The death of democracy is not likely to be an assassination from ambush. It will be a slow extinction from apathy, indifference and undernourishment. - Robert Hutchins

The trouble…is that we have taken our democracy for granted; we have thought and acted as if our forefathers had founded it once and for all. We have forgotten that it has to be enacted anew in every generation. - John Dewey

Civic Education In American Higher Education:
At a recent conference on civic education, George Mehaffy, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) Vice President for Academic Leadership and Change, offered the two quotes above as a reminder that educational institutions are at the core of protecting, sustaining, and deepening democracy. The very fact that Mehaffy was addressing 300 faculty, student affairs personal, deans and provosts suggests that educational institutions are poised to meet this challenge. The growth of Campus Compact to over 900 campuses and the launching of a 200 campus AASCU American Democracy Project are further confirmation that civic education has reemerged as a priority within higher education.

Yet, there is still much work to be done. In the most comprehensive examination of both the literature and work being done on campuses, Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, and Stephens note in Educating Citizens that there is a spectrum of exciting and creative work being done from classroom teaching to extracurricular programs to rich cultural practices that are moving campuses towards civic education. However, we are a long way from having college campuses that produce a generation of civically prepared or engaged young people. Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, and Stephens make a compelling case that civic education must include:

- Community connections. Students need to have a diverse set of experiences within different types of communities. These experiences are essential for helping students develop the sense for what it means to belong to a community, and why modern citizenship entails being members of multiple communities.
- Moral and civic value: we need a clear and consistent set of central values and virtues of democracy and citizenship built into our programs. These values and virtues have to be presented and reinforced to take hold.
• Systematic social responsibility: very few students bring sets of life experiences of active civic engagement. We need programs that provide students opportunities to explore public issues, to understand democratic process, and to develop an interest in public policy, social justice or the common good in its broadest sense. Students need to develop systematic understandings, ways to care about, and act on frameworks of social responsibility that guide their everyday actions.

How might we systematically move the work on our campuses towards this end? I want to introduce the concept of residential education as a one way to think about civic education. I then want to demonstrate how one college, Colgate University, is using the concept to reorganize the fabric of campus life towards civic education in ways that are inexpensive, politically feasible, and organizationally realistic.

A Journey Towards Civic Education:
In the fall 2002, Colgate University launched a year long planning effort to examine the history and theory of key concepts that could re-craft our student affairs program around principles of civic engagement. The process that guided our conversation was open, multifaceted and informal. But it was also purposeful, serious, and focused. We had weekly student affairs division meetings, and smaller division work-teams and reading-groups (what we called coffee house conversations). We talked across the division opening room for our psychologists, administrative deans, campus safety officers, career service staff and others to exchange ideas about concepts and theories of democracy and civic education. We engaged faculty and students. The conversations were often intense and sometimes frustrating. However, they allowed us to talk with clarity about: who we were, what we wanted to do, and the concepts that could help us bridge that gap.

As we had conversations, it became clear that we faced four challenges:

Challenge #1: We had to differentiate between being an engaged campus and a campus that was doing civic education. Colgate was already a model engaged campus. We had created a number of non-profits and other joint ventures with the community that were generating micro-enterprise development, façade improvement programs, arts festivals, and a range of other community goods. We had tripled the number of service learning classes and community-based research projects. We had a solid community service program.

Yet, we were still a long way from being a campus dedicated to civic education. We estimated that less than 15% of our students were involved in community efforts in any sustained way. Likewise, we had very few faculty involved. In short, our efforts at campus/community partnerships were being driven by a small percentage of dedicated students and faculty. They were producing wonderful gains in the community. But, this is different from being able to claim that majority of our students were being civically educated and/or that our curriculum had a civic focus.

Challenge #2: We had to move beyond values to focus equally on skills and habits: Our focused conversations with students revealed that they cared about democracy and
community. However, our students lacked the skills needed to be engaged citizens. Democracy requires people to be able to state views, to reconcile competing views, and to work with others. Our students lacked the basic skills needed to do this work, including public speaking, active listening, conflict resolution, and organizing.

Likewise, our students lacked the role models needed to develop the habit of citizenship. Our students were coming from the communities described by Putnam and others as lacking in civic life. Their parents, neighbors and other adult role models were mostly disengaged from public life. Thus, our students saw citizenship as an extraordinary event, not a habit of daily life.3

Challenge #3: We had to give our students a richer definition of Democracy. Our students tended to reduce democracy to either formal political structures where the rules of Talk Radio ruled the day, or to social acts of charity that were devoid of politics. Hence, voting and community service were seen as the fundamental acts of citizenship. Often, students managed to talk about democracy as the stark act of individuals that made little difference. We needed a more robust definition that included more classic notions of informal community-based work. We wanted students to understand democracy as something they were responsible for producing as they worked with other people to build and sustain communities. We needed new language that was active and inclusive of the range of ways people take civic and political actions.

Challenges #4: Getting Past the Bifurcation of Academic and Student Affairs. The curriculum is the core of any educational institution. Thus, civic education has to be a strong component of a curriculum if an educational institution is going to claim it as a priority. Additionally, we also had to get past the bifurcation of our academic and student affairs. Students do not learn in discrete blocks of time or experiences. Students learn across the day as experiences link together. The bifurcation of academic and student affairs leads to missed educational opportunities. It also creates a scattered educational environment where students are sent mixed signals. Thus civic education has to be woven through the curriculum and campus life, and linked in intentional ways.

As we confronted these challenges we came to redefine our student affairs program around the concepts of residential education and public work.

Residential Education and Public Work:
Residential education can be defined as an approach to campus life driven by the quest to capture all the educational moments that take place as a student spends time on campus.

The journey towards residential education is guided by three questions:

1) What are the skills, habits, values, and knowledge that our students will need to be prepared in the 21st century?
2) What do students do, and want to do, outside the classroom?
3) Can we ensure that students are acquiring these skills, habits, values and knowledge that they need as they are doing the things they want to do?

Residential education is a critique of the current student affairs model and a call for a new way of thinking about university campus life. Most student affairs work centers on a services and programming model. This model emerged in the 1970s, as the *in loco parentis* model became unsustainable under the weight of shifts in American culture, the diversification of campuses, and the growing complexities of universities. The Dean who enforced rules and maintained control on campus was replaced by the trained student affairs professionals who provided services to students. The shift mattered, as student affairs professionals came to provide services that opened universities to new populations, while also greatly increasing retention and success rates for students.

Despite the success of the model, there is a growing sense among student affairs professionals that we need an alternative way to get off a treadmill that is neither affordable nor effective. Our fixation on services and programming has turned our campuses into miniature versions of resorts or fancy hotels. For this generation of students, the services and programming model reinforces the tendency to see entitlements when they should see responsibilities, to be focused on achievements when they should be driven by personal development, and to be over-programmed consumers of services when they should be reflective producers of educational outcomes. In this context, it is hard to do civic education.

If the first wave of student affairs work was about control, and the second wave was about services, the third wave should be about education. Our driving principle should be to capture all the educational moments that take place as students spend time on campus. Residential education expresses this goal by suggesting that it is the “residentialness” of our campus that allows us to extend and deepen an education of the heart, mind, body and spirit. Students learn not just as a series of individuals who happen to show up on campus and take random classes together, but the community establishes a context for learning.

The concept of residential education suggests that the on-campus, out-of-the-classroom experience should matter for civic education, and that we have to move beyond the typical student affairs model of one-size-fits-all passive programming. Instead, we need to find ways of creating a multiplicity of experiences across campus for students to engage in public work.

Harry Boyte and his colleagues at the Center For Democracy and Citizenship at the University of Minnesota have developed the concept of public work to talk about democracy as the messy politics of the everyday actions of people coming together, often with people they do not know or even like, to be co-creators of the public goods that make communities healthy. To use the wonderful language of Harry Boyte and CDC associate Nan Kari, “Democracy is about learning to work with others across difference as co-creators of public work. It is what happens when ordinary people get together and make things happen. They do the public work that revives a park, saves a wetland, starts a church, or tackles racism in their community.”
Public work is a conception of democracy and civic education as the democracy championed by Jefferson, Tocqueville, Dewey, Franklin and others. It situates civic education as preparing students to live democratically by working across the everyday with other people to identify problems, to see opportunities, and to be group problem solvers who work together and make things happen. Civic education is about teaching students to become co-creators of public goods with people they may not know, may not like, or from whom they may just differ. The process of co-creation is aimed at creating public goods and healthy communities that can anchor the lives of individuals.

Public work expands our definition of democracy beyond formal political structures to resituate it back within communities. In a recent piece, Boyte calls public work an everyday politics rooted in the gritty soil of human plurality that pushes beyond politics as government for the people. He states that “(d)emocratic society is built by the work of citizens in diverse settings at every level of society: government is a necessary and crucial resource, but not the center of the civic universe.” This is democracy where citizens are co-creators not consumers, and where democracy moves beyond the state to society. This is a vision of democracy that accepts the messy and complex state of the human condition, while embracing the belief that people can work with others to create goods that improve lives and builds healthy communities.

**Implementing Residential Education:**
The language of residential education and public work allowed us to identify a set of attributes that students needed to learn at Colgate if they were going to be engaged citizens. High on that list were communication skills, the ability to walk across difference to thrive in diverse environments, team work, community building, critical thinking, organizing, personal responsibility, conflict mediation, and creativity. We were also able to identify four entry points for shifting campus life towards an educational model.

1. **Using Residential Halls As Sites To Teach Democracy:**
Nationally, we have spent billions of dollars on residential halls. These are wonderful places to capture moments to teach the arts of democracy. We pack students into small spaces. Ninety percent of our students have never shared a room with another person. This is a massive historic shift. Likewise, the diversity in each hall grows as students become more diverse by race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, AOD issues, and a range of other categories. Not surprisingly, residential halls become filled with disagreements and conflicts as students try to pursue their self-interests while also building community. Too often we approach these tensions as if we were running hotels or resorts. We see problems as issues to be avoided or solved. We create social control mechanisms and good customer services procedures. In the process, we remove opportunities for students to learn to work with others to build community for themselves.

For example: a typical roommate conflict takes the form of uncivil discourse. Students yell at each other. They call parents. They threaten to move. Friends take-sides and the hall becomes divided. Rather than viewing roommate conflict as a problem to be solved, we should see them as moments to teach students the habits and skills of civil discourse.
Roommate conflicts present opportunities for students to learn to voice a problem, to hear a different view, and to reconcile competing views into an action or policy. They also present moments to define democracy for students. Part of living in a democracy is learning to live and work with people you may not like. We remind students that the roommate who is “driving them crazy” will someday be their neighbor, family member, co-worker, or ally in a local issue. We tell students that they have to learn to work with others, even if you do not like them, to do the daily public work that sustains and builds healthy communities at Colgate. This is an expectation. We then provide support for students to acquire the skills needed to do this difficult work.

Of course, this is not an easy shift. We had to do the following:

We redefined the role of the residential advisor (RA). The work of an RA is an ideal natural experiment in civic education. RAs are asked to take a group of people, who mostly came to live together because the real estate was available when they needed a place to live, and to build spaces where multiple, contrasting, and shifting sets of needs can be met. Too often, RAs become “programmers” or “front-line judicial officer.” Instead, we are training our RAs as community organizers. Rather than asking them to think of themselves as unsuccessful rule enforcers or problem solvers, we want our RAs to think of themselves as coaches who organize teams of students in their units to tackle problems and/or take advantage of opportunities. We want them to get students to feel ownership and to take self-directed actions to build community. To get to this place, we are changing the label “Residential Advisor“ to “Community Coordinator.”

To make this shift, we are taking the best models of service-learning and community-service and bringing them into our residential units. For example: we worked with the Center for Democracy and Citizenship to adapt a workbook used for a service-learning program called Public Achievement for our RA program. Public Achievement pairs college students with groups of K-12 students. The college students work as coaches to help younger students do public work in schools and communities. The workbook gives RAs a tool-kit for doing public work. In the manual, we write:

“Part of your job is to build community. As problems and opportunities arise, we want you to think of yourself as a coach who can organize teams of people on your hall to work together to build a healthy community. Sometimes you will do this around when a problem needs to be solved (e.g. the bathroom gets trashed every Saturday night). But, we also want you to organize Public Achievement teams to around opportunities. We want you to use the language of public work and democracy on your halls and to openly and actively get people committed to public work using the skills developed through this tool-kit.”

For example: take a common problem of late night noise on a floor of a residential hall. Under the old student services model, we responded like a hotel responding to complaints by working with our staff to create a solution for students to consume. With the residential education model, we talk to students about the commitments and expectations of living in a community within a democratic society. We get them to work with each
other to be problem solvers. We effectively shift their role from that of a consumer to that of a producer. We shift our staff’s role from that of an expert problem solver to that of a community organizer. In doing so, we capture an important moment in which students to learn to do the daily democratic work of community building.

We are also devoting tremendous staff time to creating community councils in each residential unit. These are not elected bodies. Rather they function as neighborhood associations. We talk with them about democracy and community building. We challenge students to use the community councils to learn to work as a group to problem solve, and to identify opportunities for working together to create new things of public value. Too many of these spaces had become overly regulated attempts to create healthy communities for students. Instead, we want these to be places where students feel ownership and responsibility to work with each other to create healthy spaces. We are getting out of the way and allowing students to develop policies, projects and procedures, especially around issues like holding social functions, using common spaces, or solving community problems. We are also shifting low level judicial matters from the dean’s office to the community council and letting them set standards and resolve conflicts.

As we trained our RAs in basic community organizing skill, we are seeing a rebirth of neighborhood-based democracy in our units. In one residential unit, students started a theater in an empty basement. Another unit created a political action plan and changed university policies to allow students to paint common spaces. My favorite story from the year occurred in a free standing college house where students were trying to run a coop dining plan. Conflict broke out because everybody left their dirty dishes in one side of a large double sink. In the old student services model, the RA would have devised a set of rules and imposed them on the house. It would not have worked. The RA would have been demoralized and the community would have continued to fall apart. In the new model, a community coordinator who had been trained in community development gathered the students in the house and led a group discussion that resulted in a creative solution. The group went to the local hardware store, purchased a big piece of styrofoam and placed it in half of the sink, leaving no place to dump the dirty dishes. The problem was solved and, in the process, the students learned to do public work.

2. Transforming Student Organizations To Community Associations:
We had a campus filled with 130+ student organizations that produced thousands of potential educational moments for students to learn important civic skills like mobilizing peers, facilitating a meeting, creating an action plan, working in teams, and resolving conflicts. We were capturing virtually none of those moments. Meetings were poorly planned. Minor conflicts led to splintering of groups. Few organizations had active mission statements. Actions were often taken without plans. Many programs were poorly attended with little benefits for the students or the community. Likewise, there were macro campus effects. Organizations divided students into tiny identity groups. Rather than becoming places to meet different students, student organizations became mechanisms for creating comfort zones.
To address these challenges, we replaced Student Activities with the Center For Leadership and Student Involvement (CLSI). We stopped hiring programmers who would plan things for students to do. Instead, we hired mentors who could work with students to transform campus organizations into civic educational experiences.

We have made three shifts in how we handle student organizations:

• **Framing**: we are changing how students think about student organizations. Students typically talk about themselves as leaders of a student organization whose goal is to maintain the student organization. We want students to think about themselves as coaches who are working with a team of peers to do public work on our campus. Using the Public Achievement manual, we talk about student organizations as the work of democracy. As part of this shift, we want students to see themselves and their work as political. For example: when a cultural student organization did not like the way that student activities fees were being allocated, CLSI mentored them to see this as a problem for their group to solve, not for the administration to fix.

• **Programming**: we are using programming to focus heavily on training and skills development. We run a leadership summit before classes start. We require student organizations to work as a team to produce action plans for events, which include goals, strategies and tactics. In the process, we help students learn to plan meetings, to facilitate conversations, and to work through conflict.

• **Funding**: We also created new funding mechanisms to encourage students to organize, plan, and work across difference. For example: we started a program called Breaking Bread which creates opportunities for divergent student groups to work in partnerships. Students can access a pool of money to fund a wide variety of events with one caveat: students have to plan the event with a group of students with whom they normally do not interact. They plan the event over dinner. The groups work together to create the menu, shop, cook, set up and clean up. The outcome of the dinner is a series of objectives that the groups want to work together to accomplish together. In other words, they “break bread” together and plan events that will make the campus more vibrant and robust with regards to race and ethnic issues. They do public work by learning to walk across difference to be co-creators of public goods.

The Breaking Bread program helps students develop the analytical tools and skills required to think critically about and to address issues around working across difference. They learn to develop alliances and coalitions between students with different racial and ethnic backgrounds, where resources are shared and organizations’ missions are furthered. It gives students experience in problem solving, negotiating and compromising, imagining, and working together. In the process, we consciously talk to them about their work being democracy. Some examples from the first year include: Sisters of the Round Table (women of color) and Rainbow Alliance (LGBTG students); Students for Environmental Action and the Latin American Student Association; and the College Republicans and Advocates (sexual identity group).
As we have moved in this direction, it is seeping into our campus culture. Students use the language when they criticize the administration and in the comedy that runs on the student-run television statement. One student even dressed as the Dean for Halloween wearing our slogans on his body. Like most efforts at democracy, the process is messy and confrontational, but the outcome is a vibrant, robust, and healthy community.

3. Using Diversity By Moving From Safe Spaces To Sites Of Engagement:
Like many universities, Colgate has a cultural center. Historically, the center has defined its mission as supporting minority students while raising awareness on campus of multicultural issues. In doing so, the Cultural Center has been an important site of refuge on a campus that can feel very white to minority students. We redefined the Cultural Center as a site of engagement. While Colgate has become a more diverse place, our students were not having more diverse sets of experiences, nor did they stray from their comfort zones. To address this, we began by hiring a new director with a strong background in community building. Perhaps ironically, she was the first bi-racial administrator to work on multicultural issues.

For example the Cultural Center’s signature program is called Skin Deep. It is an intense, 36-hour, off-campus retreat in which 15 students, faculty, administrators, and staff engage each other in a sustained dialogue about race. Typically, students remark that Skin Deep is one of the most intense experiences of their Colgate career. However, upon examination, it was less clear that the weekend had an enduring impact. Students did not come back to campus and walk across difference. It also appeared that the experience seemed to reinforce cynicism. While the Skin Deep participants came back to campus wanting to talk about race, they saw that while they had changed, others had not. As a result, they remained silent when met with resistance. This reinforced the notion that nobody wanted to talk about race and that there was nothing that they could do about it.

In an effort to make the Skin Deep experience longer lasting and more impactful, we refocused it as a program to teach civic skills. We started with prep work, giving participants readings and a syllabus for the retreat that included a glossary of important concepts and assignments prior to the experience. We rebuilt the program using many of the pedagogical ideas and exercises developed by community organizers, including community visioning and asset mapping, as well as the new work being done on teaching diversity, especially the use of grouped reflective exercises. We wanted the participants to focus on two questions: (1) given the readings and theories, what would a vision for a true multicultural Colgate look like, and (2) how can we develop an action plan to move the institution towards that vision. Over the course of the weekend, students worked together to develop an action plan. They used standard community action techniques for planning and organizing campaigns and projects. They identified barriers that kept Colgate from being the community they envisioned. They mapped power and resources. They then developed strategies for using available assets to overcome the barriers.

Students left the weekend committed to action-oriented follow up. Following this year’s retreat, the students hung signs over water fountains around campus. The signs read in large type “For Whites Only” or “For Blacks Only.” In small type, it read,” This is what
the world looked like before the Civil Rights movement. Get involved by contacting **.”**

Most importantly, the group began to meet bi-monthly with the Director of the Center to benchmark progress and to redefine the strategy. Those meetings were mentorship moments to actively teach political and community organizing skills.

4. Encouraging Politics:

We are working hard to get students directly involved in politics. Much of our work is based on a project called Democracy Matters that emerged just prior to the residential education effort. Democracy Matters was started by a group of Colgate faculty who wanted to find a way to get students engaged in politics. They were looking for a non-partisan issue that would give students multiple entry points to work at all layers of politics. They came to focus on the issue of campaign finance reform, and more broadly the need to reduce the influence of private wealth in the political process.

On each campus, Democracy Matters offers one student a year long paid internship. Democracy Matters staff provide mentorship to the intern through regional training workshops, weekly mentorship, and campus visits. There is also a national summit in the middle of the year where interns share ideas, build regional coalitions, explore theories behind issues, and work on skill building. Each student is mentored to organize and educate a group of peers around the issue, who then develop and implement an action plan for raising awareness on campus. Once this is done, groups move off-campus to partner with local, state and national organizations on change. The project is funded by a former Colgate student, Adonal Foyle, who plays in the NBA. The project has been widely successful. It has grown to a 75 campus project. Students have lobbied for bills, participated in local referendum, gone into schools, pushed the issue into campaigns, and registered thousands of people to vote.7

The experiences of Democracy Matters suggested that the pathways into formal political involvement required:

- Conversation about issues. Students are intimidated by the tone of political conversations. They are looking for spaces to learn about issues and to develop their own voice. The most successful chapters are often bi-partisan as the interaction of different political views creates space for students to develop their own views.
- Clear pathways into politics. Linda Sax has written at length about student interest in community service but disinterest in politics.8 We found that students want to be politically involved but are intimidated because they lack understanding of political opportunities beyond rioting or lumping. They need direct paths to take first steps and to understand the range of actions a person can take.
- There has to be achievable goals as well as more lofty idealistic goals. Students are cynical about politics and change. They need achievable objectives to feel a sense of accomplishment, but these need to be linked to longer term objectives that provides students a sense of purpose.
We initially used these lessons of Democracy Matters to transform our community-service programs. Too much of our community-service was working from a very thin philanthropic/charity model that emphasizes individual voluntary efforts to “do something” in the community. There was minimal training, reflection, or emphasis on long term problem solving. Musil calls this the “drive by” experience arguing that it “can inadvertently produce the face of oblivious citizenship.” Cone adds “students far too often walk away with overly simplistic, and some times dangerously simplistic, understandings of the communities in which they have worked.”

We shifted our groups away from a model of strict community-service to one of public work. We started to require training. More importantly, we started requiring groups to produce action plans for their work. The plans have to include strategies for meetings multi-dimensional outcomes that includes: providing direct services to a population in need; producing educational growth in the student; raising political, intellectual, and/or ethical conversations on campus; and moving towards the longer-term elevation of need through social change.

Additionally, we came to focus on sophomores, developing a Sophomore Year Experience (SYE) on the Arts of Democracy. The sophomore year is often thought of as the lost year in higher education. Yet it is a pivotal year in student development where they are making many important internal and external life-course decisions. It is a time of indecision where small efforts can dramatically shift the frameworks that sophomores have about themselves and their relationship to community.

Conversation is a large part of the SYE. We create moments for students to hear the stories of people who have done democracy as part of the everyday. We organize Wednesday night dinners for sophomores with faculty, alumni, and parents. Faculty talk about their research, while parents and alumni talk about their involvements as citizen-actors. We select people who have lived lives of doing public work in a multitude of contexts as lawyers, teachers, artists, athletes, doctors, researchers, and so forth. The dinners purposefully take up the theme of democracy as public work. We ask faculty, alumni and parents to tell their stories. In the course of doing so, they expand our student’s definitions of democracy and the ways that people do public work. Contrary to most campus efforts, we purposefully structure the dinners to include more than the “usual suspects” who sign up for events. We use a variety of techniques to try to engage a range of the sophomores in the program.

Using these conversations as entry points, we then get sophomores to do public work. We work with the Sophomore Class Council to think about how they can facilitate efforts by all sophomores to build community in ways that creates things of lasting value for the campus. Rather than do for the class, we want the Class Council to get sophomores to work with each other to create projects. In the first year, they started a Student Lecture Forum to present research done in classes about public issues to each other, revived the debate team, help develop new policies and procedures for campus, and developed a sophomore-to-sophomore mentorship program in the community. Rising sophomores developed ideas for an intra-cultural house to rethink diversity issues on campus.
We also get students off campus to explore democracy. For example: we take a group of sophomores to Washington to visit the Holocaust Museum. After the tour, they meet with alumni who served in World War II. We take another group to New York City to meet with non-profits to learn about their role in political change. Sophomores are encouraged to take those experiences and to get active both on campus and in the local community.

**Reflections On Residential Education:**

Using the residential education framework to think about public work, we have created a multiplicity of small moments in which students come together to do public work. They are doing politics of the everyday making our community alive with the spirit and actions of democracy.

This concept of democracy shifts our thinking about civic education, as follows:

- Defines democracy as ordinary people doing public work together to make their communities better.
- Defines politics as more than government. Politics are not something done to us or for us (e.g. student government or student senate). Politics are the things we do for ourselves with others to take control of our lives. Politics are the everyday things we do together to make our communities stronger.
- Embraces the messiness of public work. Democracy, as politics of the everyday, is a messy process with messy outcomes. The public work we do together is filled with failures, arguments, fights, and tensions. Democracy is the awkward/messy bumble bee that should not be able to fly but does. We should be in awe of the messiness, not embarrassed by it.
- Shifts our thinking about students not as consumers of services and student affairs professionals as expert providers of services but as co-creators or coaches working with groups to create things that have lasting public value.
- Makes change possible. Democracy is not passing the ultimate bill that makes the world a perfect place. Democracy is pushing the peanut forward. It is people working together to create something of lasting civic value.

To get to this place, we needed a set of objectives that can formulate a strategy for civic education. These are outlined in chart 1.
Chart 1: Developing A Strategy Of Residential Education As Civic Education As Public Work

- Clearly articulate a set of skills, habits, knowledge for civic education.
- Capture lost educational moments.
- Have flexible rules while raising expectations. Let students do democracy by having space to create but set high bars for what we mean by community building and how we define a healthy community.
- Shift campus conversations from entitlements to responsibilities.
- Move from a programming to a mentorship model.
- Embrace experiential models over passive learning.
- Add more social options that encourage engagement and diversity so that students learn skills and habits of walking across difference.
- Focus on self-governance, leadership and personal responsibility.
- Recognize the challenges of this generation.
- Weave components together to create an integrated student affairs program.
- Build upon our traditional strengths of community and friendship.
- Teach the skills and instill the habits of community/political organizing.

Widening the Circle To Become A Campus Of Civic Engagement:

By moving into residential halls and student organizations we have been able to engage more students. We estimate that upwards of 80% of students are involved in some aspect of the program. As students move through the four years, they should be active in different ways at different moments.

We have also been able to increase faculty involvement in campus life. Many faculty had walked away from campus life because they saw little hope that programs would be well attended or make a difference in student lives. There was a perception that campus life was about keeping students happy. Our work has changed the feel of campus. More faculty have come to believe that we are getting a handle on campus life and that we have opened room for intellectual and civic discourse. With this hope has come a renewed sense that it is time to participate again. We have also been intentional about creating ways for faculty to get involved that respects their time commitments. Last year, we increased faculty participation by about 15%.

More importantly, the residential education programs are linking directly to classes. Our off-campus trips are partnered with classes. For example: a class on the Holocaust partners with our Sophomore Class Council to jointly sponsor the two day trip to the Washington. A major focus has been rethinking the “campus visit” for a guest speaker. Too often faculty and student affairs staff were planning programs around the same topic without any interaction. We would sponsor programs on identical topics and then compete for student attendance. Now, we partner. A typical event is jointly planned by a...
team of faculty and campus life staff. A typical campus visit includes the guest spending time through Career Services with students to broaden how they think about careers. Playing off Benjamin Franklin we call this “Doing Well By Doing Good.” We intentionally try to get students to understand the broad spectrum of civically important careers. The guest will then have a Democracy dinner with sophomores. This is followed by a lecture/talk to students from classes, but we also work with RAs to a wide range of students to attend. The next day, students from the class and others will meet with faculty and student affairs folks for some sort of reflective debate/discussion.

These are small steps. But the conversations and interactions are taking place. We are making links between academic and student affairs that is spreading civic education across campus in a seamless ways.

**Conclusions: Civic Education Driven By Hope In People, Education, and Democracy**

Residential education and public work are both concepts designed to resituate civic education back in historic roots that embrace an enduring hope in people, democracy, and education. Both concepts clearly assume that people are capable of working with others across social, economic, and political arenas to co-create public goods with lasting value.

We are drawing from a long history in civic education going back to Dewey and others that has tremendous faith in democracy, associations, and education. The goal is to develop within people the skills, values, habits, and knowledge to do public work as part of the everyday. There is a unyielding belief that democracy is society and that citizens can co-create the decisions and actions needed to build and sustain healthy and vibrant communities. This is not easy work or a short-term achievable goal. Residential education and public work are not concepts developed from naiveté. Writing from within the tradition, James Farr wrote recently, “No serious civic educator these days is so Pollyannaish as to think otherwise or to imagine an easy go of the work required. But the basic vision and sense of practical urgency that refuses to give up need not be imagined de novo. That is what Dunn, Dewey, Hanifan, and other civic educators of the Progressive Era were all about in the past. They may yet help us imagine a future.”

Our implementation has required constant work, reflection, and refinement. In the real spirit of Dewey, it is a model of eternal vigilance and constant work. We have had failures but as this paper outlines we have also had tremendous successes. Maxine Greene might call this a process of futuring driven by hope, action, and commitment.

At its core, we are talking about finding the democratic resources that exist in every corner, or subgroup, on every college campus and bringing those together to create a rich and vibrant democratic culture on campuses. Democracy can be about student government elections or the latest campus petition. But it can also be about working to transform our residential halls, student organizations, and every other public space into places where students have opportunities to work across difference to be co-creators of public goods that can enrich our community. This required a lot of faith in our students, a
keen and specified sense for what we are trying to accomplish, and an eternal vigilance to educate for democracy across the campus.

NOTES

1 This paper is a work in progress. An earlier version was presented at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities Conference on the American Democracy Project. Comments are appreciated and can be sent to aweinberg@mail.colgate.edu. I want to acknowledge the impact of Rebecca Chopp, Tom Ehrlich, Harry Boyte and George Mehaffy on my thinking about civic education, residential education and public work. Any good language in this paper and project is taken from them. I will take responsibility for any of the clumsy language still left!


7 See www.democracymatters.org for information.


