with his release. He had been scheduled for admission to a hospital for extensive psychiatric treatment, and if he completed it, the prosecutor agreed that if he then pled guilty to the charge of attempted arson, there would be no further pending charges. But the treatment was delayed, partly due to a requirement that he be quarantined after leaving Rikers, and partly due to bureaucracy. His mother tried desperately to get him treatment, to no avail.

Lamparello's moods fluctuated after his release and at times he enjoyed music and food. But within a couple of weeks, he tried to jump off the George Washington Bridge and was stopped by police. One week after that, exactly one year after his arrest at St. Patrick's, Lamparello jumped to his death from the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge. (His family lived in New Jersey and both bridges to New York were easily accessible to him.)[21]

Observers and colleagues within academic communities generally attribute accounts such as the foregoing to the low pay and life stress of adjunct employment. What justification can there be for unequal pay for the same work? Tenure-related employment is holistic, whereas adjuncts are paid on the basis of the fifteenth-century form of labor known as *piece work*—each course they teach is a "piece." (Or else, adjunct instructor jobs could be viewed as an artifact of a division-of-labor model, derived from factory assembly lines.) By contrast, tenure-related faculty are contractually paid for teaching, to which they are expected to add their research and institutional service. However, the amount of research is often not specified in job offers, and institutional service, such as advising students or being members of institutional self-governing committees, tends to be unevenly distributed among faculty of the same rank, with women and people of color typically doing more service than white males.[22]

Adjunct and full-time faculty officially have different jobs, but this is only the result of separating teaching from the triad of teaching–research–service, which tenure-related faculty are expected to perform. An adjunct job is not different in kind from the teaching component of a tenure-related job. This is both what makes adjuncts attractive employees—they are

qualified to teach—and what is wrong about their situation of far less pay for the same work done by full-time faculty. If it is not the same work, but the institution treats it as such concerning course grades, the situation seems fraudulent. If their teaching and grading are the same work, and it is treated as the same work, both of which are true, then they should be paid commensurably.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS TO THE ADJUNCT INSTRUCTOR SITUATION

Despite the court ruling for Duquesne University that exempted religious institutions from permitting workforce unionization, unionization does seem to be an obvious solution for the plight of the most disadvantaged adjuncts. Securing labor rights would seem to be effective for demands for higher pay and benefits, especially health care. Full-time faculty have increasingly joined unions and with them, adjunct employees are usually also unionized.[23,24] However, faculty unions are specific to single institutions, while adjuncts tend to be atomized and when they are not employed, which can and does happen with their employment "at will," they cannot be active in their unions or union chapters. Moreover, improvements in their working conditions that do not approach salaries and benefits of full-time faculty, but are merely improvements in their situation as adjuncts, do not address that situation itself.

Corrections of the situation of adjunct instructors will likely need to come from those with the power and authority to address the finances of faculty hires and curricula of institutional situations, as wholes. It will be necessary not only to improve situations of adjuncts, as adjuncts are now, but to radically disrupt or abolish the entire adjunct situation in principled ways that would entail as little harm as possible to those currently employed as adjuncts in an institution. What might that look like?

The goal of abolishing adjunct teaching, as now practiced, would include keeping contingent employment as a well-paid temporary option for sudden student surges in enrollment and substitution for full-time faculty with unplanned leaves. The tradition of visiting professors, who usually receive contracts for a year, livable salaries, and benefits, is already well-established and could serve as a model for future adjunct employment. As enrollment decreases, which it is currently projected to do through the 2020s, there will naturally be less need for adjunct instructors, who as systems are now set up, would simply not be rehired. This is both an opportunity to change the adjunct situation and an added responsibility for institutions to demonstrate concern for adjuncts who are suddenly put out of work.

Adjuncts who are both retained or whose hire is pending could have their positions replaced with full-time lecturer positions. Lecturers have greater job stability than adjuncts, better pay, and health and pension benefits, and they are expected to provide institutional service. They have designated offices and can advise students, and full-time faculty may be more motivated to mentor them. Overall, this adds up to a recognized commitment to their institutions. If financial constraints appear to be an obstacle, extra costs spent on adjunct-to-lecturer conversions could be offset by replacing tenure-related new hires with lecturer positions to meet teaching needs. This could be cost-saving because lecturers teach more courses, for lower pay, than tenure-related faculty. However, since lecturers are not tenured but typically work with renewable contracts lasting several years, some observers have put them in the same category with adjuncts as "contingent faculty."[25] While this is technically correct, it is important to distinguish between the difference in pay, job stability, and benefits, between adjunct and lecturer faculty. For reasons noted, both adjunct instructors and lecturers are included in faculty, but adjuncts do not belong to their institutions, whereas lecturers do.

The financial needs of adjunct instructors who cannot become lecturers, in institutions where they teach too few courses per semester, could be addressed with coordination among institutions in the same geographical area among which adjuncts commute for their jobs. For instance, an adjunct who teaches two courses a semester at A university or college and two at B, could teach four courses at either A or B. Academia has got itself into a brutally capitalistic marketplace with its employment of adjunct instructors. Solutions in keeping with general principles of non-exploitation will require that institutions take responsibility for the general adjunct situation, which may involve hiring adjuncts as lecturers, who have not previously been employed by the same institution. In time, this trend could develop into abolition or drastic reduction in coercive and exploitative adjunct employment. However, in times of budgetary cut-backs, it compounds the injustice to adjuncts if they are merely fired in conjunction with increases in class size for full-time faculty. The increased class size is an inconvenience for full-time faculty, not an injustice. But simply relying on the fireability-at-will status of adjuncts, with no attempt to place them or provide other support, is morally negligent. (While some adjuncts may be able to claim unemployment insurance, the time necessary for them to have been employed before they can do that, depends on state law.)[26]

THE MORAL ISSUE AND ARGUMENT

The foregoing practical solutions to the adjunct situation are likely to remain pie in the sky without moral motivation. The adjunct situation involves

human well-being, which is exactly what signals that an issue requires moral or ethical attention. Such attention is not entirely abstract or cognitive but has emotional components invoking empathy, sympathy, and a sense of urgency to act. Philosophers, religionists, theorists, and professional ethicists usually proceed from foundational principles such as: We should act to provide the greatest good for the greatest number; every human being has rights to equal treatment in the same situations; doing the morally right thing is a virtue for both individuals and organizations. The good for the greatest number would draw adjuncts into the same higher education culture with full-time faculty; equal rights to the same treatment would translate into equal or comparable pay for the same job of teaching college courses. Colleges and universities should expand the virtue of paying employees fairly, by adding measures to increase their professional and personal well-being.

The mission statements of colleges and universities tend to be vague in extolling "light," "being rather than seeming," and commitments to social justice and excellence. These statements do not specify who is to receive the benefits of proclaimed maxims and values or who within institutions are obligated to deliver them. If the answer is "everyone" on both sides, it might as well be no one. Neither moral nor political, or even explicitly religious in church-related institutions, the mission statements are expressions from, and for, general human elevation. For instance, there are no mission statements that the primary goal of a higher education institution is its financial security, above all other concerns. Neither are colleges or universities self-identified as businesses. But they are businesses and must balance their books or go out of business or downsize. Although, financial imperatives are not typically part of their mission statements, except for trust in their fiduciary roles. It is therefore shocking when bare financial considerations result in real harm to some members of their academic communities (see chapter 9). Pursuing the morally right course of action regarding adjuncts would be virtuous in keeping with implications of the mission statements of most colleges and universities.

Returning now to Lehman College Adjunct Instructor Marc Lamparello, as discussed above. I joined Lehman as a tenured full professor in August 2019, so I was not a Lehman faculty member when he was arrested on April 17, 2019. But I have read an email the then-president of Lehman college sent to the general listserv the day after. The president reported that Lamparello had been arrested and was no longer a Lehman employee. The email focused on reporting that Lamparello was no longer part of Lehman, because he had been arrested, and that efforts were underway to find a replacement for him, to fulfill course obligations to students.

When Lamparello killed himself a year later, it was about a month past the school's pandemic shutdown on Mar 12, 2020. Faculty and students

were scrambling to carry on with their work, remotely. News of illness and death from COVID-19, especially in the Bronx, home to many of our students, was all-consuming, over-whelming, and scary. At the time, there was no "frame" or publicly shared general apprehension of the situation of adjunct instructors that included their low pay, job insecurity, low academic status, and sub-par benefits. Now that I myself have acquired that frame, while I do not think that Lehman or any of its employees behaved wrongfully toward Lamparello, it seems clear that there was something amiss in the nature of his connection to the college. Since he taught asynchronously online, no one in the Lehman academic community may have even met him in person. Had he had the contractual stability of a full-time position, his firing, even for cause, might have required more of a process. With the medical benefits of a full-time position, it's possible that he would not have fallen through the cracks of mental health treatment after his release from Rikers. Or, if colleagues knew him, they may have been able to support his family's efforts to get him treatment. Still, these are only hypotheticals and all that is known is that Lamperello was an adjunct instructor whose life had a very sad end.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE NOW ABOUT ADJUNCT FACULTY

Given a general moral orientation toward the situation of adjunct faculty and specific abject and sad outcomes, together with knowledge that correcting the situation will take time and energetic persuasion, what should, and could, be done immediately? First, national higher education organizations should form investigatory committees to record current numbers of adjunct instructors, on a yearly basis. These statistics should be made available to all participatory institutions, along with recommended best practices regarding pay, benefits, and additional forms of support for adjuncts. Ideally, the American Council on Education (ACE) and The American Association of University Professors and their members and affiliates would initiate such measures. Within specific institutions that employ adjuncts, without significant cost increase, the following proposals could be implemented immediately, following directives from concerned administrators:

- The college or university employing adjunct instructors should issue a statement acknowledging the status and disadvantage of adjunct instructors, explaining how they are paid per course taught and can be fired or not rehired, at will. It should be clearly stated that courses taught by

adjuncts have the same official status as courses taught by full-time faculty. This statement should be posted with a link from the institution's general website, so that all members of the academic community, including students, can see it.

- The rank of all faculty members, by name, including adjuncts, should be posted. The pay range of each faculty category (full-time lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors) should be linked to the institution's website, on a yearly basis, so that all members of the academic community, including students, can see it.
- All course listings for current semesters should state the rank of the instructor teaching the course—adjunct, lecturer, or assistant, associate, full professor.
- Institutions might revisit their intentions and their effects on adjunct faculty and students to use "Professor" as a term of address for adjunct faculty members.
- Colleges should appoint Human Resource (HR) advisors and facilitators for adjunct faculty to provide institutional support, including: information about both physical and mental medical benefits and services, and access to outside agencies, and sources of emergency funds, if necessary. There should be full disclosures to adjuncts about their contractual rights and the rights of their employers regarding their employment. In some cases, the institutional HR advice and facilitation could be provided with faculty–union liaisons.
- The process for hiring adjuncts should be as detailed as the process for hiring full-time lecturers, with job standards stated, departmental interviews, and full record-keeping.
- There should be opportunities, in scheduled events, each semester in which adjuncts are employed, for full-time faculty to meet with adjunct instructors in their departments, to become familiar with their intellectual interests and pedagogical experience, with options to mentor them if sought on both sides.
- As soon as plans for correcting the adjunct situation have been approved for action, this information should be broadcast to all members of an academic community.
- Specific departments should keep adequate yearly placement records of their PhD graduates, and chairs and administrators need to limit PhD admittees to numbers likely to achieve full-time employment, given the record of the department. This is especially important in university systems that hire their own PhD's as adjunct faculty.

Implementation of these and other proposals will both further transparency about the situation of adjunct faculty and show that institutions and academic

communities are taking responsibility by acknowledging their presence and contributions, while correction of the adjunct situation is pending. As described, full correction of the unjust adjunct situation would eliminate large numbers of adjunct positions as the role was converted to full-time lecturer positions.

Chapter 4

Resetting the Humanities

Returning to Intellectual Values

Since 2019, I have been teaching undergraduate philosophy courses at Lehman College, CUNY. Lehman is an Hispanic-serving four-year college of the City University of New York, located in the Borough of the Bronx, which is one of the poorest counties in the United States. Student demographics for 2022 have been calculated as follows: 55 percent Hispanic or Latino, 25.4 percent Black or African American, 7.6 percent White, 7.39 percent Asian, 1.54 percent Two or More Races, 0.207 percent American Indian or Alaska Native, and 0.131 percent Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders.[1] For many Lehman students who are first- or second-generation immigrants, English is a second language. Many are the first in their families to attend college. Almost none begin college at Lehman or transfer to it from a community college, with philosophy in mind as a major. Usually, they first enroll in a philosophy course to fulfill a college degree requirement. Some are indifferent to philosophy or find it a strangely demanding "subject" because they have to use critical thinking to engage with it, as part of their spoken and written coursework, that is, they are required to learn philosophical skills. Lehman students are polite, so although they do not say so, it's clear that some of them hate philosophy. Others take to philosophy almost immediately and the fearless among them promptly declare it as a major.

Not only are their family members skeptical about the monetary employment value of philosophy as a major, but many are not themselves confident about what they can do with it, beyond perhaps, referring to it in applications to law schools. The record of Lehman philosophy majors who go on to graduate school in philosophy is not robust. But nonetheless, many of my students do find philosophy intriguing and earn A's. I think that philosophy is a good example of the humanities or liberal arts, because it is a discipline that has

endured for over two-and-a-half millennia, it has no immediate practical use, and it is intellectually challenging.

I have offered my own viewpoint to begin this chapter, so that readers can see that I am not writing from a purely theoretical position. The widely advertised problem about the decline of the humanities and liberal arts is difficult to define and pin down to figure out what should be done to strengthen their roles in college curricula. We should also keep in mind that most adjunct faculty are employed in the humanities (see chapter 3). The first chapter section focuses on difficulties in defining the humanities and liberal arts. The second section is about reasons or causes for the decline of the humanities and liberal arts. The third section focuses on what should be done.

DEFINING THE HUMANITIES AND LIBERAL ARTS

What are they? Let's begin with the current *Encyclopedia Britannica* entry:

> Liberal arts, college or university curriculum aimed at imparting general knowledge and developing general intellectual capacities in contrast to a professional, vocational, or technical curriculum. In the medieval European university the seven liberal arts were grammar, rhetoric, and logic (the trivium) and geometry, arithmetic, music, and astronomy (the quadrivium). In modern colleges and universities the liberal arts include the study of literature, languages, philosophy, history, mathematics, and science as the basis of a general, or liberal, education. Sometimes the liberal-arts curriculum is described as comprehending study of three main branches of knowledge: the humanities (literature, language, philosophy, the fine arts, and history), the physical and biological sciences and mathematics, and the social sciences.[2]

Britannica's entry is confusing, because it conflates subjects in the humanities and liberal arts with the idea of a liberal arts college curriculum that includes both the humanities *and* sciences. When we speak of the "decline" of the humanities and liberal arts at this time, we agree that the liberal arts generally aim to develop general intellectual capacities, but we also tend to contrast the humanities and liberal arts with the sciences. This division is evident in recent promotion of studies in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) at the expense of the humanities and liberal arts. Conservative government officials, business leaders and employers, high-school advisors, colleges through their advertising and budgeting, and students themselves have joined the STEM bandwagon. Their rationale is that in a time of rising college costs, tuition is an investment that should pay off and STEM majors promise higher incomes than humanities and liberal arts majors.[3] This privileging of STEM majors is not neutrally accepted by many

in the humanities and liberal arts, and some are understandably defensive. A sense of intellectual distinctness can also be reactive to the assessment that C. P. Snow became famous for in "Two Cultures," his 1959 Rede lecture at Oxford University, Snow said:

> A good many times I have been present at gatherings of people who, by the standards of the traditional culture, are thought highly educated and who have with considerable gusto been expressing their incredulity at the illiteracy of scientists. Once or twice I have been provoked and have asked the company how many of them could describe the Second Law of Thermodynamics. The response was cold: it was also negative. Yet I was asking something which is about the scientific equivalent of: Have you read a work of Shakespeare's?[4]

Thus, according to Snow, those in the humanities look down on scientists for not having the knowledge they have, while themselves knowing nothing about science. Snow insisted on specific knowledge from both areas—the Second Law of Thermodynamics and a work of Shakespeare's.

Usually, those in the sciences and humanities do know well enough what their contrasted fields are generally about. But this does not mean that shared or universal definitions readily circulate. So, again, what are the humanities and liberal arts? At present, lists of the humanities and liberal arts vary from college to college. For instance, at Lehman College, there is a school of Arts and Humanities that lists the following departments: Africana Studies, Art, English, History, Journalism and Media Studies, Latin American and Latino Studies, Music, Multimedia, Theatre and Dance, and Philosophy.[5] At the University of Oregon, my previous institution, the College of Arts and Sciences, lists the following humanities majors through these departments: American English Institute, Arabic Studies, Chinese, Chinese Flagship Program, Cinema Studies, Classical Civilization, Classics, Comparative Literature, Creative Writing, Comics and Cartoon Studies, Digital Humanities, Disability Studies, English, Environmental Humanities, Ethics, Folklore and Public Culture, French, German, Greek, Humanities Program, Italian, Judaic Studies, Japanese, Latin, Linguistics, Korean, Medieval Studies, Northwest Indian Language Institute, Philosophy, Portuguese, Religious Studies, Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies, Romance Languages, Spanish, Spanish Heritage Language Program, Swedish, Theatre Arts, Writing, Public Speaking and Critical Reasoning, Yamada Language Center.[6]

Notice that Lehman includes History in the Humanities, while the UO leaves it out (because it is categorized as a social science). *Britannica* includes Mathematics under the Liberal Arts, whereas others may include it under the sciences, as separate from the liberal arts. Notice more generally that such lists do not specify what makes their entries humanities or liberal

arts or how to draw the overall map. Many who are familiar with the content of some of these fields could construct a general definition of the humanities and liberal arts but such definitions are likely to vary widely. *Britannica* offers a real definition, but it has built-in bias against the humanities and liberal arts, viz.: "Liberal arts, college or university curriculum aimed at imparting general knowledge and developing general intellectual capacities in contrast to a *professional* [italics added] vocational, or technical curriculum." As a philosopher, I do not object to having my work categorized in contrast to vocational or technical studies, but I cannot accept that philosophy is not a profession. Student academic work, criteria for college teaching, and independent research, some of this very specialized, do constitute a profession, not only for philosophers but for all fields in the humanities and liberal arts, in their own distinctive ways. What *Britannica* may mean is that the professions are distinguished in requiring licensure before they can be practiced and that their practitioners are well-paid and well-respected. Doctors, lawyers, and certified public accountants, for instance.

In line with *Britannica*'s distinction, families whose students declare humanities/liberal arts majors may interrogatively exclaim: "What are you going to do with that?!" Of course, graduates with BAs in these fields can be employed across the work spectrum, by both profit and nonprofit entities. Their pay may be lower in the beginning, but comfortable middle-class incomes do come later on in their careers (see the following section). Or, they could get advanced degrees and teach at community or four-year colleges. But that is not the point in contrasting the liberal arts with the professions in "What are you going to do with that?!" The point is that companies hire accountants, computer coders, and chemists, as such, but do not offer jobs to historians, Africanists, philosophers, or composition specialists, as such. Also, there are very few humanities majors or even those with MAs or PhDs who go into independent practice (the Philosophical Counseling Movement not withstanding).[7] Still, humanities majors can get jobs in companies that recognize their ability to apply their knowledge and skills to other subjects.

Instead of saying what they are contrasted with, we need positive definitions of the humanities and liberal arts that say what they are. Although such definitions would vary, they are important because they express something about thought and feeling that are shared by all humans. The liberal arts are studies, professions, and their performances and artifacts, which use reason to gain knowledge about the social and individual worlds. For those who like it, this knowledge is easy to acquire and produce, especially if they have reflected on being human among others who are human. Wouldn't it be wonderful if the rest of society agreed that the humanities and liberal arts are very important activities and products and that if they do not immediately garner relative riches and respect, it just doesn't matter?

Writing in 1990, philosopher John Searle narrowly defined the humanities/liberal arts by focusing on introductory courses and reading programs, mainly for freshmen. Searle also limited the humanities to literature and history. Pertaining to the liberal arts, Searle's prescription for what it means to be well-educated is as relevant and controversial Today, as it was over three decades ago:

> First, the student should have enough knowledge of his or her cultural tradition to know how it got to be the way it is . . . For the United States, the dominant tradition is, and for the foreseeable future, will remain the European tradition. The United States is, after all, a product of the European Enlightenment. However, you do not understand your own tradition if you do not see it in relation to others. Works from other cultural traditions need to be studied as well.
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> . . . .
>
> If these two streams, both the political–social and the philosophical–literary, are well organized and well taught, *the claims of the various minorities should have their place*.[emphasis added] Intelligently taught social and political histories of Europe and the United States, for example, should recognize the history of all of the major components of European and American society, including those that have been treated unjustly. *It is important, however, to get rid of the ridiculous notion that there is something embarrassing or lamentable about the fact that most of the prominent political and intellectual leaders of our culture over the past two thousand years or so have been white males. This is just a historical fact whose causes should be explored and understood. To deny it or attempt to suppress the works of such thinkers is not simply racism, it is unintelligent.* [emphasis added]
>
> . . . .
>
> *You need to know at least one foreign language well enough so that you can read the best literature that that language has produced in the original, and so you carry on a reasonable conversation and have dreams in that language*. [emphasis added][8]

Searle's prescriptions endure because he holds out a goal of making students well-educated, something that it is still assumed can be provided by liberal arts education. He also provided standards for knowledge of the sciences, basic economics, and philosophy, as well as clear writing and speaking, all of which still seem reasonable. But he runs up against a powerful contemporary paradigm that rejects a view of excellence in which *the claims of minorities should have their place.* This paradigm insists that it is not just a fact of history that white males have shaped excellence in the past and that skepticism is warranted about the excellence they created, as oppressors. Also, it is not clear whether the "foreign language" knowledge should apply to those who

grow up bi- or multi-lingual. (The prescription that one should have dreams in their foreign language would be difficult to verify insofar as others do not have access to one's dreams.) The real sticking point is of course Searle's assumption that the generality of being well-educated can be achieved in an age when culture itself has become sharply divided.

Reasons for the Decline of the Humanities

Between 2005 and 2020, undergraduate majors in the Humanities fell about 30 percent in the United States. Ben Goldstein, writing for *The Cornell Diplomat*, which is produced by students, observed that losses to the humanities as majors have not been limited to the United States in recent years. Between 2015 and 2018, bachelor's degrees in the humanities fell 5 percent, masters by 11 percent, and doctoral degrees by 9 percent, within the thirty-six countries of the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development). Goldstein notes that STEM graduates made up only 7 percent of EU employment and 6 percent of US employment in 2014. Only 28 percent of STEM majors are employed in STEM fields after graduation, led by 51 percent in computer science. Goldstein suggests that changes in curricula in Western democracies have not been popular and that authoritarian regimes have instituted oppressive measures against scholarship in the humanities in Eastern Europe (Hungary), Asia (Singapore), and Latin America (Brazil). Humanities majors are reputed to be more critical of their governments.[9] In other words, the promotion of STEM discussed earlier has not led to the lucrative results it promised and the international decline in humanities majors has a political aspect.

It's not surprising that in 2023, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences found that except for four states, humanities majors had median incomes at least 40 percent higher than those who only had a high-school diploma.[10] Those who graduate with STEM majors earn $10,000 to $30,000 more in their first jobs than those with degrees in the humanities. However, over time, this gap disappears, especially since humanities graduates have the flexibility to branch out into different kinds of management fields, finance, business, and law. Added to the misperception that most Americans (71 percent) have that STEM fields pay more than humanities majors is the alacrity of college administrators to cut humanities and liberal arts programs. The US federal government does the same thing. The National Science Foundation spent $7.16 billion on research in 2022, including 1 billion for STEM education. The National Institutes of Health budget was $41.2 billion for 2022, while the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) had a budget of $180 million.[11]

Weaker earning power is a safe reason to state for the decrease in humanities majors, but it may not be the real reason, given politics. Financial need is recognized as a politically and culturally neutral bottom line, whereas political controversy can make people very uncomfortable by drawing them into the content of controversy. It used to be a truism that it was easier for Americans to talk about their sexual situations than their monetary ones, but now it is easier for many to talk about their monetary situations than their political ones. According to a Pew Research Center 2021 report, 60 percent of conservative Republicans found it stressful to discuss politics with those with whom they disagreed.[12] Earlier in the 2000s, the line between conservative Republicans and Democratic liberals or erstwhile liberals and progressives had been drawn, and also tightened.

Worldwide in the twenty-first century, the growing importance of politics in public consciousness became increasingly dependent on political party affiliation. What used to be simply opinions on cultural issues, such as support for transgendered people, free choice in abortion, affirmative action for racial and ethnic minorities, awareness of societal racism, generosity in immigration policy, and confidence in scientific expertise, became political issues, tightly tied to political party affiliation. (Notice that those who questioned scientific experts would not likely have praised the humanities, so that the politicization of the humanities has also been a politicization of science, leading to an aversion to any general form of the liberal arts, or to college itself.) This transition was supported through social media and increasingly political, but narrowly tailored-by-algorithm news sources from Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram, and so forth. News and views that were already tied to political parties could change in accord with evidence of what the politically constituent public seemed to think and want. Politicians learned to get in front of pre-existing cultural parades and make the cultural issues political with the full force of legislation and judicial rulings—the law—behind them. This has also resulted in what was political becoming personal.

The political as personal, based on prior positions in the so-called culture wars, is an inversion of the older feminist idea that *the personal is political*. The idea of the personal as political meant that what people experience as private problems, for example, sexual harassment or unwanted pregnancies, are in fact widely shared problems that ought to be viewed as public, and from there amenable to political governmental, that is, legislative and judicial solutions. That idea was widely successful, for a while, until it was overtaken by the political as personal so that opposing positions in the culture wars have become, in effect, party platforms. Because the content of these party lines often affects people in concrete individual ways—racial preference, abortion, and gender change policies affect people in their most personal experiences—political party affiliation can now form personal identity. Awareness

of shared political party affiliation also creates bonds among individuals who belong to the same political party or "tribe."[13]

It is a small step from the political as personal, to identification and aversion toward college subjects that are controlled by faculty who appear to align with one of two political parties, which is not the party of family and friends. In this regard, consider the well-known Leftism of the majority of faculty who teach courses in the Humanities. For instance, from 1950 to about 2000, "Leftist" faculty grew from about 40 to 60 percent. But in the 2000s, over 80 percent of English faculty identify as politically left, while in history, political science, and fine arts, the identification is about 70 percent. Furthermore, the US public has not at the same time become majority Left. Exact numbers are less important than broad public perception, because political views are believed to be more likely influences on humanities and liberal arts pedagogy than they are in STEM teaching.[14] Political identities, as well as monetary anxieties, therefore need to be taken seriously as a primary reason for STEM major popularity and preferences.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE IN RESETTING THE HUMANITIES?

Like other changes in US higher education, in elite schools, declines in humanities majors have not so far resulted in drastic administrative cancellations of their subjects and programs. But throughout the remainder of US higher ed, cuts in humanities majors and programs have been extreme. One way to save the humanities has been to redesign programs that prepare students for professional degrees, by including more practical versions of traditional humanities courses. And/or, humanities courses can be made part of general educational core requirements.[15] However, more practical or "applied" humanities courses do not preserve the core of many traditional humanities courses. For example, business ethics and medical ethics are not the same as "ethics" or "moral theory," according to most philosophers. And making humanities courses a degree requirement does not address the fact that students themselves have been shying away from humanities majors, because students who take humanities courses only because they must do so are not likely to approach their studies with enthusiasm or even open minds.

Since 1990, when Searle wrote, many of the Dead White Men have already been purged from college curricula in literature, history, and related fields. And with that purge, there has been a decline in majors in those fields, which as suggested may have political, as well as economic causes or reasons. However, Searle in 1990 was making an intellectual or theoretical argument, but by now, political reality has already descended upon the humanities, so that

more students may be politically motivated not to choose majors within them, including some who would have been attracted to the humanities before their politicization.

It may seem as though the humanities still need to be re-invented, made more enjoyable, more fun, more relevant to the present, and/or more entertaining, in order to keep them from being pushed into further obscurity or even oblivion. They could be renamed or better connected to popular culture or social media or whatever students seem to want, to be made popular again. In sum, they could pretend to be something other than what they have historically been, in order to attract more students. But valiant though its aims may be, this project tilts at windmills. Students who are concerned about future earnings might be open to the idea that serious knowledge and scholarship in the humanities and liberal arts could be a valuable asset, but employment-minded college Firsts are unlikely to be persuaded about the practical use of frivolous or trivial pursuits in these fields. Making philosophy fun or "playful," for instance, is a disservice to the serious work required by that discipline. Also, playful, "fun," or entertaining versions of any of the humanities are unlikely to be free of politicized, progressive, social-transformation missions, so that potential students on the non-Left side of this politicization are unlikely to be attracted or re-attracted to humanities or liberal arts majors.

Alternatively, an obsession with relevance could lead us to believe that the humanities have been replaced with opinions on social media, corporate offerings such as ancestry.com or google translate, talking heads, and pure entertainment. The task would then be to make the case for why college offerings are better. But students already know that, or they would not even consider college, to begin with.

The traditional humanities or liberal arts were historically developed and consumed by groups who have historically been leisured. As such, they are at odds with the new identities of the new multiplicities who have sought college degrees since the late twentieth century. They are also at odds with the old multiplicities who have generationally attended college and are concerned about the needs and aims of the new multiplicities, as their allies. But they are in line with those who want to preserve the traditions of their parent and grandparent academic generations. Champions of the new multiplicities have succeeded in making the humanities/liberal arts multicultural or identitarian. Embers of Searle's battle can still be fanned into internecine academic flames. But these two sides of identitarians/multiculturalists and old-school traditionalists should join forces if it is not too late to address the fact of the political absentees who are not enrolling in their programs and courses. Even if it is too late to correct political impressions, the reconciliation of the two sides would in itself be valuable.

Needed is a focus on the humanities as an educational asset that completes education for both the absent politicized and the new multiplicities. Taxonomy also has to be clarified in each institution, given the unlikelihood of universal subject divisions. The liberal arts are broader than the humanities but they need clear descriptions, such as whether they include mathematics and general knowledge of science. In institutions where the humanities are combined with something more popular, such as the Arts, it needs to be made clear, when robust enrollment in the combination is due to the subjects that humanities is combined with.[16] Or, the humanities can be definitively separated from the Liberal Arts, but then space should be created for discussion of their politicization, in the classroom, as well as in research and extracurricular activities, such as student protests (see chapters 7 and 8). The worst scenarios unfold when administrators panic from financial or political pressure and begin cutting programs and firing humanities faculty, without prior consideration based on careful discussion. Such summary action registers as betrayal to tenured faculty members.[17]

The content of humanities courses, whether focused on the scholarly histories of their fields or oppressed identities of race, ethnicity, or gender, is less important than how that material is presented. Many outside of academia are now vigilant if one political side seems to be emphasized. Needed is avoidance of even merely apparent proselytization or pedagogical appropriation of the classroom as a means for transforming society by politically transforming the minds of students. That may happen, but there needs to be sufficient educational space for students to do it freely, on their own, as autonomous adults. For instance, many of the traditional humanistic texts used universal language, appearing to apply freedom and reason to everyone, when their doctrines were in reality restricted to white men. Students need to decide on their own if the groups with which they identify can simply be included in such doctrines or whether the doctrines need to be rewritten from scratch.

Academic teachers are not preachers, therapists, political coaches, or advisors, and those who teach in the humanities need to figure out what their lanes are and stay inside of them. In the wake of Spring 2024 college protests, Harvard signaled that it would not issue political statements going forward. In 1967, The University of Chicago had issued its now famous Kalven doctrine:

> The instrument of dissent and criticism is the individual faculty member or the individual student. The university is the home and sponsor of critics; it is not itself the critic. It is, to go back once again to the classic phrase, a community of scholars. To perform its mission in the society, a university must sustain an extraordinary environment of freedom of inquiry and maintain an independence from political fashions, passions, and pressures. A university, if it is to be true to its faith in intellectual inquiry, must embrace, be hospitable to and encourage the widest diversity of views within its own community. It is a community but

> only for the limited, albeit great, purposes of teaching and research. It is not a club, it is not a trade association, it is not a lobby.[18]

Neither Harvard's nor the University of Chicago's announced policies are bottom up from the classroom at this time, or the result of any strong re-conceptions of humanities pedagogy, much less faculty deliberation. The humanities have already been re-configured in ways unanticipated in 1967. Administrators more or less overlooked new doctrines and received opinions, in upholding academic freedom; some faculty members and students have expanded their roles of dissent and criticism to include both the activism of campus protests and pedagogical advocacy of politicized subjects. Faculty–administrative unity on such issues would be an important service to present and prospective students but the basis of such unity has to be clarified.

So-called "tenured radicals" continue to have academic freedom and if their partisan speech in politically divisive times draws criticism from donors, verbal violence from congressional committees (see chapters 7 and 8), or threats of physical violence from opposing activists, their colleges and universities are obligated to do the best they can to protect them. The classroom attendance of explicitly, politically partisan teachers may swell as they continue to preach to their choirs. But the real danger is that net student attendance is decreasing, not only in their classrooms but through decreases in student enrollment in the humanities, generally, and even colleges and universities, overall. Faculty members have only a general and vague obligation to support the institutions that employ them, but they have specific, concrete obligations to allow students who disagree with them, even for political reasons, to state and write their opinions in relevant courses, without even implied negative judgment. The classroom should be a free speech zone that teachers vigorously support.

In a May 2024 *Chronicle of Higher Education* opinion essay, James Shulman, vice-president of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) observed that colleges are remarkably resistant to change. One reason is that a horizontal institutional structure means that similar institutions cooperate professionally and compete with each other, so that a change in one would require a change in all. This creates formidable barriers against change in the humanities: PhD programs tend to replicate disciplinary approaches more relevant to the past than present and rewards for humanities faculty are focused on highly specialized research. Schulman concludes that decline in the humanities may not reflect widespread "distaste" for them so much as a need for new interdisciplinary approaches such as credit for digital work and community-involved projects.[19]

Needed in Schulman's prescription is greater awareness of external political, as well as economic, pressure. For instance, when institutions "cancel" controversial speakers, they do not always offer alternative forums in which

their disruptive ideas can get calm hearings and responses. Despite their reputation for being somewhat obscure, both student and faculty ideologues in the humanities are remarkably eager to protest and dramatize differences of opinion on socially controversial issues that have now been solidified into political positions in US society. Faculty members in the humanities may be the only members of academic communities who have the skills and knowledge to diffuse, tame, and productively move such disagreements forward, on levels of reasoned and reasonable discussion. In other words, the question may not be, "How can we better attract students?" but "How can we stop scaring students away?"

Of course, some students simply on their own, without political influence, might not like to hear that US society is racist in present practice and its legal history, that race, including biological race, has been constructed by society, that male or female gender is similarly a social product, or that there is no rational proof for the existence of God. This could be thought to apply especially to American students who have been raised with optimistic views of the United States, its history, their present society, and even their immediate worlds. Religion can also be an important factor. But pessimistic views or pessimism, in general, did not deter prior generations from being attracted to the humanities and neither is Western Europe, which has experienced the same decline, notably optimistic in the American way.

The foundation for informed and calm discussion needs to be based on prior commitment to basic logic and reliance on facts in forming conclusions. The importance of facts connected to objective reality—no matter how it may be described—is an essential standard for both agreement and respect for positions with which one does not agree. In "The Storm Over the University," the same essay in which Searle set forth requirements for becoming well-educated, he criticized the then-current excoriation of objective methods for discovering truth or objective reality.[20] It is a great irony that the humanist scholars to which Searle referred, or their students, now have to explain to their students what facts and reality are, in order to successfully apply critical-thinking skills to contemporary conspiracy theories. But they (we) do have to do exactly that.

The alternative to bringing those who have been alienated from the humanities and liberal arts by recent political changes, into spaces where opposing cultural and political views can be calmly and non-judgmentally entertained, would be for humanities faculty members to accept that recent political divisions will be reflected in their classrooms by the absence of those who do not agree with progressive or Left ideas. The survival of the humanities could therefore be viewed simply as dependent on how students line up with larger societal political divisions. This is a reckless path because should society become substantially more "Right," or even if the present division continues,

funding for the humanities will continue to decline, and so will teaching employment in those fields.

And yes, of course, college teachers have academic freedom and will be protected by their institutions—but only so long as those institutions can afford to do so—financially, in courts of public opinion, and socially. The perceived political orientations of individual humanities faculty may be well-researched, with strong humanistic foundation and good will. But this last is exactly what has to be demonstrated, over and over again, to those who disagree. To call for such discussion, in the classroom and beyond, is not to take a position in the recent battles over "wokeness" in academia, but rather to invite discussion about the actual issues at stake in "wokeness" and "anti-wokeness," rather than the charges themselves in general ways.[21] The pedagogical approach should always be specific, issue by issue. Broad conflicts that imbibe already politicized general categories such as "woke" or "anti-woke" should be avoided, because they do not support careful and reasoned discussion, but rather reproduce and further entrench ideological and political battles. For examples: if the issue is abortion or free choice, talk about what that is in all of its nuances; if the topic is "institutional racism," say what that is and be prepared to examine factual claims for its existence; if the issue is critical race theory, define it. Instructors should begin with questions so that everyone does their own homework on an issue.

This approach is more foundational than John Stuart Mill's famous free speech doctrine that one should be prepared to give reasons for one's own side, even if it is known to be right. That dictum presupposes the existence of sides. Educational discussion should begin on a level before "sides" can even be identified. Free speech according to Mill presupposed free individual choice of opinions, whereas we now have to recognize that individuals will form opinions based on what they believe others, who they know, may think.[22] The pedagogical task is to create the conditions for being able to develop and choose opinions through classroom study and student participation. This is more work for faculty than to simply proceed from conclusions on culturally and politically contentious topics, because any conclusions may go beyond students' academic work, into their lives. They therefore deserve to discover for themselves how these conclusions may be reached. Debate, where one "side" wins, has nothing to do with this process. Instead of debate, inquiry should be supported.

Outside of the classroom, in C-suites, concerning immediate, institution-wide financial pressures, many colleges with state funding have had to adjust to structural deficits and often the need to cut spending comes as a sudden emergency. Closing institutions are the worst outcome and firing tenured faculty in the humanities in order to avoid closing could be avoided with advance preparation (see chapter 9). Effective downsizing can make

institutions stronger if based on evaluations of what they do best in consideration of traditional or revised missions; Case studies of collaboration among institutions can provide blueprints for both budgetary preparation and downsizing. Moving forward, top administrators need to anticipate budget shortfalls before they happen. Administration itself has expanded and become more expensive, while money spent on instruction has not kept pace. Shared faculty governance should become more active, with institution-wide transparency about what top administrators do and what their decision-making processes are. This would give faculty members more opportunities to reflect on their own roles in institutional changes, as democratic stakeholders in enterprises of higher education.

Chapter 5

Social Class à la carte

How Firsts Can Remain Loyal and Still Move Up

US high-school seniors compare the benefits of college degrees to other options. College enrollment generally goes up when the economy turns down. But if the economy is booming with low unemployment, college enrollment by low-income minority students decreases. Good money can be made with high-school diplomas and skill certificates. Some high tech and energy companies now offer paid on-the-job training without any college degree, with salaries in the $60,000–100,000 range. The mantra, "No Degree, No Problem" has been popularized by politicians.[1] A two-year community college associate degree or a four-year senior college degree may not result in much higher pay for first jobs. So, more money in the long term has to be emphasized by college recruiters who buy into the assumption that college attendance is mainly about being able to make more money. Economy-up-or down, college recruiters sing the same refrain: "Come to college and make more money!" This leaves out the intellectual and lifestyle value of a college education. This chapter and chapter 6 are about how the experience of college for students is important for their development and well-being in ways apart from their future income.

College is an opportunity for low income and minority students to develop skills that are otherwise reserved for the middle class. The college experience can support thinking and decision-making processes that are both useful and valuable. College students can learn to think critically about the world and current news, beyond their immediate wants, needs, and duties. More important, they can be given the time and support to just think. The college experience of the mind provides informed autonomy to design one's own life after graduation. The recruiting slogan should be: "Come to college and live your best life!"

The first section of this chapter is about upward mobility with social class "à la carte." The second section is about learning as leisure, and the third section explores critical and organized thinking.[2] The last section sums up these connections among race/ethnicity, class, leisure, and critical/organized thinking.

UPWARD MOBILITY WITH CLASS À LA CARTE

Living one's best life through college involves upward socioeconomic mobility. The economic part of this is already well attended to. Here, the subject is social mobility, the cultural and individual aspects of social class. Many college "Firsts" (or of the first college-attending generation in their families), may be reluctant to consciously pursue upward social class mobility although they are comfortable with the aspects of economic upward class mobility.

A college degree is a tool for higher income that secures the long-term ability to raise a family and contribute to extended family and community improvement. Such goals can be material: a nice place to live, a good car, money for health care, vacations, and what amount to luxuries from where one starts out, including paying for one's own children to go to college, and resources to help others with shared backgrounds. All of these goods are worthy goals and important for quality of life, but they are not the whole story of what college has to offer Firsts, both during the years they attend college and lifelong.

The college experience of minority Firsts rarely mirrors that of traditional, relatively privileged, and usually white students from middle-class homes. Many Firsts still live at home with their parents or else they have their own families with childcare or elder responsibilities. Most have to work at jobs less than ideal, while attending college. All too often, college is something necessary for long-term goals, which they squeeze into their busy, stretched-thin lives, without giving much thought to their personal experience of college, while they are there.

However, college introduces new lifestyles to even the most instrumentally motivated students from low-income backgrounds. Their intellectual experiences may make them aware of potential jobs and professions that they had no idea of—never dreamt of—before attending college. At the same time, they have opportunities to acquire new intellectual practices, avocations, and hobbies, which are all, otherwise, activities of the middle class.

Racial and ethnic minority college Firsts are typically not middle class and they are unlikely to aspire to becoming middle class in the social dimension of class. This resistance can be a component of their lived pre-college

identities that are not limited to boxes they check or abstract labels others apply to them. Their class backgrounds may be associated with immigrant or racial minority status, the latter often with inter-generational poverty. These backgrounds are not merely statistics that apply to them or stories that can be told, but concrete lives lived with other members of families and communities. Such backgrounds often inspire strong loyalty, while at the same time, Firsts may attend college to better their lives economically. As a result, many Firsts may resist total changes for themselves, in those aspects of social class that they have grown up to associate with snobbery and privilege. They are sensitive to self-superiority among dominant racial and ethnic groups and elite people of color. As a result, they are not motivated to acquire the aspects of social class that they believe characterize people who they have regarded as looking down on them.

Groups of people of color, academics, and ordinary people are now reasonably comfortable in talking and writing about race and racism. But discourse about class, apart from income and wealth, remains unexplored and even taboo. Higher education for minority Firsts acquaints them with middle-class lifestyles that exceed higher earning power. Elements of such lifestyles can be chosen, without fully changing original social class identities. But isn't money important for buying intangible goods, such as good health and education itself? Income–health curves and income–education curves are well known—more money seems to result in better health and education. However, recent studies by John Mirowsky and Catherine E. Ross suggest that education increases income because it increases health first. Based on studies of statistics that hold income constant, Mirowsky and Ross argue that education drives both income and social status, by improving health. The connection of education to health does not run through greater use of the medical system by the better educated, but in the potential for getting more fulfilling full-time employment, making healthier lifestyle decisions, and being more in control of one's life. For instance, fulfilling jobs allow for greater job satisfaction and less work-related disease-causing stress. Based on statistical study, Mirowsky and Ross plausibly conclude that gains of autonomy from structured learning environments in both secondary and higher education are life-changing skills that are transferable to later stages of life.[3]

New theoretical approaches to social class are very useful for considering the situation of college Firsts. Classical theories of class were rooted in Marxist ideas of power and economics. The whole of human history could be understood through the lens of class struggle that would ultimately result in a revolution led by the working class. The dominant class in a society derived its income and wealth from the dominant means of production; capitalistic profits were the result of what corporate owners and managers siphoned off from the difference between the costs of production, including wages paid,

and what they got from selling their products. Workers needed to be paid only enough for them to be able to continually show up for work, and they were alienated from the parts of products they produced in factories with divisions of labor.[4] The working class was thus pictured as monolithic and oppressed by capitalism as an economic system that should be overthrown. Marx and Engels emphasized class struggle.

More recent theories of class describe the psychology, sociality, and phenomenology (first-person experiences), of how actual people experience class and choose aspects of a class different from the one they were born into. In contrast to Marxism, these theories are not political in their aim to criticize class within a capitalistic consumer system. The approach is more descriptive than normative, insofar as consumer capitalism is here to stay. The idea of class struggle is given up in favor of class imitation and appropriation. In his 1979 *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu provided an idea of social class as composed of different kinds of "capital": economic, a person's wealth and income; social, who a person knows; symbolic, relating to status; political or the amount of political power someone has; and cultural, the person's tastes in a consumer economy and the activities or hobbies they pursue.[5] Wendy Bottero and others use the idea of *stratification*, to show that although "how where we start in life affects where we end up," other influences may intervene.[6] Bottero writes of a new notion of class as "an individualized process of hierarchical distinction":

> "Class" processes have become more implicit and less visible, but the effects of class are no less pervasive in people's lives. . . . Explicit class identification and awareness dissolve, leaving behind a hierarchical version of "class," implicitly encoded in identity through practice. . . . The importance of this theoretical change cannot be over-emphasized, since it offers a fundamentally different way of thinking about how inequality works.[7]

Bottero's theory of class depends on individual choices and behavior rather than total identification with a class as a socioeconomic group. Members of one class can replicate choices and behavior from a more elite class, without needing to take up a new class identity. They can acquire new practices, without those practices changing their class identity in their own minds or how others see them.

The cultural capital of individuals may identify them in class terms as elite or non-elite, but such capital is not entirely the result of economic group membership, as in earlier Marxist theories of class. Choices of food, clothing, habits of travel, knowledge about art, music, and even popular culture, and hobbies requiring special skills, among other matters of taste or choice, are components of an individual's cultural capital. Individuals are naturally

drawn to those with similar kinds and amounts of cultural capital, and they achieve social status based on its recognized rarity or uniqueness.[8] Of course, nonwhite racial status can be a barrier to full class equality, even when requirements of income and education are in place. The cultural capital of dominant white people may intimidate or exclude nonwhites, impede their success, and undermine their job security. But nonwhites can acquire parts of the cultural capital dominated by whites, through their college experience.

In general, white middle-class people have higher status due to race than nonwhite middle-class people. The white bird watcher may be more easily accepted in Central Park than the black bird watcher. But the point here is that the black bird watcher has also learned how to bird watch, an activity that would not even occur to poor black people who did not regularly interact with white middle-class people or have access to knowledge of their hobbies and preferences.[9] Thus, in an economically integrated environment, those with low-income backgrounds have the option of adding to their class identification, behaviors, and values associated with a class different from their own. Instead of a monolithic status, social class is thereby now "à la carte."

LEARNING AS LEISURE

Wellness and self-care are self-help ideas, services, and practices that many became pre-occupied with during the lockdown stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, both throughout society at first and then increasingly in higher education. (Sales in the total industry were projected to equal 13 billion in 2023 and combined with technology, over 1 trillion by 2026.)[10] Included in wellness are lifestyle practices that people can do on their own to support good mental and physical health, with sub-practices, such as the Mediterranean diet, mindfulness, meditation, yoga, and exercise. Accessibility to wellness practices is considered particularly important for poor communities and for college students with low-income backgrounds (see chapter 6). Wellness and self-care activities are promoted to reduce stress and elevate moods. However, the reason wellness and self-care became so popular during COVID-19 lockdowns is that staying at home generated more leisure, although without realization of what leisure itself is.

The idea of cultural capital as unusual hobbies or going to the opera does not do full justice to the choices in what is now experienced as middle-class life. In the early twentieth-first century, middle-class people are often chastised for their self-absorbed consumption of the best goods of capitalistic production, and also resented for their elitism and failure to comprehend the realities of poor or working-class life. However, many progressive political, social, and economic ideas that now sustain struggles for justice originated

in the middle class. (For one specific example, Roger Wyman pointed out in 1974 that twentieth-century US middle-class voting patterns were particularly important for positive societal change, including greater racial/ethnic equality.)[11] What the middle class has that poor people often lack and rich people may too easily take for granted is *purposeful leisure*, the time to pursue both self-developing and altruistic activities and the knowledge and skill to do so, effectively.[12]

The value of purposeful leisure has a long history in philosophy, although not by that name. Aristotle (384–322 BCE) and other ancient Greek thinkers assumed that only those who did not have to labor could participate in politics or even become virtuous. John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) prioritized the "higher pleasures" of art, literature, and poetry, over bodily pleasures. Hannah Arendt (1906–1975) extolled "work," by which she meant political participation, as opposed to labor for the necessities of life. From the standpoint of those who must toil to live, these perspectives seem elitist. But they nevertheless identify attainable liberatory goals for those who do toil, and especially for their children. That is the context in which a definition of purposeful leisure for minority college Firsts should be understood.

Activities in purposeful leisure may be enjoyable, but they are not recreational. Recreation—re-creation—includes pleasure for its own sake, rest, and many practices of wellness, including self-care, which are ends in themselves. Purposeful leisure, by contrast, has specific goals, although its process may also be enjoyable enough. Psychological therapy and rigorous exercise have direct self-benefit, while community service and voting have indirect altruistic aims (although helping others also makes the environment and world better for oneself). College life is replete with opportunities to pursue purposeful leisure, either intra- or extra-curricular. Art, music, theatre, student clubs in major subjects, and community outreach programs and service are just a few examples. The point of such activities is that discipline is balanced with freedom so that they can be structured as goal-directed. College sports can be another means for leisured self-development, although official college athletes may have obligations to attend trainings, which restrict pursuit of extra-curricular interests, as well as their class attendance.[13]

There is historical precedent for the current emphasis on the practical advantages of college education. The late nineteenth century sustained a debate between Booker T. Washington (1856–1915) and W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963), the two most influential African American public intellectuals of their time. Washington, an *accommodationist*, thought that African Americans should accept discrimination and segregation and better their conditions through hard work in the building trades and crafts, industry, and agriculture. Du Bois, by contrast, advocated civil rights activism and college training of an elite group within African Americans whom he called

"the talented tenth." His idea of the role of the talented tenth did not address the intellectual activity of the other 90 percent.[14] However, Anna J. Cooper (1858–1964), influential African American educator, activist, writer, and high-school principal, did strongly advocate for humanities or liberal arts education for all black pupils, emphasizing their importance, much as one might today.[15] Washington was focused on material or economic progress for African Americans, with explicit relinquishment of political and intellectual aspirations. By contrast, Du Bois and Cooper emphasized full and fulfilling personal development.

In the early twenty-first century, Booker T. Washington seems to be winning the debate. The life of the mind and the pleasures of learning in college get short shrift in rhetoric urging youth of color to attend college. Prospective students are shown statistics on how much more money they will make with this or that degree or major. The implications are that college is painful, boring, and unpleasant, an experience that no one would want to undergo if not for prospects of more money when they get out. It is thereby not surprising that when the economy is booming and well-paying jobs are plentiful, minority student enrollment in higher education goes down.[16] This entire scenario is oppressive to racial and ethnic minority youth, considering histories of intellectual disparagement of their groups of origin. Persuading them to, in effect, forego the personal intellectual benefits of higher education for their adult well-being amounts to urging that self-development be sacrificed. It also stamps down political and societal leadership aspirations that require a fuller cultural dimension of social class. Pre-existing doubts about their intellects are inadvertently supported and their prospective contributions to society are reduced to what money can buy with the income from well-paying jobs.

Leisure becomes available to poor minority students as class intersects with race in the middle-class ethos and life of higher education. College study within the Liberal Arts and Humanities has the potential to stimulate the life of the mind, which goes beyond the accumulation of knowledge. Philosophy, English (with the inclusion of literature outside of the Anglo-American canon), area studies such as Latin American Studies, and African American, Africana, Asian, and Indigenous thought, all provide intellectual engagement that is relevant to real lives, as do History, Sociology, and Psychology. Critical thinking, which runs through almost all academic disciplines, provides reasoning skills that are vital for contemporary survival in society, for individual life planning and for the ability to sift useful information from conspiracy theories and other expressions of ignorance. The life of the mind as supported in college is a support for lifelong thought and reflection. And along the way, having learned to learn, learning itself can become enjoyable.

CRITICAL AND ORGANIZED THINKING

Critical thinking proceeds on a basis of verified fact with structured thought to make connections within what is known to be true. But thinking as a rational, logical, cognitive process need not be critical thinking as philosophers and others teach it, which is often rigorously based on informal logic. Less structured thinking allows for surveys of subject matter and the weighing of probabilities. Different qualities of experience can be compared, such as a job one loves versus a job not loved but paying more, or getting immediate income versus taking the time to attend graduate school. The ability to think in this way is part of wellness, but it is unlike meditation.

Meditation as a wellness practice is taught and practiced, to restore peace of mind and mental and emotional balance. There seems to be several components, variations, or principles: People can self-evaluate the tension in different parts of their bodies, toward physical relaxation. At the same time, they can "check-into" their bodies to identify places of pain or discomfort. Most important, the process of meditation generally involves monitoring the contents of one's mind, without engaging them. This may entail that the "monitor" achieves a certain amount of detachment from thoughts that might be stressful or disturbing. In advanced meditation, the nature of this monitor, apart from content not engaged with, may be explored.[17] There are myriad different theories and types of meditation practices, but these generalizations provide enough information to compare thinking with meditation.

Thinking is cognitive and informative for the thinker. Before college, many Firsts may not see themselves as thinkers and more would not aspire to be intellectuals. An intellectual is someone whose life's energy is devoted to consuming and producing mental products, in thinking, speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Intellectuals typically think about general ideas or universal descriptions, especially abstract general ideas, such as justice, competence, success, and so forth. It is not necessary to be or aspire to be an intellectual, in order to be someone who thinks and is aware of the importance of thinking. People who do not primarily work with thought, as intellectuals do, nonetheless think. They think about ideas and concrete subjects, with awareness and respect for that process. One can think about whether one wants to get married or what one's ideal job would be, about what to select as a major in college, where the best place to live would be, how to organize one's finances, how to take care of one's health, and a multiplicity of other practical issues.

What is thinking, in the way that can be supported in college education? Thinking is considered an activity of the brain, rather than the body, although there is no sensation in, or of, the brain—individuals do not feel their own brains. Thinking occurs in the mind. Whether the mind is itself physical or

not is an open question that has bedeviled philosophers for centuries, ever since René Descartes (1596–1650) said that his soul or mind was immaterial—not physical.[18] But the answer to this question is irrelevant to direct experience of one's own mind. What is experienced as the "life of the mind" pertains to reading, thinking, and speaking with others about subjects that go beyond the concerns of daily life, but may be highly relevant to those concerns.

One has to be conscious in order to think, but thinking is a subset of conscious activity, because, for instance, one also has to be conscious in order to feel hot or cold or experience emotions. As a conscious activity, thinking always has an object or is about something other than itself. Even if one is thinking about one's thinking, the object of thought is not the conscious process of considering one's own thought. Philosophers have characterized every instance of consciousness as having an object—the term of art is that consciousness is intentional (with a "t")—and the same is true of thinking.[19] But we have still not answered the question, "What is thinking?" Psychologists tell us that thinking is the ability to reason beyond one's immediate situation. This means that thinking has a component, often from memory, which is distinct from one's direct or immediate experience. It has also been postulated that learning is an effect of reasoning, which is a form of thinking.[20]

There are a number of different theories or models of what is known as "critical thinking," although the term may be a misnomer for the kind of broad descriptive thinking that is closer to ordinary life than academic work and studies. Instead of "critical thinking" a more useful term would be "organized thinking that depends on facts and logic," or more simply, "organized thinking." Although, theorists and instructors may persist in calling the broad range of organized thinking, "critical thinking," and address its broad applications by referring to mental or intellectual "dispositions." For instance, in a comprehensive 2011 review of the literature of critical thinking, Emily Lai referred to the importance for critical thinking of "open- and fair-mindedness, inquisitiveness, flexibility, a propensity to seek reason, a desire to be well-informed, and a respect for and willingness to entertain diverse viewpoints."[21]

However, the emphasis on critical or organized thinking as an important component of college education (as well as earlier, because critical-thinking skills have been identified in three- and four-year olds) is normative. Critical thinking is good thinking. This distinction is apt, because while philosophers and scholars in education have emphasized the importance and value of critical-thinking skills, psychologists have studied human thinking more comprehensively, which includes kinds of thought that are neither fact-based in self-disciplined ways, nor logically consistent. Thus, students may not be consistent in thinking critically (and the absence of critical thinking is often perceived as a problem by teachers).[22]

Critical/organized thinking may occur within or about a domain or specific subject matter, or it may work in a general way, similar to an aptitude (or a disposition, as a tendency to think and act in certain ways). Minority students may perform lower than majority students in assessments of their critical/organized thinking skills. There is also some statistical support for relatively unequal race-associated performance in critical-thinking courses.[23] Part of this discrepancy may reflect implicit bias in assessments, but another part may be related to *stereotype threat* in both specific and broad ways.

In specific ways, stereotype threat has been posited to explain why members of any group, especially otherwise high achievers, perform worse on tasks, if their attention is brought to their identities as disadvantaged for the task at hand. Such attention may be alerted by explicit comparisons with groups who do better than their group or by requiring that test takers select the gender or racial group to which they belong. For instance, white male students may do worse on math tests if reminded of their identities, because of their awareness that Asian students outperform them in mathematics.[24] However, awareness of a cognitive disadvantage related to identities need not be tied to a specific task, if the student has that awareness before approaching the task. Racial or ethnic minority students may have encountered stereotypes about the general mental abilities of the groups to which they belong. Before any new cognitive task or test, they may have had disappointing scores, which they know have been shared by other members of their groups, on IQ, aptitude, or general admissions tests.

General awareness of negative stereotypes may result in unjustified low self-confidence about critical/organized thinking tasks and learning. Some may mistakenly believe that IQ and aptitude test results are effects of an innate quality or ability that carries over into all cognitive tasks. Indeed, while for individuals and groups, there are positive correlations in scores over a range of aptitude and IQ tests, all students need to be informed that intelligence itself is dependent on self-affirmation and the acquisition of new skills and values, over time.[25] In addition, critical/organized thinking is not mechanical but admits of new ideas and the identification of new connections among existing ideas—it can be creative and gratifying. Indeed, the whole history of scholarly production in all fields attests that innovation and originality fuel intellectual progress.

Both ordinary and academic critical/organized thinking could be a great asset to all college Firsts if they are supported in related cognitive skills *that they already have*. Needed is statements of the obvious to all students, during college orientation and more specific course support, along the following lines:

> All human beings have the ability to reason. College study will tap into that natural ability and support you in developing it, through critical and organized

> thinking, that will often lead to new ideas. This kind of thinking is valuable in employment and practical and personal life, as well as academic success. Similar to IQ and aptitudes, critical/organized thinking can be enhanced and developed through practice.

Notice that what students could be told assumes that thinking skills developed in college are transferable. According to Lai, the literature is not uniform about critical-thinking transferability.[26] Still, there have been models for the transferability of critical-thinking skills, since at least 1998.[27] And, ordinary experience suggests that people are intellectually changed by college study, in general ways. Also, as noted, Mirowsky and Ross found that the mental autonomy developed through higher education endures long after. While narrow domain-specific critical thinking according to disciplinary criteria, such as scientific methodologies, may not be transferable, studies with general critical-thinking skills, such as ethics, would seem to generate transferable skills.

Learning how to engage in critical/organized thinking about a subject is important beyond formal learning because what one considers to be the correct, right, or appropriate results of one's thinking can have a direct connection to action. Practical thinking in this instrumental sense of deciding or resolving what to do is a lasting essential skill in real life. While those without higher education doubtless engage in practical thinking, all of the time, the kind of critical or organized thinking that can be supported in higher education is a valuable tool for knowing what one has to consider in terms of facts, probabilities, weighing of non-cognitive factors, and logic. Engaging in such practical thinking can in itself become a disposition or well-established habit when people recognize that thought or reason has an important role, before they act.

In the fourth century BCE, Aristotle (384–322 BCE) in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, described the practical syllogism as a chain of logical reasoning with a conclusion that was not another thought or expression of a thought in language, but action itself. He wrote:

> In a practical syllogism, the major premise is an opinion, while the minor premise deals with particular things, which are the province of perception. Now when the two premises are combined, just as in theoretic reasoning the mind is compelled to affirm the resulting conclusion, so in the case of practical premises you are forced at once to do it. For example, given the premises "All sweet things ought to be tasted" and "Yonder thing is sweet"—a particular instance of the general class—you are bound, if able and not prevented, immediately to taste the thing.[28]

Despite the frivolity of Aristotle's example, the ability to apply general knowledge to particular decisions for action, with both the expectation that

the action will be effective or successful, and effective and successful results, is an important component of living a fulfilling and satisfactory life, in college and for many years after. In pedagogy and student support programs throughout higher education, colleges could do a better job of emphasizing how the intellectual process of getting a degree can make life better, through better choices in how to act, especially for college Firsts who are already motivated to apply and enroll in college. They can also reach out to those potential students—the 60 percent of eighteen to twenty-four-year-olds—to whom college does not occur as a serious option for them, before they are recruited.

SUMMING UP

As a means for upward socioeconomic mobility, higher education works for all races, ethnicities, and genders. Upward socioeconomic mobility means advancement in class in a system that may pretend to be classless, but nonetheless tilts toward middle-class values and preferences. The ultra-wealthy or "1 percent" can structure their lives to avoid social as well as economic problems that plague the "99 percent." By identifying this imbalance as "income and wealth inequality," social class status is equated to money. But there is a lot more to social class than that, including the middle-class cultural, and psychological advantages, pursued as leisure.

College Firsts, who are not already middle class, experience certain fulfilling non-monetary benefits of middle-class life. Students of color may take progressive courses and participate in activities that strengthen their nonwhite racial and ethnic identities, while also benefitting from practices of learning that can contribute to healthier lifestyles and general well-being. They are likely to emerge into the world after college with stronger senses of their nonwhite racial or ethnic identities. And they do not have to sacrifice the class identities from their backgrounds, if they learn how to appropriate otherwise middle-class values and practices during the leisure afforded by college. The same applies to white college Firsts whose backgrounds are not middle class.

The leisure dimension of the life of the mind can be most directly active in choices of majors and minors. While students with family backgrounds of college attendance (continuing students) are more likely to make these choices from personal preference, Firsts are more motivated to choose practical, money-making majors, and forego minors.[29] Colleges could do a better job of assuring Firsts that majors about which they are passionate, especially in the liberal arts, will lead to financial stability in the long run, and that minors of interest will contribute to life fulfillment. Such personally

meaningful majors and minors are instances of leisure that appropriation of middle-class habits and values makes possible.

Racial integration in US leadership positions is now visible throughout major societal institutions. Some of it looks like tokenism or integration for the sake of signaling virtue or political correctness. In those cases, newly admitted minority groups experience new kinds of problems involving how power is not democratically shared, but a strong critical/organized thinking college background will support them in meeting those challenges. Overall, administrators and faculty often seem unaware that preparation for leadership after college for college Firsts requires strong cognitive skills that include critical and organized thinking.

We do not yet know what leadership by people of color equal to leadership by white people, throughout society, would be like in the United States. Would new leaders imitate past white-dominant leaders and practice oppression against whites or other people of color? Or would people of color change the values of major institutions? However a leadership segment that is fully integrated by race and ethnicity functions, it would be influenced by the intersection of social class with race and ethnicity in higher education that provides advancement to the pool from which societal leadership emerges. This intersection is a key aspect of minority belonging in college and their college experiences belonging to them.

Chapter 6

Student Self-Help for Mental Health

First-Person Approaches to Racial Microaggression, Moral Injury, Antisemitism, and Loneliness

One in five Americans has mental health problems and racial minorities are underserved. Racist beliefs and speech, and discriminatory action, as well as structural racism, injure the mental health of racial minorities. Those with other vulnerabilities also experience aggression that harms their mental health. But there is a shortage of qualified therapists, counselors, and psychiatrists. Insurance funding is constrained, and private services are expensive. However, the gap between need and treatment can be bridged in an obvious way. Existing mental health practitioner directives, the vast white anti-racist literature, and nonwhite anti-racist liberatory writing, focus on third-person approaches to correcting racism and its effects. Left out is the subjective experience of race-based mental health injuries and its inside-out treatment by racial minorities, themselves. Altogether, this calls for a new focus on "self-help" practices that are empirically based. (Such self-help is adjacent to theoretical calls for a more phenomenological, as opposed to quantitative scientific methodology for the study of microaggression.)[1] In addition to adding subjectivity to the anti-racist approaches to mental health, subjective practices can be applied to other injuries besides racist assaults, such as moral injury and microaggressions to ancestry-based groups not traditionally viewed as victims of racism (Jews, for instance).

College students are an appropriate subject population for self-help mental health, because they already have cognitive resources for dealing with racism. First-person practices for dealing with microaggression, but stopping short of incapacitating trauma, could be supported in wellness programs that are now a necessary part of student services throughout higher education, beyond affirmative action and DEI (see chapter 1). Also, white students who have

experienced trauma should be included among the multiplicities who would benefit from self-help for mental health.

The first section of this chapter introduces the current US mental health crisis and its effects on racial minorities. The second section zeros in on the third-person perspective in anti-racist therapeutic approaches. The third section considers empirically based self-help for race-based and moral injuries, in college wellness settings. Finally, new multiplicities who would benefit from self-help toward optimum mental health are introduced in a discussion of current campus antisemitism and loneliness.

THE CURRENT US MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS AND RACIAL MINORITIES

It has been widely broadcast that the United States is currently in a mental health crisis. The one in five Americans with mental health problems add up to over 65 million. From 2013 to 2021, mental health costs increased from 6.8 to 8.2 percent of health care costs; in 2019, mental health costs were estimated at $225 billion. (Total healthcare costs were over $4 trillion in 2021.) Depression alone is believed to result in an annual loss of $44 billion in workplace productivity. Healthcare access tends to be much lower in rural compared to urban areas, affecting 112 million Americans or roughly a third of the population. Although the 2008 Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act outlawed blatant discrimination by insurers, loopholes and gaps such as under-diagnosis by primary care physicians, remain. African Americans proportionally receive mental health care at half the rate of white patients.[2]

Several solutions are on the horizon: Primary care physicians could better coordinate with mental health professionals; telehealth as an option through insurance is rising; information about mental healthcare delivery and availability could continually be improved online; insurance companies could do a better job of cooperating with psychiatrists and counselors outside of their networks, to decrease the need for more expensive private services.[3] But these solutions will require somewhat voluntary changes in systems, over time, and it is not known that better access to practitioners will close the gap between need and treatment, because of traditional cultural stigmas and resistance to mental health treatment.

Overall, mental health problems are poorly understood, and often stigmatized in ways that require specific contextualized analyses. For instance, African Americans are more likely to stigmatize mental illness because of its association with violence, although they do not favor harsh responses.[4] Such compassion may stem from concern created by high-profile cases of police

killings of black people who only appeared criminally dangerous, because they were mentally ill. Not only may mental illness be a direct issue for the victims of such violence but police killings damage mental health in the wider community of African Americans.[5]

What is the nature of specifically racial trauma and how it is categorized? Extensive research and measurement has confirmed that structural racism, racist beliefs and speech, and racially discriminatory behavior, injure the mental health of racial minorities. In *Measuring the Effects of Racism: Guidelines for the Assessment and Treatment of Race-based Traumatic Stress Injury*, Robert Carter and Alex Pieterse definitively show the connection between experiences of anti-nonwhite racism and psychological injury. They note that it was not until 1980 that the DSM-III (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) included post-traumatic stress as a disorder—PTSD. But to this day, race-based traumatic experiences are not included in DSM trauma criteria. Carter and Pieterse argue that race-based stress is broader than threats to life and may not be captured in a DSM PTSD checklist, which also ignores subjective perception. Physically violent hate crimes may qualify, although psychological injuries from cultural oppression are ignored. Carter and Pieterse call for a broader conception of trauma to apply to the effects of racism, in addition to the DSM criterion of sudden or discrete external physical events. Racism may have the effects of psychological or emotional injury, as well as bodily disruption that is not the direct result of a physical event.[6]

Carter and Pieterse are not claiming that all forms of racism constitute traumas that cause traumatic stress or that everyone has the same experience. Even within the same racial group, differences in religion, gender, class, and cultural values result in different coping strategies and positive responses to racism, which can be defined by individual "functionality." There are also variations in ego status, racial self-identity or perception, ideologies about race, and reports of the frequency and intensity of experiences of discrimination vary according to such factors. But all of these differences can be reduced to some commonality with uniform testing. The underlying method of such measurement is to rely on patient's racial identities and reported experience of racism as prompts to test for well-known symptoms or indicators of post-traumatic stress.[7]

THE THIRD-PERSON PERSPECTIVE IN CLINICAL AND ANTI-RACIST LITERATURE

It makes sense that social psychologists studying Race-Based Traumatic Stress (RBTS) would address their work to clinical practitioners. However,

the third-person approach to experiences of racism has deeper roots in critical traditions regarding problems related to race. Two well-known paradigm examples from famous psychologists clearly illustrate this emphasis on third-person approaches.

Mid-twentieth-century Afro-Caribbean social critic, revolutionary theorist, and psychiatrist Frantz Fanon (1925–1961), wrote about his experiences in France as a black man arriving at the Francophone capital of Paris, from Martinique. He was rudely awakened to racist white French attitudes toward him as a black man. In his 1952 *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon related inferred impressions of him that have had indelible life in subsequent black anti-racist studies. Consider these two reflections on the same page. Fanon first describes how racism has disrupted his first-person bodily schema:

> And then the occasion arose when I had to meet the white man's eyes. An unfamiliar weight burdened me. The real world challenged my claims. In the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. It is a third-person consciousness. A slow composition of myself as a body in the middle of a spatial and temporal world—such seems to be the schema. It does not impose itself on me; it is, rather, a definitive structuring of the self and of the world—definitive because it creates a real dialectic between my body and the world . . . Below the corporeal schema I had sketched a historico-racial schema. The elements that I used had been provided for me not by "residual sensations and perceptions primarily of a tactile, vestibular, kinesthetic, and visual character," but by the other, the white man, who had woven me out of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories. I thought that what I had in hand was to construct a physiological self, to balance space, to localize sensations, and here I was called on for more.

Fanon then describes how racism has disrupted his normal moral view of himself:

> "Look, a Negro!" It was an external stimulus that flicked over me as I passed by. I made a tight smile.
>
> "Look, a Negro!" It was true. It amused me.
>
> "Look, a Negro!" The circle was drawing a bit tighter. I made no secret of my amusement.
>
> "Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened!" Frightened! Frightened! Now they were beginning to be afraid of me. I made up my mind to laugh myself to tears, but laughter had become impossible.[8]

Fanon was harmed by these social distortions as he moved through the people world, although he was not targeted as an individual but as an instance of a type. Fanon relates his experience with great psychological precision, but he does not tell the reader how a psychiatrist might treat the effects of such

experience—and he was a psychiatrist who specialized in issues of race! Also, what did he tell himself to get over the effects of such experiences of being aware of his very body being perceived by dominant people as something other than what it was to himself or of having automatically been made an object of children's fears?

Fast Forward half a century to psychologist Derald Wing Sue et.al.'s now-classic 2007 "Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Implications for Clinical Practice," published in *American Psychologist*. (The term "microaggression" was first introduced by Chester Pierce in 1978.[9]) Sue, who is Asian American, relates an experience of a microaggression on an airplane, while enroute to a conference with an African American colleague. While boarding, they were allowed to sit anywhere and chose the front. When three white men in suits came onboard, the flight attendant asked Sue and his colleague to move, for the stated reason of balancing the weight in the plane. Sue wrote:

> Although we complied by moving to the back of the plane, both of us felt resentment, irritation, and anger. In light of our everyday racial experiences, we both came to the same conclusion: The flight attendant had treated us like second-class citizens because of our race. But this incident did not end there. While I kept telling myself to drop the matter, I could feel my blood pressure rising, heart beating faster, and face flush with anger. When the attendant walked back to make sure our seat belts were fastened, I could not contain my anger any longer. Struggling to control myself, I said to her in a forced calm voice: "Did you know that you asked two passengers of color to step to the rear of the bus?"[10]

The flight attendant indignantly denied any racial motive, which failed to match the experience of Sue and his colleague.

Sue identified his readers as clinical practitioners, typically white counselors with racial minority clients. Both anecdotally and in classroom use, the concept of microaggressions as microassault, microinsult, and microinvalidation, is almost immediately taken up by individuals as applying to themselves. But we are not told in Sue's essay what individuals relating microaggressions would be advised to do about their thoughts or feelings that result from such incidents. Presumably, concrete examples of that process and others like it would properly occur behind the confidentiality of counseling. Aware and racially educated white counselors, as well as counselors of color, would treat their clients appropriately. However, there remains a veil over the internal processes of people who are subject to microaggression. For instance, how did Sue and colleague internally deal with their anger at the flight attendant?

These accounts by Fanon and Sue, both people of color who are experts in the psychology of racism, focus on racism and its perpetrators. From healing or recovery points of view, the subject is left out. And this has been the general perspective in recent decades. When academic scholars became aware of antiblack racism in the 1970s, they reacted against initial well-meaning

expectations from white liberals that they lead discussions of racism, provide analyses of racism, and propose ways to correct problems of racism. They said that it was the responsibility of white people to analyze their own behavior and correct it themselves.[11] Enter anti-racist White Studies and Critical Whiteness Studies, a scholarly literature that continues to expand. Of course, it is mainly white people who maintain and reproduce racism, and white people are the dominant racial group who benefit most from racism, and racism is a huge moral problem. But, what actual, probable, and possible perpetrators do to correct their behavior and beliefs, from unjust police violence to microaggressions, is a subject different from the answers to questions about how people of color can and should cope with racism, in their own hearts, minds, and bodies.

EMPIRICALLY BASED SELF-HELP IN A HIGHER EDUCATION SETTING

The Covid-19 pandemic took a heavy psychological toll on young people, with wide reports of increased suicidal ideation. But by 2021, a Harvard University Youth Poll found that 72 percent of young African Americans and 69 percent of young Hispanics were hopeful about the future, compared to 18 and 29 percent in 2017. The authors of the study attributed the increase in hope to a change in national politics from the Trump to Biden presidencies.[12] While mental health generally may not be attributable to such broad environmental factors, approaches to understanding mental health and illness should be contextualized to effects on distinct populations, at different historical times. Young people require time to develop perspectives and practices to deal with disappointments about societal support and injustice, especially regarding politics, race, and racism. At the same time, while they may suffer from pessimism about the future of US race relations or sometimes experience anxiety, anger, or depression related to their own experiences of racism, most of the nonwhite college student population is otherwise able to function in their lives and studies. If their experiences of racism constitute mental health trauma, much of it could be addressed by them, in the higher education context of wellness services. At present, treatment and advice for RBTS (race-based traumatic stress) is categorized under DEI (Diversity equity and Inclusion) programs, which creates now highly charged political opposition.[13] However, if racism causes mental injuries, it would be more appropriate to address those injuries through mental health treatment, instead of political discourse. That is, more is required than identifying and criticizing the causes of harm, because the harm itself needs to be addressed.

Treatment and attitudes toward even mild race-based trauma are impacted by the current dispute about whether the DSM should include race-based

trauma as part of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In recent years, veterans groups and others have used and called for an official change from PTSD to simply PTSI (Injury). The rationale would be twofold: If post-traumatic stress is not a disorder, but an injury, then the stigma attached to mental health diagnoses is removed and the experience of post-traumatic stress is validated.

The focus on the inappropriateness of the PTSD label has been motivated by the phenomenon of self-stigmatization,[14] although stigmatization of implied mental illness by others would seem to be a significant factor, also. The reasoning behind the impetus toward PTSI diagnosis is that any rational actor would react to traumatic stress as those diagnosed with PTSD do. The idea is to remove the stigma of the label mental health "Disorder," which could imply that there is some prior and ongoing psychological impairment that causes PTS. The injury itself has psychological effects, including depression. But substituting "injury" for "disorder" makes it clear that such effects are results of the injury and not of some pre-existing mental instability or "disorder."

The approach toward both removing stigma and validating post-traumatic stress as a rational and completely "sane" reaction is especially important for college student racial and ethnic minority populations, who are already experiencing self-growth and self-empowerment in structured, supportive settings. Their race-based past and ongoing stress could thereby be addressed as part of wellness programs that are otherwise available to all students, on the assumption that PTSI diagnosis would not be as severe as a PTSD diagnosis.

Thus, there are three options for categorizing race-based traumatic stress: inclusion in the DSM under PTSD; recategorization as PSTI in the DSM; support of the status quo which is the lack of official DSM categorization as either PTSD or PTSI. In favor of DSM inclusion as either PTSD or PTSI would be disability classification and access to disability services within higher education. However, given the requirement of life-threatening, life taking, or sexually violent direct or witnessing experiences for DSM categorization, many instances of what would now qualify as race-based PTSI are not as severe as traumas, and keeping them out of the DSM may be appropriate. Nonetheless, because they are disruptive to healthy ideation and functioning, they still require treatment.

At the same time, it is important to note that while counselors, therapists, and psychologists often require training to treat racial and ethnic minorities respectfully and effectively, it is not the racial identities of racial minorities, per se, that cause race-based stress, but beliefs of others about those racial identities. Symptoms of anxiety, hyper-vigilance, depression, shame, and guilt may attach to subjects' racial identities in their own minds and the work of treatment may consist of recognizing separations between a person's own

racial identity (who or what they see themselves as) and how others have perceived them in distorted ways and reacted to it. This kind of therapeutic work is particularly salient for college students, as part of wellness programs, again, when they would not meet the DSM requirements for either PTSD or PTSI. There is already sufficient awareness of societal racism within higher education to draw the line between who people think they are and how others identify them, especially when some others pejoratively and insultingly characterize their racial identities. This cognitive or intellectual distinction is necessary to identify racism, because in ordinary life, including social media, racial minority identities and racist reactions to them may merge in people's minds. But something more is needed beyond this distinction.

There is no shortage of popular, general-reader self-help defenses and resolution of the effects of racism on individuals. On a commonsense level, the best are probably not those which require knowledge of racist ideologies or deep intellectual understandings of colonialism and the histories of racism in the West. Caution is needed with such theoretical material that offers participants ideological training. Even if the ideology has historical and empirical justification, there is too great a gap between knowledge about injustice in general, as affecting members of an entire group, and knowledge that directly pertains to an individual, as based on their experience.[15] While the general knowledge is useful and illuminating for social theorists and critics, historians, instructors, and students, it is insufficiently concrete to relate to individual experience and recovery.

For example, many members of racial minority groups suffer from the effects of institutional or structural racism and news reports of racist events. But the connection between these mass-reported events and individual emotional suffering, trauma, and bodily ills has to be felt and articulated by individuals themselves, based on their specific experiences. Learning about racism either past or present does not constitute self-help psychological therapy toward recovery from the racism experienced directly by individuals. Individuals may suffer from racism even if they are unaware of ideological or intellectual historical and contemporary racist ideas—they may simply be reacting to specific speech or action that has been directed toward them and they do not need extensive historical, theoretical, or ideological frameworks to react. Also, any theoretical framework of racism, without direct individual experience, is not what's at issue in terms of psychological injury or mental health.

Therefore, self-directed, like other-provided therapeutic approaches, would require focus on experiences and reactions to specific experiences of concrete individuals. Notice that while some knowledge of racism as unjust is necessary to separate racial self-identity from racist reactions to it, knowledge of societal racism and its historical causes can distract from self-directed

therapies for and by individuals. Individuals can and should pinpoint how they have been injured by racism in specific events, but connecting that to colonialism, slavery, white patriarchy, or capitalism is beside the point of individual self-therapy (although it may be cognitively supported by college course study).

The effects of racism on individuals can be accessed by individuals emotionally (how they feel), cognitively (what they think), and somatically (how they physically feel, especially concerning tension or blocked pain held in their bodies). Such awareness can occur in both group-based and individual settings, as parts of racially inclusive wellness programs. A 2023 study published in *The Journal of American College Health* showed that all students reported discrimination, although white students reported less than all other groups.[16] But the point is that the white students did report discrimination. Racial inclusion in discriminatory stress therapy would provide respite from political perceptions of DEI, racism trainings, and the appearance of affirmative action. Attention to race-based Injury (RBI)—non-traumatic as well as traumatic—in wellness programs would also avoid stereotypes of mental illness that are already directed toward black men, black women, and LBGTQ+ people of color. Critiques of such stereotypes are subjects for college study, and college students are uniquely positioned to apply such studies to their own gaps in wellness.

Parallel or somewhat symmetrical to race-based injuries are *moral injuries* that occur when a person harms others with actions that otherwise violate their own moral rules or values. Like race-based traumas and microaggressions, moral injuries occur in the absence of individual consent or deliberate intention. Diagnosis and definition of moral injuries, as in the case of race-based traumas and microaggressions, has combined identification of a cause, followed by the report or observation of core symptoms, in this case, of guilt, shame, spiritual/existential conflict, and loss of trust.[17]

It is important to note that for both race-based stress and moral injuries, evaluation of the extent of injuries is not made apart from recognizing symptoms. There is no intervening judgment about the strength of the cause of the injury and no need for victims or sufferers to justify their reactions. Still, the growing literature on moral injury, especially in terms of clinical practice, has in recent years developed from the starting point of military cases,[18] and it goes without saying that participation in war is an experience of aggression.

While it is premature to provide taxonomies, relatively non-debilitating moral injuries, as diagnosed based on symptoms, could in principle be treated through self-help in wellness programs in college campus settings. For instance, The Moral Injury Project was inaugurated at Syracuse University in 2014, with a focus on US veterans.[19] (Cultural blame of veterans and

their own guilt about their actions under orders constitute the moral injury.) Although many veterans claim that furthering their education motivated them to serve in the miliary, less than one-third of veterans have college degrees. Compared to traditional college students, enrolled veterans are more likely to be black, Hispanic, older, and college Firsts. GI Bill beneficiaries were less likely to enroll in colleges with graduation rates over 70 percent, but after the COVID-19 pandemic, that data has been trending upward.[20] The intersections of race, class, and being a college First among US military veterans suggests further intersections between microaggression and moral injury within this population. While it is too soon to expect research providing data for such intersections, just what has been confirmed strengthens the importance of mental health wellness for the group.

Returning now to RBIs. Throughout academia, intellectual analyses of racism as part of scholarly research and course content already work therapeutically to assuage RBIs on unstructured cognitive levels. Racial minority faculty and students are drawn to these subjects because they are relevant to their own experience, some of which is psychological, emotional, or lived, rather than purely intellectual. A first-person wellness focus on recovery from RBIs would provide support for students as concrete individuals—and there might be extensions of such projects for faculty also. The shortage of trained mental health practitioners can be mitigated by first-person approaches that would require less one-on-one time with professional practitioners, especially in situations that lend themselves to group therapy. However, the first-person approach has merits apart from the shortage of professionals, because racism happens to particular individuals in different ways, and it is individuals who must clear its effects from their psyches. Indeed, some institutions of higher education are already aware of self-help for race-based traumatic stress, although, as noted, often as part of their DEI programming, rather than wellness.[21]

First-person wellness practice (FPWP) is active. The presumption in supporting FPWP is that there is usually some degree of inaction or lack of reflection that results in lingering effects of racism, which can be changed. Racism itself is out of the control of those who suffer from it, but coping with it and feeling better from it is within their control. Engaging in FPWP in response to RBIs requires autonomy, self-interest, and motivation to recover or create mental and emotional equilibrium. To pursue wellness after RBI, it is necessary that subjects already have degrees of adjustment, mental acuity, and abilities to function in their work and life contexts. Someone with a prior mental disorder or race-based trauma (RBT) would not be able to pursue wellness until or unless the post-traumatic stress were professionally treated.

The middle therapeutic ground of FPWP is often overlooked, not only in studies of racism that neglect first-person experience, but in psychological

theoretical and clinical approaches to race-based traumatic stress. These approaches seem not to distinguish between race-based traumatic stress that is close to DSM requirements for traumatic stress and everyday microaggressions. Professional psychologists and practitioners have focused on making the case that racism has real, deleterious effects on those who suffer from it, and demanding that racism as a causal agent of real psychological stress be officially recognized. However, insofar as the concept of trauma refers to immediate and forcefully disruptive experiences, the case has not been made that all effects of racism, although they are all harmful to different degrees, are traumatic. Microaggressions, as small slights and insults, even if they collect over time, are not in the same league of extremity with race-based violent bodily assault, maiming, and killing. The exposure to racism indirectly through social media or news outlets, while it often has disruptive psychological effects, is also not in the same league as race-based trauma. This is how Carter and Pieterse refer to RBTS:

> Most forms of racism constitute assaults on one's sense of self that heighten tension. Therefore, RBTS is primarily associated with events that are experienced as sudden and uncontrollable. Researchers have found that people with severe stress and PTSD share three core components that may be expressed through one of several physiological, emotional, cognitive, or behavior modalities. . . . In addition to the core reactions of intrusion, arousal, and avoidance, other symptoms are associated with severe stress, such as depression and anxiety. A person may experience a loss of self-worth and have difficulty with intimate and interpersonal relationships. Guilt and shame may arise due to self-blame and feeling responsible in the context of racism as "internalized racism" or "appropriated racial oppression."[22] . . . Microaggressions were more strongly associated with internalizing problems, stress/negative affect, and positive affect/adjustment than with externalizing problems and physical symptoms.[23]

Carter and Pieterse do not clearly distinguish between degrees of RBTS or between trauma and microaggressions. Indeed, in their over 400-page *Measuring the Effects of Racism*, the index has only a reference to one page for "microaggression."[24]

Yet, in ordinary life for most racial minorities, including college students, their direct encounters with racism are likely to take the form of microaggressions. Racial microaggressions are disruptive and even one instance of them can ruin a day or a week. Given their pervasiveness, they might better be called "social racism." But microaggressions are not traumas, in the commonsense experience of all racial minorities. Through upbringing or temperament, some are better able to cope with them than others. Microaggressions may also be cumulative, resulting in what has been called (racial) "weathering," a gradual erosion of physical health, personality, self-esteem and spirit, over time, for

racial minorities. The psychological effects of weathering can in principle be interrupted through FPWP as the psyche is periodically cleared of the effects of microaggressions (or social racism). The physical effects of weathering, including premature aging and dysfunction of the immune, cardiovascular, metabolic and endocrine systems, require physical medical intervention but realization of the necessity for that would be part of FPWP.[25]

Racial minority college firsts from poor recent-immigrant backgrounds, families, and neighborhoods, as well as generationally established US minorities are part of the new realities in higher education. As colleges strive to maintain and boost enrollment, they will need to recruit more from the pool of 18–24-year-olds who are an important part of the 60 percent of US young adults who do not attend college. While the needs of such populations will have to be understood in a frame of minority recruitment, it will be important to understand that their minority classification is the result of otherwise superficial racial classifications that intersect with low income or poverty (see chapter 1). It is understandable in that regard that socioeconomic advancement, with an emphasis on "economic" will have a strong appeal. But the nuances of "socio" in the sense of social class should also be emphasized, because they affect quality of life, as well as personal interests and aspirations (see chapter 5). Mental health treatment, either self- or professionally administered are part of middle-class self-care that can benefit low-income minority Firsts as part of belonging in college and their college experience belonging to them.

NEW MULTIPLICITIES FOR MENTAL SELF-HELP

Antisemitism

As indicated, the concepts of both microaggression and First Person Wellness Practice (FPWP) can be extended beyond nonwhite minorities. Recent antisemitism on college campuses and longer-standing student loneliness suggest new multiplicities for FPWP mental self-help.

Antisemitism has an episodic history and Jewish Americans, who are considered racially white, have not been obvious subjects for protection under either affirmative action policies or DEI offices on college campuses (see chapter 8). After the 2024 campus protests wound down (see chapters 7 and 8), observers, including the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) an anti-hate organization, Jewish students, their parents, and their advocates on and off campus reported protestor assaults on Jewish students and their feeling unsafe. In June 2024, the ADL issued a campus report card on antisemitism. Eighty-five colleges with the highest Jewish populations were assessed, using Hillel's (the leading student organization for Jewish students) guide for "Top

60 Jewish colleges." ADL divided twenty-one assessment criteria into three groups: administrative action and policies, incidents on campus, and Jewish student life on campus. ADL cited the Hillel Campus Climate Initiative (CCI), as a program "that provides a comprehensive strategy to help college and university presidents and campus administrators counter antisemitism and build a campus climate in which Jewish students feel comfortable expressing their identity." ADL's criteria and data were evaluated by a panel of experts. Out of the eighty-five schools, none got an A and one got an F. Bs were less frequent than Cs and Ds. ADL's college report card is an ongoing project. So far as individual Jewish students are concerned, the focus in the report refers to structures, policies, and litigation that are external to their actual experience.[26]

ADL's college report card(s) is important for recognizing and supporting a group that does not line up with the census categories of vulnerable minorities. Whether through Hillel or college services, it is also important that self-help strategies for PTSI and microaggressions, be made available to Jewish students, especially when antisemitism is on the rise societally, and college protests may open unacknowledged wounds or create new ones.

Loneliness

In 2023, US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy said that there was an epidemic of loneliness and that it was a matter of public health. A survey of 1100 college students found that two-thirds reported feeling lonely, over half were concerned about the mental health of friends, and 29 percent were in "severe psychological distress." But only half recognize mental health challenges, share solutions, or collaborate with others to improve mental health on campus. Students themselves need to be taught how to actively identify mental health challenges, brainstorm shared solutions, and collaborate with other students and organizations to work together to improve mental health on their college campuses. Also, it makes sense that there is a connection between mental health and loneliness, and there is data to back that up.[27]

Students who are lonely constitute members of any racial, ethnic, gender group, or any other multiplicity. Although, one would expect loneliness to be more prevalent among those, such as college Firsts, for whom being in college initially evokes a sense of alienation or culture shock. In the absence of social shunning, loneliness is not a trauma or microaggression, because it is not caused by the speech or actions of others, but on the contrary, by their absence. But the effects of loneliness can be as damaging to mental health as injuries that do have identifiable aggressors. In 2019, as the results of a survey of 2200 liberal arts college student respondents, R. W. Mueller and M. Seehuus found that in the context of rising anxiety and depression among

college students, loneliness mediated between both anxiety and depression. Students were surveyed for loneliness, anxiety, and depression, and the social skills of verbal control and expressivity and sensitivity to social situations. The data showed how those factors were related: The social skills of expressivity and control were both negatively correlated with depression, anxiety, and loneliness, while social sensitivity was positively correlated with depression, anxiety, and loneliness. Those higher in social expressivity had lower levels of loneliness and anxiety and those higher in social sensitivity had more loneliness. Those lower in social control had higher levels of loneliness and anxiety; and those higher in loneliness had higher levels of depression. The intervening or mediating factor of loneliness was thus hypothesized to tie social skills to mental well-being. The authors concluded that addressing loneliness could have positive mental health effects for college students, although they acknowledge that loneliness itself has a stigma. Therefore, support of social skills could be effective in reducing mental health issues of anxiety and depression, by reducing loneliness.[28] Given the stigma of loneliness, a task raised by this approach would be informing students that programs to build their interactive (social) verbal skills will support their mental health by reducing loneliness.

Loneliness seems to be universally defined by college students and researchers as an experience of not having friends or meaningful social interactions. It seems clear that loneliness can be cured by contact with peers who can be friends and with whom interactions will be meaningful. Thus, loneliness may be directly correctible by meeting people, which is an indirect self-help approach to better mental health.

There are more direct approaches to student loneliness. In 2021, R. Augusto Bordini and O. Korn reported a study of college students in which the mobile app *Noneliness* was tested as an (intuitive) solution to loneliness, because it would put students in contact with peers. Subjects were US college students from India, Mexico, and Brazil. The aim of Noneliness is to reduce loneliness by "creating social opportunities through a quest-based gamified system in a secure and collaborative network of local users." Respondents—"n = 3"—chose Events as the best feature, followed by Chats, Groups, and Profiles. They were not interested in Quests, which did not further real-life meetings. Overall, there was enthusiasm about the social aspects of the platform.[29] By 2024, a number of student apps promoting interaction with others, both general and campus-specific, are regularly ranked. In a way, the use of mobile apps seems too easy a solution for ultimately supporting student mental health, but campus-specific mobile apps that get students in contact with other students, through events and other organizations that are supported and funded by their institutions, although now scarce, would nonetheless seem to accomplish the task of mitigating loneliness. Thus far, available apps are

predominantly focused on academic success through online activities.[30] Every school that recognizes the problem of student loneliness as connected to mental health should construct and fund social apps for students that require students to meet with other students, in real life.

Finally, returning to John Searle's 1990 criteria for being well-educated as discussed in chapter 4, his criteria—knowledge of own culture, of the natural sciences, economics, philosophy, and a foreign language—are at this time incomplete, because they are limited to traditional knowledge. Both knowledge of the practices and interests of a social class other than the class of one's origins, as discussed in chapter 5, and first-person mental health skills, as discussed in this chapter, should be added. Knowledge of the practices of a class other than one's own is a form of travel, while on campus (Searle did not mention travel at all). Well-educated people should be able to assess their own moods and take steps in reflection and action to deal with the causes of stress they experience. This is not therapy, which many would consider beyond the purview of a college education, but an array of first-aid mental health skills that can be introduced and supported through college experience.

Chapter 7

Free Speech, Movements, and Politics

Reclaiming Academic Freedom

I was born in 1944, a member of the Silent Generation, too early to be a Baby Boomer or true child of the 1960s. Nevertheless, I was profoundly affected by the atmospheric, social, and cultural changes of their era.[1] In April 1968, I was a second-year PhD student in Philosophy at the Graduate Faculties of Columbia University. I was not part of the campus protests at that time, which belonged to undergraduates, but I felt the upheaval.

Before delving into the scholarly analysis of this chapter, which is about free speech and its expression and cultural and political movements, here is what I remember (with some fact checking). Undergraduates had already been protesting ROTC (The US Army's Reserve Officer Training Core) on campus, because of objections to the Vietnam War and Columbia University's connection to the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA), a weapons research think tank; there were also demands that Columbia divest itself of investments in corporations that produced war materials, and that protestors receive amnesty. A dean was taken hostage for a day. Columbia University had expanded new construction into predominately black Harlem and was planning a gymnasium viewed as "segregated" because Columbia students, faculty, and staff would have access on an upper level and members of the community on a lower level. Calling this project "Gym Crow," students and community members demanded its halt.

Undergraduates, spear headed by SDS (Students for a Democratic Society),[2] first occupied Hamilton Hall, a major administrative building, and then Low Library and other buildings. Only black students, through SAS (Students Afro-American Society), occupied Hamilton, and they separated their mission from that of white student protestors. The Rev. Martin Luther King had been assassinated weeks earlier and their focus was on race relations and their own identity. The 1968 Cox Commission Report, *Crisis at*

Columbia, did not document intense black student involvement in objections to the projected gym, which were an important reason for the general student protest. Instead, the black students were becoming increasingly concerned about their own status at Columbia University. A close observer told the Cox investigators: "I believe their basic cause was to dramatize the unresponsiveness of the University, primarily to them." Black student participation in the protests both expressed identification with famous militant black leaders at that time and asserted their own identity as black students in a predominantly white institution.[3]

The university requested police action. The black students in Hamilton Hall evacuated peacefully. The students occupying Low would not leave. One thousand officers from the New York City Tactical Patrol Force forcefully evacuated them at night, chasing some on horseback, clubbing them, hitting them with brass knuckles, dragging others down concrete steps.[4] The next day, I saw a number of students who looked dazed, as they walked around campus with bandaged heads and arms. I asked Professor Arthur Danto, who taught aesthetics, if he thought we were in a revolution—the word was in circulation. He told me that it was a revolution only if a haircut could be considered surgery. He had no idea of a cultural movement, which was not unusual at that time.

Soon after the massive arrest, a very large crowd of students gathered on Amsterdam Avenue, amassed shoulder-to-shoulder between locked campus gates and the New York City Tactical Police Force, many in riot gear, on the other side of the street. A number of buses and ambulances were parked nearby. Some protestors were calling to storm the campus and the police were clearly ready to intervene. Mark Rudd, head of SDS, climbed up on a monument, carrying a bullhorn. He directed the mass of protestors and the police to move away from each other and created a space for the protestors to leave. He then told the protestors to go home, and they did!

Rudd's action became an indelible memory for me—I told people that I had witnessed what could have been his finest hour, although I did not know him. In April 2008, when I was teaching at the University of Oregon, in Eugene, Mark Rudd gave a talk there and later at Oregon University, in Portland. He related his socialist ideals and political transformation from violent militancy to peaceful mass organizing. After he had left The Weatherman Underground that had blown up its own members with a home-made bomb, Rudd became a fugitive, and then surrendered to serve a prison sentence. Rudd then taught mathematics at Central New Mexico Community College.[5] I went up to him after the talk and related my memory of the bullhorn dispersal at Columbia. He barely recalled the incident. This was extremely ironic because he had been speaking about his transition from violent protest to peaceful mass organizing and his dispersal of the protestors and police was

exactly peaceful mass organizing. Although, I read that in commenting on the 2024 protests, he noted approvingly that Columbia students were less violent in rhetoric and behavior than they had been in 1968 and that the police action was also relatively peaceful.[6]

So, now, in late April 2024, I am here returning to the subject of speech and protests at Columbia University, which is spreading to other prestigious schools, such as Yale University, New York University and schools in Michigan, Massachusetts, and California, indeed, throughout the country, as I write. My hope is that my detachment from the politics of student protests at this time, as well as in 1968, can support constructive involvement in terms of form, rather than content. The next section of this chapter is about free speech and expression related to college life. The section following considers whether contemporary student protests, like the 1968 disturbance at Columbia University, may be the beginning of a new politically progressive movement. But to focus on that might be to miss the coalescing political and governmental movement against higher education, in general. The chapter sections conclude with a discussion of academic freedom. There is also a postscript, because I wrote the sections in late April and May, but by June, further events required discussion relating to what had been written earlier.

FREE SPEECH

It is important to distinguish among free speech, freedom of assembly, free expression, and disruptions or crimes committed in course of their exercise. The April 2024 disruptions on college campuses occurred in politically divided times, amidst political attacks on progressive thought and college budgetary and enrollment shortfalls. Although they began in ivy league schools, they quickly extended throughout higher education, and could persist. Over two years after the 1968 Columbia campus protests, on May 4, 1970, four students where fatally shot and nine wounded by National Guard troops during protests against the US invasion of Cambodia. Student strikes and college closures then followed at hundreds of schools.[7] With social media, college protest spreads much faster in the present.[8] The 2024 activist's target was still US support for colonialism abroad but it was complicated by experiences of antisemitism on campus. However, attacks on academic free speech from the US Congress may be the biggest threat to US higher education.

The college protests of the late 1960s and early 1970s, as well as those of 2024, were/have been expressions of dissent with college policies that appeared to support national political policies. The same theme of anti-colonialism drove both sets of protests that began on the campus of Columbia

University. In 1968, students protested against US imperialist interests as motivating the Vietnam War. In 2024, student protestors demanded that their institutions curtail all financial and academic ties with Israel, which they viewed as the direct colonizing power over Palestine. This was a demand to boycott Israeli products, end investments in Israeli-connected companies, and abolish study-abroad programs or research partnerships with Israeli institutions. Institutional condemnation of the Israeli treatment of Palestinians was also sought, which completed the overall Boycott, Divest, Sanction (BDS) objective.

BDS objectives have additional precedent in student protests going back to the U.S. civil rights movement and South African apartheid. More recently, BDS has been invoked concerning investment in the fossil fuel industry. However, divestment is complicated by structures of authority in higher education and the indirect nature of college investments, which go through outside fund management to investments in companies for which their association with offending entities are only parts of their business. Since 1968, some institutions have established internal senates with the capacity to advise on ethical investment, although very few, if any, colleges and universities have completely fulfilled BDS objectives in response to student protests. In some cases, state law barring BDS, for instance in Tennessee pertaining to Vanderbilt University, may preclude student input on higher ed investments.[9,10]

The 2024 demonstrations, consisting of tents and towels to demonstrate solidarity with displaced Palestinians, were protected free speech, although their accompanying acts of trespass and disruption of normal college functioning were regarded as cause for bringing police force onto campus.[11] The 2024 political context for protest was Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza that had by then resulted in over 33,000 civilian deaths in what had been called war crimes versus Israel's right to exist and defend itself after the October 7, 2023, massacre conducted by Hamas. But the focus was only rarely on free speech protections. Instead, observers, including congressional committees, took sides on the content of disputes. Student protestors were pro-Palestinian and when they took up the side associated with Hamas and chanted its antisemitic slogans, Jewish students perceived this rhetoric as threatening to their safety on campus.[12]

Judicial precedent supporting the City of Charlottsville's designation of the 2017 "Unite the Right Rally," as an unlawful assembly, because of its violence, did not directly address the free speech aspects of that rally. The antisemitic slogans chanted were not identified as unprotected speech.[13] Moreover, hate speech is generally protected as free speech in the United States.[14] Therefore, the issue of free speech in antisemitic declarations is probably best understood, not in terms of "hate speech," that there is a right

to express, but through a Canadian approach to free speech limitations that includes the effects of speech on its listeners, now including online readers.[15] That is, the Charlottsville antisemitic chants by white supremacist activists would likely have been designated as free speech, had that been made the issue. The rhetoric of the Spring 2024 pro-Palestinian protestors was only belatedly considered in terms of free speech, but when it was, it was seen as free speech.

In terms of judging the content of protest speech in 2024, the Right merely countered the rhetoric of the Left. The Left protested how Palestinian civilians were victimized by Israeli military action. They were. The Right objected to how the pro-Palestinian protestors were scaring Jewish students. They were. But the real victim is the community and institution of US higher education. University presidents were pressured to resign by political partisans and when internal pressures from donors and Jewish advocates were added, they did resign. These administrators were held responsible for the content of protests on their campuses, without discussion of whether that objectionable speech was within the rights of protestors. They were punished for the content of what they in all likelihood at first took to be expressions of free speech.

Leaders in higher education need to draw and enforce clear demarcations among free speech, hate speech, incitement, and destructive and obstructive behavior, including trespass. They need to eloquently proclaim and effectively protect the free speech of students, faculty, and to the best of their ability, protestors, short of their destructive and obstructive actions. If colleges want to designate hate speech or intimidating speech as punishable according to their own codes of conduct, they must do so in clear language that is broadly promulgated. Instead, they now react to political and governmental ad hoc designations of what is unacceptable speech, in the 2024 case, antisemitic speech. Either free speech is upheld and protected, even when it is hateful to some listeners, or only acceptable free speech is upheld and protected. But if some have to decide whether speech is acceptable, for it to be free, then there really is no free speech. On the other hand, college administrators have obligations to protect all students. So if some students are frightened by the speech of other students, then that fact alone might be reason to restrain the speech in question.

Nevertheless, without free speech, higher education cannot endure in a secular democracy. The core of this freedom supports the advancement of knowledge in all fields through research and its dissemination by teaching. Most of this speech is not communicated to the wider public, and neither are they interested, with two exceptions: extra-mural speech and writing by students and faculty on culturally controversial topics; normative speech, writing, and research that promotes progressive views on cultural topics that have become political issues. Extra-mural controversial speech by college

employees should be protected by the First Amendment to the US Constitution. However, recent state-level attacks on progressive content, such as black history and the idea of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, have been successfully politicized by Republicans.[16] These new laws and the parts of the public who support them raise a difficult long-term question about college missions, programs, and curricula, in terms of free speech. Does state government have a right to decide on such matters or do institutions of higher education have final authority over speech on their campuses? The answer to that question will doubtless play out in court cases. But in Spring 2024, there were more immediate governmental interventions from a federal level.

When the US House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce held hearings with the Presidents of Harvard, MIT, and the University of Pennsylvania, in December 2023, the leading questions amounted to: Is there antisemitism on your campus? Is advocating genocide against Jews (as expressed in Hamas slogans that student protestors repeated) protected free speech? What disciplinary action have you taken to punish those who are advocating genocide against Jews? What have you done to protect Jewish students? The presidents of Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania did not push back by asking what was meant by "antisemitism" and neither did they bring up the right to "free speech." Instead, they provided what sounded like legalistic evasions of the questions, such as that their assessment of the kind of protest rhetoric to which the committee referred, would depend on its contexts. Both of these presidents soon resigned, the former amidst a storm of allegations of plagiarism. The house passed H.Res 197, condemning antisemitism on US college campuses and "strongly" condemning the testimony of:

> University of Pennsylvania President Elizabeth Magill, Harvard University President Claudine Gay, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology President Sally Kornbluth and their failure to clearly state that calls for the genocide of Jews constitute harassment and violate their institutions' codes of conduct in front of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce on December 5, 2023.[17]

The committee's hearing with the President of Columbia University occurred later, in the midst of amped-up student protests that included expressions of solidarity with Palestinians through encampments on college property. That hearing and response to it resulted in more nuanced discussion concerning academic authority and academic freedom, which will be considered in the last section of this chapter.

CULTURAL AND POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

The 1968 student protests at Columbia University achieved their aims: the gym construction in Harlem was cancelled, Columbia withdrew from its association with the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA), and students who had protested were granted amnesty.[18] And, of course, the Vietnam War eventually ended, seven years later, in 1975. But some assess that it took Columbia University twenty years to recover prestige, endowment, and financial stability after the 1968 disruptions. Fifty years after its 1968 student protests, Columbia University celebrated how much it had changed.[19] This new Columbia is an institution that emerged after the societal cultural *movement* that began in the late 1960s. The political theme of that movement was that unjust war and colonialism were morally wrong. US higher education in time absorbed that theme in curricula, just as it absorbed multiculturalism, progressive studies of race and ethnicities (including critical race theory), feminism, advocacy for disabled people, and many other cultural changes, including the sexual revolution and LGBTQ+ recognition and rights. The potential new movement, as spearheaded by pro-Palestinian college protests, might be a continuation of such progressivism, both political and cultural, for instance, in research and policy for avoiding and mitigating the effects of climate change. Contra Professor Danto, the movement that began in the late 1960s was a *cultural revolution*.[20] Most progressives came to think that the movement of the 1960s did not go far enough. But the cultural revolution was not a long-term problem for US higher education. Although, the success of that movement has re-emerged as a problem in the recent political and governmental movement against higher education, itself, complete with neglect of the value of free speech in congressional committee interrogations of elite college presidents.

Little in higher education can, or should, be done about movements that overtime can fulfill its own progressive values. It should be assumed that colleges will routinely observe fire codes and other common sense, legitimate issues of safety. But it is important to not confuse safety with security. When student protestors are listened to, in their calls for divestment in military investment, as some were in 1968 and 2024, administrators can include students, as well as faculty in investment decisions. Despite the complexities of endowment investments, it remains possible for institutions to seek financial advice on how to revise their investments to avoid indirectly profiting from agreed-upon unjust causes. Before then, college presidents should walk among protestors and talk to them about their complaints and find out what they want. Somewhat belatedly the president of Columbia, Nemat (Minouche) Stafik, announced such talks with student protest leaders in the

wake of congressional attention. But the same day, Mike Johnson, Speaker of the US House of Representatives, visited the Columbia campus to support Jewish students and urge Stafik to resign because of then-present "chaos."[21]

Johnson's use of "chaos" was unclear, because he did not distinguish between safety on campus and what he and his Republican colleagues were attempting to characterize as security issues. For instance, US Representative Elise Stefanik had called for Homeland Security investigations of Columbia protestors' alliances with Hamas-related terrorists, after Stafik was questioned by her committee.[22] These measures were sought to "ensure the safety of Jewish students." But which Jewish students? Some Jewish students had voiced feeling unsafe, because protestors were reiterating Hamas political slogans, which was understandably frightening after Hamas' violent and brutal attack on Israelis on October 7, 2023; others had experienced confrontations with protestors (not all of whom were students at the campuses in question) that were solely based on their identities as Jews. At Columbia University, on the eve of Passover, a Rabbi told the 300 Jewish students then enrolled to go home, for their safety, because the NYPD could not protect them.[23] But the *NYTimes* reported that other Jewish students who were pro-Palestinian protestors, were preparing a seder on the Columbia campus.[24]

Vigorous government concern for the safety of Jewish college students is laudable, although one wonders if the same political voices were raised from ADL reports of a nation-wide rise in antisemitic violence, associated with far Right and white supremacist groups. From 2013 to 2022 antisemitic incidents increased from 751 to 3,697.[25] However, the April 2024 government response to pro-Palestinian protestors raised the possibility of an unintended consequence of bringing protestors together with their administration. It should not be necessary that college presidents have their feet held to the fire before they take student demands seriously, or in order to quell protests that draw unwanted government interventions. Students, as well as faculty, need to be included in monetary decisions that have moral implications for colleges and universities.

The idea of "belonging" here has another dimension, besides belonging of the recently excluded, as discussed in chapter 1. Colleges need to belong to all members of their academic community. In a nation such as the United States, with a long history of the valorization of private property and ownership, members of academic communities should be recognized as *owners* of their colleges and universities. They do not own tangible property or "shares" in their institutions in a corporate sense—although that might be an idea for the future—but they own the values and policies of their institutions as they live and work within them. All of this can be recognized, without challenging college's ownership of their physical property, so that administrators can continue to call upon laws against trespass if members of their communities

occupy physical spaces after they are requested to vacate them (if that is their main concern).

And of course, all college students and especially Jewish and Muslim students during conflict in the Middle East have a right to be protected from identity-based harassment and violence. Higher education throughout the United States has that duty to protect and punish offenders, in clear and transparent ways. But no one has a right not to be offended by, or protected from, political opinions with which they disagree. It is the job of leaders in higher education to distinguish between the antisemitism and political disagreement in what pro-Palestinians protestors say or do. If reports of antisemitism are credible, they need to be tracked down and those accused should be questioned through due process procedures, as to their intent. Higher ed leaders also have a duty to report evidence of terrorist affiliation on campus to Homeland Security, as well as the FBI. These obligations should be automatically understood and fulfilled, but they are only part of what needs to be further understood as morally obligated in the context of higher education.

The tents and towels set up on the Columbia campus may have constituted trespass, which resulted in arrests for that offense, but they were nonetheless peaceful protests, within free speech permissibility in less troubled political times. In the First Amendment to the US Constitution, included with a right to free speech is a right to peaceful assembly, viz.:

> First Amendment
>
> Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.[26]

According to the US Supreme Court, the First Amendment right to assemble is "cognate to those of free speech and free press and is equally fundamental."[27,28] However, the same day that Johnson visited the campus of Columbia University, at the University of Texas, Austin, the university called upon Texas State Police and Austin city police, to ensure order, before there were signs of disorder. Students merely intending to walk across campus from the gym to a lawn where they would hold a teach-in and conduct other peaceful discourse in support of Palestinians were stopped and some were arrested on charges of trespass, including those who were trying to tell a crowd to disperse.[29]

The movement that should be of urgent concern within US Higher Education consists of the political and government attacks on peaceful events on US college campuses. This government overreach should be recognized for what

it is, and also addressed. Needed is broad recognition of a first-amendment protected separation between education and state, analogous to recognition of the separation between the Church and State! Needed is consideration of what happened under McCarthyism, even in states and university systems that had long histories of dedication to liberal and progressive causes. Consider, for instance, the text of an archival display about McCarthyism and the City University of New York (CUNY):

> Mccarthyism [*sic*]
>
> During the 1950s, another wave of anti-communism known as McCarthyism affects colleges and universities everywhere. Hundreds of professors loose their jobs. In the early 1950s, the US Senate's Internal Security Subcommittee resumes the work initiated by the Rapp–Coudert Committee at the city colleges. In 1953, the NYC Board of Higher Education creates its own committee to continue these investigations. By 1958, fifty-seven faculty and staff are dismissed, resign under pressure, or retire because of these investigations.
>
> Faculty and staff are either dismissed under Section 903 of the City Charter, which makes it mandatory to cooperate with a government investigation, or under the 1949 New York State Feinberg Law, which prevents members of the Communist party from teaching in the public schools and colleges. The U. S. Supreme Court declares these laws unconstitutional in 1967–68.
>
> "McCarthyism assumed many forms and affected almost every aspect of American life. While all the nation's schools and universities were hard hit, the City Colleges, as public institutions, were particularly vulnerable. All four of then existing branches, Brooklyn College, City College, Hunter College and Queens College, suffered."
>
> —Professor Lawrence Kaplan, Introductory text to library exhibit at Queens College on "McCarthyism at Queens College," September 1–October 15, 2003.
>
> "Let it be declared the CCNY is actually the college which won the Purple Heart for its front-rank and continuing battle against Communism."
>
> —City College President Buell Gallagher
>
> In 1957, the Board of Higher Education dismisses Professor Warren Austin, who had worked as an English professor at CCNY since 1931. Nineteen members of his department write a letter to the board in defense of his character, to no avail.
>
> There is a general decline in campus activism at CCNY in the 1950s. All student clubs are required to submit their membership lists to the college administration. This regulation leads to a vast decline of political organizations on campus because of fear that these lists would be turned over to the FBI.

> Public college and university administrations throughout the country mandate loyalty oaths for faculty members, fostering an atmosphere of fear on campus. The generation of the 1950s is known as the silent generation.[30]

CUNY's apologies for careers and lives ruined only came much later, viz:

> October 26, 1981. Forty years after the Rapp-Coudert dismissals, The City University of New York's Board of Trustees (formerly known as the Board of Higher Education) unanimously adopts a historic resolution expressing "profound regret at the injustice done to the faculty and staff who had been dismissed or forced to resign in 1941 and 1942 because of their alleged political associations and beliefs and their unwillingness to testify publicly about them."
>
> In addition, the board resolution promises "diligently to safeguard the constitutional rights of freedom of expression, freedom of association and open intellectual inquiry of the faculty, staff and students of the University." The impetus for the Board of Trustees' action comes from the City College Faculty Senate and the University Faculty Senate, encouraged by a public campaign.[31]

WHAT IS ACADEMIC FREEDOM?

A general understanding of academic freedom is vital, so that free speech in higher education can be deliberately protected, as preparation to avoid the next wave of "McCarthyism." Academic freedom pertains to specific or distinctive rights and privileges of academic faculty, and their free speech rights are embedded in their academic freedom. So the main question underlying academic freedom is, What is free speech? According to Stanley Fish, there is no such thing as "free speech" in the sense of speech that is disconnected from action, or speech that does not support some pre-agreed upon core, collective value. For Fish, the idea of free speech as occurring in a realm of its own, disconnected from values, is a fantasy, which if it did exist would be of no interest to anyone. He convincingly argues that speech which comes under the category of "free" or "restricted" is already persuasive, if not political. It is "free," which is to say unobjectionable, if in accord with core values but "restricted" or a candidate for restriction, if it contains a message that opposes those core values. Fish believes that bigoted speech or speech that targets minorities, which is based on poor reasoning or falsehoods, should be restricted. He is not disturbed by "chills" on "free speech" in anti-harassment codes in colleges and universities and suggests the following inner directive to anyone worried about "slippery slope" erosions of free speech:

> Some form of speech is always being restricted, else there could be no meaningful assertion; we have always and already slid down the slippery slope; someone is always going to be restricted next, and it is your job to make sure that the someone is not you.[32]

However, Fish does not need to disparage the idea of free speech as unconnected from core values or any kind of action, in order to propose restrictions on speech, as he is otherwise happy to do. In terms of academic freedom in the specialized disciplines, which like philosophy, or law, allow for open criticism and disagreement with stated points of view and opinions, Fish's thesis is questionable. Without free speech in the argumentative disciplines, those disciplines could not exist or endure. Fish could insist that the free speech in the argumentative disciplines, and even some of the theoretical aspects of the sciences, presuppose ground rules that are based on shared core values. But the shared core values, such as "truth" or "reason" or even "logic," are usually quite vague, although they operate as rules of engagement for those who are recognized practitioners of the discipline. And then they have free speech. The same could be said about playing chess, and a host of other games. Chess and other games are played within their own realms and moves in them are not connected to the practical or political outside world—except for the glory garnered by winning. Art also has its realm of self-contained freedom of action. At any rate, the self-contained nature of free speech and free expression in these contexts is a valid idea of free speech.

Still, the free creativity, originality, and other products of talent in academic disciplines do need to conform to certain forms for merit to be recognized. Those forms are not free, and they are supported by institutional rules, as well as intra-disciplinary standards. Fish is correct in noting that this apparatus, as an apparatus, is quite different from free speech.[33] Intra-disciplinary standards are upheld and held together through faculty governance within disciplines and faculty influence and advice to administrators, who represent their institution and have ultimate power that is unseen when things function normally, but may be exposed to very harsh criticism if they misstep in times of crisis. When all goes well in a meeting of administrative, faculty, and student, minds, mutual trust and understanding more or less oil the academic machine. But when administrators pull away, even if under great external pressure, things can rapidly fall apart.

However, the question of free speech in terms of academic freedom is usually not framed as a matter of what can be said *within* academic disciplines, but a matter of what can be said in public, which everyone, within the disciplines, across the disciplines, and for the general listener, can understand. That is, US Congressional committees are unlikely to hold hearings pertaining to disputes within philosophy, and they are likely to frame issues

as though there were no such thing as internal administrative-faculty governance and ultimate internal institutional authority. When college presidents accept that framing, much of what is at stake subject to internal decisions that are recognized in terms of the internal authorities of institutions of higher education, gets lost. This is what appears to have happened when Columbia University President Stafik returned to campus after her hearing before the House Committee on Education and the Work Force, on April 17, 2024. In that hearing, Stafik began her testimony by asserting, "Antisemitism has no place on our campus, and I am personally committed to doing everything I can to confront it directly," and she affirmed that calls for genocide of Jews would violate campus policy. But she waffled on whether a tenured faculty member who had published an online essay supporting the Palestinian cause had or would be punished, thereby missing an opportunity to talk about institutional rules protecting free speech or the institutional due process rights of tenured faculty. She declared that an untenured faculty member who had published offensive comments, according to the committee, would no longer be employed at Columbia.[34]

Bruce Robbins, professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, who self-identifies as a secular Jew, criticized President Stafik in a CNN interview and blog posting for the *London Review of Books*. Stafik had called the police to clear what had been a peaceful student demonstration on an authorized space, the day after her congressional hearing. About one-hundred students were arrested and a student who had earlier said that Zionists "do not deserve to live" was banned from campus with interim suspension that could result in expulsion.[35] Others of the arrested students were barred from campus. Faculty were disappointed and dismayed that Stafik acted autocratically in summarily disbanding student groups, including Students for Justice in Palestine and Jewish Voice for Peace.[36]

US federal government overreach into higher education self-governance and authority can only be effectively met with unity among administrators, faculty, and students. Otherwise, the danger is that higher education will lose both internal and external authority and with that, the freedom of educational process, which although it is not exactly free speech, nonetheless preserves what it means for education to be "higher." Higher ed administrators and their Boards of Trustees should construct emergency joint administrative-faculty committees, in preparation for assuring institutional functioning, with integrity, in times of crisis. Such committees should allow for student advice and have clear directives for their own activation, including rules when police force should be applied to restore order and how external political pressure should be answered. Complacency that such an emergency apparatus is unnecessary to set up in advance of crises overlooks the importance of preserving the authority and internal shared governance in colleges and

universities, exactly in times of crisis. Arrest of faculty bystanders or observers of 2024 protests on college campuses is proof of the failure and shame of ad hoc responses to crises that include unpredicted and unprepared-for spontaneous brutality or violence from police officers who are brought onto campus as last resorts or even apparent solutions, in emergency situations.[37] The tradition and ethos of higher education itself requires that discourse, either in the form of free speech or legitimate, established academic structures, take the place of force for solving conflict. In that sense, higher education should be reliably expected to preserve peace.

POSTSCRIPT TO CHAPTER 7

As noted in the introduction, this postscript updates events discussed in the chapter sections, with further comment.

- Students at Columbia University occupied Hamilton Hall on April 29, 2024, and were removed by the NYPD at the president of Columbia's invitation. Over the same time period, it was announced that pro-Palestinian protests at Brown University had been quelled by the Board of Trustee's promise to vote on divestment of twelve companies in October 2024. This has led many to criticize the intransigence of blanket administrative refusal to divest.[38]
- Columbia and other prestigious colleges have used activist participation as a recruitment attraction and even commemorated and celebrated past protests. The lack of clear rules for what is and is not acceptable protest and demonstration led to both disappointment and a perception of hypocrisy among many students throughout higher education, when police were invited to clear tent encampments in the protests of April–May 2024.[39] Insofar as a college education is preparation for active and informed citizenship in a democracy, if colleges recognize protests as part of that function, it is necessary that they explicitly craft and promulgate clear rules for what is permitted and not permitted on campus, so that all students are informed during times when there are no active protests. And then, colleges need to follow through with disciplinary action that has been specified in such rules, as soon as protests begin, while at the same time reminding students of standing rules. Without such clear rules and follow-through, protests can degenerate into a form of public theatre that disrupts ordinary life on campus, results in (disturbing) police presence on campus, and makes prior political disagreements both more intense and likely to motivate intrusive government action. Student protests should be treated with respect and not allowed to degenerate into emergency situations requiring

crisis management. If institutions of higher education encourage student activism in enrollment, then they need to follow through with plans to manage it on their campuses.

- On May 9, 2024, Irene Mulvey, president of AAUP noted that over 2,000 students had been arrested as campus presidents yielded to external pressure from government, politicians, and donors. Mulvey called this a new "repression" of free speech in US higher education and argued that the mission of higher education was to teach and educate. This mission was ignored in inviting police on college campuses for peaceful protests, while at the same time, institutions already had mechanisms for dealing with speech hateful to minorities, which they did not use.[40] The AAUP's defense of free speech on campus appeared to cap a consensus among faculty and students.
- Also in early May 2024, a number of schools announced agreements with students to condemn human rights violations and examine investment ties with Israel, including Sacramento State, Evergreen College (WA), Rutgers University, and Northwestern. While all student demands were not explicitly met, peace was restored on campus for the time being. For instance, Sacramento reaffirmed the value of free speech and committed to pursuing an investment strategy to divest from "corporations & funds that profit from genocide, ethnic cleansing, and activities that violate fundamental human rights."[41] It is important that peace was secured not by concrete actions of divestment, but mainly by agreement to consider it and uphold support for human rights, including free speech.

Chapter 8

Student Protests, Antisemitism, and Communication

The Importance of Academic Discourse

Learning and events in higher education are regularly scheduled within the academic year and norms support civility in courteous interactions and predictable behavior. Of course, there are student, staff, and faculty complaints, and also disagreements between faculty and administration and among faculty. But these tensions are channeled through existing institutional structures and tamed through academic decorum. Colleges are orderly places and protests by members of the academic community that include physical symbols, music, chants, demands, confrontations, and unusual physical presence disrupt that order. Indeed, the subject and demands of protestors—what is being protested or objected to and what protestors want—may be overridden by the fact and physical reality of the protests themselves. Counter-protests or claims by other members of the college community that they have been harmed by the messages of a protest or harassed by protestors are reactions to both the content and activities of protests. The 2024 pro-Palestinian protests exemplified all of these protest "components," including tents as a demonstration to symbolize dislocation in Gaza, demands for college or university financial divestment from Israeli companies, complaints of antisemitism by and on behalf of Jewish students, congressional questioning of college presidents, and invited police intervention and arrests.

Chapter 7 focused on the facts or physical reality of student protests, of which speech was a component. In this chapter, the philosophical or theoretical aspects of protests are explored through ethics, metaphysics, epistemology, and the semantics and rhetoric of Jewish identity. These are general analysis, although the main subject remains the 2024 Israel–Hamas War student protests. Congressional hearings about the content of protests and college administration invitations to police to enter campuses and arrest students (and faculty) and clear their protest materials were mainly reactions

to the fact of protests themselves, and not their content. Without the physical fact of protests, it is unlikely that their content would have received broad public attention. Indeed, getting attention to their content (message) is often the main aim of such protests. In political contexts, there are also explicit partisan reactions to their content, such as, exactly, the Spring 2024 Republican congressional hearings on student support for Palestinians versus support for Israel. So, the fact of the protests themselves and their content, or what they are about, are intertwined.

The academic questions about protests revolve around whether they can be tamed through existing institutional structures, with conflicts exposed by their content, resolved. But the content of protests may raise questions that have no immediate answers for higher education, for instance: Is it even possible for institutions to divest financially? Are institutions obligated to make humanitarian statements about a war with high civilian casualties? Should faculty and students have more influence on public declarations that institutions promulgate?

There are also questions that go beyond the academy that can be raised by the content and fact of protests, including issues of free speech on campus and academic freedom that includes what colleges and universities are or should be allowed to do, as institutions in society. The value of free speech on campus is universally acclaimed, but hate speech, such as antisemitic speech which is not "free," is subject to definition, for instance, is anti-Zionism antisemitic? Also: What is the appropriate legal relationship between government and higher education? And, when is it right to quell the disorder of protests by inviting police onto campus? Consideration of these questions weave through the sections of this chapter. The first section provides an analysis of the metaphysics, ethics, epistemology, and politics of student protests. The second section focuses on the identities of those who have protested and counter-protested, as well as protest participants external to college communities. The third section concerns how colleges might better communicate internally, before political and law enforcement crises arise.

The Metaphysics, Ethics, Epistemology, and Politics of Student Protests

US college student protests, like other forms of activism, involve people doing physical things but their end goal is not to make noise, create visual displays, or unconventionally occupy college property. Their end goal is to get other people to do things. The fact of a protest is a disruption, not just of normal academic activities, but of normal academic thought or "frames" about contemporary issues. However, instead of engaging their content that may not be clearly understood, the mere physical reality of a protest itself is

often viewed as a problem. As unpredictable disruptions, protests cannot in principle be tamed. If protestors or their advisors are sufficiently dedicated to their cause, they may welcome the precipitation of a crisis and deliberately use disruption to get attention and use as leverage to achieve their aims. In *Shut it Down*, long-experienced activist and protest organizer, Lisa Fithian, praises the creation of a crisis for achieving societal change. In an interview about her overall vision of organized protest, she said:

> We also know that in every crisis there is opportunity. And so the question is whenever there is a crisis, there are different forces that might be poised to move that crisis in certain directions. There is a natural and organic way that change happens, and we need to set the foundation. We need to build the conditions. We need to hold a vision. So that when things are emerging, while we are not in control, we can move them in the direction we want. I want us to be poised to be doing that very intentionally.[1]

Clearly, Fithian sees protests as part of a revolution involving major societal change. But revolutions cannot be predicted or timed and only history will tell whether the 2024 college protests were even part of a cultural revolution or a movement.

However, Fithian's reference to crises, which create periods of shock and indecision among academic leaders to whom protests are rhetorically addressed—even though their audience is the entire worldwide public—is relevant to the manipulative side of student demands combined with protests. The disruption to normal academic life caused by protests creates leverage so that "deals" can be made to end the protest disruption in exchange for protestors getting what they want. Indeed, when Brown University agreed to discuss divestment, the May 1, 2024, headline at MassLive News read, "Brown U. and students made a rare deal to end encampment; here's how."[2]

The grounds on which protestors make demands of their institutions are often ethical in content, of the form, "Do not invest in entities that profit from or support the maiming and killing of innocent civilians." To even consider fulfilling such demands, a shift in "frame" or viewpoint has to occur on the part of those who have the power to fulfill protest demands. In this case, it would be a shift from assumed institutional fiduciary obligations to maximize profits on investments, to questioning whether it is ethical to profit from unethical activities. For those who are prepared to evaluate all decisions and actions in ethical terms, ethical evaluation of investments is an automatic requirement for deciding what are appropriate investments. However, for those who focus on finances, their obligation to maximize the profits on endowment funds is the primary consideration, so that demands for ethical consideration may at first seem irrelevant and end up seeming too complex

and open-ended. Elite college investment in companies doing business with Israel is more symbolic than substantial, because it involves relatively small investments in companies that themselves invest in Israeli companies. Gary Sernovitz, a managing director of Lime Rock Management LLP, a private equity investment firm, wrote:

> The real world does not always provide objective answers to how to balance benefits and consequences of companies providing products and services: Carbon emissions are bad, but energy consumption is necessary. Microsoft software for the Israeli government may displease you, but Microsoft saying it won't sell software to Israel would displease others—and probably get itself banned from working with New York State agencies.

And Sernovitz concluded:

> University budgets' demands on endowments never go away. Tuitions are rising. Costs always go up. Colleges should debate deep moral issues and discuss the hard compromises to solve the world's ills. But we should move those efforts to the lecture halls, away from the investment offices. Divesting is an easy chant. Investing is hard enough as it is.[3]

Sernovitz's prescription raises the question of the direction of discussion of ethical issues. To result in practical decisions, should ethical issues go from protests to course curricula, or the other way round? Some protest content could be based on curricula, but if protest content is extra-curricular, then it is unknown whether that content will work its way into curricula, or how. If divestment were already well understood through course work, normal institutional structures would allow for faculty to call for divestment before protests were enacted. That would be an institutional remedy. But none of the research on protests yields information about protestors exhausting their institutional resources or remedies, before protesting. Furthermore, the fact and presence of protests often serves as a disruption to well-entrenched assumptions, for instance, that ethics do not apply to investments.

Insofar as campus administrators designate financial managers to decide on investments based on profits, the ethical considerations may at first not occur to them and then end up seeming too complicated. Student calls for financial divestment from entities that they perceive to be morally wrong, such as companies that benefitted from the Vietnam War in the late 1960s and early 1970s, companies benefitting from apartheid in South Africa during the 1970s and 1980s, fossil fuel companies in the 2000s, and Israeli companies during the Israeli–Hamas war, are about the political influence of colleges and universities. But neither students nor college administrators have the power to direct government decisions and actions pertaining to wars, public

policies in other countries, or national energy production and consumption. There are no societal mechanisms for such direction, although statements and actions by members of academic communities may influence electoral officials, in ad hoc and unpredictable ways.

But students believe that their educational institutions should do something, namely, take a moral stand, on government policies that they (the students) think are morally wrong. The idea and practice of "divestment" refers to something that their institutions can enact which would signal the institutions' agreement that a practice is wrong. That is, the call for divestment is in its core a call for a change in US government policies but instead of making that demand to elected officials, the call for divestment is made and demonstrated on college campuses. The student aim is to create a new obligation for college administrators to call for that change, if only just rhetorically or symbolically, because their investments are insufficient political pressure to change government decisions. Students are thereby demanding that their institutions take a moral or ethical stand against government. But although their protests are at core political, because students and their institutions do not have political power, the pressure they apply to their institutions is only moral or ethical. Of course, in a time of instant media, that pressure becomes a global spectacle, subject to immediate international imitation. But, "the world" has no political power, either, to rectify conditions protested against. Public opinion can become more informed or swayed by protests, but until it is translated into political action by government authority, the situation protested against remains unchanged.

Morally motivated campus protests on college campuses are unusual projects in a democracy where political changes could be petitioned by appeals to elected representatives. The protest-initiated conversation between students and college administrations would make sense if protests, like lectures, and most extra-curricular activities, took place as purely internal events within college and universities. But, as noted, the public auditorium makes such conversation visible to everyone outside of higher ed institutions, as well as within them, and all the more so in an age of instantaneous online news. Thus, the fact of student protests as worldwide public theatre is not a direct or normal form of political action—it is literally, "making a scene."

Some were surprised when pro-Palestinian protests on college campuses caught the attention of members of the Education and Workforce Committee in the US House of Representatives and college presidents were summoned to testify in late 2023 and Spring 2024. How were the protests the concern of Congress? Congress simply has the constitutional power to summon people for hearings on matters of public interest[4] and protests on college campuses, met by complaints of antisemitism, were/are such matters. The stated concern was whether there was antisemitism on certain campuses,

with follow-up questions about what college presidents had or were going to do about it. Despite apparent compliance, there were congressional calls for college president resignations (see chapter 7). Such calls are rhetorical because only college Boards of Trustees can fire presidents if they do not voluntarily resign. There was also talk of calling in the National Guard from some Republican elected officials.[5] Compliance with congressional calls for student punishment quickly resulted in college leaders inviting police onto campus, presumably out of fear of: federal action and in some cases, loss of funding, loss of endowment funds from outraged doners, or a desire to restore normal order. Punishment by police led to further protests. What college presidents should have told their congressional interrogators early on was that academic institutions have strict and complex internal rules of due process, which require investigations, and do not provide for immediate punishment. Northwestern University President Michael Shill finally brought the issue of internal institutional due process to the surface in his hearing before The Committee on Education and the Workforce on May 23, 2024.[6] Looking ahead, such internal due process procedures could be clearly described and made available to all interested parties.

Unforeseen consequences of police action, during Spring 2024, such as the arrest of the chair of the Philosophy Department of Emory University[7] and the accidental firing of an officer's gun when Hamilton Hall was being cleared at Columbia University, as well as widespread reports of brutality against students led to faculty calls for college presidents to resign, in votes of "no confidence."[8,9] Since faculty do not have the authority to fire college presidents, these calls, like student protests, were mainly expressive in nature. This is not to make light of faculty objections. Many faculty members were shocked and deeply offended by the violence of police action as a response to the fact of physically peaceful student protest. It felt like a violation of the normal peace and safety of academic spaces. They also returned to the issue of free speech and at Columbia and Middlebury, professors joined protestor encampments with optional invitations to their students, to attend classes there. These were relevant teaching opportunities, but they also underscored support for free speech.[10,11] But are draped kufiyahs, tented encampments, and building occupations, speech? Like flag burning as "symbolic speech,"[12] except for vandalism and forced building occupations, they are protected speech as expressions of points of view. All of these expressions are also part of the leverage gained by disruption.

Notice that the message of the fact of disruption is not, "No one should live an orderly privileged life while innocent civilians are being maimed and killed," but "This campus cannot be orderly without divestment from entities that profit while innocent civilians are being maimed and killed." The fact that "deals" involving divestment resulted in a restoration of campus

order in some institutions proves this point. Without the pressure of protest, agreements to divest or consider divestment would not have been made. However, how protest is handled can lead to further institutional disorder. In May 2024, United Auto Workers Local 4811, representing 48,000 teaching assistants, researchers, and postdocs, announced possibly impending rolling strikes across ten campuses of the University of California. Their grounds were restrictions of free speech and unfair labor practices in police responses to protests. Their demands included divestment and amnesty for protestors.[13]

The news has not been splashed with charges for the criminal violations on the basis of which police were asked to act or whether police brought charges on their own. Neither have final penalties for indictments been widely publicized. Charges would presumably have involved trespass, vandalism (if applicable), disorderly conduct, resisting arrest (if applicable), public nuisance, and perhaps burglary when students take possession of campus buildings and barricade their entrances and exits.[14] When no charges were filed beyond possible misdemeanors for trespass and the mere facts of arrest and suspension were held to constitute sufficient punishment, then the public theatre of protest became a form of living theatre, with audience participation by college administrators. And if that audience participation concludes the matter, then college protests remain a closed, in-house, academic phenomenon, despite their wider display as a mass spectacle. The process of disruption and leverage through student protest can lead to institutional change regarding investment and rules for inviting police onto campus, as well as resilience against external pressures. But again, these effects are in-house.

By contrast, congressional summons and police interventions have direct authority and power that makes them at core more real than theatre (although media depictions of them become part of public protest theater). Congressional summons and police action are reactions to the fact of student protests, while reactions to its content may be inferred. Also, big academic donors may need to be appeased.[15] While campus police or security officers report to college administrations, town, city, or state police who have a tradition of not intervening in college events without outside invitation, nevertheless are semi-autonomous when they do intervene. And that is when events can spin out of control. External police may be "too" violent. Complicated, unpredicted structures may be evoked by student protests in times of political division driven/riven by party politics. Protests may become riots aided by political actors who are not students but have their own political axes to grind. For example, some of the pro-Jewish counter-protestors at the pro-Palestinian protests on the UCLA campus in late April 2024 were identified by *The Guardian* as belonging to ultra-conservative Right-wing extremist groups, who in other contexts expressed white supremacist antisemitic tropes and anti-LGBTQ+ and anti-vaccination conspiracies.[16]

IDENTITIES IN THE ISRAEL–HAMAS PROTESTS AND COUNTER-PROTESTS

Who protested, who complained, or counter-protested and who refrained? The 2024 pro-Palestinian college protests began in elite schools in the US Northeast and spread throughout the country and internationally, resulting in encampments and protests on over 140 colleges and universities in forty-five US States; and their demands for divestment were echoed by pro-Palestinian student protests throughout Europe.[17] There were complaints from Jewish students and their advocates. HBCUs and other minority-serving institutions with large proportions of college student Firsts seemed to have abstained. The spearhead of elite US schools suggests that protestors were at first relatively privileged students and not first-generation college students. For minority Firsts who are focused on the achievement of a college degree, especially in fulfillment of family aspirations, the prospects of suspension and police arresting students of color, especially black students, seemed daunting, with too much to lose.[18] At Lehman college, which is an Hispanic-serving institutions with many first- or second-generation immigrants, there were no Pro-Palestinian protests, although in meetings, some students, and perhaps more faculty, expressed solidarity with protestors on other campuses. The Lehman College graduation ceremony on May 29, 2024, was politically uneventful. Overall, the demographics of Spring 2024 college protestors suggest that protests are activities of leisure, based on the security of middle-class socio-economic family membership.

Still, many students at HBCUs followed protests on other campuses and were well-informed about their issues and demands. About seven out of over 400 Morehouse College 2024 graduates quietly protested while President Biden gave the commencement address on May 19, 2024. Perhaps most noteworthy about that address in terms of student influence was that Biden discussed the Israeli–Hamas war at length, reiterating his support for a cease fire and voicing distress about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. This was pragmatic rather than idealistic politics, because in speaking to the male-only Morehouse graduates, Biden was also addressing his slippage in support from African American men for the forthcoming presidential election.[19]

Complaints from Jewish students and the ADL (Anti-Defamation League) and other pro-Jewish organizations against Pro-Palestinian student demonstrators' apparent support of Hamas' terrorist October 7, 2023, attack on Israel, began in late 2023.[20] But charges of antisemitism grew more intense when student protestors constructed encampments, and assaults on, and intimidation of, Jewish students were reported. In adopting Palestinian slogans, such as "From the River to the Sea," vilification of Israel and Zionism became conflated with antisemitism against American Jews. The ADL and

numerous commentators have distinguished between antisemitism and anti-Zionism and/or criticism of the Israeli government. Antisemitism is discrimination, hatred, and attacks on Jewish people, because they are Jewish, and as such it is a species of speech and behavior that colleges and universities would generally oppose. But Zionism is an ideology that itself may conflate Jewish identity with connection to the national identity of Israel.[21] As a result, according to some Zionists, to be Jewish is to be pro-Israel and therefore to be anti-Israel is to be anti-Jewish/antisemitic.

The societal success and acceptance of American Jews as generically racially white has failed to mobilize the kinds of institutional protection of them that is accorded to other racial and ethnic minority groups. Part of the reason for this is that diversity programs have hewed to the limited census categories of race and ethnicity, making it difficult, if not impossible, to recognize harm to those who do not fit into those categories. As discussed in chapter 1, a substitution of the idea of "multiplicity" for "diversity" would provide a more attentive framework, not only to American Jews, but to Muslims, Palestinians, and other groups subject to harassment or persecution. The history of antisemitism is unique in its episodic nature and ignorance of that history, including widespread ignorance of the World War II Nazi holocaust, is an important factor in the conflation of antisemitism with anti-Zionism or criticism of Israel. Not only would Zionists view anti-Zionism as antisemitism, because they locate Jewish identity within Israeli national identity, but the roots of modern Zionism in the formation of the nation of Israel after the World War II holocaust, has an existential historical dimension for many Jews.

Antisemitism has been on the rise in recent years in the United States but it has so far been episodic in attacks on synagogues, particularly the massacre at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh in October 2018.[22] This episodic nature follows an historical pattern. Jewish populations in predominantly Christian and Muslim nations have a history of assimilation, followed by thriving, which is suddenly interrupted by violent attack. This was what happened in Germany during the 1930s and 1940s, and it was echoed by Hamas' sudden and violent attack on Israelis on October 7, 2023, which motivated Israel's war in Gaza.

Based on a long history of successful assimilation, success, and sudden attacks, there is reason for Jews, anywhere, to be alert to the possibility that "it could happen, here." Given that historically/inductively justified mindset, there is no such thing as over-reaction to antiseemitic language. The conflation of antisemitism with anti-Zionism has recently been expressed by German leaders as their own existential investment in the survival of the state of Israel. Their reasoning is that the existence of Israel represents atonement or redemption for the German Holocaust, so that were Israel to be destroyed, the modern expiation of German collective guilt would vanish with it.[23]

In May 2024, the US House of Representatives and Senate passed the Antisemitism Awareness Act, a bill to define antisemitism according to the definition provided by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition and to be codified in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964:

> Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

If signed into law, the Antisemitism Awareness Act would include anti-Zionism in antisemitism, as "targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity."[24] Soon after the Act cleared Congress, almost 700 Jewish college professors wrote a letter of protest against it.[25] Even in the absence of a framework of multiplicity, this definition would require colleges and universities to attend to anti-Zionism, as well as more direct antisemitism against individuals, according to the Civil Rights Act.

Some erstwhile progressives, who might otherwise have tried to split anti-Zionism from antisemitism, are sufficiently alarmed by the interpretation of Pro-Palestinian slogans, "From the River to the Sea" and "Globalize the Intifada," as calls to obliterate the state of Israel, that they would likely accept the now-ruling conflation. Paul Berman, 1968 Columbia protestor and subsequent chronicler of the politics of his generation, which included LGBTQ+ liberation, said:

> The real meaning of the "river to the sea" is that the state of Israel should not exist, that 50 percent of the world's population of Jews should be rendered stateless. And the real meaning of "globalize the intifada" is that there should be a globalization of the events that introduced the word "intifada" to the world, namely the intifada of circa 2001, which was a mass movement to commit random acts of murderous terror. But people don't want to acknowledge that. They get red in the face denying that's the case. But they can't explain why the students want to chant these things. The students want to chant these things, of course, because these slogans are transgressive. But no one wants to say what the transgression is because it's too horrible. So we're having a mass euphemism event: Horrible things are being advocated by people who deny that they're advocating it.[26]

If pro-Palestinian student protestors knew what the slogans meant and intended to convey that meaning, but did not want to take responsibility for that, then Berman is more than correct in calling "euphemism." But if they did not know what the slogans meant, then there was a problem in communication that should not have been possible on college campuses.

COMMUNICATION

Let's assume that anti-Zionism is a form of antisemitism, because Zionism asserts that Israel has a right to exist and posits identity as Israeli or support of Israel and belonging to Israel, as extending to all Jews. If Israel is a democracy and some Jews live in other democratic countries, then criticism or even condemnation of Israel's military policies need not be anti-Zionist or antisemitic. If the student pro-Palestinian protestors had merely stood up for civilian war victims in Gaza, without taking up the slogans of Hamas, the charges of anti-Zionism, as well as antisemitism, would not have had a foundation. They may also have criticized Israel's long-time occupation of Gaza, as students had been doing for years, again, without anti-Zionist/antisemitic slogans. This is not a complicated analysis, and it is well within the skill set of many or most academics, including undergraduates. So why was it not communicated to those who wanted to protest for Palestinians—assuming that it is unthinkable that they were calling for the annihilation of Israel? That kind of failure in academic communication needs to be addressed, not only concerning the point about the 2024 pro-Palestinian protestors but much more generally.

The conflation of antisemitism and anti-Zionism is now the received definition, as noted in terms of Zionist claims and the pending Antisemitism Awareness Act. There is a second conflation between the source and motivation of antisemitism as coming from long-established white supremacist ideology and pro-Palestinian support based on the actions of Israel in Gaza. White supremacist antisemitic ideology has issued from the extreme political Right, whereas pro-Palestinian discourse has been largely associated with the political Left. While antisemitic speech, harassment, and other harms are from both directions commensurable, the political cross-currents are not irrelevant. During a May 23, 2024 congressional committee hearing, the presidents of Northwestern and Rutgers universities and the Chancellor of UCLA were summoned to testify about recent protests and antisemitism on their campuses. Before the questioning began, the ranking member of the committee (longest serving member of minority political contingent in the committee), Robert C. "Bobby" Scott, who is a Democrat, noted in his statement that he had called for congressional investigation of the antisemitic slogans chanted by white supremacist marchers at the 2017 "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottsville, Virginia, but to no avail.[27] While the political use of antisemitism does not diminish its core social and individual harms, it does create confusion in calling people to account, when, as in congressional hearings, college presidents have been questioned about antisemitism on their campuses, as though that antisemitism were part of the same ideology and crimes as the antisemitism of Nazi Germany or even unite the Right demonstrations in Charlottsville.

In communications both within and outside of campus communities, leaders in higher education do not always take advantage of the expertise, knowledge, and just plain smarts that are already at their disposal. Diffusing political pressure would be less necessary if those in higher education communicated more effectively in the first place and were informative across the political spectrum. There are two dimensions to this: First, holding cross-disciplinary discussions within institutions, and second, making them freely available to the public in language that is clear and accessible.

As noted in chapter 7, the anti-Vietnam War student protests were part of a cultural revolution. But insofar as their specific aims in 1968 were political, the question is whether they were effective. The Vietnam War ended in 1975 but before then, Richard Nixon was elected president in 1969, partly on a law-and-order promise and later, Ronald Reagan's election in 1981 was partly fueled by his conservative stance against student protests.[28] One way to consider the connections between student protests and progressive political changes is to place them within larger progressive movements that eventually prevail. However, this is to rely on unpredictable events that will eventually be viewed as part of a pattern, after the fact. Another view that is more empirical is to consider student protests as part of communication from higher education to the rest of society, and within communication, identify speech, as distinct from demonstration and disruption. Speech is clearly within the scope of higher education, although demonstration and disruption occur in media that some academics regard with suspicion, and opportunistic political partisans can take advantage of for their own causes.

Removing demonstration (theater) and disruption leaves speech for education, both within and outside of higher ed, as well as specialized research. Specialized research is relatively easy to organize, because in most cases concerning controversial issues there are agreed-upon, shared conceptual tools. Academic research on progressive subjects such as philosophy of race, philosophy of education, feminism, and LGBTQ+ studies is not directly broadcast to the wider public, because it is arcane, jargon laden, and complicated. Little of this research even makes its way into trade books for general readers. And trade-book material also usually takes sides.

Needed is an educational form of speech that analyzes sides and issues, with greater depth than journalism (which also takes sides) but not so "deep" as to fail to engage popular audiences. Non-partisan public intellectuals are desperately needed, but short of that, colleges and universities can solicit and collect written material and videos from rank-and-file faculty, as well as students, and routinely make that material available online and to journalists. The problem with the present situation is that the few public intellectuals in public view are celebrities. Successful journalists are also celebrities, and it is often left to them to analyze current events pertaining to higher education,

especially student protests. When institutions present their "experts" to media, the messages also get lost in the attention those experts attract.

Needed is relatively quiet and widely accessible thought from academics, without celebrity attached to the fact of communicating it. The medium should *not* be the message. Such thought needs to be written or video recorded in language that anyone can understand. This is not easy to do. By comparison, on one side what we have now is generally abstruse professional jargon, and on the other, comparatively superficial reports and analysis in op eds and other news reports that are broadcast on an ad hoc basis. Imagine an organized, internally categorized public auditorium, with accessible thought and reflection, available for free online, from both individual institutions and collected into a central website with useful search functions. Of course, in a generally anti-intellectual culture, such emporia of ideas may be ignored, but the task is to make offerings sufficiently accessible to attract broad attention, from those who want to be informed. That we can only imagine this shows that despite accelerating digital advances, including AI, higher education is still in the infancy of using available technology for meaningful communication. For instance, the intense phase of the 2024 pro-Palestinian protests occurred over about a three-week period, resulting in police on campuses, perceptions of antisemitism, and much disappointment among those who did not participate, including parents of enrolled students.[29] After the winddown, while a google search provided over 1 billion entries on May 4, 2024, there was still no consensus on what had happened or what it would take to come to a consensus—or even orderly discussion within the academic community, much less ordinary people.[30] Colleges and universities can ameliorate, or even correct, this situation. Even if consensus is elusive, the public should have opportunities to understand their own and others' viewpoints, and perhaps become better able to live with disagreement about important issues.

Moreover, if faculty members can be read, heard, seen (in print, in person, or on a YouTube channel) to be conversing civilly and without fanfare with one another, it provides a model for students. During the Spring 2024 Israel–Hamas War, too many members of academic communities chose sides so that students who wanted to come together as both Arab, Muslim, and Jewish were at first fearful of hostility from their own peer groups and opposing groups.[31] This indicates a vacuum of informed civil discourse about controversial subjects. If faculty had set a precedent or can commit to such precedents going forward, it would be no more than a normal facet of college life for students from different political sides or backgrounds, to voluntarily come together to peacefully, and perhaps productively, discuss contemporary conflicts on campus and beyond.

There is also a need for greater institution-wide communication. For instance in February, 2024, the AAUP signed a general call of labor unions for a cease fire in the Israel–Hamas war, which read:

> We, along with other members of the American labor movement, mourn the loss of life in Israel and Palestine. We express our solidarity with all workers and our common desire for peace in Palestine and Israel, and we call on President Joe Biden and Congress to push for an immediate ceasefire and end to the siege of Gaza.

Below its statement, the AAUP leadership solicited signatures for a petition supporting calls for the ceasefire that had already been signed by over 200 unions and organizatons.[32] But, so far as I am aware, AAUP membership, even though many would have agreed with this declaration, did not participate in, or approve of, this call for a ceasefire. Declarations by organizations with academic (as well as other) membership are only democratic if membership participates or if the organizations are transparent about how they arrive at their public positions.

The reason membership was not consulted for the AAUP statement may be that it was believed that consensus was impossible. Throughout the student protests, and in broad US society, there seemed to be two opposed sides—pro-Palestinians with embedded pro-Hamasians, and pro-Israeli's with embedded anti-antisemites. But consensus could be reached in both academic and broader discourse with the help of moderators' suggestions that draw on more abstract and general categories than the two opposing sides, categories within which there are "intersections" due to multiple oppressions.[33] For instance, opposing sides of academic communities who are both members of academic communities, and opposing sides of political communities, are all Americans, or in the Middle East, Middle Easterners. By drawing on and referring to such wider memberships, while at the same time acknowledging differences *within them* (which must be emphasized), unity can be emphasized. But if consensus remains elusive, opposing sides within academic communities will have an opportunity to understand their own and others viewpoints, and perhaps become better able to live with disagreement about important issues. And that is the peaceful process that can be shared with the public.

Chapter 9

All-Hazards Risk Management

Preparing for Natural Disasters, Shooters, Hackers, and AI

The previous chapters have addressed problematic conditions of present life in US higher education. Conditions such as the end of Affirmative Action and DEI, falling enrollment, the unjust treatment of adjunct faculty, declining humanities, student culture shock and mental health needs, lack of clarity about free speech, political protests, antisemitism, and government overreach against academic freedom, may all go on for a while. While these conditions or states of affairs could culminate or conclude in disastrous events such as human harm, property destruction, faculty unemployment, or college closures, there is usually enough time to take steps to avert the worst possible outcomes, and the steps to be taken are within the range of normal academic activities. In contrast, natural weather disasters, pandemics, shootings on campus, cyber threats, and unregulated AI, are emergencies when they happen. Advance preparation is necessary, because the timing of such disasters cannot be accurately predicted and when they do occur, it is too late to mitigate their damage. Without advance preparation, all that can be done is emergency response. Emergency response has built-in stages of preparation because equipment and personnel need to be assembled and managed, for example, law enforcement containment of active shooters, but that does not reduce damage as much as active preparation, beforehand.

Natural weather disasters and pandemics are matters of safety. Shooters on campus are matters of security, as well as safety. Cyberattacks are breaches of electronic infrastructure that disrupt normal academic life. The addition of AI to college life looks like a growing condition, because as of this writing, it is a mix of enthusiasm and invention of rules at the same time of implementation. The danger is that if AI is not managed properly, a generation of college students could lose opportunities to develop their minds, both critically and creatively. While that does not qualify as a disastrous event, because it will

occur over time, it could lead to the disastrous condition of college education losing its capability of supporting not only the life of the mind, but the mind itself. And should that happen, it would be a major disaster, with little hope of effective response.

The first section of this chapter addresses safety through natural disaster preparation, both weather and biological, especially COVID-19. This is followed by issues of physical and electronic security. The risks of under-regulated AI use are then considered. And finally, the Precautionary Principle is introduced to tie together the necessity of preparation for the foregoing urgencies.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Weather and Fire

Emergency management research broadly divides natural disasters into stages of: preparation (both avoidance and mitigation or adaptation), response, and recovery. College campuses are particularly vulnerable to weather-related natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, and tornadoes, because they house dense populations, usually of young adults, who increasingly arrive with pre-existing socioeconomic and demographic vulnerabilities, without commitment to strong cultures of preparation. In addition, those who are within the traditional 18–24 age range may experience long-term formative effects from disasters.

Kyle Breen et al. have provided a 2024 review of 1,743 publications about the effects of natural disasters on college students, in which half dealt with North American college students (the United States, Mexico, and Canada). About 30 percent of the publications discussed disasters in general terms and another 30 percent addressed hurricanes, followed by about a quarter addressing earthquakes, and tornadoes, floods, and wildfires making up about 9 percent. After screening the publications, the authors highlighted several big-picture concerns in a "full disaster and emergency management cycle, including disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery." Two-thirds of the publications surveyed focused on disaster impacts or the recovery stage. Preparation for immediate disaster response was least discussed, although disaster mitigation was emphasized, as part of preparation, with advice to specific institutions. Particular attention was paid to student knowledge in terms of their personal preparation, which can be supported through course work on disaster management, if it is made part of standard curricula.[1] This focus on the resiliency of likely disaster victims is an important shift from the logistics of physical disaster response, to the effects of disaster on human experience and capabilities. Indeed, a year after Hurricane Katrina, in 2006,

disaster researchers and planners began to focus on *resilience* or the ability to build back better and not only mitigate the effects of area-specific disasters, but emerge stronger after them, with better communication and information. The ideal of a disaster-resilient university (DRU) proposed by Naim Kapucu and Sana Khosa, in 2012, has in many cases been implemented for weather-related events.[2]

Hurricane Katrina still stands out as a keystone catastrophe. Katrina affected thirty-one colleges and universities, among which many provided aid and rescue to disaster victims in their communities.[3] The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), under the Presidential Directive-5 responded with the requirement that universities create emergency plans in compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) which specifies organization structures and communication for leadership in disaster response. Many colleges throughout the US express their adherence to NIMS on their websites, for example, in stating: "NIMS is the comprehensive system for managing domestic incidents in the United States and is suitable for all institutions of higher education (IHEs) to implement before, during, and after an emergency."[4]

Some US campuses, in accord with the American College Health Association (ACHA) have implemented an All-Hazards approach to disasters affecting college campuses attending to both health services and overall conformity to NIMS guidelines. This people-centered approach is important for disaster resiliency. The US government Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) also provides guidelines for identifying geographically specific risks.[5] Given such structures for preparedness, information about them for all members of college communities should be widely disseminated, together with 24/7/365 emergency contact information. Rotating crisis management teams made up administrators, emergency/risk specialists, faculty, and campus safety staff should also be available 24/7/365 to advise and inform those who have the authority to make decisions for immediate responses that are likely to begin with security and practical logistical mobilizations, as well as emergency medical care and outreach to external local agencies such as police, fire departments, and other components of Emergency Management Systems (EMS).

COVID-19

Except for ongoing climate change, weather-related natural disasters do not affect those distant from their immediate areas. And climate change, although a universal catastrophe, is a somewhat abstract and slow-moving condition. In contrast, a once-in-a-hundred-years pandemic, such as COVID-19, strikes everyone, everywhere, in a kind of rolling simultaneity that was particularly

devastating to higher education. In the words of the 2021 American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Special Report:

> For American higher education, as for almost every other aspect of life and livelihood in the United States, the arrival of the COVID-19 virus in early 2020 was a cataclysmic event. Within a matter of weeks, instruction moved online, meetings and conferences were canceled or transferred to platforms such as Zoom, residence halls were evacuated, and athletic and hospitality facilities were closed. As the first wave of the virus spread, the longer-term impact of the pandemic began to be felt, and many institutions faced dire challenges in the 2020–21 academic year.[6]

The global effects of the COVID-19 pandemic itself extended beyond illness and death into profound changes in the mode of academic life. Enrollment fell and research and community service were disrupted. The modality of academic life largely moved online when campuses themselves shut down and in-person classes were cancelled. Technological capabilities, especially connectivity issues, varied, with uneven success for the transition.[7] Due to widespread college lockdowns, campuses looked like ghost towns for a while, with bulletin board postings of pre-pandemic announcements. Campuses re-occupied after vaccines became available, and in many cases mandatory, for students. But the speed and convenience of online teaching, faculty meetings, academic conferences, and even graduation ceremonies have meant that a large part of living academic life online, remains, as it also remains for many other areas of societal interaction. One of the biggest differences between virtual and in-person interactions is the lack of spontaneity and creativity in getting together online, because meetings have to be planned and scheduled in advance. Speaking anecdotally, this has affected the frequency and quality of collegial interactions. However, the convenience of the move online and its apparent greater efficiency strongly suggests that this part of academic life for faculty is unlikely to fully return to pre-pandemic in-person practices.

The harm to mental health, socialization, and learning progress when K-12 pupils could not physically go to school and struggled to learn through online platforms has been well documented.[8] School performance in K-12 is easily measurable, because there is national uniformity for measurement of capabilities for each grade in K-12, and 1.5 million pupils had lower scores in reading and mathematics, with specific difficulties reported in mathematics, language, and reading skills.[9] However, college degrees are not achieved by advancing through set grades, but by the accumulation of course credits. There is less, if any, college-level standardized testing of the nature available for K-12 pupils.

Student perceptions may be more influential for the future of online learning, because higher education institutions need to remain attractive to prospective students to support enrollment. Before the pandemic, about a third of higher education students studied online. This group tended to be disproportionately populated by older and racial/ethnic minority students, many of whom did not do well academically, because of non-academic life pressures. The pandemic created a much broader research database. Overall, almost half (47 percent) of all students surveyed in a Hechinger Report found online learning a positive experience, although slightly less faculty (43 percent) were approving. Before the pandemic, 70 percent of chief online officers believed that online teaching would increase and after the pandemic it was 99 percent. Many observers believe that trends toward "blended" or mixed online and in-person teaching and learning may be the best way to capture the convenience of pandemic-learning models and preserve the benefits of in-person encounters, going forward. Overall, after the pandemic, 57 percent of students expressed optimism about online learning for the future.[10] A survey of pharmacy students at HBCUs about the campus move to online instruction concluded that these mostly black and female students reported greater stress during periods of online learning, but for reasons in their lives, so that they judged their online learning to be successful.[11]

In 2024, it may still be too close in time for members of college communities, and indeed of any community, or for any individual, to assess the personal and communal effects of COVID-19, both during the active pandemic itself and extending into the vaccination and booster regime (that remains with us, to this day). In my own experience, I have noticed a kind of Groundhog Day reiteration of expressions of pandemic recovery that seem to be continually announced during the year after the COVID-19 pandemic was officially declared over by the World Health Organization on May 5, 2023 (this closed out its initial recognition of it on January 30, 2020).[12] Granted, a year is a short term in which to process such an epic event, but the worst of mortalities and lockdowns seemed to be over, after vaccinations became available at the end of 2020.[13]

An All-Hazards approach should include resilience after the next pandemic, as part of preparation. But the question remains open of how what was learned from the COVID-19 pandemic could be applied to the next crisis of contagion. For instance, resilience resources before a disaster often depend on prior or mid-stream attitudes and abilities for coping with stress, which studies indicated lessened depression and anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic.[14] This implies that mental health issues should be part of preparation for the next pandemic in higher ed. At the same time, ongoing blended models for mixing teaching with in-person and online student work and

instruction should strengthen abilities for college students to adapt to fully online education, if it again becomes necessary in a future pandemic.

SECURITY

Shootings on Campus

According to *Britannica*, referring to the FBI, a mass shooting is an event in which one or more people are "actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area. Implicit in this definition is the shooter's use of a firearm." The FBI does not specify numbers of casualties but the Investigative Assistance for Violent Crimes Act of 2012 defines a "mass killing" as "3 or more killings in a single incident."[15] The US federal government has kept statistics on K-12 shootings since 2000, but not for colleges and universities. From 2000 to 2022, there were 1,375 school shootings at public and private elementary and secondary schools, causing 515 deaths and 1,161 injuries.[16]

On August 1, 1966, fifteen were killed and thirty-one injured by a shooter from a tower at the University of Texas, Austin. This was not only the first recorded university shooting but the first US mass shooting. According to a *Best Colleges* report, updated in December 2024, since 1966, at least 102 people have been killed in thirteen mass shootings on college campuses:

1970—Kent State, (4 killed by Ohio National Guard)
1976—California State University, seven killed
1991—University of Iowa, five killed
2007—Virginia Tech, thirty-two killed, in deadliest college shooting on record
2008—Northern Illinois University, five killed
2012: Oikos University, Oakland, CA campus, seven killed
2013—Santa Monica College, five killed
2014—University of California Santa Barbara, three killed in town of Isla Vista, CA
2015—Umpqua Community Collete, Rosenberg Oregon, nine killed
2022—University of Virginia, three killed
2023—Michigan State University, three killed
2023—University of Nevada, Las Vegas, three killed
2023—HBCU Morgan State University, 5 injured but HBCUs were experiencing increases in threats

Mass shootings aren't the only kinds of gun violence on college campuses. Everytown for Gun Safety documented 323 instances of gunfire on college

campuses, occurring in forty-two states and Washington, D.C., from 2013 to 2023. These incidents include individual attacks, unintentional gunfire, legal interventions, and self-harm, which have killed 300 people and injured 94. Access to guns on campus can increase suicide risk and escalate hostile conflicts. Over 60 percent of college students surveyed report that shootings disrupt their feelings of safety and/or that they favor more strict campus gun policies. Gun control policies were among the top three voting issues for college students during the 2022 midterm elections, especially among Gen Z (born 1997–2012, ages ten to twenty-five in 2022).[17]

Even allowing for up to three times as many K-12 as college students, deaths by shootings on college campuses are proportionally less frequent than on primary and secondary school campuses. One reason might be that mass targets on colleges campuses are more difficult to pinpoint because college classrooms are typically spread out, and classes are held at varying times, in different buildings, compared to more compact layouts of K-12 campuses. At UT, Austin in 1966, thirty-one were killed and at Virginia Tech in 2007, thirty-two were killed, but these massacres seem not to have resulted in high impact movements for gun safety, led by college students. The immediate issue for college students appears to be policies that allow guns to be carried on campus and they are less attuned to gun-related legislation than high-school students such as those who began the #Never Again movement after the 2018 Marjory Stoneman Douglas shooting in Parkland, Florida.[18]

There are two main approaches to preventing campus shootings. The wide-net approach concentrates on therapy for all troubled students, increased campus access security for everyone, and regular, required drills and training for the campus community, including safety officers, about what to do if shots are fired.[19] Wide-net programs affect the entire campus population and may require outside contractors and extensive internal announcements.[20] Local, state, and federal gun control laws and policies, safety trainings, and legal advocacy can become part of external resources for safety. Wide-net measures are expensive but also in principle inclusive, because all members of campus communities are involved. But because they are expensive and require broad cooperation, it is wise to determine before implementing them, if they are acceptable to most faculty, staff, and students.[21]

A more specific approach focuses on those likely to become shooters on campus, given their present or recent speech and behavior. In retrospect, the traits of college shooters can be categorized into those with disrupted family backgrounds and those from intact families with severe psychological problems, such as narcissism or the absence of empathy.[22] According to a PBS study, campus shooters have all have been male, with an average age of twenty-eight and six out of thirteen have been racially nonwhite. However, for prevention, this kind of information is still too broad to be practical. But

it is also known that shooters communicate their intent to harm in advance. If family members, friends, and co-workers know these warning signs and how and to whom to report them, specific interventions can be effective for prevention.[23] Such intervention requires campus policies for threat assessment.

Threat assessment is in principle different from therapeutic or counseling/life coaching services for troubled students who may be isolated, depressed, or angry, because those kinds of support usually focus on clients' improved well-being and can miss their negative expressions of violent intent. The focus on violent intent primarily aims to diffuse the violent intent, although individuals are also supported and encouraged to engage in nonviolent, constructive outlets. One key factor in threat assessment is that intent to harm others has been found to be linked to suicidality.[24] In the process of avoiding a focus on immediate causes of violence, as well as media myths and demonization of college shooters, researchers generally reject ideological motivations, such as INCEL(involuntary celibate) misogynistic online inspiration. It has been found that shooters' references to ideologies usually come after the fact of their violent intent that arises from concrete personal problems.[25]

The majority of colleges do not have threat assessment teams, at this time. A 2023 examination of written threat assessment policies in eleven four-year institutions in one state found that only five had such written policies in place. And those policies did not include best practices, such as threat assessment teams that were representative of all campus community groups, consistency in how reports were made, and clear guidelines for working with outside agencies.[26] Both wide-net security measures and specific threat assessments are necessary preventative measures for shootings on campus. But in a time of general campus budget crunches and the absence of uniform policies, even on state levels, either or both measures are unlikely to be seriously considered and undertaken until after a tragic event has occurred.

Nevertheless, there has been a heightened focus on crime on college campuses during the 2000s, along with duties to report. The Clery Act or federal security Act of 1990/98 was a response to the 1986 rape and killing of Jeanne Clery, a freshman at Lehigh University. And in 2008, after the massacre at Virginia Tech, the Clery Act was amended to include requirements for campus emergency response plans, with immediate notification of an emergency to faculty and staff, provided that such notice did not worsen present conditions.[27] Campus mass shootings are emergencies and where legal structures and official institutional policies exist for preventing them, it is the obligation of faculty and staff to demand that top administrators fulfill their obligations to implement them. Potential college shooters who are members of campus communities can be deflected through threat assessment policies and terms. Creating that apparatus to prevent college shootings becomes a moral requirement under present duties of care.

Cyber Security

Cybercrimes affect students, researchers, administrators, and all members of academic communities. An entire industry stands by to provide outside services and advice to college leaders, in addition to their own experts who implement precautionary measures.[28] Institutions offering degrees in cyber security are also routinely ranked.[29]

Anyone who has been employed in higher education after about 2000 has encountered mandatory cyber security trainings, much of which consist of common sense that is widely shared throughout society. Nevertheless, data breaches have occurred and a twelve-year review study of published reports found that empirical research on cyber security risk areas in US higher education is not robust, particularly concerning knowledge of vulnerabilities in email use (e.g., through phishing) and research.[30] Most members of academic communities are not highly knowledgeable about the electronic systems they use for study, teaching, or research, so that institutional cyber security depends on the diligence of campus leaders, IT specialists, and outside contractors. Both quantitative and qualitative student surveys have identified "latencies" or default modes of routinization and ritualization of risk, optimistic bias, self-efficacy bias, and the "Can-I-Live?" syndrome that is defined as "exercising learned helplessness."[31]

Calling "Can-I-Live?" a "syndrome" does not do justice to the helplessness which is not so much learned, as imposed. Scams, viruses, worms, malware, identity theft, frequent password changes, firewalls, two-step verification, texted codes, data breaches in major companies: this is the reality we now all have to live in, all the time. The existential condition of cyber insecurity, which is ignored when pundits describe it as a problem that can be solved, if only certain directions are followed, is a collective price that everyone now pays for the transition online to practically all facets of human life that used to be transacted, and yes, *lived*, in physical reality. The honest answer to "Can-I-Live?" is "No, not at this time."

AI

The title of a June 13, 2024, article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education read*, "Professors Ask: Are We Just Grading Robots? Some are Riding the AI Wave. Others Feel Like They're Drowning." There is as yet no clear, shared understanding of the relevance of AI to higher education or rules for its application. Administrators are more enthusiastic about the uses of AI than faculty, and faculty are often flummoxed by how to grade AI-generated student work. Many instructors have given up expectations that they can enforce reading and writing requirements when students submit their work online and some have reverted to hand-written assignments in class.[32] The questions are, Who

is in ultimately in charge of AI use? and What exactly are the problems with its applications in higher education, particularly for teaching and learning?

Warnings of AI researchers and whistleblowers have raised scattered alarms that AI has a probability of destroying the whole of humanity, rendering our species extinct.[33] Much of the attention toward AI regulation has focused on government regulation, consisting of standards and audits.[34] But President Biden's 2023 Executive Order encompassing AI consumer privacy protections, safety, cyber security, civil rights protection, health care, biological research and international outreach, ultimately depends on corporate self-regulation and reporting.[35] While the AAUP has specified positions on academic freedom since 1940, as of this writing (June 13, 2024) it has not issued a statement on AI. Freedom of expression has been proclaimed for students, as well as faculty.[36] Does that extend to their appropriation of AI products?

It has traditionally been assumed that students will not present as their own, work that they have not done. Plagiarism is, of course, relevant here, although plagiarism traditionally refers to presenting the work of other humans as one's own work. This is part of why AI is a pedagogical problem. It can be mitigated by requiring that generative AI be cited as a source in student work, and many colleges and universities have adopted or advised such rules.[37] For enforcement, varied AI detection tools are available for instructors.[38] However, institutional consequences for widespread AI plagiarism do not yet exist, probably because the number of students who plagiarize in this way is already too large for effective punitive measures. This means that instructors, especially in the humanities, where AI use has been encouraged by administrators for student information about subject overviews and writing skills, are left to their own devices.[39] Needed is a deeper understanding of the problems with specifically AI plagiarism.

Traditionally, the wrongness of plagiarism has centered on theft and deception—the student or researcher has stolen the product of another and falsely presented it as their own. It seems intuitively obvious that we should not have to grade robots, but this reaction of outrage is more complex than realized. At stake is subjectivity itself. Imagine the dystopian AI-run college of the future: students are algorithmically enrolled and registered in college, with all financial aid sources duly computed, and courses appropriately assigned. Their course work is completed by an advanced form of generative AI and graded by other AI programs. Credits toward degrees are automatically computed in the same way. Not only would such processes be "untouched by human hands," but they would also be untouched by human minds. This is a huge problem. The purpose of higher education as it has been understood so far is the development of human minds, not only their acquisition of knowledge and logical and writing mechanics skills, but their decision-making and

critical-thinking skills. Generative AI is recognized to lack these skills. Even enthusiastic proponents of educational uses of generative AI counsel the importance of checking it by using human critical-thinking skills.[40]

The major problem with AI and plagiarism is that subjective human processes are left out in the delivery of plausible products.[41] At present, AI programs are opaque about their processes, partly because of the huge amount of data they have to be trained with, in order to come up with specific "products," or answers to human questions. But humans are also vague when it comes to describing their intellectual processes, part of which may be subconscious or even seemingly unrelated to their end products. We as teachers, who have come to focus on products, nevertheless have always assumed that student products are the end result of student processes. The pedagogical solution to being faced with machine products is to become better at making students more aware of their own processes: require student participation in class; ask students how they came up with their products and what their thought and research processes were; require citations to specific pages of assigned readings in written work; require successive drafts of written work; explain the nature of generative AI; support student awareness of their own consciousness and what they think about. This amounts to a return to process in learning through a shift in the process of teaching. Insofar as the dystopian future of mindless higher education would be a disaster, instructors are obligated to at least mitigate it.

THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

The disasters caused by extreme weather, pandemics, shooters, hackers, and unregulated AI destructively affect colleges and universities, and also academic life. Preparation is essential but counter-intuitive because money and human and material resources have to be directed toward avoiding, mitigating, or only making less worse, unwanted and unpredictable events. According to the *Precautionary Principle* (PP), we are obligated to take steps to prevent unwanted or destructive events, even if we do not know the results of not acting. College leaders may not know the exact consequences of not acting, but it can be assumed that outcomes will be worse without preparation, than with it. The assumption of PP is that human life and well-being are our highest values. Disaster studies, assessments, and predictions are usually relegated to the applied sciences and technologies, with outcomes and predictions stated in mathematical probabilities. But there are qualitative moral/ethical issues that should motivate applications of PP, which include: fairness so that some are not disproportionately harmed; specific duties to act attached to those in official positions; and duties to consider the consequences

of not acting when bad outcomes are known to be likely.[42] Overall, there are normal duties of care in overseeing all policies involving groups of people, which college leaders have both the recognized authority and practical means to carry out.

Vorsorgeprinzip, or the precautionary principle, was first developed in German environmental law during the 1970s–1980s. In 1987, it became part of international law at the International Conference on the Protection of the North Sea. PP is invoked at most international environmental conventions, for instance, from the 1992 Rio Declaration, it was made part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and retroactively made part of the Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. PP became part of the criteria for listing endangered species by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species in 1994, and in 1995, it was adopted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The precautionary principle is a foundation of European Union (EU) environmental law and for the EU's position on genetically modified organisms. The EU has also supported extending the PP to food and health regulations. In sum, the precautionary principle has been recognized and adopted on the highest international regulatory levels.

Objectors to PP have criticized it as an approach that can paralyze decision-making when risk is part of what has to be decided on, especially given scientific uncertainty.[43] An example might be implementing mass vaccinations when it is known that some will have adverse reactions.[44] This is a question of balancing known risks or estimated outcomes of the disease being vaccinated against, versus the adverse reactions. However, for disaster preparation and mitigation, the PP is relevant at the point of decision-making that involves whether or not to prepare or mitigate. It is not a defensible risk management decision to reject preparation and mitigation for the risks of natural, security, and AI disasters, on college campuses.

Contexts for the application of the PP are not isolated or "pure." In higher education, there are other duties, such as fiduciary obligations and contractual obligations regarding tenure and with that, academic freedom. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has no NIMS-related announcement although it released a report on COVID-19 and academic governance in 2021. AAUP presented research on eight colleges as examples, while anticipating many more. AAUP found that presidents and boards of trustees of these institutions, with histories of not fulfilling their fiduciary obligations regarding budget deficits and endowment preservation, used the disaster of COVID-19 to take exigency measures, without declaring exigency in whole or in part: Tenured faculty were fired on the advice of ad hoc committees that violated contractual provisions for shared faculty governance; Departments and programs were terminated according to pre-pandemic "visions" for

drastic changes in institutional structure, toward downsizing. These actions violated AAUP best practices, by crudely transforming institutions of higher education into crass business concerns. In the words of the AAUP report:

> Some institutional leaders seem to have taken the COVID-19 crisis as an opportunity to turbocharge the corporate model that has been spreading in higher education over the past few decades, allowing them to close programs and lay off faculty members as expeditiously as if colleges and universities were businesses whose CEOs suddenly decided to stop making widgets or shut down the steelworks.[45]

Thus, the results of an absence of PP applications for disasters such as the COVID-19 pandemic, or perhaps, any natural or human-made disasters, can create apparent opportunities to make up for pre-existing fiduciary failures. Such compounded violations of financial, safety, and contractual obligations to faculty, by college administrations, amount to moral disorders on the highest levels of higher educational institutions.

Faculty members throughout higher education, who continue to be employed with contractual respect for tenure and their participation in institutional governance, need to make sure that these rights are secured through foreseeable disasters. The AAUP recommended that faculty contractually protect tenure and shared governance. This can only be done at times that tenure and shared government are respected. The AAUP included the following in its 2021 report:

> As the authors of the Katrina report observed, handbook or CBA [collective bargaining agreement] provisions allowing an administration to invoke force majeure (or catastrophic conditions, act of God, extraordinary circumstances, and the like) to nullify existing policies, unilaterally shutter programs, and terminate tenure are inimical to principles and standards of academic freedom and governance. Faculty should therefore steadfastly oppose their inclusion in CBAs [collective bargaining agreements], faculty contracts and letters of appointment, and faculty handbooks.[46]

Securing the exclusions of *force majeure* clauses from CBAs is an important application of the PP *by unionized faculty*.

Finally, the PP applies to dangers on campus that may seem vague but nonetheless already have advocates for more college involvement and new policies and programs. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* compiled a report in June 2024, called "The Future of Campus Safety: Managing Risk, Promoting Welfare." The chronicle highlighted major concerns as follows: all members of the campus community need to understand the role of effective campus police; mental health services need to be robust enough to cover

needs that do not pose violent threats (see chapter 6); drug use can require interventions, as well as treatment and programs for those who do not want to use substances or who voluntarily seek cessation help; and sexual assault may be related to campus cultures that require preventative interventions.[47] But *The Chronicle* is primarily a general academic news source and applying the PP to reports of campus dangers requires contextualized analyses on specific campuses, and recognition of concrete action required by the PP, in those actual places. All hazards are context-specific and all responsible actors who have duties of care in their specific institutions are obligated to act to prepare for or avoid unwanted or destructive events, when they do not know how not acting will impact their campuses.

Conclusion

College Smart Now

The idea of college smart is inspired by the idea of street smart. A person is *street smart* if they have practical knowledge for dealing with difficulties and challenges, in an unpredictable environment with allies and opponents, where the stakes range from petty to catastrophic. Street smart is a flexible and conditional disposition that can be confirmed only after its successful practice. No one can be considered street smart before they've won a few confrontations and battles and are ready to take on more. There is also the matter of style, how it is conveyed that one is street smart in talking and interacting with different friends and opponents.

All higher education leaders, faculty, and students now need to have a sophisticated and practical perspective on the situations they are dealing with, both on and off their campuses. They need to understand that in situations of crisis, whatever they do has risks and they need to be ready to take them and think ahead to what they will do if the outcomes are not what they wanted. Their style comes in being able to carry this off with humility, assertiveness, friendliness, and core values. Charisma helps, and leaders should consider how they present themselves, which can vary for different audiences and interlocutors (while preserving integrity about core beliefs and opinions).

Positions taken on free speech and academic freedom, in the wake of Spring 2024 college protests, provide apt opportunities to consider whether or not administrators are college smart. Consider now, these actions and statements of administrators at Harvard and UC Berkeley.

Just before graduation on May 23, 2024, the Harvard Corporation preempted Faculty of Arts and Sciences recommendations and prevented degree conferrals on thirteen students who had participated in pro-Palestinian encampments. Over 1,000 students, parents, and professors stood up, turned their backs on Harvard's interim president and the corporation members

seated with him on the dais, and left, chanting, "Let them walk! Let them walk!"

The Harvard Corporation, largely made up of business leaders without prior experience in higher education is the governing body of the university, which is a private, but nonprofit institution.[1] As a private institution, Harvard is not subject to internal governance according to the First Amendment to the US Constitution. The First Amendment provides for protection from government regarding: speech, religion, press, assembly, and the right to petition the government. (There is no age requirement for First Amendment protection.) This constitutional protection is specifically from government interference, but private employers often set their own rules or restrictions, and it is a gray area whether they violate constitutional rights in carrying them out. Public schools, colleges, and universities must extend First Amendment protections, but private colleges can, in principle, set their own rules or restrictions.[2] Harvard University is a private employer, so legally, its corporation's intervention into who could graduate from Harvard was within its legal rights. But not allowing graduation for those who may have behaved within their constitutional rights could be unjust punishment.

The Harvard corporation's pre-emption of faculty recommendations for graduation, similar to its removal of Claudine Gay as president of Harvard after a congressional hearing earlier in 2024 (see chapters 7 and 8), expressed the administration's greater power in divided opinion with faculty. That the corporation's judgment pre-empted faculty judgment is more important than the merits of what they disagreed about. If the faculty and administration of any college cannot agree on how to resolve a crisis, that rift is likely to disrupt normal functioning and morale. It will affect faculty confidence in how their institution is run and their sense of belonging to the institution and having it belong to them.

Soon after its 2024 graduation ceremony, Laurence D. Bobo, Harvard's Dean of Social Science, rhetorically asked in an essay in the campus paper, "Is it outside the bounds of acceptable professional conduct for a faculty member to excoriate university leadership, faculty, staff, or students with the intent to arouse external intervention into university business?" . . . "And does the broad publication of such views cross a line into sanctionable violations of professional conduct?" Bobo's answers were "Yes it is and yes it does."[3] Both faculty members who had supported the student protestors and those who had opposed them objected to Bobo's declaration in this essay that was titled "Faculty Speech Must Have Limits." Like the Harvard Corporation, Bobo asserted administrative power over faculty. If being college smart requires adherence to democratic principles in institutions of higher education, neither the Harvard Corporation's graduation block, nor Bobo's

declaration of administrative power will prove to be college smart, in the longer term.

Carol Christ, the outgoing chancellor of UC Berkely (which is required to protect First Amendment free speech as a public university) and who herself has a long history of championing free speech, told students on May 28, 2024, "Just because you have the right to say something doesn't mean it's right to say." Christ noted that whereas protests in the 1960s and 1970s had united students, recent protests, developed by siloed groups on social media, pit students against each other. Christ then called for civility in discourse that was tempered by empathy. "We all use censorship in our speech in relation to the occasion we are in. If you value your community, you have to find ways of sharing your views that are not vitriolic, that are not needlessly hurtful to other people." [4] What Christ failed to note is that even vitriolic views expressed in assemblies are still free speech, legally entitled to protection in state-funded schools. And, earlier, police had arrested twelve protestors who had taken over a fire-damaged building on campus.[5] So Chancellor Christ had one message of college smarts to students, "Use practices of discourse that do not upset listeners," while following another principle for her own actions, "Call the police when you think it's necessary, even in apparent violation of legal free speech protection."

Tolerance of free speech is risky, but so are actions and words toward restraining it. Administrators can no longer function by mainly recognizing high achievements in knowledge and using cultural capital to woo donors. They now have to craft sustainable policies regarding the free speech of faculty and students. Sustainable policies should not damage their institutions either by deepening faculty and student opposition to administration or creating vulnerabilities to outside intervention by government and donors. This is a dilemma and will require being very college smart to get through.

As administrators find their way, faculty and students need to access the likely internal and external repercussions of their free speech. They have to think practically but not so pragmatically as to betray common moral ideals and traditional academic principles. For individuals, this becomes a task of being very clear about what they want to say and saying it precisely. They must decide what they are willing to stake their academic careers on, if what they say incurs administrative punishment. The expression of opinions, like assertive actions on the street, have to be calibrated beforehand, by taking likely consequences into account. There is nothing wrong with wariness or discretion, although cowardice is not a moral option and blind confidence that one is right is not a practical strategy. Many otherwise smart people just assume that once they have identified what is right, an issue is concluded, as though their moral conviction automatically has the effect that others will agree with them and act accordingly. It is neither street smart nor college

smart to confuse what one thinks should be the case, with the realities that have to be faced to get there.

Aside from the issue of contested free speech, I hope that the chapters of this book could strengthen being college smart pertaining to issues where strong divisions have not yet solidified, as well as encourage creative thinking where they have. The chapters analyze current crisis-level problems, that is, problems for which it is not clear what to do, and provide examples of practical pivots for colleges. These solutions are not the only pivots, but they could spark discussion and more new ideas.

I am going to end here with some key chapter takeaways.

- The legal demise of affirmative action was meant to address a limited number of racial and ethnic categories that do not do justice to real human differences that constitute multiplicities. Those multiplicities can be identified as they become apparent after college admission, with an emphasis on student belonging.
- Both falling enrollment and a long-standing concern with people who are disadvantaged in society should result in recruiting and retention based on the needs of new multiplicities that emerge after services and support are universally offered.
- It is important that students belong, instead of being included, and that their institutions belong to them. The idea of inclusion overlooks how wholes will change after new multiplicities are admitted.
- The situation of adjunct faculty is unjust and every effort should be made to both be transparent about their conditions of employment and convert this piecemeal job-hiring practice into full-time work.
- Faculty and program directors in the humanities need to clarify what they have to offer and allow students to come to their own conclusions about topics that have been politicized.
- Firsts in their families to attend college should be supported in pursuing interests that are associated with social classes different from their classes of origin, without jeopardy to their original class identities.
- The huge array of harmful and aggressive actions and speech throughout society, and partly mirrored in university culture, now require universal student support for self-help toward optimal mental health.
- College officials should learn how to communicate institutional norms regarding free speech and academic freedom, to political officials who attempt to intimidate them or intervene in college business.
- Faculty should support student learning in how to convey their political opinions, clearly, in protests.
- Faculty should have civil discourse among themselves about controversial current issues and quietly make some of their discussions available to public audiences.

- College administrators need to have clear rules about what will be tolerated in the course of student protest and what the penalties will be for breaking these rules. They should make this information readily available to all students at all times, especially before protests arise.
- Real and potential dangers, including storms, earthquakes, pandemics, shooters, and cyberattacks, must be prepared for, in advance. This requires an All-Hazards approach with specific plans involving outreach and on-campus resources. Decision makers should be accessible 24/7/365 and crisis information should be available to all members of campus communities, during normal times. Such preparation is a moral obligation for college leaders.

From football fields to libraries, in a range of churchly seclusion to consumer-oriented transactions, the US institution of mass higher education is unique among advanced democratic nations, for its academic excellence and uneven expense to students. From the leadership of specific institutions to individual researchers, there is an entrepreneurial ethos—doing well academically is up to individuals and small groups—and administrators measure success and add it up for their whole institutions. For US higher ed to survive and thrive through current crises, there needs to be awareness throughout academic communities of new realities that impinge on them, and a readiness to make fast changes, so as to endure according to core values. This disposition of college smart connects "book learning" to the real world.

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Index

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