# Faculty Bulletin

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Editorial Introduction

Peter Wegner and Peter Richardson, Editors

This issue of the Faculty Bulletin has seven articles, including contributions by the President and the Provost.

President Paxson’s paper “Non-Conformity and Tolerance” reviews the importance of tolerance in the creation of Rhode Island by Roger Williams 350 years ago and the founding of Brown University 250 years ago. She suggests that tolerance should require us to listen to lectures on topics with which we may disagree and in particular that the lecture by NYC Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly about stop-and-frisk policing should not have been disrupted by protesters.

The Provost examines Brown’s new strategic plan for teaching, learning, and discovery among both faculty and students. The plan strikes a balance between research and education, focuses on both masters and doctoral level education, and support of diversity and breadth of understanding. It inspires further substantive roles on the growing faculty created by Brown’s recently completed plan for academic enrichment that strengthen Brown's teaching and research ability.

Former provost Bill Simmons reviews the specification of great ideas during the evolution of Brown. Brown’s initial charter in 1764 was developed by a group sharing religious ideas but agreed that individuals could choose their own religious beliefs to serve as a basis for university life. In the 1960s Brown adopted a new curriculum stirred by Magaziner and Maxwell’s report, but with many differences from their suggestions, and yet retaining principles which allowed students to determine their own educational desires and specify their areas of study. Since both educational and religious requirements support individual choice as a basis for beliefs, the shift from religious to educational decision-making did not greatly change students' ability to make their own choices in decision-making. It was set in a context where women undergraduates were still in Pembroke College. It was focused on undergraduate education, and did not anticipate the transition to Schools; the Medical Program was so named before it became the Medical School, for example. In the early years post WW II the National Science Foundation was yet to be started.

Former provost Maurice Glicksman examines the degree to which understanding the future of scientific theories like biology and Physics can be achieved by better education. He shows that the discovery of the Higgs Boson by the CERN hadron collider likely has taken care of some previously unsolved questions with better answers, but some problems of physics and chemistry still remain unsolved, and unsolvability is still a central factor in research. Though certain forms of education are improving the quality of learning and teaching at Brown, certain substantive scientific problems remain unsolved, suggesting
that unsolvability may be a substantive aspect for which no complete set of satisfactory solutions will ever be found.

Luiz Valente explores the role of education in the humanities, which were supported more weakly than science education during the late 20th of the University became the first head of the National Endowment for the Humanities), but they are again emerging because of the growing importance of race, gender, class and more languages and literatures as humanistic disciplines. University teachers may focus on persuading their students to publish papers in journals and become professional experts in addition to learning their subject matter. The income of humanities professors should be increased, reversing the decrease in remuneration that has occurred because of relatively declining university funding. The humanities are as important as the sciences in university education, and should receive equal treatment as academic disciplines, both financially and academically.

Peter Richardson’s article “Free Speech, Civil Discourse, and Natural Law” examines social arguments analyzing public laws and practices in each of these areas, and mentions his experiences in England and America during his younger days. Each of these three matters must be defined by requirements specified by laws of the university or by political laws governing inappropriate behavior. He mentions the recent infringement of free speech in connection with Ray Kelly’s lecture, but points to several situations that illustrate a broader set of personal and political solutions that have occurred in public life.

Peter Wegner reviews Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath*, published in 1939, and relates it to political activism of the rich against the poor in current society. Steinbeck’s novel, considered an important contribution during the mid and late 1900s, received the Nobel Prize for literature in 1960. It is still relevant today, given the current opposition by some groups of Republicans to Democrats’ attempts to improve the status of the poor with regard to their purchasing power and their health.

We look forward to receiving articles for the next issue of the *Faculty Bulletin*, and as we will be in the midst of celebrations of the 250th Anniversary of the founding of Brown University, articles which address events and developments in the past 50 years or more will be particularly welcome. We plan to publish before the academic year ends, so submissions by mid-April, and hopefully earlier, are sought. Please inform Cheryl Moreau (Cheryl_Moreau@brown.edu) if you plan to write.
Non-Conformity and Tolerance

Christina H. Paxson
President

We are in a time of anniversaries. This is the 25th anniversary issue of the Faculty Bulletin, a publication that supports the exchange of information and opinions between faculty members on all aspects of Brown University. This past year we celebrated the 350th anniversary of the founding of Rhode Island and the Providence Plantations, a state known for its fierce dedication to independent thought, as well as the 350th anniversary of the Touro Synagogue in Newport, the oldest synagogue in America. In March of 2014, we will launch the 250th anniversary of Brown’s founding.

These anniversaries share a common thread. For each, we celebrate the importance of free expression within a tolerant society. At Brown, these values have produced a tradition of non-conformity which has resulted in generations of faculty and students who think independently, act on their convictions, and respect the views of others.

This fall, at Opening Convocation, I spoke about the influence of the culture and history of Rhode Island on Brown. When I moved here over a year ago, I learned what all Rhode Island schoolchildren know: that this state was founded by a tolerant nonconformist. Roger Williams came to this part of the world after having been banished by the leaders of Massachusetts for his heretical opinions, including his then-startling views that Indians ought to hold title to their own land, and that religion and government should be separate. Although Williams held strong opinions, he was also open to ideas that differed from his own. As a consequence, the colony he founded was populated by people from a range of backgrounds, including Quakers, Jews and dissenters who appreciated the freedom of expression that was not available elsewhere.

Williams’ philosophy was woven into the state’s fiber. The charter of Rhode Island and the Providence Plantations describes Rhode Island as a “lively experiment” in which individuals from all religious backgrounds would be welcomed. The fact that the state was described as an experiment implies that there was doubt in some quarters that people with different religious beliefs could co-exist in peace. But, despite some difficult moments, the experiment was successful. The ideas of religious liberty on which Rhode Island was founded became a fundamental principle of this nation.

When Brown University was established 100 years later, it followed the Rhode Island model by welcoming students from a wide range of backgrounds. Brown’s charter stated that “all the members hereof shall forever enjoy full, free, absolute, and uninterrupted liberty of conscience.” It went on to say that “all religious controversies may be studied freely, examined, and explained by the President, Professors, and Tutors.” The concepts of openness and tolerance expressed in Brown’s charter were broadened over the years, as women and members of all racial and ethnic groups, and all nationalities, were welcomed to Brown. The tradition of intellectual openness
was carried forward into the University’s mission statement, written in 1998, which states that Brown should discover, communicate, and preserve knowledge and understanding in a “spirit of free inquiry.”

Given Brown’s roots, it is not surprising that the university has cultivated a culture of nonconformity that is reflected in the achievements of its alumni. Over the years, numerous alumni have broken the mold in a wide array of fields ranging from academics, to human rights, to technology and innovation. Notable early examples from the field of education include Horace Mann, Class of 1819, who became a passionate advocate of education as the “great equalizer” as well as an ardent abolitionist, and Inman Page, Class of 1877, who was born into slavery and was one of the first two African Americans to attend Brown. Page distinguished himself as a teacher and administrator in African-American schools around the country, making a mark on other path-breakers such as the novelist Ralph Ellison. Mary Woolley, the first women to attend Brown, received her A.B. in 1894 and her Master’s degree in 1895. She went on to become a prominent proponent of women’s education in her role as president of Mt. Holyoke as well as a national leader on issues of arms control.

The ability of Brown students and alumni to break new ground has had an impact on the way Brown educates its students. In the late 1960’s, Brown undergraduates Ira Magaziner and Elliot Maxwell organized a Group Independent Study Project that, with the participation of Brown faculty and students, resulted in the “new” curriculum (now called the Brown curriculum) that encouraged self-directed intellectual exploration. The approach to education and scholarship embodied in the Brown curriculum continues to be a defining strength of this university. The “lively experiment” continues at Brown. Each year, we bring together talented students with diverse backgrounds and experiences, and we ask them to engage in open intellectual exploration and challenge conventional wisdom. This fall, I learned first-hand that this experiment does indeed produce difficult moments: it is not always easy for individuals with strongly-held beliefs to co-exist in peace. The disruption of a lecture that was to be given by NYC Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly by opponents of stop-and-frisk policing policies produced a vibrant and intense campus-wide discussion of how the culture of non-conformity and activism that we encourage can be squared with our commitment to free expression.

The truth is, I do not have a solution for eradicating these tensions, and I am not sure they should be eradicated. They are the inevitable consequence of having the kind of student body we want—one that is neither complacent nor homogenous. However, as I have said consistently since the Kelly incident, the free exchange of ideas is essential to Brown’s mission. We must insist that non-conformity, however valuable, is coupled with the ideas of tolerance and respect on which the university and its home state were founded.
The Rationale Behind Brown’s New Strategic Plan

Mark Schlissel
Provost

On October 26, 2013, the Brown Corporation approved the university’s new strategic plan entitled “Building on Distinction: A New Plan for Brown.” It charts a course for Brown in the decade ahead that is both focused and flexible, one that should engage the breadth of our community in an effort to fulfill our mission and achieve our collective ambitions.

The last strategic plan known as the Plan for Academic Enrichment (PAE) expanded the University’s capacity to achieve excellence by adding 100 faculty, adopting a need blind admission policy, promoting internationalization, and erecting new space for growing research programs. The current plan is designed to deploy that capacity to make Brown an increasingly important center for teaching, learning, and discovery.

The goal of the new plan is to build on Brown’s distinction – and distinctiveness – as a research university with liberal arts education at its core. We aim to achieve new levels of recognition for our scholarly contributions in the generation of knowledge and understanding for the benefit of society. We want to reinforce our reputation as an outstanding university that unites innovative education and outstanding scholarship to benefit the community, the nation and the world. This growing reputation will help us recruit the next generation of outstanding students and faculty and develop the resources to unleash their talents.

As described below, we also envision an increasingly diverse and globalized university that takes advantage of digital technologies to enhance what we do on campus and extend our reach and sense of community around the world.

A decade from now, we envision a place easily recognizable as Brown. One that offers the best residential liberal education available at a major research university, but also a place known for outstanding masters, doctoral and medical programs, leading research centers, a vibrant arts community, and an unyielding commitment to humanistic inquiry.

One of Brown’s defining strengths is the ease with which our faculty collaborate across disciplines, calling upon diverse methodologies and expertise to reveal new understanding or promote discovery. This is a fitting correlate of the Open Curriculum in which students are empowered to explore their interests widely across the many academic disciplines while also receiving rigorous training in fields of their choice. Another strength of Brown is the close collaboration between students and faculty, in the classroom and also in research. We are a community that excels at integration—of knowledge across disciplines and of research with teaching.
Striking a Balance

To achieve new levels of distinction in research and education, Brown must make choices. We lack the resources to invest equally in all parts of the campus. However, we recognize an obligation to provide all faculty with the tools they need to pursue their scholarly interests regardless of whether they are working within one of the broad thematic areas identified in the plan. A survey done during the planning process indicated that what faculty want most of all is time—to do their scholarly work and to further develop their teaching. Thus, the new plan commits to provide faculty with enhancements to the sabbatical program and to consider changes to the academic calendar and course schedule that would free up contiguous blocks of time for scholarship. In addition, a large fraction of the faculty called for increased support (in various forms) for graduate education as being a key to their scholarly success.

The seven integrative themes identified in the plan will bring together faculty and students at all levels from multiple departments in pursuit of scholarship and education that fundamentally advances our understanding of the world. Focused investments in these themes will consist of incremental faculty, postdocs and graduate students, research seed funds, programmatic resources, and in some cases new facilities. Whenever possible, we intend to build upon existing programs rather than create new ones. Efforts in these areas will be subject to regular review in order to ensure that resources are being directed to best effect for the University’s overall goals. The goal is for Brown to be even more widely recognized as a leader in research and teaching with top ranked departments and graduate programs that produce influential scholarship and graduates who make a genuine difference.

The concept of balance evidenced in the plan extends to the various disciplines at Brown. Even as Brown’s profile in the sciences and technology grew under the PAE, significant investments were made across all disciplines. In Building on Distinction, growth in Brain Science, Health, and Engineering will be accompanied by unflagging commitment to the humanities and increased investment in the performing arts. Humanistic inquiry remains at the core of Brown’s vision of a liberal education. At the same time, we have the potential to become the leading institution for combining study of the arts with the opportunities found only at research universities.

The plan describes a broad array of enhancements in undergraduate education and also calls for a renewed focus on achieving greater levels of distinction in doctoral education. These two efforts reinforce one another at multiple levels. In some sense, the plan must have gotten the balance right between undergraduate and graduate education since some members of each group argue that the other was given preferential treatment!

Doctoral Education

Graduate students produce scholarship that contributes to the university’s reputation for innovation while also assisting the faculty with their own research. They help create a vigorous intellectual community within departments that enriches all academic activities. Graduate students also play a key role in educating undergraduates, serving as mentors and advisors in
addition to teaching assistants. Finally, as graduate alumni, they populate the academy with Brown-trained scholars and serve as ambassadors for our institution.

During the PAE, the faculty grew by about 17%, but the number of doctoral students did not increase proportionately. Although they have grown significantly in recent years, graduate stipends remain low and summer support too modest compared to our peers. In addition, charges to faculty research grants for students serving as research assistants can make it too costly for faculty to contribute to doctoral education in the sciences. New resources developed to support graduate education will help meet these challenges.

Diversity

An academic community cannot achieve excellence without being diverse. Brown has made great strides during the past decade diversifying its undergraduate community, but we continue to face challenges with respect to broader representativeness among faculty and graduate students. The plan calls for continuing the Target of Opportunity program with a reaffirmed commitment to using these resources to recruit faculty from historically underrepresented groups. In addition, we plan to introduce a named postdoctoral fellowship program focused on early career scholars also from underrepresented groups. The Associate Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity has been tasked with being directly involved in the approval and conduct of all faculty searches, and the Deans and I will continue to consider diversity issues as we authorize faculty searches each year. In addition, the plan calls for educational efforts, in particular a new sophomore seminar program focused on issues of identity and cross-cultural understanding. The campus clearly will benefit from such educational efforts as we continue to promote civil discourse over the most challenging of issues that stress relationships spanning economic, racial or ethnic difference.

Internationalization

Brown has made significant strides in its efforts to become a more internationally engaged and well known university. In the new plan, internationalization efforts will be carried forward by promoting research by Brown’s faculty who collaborate with international scholars or engage in research focused on disparate regions around the globe. We will focus on existing or emerging strengths in the study of Brazil, India, China, Latin America, and the Middle East. One of the integrative themes, Creating Peaceful, Just, and Prosperous Societies, provides one framework for some of this scholarship, but all other themes give ample scope for international scholarship and exchange. In addition, we are committed to enhancing the study of foreign languages at Brown, and promoting study abroad for our undergrads. Increased travel funds will be made available to faculty and graduate students as well.

Metrics

How will we know whether Building on Distinction is having its intended consequence of making Brown a stronger research university while maintaining its standing as a preeminent educational institution? We have to develop a meaningful set of metrics that will help us track our progress, make mid-course adjustments, and hold ourselves to account. We realize that some
of the most important things are the hardest to measure and that what should be measured differs across the different disciplines. Quantitative and qualitative measures must both be applied as appropriate.

In conclusion, and moving forward

As was obvious to many readers, *Building on Distinction* was purposefully developed as a high-level strategic plan and not a detailed list of specific investments for the decade ahead. There is good reason for this, of course. Events of the past decade have taught us that we live in uncertain times that require a subtle mix of planning and flexibility to move the institution towards its goals but remain flexible enough to adjust to changing circumstances, emerging opportunities, and unforeseen challenges. During the coming months and years, faculty, students, and staff will work together to fill in the details while we continue to hold ourselves to high aspirational standards. This new plan, coming on the cusp of Brown’s 250th anniversary, will launch our institution to even greater levels of distinction and value in the years ahead.
“Great ideas have a logic of their own…. [and] do not stop where their first advocates often stop…but move steadily on to their ultimate consequences.” (Brown President, Barnas Sears, “Centennial Discourse” 1864: 9)

As eighteenth-century Brown distinguished itself from other colonial colleges by its Baptist faith and not by its curriculum, twenty-first century Brown distinguishes itself from peer institutions by its curriculum and no longer by its faith. This article makes the point that the two distinctions, separated by 250 years, are culturally and historically connected.

Brown originated in the desire of a network of eighteenth-century American Baptists to found a college for (but not exclusively for) members of their denomination. There, Baptist students would feel that they belonged, as opposed to enrolling in other of the colonial colleges where they would be a religious minority. The founders chose Rhode Island to be its site because of its flourishing and welcoming Baptist community and history, and because of its historical association with Roger Williams, whose ideas about liberty of conscience and separation of church and state were compatible with their own.

The 1764 Charter structured their several motives. The Corporation, the governing body brought into being by the Charter, was to be composed of two branches known as the Trustees and the Fellows. There would be thirty-six trustees, of which, twenty two would be Baptists or Antipedobaptists, five would be Friends or Quakers, four would be Congregationalists, and five would be Episcopalians. The Fellows, which would always include the President, would include eight Baptists or Anabaptists (the President was to be a Baptist) and the rest could be “indifferently of any or all denominations.”

While Baptists held the stronger hand in Corporation governance, the Charter mandated “full, free, absolute, and uninterrupted liberty of conscience” and thus no religious test for the appointments of Professors and Tutors or in the admission and treatment of students. Furthermore, teaching should “respect the sciences” and “sectarian differences of opinions shall not make any part of the public and classical instruction; although all religious controversies may be studied freely, examined and explained by the President, Professors, and Tutors.” The curriculum that emerged reflected precedents at Harvard, Princeton, and elsewhere without obvious Baptist interventions. The Charter stated that the College was to be “a public school or seminary, erected for that purpose within this Colony, to which the youth may freely resort for education in the vernacular and learned languages, and in the liberal arts and sciences…for the general advantage and honor of the government.”

Baptists distinguished themselves from other contemporary Christian denominations in their finding that no precedent for infant baptism existed in the Bible and thus that the practice was a
human contrivance and not a legitimately Christian ritual. To them, only those individuals who were adult enough to realize its blessing were worthy to be baptized. According to one nineteenth-century Baptist theologian familiar with this controversy:

The Baptists contend that no human being has a right to interfere between the soul and God....Each soul occupies an independent position before the Almighty, is responsible for its own baptism and its own faith. This view Baptists hold against all those sects that practise infant baptism, as that rite takes from the child all opportunity of deciding what is right and wrong in relation to that ordinance, and commits him to forms which intelligent conviction may lead him to repudiate; takes away his free agency, and places him under obligations he never assumed....[infant] Baptism binds the conscience of the child, imposes responsibility, and whether administered by Catholic or Protestant, in Rome or Geneva, is an unwarrantable interference with the soul’s relation to God (Eddy 1861: 20-22)

Mid-eighteenth-century Baptists, including the noted clergyman and original Brown Trustee, Isaac Backus, called their movement "the new reformation" (see McLaughlin 1967: 1-2).

Post founding, Brown’s English-derived and largely prescriptive academic curriculum continued to grow until the latter years of Francis Wayland’s presidency, when he expressed serious concerns with “the system of instruction which we inherited from our English ancestors.” The traditional liberal learning with its required studies of ancient languages and literature did not by itself provide adequate preparation for success in America’s churning industrial economy and westward expansion. Ambitious young men, he feared, would find the college irrelevant to their aspirations. For Brown to serve future citizens and leaders would require a transformation of academic structures and offerings and provide unfettered access to practical disciplines such as chemistry, mechanics, physiology, geology, agriculture, law, and political economy. He argued to the Corporation that existing academic requirements and even the traditional four-year time frame must be reconfigured. With the Corporation’s endorsement, he adapted instruction to national needs by reducing requirements and by trusting to the efficacy of free electives: “so far as it is practicable, every student might study what he chose, all that he chose, and nothing but what he chose.” While Wayland did not mention Baptist beliefs in his report to the Corporation, I surmise that consciously or not he sensed a fit between freedom of choice as in the Baptist template for salvation, and the freedom of student choice he saw as necessary for revitalizing the College under what was known as the “new system.”

Today’s New Curriculum, with its legitimating trust in the self-fashioning agency of the individual student can also be seen as an expression--shaped consciously or not—by the Baptist great idea of soul liberty moving steadily on to its ultimate consequences. Today’s New Curriculum grew from the institutional soul-searching efforts led and inspired by Brown students Ira Magaziner and Elliot Maxwell, among others, in 1966-67 (available now as The Magaziner-Maxwell Report: the seed of a curricular revolution at Brown, published by the Open Jar Foundation in 2011). This Report, a gift to Brown and a testimony to its students, presents a vision and recommendations for change, attention to institutional and curricular invention and integration, and discernment of Brown’s character, values, and purpose. The report questions narrow professionalism, mechanical performance of skills, and any rigidity such as formal requirements, even in the concentration, that might hamper opportunities for individual self-
realization. The report encourages the pursuit of meaning and direction for life, independence in learning, freedom to work on one’s own, and in general practices that support freedom of choice and from constraint.

Descriptions of the Brown Curriculum laud the freedom guaranteed to the individual student to construct his or her own educational path in that space closed off elsewhere by prescriptive general education curricula. A current description on Brown’s website reads: "Rather than defining a broad set of distribution requirements, the open curriculum gives students the freedom to choose for themselves. This philosophy has defined Brown's place in the landscape of higher education for more than four decades" (The Brown Curriculum). Similarly, Dean Katherine Bergeron, in a paper titled “The Free Elective Curriculum” described this Curriculum as "a philosophy that gives students the freedom to choose, the freedom to fail, and the responsibility to direct their own education." Almost without fail, when I ask Brown undergraduates how they chose to come to Brown they respond by praising the New Curriculum and volunteer while smiling that they are very happy with their choice.

I expect that Isaac Backus (and his friend, the Reverend and President James Manning) would recognize a relationship between the educational ideas articulated at this place today and the radically individualistic ideas that underpinned the Baptist College for which he served as an original trustee from 1765-1780. As Barnas Sears noted in his 1864 “Centennial Discourse,” such great ideas move steadily on as their logic informs new times. In times of crisis Brown has drawn on its great ideas. Through radical change, Brown becomes more like Brown.

SOURCES


Executive Board [of the Brown Corporation], 1861. A Sketch of the History and the Present Organization of Brown University (Providence: Knowles, Anthony & Co.).


I have no insight into the future: no one really has. In his 1981 book “2081”, Gerard K. O’Neill noted the lack of success in predictions of the past (and of his present), with over-prediction of change in social and political contexts, and under-prediction of technical change. Nonetheless, I think the following thoughts about the future are worth considering, and, if possible, planning for.

Biologists and medical researchers are being joined by physicists, chemists, psychologists, mathematicians, engineers and computer scientists in real efforts to understand the behavior of living cells and organisms. The systems are horribly complex and the data difficult to sharpen, but there is real progress under way. In its early stages, that progress can well yield improvement in the health of humans, through better understanding of what we call “disease” and its mechanisms. In later stages, we may well be able to mend and maintain humans for much longer lifetimes (whether or not this is desirable!) or transfer their control systems into long-living machines (robots). One tentative prediction in which I have confidence is that eventually we will understand how living entities work, and hence how they can be changed or duplicated.

As a special sign of progress, I look for a real connection between theories (including predictive results) and observation. This year’s Nobel prizes in Chemistry (“for the development of multi-scale models for complex chemical systems”) and in Physiology or Medicine (“for unveiling how cells organize their transport systems”) are promising indicators of some positive movement in theory and experiment. It is also important to note the role played by our computing environment in allowing complicated mathematical and experimental results to be quantified and understood.

More than sixty years ago I was pursuing a graduate degree in physics, conducting experiments at the then-highest energies in the laboratory to understand the behavior of elementary particles of matter. When not experimenting, we tried to dream up theories that could answer a fundamental question: what leads these particles to have mass? Our attempts got nowhere. But a dozen years later, six brilliant colleagues succeeded in finding a way; in recent years, hundreds if not thousands of our colleagues actually found through experiment the key proof that that theory makes sense, in discovering the Higgs Boson particle in the debris produced by the Large Hadron Collider at CERN in Geneva. The 2013 Nobel Prize in Physics recognized the vindication of this fifty-year old theory.

This, however, does not solve the problem of understanding our universe. There are empirical stratagems to fit observation into a framework, but they seem to me (and I assume to others) to be artificial constructs. “Inflation” (expansion at speeds beyond the speed of light); “dark matter” (invisible content of space that exerts gravitational force); and space itself are among the phenomena that remain to be understood. These are challenges at the fundamental level, and
probably understanding them may yield no clues to explaining organisms that can reason -- not to mention the universal question that reasoning prompts: why are we here?

Our challenge as members of the Brown University faculty is to stimulate in our students a desire to answer these questions, as they start contributing to the human experience. It is in the spirit of this responsibility that we should develop plans for the future, including the boldest steps to move us to that better understanding. The planning process is under way, and an overview of its content has been made available to us by President Paxson and Provost Schlissel. The plan sets out highly desirable goals and presents means for reaching toward them.

As is the case for many expanding institutions, finding appropriate space can be a real challenge. The plan does not present a solution that keeps all of Brown University in one location, but rather indicates an expansion of the use of “downtown” space by providing room for more research and administrative offices to be moved away from College Hill. The plan’s language hints that College Hill will become the college part of Brown, while the professional, graduate and research segments will mostly migrate downtown – mainly to the Jewelry District. Despite the attention paid to transportation, the separation will remain. For undergraduate students already challenged to organize their time to fit in their tasks and pleasures, it will be a real barrier to working in a research and scholarly-driven environment.

I fear this could lead to real erosion of the Wriston concept of a University-College, and with it a deterioration of our very high quality undergraduate education. The move of the Medical School downtown provides real pluses for the medical students, since they must also interact with the teaching hospitals; and transporting themselves is already an accepted factor. Virtual transport is an adjunct, but in training a medical practitioner real people have to be seen and touched.

For other areas of the University, keeping the research work of faculty accessible to our undergraduates is good for faculty members, students and the University. Every effort should be made to maintain this environment. In addition, we must encourage the disciplinary flexibility that seems to be a hallmark of progress in the sciences. Initiatives like the one in the Brain Sciences show the recognition of such an approach, as do some of the other listed goals. What is not clear is how this can be enhanced in the space planning.

It is a personal pleasure for me to see Brown University moving toward the goals enunciated to me when I was recruited in 1968-69. A succession of successful leaders has been the engine, along with the very well-thought-out recruitment of outstanding faculty members, thereby attracting excellent students. My granddaughter (class of 2013) was a beneficiary, for which we are thankful. Keep it up!
New Vectors in Graduate Education in the Humanities

Luiz Fernando Valente
Professor of Portuguese and Brazilian Studies and Comparative Literature

I.

It has become commonplace to say that graduate education, particularly graduate education in the Humanities, is in a state of crisis. For example, in a December 2012 speech to the Council of Graduate Schools, reprinted in the February 18, 2013 issue of the Chronicle of Higher Education, Penn State Professor Michael Bérubé, a former President of the Modern Language Association of America, argued that graduate education in the Humanities “is a seamless garment of crisis: If you pull on any one thread, the entire thing unravels.” A couple of years ago, in a polemical essay entitled “Overeducated, Underemployed,” Hope College Professor of English William Pannapacker, described by the New York Times as “a graduate-school Cassandra,” bitterly stated that he could “only recommend graduate school in the humanities . . . if you are independently wealthy, well-connected in the field you plan to enter (e.g. your mom is the president of an Ivy League university), or earning a credential to advance in a position you already had, such as a high-school teacher.” Though I do not entirely share Bérubé’s and Pannapacker’s angst, there is no question that the Humanities face serious challenges. Indeed, most of us could come up with horror stories about budgets of Humanities departments being slashed while undergraduate admissions officers are given marching orders by senior administrations, even at universities like mine with a record of high distinction in the Humanities, to privilege applicants interested in the sciences. The push to internationalize American institutions of higher learning, led in many cases by monolingual administrators, with little or no tangible experience in foreign countries, has not helped modern language departments, as so-called internationalization has often meant accepting more international students, particularly those who can pay full tuition, establishing study tours or internships by undergraduates at foreign locations (relying primarily on the English language), or setting up campuses or offices in foreign countries, designed to generate revenue for the institution—in other words, internationalization, yes, but without languages other than English. More recently, graduate admission slots in the Humanities have been getting scarcer as federal support for scientific research has declined and universities have been forced to commit more of their own funds to support graduate education in the sciences.

My intention, however, is not to whine about the supposed impending doom of the Humanities—which I don’t think is the case—or point fingers at university administrators—even though it may be fun to do so—because I do believe that those of us in the Humanities haven’t been doing a very good job facing up to these challenges.

II.

1 This piece was originally delivered as a plenary talk at the Summer Seminar South for department chairs, sponsored by the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages (ADFL), Houston, TX, June 18, 2013.
Any discussion of the challenges to graduate education in the Humanities must start with a consideration of the dismal job market. And yet twenty-four years ago the distinguished labor economist William Bowen, a former Princeton University and Mellon Foundation President, had predicted “a substantial excess demand for faculty in the arts and sciences” by the mid-1990s and a true academic bull market by the new millennium, with “roughly four candidates for every five positions”—which, as we well know, hasn’t come to pass. It isn’t that there aren’t any jobs—there are jobs—but most of the available jobs are not the kind of tenure-track positions Bowen envisioned in his optimistic report. As Bérubé has pointed out on several occasions, more than one million of the million and half individuals employed in college teaching are contingent faculty off the tenure track, many of them in adjunct positions with low pay, few or no benefits, and scant opportunity for advancement—a reversal of the situation just a few decades ago when most faculty positions were on the tenure track.

There is no question that the reduction of public support for higher education has contributed to the current situation. Nevertheless, much of the problem is also an outcome of the growing corporatism of American colleges and universities, where chief academic officers are often expected to behave more like CEOs than educators, following directives from governing boards—which are comprised primarily of individuals from corporate America—to keep costs as low as possible and revenue streams, including tuition and ever-growing fees, as high as possible, all allegedly in the name of productivity. Just as it has happened with home mortgages, which have been broken up into smaller and smaller slices in order to be securitized, a practice that has enriched a few but created massive problems for the rest of us, as attested by the 2008 financial crisis and its aftermath, the academic powers that be learned some time ago that it’s a lot cheaper to break up a full-time faculty position into part-time positions, paying only a few thousand dollars per course rather than a full salary complete with benefits, even as the number of administrators keeps increasing while the gap between the compensation packages that some top administrators command and the salaries paid to faculty or graduate assistants shamefully mirror the pay disparities in corporate America. After all, funds must be set aside for supposedly more pressing needs than ensuring adequate work conditions and fair wages for instructors, such as, for example, to allow retired Ohio State President E. Gordon Gee, whose salary already topped $1,000,000 a year, to spend another $64,000 on bow ties since 2007. Or to build multimillion-dollar athletic/recreational facilities and posh residence halls to house the wealthiest students, which even as distinguished an institution as Boston University has seen fit to do with its Student Village and Student Village II, an expensive proposition that is totally out of line with the university’s relatively low endowment.2

The job market situation has seen little substantial change since Marc Bousquet, a Professor of English at Emory University, argued in a stinging article published in Social Text in 2002 that graduate education in the Humanities was based on a foundation of exploitation that created a “waste product” of employed but poorly paid teachers, including graduate teaching assistants, whose completion of a terminal degree marked “no longer the beginning of one’s teaching career

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2 As reported by Boston journalist Tracy Jan, according to Boston University president Robert Brown the school was just giving the students what they wanted, an all-too-common deference to the regrettable new paradigm of the student as consumer: “You can’t get a lot of upperclassmen who want to live in traditional dorms in their junior and senior years.”
but the logical end of that career.” Although I find Bousquet’s argumentation a bit too strident, I believe that he’s correct in calling attention to the fact that “cheap teaching is not a victimless crime,” as it has an adverse impact not only on professional morale but also on the quality of undergraduate education.

While we wait for the revolution, however, there are a few things that we can and must do as we sail through the choppy waters of the current academic environment, so I’ll try for the moment to set aside my naturally rebellious and utopian instincts, and let my practical side take over. Given the present conditions, what should we be doing to prepare our students to compete in a tight job market? And, concurrently, to what extent has our inertia been at least partly responsible for the current situation?

III.

In my opinion a fundamental problem with graduate education in the Humanities is that we have failed to professionalize it the way other professions, such as law, medicine and business, have done. We often treat graduate education as if it were a mere extension of undergraduate education. On the contrary, we must conceive of graduate education as the professional development of our graduate students, which includes not only their mastery of a certain body of knowledge but also their effective preparation to become active members of our profession. At my counseling sessions for job candidates at past MLA conventions, I’ve been astounded by how so many graduate students appear to have gone through their studies without gaining an understanding of how the profession functions. To begin to remedy this situation I propose that, just as first-year law students are required to take a course on “lawyering,” our graduate curricula should include early on a course—perhaps team-taught—on, for lack of a better word, “professoring.” In such a course, designed to prepare graduate students to become professionals in the languages and literatures, students would not only familiarize themselves with the major journals and research resources in their areas, as it has been traditionally done in the so-called graduate pro-seminars, but also with the history of our fields, the functioning of our professional associations, the protocols for submitting grant proposals, delivering papers at conferences, and preparing articles for publication, the daily life of a faculty member, including the balancing act among research, teaching and service, the current debates in the profession, etc. Of course this kind of training cannot be exhausted within the confines of a single introductory course but must continue in different venues throughout the students’ careers.

Let me share with you a couple of concrete examples of what I try to do in terms of professionalizing my students. I tell students in my graduate seminars always to think of their final papers as a piece of work that could be developed into a conference presentation and eventually published as an article rather than as a way of simply fulfilling a course requirement. It’s all right if their seminar papers aren’t completely polished, as long as they take chances in challenging themselves by posing thought-provoking questions. Each of my graduate seminars concludes with a daylong mini-conference that attempts to mimic professional conferences, complete with coffee breaks, lunch, and a keynote speaker—generally a recent graduate from our program, who in this sense serves both as a role model and tangible proof that the training that we’re offering will bear fruit. In these mini-conferences seminar participants present fifteen-to-
twenty-minute versions of their final papers in sessions that always include a question-and-answer period, so that students not only practice delivering a paper, but also formulating and answering questions on their feet so to speak. In preparation for the mini-conference I offer to work, particularly with first-year students, on compressing their longer papers into conference-size presentations. I also try to give them tips about how to deliver their papers. As I indicated before, I advise students that in preparing the final, longer version of their papers after the mini-conference, they should go for broke rather than play it safe. The results have been encouraging. Every semester I’m able to identify several papers that, with some adjustments, will be ready to be presented at actual professional conferences, and a few that with additional work will find their way into professional journals. Once the course is concluded, I encourage the students to meet individually with me in order to explore a future for their papers, and I continue to assist them in reshaping their papers into conference presentations and preparing them to be submitted for publication. In other words, I regard as my responsibility not just to impart information about the seminar subject matter and to assess student performance, but to mentor each student with the ultimate goal of preparing him or her to become an effective member of our profession. Indeed, most of our doctoral students in Portuguese and Brazilian Studies invariably graduate having not only presented competent papers at several conferences, which instills self-confidence and ensures visibility, but, more importantly, also published papers in refereed journals, a situation that makes them stand out in the applicant pool and greatly enhances their chances of being offered a good job.

Conference participation and publication are, however, only one of the poles of graduate students’ professional preparation. Teaching is the other. Everywhere most graduate students do perform quite a bit of teaching during their student careers, but, once again, are they being properly guided? I’m not convinced that the traditional course on teaching methodology, which is a requirement at most institutions, is sufficient. And I certainly agree that it’s just plain exploitation to have graduate students teach the same one or two courses semester after semester. In making graduate student teaching assignments we should aim for a balance between the instructional needs of the department and our responsibility to develop graduate students into effective teachers. Needless to say, I’m once again talking about mentoring. In the Department of Portuguese and Brazilian Studies at Brown we have developed a teaching-mentoring program in which graduate students progress through several steps. They begin by team-teaching the Intensive Introductory Portuguese course with a faculty member, move on to team-teaching a second-year-level course, again with a faculty member, and only then are allowed to teach a course on their own or to co-teach it with another experienced graduate student. In the course of the mentoring program we make every effort to vary the course assignments from semester to semester, and to create as many different teaching opportunities as possible, including a chance to teach an introductory Brazilian or Portuguese literature course before they graduate. It helps that doctoral student support at Brown has been somewhat decoupled from the teaching needs of the department—each entering student is guaranteed a five-year fellowship, which generally includes teaching in years 2, 3, and 4 (though patterns may vary depending primarily on the needs of the students), with a sixth year de facto guaranteed if the student is making adequate progress towards completion. This system gives the department enormous flexibility on how to develop students as teachers. Obviously the level of financial support that Brown offers may not be replicated everywhere, but the concept of the centrality of the mentoring program can be adapted to the realities of other institutions.
I wouldn’t be at all surprised if some of you have begun to think: “All this mentoring is fine and dandy, but Brown is a wealthy institution, with a low faculty-to-student ratio and small doctoral programs in the Humanities, but our reality is very different, with graduate students fiercely competing for teaching slots and too many graduate students to properly mentor.” Well, I’m going to say something that will probably be very unpopular: Perhaps we shouldn’t admit so many graduate students if we can’t properly mentor them into scholars and give them effective opportunities to develop as teachers. And yet some graduate programs continue to accept large entering classes—including some students who are only marginally capable of producing the kind of first-rate work that will eventually allow them to compete in a tight job market—while hoping that numbers will be reduced through attrition so that another large entering class may be admitted, filling seats in seminars and creating an inexhaustible supply of cheap labor. Frankly, I find this vicious cycle unconscionable. The time may have come to reduce admission slots in the Humanities not because provosts and deans need these slots for the sciences but because we can’t effectively prepare so many students to compete in our profession. Graduate admissions should not be driven by the instructional needs of the undergraduate college but by the quality of the graduate students that a program is able to attract and the available resources for effective mentoring of the students who have been admitted. It’s not the primary responsibility of graduate programs to provide universities and colleges with a perennial source of inexpensive labor by continuing to accept large numbers of students and churning out graduates who won’t be able to compete for good jobs. Maybe as the demand for instructors becomes more and more out of line with the supply, institutions will have to provide better compensation and perhaps eventually rebuild those part-time positions into full time positions, with a decent salary, benefits, and opportunities for professional advancement. Unfortunately, as colleges and universities have become more and more corporate, there’s always the possibility, of course, that rather than improving the work environment, institutions will simply sign new contracts with Coursera, or, God forbid, with Rosetta Stone—though that discussion merits another forum.

IV.

Because I’m an eternal optimist, let me finish on a positive note. First of all I’m in complete agreement with Michael Bérubé on two points. Despite current challenges, our field is much more interesting and relevant that it was in the 1970s when I was finishing college and beginning graduate school. The rise of the study of race, gender, and class, the renewed interest in history and postcoloniality, the push towards interdisciplinarity have made the study of the Humanities field, in Bérubé’s words “more vibrant, more exciting and . . . more important than it was a generation ago.” This is why I also agree with Bérubé that the new emphasis on alternative careers for Humanities students should not be viewed as a panacea and may be misguided. It’s not our job to invest time, money and effort in the training of doctoral students so that they can write manuals for Microsoft. Again, allow me to quote Bérubé: “The department that most emphatically and open-mindedly embraces the idea of graduate training for careers outside academe might just find itself the department whose graduate program is eliminated in the next strategic plan.” Let’s focus, then, on professionalizing and renewing graduate education from inside academia.
One promising possibility that I’d like to highlight is the “Open Graduate Education Program” at Brown, a pilot project started in 2011 and supported by the Andrew Mellon Foundation. This innovative program allows select doctoral students to pursue a master’s degree in a secondary field related to their primary field while they continue to pursue their doctoral degrees. In the words of the Dean of the Graduate School, Professor Peter Weber, the program “aims to align more closely the training of doctoral students with the spirit of Brown's Open Curriculum for undergraduates, a cornerstone of the University's pedagogy” with the hope that “the initiative will further catalyze interdisciplinary research and prepare students for the competitive demands of the job market.” Students accepted into the program are given an additional year of full fellowship support with no teaching obligations, in order to pursue their master’s. Among the nine projects selected this year, a graduate student in German Studies will be doing a master’s in Philosophy; a graduate student in Sociology will be pursuing a master’s in Ecology and Environmental Biology; a graduate student in Egyptology will be completing a master’s in Applied Mathematics; a graduate student in Anthropology will be taking a master’s in Modern Culture and Media; and so on.

But I’ve bored you enough, and my time is up. So I’ll stop here.

References


Free Speech, Civil Discourse, and Natural Law

Peter D. Richardson
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It is inevitable in the course of human affairs for there to be disagreements. However, it has been noted by John Maynard Smith and E. Szethmary that successful evolution of humans has needed cooperativeness [1], as well as language and permanent records. Biologists and historians may enjoy tracing the evolution of cooperativeness. Organization of peoples into towns, countries, sometimes relatively briefly into empires and more frequently now into universities, has provided opportunities for devising methods for coping cooperatively over settling disagreements, or at least to fairly determine what the issues are. First, of course, it is important to study what a disagreement is about.

Back in 1966, when we recognized some adverse trends in the USA, the Brown faculty discussed and voted on a Motion to define our support of free speech, where people can express their ideas, openly and without fear for their lives or liberty, or unreasonable interruption, often involving issues of fact and interpretation. This was agreed upon by the Corporation, with one caveat. This is recorded in the Faculty Rules, version 11.0, as follows:

B. Academic Freedom
“Academic freedom is essential to the function of education and to the pursuit of scholarship in universities.
“1. Therefore, Brown University, mindful of its historic commitment to scholarship and to the free exchange of ideas, affirms that faculty and students alike shall enjoy full freedom in their teaching, learning, and research.
“2. Brown University also affirms that students shall have the freedom of religious belief, of speech, of press, of association and assembly, of political activity inside and outside the university, the right to petition the authorities, public and University, and to invite speakers of their choice to the campus, and that students and faculty as such should not be required to take any oath not required of other citizens. The time, place, and manner of exercising these rights on the campus shall be subject to reasonable regulation only to prevent interference with the normal functions of the University.” There is a codicil which comments that this paragraph is an amendment voted by the Faculty 5/3/83, and repeats the Statement on Academic Freedom for Faculty and Students, Part 5, Section 11, I, B; however, it is 11.I.C. p.108, which repeats “Statement on Academic Freedom for Faculty and Students,” and includes an introductory commentary: “NOTE: The Faculty voted on April 12, 1966, to recommend the following statement to the Corporation for adoption as the public policy of Brown University. On June 4, 1966, the Corporation approved the recommendation with the proviso as noted in the footnote.” The relevant footnote, at the bottom of p.109 of the Version 11.0, reads: “The reference to the rights of students to invite speakers to the campus refers to recognized student groups.” Part 5 is about “Corporation and Administrative Policies”.

Many of us have been introduced to practice in Civil Discourse. Many debates rely on this. I was introduced to it while still in school – we had the Society for the Encouragement of Culture, Arts and the Sciences (SECAS), selected students and with a few teachers attending, with each meeting beginning (at 4:31 pm) with Society management matters first and then a main feature in the form of debates, or sometimes speakers from inside or outside the Society. To be sure everyone had some opportunity to speak, we sometimes had “out of the hat” debates, where member’s names would be drawn on folded slips of paper from one hat, and the topic similarly anonymous from another hat, so the member chosen would be already standing, and had to start speaking on the assigned topic at once. I remember well my first such debate: my assigned topic was ‘Gorgeous Gussie’s laced Unmentionables,’ which I’d never seen on this American tennis player, as I grew up without TV at home. The immediate laughter from my schoolmates at the incongruity of my having this topic gave me a bit of time to think of what to say in my assigned 90 seconds. Sometimes we had debates somewhat imitating those of the Oxford Union, with such topics as “This House believes that scientists should be Members of Parliament,” a motion obviously doomed in a school where most students chose arts and humanities for their electives but nevertheless giving opportunity for debate. This helped us become used to having a Moderator who did not have obvious opinions but the task of ‘recognizing’ people to speak, and quelling interruptions, and guiding the debate to find speakers on different sides. Forms of such meetings are found, for example, in local town councils. I own some property in a Massachusetts town, although not registered to vote there, and can speak if I wish to on being ‘recognized’. Agendas are typically published ahead by several days so those interested can decide which meetings they wish to attend, and be prepared. Such organizations may typically follow Robert’s Rules, or have their own which often refer to Roberts Rules for matters for which they do have not different rules.

One summer in Providence, when reading a book by Brown’s Prof Bryce Lyon – probably his Constitutional and Legal History of Medieval England [2] - I came with a jolt to see the name Sir John Fortescue mentioned – because I knew that name was on my family tree. I am a linear descendant on my maternal grandmother’s side, 13 generations later. He was Chief Justice of England, and wrote three books, one on the Nature of Natural Law. This is distinct from any religiously-linked law, such as Canon Law. There is a monument to him in St. Eadburga’s Church, a few miles west of Banbury, so in the northern Cotswolds. Late in WW II, as a consequence of a flying bomb exploding too close to my home I was evacuated to Banbury, and would have gone to look at that church if I’d known that at the time.

Natural Law has some basic principles which are the foundations of ‘due process’ in law. The first is nemo judex in causa sua, literally no one should be a judge in his own cause, a protection of fairness by excluding persons who have some interest in the outcome, or possible bias. One sees this, for example, in the selection of juries, and the English practice of avoiding publication of snippets of news before a trial, whereby it might become harder to find jurors who have no previous knowledge which may have caused a bias. Anyone who has read threads of comments on-line in response to news items may see that people are quite willing to develop judgments without hearing all possible relevant details. Another highly important principle is audi alteram partem, listen to the other side, let people explain what happened, which may be in definite and even demonstrable contradiction to a claim which has initiated the action or hearing. An associated concept is that people should be given adequate time to prepare and state their
response in a case. Even parking tickets usually have an appeal process mentioned on them, and the appeal is not heard by the ticketing officer. This works for Brown parking tickets, there is an appeal opportunity spelled out on each ticket, and the same for Providence parking tickets. With the latter, there used to be a process of marking the tread of a car tire with chalk and returning after the time limit of allowed parking to issue a ticket if the car and chalk mark were still there, but more recently a patrol officer would simply record the license numbers of vehicles along particular stretches of street, and return later and look for vehicles parked there with the same registration numbers. Because the offense involves continuous parking, if the vehicle driver took the vehicle away and then returned later, finding the opportunity to park in that area open again, that would not be an offense, and the chalk mark would likely not have survived such a trip, but if the vehicle had only been noted and moved away before returning, it would not be an offense. Some drivers might decide it was easier to pay the fine than to go and object, but the opportunity to do so is provided, as it would not be fair not to do so. The principle of giving people enough time, even if there is not a personal penalty definitely being faced, is enshrined in the requirement of prior notice, such as in sending out the Agendas for Meetings ahead of the meeting times. With Brown Faculty meetings, there is a requirement that such notices are sent out (at least) seven days before the scheduled Meeting, and with the texts of Motions fully included in the Agenda. There are case histories where actions taken without sufficient notice become void on appeal, regardless of their possible merit, because adequate notice time was not provided. See, for example, Farley v. Board of Education of County of Mingo, 365 S.E. 2nd 816 (W.Va.App. 1988), in which the Supreme Court of Appeals held that (1) Where teachers were to be terminated, teachers must receive notice, served upon teachers, return receipt requested, stating cause or causes for termination, and permitting reasonable opportunity to be heard before county board of education prior to termination, and (2) county superintendent’s notice of termination letters one to two days prior to hearing deprived teachers of opportunity to challenge basis for their proposed dismissals. Reversed and remanded. In the recent matter of the October 29th demonstration against Commissioner Ray Kelly, the publication “Standing for racial justice” as printed in the Brown Daily Herald of November 12, 2013, by unnamed authors, would not avoid the need for adequate notice, because so far no findings or accusations have been made, nor have possible respondents been named, nor is it known who wrote the article; it might not be by anyone who would subsequently be charged. There needs to be an auditable trail of due process with dates and times and persons, to help protect accusers and the accused in a possible subsequent appeal. In Roberts Rules, 10th edition, Chapter XX, beginning on p.624, there is a description of Disciplinary Procedures which may be adopted by groups which apply those Rules.

In the Brown Daily Herald of November 13th 2013 there is a full-page ad on “Debating Character at Brown”, but unsigned. May I offer my own personal comments, in the context of the Ray Kelly protest, which I did not witness? In my time as a university student I saw it was very easy to get students out for a protest demonstration, such as against the invasion of Egypt to try to capture the Suez Canal from being taken over by Egyptian forces, or later against Russian invasion of Hungary. Such demonstrations did not change history. Sometimes a peaceful march could be turned into something more ugly and destructive by a few, and at first it might seem the whole group was intent on such behavior, although the majority might wish to withdraw when they saw that. I probably did something small, but successful in its way, by handing coins to a Hungarian refugee who’d reached London and wanted to use a public phone to reach family
members still back in Hungary, the phones needing repeated, regular infusion with coins to keep the connection alive. That was an actual help, but miniscule compared with relatives who, starting from their late teens in Lambeth, founded what became the Waifs and Strays Society of the Church of England – now morphed into The Children’s Society. Many years later I succeeded in visiting Hungary, and one of the locations I went to was an orphanage, as an observer to what really went on there; it was a beautiful sunny day, and there were lots of cribs out in the sun, a clean infant in each – but not enough people to pick them up and hold them, in a beginning of socialization, and older small children playing in a small playground, but not with each other. They were being kept alive, clean, fed and clothed, but there were unmet needs. That may be found more frequently in orphanages: the hope of individual adoption weighs against bonding between the individual children. But Russian oversight was not there.

The Divest from Coal stocks movement could well be misplaced. Coal mining has been subject to regulation for more than a century, and it is worthwhile to consider its international history, such as the First Report of the (UK) Children’s Employment Commission of May 1842 (Children were being employed in terrible conditions in underground coal mining, for example), and the shift in regulation in the USA during the energy crisis of the 1970s led to the Federal Power Commission being revised to become the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, with opportunities for thermally efficient power producers being able to sell their power over existing networks. There was a loophole for coal-fired power plants. This led to Newbay Corporation proposing a coal-burning power plant on the East Providence shore of the Seekonk River, roughly a mile from the Brown campus: it did not happen, but it required years of passionate public debate, and enormous legal fees to be paid. A Brown student in Environmental Studies, Samantha Schreiber, wrote an Environmental Studies thesis about it in 1993. Divesting from Coal Stocks would not have stopped this project.

The thought I wish to offer our students is to consider what change a protest will likely achieve, besides a transient feeling you’ve done the right thing, compared with something else which is more constructive. Our students will live for roughly another sixty years; what will your children and grandchildren wish you had begun addressing now? I had an academic colleague who went from London to visit his family in Warsaw late in the summer of 1939, noting that it was still business as usual there, people buying and selling houses and so forth, and found himself trapped there by the invasion of German troops. It took him years to get back to London. What traps may be waiting by 2063? As fossil fuels become scarcer, will we have reached the “middle game” by then, with fewer national players?

The Grapes of Wrath
by John Steinbeck

Peter Wegner
Professor of Computer Science

John Steinbeck (born in Salinas, California in 1902) wrote many books about poverty, received the Nobel Prize for literature in 1962, and died at age 66 in 1968. His seminal work, *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), which was voted the most significant American book of the 1900s (both in its quality and in its content) described the role of wealthy communities, banks, and individual property owners in oppressing poor migrants. His analysis of the impact of the rich on the poor persists in the current conflict between rich Republicans and poor Democrats in contemporary society.

*The Grapes of Wrath* is a fictional recreation of the “dust bowl” of the early 1930s, which caused many poor farm owners in Oklahoma and adjoining states to be stripped of their land and forced to move to California to find employment. When Tom Joad returned home on parole after serving a four-year prison term for killing a man who had attacked him with a knife, he found his parents’ house empty because his family could not pay their mortgage and the bank had expelled them. Tom located his family several miles away, at the home of a relative where they had purchased a truck to drive to California because no local work was available. His family of twelve included his parents, two adult brothers, a pregnant sister and her husband, two grandparents and two younger siblings. They also invited a former preacher [John Casey], who had asked to join them on their trip because experiencing the way of life of poor migrants was more important to him than preaching.

The family, overjoyed that Tom had returned from prison in time to travel with them, began the 2000-mile trip to California a few days later, traveling along route 66 through Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. Their grandparents died *en route*, and had to be buried by the roadside because the Joads could not afford the fee to bury them in a regular cemetery. They believed the pamphlets asserting that there were jobs in California orchards picking oranges, grapes, and vegetables. But when they arrived in Eastern California after crossing the Rio Grande, they were met by police who told them that poor migrants were not welcome because they could spread diseases that would affect the entire population. They nevertheless drove across the eastern desert to Bakersfield, where they stayed at a migrant camp known as Hooversville (the name often given to poor migrant camps in California). There was a fight in the camp because a deputy sheriff fired his gun at an escaping migrant and hit a local woman by mistake, and Casey admitted fighting the deputy to stop his indiscriminate firing and was imprisoned by the police for obstructing legitimate police activities.

The Joads could not find work for several months. They were eventually hired by a company whose workers had gone on strike because their wages were too low. Tom Joad discovered that Casey, who had been freed from prison, was one of the strike leaders. Tom was present when Casey was killed by an opponent of the strike. Tom killed Casey’s killer, and was able to escape
and return to his family, but then had to run away and hide in the nearby forest to avoid arrest. His family, believing Tom’s actions justified, brought food to his hiding place every night.

Tom’s mother had hoped that Tom would commit no crimes during conflicts with his opponents, but her many attempts to prevent unlawful actions failed. She wanted her family to live together and own a house, but she failed not only with Tom but also with his brother Noah who ran away in the hope of finding a better life, and with her daughter Rose, whose husband deserted the family and whose baby died in childbirth because they could not afford to provide her with adequate food or take her to a hospital. The book ends with the family running away from their temporary shelter because a flood destroys their tent and their truck. (Whereas modern flood victims can go to special shelters made available by the government, these were not available in the 1930s.

What lessons can we learn today from The Grapes of Wrath? Clearly, the opposition to the poor depicted in the novel written almost a century ago has its counterpart in the antagonism currently being expressed by Republicans in Congress and in many rural parts of the country towards poor minorities and immigrants in our own day. It illustrates the persistent political problem in the United States, whereby legitimate defenders of victims of discrimination are viewed by their opponents as equivalent to terrorists, while their supporters feel they are legitimately advocating universal fairness among all segments of society.

Steinbeck’s Grapes of Wrath assumed that in the 1930s the United States was governed by the rich, who could impose their will on the poor, both financially and legally. Our current government, run by Democrats who control the White House and the Senate, can propose laws that favor all segments of society alike. However, the Republican-controlled House generally opposes bills introduced by Democrats -- resulting in a failure to pass any laws at all, thereby weakening American society. The power of a small, wealthy minority to negate laws supported by the majority (and endorsed by the President) has to be curtailed if the United States is to survive as a genuinely democratic nation.

November 22, 2013 is the 50th anniversary of the Kennedy assassination, which in its turn is the 100th anniversary of the Gettysburg address, delivered “four score and seven” years after the Declaration of Independence was drawn up in 1776, envisaging a republic in which “all men are created equal.” These principles led to the death of soldiers in the Revolutionary War against England and again in the Civil War of 1861-5, the assassinations of President Lincoln and President Kennedy, and later of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, all carried out by individuals who rejected the better world proposed by the Declaration of Independence.

Today, our current President and democratic government are being challenged by opponents who take advantage of undemocratic processes like restriction of voting rights, rejection of health care rules, restraints on the possession of guns, and excuses to kill innocent members of minority groups like Trayvon Martin. Apparently, wealthy opponents of the poor and of migrants support anti-democratic restrictions. Laws banning undemocratic procedures must be established as a basis for the inauguration of a truly better, democratic world.
FACULTY BULLETIN

INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING ARTICLES:

The next issue of the Faculty Bulletin will be published this spring. Articles should be submitted by mid-April for publication in May.

Please submit text electronically in Word format to:

Cheryl_Moreau@Brown.edu

Articles should be approximately 1,000 words (two to three pages). If space permits, longer papers will be considered.

Articles and/or questions should be directed to:

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