Deans’ Reflections on
Creative Tension in the Academy

Dave Burrows, Provost and Dean of the Faculty (2005-17), Lawrence University
Jon Chenette, Dean of the Faculty, Vassar College
Marc Roy, Provost, Albion College

TENSIONS: THE GOALS OF EDUCATION

Development of the mind vs. Career preparation
General abilities vs. Specific skill sets
Lifetime preparation vs. Immediate Employment
EDUCATION AS THE REALIZATION OF HUMAN POTENTIAL

Self-direction—Motivation to make choices
Engagement—Motivation to act (on environment, on ideas)
Purposiveness—Motivation to set goals and persevere to their achievement.

Concept of the active organism

COURSES: ENGAGING IN ACTION

Problem based learning—e.g. how to reduce race prejudice (intro level?)
Community action—e.g. working in a local community
Internships—e.g. at an inner city agency
Senior Experience or Capstone—thesis on prejudice and its reduction
COURSES: DECISION MAKING

Cost-benefit measurement- Self-insured or insurance agency; infield in for double-play?
Ethical consideration- Risk one innocent conviction to obtain many true convictions? Build a new aircraft carrier or address poverty issues?
Assessment- Is the teaching of creativity worthwhile?

COURSES: DEVELOPMENT OF SELF AND VALUES

Ideas of human nature- literature, philosophy, psychology
Disciplines to follow- sciences, social sciences, humanities, arts
Goals- (All of the above)
QUESTIONS

Does learning-by-doing work?
What are the effects of student-centered choice on learning?
Will skills of action-planning and decision-making transfer?
What will the faculty say about the relationship of thought to action?

The balance between change and stability
Jon Chenette, Vassar College

Pace of student change / pace of faculty and institutional change
● “aging faculty”
● “new colleagues and students with superior technical skills”
● “the potential for developing new and more effective teaching strategies”

From AAC&U “Changing Students, Faculty, and Institutions in the Twenty-First Century” (Peer Review, Summer 2010, Vol. 12, No. 3)
Student and Faculty Demographics
2006-07 vs. 2017-18

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<th>Student demographics</th>
<th>2006-07</th>
<th>2017-18</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pell Grant recipients</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>24%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Need-based aid recipients</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>64%</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. students of color</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-U.S. citizens</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<td>Veterans in student body</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Faculty demographics</th>
<th>2006-07</th>
<th>2017-18</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S. faculty of color</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>24%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tenure-eligible with tenure</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>84%</td>
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Tensions
- Old pedagogies no longer work or require different framing
- Changes in disciplines
- Changes in jobs
- Reverberation of off-campus events
- Sense of alienation: “this place wasn’t built for me”

- Listening to students and being open to change
The Relationship Between The Dean, Faculty, President, and Board.

Marc Roy, Albion College

Dave: Tensions
   i.e. Development of the mind vs. career preparation.
   Ways that they can be resolved.

Jon: Change and Stability

Marc: Who does what?
Who Decides and What is the role of the Dean/Provost?

We dance between the rocks and hard places.

President: I must be able to convince and engage all constituencies.

Faculty: The curriculum is our responsibility.

Board: Be nimble, responsive to needs, and don’t spend too much money.

Other Entities: Affordability, access, accountability...

Who are you? Who? Who? And what do you want?
Does it really need to feel like this?

A Polycentric Order

From Emily Chamlee-Wright, Institute for Humane Studies, George Washington University
Creative Tensions do not have Easy Answers.

Deans’ Reflections on Creative Tension in the Academy

1. What are the key arguments you or faculty colleagues would make at a faculty meeting in favor of curricular initiatives to reduce the schism between liberal learning and preparation for life after graduation?

2. Share an instance in which the pace of faculty and/or institutional change has lagged behind the pace of student change on your campus. Pick one and discuss. What role might the dean play in helping the faculty and the institution respond creatively to this tension?

3. How has collaboration helped solve a tension on your campus? Have there been times when collaboration with other divisions of your campus, the president, or the board were not helpful or necessary?

4. Pick a particular creative tension of interest to those at your table... perhaps one between faculty members and students or between your institution and parents, board members, your community, or the broader world. Discuss how it is playing out on your campuses and the role the dean might play in making it a creative opportunity.
ACAD Welcomes your feedback on this session.

Online evaluation form: www.acad.org/amsurvey.
Passcode: acad2018

Thank you in advance for your feedback!