

## **How the Plan for LEAP Evolved:**

Selections from Working Papers Prepared for the AAC&U Board of  
Directors by Carol Geary Schneider  
January 2003-October 2004

*Note: Access to AAC&U's official Board of Directors papers must be secured directly from AAC&U. Those interested should consult with the Office of Communications.*

The selections reproduced in this document are from discussion papers prepared for AAC&U Board consideration as AAC&U's strategic plan pledge to provide influential public advocacy for liberal education evolved. Initially conceived as public advocacy alone, LEAP eventually became a multi-front effort that included 1) public advocacy for liberal education; 2) evidence concerning students' achievement of "essential learning outcomes"; and 3) educational change on campus to foster liberal learning across-the-curriculum, including learning by doing.

January, 2003 Excerpt from A Report on the Presidents' Campaign for the Advancement of Liberal Learning (CALL).

The last section of this report on the advocacy effort titled Presidents' CALL (Campaign for the Advancement of Liberal Learning) contains notes on "Expanding the CALL" and points toward themes that were eventually included in the LEAP initiative, such as a National Leadership Council, presidential leadership, media engagement, and evidence on students' achievement of liberal learning outcomes.

January, 2004 Draft Working Paper and Plan for "Sounding the Call for Liberal Education: Because Every Student Deserves Our Best."

Written as internal notes for fundraising, this document predates the public opinion research AAC&U commissioned in 2004 on employer and student views of liberal education. Its narrow focus on a proposed Coalition for Liberal Education (a different name for what became the National Leadership Council) provides an illuminating contrast with the much more comprehensive LEAP plan that the Board eventually approved.

October, 2004 Board Working Paper on "Liberal Education and America's Promise: Engaging the Public with What Matters in College."

This version of the LEAP plan sets forth four "strands" of work, including AAC&U's own development of new capacity as both an advocate and a fundraiser for the advancement of liberal education. Note that the campaign title was still a work in progress. When launched in January, 2005 LEAP was subtitled: "Excellence for Everyone as a Nation Goes to College."

January, 2003:  
Report on Call Dialogues  
as Plan for Public Advocacy

AAC&U Senior Fellow Tamar March is working now to identify business and civic leaders whose organizations might themselves become sponsors for public dialogues about the aims of higher education.

AAC&U has proposed to Carnegie Corporation that the Corporation itself take responsibility for organizing a well-publicized discussion of the aims of education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century to be held in the New York City region. There has been initial interest at Carnegie and a decision is pending.

### Themes in the CALL Discussions

On the whole, Dialogue participants have been overwhelmingly positive about the Greater Expectations (GEX) report and its recommendations for an engaged and practical liberal education for all students. They approved the particular goals for college learning the GEX report proposes, and the GEX argument that achieving these outcomes will require more intentional partnerships between school and college. In this respect, the Dialogues suggest that the GEX report met its goal of speaking to a broad public, as well as the academic community.

Dialogue participants also endorsed the report's inclusive approach to liberal education. In some Dialogues, endorsement turned into a missionary zeal about ensuring equal access for all communities to what has historically been recognized as the best form of education our society provides. In other words, denial of liberal education was viewed as a denial of full opportunity.

In plenary sessions and in small groups, Dialogue participants both attested to the value of liberal education as intellectual and ethical development, and also endorsed the report's call for a more "hands-on" and collaborative approach to student learning. Many participants spoke vehemently against "narrow job training." Participating executives at technology companies from both Maryland and Texas, for instance, observed that employees with narrow training only turn out to be ineffective workers. These charges, which no one contested, run directly counter to the frequently made claim that certificate training programs are outpacing higher education in setting standards for quality.

Participants at the events sponsored by Trinity College and North Carolina State/Duke University urged company executives to expand the CALL Dialogues to include those responsible for hiring in business and industry. "Human resource offices aren't on the same page as the CEO's when it comes to education," one participant observed.

AAC&U correctly anticipated that there would be a positive public response to the idea of making liberal education both "hands-on" and practical. Overall, however, the non-academic participants in the Dialogues were even more enthusiastic about the GEX call for a renewed commitment to education for ethical integrity, personal and social responsibility and civic engagement. Some participants expressed concern that many new workers lack the sense of responsibility to the whole that the workplace requires. Others, clearly responding to the Enron syndrome, wanted to see a very strong educational emphasis on ethical integrity and its applications in the wider world. While both civic engagement and ethics were embraced, fostering ethical integrity seemed the goal many Dialogue participants viewed as especially urgent.

In thoughtful and non-contentious ways, many of the Dialogue groups also discussed democracy's need for educated citizens who know and can respond respectfully to communities, cultures, histories and viewpoints other than their own. Overall, participants exhibited a very sophisticated understanding of the dynamic interaction between democratic

values and the willingness to respect diversity. There were many expressions of support for higher education's role in educating students for a diverse society, and no apparent dissenters. There were echoes in some of the Dialogues of the Ford Foundation's national finding that the public believes both that Americans are growing apart and also that learning about diversity in college can help bring a divided society together.

### **Competing Visions**

With most participants finding the report's educational vision highly attractive, the only severe critique came from an Indiana newspaper publisher actively involved with the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, which supports a "true" core curriculum. As an invited respondent, she found the report "vacuous." A few other participants, picking up on the report's contention that many students are ill-prepared for college-level work, blamed higher education for admitting such students and called on the academy to raise admissions standards. The report had not persuaded them that the United States has moved beyond exclusionary approaches to excellence to a new era in which every student must count.

The more pervasive issue was the clash of inherited conceptions of the liberal arts with the comprehensive vision advanced in the report. Despite written and oral explanations that the GEX report calls for all subjects to be taught as liberal education, many Dialogue participants offered comments that were really in support of the liberal arts disciplines, the humanities, or a particular type of college. These inherited mental models appear very well-established and difficult to dislodge.

### **New Allies for Liberal Learning?**

Overall, the Dialogues were a gathering of the well-informed public, rather than a cross-section of U.S. society at large. But their success, and the enthusiasm they engendered, demonstrates that members of the "informed public" can, if cultivated, become positive allies for campuses and for AAC&U in building public support for liberal education. Indeed, AAC&U has received some inquiries about organizing CALL Dialogues from presidents who first learned of them from campus colleagues who had taken part in one at another institution.

Most of the issues discussed in the Dialogues—such as diversity or civic engagement—have been thoroughly canvassed on many campuses. Yet clearly, these were fresh rather than familiar conversations for the non-academic participants. **Moreover, the Dialogues highlighted concerns—such as education for integrity and responsibility—that have discernible resonance for public leaders.**

The Dialogues, in short, provided evidence both that the public has had few invitations to explore the ultimate aims of higher learning — and, that the well-informed public at least, will respond to such invitations with enthusiasm and thoughtful judgment.

## Expanding the CALL - 2003 and Beyond

### Goals

1. Provide moral and educational leadership--persuade college presidents to become advocates for an invigorated liberal education for all students
2. Provide resources to presidents and other leaders to enable them to become better advocates
3. Build awareness and support for practical and engaged le among some key stakeholders (business leaders, civic leaders, selected school leaders).
4. Make the aims of liberal education transparent and widely cited
5. Provide data and examples in support of our claims of value of liberal education and needed reforms in undergraduate education.

### Strategies

1. Continue solicitation of signers and publicity for their participation.
2. Sponsor Campus-Community dialogues focused on business, communications, and secondary school constituents.
3. Use dialogues to generate more media coverage.
4. Continue media outreach for stories on campaign as a whole - work with communications advisors to develop media themes.
5. Develop cadre of business and communications leaders willing to advise and speak out in support of liberal education in their own circles.
6. Connect with other efforts already underway by business to draw attention to our educational issues.
7. With external funding, develop Commission on Liberal Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; involve presidents and other visible spokespeople for educational excellence (to advice on strategy, become advocates in key policy arenas; connect with media; help raise funds. Set initial time limit of three to five years.
8. Develop leadership groups within Commission to connect to key educational reform efforts: e.g. accreditation, school reform, p-16 efforts, state decision, college admission.
9. Hold Summit for presidents - at which we announce the Commission.
10. With external funding, develop National Indicators of College Preparation and Achievement Report, with its own advisory panel of researchers as well as lead researchers who co-author the report in consultation with the Commission and with AAC&U staff.

January, 2004

Draft

## **Sounding the Call for Liberal Education**

### **Because Every Student Deserves Our Best**

#### **Preface**

There is widespread agreement that college has become an imperative for twenty-first century Americans. Sophisticated knowledge and skills now fuel the economy and have become key determinants of both workplace creativity and economic opportunity. Simultaneously Americans as citizens face challenges—at home and abroad—that are unprecedented in their complexity and in their demands on human knowledge and ingenuity. This is an era of greater expectations for knowledge, skill, and continuous learning in every arena of contemporary life.

In response, there are vigorous efforts at every level to expand access to college. Families seek college access; schools promote it; policy leaders and presidential candidates warmly endorse it. The rates of actual college enrollment remain inequitable, with low-income students and many communities of color still lagging behind. But the overall trend is clear: college has become for the twenty-first century what high school became in the twentieth, the expected point of departure for full participation both in the economy and in civic life.

For all the importance now placed on college, however, there is stunningly little public attention paid to what students ought to accomplish in college. Public debate focuses almost exclusively on access and affordability. Intermittent policy calls for educational “accountability” prove vacuous because there is virtually no national dialogue—much less any consensus—around the questions: College for what? What kinds of learning really matter in college—and in contemporary life? How do we ensure that graduates are really prepared for a lifetime of continuous learning? This vacuum is so taken for granted that some policymakers now propose to hold colleges and universities “accountable” just for their rates of graduation, as though seat-time is synonymous with actual accomplishment.

#### **I. Sounding the Call for Liberal Education**

Recognizing the public stake in the actual quality of college-level learning, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) proposes to shape a broad national dialogue on these issues. Titled *Sounding the Call*, this national dialogue will examine the historic and contemporary importance of liberal education in our society, and will document the value of a challenging and horizon-expanding liberal education for all students, whatever their backgrounds or professional aspirations. *Sounding the Call* will be led by a Coalition for Liberal Education. Working with policy leaders, the media and campuses, the Coalition will organize a broad public examination of the kinds of learning students need for the twenty-first century. The Coalition also will publicize changes already emerging in the academy that can help today's diverse students reap the full benefits of their participation in higher education.

*Sounding the Call* for Liberal Education will:

Spark public debate about the kinds of knowledge, skills and values needed to prepare college students for a new era of “greater expectations,” both in the workplace and in public and private life;

Confront the inherent inequities in current practices that steer low-income students to college programs that teach job skills alone, while more advantaged students reap the full benefit of a first-rate liberal education;

Support every student's right to an education—beginning in school and culminating in college—that develops intellectual and ethical judgment; expands cultural, societal and scientific horizons; cultivates democratic and global knowledge and engagement, **and also** prepares learners for successful participation in a dynamic and rapidly evolving economy;

Challenge and change the widespread belief that students must choose either a practical education **or** a liberal education;

Mobilize support for changes on campus that already are producing a new synthesis between practical and liberal education;

Sustain public engagement with the quality and level of college students' preparation for, participation in, and cumulative accomplishment in liberal education.

The mission and composition of the Coalition are described in Part III below.

## II. About AAC&U

AAC&U brings to this endeavor a high level of credibility and a substantial record of accomplishment for its work on college-level learning. It is unique among the major institutional membership associations both for its exclusive focus on the overall aims of education, and for its continuing efforts to ensure that all students reap the full benefits of college. As the late Ernest Boyer observed, "I know of no organization that has more consistently focused on the single important question: What does it mean to be an educated person?" This focus is more than rhetorical. AAC&U works closely with its member campuses to adapt the college curriculum to a changing world and to test and advance practices that make education more engaging, more rigorous, more practical, and more inclusive.

AAC&U's 900 institutional members represent the entire spectrum of postsecondary education: public, private, large, small, research and comprehensive universities, liberal arts and community colleges. These diverse colleges and universities come together in a common commitment to liberal education—understood, supported, and championed as the central and overarching framework for educational excellence in a democratic society.

The association's approach to liberal education is inclusive, even ecumenical:

Liberal learning is not confined to particular fields of study....What matters in liberal education is substantial content, rigorous methodology and an active engagement with the societal, ethical and practical implications of our learning. The spirit and value of liberal learning are equally relevant to all forms of higher education and to all students." (AAC&U Statement on Liberal Learning, October 1998)

Recently, AAC&U released a comprehensive major study, *Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College*. Framed by leaders from the academy, public education, business, and civil society, the report outlines the kinds of learning that students need to navigate a world of diversity, complexity, and accelerating change. The report also urges that higher education scale up reforms already being pioneered on some pace-setting campuses to provide every student with a rigorous, engaged, and practical liberal education.

*Sounding the Call* will make the *Greater Expectations* recommendations an initial point of departure for its work.

### III. Mission, Purposes and Composition of the Coalition for Liberal Education

1. The Coalition will build public knowledge and support for liberal education for all students. It will work to change the terms of discussion about higher education in contemporary society, and to build a case for liberal education as the best and most practical form of learning for all college students and therefore as the standard of excellence for all of higher education. The Coalition will work in partnership with higher education through its alliance with AAC&U.
2. The Coalition will be led by 30 business, civic, and public policy leaders, including school leaders. Coalition leaders will be chosen for their commitment to higher education, their ability to win public attention, and their willingness to serve as advocates for liberal education as the best form of learning for twenty-first century college students. Coalition leaders will be expected to contribute to and/or help secure financial support for a public information campaign to build public support for liberal education for all students. The Coalition will include the voices of college presidents and academic leaders through a working relationship with the AAC&U Board of Directors. The Coalition will consciously work to engage business and policy leaders who raise challenging and skeptical questions about the contemporary value of liberal education.
3. Coalition leaders will guide a carefully planned and targeted public information campaign in support of liberal education for all students. The focus and themes of this campaign will evolve over time.
4. The Coalition may tie its communications effort to "trigger issues" already in the public domain - e.g., access to college; accountability; admissions.
5. The Coalition may also become a sponsor/publicist of findings from selected AAC&U projects. These projects will be done within the AAC&U Educational Affairs offices, but planned and funded with an eye to public communications. The Coalition may also commission reports or projects to be accomplished on its behalf by AAC&U staff or by other appropriate sources.
6. To succeed with its public outreach effort, the Coalition may enlist assistance from specialists in implementing public information campaigns.
7. The Coalition will work in concert with and be supported by staff in the President's Office and the Office of Communications and Public Affairs at AAC&U.

#### Relation to AAC&U Board of Directors

1. The Coalition will be an "arm" of AAC&U, and it will work in concert with the AAC&U Board of Directors. Board members will set a general direction for the Coalition in light of AAC&U's mission and strategic plan. Dialogue about the meaning and translation of the general direction will occur between Board and Coalition leaders.
2. Coalition leaders will be recommended by the Board of Directors and Board members will make initial overtures to potential participants. (Note: we may want to include former board members in the pool of nominators as well.)
3. A new Board Committee will provide oversight to the Coalition. That Committee may include additional members not on the AAC&U Board, such as former Board members committed to *Sounding the Call* for Liberal Education.



### Relation to AAC&U's Proposed Development Initiative

1. The Coalition will be conceived as an activity with its own purposes, rather than as a central element in the AAC&U development plan.
  2. The Coalition will need to be envisioned and established as a self-supporting enterprise in order to flourish. Funds raised for it should cover the cost of its intended activities and meetings, as well the costs of AAC&U staff who support it. AAC&U cannot support it from current income. (AAC&U anticipates that it can be staffed by members of the existing Office of Communications and Public Affairs.)
  3. The Executive Committee proposes that Coalition leaders be seen as "allies" of AAC&U's development effort. As the Coalition for Liberal Education becomes established, the fundraising should produce income that contributes to AAC&U as a whole.
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### Next Steps

- ▶ Test the feasibility of this proposal over a one-year period (Jan 2004-Jan 2005)
  - Pursue funding for *Sounding the Call* from foundations. (Two have already signaled initial interest.)
  - Construct a profile of desired members and a set of nominees.
  - Hold small gatherings with potential nominees to test levels of interest and support.
  - Frame a charter "Call" for this group, derived from the Presidents' CALL statement, but written for a public, rather than an academic, audience.
- ▶ Tie the anticipated launch to AAC&U's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary in January 2005.
  - Invite potential coalition leaders to be part of the 2005 Annual Meeting.
  - Make the 2005 Annual Meeting itself an occasion for a meeting of member presidents with coalition leaders.



Fall 2004

## Liberal Education and America's Promise

### Engaging the Public with What Matters in College

A Major Initiative of the Association of American Colleges and Universities

#### Initiative Overview

***Liberal Education and America's Promise*** is a national effort to champion the value of liberal education—for individual students and for a nation dependent on economic creativity and democratic vitality. This initiative will be launched in 2005, on the occasion of AAC&U's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It will commence "a milestone decade," leading to AAC&U's centennial, during which AAC&U will work to re-establish the standing of liberal education as the nation's best investment in our shared future, to reach out to those who traditionally have been excluded from liberal education, and to demonstrate with how well today's college students are achieving important liberal learning outcomes.

The themes addressed in the campaign will draw on AAC&U's current efforts through its "Greater Expectations" initiative to articulate the aims and outcomes of a twenty-first century liberal education, and to fulfill the promise of educational excellence for all college students, especially those who historically have been underserved by the academy.

The intended campaign will include several strands of work:

1. **Sounding the Call:** a decade-long effort to mobilize public support for liberal education as the best and most powerful form of college preparation for a fast-changing world.
2. **Providing Evidence:** a systematic effort to provide periodic reports of "national indicators" for selected outcomes of a liberal education (e.g., *analytical and communication skills, global and intercultural knowledge, scientific literacy, quantitative reasoning, engaged citizenship*, etc.) and on students' educational achievement in these areas, as they leave high school and as they leave college.
3. **Building Capacity:** a related effort to enhance AAC&U's own capacity to engage the public as well as the academy with the importance of liberal education, and to become a recognized source of evidence about the nation's progress in providing liberal education to all its students.
4. **(New Strand 4) Engaging Campuses:** specific efforts to work with colleges and universities of every kind to develop and make visible new approaches to liberal education that can successfully prepare today's students for the new demands—personal, professional and civic—of contemporary life.

AAC&U envisions this effort, not as a short-term project, but rather as a core dimension of the Association's work on behalf of its 975 member colleges and universities. ***Liberal Education and America's Promise*** will augment and reinforce AAC&U's ongoing work—both externally funded, and member-supported—to reinvigorate undergraduate liberal education for all college students.

The campaign will include several complementary strands of work:

**Strand 1: Sounding the Call—Public Advocacy for Liberal Education**

**A coalition for liberal education**—business, civic, and school leaders working with presidents, chief academic officers, and leading scholars in the academy—to lead the campaign and provide public advocacy for liberal education.

**A public information campaign, beginning in pilot states, and expanding over time**—assisted by communications professionals, to articulate the aims and educational outcomes of a contemporary liberal education, and establish their importance to individuals, society, and democracy. The campaign will include focus groups, message development, outreach to national and regional press, and “training” of campus media staff to make a locally influential case for liberal education.

**“Public Hearings”**—as part of the campaign—that put employers and recent college graduates in dialogue with campus faculty and leaders about student learning in college.

**Public surveys**—tied to the campaign—about the importance of selected liberal arts outcomes, and also periodic reports on students’ levels of achievement, in school and in college, in selected liberal education outcomes (see Strand 2, below).

**Strand 2: Providing Evidence—Synthesizing and Reporting Findings on Liberal Education Outcomes—both on the opportunity to achieve, and evidence of the quality of achievement**

**Partnership with appropriate research centers** to identify and synthesize relevant data on liberal education outcomes; a research advisory committee to guide the effort.

**Student learning “indicators” on selected liberal education outcomes:** what they are, why they matter, and what the evidence shows about their achievement. For example, for scientific literacy, the indicators might show what percentage of high school students graduate with the right preparation to pursue a scientific field in college (25% according to NSF); what percentage take any science beyond an introductory (usually required) level in college; and what studies such as the College Learning Assessment reveal about graduating college seniors’ ability to use scientific information in solving problems.

**Student learning reports,** tied to the indicators, issued over time, that show progress (or not), both in high school and in college, on selected liberal education outcomes.

**Campus-based work:** concerted attention to cultivating and assessing these (and related) liberal education outcomes, across-the-curriculum, incorporated into AAC&U’s funded initiatives and continuing programs (e.g., summer institutes) for faculty and academic leaders.

**Strand 3: Building Capacity within AAC&U—to Provide Public Advocacy and Evidence**

**Advancement:** AAC&U needs to expand its ability to engage the many private family foundations and interested donors to support its work on behalf of liberal education; it plans a three-year expansion of its internal development capacity tied to this campaign.

**Public Communications:** AAC&U wants to strengthen its internal capacity to publicize liberal education and engage policy leaders and the public with evidence about it.

#### **Strand 4: Engaging Campuses—And Fulfilling the Promise of a Greater Expectations Liberal Education for Every Student**

##### **This strand will be discussed at the October Board of Directors Meeting**

The importance of engaging a set of actively participating campuses emerged from discussions about the steps involved in "Sounding the CALL" (strand one) in selected pilot states. Ideally, several campuses should take a leadership role in each pilot state, making the aims of liberal education a shared commitment, and engaging in both public advocacy and campus action to ensure that liberal education becomes a framework for all students' learning.

Conceivable steps include:

**A Call to Action:** Several campuses agree to take the lead in each state or region, providing public leadership, visibility, and host sites for the effort. (Described as Greater Expectations campuses?)

**Self-study and Priority Setting:** Each campus assesses how well it is providing liberal education to all students, using a common self-study framework; sets priorities for putting liberal learning at the center.

**Guiding and Assessing Student Learning:** Participating campuses begin using liberal education outcomes as a framework for student planning and progressive assessments of students' learning gains.

**Outreach to Underserved Students:** Students who would benefit most from liberal education according to recent research are least likely to be aware of it. Participating campuses would develop programs to help students discover their own self-interest in achieving the outcomes that characterize a strong liberal education.

**Connecting Liberal Education and Careers:** Participating campuses test models for helping students—including underserved students—make the connections between liberal education and employer expectations.

**Admissions, Advising and Orientation:** Participating campuses put liberal education into the materials they use to attract, orient, guide and assess students, faculty, staff and trustees.

**Telling Student Stories:** Campus efforts and achievements would be incorporated in Sounding the CALL, the public advocacy effort in each state.

# Liberal Education and America's Promise

## Engaging the Public with What Matters in College

### Progress Report

#### **Strand 1: Sounding the CALL—Public Advocacy for an Engaged and Practical Liberal Education**

**Staff:** AAC&U Office of Communications and Public Affairs, working with Board and President's Office.

**Funding:** Initial grant (\$450,000/3 years) made by Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation; portion of funds applied to Strand 1; most to Strand 3. Small grant from AT&T. Additional discretionary funds were included in a recent Charles Engelhard Foundation project grant, thanks to Senior Fellow Donald Harward.

**Current Work:** AAC&U will test public advocacy strategies for liberal education in three pilot states—Virginia, Indiana and Oregon—while seeking funding for an expansion of efforts. The plan builds from what AAC&U is calling “an emerging consensus” between the academy and employers on “greater expectations” for college outcomes—i.e., for liberal education.

**Six student focus groups** were commissioned in the pilot states with college-bound high school seniors and with college juniors and seniors. The findings reveal a large gap between the “emerging consensus” learning outcomes and what students themselves consider important in college. (See Attachment A and the full Peter D. Hart Research Associates report on the AAC&U focus groups) A power point presentation and video clips from the focus groups will be used to engage the interested public with the gap between outcomes highly valued by both the academy and business, and students' own perceptions of what matters in college.

**Numerous conversations with public figures, policy leaders and interested campus leaders** have been held about the need for and possible shape of a campaign. An initial list of potential Council leaders has been prepared; recommendations and nominations are still actively sought. Further work on message development must be done.

**The University of Virginia and AAC&U will host a national planning meeting** with interested academic and business leaders to review proposed steps in building public leadership for and interest in important college outcomes. **To prepare for the UVA meeting and AAC&U's own Presidents' Forum in January 2005, the October 2004 AAC&U Board meeting will review and revise proposed action steps for the pilot states where public advocacy strategies will be tested.**

**Under consideration:** asking Greater Expectations campuses to do their own focus groups, using the AAC&U protocol, to see whether a more intentional campus approach to college learning translates into stronger student understanding of liberal education outcomes.

**Related:** Thanks to Board member Richard Hersh, AAC&U will have a chapter in a book planned to accompany a spring 2005 Jon Merrow PBS documentary on the promise and peril of college. See also Richard Freeland's article in the October 2004 issue of Atlantic Monthly which cites AAC&U on connecting liberal education with practice.

**Also, Campus Compact** is launching its own campaign to identify civic engagement as a college outcome. AAC&U is actively cooperating with this campaign.

## **Strand 2: Providing Evidence—Documenting and Reporting on Liberal Education Outcomes**

**Staff:** President's office in consultation with board members, external advisors, and AAC&U offices.

**Funding:** The Wabash Center for Inquiry in the Liberal Arts provided initial assistance to AAC&U on ways of developing "dashboard indicators" on liberal education outcomes. (See below). The John T. Templeton awarded a planning grant on ways of studying selected outcomes. Discussions in progress with the Teagle Foundation and Pew Charitable Trusts. Indicator funding may also be attached to larger project proposals.

**Work:** In August 2004, a Wabash Center convening with key researchers on college outcomes explored ways AAC&U can develop "dashboard indicators" on outcomes. George Kuh noted that NSSE asks students' self-assessments on most of the "emerging consensus" liberal education outcomes. Using NSSE data, AAC&U staff has prepared an initial protocol.

In addition, Wabash is commissioning (with Lilly funding) both a cross-sectional and an eight-year longitudinal study of selected liberal education outcomes, conducted by scholars from the University of Michigan and the University of Iowa. Key liberal education outcomes to be studied using available measures include: **Effective Reasoning and Problem Solving; Moral Reasoning, Integrative Learning; Facility with Intercultural Differences; Well-being, Socially Responsible Leadership; Inclination to Inquire/Lifelong Learning Orientation.** Conversations are under way with Wabash about use of these findings in the AAC&U indicators.

With Templeton support, a November meeting with **key researchers on moral and ethical development** has been planned. Cooperation with the Rand College Learning Assessment (CLA) also continues.

## **Strand 3: Building Capacity within AAC&U**

**Staff:** AAC&U has appointed a Director of Development and a development assistant to work with the President and Board on fundraising for AAC&U's work on liberal education and for the public advocacy campaign. Candace Kuhta began work September 7, 2004.

**Funding:** See Strand 1.

**Work:** to assist in finding new sources of support for the campaign, AAC&U has formed a Presidents' Advisory Committee (PAC), drawn from recent college and university presidents with substantial fundraising connections. Members are advising on potential funding in the pilot states for the advocacy initiative and on additional resources. The Director of Development staffs this Committee, and has also begun work on policies, donor prospects, and a tracking system.

In October 2004, the AAC&U Board of Directors' will discuss its own role in building AAC&U's development and public advocacy capacities.

## **A New Strand 4: Engaging Campuses—And Fulfilling the Promise of a Greater Expectations Liberal Education for Every Student**

AAC&U proposes to use the student focus group findings as a "trigger" to stimulate public awareness that students need better orientation to liberal education outcomes and their importance. It is likely, however, that those who review students' lack of knowledge



about important college outcomes will want to know how campuses are addressing this problem.

This raises the question: how can AAC&U increase the visibility of the many campuses actually working on "greater expectations" reforms and enlist such campuses in a more visible effort to signal their commitment to their students' liberal education? This fourth strand would build on AAC&U's ongoing work with campuses and also create more visible alliances among institutions intentionally strengthening their focus on students' liberal education.

**The design and strategy of such an effort is on the AAC&U Board of Directors' agenda, and is proposed as a focus of presidents' discussion at the AAC&U annual meeting. See Overview for more details.**