



April 2009

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(BTtoP) is an independent national effort. It is funded by the Charles Engelhard Foundation of New York, and functions in partnership with the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) in Washington, DC.

The Charles Engelhard Foundation is a New York-based foundation whose mission focuses on projects in higher and secondary education, cultural, medical, religious, wildlife and conservation organizations.

S. Engelhard Center is a nonprofit public charitable foundation; its mission is to support projects and initiatives that affect greater and sustained commitments by educational institutions at all levels to provide effective means of addressing the intellectual, emotional, and civic development of today's students in preparation for claiming their positive future.



Association  
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### BTtoP Campus Highlight

## Connecting Life and Learning: Engaging the Whole Person through the Integration of Academics and Student Affairs

For the past two years, the Engelhard Project has appeared on this student-published Thanksgiving list on Georgetown's campus: "100 Things at Georgetown to be Thankful For: The Engelhard Project." Georgetown University represents one of two Intensive Sites that the BTtoP Project funds with Engelhard Foundation support—a three-year grant of \$250,000. Georgetown is seeking to have 100 percent of the class of 2010 involved in the Engelhard Project.

Georgetown has long been a standout campus in the BTtoP Project; it is the model campus for curricular infusion. Georgetown's model of curricular infusion combines engaged learning with mental health awareness by introducing health topics directly into existing course content, opening the dialogue on an all-too-often stigmatized and ignored problem on college campuses. "A math class is an unusual place to learn about how diet affects metabolic rates," reasoned an

article in the *Blue & Gray* magazine at the time of the award in 2007. Professor James Sandefur responds that this strategy is not so unusual. "Students are inundated with information about eating disorders and nutrition, and even more so about



Georgetown University

alcohol and the dangers of alcohol...being presented with the information as a mathematical model, seeing how alcohol is used in and leaves the body in a mathematical equation...the students were finding that this material was a totally different way of seeing problems of alcohol and alcohol abuse."

The true impact of the Engelhard Project at GU can be seen in the level of student engagement, both in and out of the classroom. A number of Engelhard courses incorporate a community-based learning component, partnering with

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## The College Outcomes Project

Many presidents, provosts, faculty members, counseling center professionals, student affairs professionals, and students believe that higher education is “challenged,” or that it has strayed from its fundamental mission. Everyone is aware of what could be done, and what changes should occur, but actually doing it—especially in the midst of the current economic climate, paired with the escalating complexity of technological advances and an ever-more diverse global community—is clearly a complex and difficult undertaking.

We can all agree: we must be clearer about what outcomes should be expected, and we must have reasonable means for determining that they are achieved. The college living and learning environments must be more integrated and should break down strongly assembled campus compartmentalization. Higher education must push students beyond just mastering content and skills, to achieving higher levels of personal, social, moral, and civic development as whole individuals. These various elements and outcomes should not be add-ons, but need to be inextricably connected.

The College Outcomes Project (COP), directed by Dr. Richard Hersh (senior consultant, Keeling & Associates; former president, Trinity and Hobart & William Smith Colleges) is an extension of the Bringing Theory to Practice Project (BTtoP) and has received support from both the S. Engelhard Center and from the Spencer Foundation in Chicago, to study and report on what a deeper analysis of learning outcomes might mean and what changes this analysis might suggest for higher education.

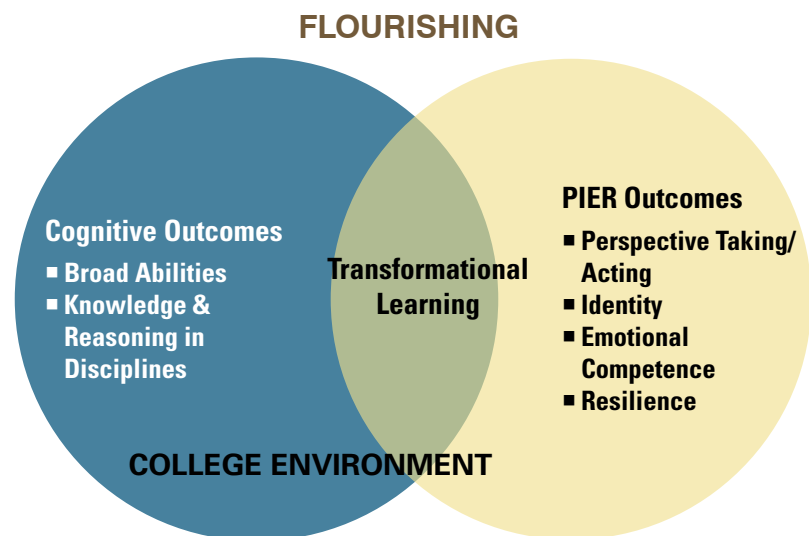
COP scholars, researchers, and practitioners began by focusing on the

outcome of greater student well-being. What did that mean? What could provide evidence that experiences of higher education of particular sorts would encourage student well-being? Dr. Hersh’s colleague Dr. Corey Keyes defines this outcome as “flourishing” (the optimal level of emotional, psychological and social functioning) as opposed to “languishing.” Could and should a liberal education encourage such an outcome?

The project progressed by examining the student-learner as a developmental whole and studying how an identifiable range of outcomes followed from a truly transformative educational experience.

one’s evolving identity, deeply engaging the learner’s capacities for understanding, feeling, relating and acting); (c) integrative (active learning, involving ongoing experimentation); and (d) contextual (engaging in social contexts beyond the classroom, thereby understanding the interdependence of self and society).

The COP gathered and evaluated existing instruments designed to measure multiple outcomes (for the full list of measures, see [www.aacu.org/bringing\\_theory/research.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/bringing_theory/research.cfm)). However, the task of determining the best and most reliable means for assessing higher education’s multiple and interconnected outcomes



According to the COP, the ideal college/university environment should be centered around ‘transformational learning’—which essentially challenges the status quo of curriculum, pedagogy, institutional culture, and organizational structure to exhibit the following attributes: (a) developmental (challenging the student in ways that cause them to move toward new and more complex ways of understanding and being in the world); (b) holistic (encompassing multiple aspects of

remains. Even so, the Outcomes Project contribution has been a significant step in our greater understanding of what a liberal education can and should provide, and points in the direction of how to measure its success in doing so. ■

For the full report by Richard Hersh, and more information on the Outcomes Project, please see the Research page of the BTtoP Web site ([www.aacu.org/bringing\\_theory/research.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/bringing_theory/research.cfm)).

Cost-Study Reports:

# Addressing Student Disengagement and High-Risk Behavior: How Much Does It Cost?

Student disengagement takes many forms. It is most apparent in academic contexts, in student behavior and student culture, and in the realm of civic involvement.

BTtoP seeks to address student disengagement on college and university campuses through a restructuring of institutional priorities and organization and by directly addressing the causes of the disengagement, rather than only responding to symptoms.

To assist in this effort, BTtoP commissioned a cost study. Researchers Dr. Ashley Finley (Dickinson College) and Dr. Lynn Swaner (Long Island University), recruited nine institutions (of various type and size) to collect information about the direct and indirect costs related to resources, personnel, and programming being employed on campus to

address student disengagement. When the information was gathered, the aggregate data was analyzed to describe total and itemized spending.

Institutions were purposively and nonrandomly recruited from those already involved in the BTtoP Project, in hopes that these institutions would have easier access to the types of data the cost study sought and historical data that would allow some conclusions to be comparative over time. A comprehensive report on the study’s methodology and findings can be found on the “Research” Web page of BTtoP’s Web site ([www.aacu.org/bringing\\_theory/research.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/bringing_theory/research.cfm)).

### Selected Findings

The cost study determined that: (a) While institutional expenditures on

mental health and well-being rose over time, the number of staff available to meet the demand for services decreased or stayed the same; (b) Participating institutions found it very difficult to keep financial and personnel resource information linked to objectives and outcomes; and (c) Expenditures on civic development programming significantly increased over the period 2002-2007, while expenditures related specifically to what institutions defined as “engaged learning” either declined over the five years or remained at the 2002 level. Detailed findings are available in the report on the Web site and may be useful when comparing one’s own institutional data.

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**Table 6. Construction of composite BTtoP variable**

| BTtoP Core Dimension                | Resource   | Total for \$\$ 2001-02 | Total for \$\$ 2006-07              | % Change |
|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Mental Health and Well-being</b> | Total Operating Budget Counseling & Psych. Services      | 2,632,939              | 3,182,490                           | +20.87%  |
|                                     | Total Operating Budget Alc. & Substance Abuse Prevention | 198,729                | 519,471                             | +161.40% |
| <b>Civic Development</b>            | Costs for Leadership Programming                         | 210,000                | 441,900                             | +110.43% |
|                                     | Costs for Service-Learning Programming                   | 203,954                | 351,148                             | +72.17%  |
|                                     | Costs for Volunteer Programming                          | 181,449                | 319,650                             | +76.17%  |
|                                     | In-Kind Funding  | 53,071                 | 141,359                             | +166.36% |
| <b>Engaged Learning</b>             | Total Operating Budget Engaged Learning Efforts          | 3,293,005              | 5,990,555                           | +81.92%  |
|                                     | Costs for Teaching & Learning Center                     | 1,003,891              | 1,101,960                           | +9.77%   |
|                                     | Costs for Faculty Training                               | 255,000                | 378,669                             | +48.50%  |
|                                     | Costs for Teaching & Learning-related Events             | 240,000                | 314,311                             | +30.96%  |
|                                     | Costs for Living-Learning Programs                       | 1,854,167              | 2,176,885                           | +17.41%  |
|                                     | Costs for First-Year Seminar Programs                    | 1,809,298              | 2,076,277                           | +14.76%  |
|                                     |  |                        | <b>Average % of Change = 67.56%</b> |          |

## Cost-Study Reports

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### How Findings Can Help Advise Campus Planning

The authors of the study supply at the end of their paper a discussion of how the findings can aid institutional progression toward more effective means of addressing issues of student disengagement.

They addressed: budget accountability and communication, program allocation and staffing, and intentional definitions of resource allocation—e.g. resources for preventative vs. responsive programs.

Study authors suggest that campus leaders find ways in which greater transparency can be built into budgeting to

increase accountability, seek innovative ways to staff programs to accommodate personnel shortages, and create a universal campus language around programmatic efforts to construct bridges across offices and departments. They also suggest that accepting the reality of the economic climate that forces institutions to do more with fewer resources and people as opposed to treating it like a trend can force innovation both in programming and in the use of existing resources and incoming staff responsibilities and capabilities. The authors also suggest critically examining the cost-benefit analysis of defining measures related to student disengagement as preventative vs. responsive. Defining them has two potential functions: a) could

facilitate both better budget accountability and inter-departmental communication; and b) could allow institutional cost-benefit analysis of each categorical value.

What is presented in the cost study report could lead to a more effective and efficient means of addressing student disengagement on our college and university campuses. It provides a practical solution for thinking about what already exists on campus—what's already strong (successful programming, dedicated personnel, etc.)—and using it to strengthen the more fragile innovations (engaged learning, civic development) that will take time to be implemented. ■

[www.aacu.org/bringing\\_theory/research.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/bringing_theory/research.cfm)

## Georgetown University

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departments across campus to allow students to explore what they are learning in the surrounding campus and DC-area communities. Theater Professor Karen Burman recently offered a course, Theater as Social Change, partnering with Ballou High School in Southeast DC, in which Georgetown students worked with high school students to put on a community-based theater production. Joan Riley, professor of Nursing and Health Studies, says that “what Engelhard changed most about my classroom was the level of active student engagement.”

BTtoP Project leaders, as well as the GU Engelhard Project administrators at the Center for New Designs in Leadership and Scholarship (CNDLS), recognize that the infusion method, and more broadly, the connection of well-

being, civic development, and engaged learning, is a challenge and commonly involves extra work for many of the faculty members who implement these practices in their classrooms. GU's response in effectively addressing that challenge is well summarized by Vice President for Student Affairs Todd Olson. “The success of the Engelhard Project at Georgetown is due largely to the partnership between faculty, CNDLS staff, and student affairs staff in the interest of more deeply engaging our students in the learning process and improving the health of our students at the same time.”

At a 2007 BTtoP Workshop, GU presented its project to an audience of eager fellow BTtoP grantees. Patrick Kilcarr, director for the Center for Personal Development, brought a student to the workshop who spoke about journal writing and sharing with peers in the classroom (commonly called “student

reflection” by faculty) his fears and issues within the college atmosphere. The student explained how it opened his eyes to the prevalence of well-being issues surrounding him on campus, and how opening the conversation allowed him to view all students in a similar, nonjudgmental light whatever their personal concerns may be. Kilcarr wrote to the BTtoP Project after the conference, “I cannot articulate enough the importance of the BTtoP Program and what it's doing for our students at Georgetown. This is something I have thought about happening on campus for literally 18 years. My deepest thanks.” ■

For more information on Georgetown's Engelhard Project, please see the CNDLS Web site ([cndls.georgetown.edu/view/about/engelhard.html](http://cndls.georgetown.edu/view/about/engelhard.html)); a video characterizing the activities and affects of the Project on the Georgetown campus will soon be available.

## Letter from the Director

Donald W. Harward, Project Director, *Bringing Theory to Practice* and President Emeritus, Bates College

In considering just the right topic for my contribution to this issue of the BTtoP Newsletter, I leaned toward capturing the major messages and accomplishments of the past year (the 2008 Report is now online [www.aacu.org/bringing\\_theory/index.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/bringing_theory/index.cfm), and does describe those messages and achievements as well as foreshadows the major work of the Project for 2009). However, it seemed more timely to address remarks to a population that has a particularly important (but often unaddressed) role in whether higher education, particularly liberal education, provides the context and incentive for the full potential of students. That population is the parents and families of students.

So what follows is the open letter I'd like parents to receive this spring as they help with the choices and decisions their student must make:

### Open Letter to Parents "What You Should Expect from your Student's College or University"

If you are a parent of a current student or the parent of a student who will be attending college soon, I want to encourage you to take a particular approach—one of agreeing on a set of clear expectations—expectations that you not only would like to see, but would insist on seeing met by your student and by the institution.

Each of the following expectations gets at the very core of what higher education is about and what it must deliver. Each can be satisfied by documentable outcomes that the institution can help to identify and measure. Colleges and universities will respond to yours and your student's expectations that the

institution's priority be that of satisfying its historic core mission—to make available the resources, the opportunities, and the particular academic experiences of fully engaging students—with the result of affecting their learning, their emotional and behavioral development, and their civic awareness.

National projects and their partnering organizations (*Bringing Theory to Practice* and the Association of American Colleges and Universities) reveal how such expectations are now validated by relevant research and by the practices of those colleges and universities where experiences of a particular academic sort make a difference in the full life and development of a student.

Rather than the current prevalent ranking criteria, the more meaningful criteria for the educational excellence of the institution and the excellence of the "fit" for your student is whether the following expectations, held by you and your student, are fulfilled. If they are, the confirmation of excellence is deserved. If these expectations are not filled, your student should consider transferring!

1. Expect your student to be surprised, to be pulled in new directions and to discover new interests. If he or she is finding what they anticipated finding out about themselves, they have been cheated.

2. Expect your student to be engaged—fully engaged in various and different contexts and styles of learning. Engaged learning takes the student out of the classroom and out of the mode of receiving only information. Engaged learning requires the student to encounter their own privilege and preconceptions. It challenges set ideas and de-

mands intensity, rigor, clarity, openness to alternatives, and good will.

3. Expect that your student's engagement in learning will bring with it self-affirmation and growth in behavior and healthy choices. The evidence is available, and the best institutions can document the link between engaged learning and students' intellectual, civic, and personal growth. They have the faculty, the designed programs, the opportunities and expectations for students, and the campus culture that prizes the linkage of engaged learning to students' well-being and to their civic development.

4. Expect the institution to provide the evidence of such outcomes. Their excellence should be determined by the evidence. So instead of asking for "notification" of illegal drinking, expect your student to be engaged; expect his or her institution to not only provide the opportunities for academic, social, and civic engagement, but require students and faculty to be so involved—not busy

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Mercer University

## Letter from the Director

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but earnestly engaged—that your student squawks—and as the late President Thomas Healy of Georgetown University would say, “...if they don’t squawk, transfer!”

The metaphor is apt. “Squawking” by your student is a better mark of excellence than any criterion in an arbitrary ranking. An excellent college for your student is one which takes him or her seriously as a whole and developing individual—engaging students from day one; challenging them; supporting them; guiding them; encouraging them to emancipate themselves from prejudice and presumption. This means educating them in the broadest and best sense.

Many colleges and universities have not heard recently from you and your stu-

dent that they, the student and the institution, be held to these basic expectations.

Taking your student seriously as a whole and developing individual—intellectually, socially, morally, and civically—is not beyond the institution’s capacity or its core purpose. It is at the heart of its purpose. Colleges and universities can align resources to meet genuine expectations. Students can “go to college” for profoundly holistic as well as practical purposes. But the aim of education (and the core purpose of our educational institutions) is not to be a “service provider.” Education must not be viewed as a commodity or a service industry. Challenging, getting participants to squawk is not “customer friendly.” Higher education has as much or more to do with the full development of students as it does with being an important step on an economic and social ladder. This is not to say that higher

education and its institutions should not be accountable. In fact, accountability is basic to excellence. But accountability should not be misdirected. Accountability should have all to do with meeting these (yours, your student’s, and the institution’s) core expectations for the learning and development of students.

As parents, don’t hover; but do have, and insist that your student has, the expectations of full engagement and access to the documentable outcomes that flow from it. Your student is up to it. And in many ways, students crave to be taken, wholly and seriously, as individuals for whom not failure but low aim is a sin. Colleges and universities can and should deliver on those expectations!

I send best wishes and support for your having these expectations of higher education and insisting that higher education institutions have these expectations of their students. ■

### Coming Events

Leadership Coalition  
Follow-up Conference  
April 19-20, 2009,  
Washington, DC

Presidents Seminar  
(By Invitation)  
April 27, 2009, New York City

Faculty Workshop  
fall 2009

Civic Engagement, Public Work,  
and Psychological Well-Being  
fall 2009

Request for Proposals,  
funding period 2010–2012

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