

I. FROM NUMBER CRUNCHING TO SPIRITUALITY

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In extending their generous invitation to prepare this autobiographical chapter, John Smart and Alan Bayer kindly assured me of two things: (1) that accepting the invitation did not necessarily constitute an admission that I was “over-the-hill”; and (2) that the chapter did not have to be strictly autobiographical and that they would welcome some comments about what’s been going on in our field.

In recent years it has gradually begun to dawn on me that higher education has become overly preoccupied with the “external” aspects of our work, by which I mean such tangible things as programs, policies, practices, resources, etc., to the neglect of our “inner” lives, by which I mean our values, beliefs, hopes, dreams, fears, and the *meaning* that we make of our work and our lives. I will return to this theme later on in the chapter, but in the spirit of trying to practice what I preach, I will try to share some of my own “inner journey” in the autobiographical portions of it. Since I’ve tried to mix history (family, graduate school, subsequent jobs, etc.) with topical discussions (methodology, people, etc.), the chapter zigzags a bit between chronological accounts and substantive discussions.

THE EARLY YEARS: HOW I GOT INVOLVED IN HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH

In many respects my introduction to the field of higher education scholarship was serendipitous. I had recently completed my two-year service obligation, and was working as a clinical research psychologist for the Veteran's Administration in Baltimore when a former mentor, psychologist John Holland, invited me to move from the East coast to Evanston, Illinois to work with him at the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC). John had initiated a research program that was focused on our nation's brightest young high school graduates: National Merit Scholars, Finalists and Commended Students. Education was a brand new field for me (I've never actually taken a course in education!), but the problems of student development seemed interesting enough and the opportunity to work once again with John provided sufficient incentive for me to accept his offer. So, in the summer of 1960, at the tender age of 28, I left the clinical field and began my career as a researcher in higher education.

Before discussing the research at NMSC it might be helpful to provide some personal background information to help set the context for my past and current work.

MY FAMILY

I was raised in a family which, in many respects, mirrored C.P. Snow's "two cultures". My father, a physicist, exemplified many of the stereotypical qualities of the hard scientist: he was quiet, reserved, thoughtful, and kept his emotions very much to himself. My mother, on the other hand, was very identified with the arts and literature and had a remarkable gift of language: she was a fabulous writer, a remarkable raconteuse, and had briefly worked as a newspaper reporter for a New York City daily paper while my father was working on his Ph.D. Her emotions, in contrast to those of my father, were very much on the surface. Like most scientists, my father was strongly oriented toward the "objective" exterior world, the world of objects and things, while my mother was very much focused on the inner world of feelings and emotions. To a certain extent my subsequent scholarly and professional life has mirrored both of these contrasting orientations.

I learned to play the trumpet at age 7 and became heavily involved in all kinds of musical activities and organizations during junior high and high school. Since music during those years interested me far more than

academics (which seemed tedious and boring), I ended up majoring in music as an undergraduate. When I finished college, however, I decided to abandon plans for a musical career and to attend graduate school at the University of Maryland to study psychology, which had been my undergraduate minor. (At almost the same time, and without knowing anything of my change of interests, my older brother — also a classic product of the Two Cultures — switched from a mathematics to a drama major, a field he remains in to this day as an actor, writer, director, and — most recently — college teacher.) The reasons for my own change of field are too numerous to detail here; suffice it to say that I felt that I lacked the talent and other personal qualities that would be required to pursue a successful musical career. Psychology, on the other hand, was something that was not only interesting but that always seemed to come easily to me.

GRADUATE SCHOOL

My graduate program proved to emphasize very “scientific” psychology, which put a great deal of emphasis on research, measurement, statistics, theory, experimentation, hypothesis testing, and the like. I did a laboratory experiment for my master’s thesis and a very statistically-oriented doctoral dissertation. At the same time, a good deal of my graduate work consisted of courses in clinical and counseling psychology and I eventually did an internship as a counseling psychologist with the Veteran’s Administration. I ended up completing my doctoral program with a double major: counseling and quantitative psychology. My wife Lena (Helen S. Astin) and I met during our second year in graduate school, had a whirlwind courtship lasting about seven weeks, and got married a few months before we both took our doctoral qualifying exams. Lena ended up majoring in counseling and social psychology.

In those days the Psychology Department at Maryland comprised a small and very tightly-knit group of about 10 faculty and 35 doctoral students. Everybody knew everyone else. Clinical psychology wasn’t allowed because it was considered to be too “unscientific”, and counseling psychology was tolerated only because it focused on “objective” testing, psychometrics, test theory, and the like. Despite the very strong emphasis on research, the faculty took their teaching and mentoring responsibilities very seriously. And while the department was a beehive of research activity, the counseling center also provided us with exceptional opportunities to develop our interviewing and testing skills. Further, in those days the graduate program was

2. STATE GOVERNANCE REFORM OF HIGHER EDUCATION: PATTERNS, TRENDS, AND THEORIES OF THE PUBLIC POLICY PROCESS¹

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The American campus-state relationship typically is cast in terms of a fundamental, even paradoxical, tension between the dual demands of *institutional autonomy* and *public accountability*, or between the university's right to regulate its affairs from within and the state's authority (and responsibility) to regulate the university's affairs from without (Bailey, 1975; Berdahl, 1971; Carnegie Foundation, 1982; Glenny and Schmidtlein, 1983; Graham, 1989; Hines, 1988; Millet, 1982; Mortimer and McConnell, 1982; Newman, 1987; Volkwein, 1987). Because neither absolute autonomy of the campus from the state nor complete accountability of the campus to the state is likely to be feasible, the vexing question confronting policymakers is where, precisely, the line should be drawn between campus and state. The dominant pattern of the twentieth century was one of increasing involvement and intervention by state governments in the higher education sector. A large volume of literature has amassed around the interactions between higher education and state governments, focusing particularly on the development and functioning of different governance arrangements for higher education and on the effects of these different arrangements upon various institutional and state policy outcomes.

¹ The author wishes to acknowledge the helpful comments on drafts of this paper by David Leslie, Chancellor Professor of Education at the College of William and Mary, and Jim Hearn, Professor and Chair of the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Minnesota. Of course, full responsibility for the content of the review remains with the author.

A growing literature also exists on recent efforts to reform state higher education governance² patterns. In contrast with the uniform movement toward state-level centralization of higher education in the immediate post-World War II era, the 1980s–1990s represented a period of frenetic and diverse change in the campus–state relationship. From 1985 to 2000, state governments debated in excess of 100 proposals to reform the structural, functional, and authority patterns of their higher education systems (Marcus, 1997; McGuinness, 1994; McLendon and Ness, 2001). The nature of these reform initiatives ranged in scope from relatively narrow alterations in state fiscal and administrative control to the large-scale restructuring of multicampus systems and of statewide coordinating structures. Centralization of decision authority at the state level remained a prominent theme during the period, but “decentralization” and “deregulation” of higher education emerged as important countertrends.

Although an appreciable literature continues to accumulate in description of state governance reform (Hines, 1988; MacTaggart, 1996, 1998; Marcus, 1997; Marcus, Pratt and Stevens, 1997; McGuinness, 1995; McLendon, 2000a,b; McLendon and Ness, 2001; Novak, 1996; Volkwein, 1986a,b, 1989), virtually nothing is known about how or why state governments undertake reforms of their higher education systems. Alternatively stated, little scholarship of either a conceptual or empirical nature exists on the processes of state-level policymaking to reform higher education governance patterns. Consequently, provocative questions about governance policymaking remain largely ignored: given all the other important issues to which state governments might attend, how and why does higher education governance reform emerge as a topic of serious debate among policymakers? Where do ideas to reform the campus–state relationship come from? Why do some proposals succeed in passage, while others fail? Are there discernible patterns in governance policymaking across the states? Or, is such policymaking entirely idiosyncratic, owing to unique (non-repeatable) intersections of social and political phenomena particular to the state and to the reform episode?

The scholarly neglect with respect to governance reform questions reflects a more fundamental deficiency of the extant literature: a general

² The chapter employs the term “state governance” to refer to the different ways in which states have organized their respective systems of higher education, and authority patterns within those systems. The term governance reform refers to changes in those various structural and authority arrangements by state governments. “Restructuring” and “reorganization” are terms also found in the literature.

lack of systematic conceptualization and analysis of state policymaking for higher education. While scholars of K-12 education have derived and adapted from political science a variety of theoretical frameworks to help explain state policymaking in their own arena of activity (Clune, 1987; Fowler, 1994; Mawhinney, 1993; Mazzoni, 1991), higher education researchers have made little effort to systematically identify, simplify, and arrange the complex of interactions and relationships attending higher education policymaking in the states. Indeed, only a handful of studies have explicitly examined state policymaking as it involves higher education (Crosson, 1984; deGive and Olswang, 1999; Frost, Hearn and Marine, 1997; McLendon, 2000b; Olivas, 1984; Van Der Slik, 1999).

This gap in the higher education literature base is particularly glaring because theory and research on public policymaking have accelerated in recent years (Dodd and Jillson, 1994; Sabatier, 1999a,b,c), offering applied policy researchers (such as higher education specialists) a rich array of theoretical perspectives with which to frame investigation of complex policy phenomena. Whereas two decades ago, students of public policymaking were restricted to a rather narrow range of theoretical perspectives, the number and variety of such perspectives available to researchers has grown considerably in recent years.³

This chapter integrates the literature on state governance of higher education with contemporary theories of public policymaking in order to generate initial conceptualization about higher education governance reform in the states. The chapter is organized into three sections. The first section reviews the literature on the campus-state relationship. A large volume of literature exists on the role of the states in higher education, but few comprehensive syntheses have been undertaken. Therefore, the first section of the chapter (1) examines the historical antecedents of the American campus-state relationship, (2) identifies the mechanisms of state governmental control over higher education in the post-World War II era, (3) reviews seminal studies on the campus-state relationship, (4) assesses what is known about the effects of state regulation of higher education, and (5) identifies recent trends in governance reform. The second section describes the development and essential features of three prominent

³ Among the prominent contemporary perspectives attracting major treatment are punctuated-equilibrium theory (Baumgartner and Jones, 1991, 1993), revised garbage can theory (Kingdon, 1984, 1995), policy innovation and diffusion theories (Berry and Berry, 1999; Gray, 1973, 1994; Walker, 1969), advocacy coalition theory (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993, 1999), and institutional rational choice theories (Kiser and Ostrom, 1982; Ostrom, 1999).

3. COLLEGE ENVIRONMENTS, DIVERSITY, AND STUDENT LEARNING

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The research literature on students in higher education is both rich and varied, even though the concerns addressed in this literature effectively resolve to three primary questions (Dey and Feldman, 1999): What sorts of people go to college, what experiences do they have at college, and what sorts of people do they become by the end of their college experience? To generate meaningful answers to these primary questions requires not only careful consideration of the attributes of students, but also of the educational environments that they encounter during their journey through the postsecondary education enterprise.

Among the important issues that encompass each of these three primary questions is the use of affirmative action in college admissions and the benefits for student learning that diversity produces as a result. What have we learned about the educational value of diversity in the college environment? This chapter reviews the empirical and theoretical literature on diversity to explore the interplay between individuals and their collegiate environments and how these relate to student learning and development. We present a summary of the existing research evidence related to the ways in which campus diversity — one important aspect of the college environment — shapes the people who emerge from college and universities at the end of their undergraduate experiences. To do so, we first consider a theory of social difference and discontinuity that was

advanced to test whether campus diversity influences student outcomes (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, and Gurin, 2002), as well as the existing literature on different conceptions of the college environment.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The people who work and study within colleges and universities experience social difference and discontinuity as they move from one environment to another. For college students, some of the largest points of difference and discontinuity occur at the transitional boundaries implied by the three primary questions of college student research — entry into college, experiences during college, exit into their post-collegiate lives — whereas faculty are engaged in the process of finding and creating the kinds of settings and conditions — the environments — under which their students will change and develop in desired ways. Although many of the educational settings created by colleges and universities — programs of study, officially organized and sanctioned student activities, and the like — are structured and intentional in their goals for student development, this is not universally the case. The conditions created by a student's peer environment, for example, appear to be beyond the precise control of a college or university, and yet can have a strong impact on how students develop during the college years. Selective admissions officers, however, often speak of “shaping the class” with a clear intent on selecting an exciting and diverse peer environment of student backgrounds (based on race/ethnicity, geography, income, and nationality), skills, and talents that achieve the educational goals of the institution. While college admissions plays an important role in providing opportunities for interactions across social differences, many practices and traditions within higher education provide institutional support directed at helping to create settings to facilitate peer interactions (such as student residence hall programming and organized student activities). Many educators are intuitively aware of the fact that *who one is educated with* may be just as important as *where one is educated*. This review examines the empirical and theoretical basis of such a notion.

The question at issue is whether racial/ethnic diversity in the college environment is one of the key factors that contribute to student development. Some contend that students are educated in distinct racial contexts (Hurtado *et al.*, 1999) and that the nature of interracial contacts among peers is key in the education of students from various backgrounds (Bennett, 1984; Orfield and Whitley, 1999). Race remains an important issue

around which educational interactions occur on college campuses. This is in part due to the limited exposure to people of different races that many students experience prior to attending college, given the persistent patterns of racial segregation in American society.

Researchers have documented a deepening segregation in American schools, with increasingly segregated education for African American and Latino students (Orfield *et al.*, 1997). In addition, campus diversity, which is most commonly defined in terms of race and ethnicity, remains at the forefront of a number of public policy agendas. Legal and legislative initiatives continue to challenge the use of race as a factor in college admissions processes, which threatens not only how much diversity can and will exist on college campuses, but may also politicize campus race discussions. Although eliminating the use of race in admissions can have immediate, obvious consequences in terms of access and equity, what is not immediately apparent is the effect that these changes will have on the experiences and outcomes of enrolled students. Based on many research studies over the years, it is believed that as the nature of the peer environment changes, so do the experience and outcomes we would expect to see in individual students. Influences that reshape the nature of the students enrolled on any particular campus are also likely to strongly reshape the nature of student experiences.

It is imperative to understand how diversity plays a role in student learning for a number of reasons beside the important issues of access and equity. For example, corporate leaders have reinforced the learning mission surrounding diversity by confirming that the business community is looking to colleges and universities to produce highly valued cognitive and social skills in the educated workforce, including: Ability to work effectively in groups with colleagues of diverse backgrounds, openness to new ideas and perspectives, and empathy with other workers' perspectives (Bikson and Law, 1994). These are qualities that higher education institutions are best equipped to create and nurture, if they are diverse.

That colleges and universities have an obligation to choose carefully the kind of student body that will create the best learning environment for all their students is fundamental to achieving these goals. The vitality, stimulation, and educational potential of a college is, quite obviously, directly related to the makeup of its student body, and diversity is a critically important factor in creating the richly varied educational experience that helps students learn and prepares them for participation in a democracy that is characterized by diversity. Several studies show student interaction with racially diverse peers is associated with increases in cultural