



Bringing
Theory to
Practice

Newsletter

December 2009

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Revamping the Teacher-Scholar Model at Washington & Lee University

Long before Ken Ruscio began his tenure as president of Washington & Lee University, he was focused on redirecting liberal arts colleges' attention to the teacher-scholar model. Through his own research and experience, he had become convinced that the legitimacy of the small liberal arts college as distinctive among the myriad types of institutions in higher education was dependent upon the teacher-scholar model of the professoriate that is at the heart of this type of institution. In his proposal to BTtoP to become a Leadership Coalition grantee, he wrote, "In an educational world in which increasing attention is paid to undergraduate research, this model of collaborative learning could serve as the ideal means to deepen students'

understanding of the life of the mind, the life of the scholar, and the life of the academy."

At the Teacher-Scholar Symposium held at W&L on Sept. 20-21, 2009, Ruscio set the tone for the agenda of the two-day event, citing the need to sharpen the articulation of the teacher-scholar model.

Steven Wheatley, vice president, American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), opened the symposium by citing the main theses of a "white paper" prepared by ACLS and the Teagle Foundation.



Washington & Lee University



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Revamping the Teacher-Scholar Model

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First, students are more likely to learn the value of multiple perspectives and intellectual humility if they are taught by teacher-scholars, who continue to be students themselves and take risks in their research and intellectual pursuits in order to enrich their own learning. Second, while the teacher-scholar model can be found in many different types of institutions in higher education, the culture, practice, and ethos of liberal arts colleges maximizes the

level of curiosity that illuminates the expanding boundaries of knowledge.

The symposium featured addresses by William Sullivan, senior scholar, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching; Carol Schneider, president, AAC&U; Scott Jaschik, editor, *InsideHigherEd*; and three panels covering such topics as links between student and faculty research; disciplinary differences for teacher-scholars; and career stage differences for teacher-scholars.

In their reactions to presentations, participants discussed a disconnect between what seemed to be the successful practice of the teacher-scholar model

The Teacher-Scholar Symposium was a central aspect of W&L's decision to use the revitalization of a four-week spring term as the vehicle to emphasize change and a campus culture attentive to learning. "Students and faculty benefit from a focused learning environment that allows them to devote undivided attention to the subject matter of one course," Ruscio wrote in W&L's BTtoP grant proposal. The activities for the new spring term are in part supported by the Bringing Theory to Practice Leadership Coalition initiative. The experimental, intensive four-week spring term focuses on integrated research and faculty-student collaboration, in conjunction with assessment of faculty involvement and student learning outcomes. Washington & Lee educational leaders believe that in this model, faculty will find that their research interests will align with what their students are learning, and an "apprentice" model of teaching will emerge. Students will observe the teacher's methods of learning as well as teaching—a clear statement of the symbiotic relationship and reciprocity of the teacher/scholar model.

As President Ruscio put it, "Liberal arts colleges must, in the future, prove why we are truly distinctive. The sharpening of the articulation of our models of the teacher-scholar is part of that case."

For more information on the W&L Teacher-Scholar Symposium, including audio of presentations, reading materials and other resources, and the symposium agenda, please see the Web site (www.wlu.edu/x33452.xml). ■



Teacher-Scholar Symposium at Washington and Lee

effectiveness of the model. And third, the teacher-scholar model embodies the importance of the practice of deep learning, which includes understanding the nature of knowledge, employing engaged inquiry, and sustaining a high

and clarity or agreement about the precise definition of the model or evidence of its success. Participants debated such questions as, How do we know the teacher-scholar model is effective? What are the costs of this model?

ANNOUNCING...

BTtoP's Latest Major Push for Transformative and Sustainable Campus Change for Learning: "2010-2012: Focus on Faculty"

As one of many strategies employed by the BTtoP Project, and the campuses it supports by grants, BTtoP focuses intently on supporting faculty needs and rewards. This support is especially important for faculty involved in intensive engaged pedagogies and activities that tend to require extra hours and often result in little traditional recognition or reward.

Project Director Don Harward makes clear the motivation behind the Project's new direction and focus in a recent note to the Leadership Coal-

ition—fifty-three institutions funded to advance campus change for learning, involving campus teams of two to three faculty members from more than fifty-three institutions gathered to plan how the Project might be of help to campuses to launch programs, resources, and other opportunities that give attention to faculty and their leadership to bring about changes that strengthen the cultures for learning on our campuses.

In late 2009, Dr. Ashley Finley, national evaluator for the BTtoP Project and Leadership Coalition, will conduct the first round of a Faculty Survey

at five institutions and will present preliminary data at the January conference. Topics covered in the survey will include reward structures for promotion and tenure; teaching and learning efforts as valued components of scholarship; and time constraints that impact faculty members' willingness or ability to engage in pedagogies intended to advance essential learning outcomes. [See page 4 for information on the Faculty Survey in the "In Brief" section of this issue.]

Findings from this survey and the conference in January will guide the Project's agenda for 2010–2012 as it looks forward to emphasizing the faculty perspective and role in initiating and sustaining transformative change. ■

Unless the faculty provide the leadership, the changes identified as fundamental to creating and strengthening cultures for learning will not occur or will not be sustained.

tion—fifty-three institutions funded to advance campus change for learning: "It is universally acknowledged that unless the faculty provide the leadership, the changes identified as fundamental to creating and strengthening cultures for learning—the transforming changes that help students connect their own sense of purpose, civic development, and personal well being to the full aim and practices of liberal education—will not occur or will not be sustained."

The Project will focus the final two years leading up to BTtoP's tenth anniversary in 2012 on attention to faculty perspective. Kicking off the "Focus on Faculty" will be a January 2010 Lead-



Kent State University

In Brief

Leadership Coalition Follow-up Conference

The Bringing Theory to Practice **Leadership Coalition Follow-up Conference** was held November 6-7, 2009, in Washington, DC. This conference had the dual purposes of orienting the most recently added fourteen institutions to the Leadership Coalition goals and structures, while also facilitating the exchange of successful models for developing campus cultures for learning. Teams of two to three campus leaders (including provosts, student affairs personnel, faculty, etc.) were invited to attend.

Participating institutions included: Bowling Green State University, Gettysburg College, Ithaca College, Morehouse College, Muhlenberg College, Pace University, Roosevelt University, Southern Arkansas University, State University of New York College at Cortland, The College of Wooster, The New School, Tufts University, Vancouver Island University, and Widener University.

For more information on the conference, please see: www.aacu.org/bringing_theory/lcfollowupnov09.cfm.

Civic Engagement, Public Work, and Psychosocial Well-being Symposium

The **Bringing Theory to Practice Civic Engagement, Public Work, and Psychosocial Well-being Symposium** was held November 5-6, 2009, in Washington D.C. Throughout various large and small group sessions, the symposium assessed the effects and affects of civic engagement and public work on the psychosocial well-being of college students. Participants brought and exchanged information and ideas from their expertise and experiences; built a national learning community among researchers, educators, and institutional leaders; and contributed to a field of practice and subject of study.

Participating institutions included: American University, Bates College, Bowling Green State University, California State University – Chico, Centre College, State University of New York at Fredonia, State University of New York College at Cortland, State University of New York College at Geneseo, Stetson University, The Evergreen State College, The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Tufts University, University of Delaware, University of Denver, University of Maryland, University of Northern Colorado, University of Notre Dame, University of Virginia College, Colgate University, Colorado College, Drury University, Elon University, Georgia Gwinnett College, Gettysburg College, Indiana State University, Indiana University Purdue University – Indianapolis, Lewis University, McDaniel College, Montclair State University, Pitzer College, Sarah

Lawrence College, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Southern Arkansas University, State University, University of Wisconsin – River Falls, Vincennes University – Jasper Campus, Virginia Tech, Wagner College, Wartburg College

For more information on the conference, please see: www.aacu.org/bringing_theory/healthsymposium09.cfm.

**The two events mentioned above occurred while this issue was in development; full reports with outcomes and analysis of proceedings will be featured in the next issue of the newsletter.*

Faculty Survey

Recently, Bringing Theory to Practice's national evaluator, Dr. Ashley Finley, crafted a proposal outlining the need for, and structure of, a confidential faculty survey that will examine:

- The reward structures for promotion and tenure
- Teaching and learning efforts as valued components of scholarship
- Time constraints that impact faculty members' willingness or ability to engage in pedagogies intended to advance essential learning outcomes.

The survey's first round will commence in early November 2009, with additional rounds to take place after preliminary analysis. The primary report will be complete on June 15, 2010. Please contact Ashley Finley (Finley@aacu.org) with questions and interest regarding survey participation.

UPCOMING EVENT

Leadership Coalition Faculty Conference

January 20, 2010
Washington, DC

Letter from the Director

The Bringing Theory to Practice Project: Years of Focus on Faculty

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

What should be the role of faculty in identifying, exercising, and sustaining transformative changes needed to help students achieve an integrated and valued liberal education?

It is universally acknowledged that unless the faculty provide the leadership, the changes identified as fundamental to creating and strengthening such cultures for learning—the transforming changes that help students connect their own sense of purpose, civic development, and personal well-being to the full aim and practices of liberal education—will not occur or will not be sustained.

On January 20, 2010, we will bring together faculty and academic leaders from each of the fifty-three Leadership Coalition institutions. This will be the first time that all of the institutions have representation “in the same room.” The focus of the January gathering will be to discuss and plan how we might help campuses launch programs, resources, and other opportunities that give attention to the faculty and their leadership in bringing about the changes that strengthen campus cultures for learning.

The one-day conference has two distinct but complementary sets of objectives: (1) to present and discuss a limited number of issues that are most relevant to the concerns of faculty; to present an example of illuminating and innovative action being taken that addresses one of the identified concerns; and to assure attendees that regardless

of their location on any arc of change at their institution, they will “take away” some useful and transferable insights, and (2) to gain from the attendees their own perspectives of what the key issues are; how the coalition could begin the work that would assist (reinforce, amplify, underscore, or facilitate) them in addressing those issues on their campus; and how the Leadership Coalition could be most effective as a coalition. With the tidal rise of interest and efforts lifting all our institutional vessels, we will use the conference to confirm the efforts of the coalition to focus on how 2010-2012 can be years of making and sustaining transformative change with the commitment, attention, and support of faculty.

You can imagine the range of topics that could be addressed at the January conference. To avoid oversimplification and superficiality, the faculty conference is structured to be highly participatory and to limit the concentrated discussion to only three areas of concern. In each, the basic question is, “What if the current paradigm, values, and practices shift from teaching to student learning?” Topics of discussion will include:

1. examining what we know about the connection of learning to alternate pedagogies, “high-impact” practices, and interdisciplinarity in the curriculum and in research;
2. exploring alternatives and additions to the current reward

structures, particularly examining innovative uses of peer review; and

3. discussing a faculty development issue that gets less attention because of its pervasiveness—namely, how to address the implicit and explicit pressures and norms established by professional disciplinary associations and their influence on graduate education and the socialization of faculty to disciplines.

Each of these is formidable and the conference’s willingness to open consideration of them flows from taking seriously the implications of transformative change. But open consideration will only be useful if it leads to addressing the challenges, and the conditions that impede or facilitate moving from theory to practice. ■

In the Next Issue— April 2009

- ▶ Reports and Analysis of Leadership Coalition Follow-up Conference and Civic Engagement, Public Work, and Psychosocial Well-being Symposium
- ▶ Campus Highlights
- ▶ Faculty Survey preliminary results
- ▶ January 2010 Faculty Conference Report



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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.

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