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AGLS News

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From the President

John Nichols: AGLS, General Education and the Idea of a University

At the final plenary session for the AGLS Conference 2000 in Chicago last November, I presented some thoughts on how to translate Cardinal Newman's Idea of a University into 21st century terms. What I'd like to do in this brief column is take the one central idea from that presentation and discuss its significance in the contemporary idiom of assessment of and outcomes from general education.

Out of the dozens—and dozens!—of outcomes that I've seen advocated for general education programs across the country, I will place myself way out on a rather skinny limb and make the claim that one outcome is of higher and more essential significance than all the others. I hope this limb is not too skinny, though, because I think there are several other folks out there with me, not the least of whom would be Newman himself.

OK, here's the thesis: the ability to think, meaning the ability to make critical judgments, is what general education, as the locus of liberal (not specialized) education, ought to and can contribute to the baccalaureate degree. When Newman talked about liberal education teaching "all" knowledge, that was Victorian hyperbole. What he really meant was that the liberally-educated mind can "enter with comparative ease into any subject of thought." Such a mind can competently and reliably make judgments about any and all truth claims that are encountered.

What does that mean?

It means judging whether truth claims are true or false, more or less probable, or strongly or weakly supported by the available evidence. It also means that the liberally educated mind can, in Newman's words, "seize the strong point" in

the asserted claim, seeing the general and the principle in it. Such a mind is not "dazzled by phenomena" but can stand up to experts and connect what is worthwhile in their claims with other knowledge.

With just a little bit of looking around in my files, I've come up with two other contemporary voices who clearly are saying very similar things about general education. Steve Crow, Executive Director at North Central, defines the "educated person," a phrase that occurs in the North Central accreditation standards, as someone capable of "independent critical thinking." Possessing "autonomy in the face of experts" and being able "to judge their claims" is the key outcome of general education for Jonathan Smith of the University of Chicago.

But is this possible in our complex world?

Yes, and even critically necessary for coping with the very complexity of our world. We all recognize the role of the major in higher education and can probably agree that its goal is a specialist's mastery of one particular discipline. What is very important precisely in this age of complexity is that, along with learning how knowledge is created and evaluated in this one field, students also learn especially thoroughly the partiality of the discipline they have selected as their specialty.

What general education offers to students is a generalist's mastery of the methods of creating and evaluating knowledge in all the major intentionalities. For purposes of showing this as manageable, I'll propose seven of them: history, philosophy (ethics), religion, natural science, behavioral (human) science, art (literature), and mathematics. You cannot do this without having content

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**President's
Message,
continued**

to work with, so some of the other contemporary "desirables" in general education—East and West, past and present, great works, etc.—can easily be handled. What completes the picture (dream? realistic vision?) for me is a capstone experience that gives students the opportunity to connect these two principal outcomes, the specialization from the major and the generalist's critical judgment from general education.

Unfortunately, there isn't any originality in what I've said. Focus maybe, but not originality. Newman already said it. He wanted the community of the disciplines to be the principal character-

istic of university education. Students would specialize in one discipline but "live among practitioners" of all of them. What's challenging and also exhilarating for us, in our institutions and in our world, is that we can pursue that twofold goal in a more structured and deliberate manner than Newman could! If we so choose...

John Nichols
AGLS President
Saint Joseph's College (Indiana)

Pittsburgh 2001: A Preview

The AGLS 2001 Conference will meet in Pittsburgh from October 11-13th. The theme will be "Liberal Education in a Democratic Society." The program will emphasize issues such as:

- civic engagement
- scholarship of application
- university-community partnerships
- service learning
- using technology to build community
- international experience and liberal education

Program organizers are Roberta C. Aronson (aronson@duq.edu) and G. Evan Stoddard (stoddard@duq.edu), both of Duquesne University. Contact them for additional information.

Pittsburgh is a transformed city which leads the country in medicine, education and technology. As the only "city with an entrance," Pittsburgh offers many rich architectural and cultural sites. Our convention hotel, the Westin William Penn, is the "grande dame" of Pittsburgh's wealthy industrial era and will offer convention rates of \$128 per night. Plan now to join your colleagues for this wonderful opportunity to share ideas and to experience the rich life of Pittsburgh!



**The AGLS website has been updated,
so be sure to check it out.
It is a changed site!
The address is: www.bsu.edu/agls**

AGLS News is the newsletter of the Association for General and Liberal Studies. Send news, information, or queries to:

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HBCU Faculty Development Network Update

Here are the names, topics and presenters from our networks/organizations that presented at the AGLS Conference in November and the HBCU Network in October 2000.

AGLS Conference, Thursday, Nov. 2:

- **Phyllis Worthy Dawkins**, Director of Faculty Development, Johnson C. Smith University
- **Barbara S. Frankle**, Dean of Faculty and Professor of History, LeMoyne-Owen College, "Connecting Students to Learning: The Experience of Historically Black Colleges and Universities" (See program for description)

HBCU Symposium, Thursday, Oct. 19:

- **Robert Frankle**, University of Memphis, Association of General and Liberal Studies, Served on a Resource Panel

This session provided: 1) a brief overview of the General Education Reformation movement, its goals and some of its more prominent practices;

2) recent trends in general education, based on the activities and programs of recent applicants to the Asheville Institute on General Education; and 3) an overview of one of these trends: integrating service learning into the General Education Curriculum.

Peg Downs asked Phyllis Worthy Dawkins to serve as a core faculty for the June 2001 Asheville Institute on General Education and she has officially accepted the offer.

We will continue to encourage and recruit faculty presentation exchanges at each of our conferences. We are also exploring the possibility of jointly sharing a regional summer institute or workshop.

*Phyllis Worthy Dawkins,
Johnson C. Smith University
and Barbara S. Frankle,
LeMoyne-Owen College*

CAGLS Update

The Council for Administration of General and Liberal Studies (CAGLS) had its beginning in the fall of 1994 when a draft constitution was circulated among 15 people in attendance at the AGLS meeting in Savannah, GA. Its purposes are to provide a forum for discussion of problems and solutions in administering general and liberal education, and to provide an information and advising network for administrators of those programs.

Recently, some of the issues that have been addressed on the CAGLS on-line discussion group include a survey of student transfer practices, program evaluation, total number of hours in undergraduate general education programs, relations with accrediting organizations, and state-mandated requirements. CAGLS Executive Director Fred Janzow of Southeast Missouri State maintains the CAGLS web site at cstl.semo.edu/cagls.

CAGLS plans to develop further avenues of communication. In the planning stages are: a listing of members' academic vitae, discussions of best practices in general education administration in order to establish accreditation standards and guidelines, discussions of standards in recognition

of an increasingly mobile student population, and discussions of program coherence in an era of distance learning. Two other CAGLS initiatives include articulation from high school, to community college, to four-year institutions, and faculty development issues related to reform of curriculum and pedagogy. While most of these issues are ones which the higher education community as a whole must consider, CAGLS is committed to seeking to provide insight and counsel for its members who are administering general and liberal programs.

Lastly, CAGLS is co-sponsor of the Association of American Colleges and Universities conference in Atlanta, Georgia, Feb. 22-24, 2001, "Best Practices in General Education and Its Assessment: Bridging Theory and Practice," a part of AAC&U's Network for Academic Renewal.

For additional information about CAGLS please contact Fred Janzow at fjanzow@semovm.semo.edu or Bill Badley at wbadley@mtsu.edu.

CAGLS is committed to seeking to provide insight and counsel for its members who are administering general and liberal programs.

Seeking Nominations for Joseph Katz Award

Previous winners of the award include Kathryn Morman, Jerry Gaff, Jack Newell, Richard Weeks, and John Nichols.

Established in 1961, the Association for General & Liberal Studies serves college and university faculty, administrators, and prospective faculty who share a commitment to the centrality of general and liberal education in the undergraduate experience. In honor of the memory of Joseph Katz, the association established the AGLS Joseph Katz Award for Distinguished Contributions to the Practice and Discourse of General and Liberal Education. This award recognizes an individual who reflects Joseph Katz's commitment to students, his passion for the improvement of undergraduate education, and his understanding of the significance of liberal and general education. Previous winners of the award include Kathryn Morman, Jerry Gaff, Jack Newell, Richard Weeks, and John Nichols.

We are seeking nominations for this year's award recipient, someone who:

- is an active leader in the life of general and liberal education both on campus and in the national arena. Please consider nominating someone who is involved in the daily rhythm of the liberal and general education program on your campus, providing leadership in developing and implementing a curriculum that broadens horizons beyond

- the immediate concerns of professionalism;
- has publicly reflected on the meaning and importance of general and liberal education through publication, conference presentations, and/or consultation;
- has a demonstrated record of providing leadership beyond the local campus as an advocate for general and liberal education.

All nominees will be notified of their nominations, and all finalists will be recognized at the annual AGLS National Conference to be held in October in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Katz Award recipient will have travel expenses paid to the conference and be honored at an award ceremony acknowledging her or his achievement.

Please consider nominating someone for this important award by letter, fax, or e-mail. Include the persons name, title, institutional affiliation, along with a curriculum vita of the nominee, as well as (1) a brief description of the contribution the person has made to General and Liberal Education; (2) an account of how this person's commitment and activity has contributed to the improvement of the educational experiences of students on campus; (3) commentary on how this person's commitment and activity has contributed to her/his colleagues on campus; and (4) examples of how this person's commitment and activity has contributed to the understanding of the theory and practice of general/liberal education at the national level.

Please send nomination materials no later than May 30, 2001 to:

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NACADA Faculty Advisor Update

In conjunction with the AAHE Annual conference on Faculty Roles & Rewards, NACADA (National Academic Advising Association) will be offering a free pre-conference forum on Faculty Reward & Recognition Issues related to academic advising on Friday, Feb. 2, 2001, from 8am to 11am. Panel members will be:

- **Ruth A. Darling**, University of Tennessee
- **David H. Goldenberg**, Pennsylvania State University- Mont Alto
- **Wesley R. Habley**, ACT Center for the Enhancement of Educational Practices
- **Victoria A. McGillin**, Wheaton College
- **Sydney McPhee**, Tennessee Board of Regents

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Research on faculty advising has identified reward and recognition as the top campus need, and yet, advising has consistently been rated low in status and in the traditional reward structure. This open forum on faculty reward for academic advising will bring together chief academic officers of institutions where reward for advising has been successfully integrated into tenure and promotion, faculty work load and/or post tenure review. Attendees will learn about these programs and participate in a shared discussion of campus issues and strategies for faculty reward program implementation.

Faculty reward for advising is an issue of

concern on all campuses. The results of ACT's Fifth National Survey of Academic Advising presented data showing that fewer than one in three campuses recognize, reward, or compensate faculty for academic advising. Also, campus-wide recognition/reward/compensation for faculty has declined since the 1992 survey and there has been a consistent decline in all types of faculty advisor recognition strategies from 1987 and 1992 data. Yet, there are colleges and universities that have successfully implemented rewards relative to academic advising as part of faculty workload, tenure and promotion decisions and post tenure review.

The forum will be divided into three components:

- (1) a panel presentation of the issues and case studies outlined above,
- (2) small group discussions led by the panel members and other "experts" present in the audience with the goal of presenting summaries of the main themes that evolved from the shared conversations, and
- (3) a general discussion of the themes presented that will include a response from the panel mem-

bers, strategies for implementing faculty reward programs and resources available through NACADA. Recommendations will be sought from the participants as to future directions for sessions, papers and disciplinary involvement on this topic.

For more information

For more information, please refer to the AAHE website at www.aahe.org or the NADADA website at www.nacada.ksu.edu.

NACADA offers many opportunities for faculty development in the areas of academic advising and advising administration. Please refer to the NACADA website for a complete listing of regional conferences and 2001 dates for the NACADA National Conference, NACADA Summer Advising Institute and the Advising Administrators' Forum.

*NACADA Update,
continued*

Friday, Feb. 2, 2001 • 8am to 11am
9th Annual AAHE Conference on
Faculty Roles and Rewards "The
Changing Professoriate: New
Technologies, New Generation"
NACADA Associated Meeting with
American Association for Higher
Education Academic Advising Forum:
"Faculty Reward and Recognition"

Report on the 2000 conference Liberal Education in the 21st Century

AGLS's fortieth annual conference gave us a bold look into the next century. The millennial spirit was still present this November in Chicago. Once the university was an "ivory tower," a walled enclosure. At the conference we observed universities and colleges becoming usefully connected to their communities through service learning and a variety of community projects. Keynoter Nancy Thomas, the Project Director of Models for Democracy for the Society for Values in Higher Education, spoke confidently to us about how students and faculty learn from these connections and how community leaders perceive them. A new dynamic has clearly entered higher education. Jim Harris, President of Defiance College, who clearly embodies his college's vision of the connection between community service and character development, addressed us at our luncheon and inspired us by his energetic commitment and his clear perception of the ethical values enhanced by curricular and extracurricular community connections.

Keynoters Grant Cornwell and Eve Stoddard

of St Lawrence University opened the conference by developing interesting discussions among members around globalizing the academy--a second new and controversial set of connections for higher education. By offering an analysis of globalization as it is being represented in corporate media, they provided a look at how some of our students are perceiving the global community before we even begin to assist them to develop capacities for intercultural communication and collaboration. They also emphasized the need for a multidisciplinary curriculum--another major conference theme. A dozen other colleges and universities were able to address the new connections to the global community as well, including Earlham, Beloit, Kalamazoo, Bowling Green, San Francisco State, and the University of Missouri - Kansas City. Clearly we are moving forward on this development so central to our future.

Sessions on interdisciplinary studies were particularly informative, beginning with a workshop by AIS President Joan Fiscella and Board member Cheryl Jacobsen, who engaged partici-

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next page*

2000 conference report, continued

pants on interdisciplinary pedagogy, courses, and program development through AIS's new Guidelines for Best Practices. Faculty from San Francisco State, Wooster and Miami University addressed interdisciplinary pedagogy especially in the social sciences and in Women's Studies, and several other panels presentations made it clear that we are able to be much more conscious now of how interdisciplinary curricula are assembled and assessed.

The problem we all face of communicating about general education to faculty and students was also well addressed in Chicago with perhaps the prize-winning sessions being Penn State University's clever and informative web site for students who will access it before they reach the campus and Virginia Tech's Common Book experience. Other excellent sessions updated us on technology, change management, skill development, learning communities, and cultural diversity. Peg Downes connected us globally at her session with Scott Lee on general education in universities in Central Asia. Humanities general education has a grave responsibility in ethnically diverse nations around the world as well as at home.

The Midland Hotel served us well for our conference. (This was outgoing President Bob Levy's dream hotel for us--and wisely suggested.) I will bear in memory the faculty sitting together at the small tables around the balcony, and the proximity to the best that Chicago had to offer. The architectural tours, the opera, and the plethora of shops and museums exhilarated many. We concluded nobly with incoming President John Nichol's reminder to us of the continuity of the liberal tradition of education in his address: "Newman's Idea of the University and the Twenty-First Century." John reminded us that important traditions can, indeed, continue in what is clearly new.

We look forward to Pittsburgh and the Golden Triangle in October of 2001. Chicago Conference-coordinators Bruce Busby of Defiance and Beth Casey of Bowling Green thank all of you who participated for an outstanding conference.

AGLS Executive Council 2001

The following is a list of Executive Council members. If you have any issues, concerns or questions you would like taken up by the Executive Council, please contact us. We would like to hear from you.

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Return Service Requested

Is your membership in AGLS due for renewal? Look at your mailing label on this newsletter. The date following your name is the year your membership expires. Use the membership renewal form included here. If you think our records are wrong, or if you have questions about your membership, contact the Executive Director, Tom Lowe.

AGLS Membership Form

New Membership Renewal

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Department or Program _____

University/College Address _____

City, State & Zip Code _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

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