

Institute on College Student Values
Florida State University

Conference on “Leadership with Spirit:
How Colleges Prepare Students to Lead
with Moral Purpose and Commitment”

Keynote Address

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“Trustworthy Leadership”

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What a pleasure it is to be here with this group of pioneers and explorers -- researchers, practitioners, professionals from a range of disciplines, working at the frontier (some might say across the abyss) that separates academic and student life on college campuses, working it from both sides of the street with a vision of the whole. The very duality of this conception of our collective work is, of course, a chronic and debilitating problem that many of you have spent your careers addressing with creative and inventive initiatives and collaborations.

It is you who have been building the bridges and the alliances that recognize students as whole human beings: mind, body, heart, and spirit evolving and growing through the life shaping and (we hope) life-transforming period of late adolescence and early adulthood. It is you who understand how vital – and how improbable -- it has become in our wired, and transactional, and competitive consumer culture to convince today's young people that it's worth their while to dwell for a time with the confusing "big questions," and to entertain the demanding "worthy dreams" captured by Sharon Parks in her landmark study of how we might mentor young adults for lives of meaning, purpose and faith.

So I am here to pay tribute to the value of your work, and I'm grateful for the privilege to be here with you, to learn with you, and to reflect with you on this work of yours -- this work of ours -- that strikes me as never more important than it is right now, as our nation becomes more and more polarized and our world less and less willing, or able, to engage "the other," a task that I expect you would agree has become the most pressing challenge of our time – to move beyond tolerance of difference to true and deep empathy with that which is other and alien.

A few days after the turn of the millennium, I participated in a televised roundtable discussion with James Billington, the Librarian of Congress, an insightful scholar, and a thoughtful man who, a few weeks later, delivered a prophetic speech. It was nine months before 9/11, and he said this:

"We [Americans] have ... a profound special need to understand better the three great cultural belts of Asia – each of which is now aggressively asserting itself on the world scene: the Confucian- and Buddhist-based cultures of East Asia, the Hindu-based cultures of South Asia, and the long corridor of Islamic nations stretching from Indonesia through Central and West Asia to North Africa. Each of these worlds contains more than one billion people who speak languages and profess beliefs that few of us have even begun to understand. But if you do not learn to listen to people when they are whispering their prayers, you increase the risk of meeting them later when they are howling their war cries."¹

In a similar vein, just last month, the United Nations issued its new report on the "Millennium Development Goals." Produced by Columbia economist Jeffrey Sachs for UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, the report projects that we could halve extreme poverty around the world by 2015, and eliminate it by 2025, if we could mobilize the

world's richest countries (including the US, Japan, and Germany) to more than double their international aid. Annan said that the goals of the project – which some characterize as unattainable -- are “not utopian but eminently achievable.” Sachs has been arguing for years that the necessary resources are available if the richest nations would make this goal a priority.

Moreover, in Davos just last week at the World Economic Forum, Bill Clinton, and Bill Gates discussed the worsening AIDS crisis in Africa. “You want to go save four million lives,” Clinton said bluntly, “give them the medicine. It’s not rocket science and it’s so cheap compared to everything else all these rich countries do.” He’s right and his honesty is refreshing and galvanizing, now that he is free of the burdens of positional leadership, burdens under which his legacy imploded for lack of an inner compass and the disciplines of self-awareness and self-management that so many of you are working so well to instill in your students, knowing that they are going to need their own inner teachers perhaps more than any other competencies or skills.

If addressing the world’s most pressing problems is not rocket science, and not simply resources, what is it then? It is our own ability as leaders to discover our solid ground, to hear truly the whispered prayers that are building to war cries, to sense that time is short and to trust that our lives can matter. It is summoning the discipline to focus attention in directions that do not feel so good, facing moral dilemmas in all their complexity. It’s seeing past the self-interest of short-term electoral and business cycles and cultivating the imagination, and the generosity of spirit – in ourselves and those we touch -- to keep our eyes focused and yet not to lose heart, to open our hearts to sorrow without being paralyzed, to find in the world’s suffering our bonds of humanity.

The theme you have selected for your conference, then — how we can support our students in becoming passionate and powerful moral leaders -- could not be more important, or timelier. Indeed, it seems prescient, really, for your organizers could not have known how the fall semester would unfold through the divisive national presidential election and, on the day after Christmas, would end with the horrific images of death and destruction across those very regions of which Dr. Billington warned us we are so dangerously ignorant.

The tragedy of the Christmas tsunami – as awful as it was -- has bought into bold relief an even deeper, more systemic, and more portentous test of our collective will – the widening gap between rich and poor, north and south (the fact that 3-billion of the earth’s 6.4-billion people subsist on roughly two dollars a day), and the degree to which we privileged few on the planet are ignoring and exacerbating the misery of the billions who are innocent victims of war, genocide, starvation, and preventable disease and death around the globe. This widening gap is a shame and a moral catastrophe as we all know and it is a menacing threat. Yet we look the other way and go on about our lives, wishing we were not so busy, distracted, and starved for time. At least that is what I do; I will speak for myself.

Can there be any doubt, then, that we need our graduates – this new American

generation of such great privilege and promise -- to become activists in the world, potent advocates for human rights, confident leaders willing to take risks in the pursuit of intellectual honesty, of freedom to disagree, of justice and fairness, global citizenship, mutual responsibility ... all those virtues and values you'll be taking about in the concurrent sessions of this conference.

The clear urgency of our need for leadership explains in part, I think, the extraordinary range of programs and initiatives that fit under the rubric of the topic we're here together to explore. In fact, part of what is daunting about this conference is that there are so many disparate and disconnected entry points into it, so many corners within the academy in which aspects or elements of our questions are being raised and pursued; questions about:

- the role of religion and spirituality in higher education (and corollary questions about the role of spirituality in leadership);
- how to teach today's students to become engaged, responsible and effective citizens of their nation and the world;
- how to educate young people to think well about their values, to make moral choices, to be moral agents;
- how to prepare young adults for healthy and fulfilling lives, lives imbued with meaning, purpose, and hope.

At the most fundamental and intriguing levels are the epistemological questions that define how we teach and what students learn. Parker Palmer has argued eloquently that the myth of objectivism, which has dominated Western thinking and structured our consciousness, distances the knower from what is known, separates our inner lives from the objects of our study, deforms us morally and distorts our understanding by denying us the opportunity to connect our small stories to the large stories of the disciplines.²

But as the established disciplines have been challenged by alternative epistemologies – from feminism, multiculturalism, the new physics, Eastern and indigenous wisdom traditions and philosophies -- the duality between objectivism and subjectivism (between truth and reason on one hand; art and imagination on the other) has been undermined. New syntheses are emerging that don't send us back to hopelessly radical subjectivity (where everyone's opinion is always equally valid and true) while they do bring the knowing and feeling and sensing self back into the equation.

We are not going to learn how to engage "the other" – that is, understand and bridge the profound differences that divide and define us – unless we are willing to bring our curiosity and our full selves into an unfamiliar meaning system – an alternative epistemology -- and try as best we can to make our own sense of it. If we can expose

our students to alternative methodologies for making sense of empirical observation, we can perhaps help them stay connected to a world “out there” that is also “in here,” a world of which they are an integral part, a world to which they have legitimate emotional connections and enduring moral obligations, a world they can love.

For, as Parker Palmer has written, “a knowledge that springs from love will implicate us in the web of life; it will wrap the knower and the known in compassion, in a bond of awesome responsibility as well as transforming joy; it will call us to involvement, mutuality, accountability.”³ The contemplative practices from Eastern wisdom traditions are part of this epistemological expansion that offers students a way to reconnect to their inner lives and to find the reliable sources that animate their sense of social engagement. The inspiring work on mindfulness meditation being advanced by our colleagues from Naropa University, Jon Kabat-Zinn⁴ and others, Ellen Langer’s work on “mindful learning,”⁵ the support of the Fetzer Institute for bringing contemplative practice into classrooms and course syllabi, and other such initiatives are highly germane to the questions we’re exploring here about how we can educate our students to be effective moral leaders.

A second entry point into our topic is through the curriculum and in the classroom. It is obvious that the problem of specialization and fragmentation of knowledge is straining the orthodox structures of the academy. Many of us have been reassessing the role of general education at the undergraduate level. All of us are wondering where the proliferation of interdisciplinary studies will ultimately lead. More than a decade ago, Gerald Graff⁶ was arguing that we ought to “teach the conflicts” between the disciplines, rather than leaving to students the task of trying to figure out for themselves how to integrate knowledge across wide and mysterious disciplinary divides.

From here, it is a short step to questions about pedagogy, questions such as those being advanced by Carnegie Vice President, Pat Hutchins and others, about how we can instill in our students what she calls “pedagogical intelligence.” If we can draw on the great strides being made in our understanding of the brain and how it learns in order to guide students systematically to “reflect on and assess their own experiences as learners,” she suggests, we can perhaps help them develop the ability to be informed, discerning, and “active agents of their own learning.”⁷ Moreover, is that not when we think about it, our very *raison d’etre*: providing students with the wherewithal to become lifelong learners?

The hope of overcoming fragmentation, specialization and isolation by transforming higher education through integrative approaches, is, as David Scott has often argued, a “powerful movement” driven by an increasingly widespread and uncompromising search many of us are pursuing for “greater meaning and wholeness”⁸ in our lives. The question of how to make this integration a central part of the college experience -- through first-year seminars, case-method teaching, capstone experiences, and/or much more radical departures that would make the “scholarship of teaching and

learning” a central concern of the faculty – is intimately related to our question of how to educate tomorrow’s leaders.

A third entry point into our conversation is the expansion of student activities and social engagement away from campus: community service, experiential learning, study abroad, internship programs. Many of us are being pushed by our students to recall that the mission statements of most of the nation’s colleges and universities imply in one way or another, and often explicitly state, that we exist to prepare our graduates, as Wellesley’s founder quaintly said, “For lives of noblest usefulness.”

Over the past decade or two, many of our institutions have been strengthening our support systems for internships, volunteerism, and service learning. We have been encouraging our faculty to consider the possibility that their students are not wrong when they insist that much of their most profound learning is happening outside the classroom. Campus Compact is one organization that has done much to advance this important agenda.

At Wellesley, after hearing our students we created a new tradition, an annual day-long celebration called the Tanner Conference, dedicated to exploring the relationships between the liberal arts classroom and student involvement in an increasingly diverse and interdependent world. We suspend classes for a full day in the fall and all of us – students, faculty, staff, alumnae, trustees -- attend dozens of concurrent panels, roundtable discussions, performances, and presentations by students who have prepared thoughtful reflections on their off-campus learning experiences. They all have faculty sponsors who have helped them think through how best to represent what they have drawn from these experiences, how they have been changed by them, how they affected the settings in which they worked, and how they can integrate those experiences with their classroom learning. They astonish us with the depth and sophistication of their insights, as I am sure your students do you when given a chance.

When we have the privilege of hearing our students describe their commitments to a wider community, it is evident that their motivations go so far beyond a sense of obligation or the desire to garner practical experience and build a resume. There are much deeper yearnings percolating in the student culture and there is much more we can be doing to understand those yearnings more fully and to encourage them more effectively.

The fourth entry point – the one most of you inhabit and shape – is the busy and hectic world of on-campus life outside the classroom. And, oddly enough, what I find myself wanting to say to you this morning in response to your question to me about how we can invite spirit into this sacred work of ours -- educating our students to be moral leaders -- is not so much about retreating to our pillows or pews for contemplative practice (as much as I do personally treasure and depend on retreats for silence). Rather I want to speak to you about how we can bring to our improvisational work of managing the complex force fields in which our students are learning and growing an

awareness that it will often be in the hot and tense and even painful moments of sharp-elbowed conflict, or heartbreaking grief, that something that feels like “spirit” will quietly enter the space and light with us for a time while we find our bearings.

The most unlikely seeming moment – when people are confused and frightened, or angry and at each others’ throats – is often the place where a spark of true meaning can ignite. I’m not entirely sure why this is so, but I suspect it’s partly because these are the circumstances that push us up against the tender growing edges that we can studiously hide until we find ourselves under duress. These are the moments in which we discover our *differences* and, in that discovery, learn more about who we really are.

So I want to talk about our own leadership – yours and mine – and to offer a few principles and practices that we have been evolving informally at Wellesley, principles for taking up our conflicts in a way that seeks to turn them into crucibles for learning. When we are lucky, I think we do create a container in which our students can safely and genuinely experience confusion and conflict in all its complexity, and can grow through and with it to greater wisdom and maturity. At least I hope that is what we have been doing, at least some of the time. Nevertheless, uncertainty is part of the process and we are living, not answering, questions, living the questions in Rilke’s⁹ sense, as a form of spiritual leadership.

That these are perilous times to be making any claims about one’s proficiency as a leader is evident all around us: in the steady procession of graphic images of leaders being carted off in handcuffs, or otherwise toppled from power, leaders who lost their moral bearings, took shortcuts, broke or bent the rules, violated their followers’ trust – powerful, successful leaders from virtually every sector of American society: the clergy, corporations, politics, athletics, broadcast and print journalism, entertainment, publishing, the law, education ... on and on, a veritable parade of horrors. Jean Lipman Blumen, a Wellesley alumna who wrote an upbeat book some years ago on “connective leadership” has a new one out called “The Allure of Toxic Leaders,”¹⁰ a sign of the times.

Here we are in Florida asking ourselves what we can do to prepare the next generation to bring moral purpose and commitment to their leadership when it is their turn, which it will be soon. For starters, I am sure you will agree, we can do our best to offer those students leadership that is worthy of their trust. It is not easy; we should not delude ourselves, but I think we should try to live at least the following five commitments in our leadership roles.

Primarily, we should question ourselves. Effective leadership comes from an inner core of integrity and yet is not fixed, stubborn, or implacable. Leaders we trust are open to our thoughtful influence. They are aware that they cannot possess all the answers because they can have only one perspective. They are eager to hear responsible critique, and the viewpoints of others.

When leaders inspire us, we experience them as consistently themselves – yes - - we sense in them a solid self-confidence, but not one that walls others out. Clear

about who they are, they can open themselves to others. They stay attuned to their inner truth through disciplines that keep them honest, knowing, as the ancients did, that the first and most demanding obligation of a leader is the Socratic injunction to “know thyself.” Yeats wrote, “We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry.”¹¹ Trustworthy leaders are poets; they quarrel with themselves.

Second, since even if we know ourselves, we cannot know all we need to know from our own limited perspective, we need to establish partnerships as the basic units for accomplishing work. In addition, they have to be reliable partnerships, which mean investing time and energy in preserving their integrity. Reliable partnerships help prevent the distortions of information that often result from perceived or real imbalances of power – distortions produced by projections on to the leader and/or the tendency to shield her from bad news. Trustworthy leaders choose their partners wisely, for a range of perspectives and for a sense of shared core values. They negotiate the common understandings at the heart of these partnerships, which they attend to regularly, and integrate into a larger understanding of the goals they are pursuing.

To be trustworthy leaders, then, we need to make a serious commitment to a network of partnerships – including with our students -- that are honest and effective, solid and sophisticated and above all remain capable of receiving candid critique. Enlisting others – and not just loyal insiders -- in these mutual relationships becomes a major part of the leader's task: inviting a mutual exploration of what happened when things go awry, coming together to assess behaviors that may be undermining the alliance, taking explicit steps to reinforce shared commitments, revisiting the inspiration from which the collaboration draws its meaning. If we can strive to be such leaders, we can earn our students' trust.

Third, I believe that trustworthy leaders consciously resist the use of force except as a last resort. Leadership is by definition the exercise of power, and leaders are constantly called upon to deploy their power on one side or another of high-stakes disputes. As tempting as it is to wade in with what looks like decisiveness, in our hearts we really know that interventions imposed from on high seldom yield enduring peace.

Refusing to resort to force is never easy. It is painful to look like a wimp, a judgment our culture is quick to apply. However, it is even more painful to watch disputes smolder and re-ignite in debilitating cycles of repetition and escalation. Avoiding the use of force reflects a conception of leadership as nonpartisan, and of the leader as the person whose effectiveness depends on hearing all sides of a dispute, in essence taking in the many perspectives that comprise the whole. If we become captive of one or more of these voices, then soon we are waging a war within ourselves. As leaders, our task is to create conditions within which disputes can be explored and transformed at the most local level where those most directly affected can assume responsibility and discover their own resourcefulness.

Fourth, knowing that differences of opinion, perspective, and world-view are a crucial part of life and learning, we will be leaders our students can trust if we truly

value differences, not only as an ethical imperative and a measure of respect for others (although surely for these reasons), but also as a unique creative resource. In any group, organization, or system, the voices from the margins hold the buried wisdom that can alert us to our self-deceptions.

There are aspects of any campus culture to which resistance is a healthy response. We need a new language, then, about how we understand differences, and a new kind of leadership that will engage identity struggles in diverse communities by appreciating their complexity and messiness, digging beneath the power dimensions, and opening to profounder meanings and deeper human connections. Only when we have leaders who understand healthy conflict in its inevitability and its productivity will we begin to develop the skills to mine it well. We ourselves need to hone those skills – and that tolerance for complexity -- so that our students can. And it is never easy.

That is why, fifth, and finally, in our effort to be leaders our students can trust, we need to create communities that can function as sustaining circles of mutual support. Leaders need places to which they can retreat to grapple with pressures and doubts and the assaults on confidence no one should have to confront alone. I know from years of experience how isolating leadership can be, how sudden, wide, and unnerving sometimes the swings can be from elation to despair, how often, even now, I lose and find myself again – my moorings, my equilibrium, my commitment, my heart.

If we can practice our leadership within supportive communities – if we can build and bind those communities -- then we can begin to define and experience leadership as a collective project that derives its power and authority from a cooperative attachment to mutually defined commitments and values. Having done so, we can perhaps free our student leaders of the illusion that they could or should try to accomplish their goals on their own – to trust that they don't have to carry the whole load, that they can co-create with each other, that they need do only what they can do, and bring only what is theirs to give.

I was interested to discover in preparing to come down here how clear and articulate Wellesley's student leaders are about this communal aspect of their leadership. As I was assembling ideas for this talk, I decided to ask a group of our student leaders to spend some time with me discussing the values they try to embody in their leadership. (I thought I should hear from the experts). We had a lively discussion that could have gone on for days (except that they were in the middle of final exams) and if you haven't had occasion to ask your student leaders to tell you about the values they are bringing to their work, I commend the exercise to you as a terrific morale booster.

About 20 students joined me in this discussion, mostly house presidents and members of our multi-faith council. I told them I would be speaking here and what the topic was and said I wanted a reality check to be sure that what I had to say was consistent with their experience as campus leaders. They talked passionately about building community, respecting differences, modeling integrity, and the gratification of serving a cause larger than themselves, about pressures they face, especially in times

of conflict, inspiration they draw from one another, and the comfort they find in the “support networks” and advisors to whom they know they can turn, as well as the knowledge that “people have been through this before and we can get through it too.”

About halfway through our conversation one student from the multi-faith council looked intently at me and asked, “What is this conference again? Who will you be talking to?” She thought I might be getting the wrong impression from “hearing all this rosiness. You have to know,” she said, “that there are lots of people on this campus who don’t feel as we do, in fact, who feel the opposite.” She said the first year students “arrive with enthusiasm and a deep desire to become part of the community. We watch them come bounding up the hallway in the dorm,” she said, “and see them run head-on into the cynicism and alienation of upper class students.” She’s right, of course, and as sure as I am that we are providing our students a great education, I’m equally sure that we are letting them down in important ways – not feeding their yearning to be living the biggest ontological and existential questions they see unfolding around them and don’t know quite how to embrace, attending chiefly to their minds when their hearts (and ours) are being broken by events in the world.

Therefore, I was as encouraged by that abrupt shift in our conversation as I was by anything else I heard from the students that day. We need to keep reminding ourselves how vital it is to maintain that habit of skepticism -- as perhaps the ultimate test of whether our leadership should be trusted; indeed of how fully we can trust ourselves. It is when we let our guards down and allow our differences and doubts to surface that something authentic and original can begin to emerge, tentatively, in the spaces between us. I have found that it is often in these fleeting and complicated moments that the heart and mind can come into synchrony, pointing to altogether novel educational possibilities.

On our campus, those openings tend to happen, typically, in various charged domains: in disagreements over money and resources; in moments of failure, grief, and loss; in struggles over race and difference, or religion and spirituality, or sexuality and gender, or the law and public image; in power struggles of all sorts. I do not have to tell you about campus conflicts and crises, I know; what a juicy list we could assemble if we had the time and the inclination.

Ours are precipitated by internal forces, sometimes, and sometimes by external events; often they arise as a local campus echo of something that is brewing in the larger world. When Rodney King was beaten, racial tensions flared on campuses everywhere. Ever since 9/11 and the USA Patriot Act, our students and faculty have been testing the limits of free speech with a bizarre parade of controversial speakers. The Iraq war and the latest presidential election split us along political lines. When Massachusetts led the way last year on same-sex marriage, the LGTB community felt new pressure on the campus.

These conflicts tend to escalate quickly and to attach to institutional values. They rekindle unresolved issues about who is in and who is out. They arouse reactions

throughout the college community, in many inter-connected sub-communities across the institution and in cyberspace where they move so quickly it astounds us. The multiplicity of voices triggers all sorts of untoward interaction effects. Groups and individuals begin to orient and coalesce around the incident and this creates many diffuse centers of power, and much confusion and ardent opinion about who should be doing what. Authority is contested, and leadership tested, throughout the system. Everything feels as though it is speeding up, adrenalin is rushing, and the stakes can feel very high.

The most important informal principle we have evolved when this occurs is to stop and ask questions, which is harder than it might sound, given the intensity of the pressure to do something, anything -- and fast. The questions are straightforward, but the answers are anything but: Where are we? What is this? Where have we seen it before? How is it new? What are its meanings in various parts of the college? Is it significant in terms of the opportunities it presents, the risks it entails, the meanings it evokes -- past, present and future?

We assume that the meanings are specific to the moment. They are multiple and contested, always, depending on whose perspective one takes. We assume that every incident like this contains all of its history and all of its future possibility, even if they are blocked from view in the heat of the moment; we pause to wonder where it fits in that stream of time. We've learned also that the process of probing for meanings can be very rich if we allow ourselves to draw on multiple ways of knowing -- thinking, analyzing, feeling, sensing, remembering, imagining, grieving. It is not purely analytical although analysis has a clear place, and the more we can remain open to our intuitive and creative faculties, and can listen for metaphors, the more we will see and comprehend.

We know that the most effective process for discovering these layers of meaning is through interactive and iterative dialogues, and that if we undertake them sincerely and openly -- and with patience -- we can sometimes find our way to something utterly new. We assume that individual voices speak, and play functions, for the system as a whole and we listen carefully for a variety of voices and the competing values they represent. In our key partnerships, we check in with each other frequently so we can align around our values together as well as define and allocate specific tasks and roles. We begin (but never end) with the local site and the precipitating incident where the conflict initially arose.

An indispensable part of this process of organizing around our values and tasks are the leaders' own internal alignments within themselves (ourselves). It is easy to be blown off course during what feels like a stormy conflict. We see this internal check-in as essential work and we invest time and institutional resources in enabling it to happen. When we are in the vortex of one of these situations, we convene as a group regularly, and a number of us stay in close touch with an outside organizational consultant, Richard S. Nodell, with whom we have been working for many years.

The leadership team fans out into the wider system, listening for insights and encouraging others (faculty, students, staff, trustees) to take up their particular roles and responsibilities, not as stakeholders to be managed but as fellow stewards of the community who can help mine the learning opportunities embedded in the conflict or crisis. This step recapitulates the earlier meaning making during the initial discovery process, and deepens our understanding through expanded dialogue.

As the pressure begins to dissipate, we try to remember to stop and take stock, hoping to capture and crystallize the retained meaning of the incident. Our goal is not to “move on” (with resentments still simmering) but to “carry forward,” with institutional history claimed and retained. We take time to check in with those who were most actively involved, to unpack the incident, digest its full meaning, and examine, as grist for learning, the mistakes we inevitably made. When we stand in the middle of the chaos, we do not expect to know or control very much.

After an incident like this, I invariably find myself filled with admiration and gratitude for my colleagues – and for our student leaders – who bring such energy, wisdom, and heart to our work of community building. Moreover, after the fact, I frequently have the impression that our partnerships have deepened and our possibilities for growth – our own and that of the college as a whole -- have taken a quantum leap forward. That is because these moments of stress and conflict contain the information about basic differences among us, differences that make us human but also vulnerable, suspicious and guarded.

The painful identity struggles that surface in times of crisis or conflict often reflect social and spiritual estrangement from the mainstream campus culture. Meeting them as the power struggles that they appear to be invites solutions that promote consumerism. We scramble to find more resources for a marginalized group -- another cultural advisor, new space in the curriculum or on the campus -- so that its members can feel seen and appreciated. Those material and political accommodations may buy time and temporary peace, but they fail to address the deeper spiritual questions that lie at the root of the problem, which then goes underground until the next eruption. They ignore the whispered prayers that precede the threatened war cries, when we need our ears attuned to both.

In closing, then, it is clear that effectively addressing the challenges I outlined at the beginning of this talk is going to require all the wisdom and all the patience we as an educated and advanced democratic society can muster. We are going to have to develop the ability to collaborate and communicate with fluency across a wide range of cultures, races, religions, and socioeconomic groups. We are going to have to learn to appreciate and skillfully use conflict as a creative intellectual force for mining what we know from our disagreements and differences, across the country and around the world. We are going to need the grace and the generosity of spirit to design and sustain communities of meaning and hope, communities that will offer all their members opportunities to learn and grow, to make contributions and to be seen and recognized for who they are and what they bring. We are going to need men and women of good

will, and of subtle skill, to be building such communities, here and around the world, with all deliberate speed. The hour is late, the work is hard, and the stakes are high, but so are the satisfactions, as you well know.

In that spirit, I would like to leave you with a poem, followed by a few moments of silence to gather us together before we disperse for the break. We can think of it as a kind of secular invocation for the day. Some of you may know this poem. It is by Pablo Neruda, and it is called "Keeping Quiet." ¹²

Now we will count to twelve
and we will all keep still.

This one time upon the earth,
let's not speak any language,
let's stop for one second,
and not move our arms so much.

It would be a delicious moment,
without hurry, without locomotives,
all of us would be together
in a sudden uneasiness.

The fishermen in the cold sea
would do no harm to the whales
and the peasant gathering salt
would look at his torn hands.

Those who prepare green wars,
wars of gas, wars of fire,
victories without survivors,
would put on clean clothing
and would walk alongside with their brothers
in the shade, without doing a thing.

What I want shouldn't be confused
with final inactivity;
life alone is what matters,
I want nothing to do with death.

If we weren't unanimous
about keeping our lives so much in motion,
if we could do nothing for once,
perhaps a great silence would
interrupt this sadness,
this never understanding ourselves
and of threatening ourselves with death,

perhaps the earth is teaching us
when everything seems to be dead
and then everything is alive.

Now I will count to twelve
and you keep quiet and I'll go.

Thank you so much for having me here and for hearing me out.

¹James H. Billington, February 3, 2000, quoted in Carolyn T. Brown, *Footprints of the Soul: Uniting Spirit with Action in the World*, Essay Number 3 in *Essays on Deepening the American Dream*. Kalamazoo, MI: Fetzer Institute, 2003, page 29.

²Parker J. Palmer, "A Vision of Education as Transformation," in Victor H. Kazanjian, Jr. and Peter L. Laurence (eds.), *Education as Transformation: Religious Pluralism, Spirituality and a New Vision for Higher Education in America*. New York: Peter Lang, 2000, pp. 17-22.

³Parker J. Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1998.

⁴Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Coming to Our Senses: Healing Ourselves and the World Through Mindfulness*, New York: Hyperion, 2005.

⁸ Ellen J. Langer, *The Power of Mindful Learning*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus, 1997.

⁶ Gerald Graff, *Beyond the Culture Wars: How Teaching the Conflicts Can Revitalize American Education*. New York: Norton, 1992.

⁷Pat Hutchins, "Students as Partners in Improvement," in *Carnegie Perspectives*, January 2005.

⁸ David K. Scott, "Spirituality in an Integrative Age," in Victor H. Kazanjian, Jr. and Peter L. Laurence (eds.), *Education as Transformation: Religious Pluralism, Spirituality and a New Vision for Higher Education in America*. New York: Peter Lang, 2000, pp. 23-36.

⁹ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet*. New York: Vintage, 1984.

¹⁰ Jean Lipman-Blumen, *The Connective Edge: Leading in an Interdependent World*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1996; Jean Lipman-Blumen, *The Allure of Toxic Leaders: Why We Follow Destructive Bosses and Corrupt Politicians and How We Can Survive Them*. Oxford University Press, 2005.

¹¹ William Butler Yeats, "Anima Hominis," Part V in *Essays*. New York: Macmillan, 1924, page 492

¹² Pablo Neruda, "Keeping Quiet," English translation by Alastair Reed of Neruda's Spanish poem "A callarse," in Extravagaria. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1974, pages 26-27.