



January 2011

What's Inside:

SUNY Cortland:
Bridge to the Future

Letter from the Director

In Brief

- ▶ Retrieval Conference, Spring 2011
- ▶ BTtoP's Special Civic Issue of *Liberal Education*
- ▶ BTtoP to Host Reception at AAC&U's Annual Meeting

Engaged Students Require Engaged Faculty: Facing the Paradox of a Largely Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

By Adrianna Kezar, *associate professor, University of Southern California*

The changing face of the professoriate with the increased hiring of nontenured faculty members is an important trend largely ignored by most institutional leaders as they think about ways to improve the student experience and create greater student engagement. We know that one of the most important predictors of student success is students' relationship with faculty. Students who talk to their professors, attend office hours, and engage with faculty outside of the class tend to persist, graduate, and do better in school. While campuses seem to be aware of this important relationship between faculty and students, few seem to be concerned about the enormous shift from a largely tenured to an untenured professoriate. These new faculty positions are not designed to provide a quality teaching experience—nontenured faculty have limited or no time for advising, office hours, engagement outside of the class, or even the ability to talk with students after class due to the tight scheduling of courses. Campus policies and practices can make it virtually

impossible for faculty to provide a quality learning environment.

The number of non-tenure-track faculty (both full time and part time) has increased at all institutional types, and presently represents two-thirds of our nation's faculty (Schuster and Finkelstein 2006). If the current trend in hiring non-tenure-track faculty (three out of four appointments) continues, then tenured faculty will become a marginal part of our higher education institutions, perhaps existing only within elite research universities, liberal arts colleges, or a few select



University of Southern California, photographer Philip Channing

(continued on page 2)



Association of American Colleges and Universities

Engaged Students Require Engaged Faculty

(continued from page 1)

departments. Non-tenure-track faculty receive little orientation, may be hired a week before class, have limited or no professional development opportunities, are provided limited information about campus learning goals or input on textbooks and curriculum, and receive little or no clerical and technical support for courses. Research examining the learning outcomes for students who take many courses with part-time faculty suggests that they have lower graduation rates and are less likely to transfer to four-year institutions (Jaeger and Egan 2009). We also know that non-tenure-track faculty, particularly part-timers, use less engaging pedagogies and spend less time with students (Umbach 2007, 2008). The negative outcomes are much more pronounced among part-time rather than full-time non-tenure-track faculty. While we do not have definitive empirical evidence, these outcomes are likely a result of the way that we as institutional leaders have constructed their positions (part-time faculty often teach at multiple institutions, may not be paid for office hours, are hired on a semester-by-semester basis, etc.) Certainly not all part-time faculty are piecing together part-time jobs into full-time ones, but national data suggest this is the case for more than one-third of the faculty (AFT Higher Education 2010). Even professionals who are only teaching one course on campus are still limited in the amount of time and rich engagement they can provide for students. Campus policies and practices

do not try to ameliorate the difficulty of these positions; instead, they exacerbate the difficulties by providing little, if any, communication, socialization, professional development, or involvement in governance (if jobs are even constructed in ways where they could take advantage of these opportunities).

Campus administrators must take leadership on this important national issue in two ways. First, administrative teams need to look at their own faculty composition. Data need to be collected on the number of non-tenure-track faculty, and the percentage who work full time and part time. Many campuses do not have accurate data because hiring happens within departments, and these institutional trends are often unknown to administrative teams. With more accurate information about faculty composition, conversations across multiple campus constituencies need to take place about how many tenure-track faculty are needed to maintain an engaging environment and to support students. Part-time positions need to be examined, and individuals who are interested in full-time non-tenure-track work should be offered

positions where possible. The number of part-time positions should be consolidated, since the negative outcomes are often associated with part-time positions.

I need to emphasize that this is not because part-time faculty are not quality instructors, but instead because of inferior working conditions and lack of institutional expectations around student engagement. Also, in certain professional fields, part-time faculty expertise is important, and these various needs should be the focus of campus discussions. Campuses need to consider if certain non-tenure-track faculty should be converted to tenure-track lines where appropriate (AAUP 2001). Administrative teams also need to develop campuswide policies about supporting non-tenure-track faculty. At a minimum, the following should be addressed: orientation, mentoring on teaching and advising, opportunities for input about curriculum and textbook selection, training for department chairs about inclusivity and support for non-tenure-track faculty, surveys of office space, computer equipment, and clerical support, and an examination of salary and benefits for equity.



University of Southern California, photographer Philip Channing

Second, campus leaders need to talk about this issue at a national level and with their colleagues, challenging each other to provide strong role models for campuses that support all faculty. While some private liberal arts colleges may be less affected by these hiring trends, their leaders should still speak up nationally on behalf of public institutions with shrinking budgets. And while shrinking budgets are one reason for this transition in the faculty, we know the expenditures for instruction have declined from instructional budgets across higher education (and have gone up in other areas within institutional budgets); we need to examine and question this trend. How will we achieve the quality of learning we know is important for students when we consistently move money away from the core of instruction? But more than just needing more money, we need leaders who shine a light on this issue – who examine data, hold campus conversations, and create new policies and practices that support the professoriate of today. ■

References

- American Association of University Professors. 2001. *Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Report*. Washington, DC: American Association of University Professors. <http://www.aau.edu/WorkArea/showcontent.aspx?id=466>
- AFT Higher Education. 2010. *American Academic: A National Survey of Part-Time/Adjunct Faculty*. Washington, DC: American Federation of Teachers.
- Jaeger, Audrey, and M. Kevin Eagan. 2009. "Unintended Consequences: Examining the Effect of Part-Time Faculty Members on Associate's Degree Completion." *Community College Review* 36 (3):167-194.
- Schuster, Jack H., and Martin J. Finkelstein. 2006. *American Faculty: The Restructuring of Academic Work and Careers*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Umbach, Paul D. 2007. "How Effective Are They? Exploring the Impact of Non-Tenure Track Faculty on Undergraduate Education." *The Review of Higher Education* 30 (2): 91-123.
- . 2008. "The Effects of Part-Time Faculty Appointments on Instructional Techniques and Commitment to Teaching." Paper presented at the Thirty-Third Annual Conference of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Jacksonville, FL.

BTtoP Campus Highlight

The Bridge to the Future: Bringing Theory to Practice's Leadership Coalition and Demonstration Site Programs at SUNY Cortland

By **J. Richard Kendrick, Jr.**, *Director, Institute for Civic Engagement* and **Christopher P. Latimer**, *Associate Director*

The State University of New York College at Cortland has made great strides in developing its civic engagement programs through its participation in BTtoP's Leadership Coalition and demonstration site projects. SUNY Cortland is one of thirteen comprehensive institutions in New York's public system of higher education. We currently enroll 6,326 undergraduates and 1,035 graduate students in three schools. As a public institution of higher education, it is our mission to work with our neighboring communities to help meet our common challenges. Our Institute for Civic Engagement, now in its eighth year, was created to aid the college in fulfilling this mission. SUNY Cortland

holds elective Carnegie classifications in Community Engagement for Civic Engagement and for Outreach and Partnerships. We have also been included in the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll every year since its inception in 2006.

Our participation in BTtoP's Leadership Coalition began in 2009 and led to the formation of Cortland's President's Leadership Coalition for Student Engagement. This committee, chaired by the Director of the Institute for Civic Engagement, was charged with coordinating the work of Academic and Student Affairs programs and initiatives that are related to transformational change and high-impact learning. The leadership coalition meets this objective by providing a forum for information sharing across campus. It also assists with implementation of our BTtoP project, and it contributes to our Building Community Leaders program (described below). This committee's work complements Cortland's collegewide strategic plan, which focuses on the following four priorities: academic excellence, transformational education, well-being, and maximization of resources.

SUNY Cortland received a BTtoP demonstration site award in 2010. The two-year grant supports a study to explore student flourishing and the



SUNY Cortland

(continued on page 4)

SUNY Cortland

(continued from page 3)

emotional and physical well-being of undergraduates as outcomes of high-impact learning practices. High-impact practices are defined in our Bringing Theory to Practice project to include service learning, undergraduate research, community-based research, senior theses, capstone courses, internships, international experiences, and multicultural experiences. With BTtoP support, we are examining a number of projects both inside and outside the classroom that incorporate high-impact learning practices to measure their effects on student learning outcomes, particularly indicators of well-being, such as perspective taking, identity formation, emotional competence, and resilience. As a part of the BTtoP program, we collected pre-test responses early in the fall 2010 semester from over five hundred students enrolled in programs incorporating high-impact learning practices: learning communities; traditionally taught and service-learning first-year composition courses; Health department courses with service-learning components; and Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Studies service-learning and internship courses, among others. Using items from the BTtoP Toolkit, including Corey Keyes' flourishing scale (2002) and other indicators, we will compare students in courses that incorporate high-impact learning with peers who are not enrolled in such courses.

As part of our BTtoP project, the President's Leadership Coalition for Student Engagement is also overseeing the development and implementation of the President's Certificate for Engaged Lead-

ership. This program will contain the following elements: (a) a voluntary commitment on the part of each student entering SUNY Cortland to engage actively in a high-impact learning process in one or more ways, including service learning, international experiences, internships, leadership development, and undergraduate research; (b) the implementation of a cocurricular transcript to document the ways that our students are engaged in the life of the campus and community; and (c) a certificate, awarded upon graduation, to recognize students who complete the program.

This project also builds on our Building Community Leaders initiative, which is supported by a congressionally directed grant administered by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). The Building Community Leaders program promotes the development and institutionalization of high-impact learning practices across the college in several ways. Using FIPSE resources, we made four awards to those units across campus interested in developing plans for integrating high-impact learning practices in their curricula or programs. Departments and programs submitted proposals consistent with the institutional goals for transformational change. The Social Advocacy department's proposal included the development and implementation of a new course to include the principles and practices of service-learning. A second proposal incorporated an after-school program at a local nature preserve that provides a foundation for student leadership development. We also hold an annual leadership conference for high school and college students, provide programming for a leadership living-learning community in a residen-

tial facility called the Judson H. Taylor Leadership House, and develop curricular materials on leadership for our first-year experience courses.

Our Leadership Coalition, BTtoP, and Building Community Leaders programs work hand in hand to monitor, measure, and nurture the development of the whole person through high-impact practices, whether performed in the classroom or in the external community. These three programs form a powerful force for moving the college toward its objective of creating transformational change through high impact learning practices.

It may be too early to decipher overall effects, but there are already numerous empirical outcomes. Our President's Leadership Coalition for Student Engagement has forged new collaborative relationships among those on campus working to engage our students in high-impact practices. We are eagerly anticipating the first analysis of our BTtoP data, which will occur following our post-tests in December 2010. Our new strategic plan highlights well-being and transformational education as goals of our college community. Students in our Leadership House Living-Learning Community have already started to contribute to campus life in ways we did not predict. We are working on new levels of institutionalization by embedding high-impact practices in courses and curricula. We don't know for sure where this will take us, but, looking back, we are not the same campus we were even ten years ago. We have changed, and we have no doubt that we will continue to do so. ■

References

- Keyes, Corey L. M. 2002. "The Mental Health Continuum: From Languishing to Flourishing in Life." *Journal of Health and Behavior Research* 43: 207-222.

Letter from the Director

Institutional Change Requires Student Involvement

Donald W. Harward, *Project Director, Bringing Theory to Practice, and President Emeritus, Bates College*

In November, I was offered the opportunity to speak to students assembled from many institutions participating in a BTtoP Student Conference. I wanted to share with them the spirit of the BTtoP Project, but to do so using a window open to their interests—namely the advent of social networking as a dominant motif in student culture. My remarks constitute the director’s column this issue.

I want to welcome you to this BTtoP Student Conference.

One real dimension of what the Project is about is the identification and the support of transformative change in higher education, and with your involvement, changes on your own campuses that lead to a greater campus culture for learning—one that puts your learning, personal development, and civic responsibility at the very center of the institution’s priorities. By so doing, your involvement will be as the emergent architects of the changes needed locally and beyond... changes that will eventually depend on you to make to society, the environment, and to any common culture.

As you know, talk of change is ubiquitous and all too often it is simply a rhetorical pause or a superficial observation with no specific meaning. Who now denies the existence and need for change? But what does it mean? What does it mean for you as active students on your campuses? Much of the conversation you will engage in over the next two days is all about the 4 R’s (responsibility, resiliency, reflection, and relationships);

but implicit in those conversations is the recognition that much that occurs on our campuses is not aligned to support the cultivation of those 4 R’s—but it can and should be! So as you work together in groups and as you think about these matters independently, give some consideration to change. How does it work on your campus? How can you be involved? Does it take a major Copernican-like revolution? Do small changes with common direction suffice? Who is invested in not making changes and why?

Adding a dimension to thinking about stimulating campus change is the current consideration of how computer-based social networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, and others) can influence behavior by increasing participant volume and organizing (for example, student) involvement in a brief period

of time. Social networking can offer a “horizontal” dimension to affecting change, widening the circle of those involved (much like the spread of concentric ripples in water).

Except in contexts where dissent and opinion are repressed, social networking involvement requires very modest commitment, little risk, and little reflection regarding the significance of that involvement for future choices or actions. Even so, whether social networking’s horizontal impact could lead to substantive change in the academy remains to be determined. But such involvement can be practiced and can be critically studied. Colleges and students are good at doing just that. If any of you are looking for a thesis topic, I think that would be a good one!

(continued on page 6)



SUNY Cortland

Letter from the Director

(continued from page 5)

But I want to argue for another, very different dimension needed to make change. There are forms of participation, such as active, deep, and prolonged involvement, that may be organized by necessity quite differently than through social networking. Participation may be more “vertical,” that is, requiring a high level of accountability and action steps that are intentionally demanding. Contrary to the social networking mantra that “hierarchies can be inverted or obviated by the use of social networking,” I want to argue that fundamental, transformative change in higher education will require some established and ongoing structure—vertical intensity and depth as well as horizontal dispersal.

The most desirable way to intensify the conditions needed to affect change—perhaps accelerate change—would be to combine social networking on one level, with its somewhat disorganized but widely dispersed appeal that reduces marginality, with more strategic and critically organized apparatus and leadership for change. While you are all indeed more familiar than I am regarding specific social networking options, I would offer only a translation of the more vertical dimension of involvement available to you—such actions as: championing a contrarian voice, organizing colloquia, workshops, or leadership seminars, calling for the empowerment of task forces that involve all campus constituencies (trustees, students, faculty, alumni, invested deans and presidents), putting forth your own views in writing and then promulgating them. I want to argue that

as students you need to be called upon to contribute, to make deeper commitments, to run some risk of suspending what is currently secure and rewarded.

In your role as campus and community architects of change, you can use both your skills and propensity to employ the benefits of responsible social networking and you can make a greater commitment, run some risk, and dedicate your energy and efforts to make a difference—to engage in change. It is what “making a community,” especially an academic community, has always meant. It is what was meant in the student involvement in the civil rights movement, in the student-

Without the vertical strategic dimension, the advances of actions resulting from social networking and the inclusiveness it generates remain shallow—influencing context but not being determinant, or anywhere near sufficient, for change

led divestment of university and college endowments in South Africa, and in the demand by students to open the curriculum beyond “dead white men.” So it remains important for every generation of students to repeat the meaningful turn of phrase . . . “stop asking what your college or university is doing for your future, and begin asking what you are doing for its,” —for participating in changing your institution is the first step in participating in wider and persisting societal and cultural change.

If I am right about the complex dynamic of change, then to your agenda for this conference I would like to add a fifth “R”—risk. The risk I’m talking about is distinctly connected to the changes achieved in the context of vertical engagement. While acknowledging that

social networking may offer a necessary horizontal dimension for change, exemplifying connectedness across issues, populations, and campus constituencies, it is not sufficient. It asks little of you. Through YouTube or Facebook we can create our “Daily Me,” rather than expose ourselves to ‘the other’ or take seriously in our own lives what it means to make change. Without the vertical strategic dimension, the advances of actions resulting from social networking and the inclusiveness it generates remain shallow—influencing context but not being determinant, or anywhere near sufficient, for change. Being a fan on Facebook is

analogous to attending a rally or signing the petition as you enter the dining hall. I want to encourage you to go vertically while or before spreading horizontally! In addition to “tweeting”—or perhaps more important than tweeting—engage vertically. Strategic, directed avenues for change need your commitment, sensitivity, and facility to recognize what is at stake, to recognize effective avenues or structures that can advance and sustain change, and then to act.

The risk I want to encourage is deepened where we make commitments. We deepen our openness to risk—the risk of revealing what we hold important, the risk of being challenged, the risk of no reward or even failure, as well as the risk of discovery and the risk of confrontation of our own authenticity. Currently, many

Letter from the Director

(continued from page 6)

students are reported as not willing to take such risks. A Georgia Tech study in 2009 reported that 72 percent of students surveyed claimed that “feeling comfortable” and being “unthreatened intellectually” was of highest importance. The report reads... “contrary to the image of college being a place to ‘find oneself’ and learn from others....a (large) number of students see the campus as just the opposite—a place where already formed citizens clash, stay with like minded others, and avoid politics [change] all together.” You can hear the request... “Please, no risks!”

I want to encourage you to take the contrary position. Jettison “feeling comfortable” and by so doing find yourself. Take intellectual risks and in so doing reveal your courage to examine ideas and beliefs.

Only by accepting greater risk of this special sort can we be agents of change—liberated in our own education, and participating in the conditions that bring about institutional change. Your exposure will be greater. More resources (time, information, commitments, and the exploration of your beliefs) will be demanded of you; the position you take on making change will be very public—a greater risk indeed—but you will be taking the necessary step that actually leads to making a difference. You and we depend on your doing so. ■

In Brief: BTtoP News and Notes

Retrieval Conference, Spring 2011

Bringing Theory to Practice has supported more than 130 college and university campuses to assist them in building conversations, programming, and assessment for engaged learning, psychosocial well-being, and civic engagement on campus.

BTtoP is convening a national retrieval conference. A retrieval conference brings people together to share information from their experience or expertise around common topics and guiding questions. Past and current BTtoP grant recipients will be invited to share program designs, implementation strategies, findings, and plans for sustainability of efforts.

The conference will take place in Washington, DC—look for announcements in the near future.

BTtoP’s Special Civic Issue of Liberal Education

What are some strategies for strengthening the relationship between civic engagement and psychosocial health and well-being of college students, as part of the core mission of higher education? Based upon a series of BTtoP activities, the spring 2011 issue of *Liberal Education* will focus on this question and some of the issues it raises for colleges and universities. The issue will provide definitions of key terms, conceptual frameworks, case studies, and best practices, with articles by leading scholars, educators, administrators, and students.

BTtoP to Host Reception at AAC&U’s Annual Meeting

The Bringing Theory to Practice Project will be hosting an informal reception for all past, present, and prospective grantees at AAC&U’s Annual Meeting on January 26-29, 2011, in San Francisco. The reception will be held from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. on Friday, January 28, 2011, in the Hyatt Regency Hotel--the central venue for the AAC&U meetings. Brief remarks about BTtoP and Leadership Coalition initiatives, previews of the Project’s areas of future concentration, and announcements of conferences and workshops to be held in 2011 will be featured.

In the Next Issue— Spring 2011

- ▶ 2010 National Biennial Student Conference Report, including student reflections and presentations
- ▶ Letter from the Director



**c/o Association of American
Colleges and Universities
1818 R Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009**

The Bringing Theory to Practice Project (BTtoP) is an independent national effort. It is funded by the Charles Engelhard Foundation of New York, and functions in partnership with the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) in Washington, DC.

The **Charles Engelhard Foundation** is a New York-based foundation whose mission focuses on projects in higher and secondary education, cultural, medical, religious, wildlife and conservation organizations.

S. Engelhard Center is a nonprofit public charitable foundation; its mission is to support projects and initiatives that affect greater and sustained commitments by educational institutions at all levels to provide effective means of addressing the intellectual, emotional, and civic development of today's students in preparation for claiming their positive future.

**Bringing Theory to Practice
c/o Association of American
Colleges and Universities
1818 R Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009
Fax: 202.265.9532
www.aacu.org/bringing_theory**

Donald W. Harward
Project Director and AAC&U Senior
Fellow; President Emeritus, Bates College
E-mail: harward@aacu.org

Jennifer O'Brien
Project Coordinator and
Assistant to the Director
Phone: 202.387.3760 ext.815
E-mail: obrien@aacu.org