

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LIBERAL LEARNING
IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

by

The Blue Ribbon Commission
on Liberal Learning in the Twenty-first Century

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FOREWORD

In December 1995, President David Davenport established the Blue Ribbon Commission on Liberal Learning in the Twenty-first Century. He named as members Seaver College professors Ron Highfield (Religion), Cynthia Novak (Humanities), and Don Thompson (Mathematics); D'Esta Love, Seaver College Dean of Students; Professor John Nicks of the Graziadio School of Business and Management; Professor Douglas Kmiec of the School of Law; Thomas G. Bost, Chair of the Pepperdine University Board of Trustees; Mandy Broaddus and Isaac Bright, Seaver College students; Jennifer Farley Brase, Seaver College alumnus. Norm Fischer, Director of Institutional Research, agreed to serve as an exofficio member and staff person, while W. David Baird, Howard A. White Professor of History and Chair of the Division of Humanities and Teacher Education at Seaver College, accepted the responsibilities of chairing the commission.

On January 26, 1996, President Davenport charged the Blue Ribbon Commission with the following:

We live in an era of unprecedented change. Knowledge doubles almost yearly. Soon, the years may become months. Today's graduates must expect to change careers several times during their working lives. Technological advances are transforming virtually every existing profession. Meanwhile, the world is shrinking and its peoples and institutions are becoming increasingly interdependent. Most issues have important global and cultural dimensions.

The students who come to college to prepare for this world come with increasingly different backgrounds and levels of preparation. Dramatic changes in the family and in K-12 education, for example, have resulted in a wider variety of values-based experiences and academic readiness than ever before.

Colleges and universities are already experiencing the stress which accompanies these changes. Major campus initiatives in technolo-

gy, cultural diversity, and globalization have become the order of the day. New delivery systems like three-year programs and on-line degrees are appearing. It is likely that higher education will experience more change in the next decade or two than at any time in this century.

How should Seaver College prepare to face the challenges of the Twenty-first Century while remaining true to its mission of providing high quality liberal arts education? Happily, George Pepperdine pointed to a polar star for navigating the seas of change when he said that he was founding his college to help prepare students for lives of usefulness. The educational needs of students have always been the focal point of educational planning at Pepperdine. Our challenge is to anticipate what these needs will be in the Twenty-first Century. What will students need to know, do, and become in order to live lives of usefulness in this new era? How may we best provide an undergraduate experience which will appropriately prepare them for what is ahead?

The pace of change seems to be out-stripping the capacity of regular planning process. It is important to take a global look at undergraduate education for the new century to supplement this process and provide it a comprehensive reference point. This will be the task of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Liberal Learning in the Twenty-first Century. This Commission, comprised of faculty, students, staff, alumni and board members, will be asked to study and report on the educational needs of today's and tomorrow's college students. The Commission's report should help the University assess the curricular and co-curricular experiences a Pepperdine graduate will need to be prepared for a life of usefulness as we enter the new century. What will it mean to provide a high quality education in a Christian environment for these students? What information, ideas, values and skills will Pepperdine wish to send with them as they graduate?

The report of the Commission is not expected to be a final implementation plan for change at Pepperdine. That must emerge through the normal processes of campus decision-making. The report will, however, provide a springboard from which discussions about educational pro-

grams and policies might be launched over the next several years.

In response to President Davenport's charge, members of the commission undertook a year-long study of the environment in which students are likely to live and work in the Twenty-first Century. The commission also studied the ways that Pepperdine University in general, and Seaver College in particular can better prepare students for lives of usefulness in that unique environment. They accentuated an ambitious reading program by four weekend retreats and one dinner meeting. At its first retreat held in early March 1996, commission members struggled to understand what the Twenty-first Century might look like economically, politically, socially, technologically, and religiously. In this task we were guided by Roger Benjamin, a RAND corporation consultant, and Wade Clark Roof, a sociologist of religion at the University of California, Santa Barbara. In June, the second retreat of the commission focused on discerning ways in which a liberal arts institution with a unique mission like Seaver College could and should respond to the challenges of the Twenty-first Century. Michael Dolence, an organizational and information technology planner, and Thomas E. Dillon, president of Thomas Aquinas College, acted as consultants on this occasion. The commission also devoted some time to understanding the qualities of and debate over so-called "Generation 13."

In August, members of the commission had an opportunity to spend a stimulating evening with George Keller, renowned educational consultant, who was in town to address the Seaver faculty on the importance of strategic planning. Keller caused the members both to refine the objectives and to rethink the structure of the document we expected to produce. In September when the commission met in its third retreat, members responded by dividing into small groups to begin the difficult task of drafting segments of the final report. In subsequent weeks, Professor Baird folded the results of that cooperative endeavor into a single draft. Members of the commission adopted final language

for the report at a fourth retreat held in January 1997. Professor Linda C. Mitchell edited the report for publication.

The report of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Liberal Learning in the Twenty-first Century is presented in the pages that follow. Entitled "Opportunities for Liberal Learning in the Twenty-first Century," the report is organized into seven different chapters. The first provides a history of the development of the liberal arts curriculum at Seaver College in the context of both national and local developments. In the second we articulate the definitions and assumptions implicit to the report. Included in this chapter is our effort to describe and characterize the student that will likely enroll in Seaver College at the dawning of the Twenty-first Century. Chapter three seeks to sketch the environment (economic, political, social, technological, and religious, among others) Twenty-first Century graduates will encounter, while chapter four identifies the qualities, knowledges, and skills graduates will need if they are to live lives of usefulness in that environment.

Chapter five is the heart of the commission's final report. There we grapple with identifying the learning experiences that Seaver College must make available if its students are to have the qualities, skills, and knowledges (identified in chapter four) which will help assure productive lives in the next century. In three large sections we examine general, specialized, and co-curricular education, offering in each section recommendations that envision both adjustments and changes. How Seaver College might best realize or deliver these opportunities is addressed in chapter six. Chapter seven provides a brief conclusion to the report.

It is important to know that members of the Commission embarked upon their study of liberal learning in the Twenty-first Century with considerable enthusiasm and dedication. Over the course of twelve months, there was no waning of that interest and commitment, although the enormity and importance of the task grew upon us; indeed, it sobered and humbled us. We are not futurists, experts in curriculum design,

technological wizards, or organizational specialists. What we lacked in expertise, however, we counterbalanced with a rich diversity of experience, extensive reading in the relevant literature, affection for each other, support for the unique experiment that is Pepperdine University, and recognition that God is the source of all

truth and light. President Davenport has said that when you put good people together in a room, good things happen. In this case there *were* good people in a room, and good things *did* happen. We pray that this report was one of those things.

CHAPTER 1

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CURRICULUM AT SEAVER COLLEGE

When George Pepperdine established his college in 1937, he and his advisers organized a curriculum with two purposes: to “fit the student for life” and to prepare the student “for...the life activity” in which he or she “expect[ed] to engage after leaving college.”¹ In designing such a course of study, they drew upon more than a century of American educational tradition. Moreover, they also set a precedent, now sixty years in duration, whereby curriculum development within the institution would be informed but not dominated by national debates and trends.

The first four decades of the twentieth century witnessed a remarkable flurry of curricular reform and experimentation in American higher education. Reaction to the elective principle pioneered at Harvard after 1869 explained much of this activity. Permitting undergraduates to select their own patterns of study, this system had produced curricular incoherence and intellectual fragmentation. Indeed, the elective principle had fostered so much specialization of interest and professionalism that education of a more liberal character and any notion of a shared culture were in danger of disappearing. The challenge for educators was to prevent intellectual dilettantism and to avoid narrow overspecialization.²

Bold and controversial experiments eventually produced a practical solution to the di-

lemma. In 1909, for example, Harvard required students to “concentrate” their studies in a given discipline or an assemblage of closely related disciplines, that is, to select an academic “major.” This concentration of subject matter would provide depth of content, acting as an antidote to intellectual shallowness. Simultaneously, Harvard also required its students to take courses in three fields outside their major area of study; in other words, to “distribute” their courses across a range of subjects in the sciences, arts, and humanities. The distribution requirement assured breadth of coverage, counteracting any inclination to study one subject to the exclusion of all others. Most educational institutions in the United States quickly embraced the “concentration and distribution” model of course selection. Nearly thirty years later, George Pepperdine College would do the same thing.³

An alternative approach to achieving curricular coherence focused upon what came to be called “general education.” John Dewey argued as early as 1902 that overcrowded courses of study were deficient in terms of organizing structure or a larger frame of reference. He proposed that they be presented holistically so that interrelations among their constituent elements would become more apparent. How to do this was debatable, but Dewey suggested “a survey...of the universe in its manifold phases from which a student can get an ‘orientation’ to the larger world.” One of the more celebrated attempts to implement this idea occurred at Columbia University in 1919 when all entering freshmen were required to take a core course

¹ *George Pepperdine College Bulletin, 1939* (Los Angeles, Calif.: George Pepperdine College, 1939), 9. Although curriculum development is not its focus, Richard T. Hughes’ “Faith and Learning At Pepperdine University” (an unpublished essay prepared for the Lilly Foundation, 1996) is a useful complement to this chapter of our report.

² Christopher J. Lucas, *American Higher Education, A History* (New York: St.Martin’s Press, 1994), 212.

³ *Ibid.*; Arthur Levine, *Handbook on Undergraduate Curriculum* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1978), 508.

entitled “Introduction to Contemporary Civilization.” Offering a vehicle for the integration of fragmented knowledge, the year-long grandfather of all Western civilization courses was, over time, replicated and enhanced by colleges and universities across the nation, including the one established by George Pepperdine.⁴

General survey courses that examined Western civilization, the humanities, or the sciences were not above criticism, especially for sacrificing depth in the interest of coverage. Yet surveys also brought much-needed coherence to a curriculum that usually verged on excessive specialization. The faculties of most American colleges and universities, consequently, restricted the first two years of a student’s educational program to survey courses, which they then characterized both as “general education” and “lower-division” courses. It followed that students then devoted most of their remaining two years of collegiate study to taking “upper-division” courses in the major. Predictably, the curriculum announced by George Pepperdine College in 1937 embodied these organizational principles.

An even more extreme form of general education occurred after 1928 at the University of Chicago. There President Robert Maynard Hutchins sought to revive the “classic” liberal arts tradition by instituting a common, or core, curriculum based upon reading and discussing original sources, the so-called Great Books of Western civilization. In them, he insisted, mankind could find a “common stock of fundamental ideas” to overcome the “disunity, discord, and disorder” of the modern world. Hutchins and the Chicago Plan generated great intellectual excitement and inspired a generation of educational leaders. Among the latter was E.V. Pullias, a member of the original faculty and long-time dean of George Pepperdine College.⁵

With regard to formulation of curriculum, the leaders of Mr. Pepperdine’s new college had a century of educational traditions and innovations from which they could draw. More explicitly, they borrowed ideas and structures from Occidental College and UCLA. And given the experience of President Batsell Baxter, they also drew from “sister” institutions like David Lipscomb College and Abilene Christian College. In 1937 the Pepperdine faculty announced a curriculum requiring four years of study, with each year divided into four ten-week terms, or quarters. To meet breadth requirements, it required students during their first two years to take five lower-division courses, among them world civilization and foreign language. When added to three required religion courses, the general education component of the curriculum equaled 30 percent of the whole. The course of study announced by the faculty also required students to concentrate some 45 percent of the total units necessary for graduation into a major and a minor field. Significantly, the curriculum left some 20 to 25 percent of the prerequisites for any degree open to student choice⁶

In the immediate post-World War II era, the faculty hardly modified general education requirements. Rather than take a smorgasbord of natural science courses, students had to focus on one (chemistry, botany, or home economics, for example). They had to complete year-long courses in world civilization and in United States history to meet the social science requirements. They also had to take four units of physical education. The sharpening of the curriculum, however, hardly increased the total number of units any student devoted to general education. The proportion of courses devoted to major and general education courses did not change even in 1949 when the faculty adopted the semester academic calendar (fifteen week terms) and required 128 credits for graduation.⁷

In the years after 1953, the curriculum was more dramatically restructured to accommodate

⁴ Dewey is quoted in Lucas, 213. See also Levine, 330-33; and Timothy P. Cross, *An Oasis of Order: The Core Curriculum at Columbia College* (New York: Columbia College, 1995), chpt. 1.

⁵ Lucas, 215-19; Levine, 347-50.

⁶ *George Pepperdine College Bulletin, 1937-1938, 1938-1939, and 1939-1940.*

⁷ *Ibid., 1947-1948 and 1949-1950.*

the veterans of the Korean War. In this endeavor, the faculty was certainly influenced by the well-known Harvard University report published in 1945 that defined general education as distinct from specialized education. General education, the report argued, embraced the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences and emphasized continuities rather than changes. Its objective was to help people “to think effectively, to communicate thoughts, to make relevant judgments, [and] to discriminate among values.” General education further aimed at developing the whole person, affectively as well as intellectually, and at reconciling the needs of the individual and the society.⁸ The first bulletin of George Pepperdine College stated that general education was “to fit the student for life.”

The Harvard report did not deny the importance of “special” education. The part of the curriculum devoted to that endeavor was to prepare students for their unique and personal functions in life, that is, to give them competence in some profession or occupation. Of course, that objective had shaped the curriculum at Pepperdine College from the beginning. The recommended model of undergraduate education proposed by the Harvard report, therefore, reaffirmed the appropriateness of Pepperdine’s curricular objectives. Yet within those parameters, it was clear that substantial refinements could and should be made.

Dean Pullias and his colleagues instituted major curriculum change in the Fall 1953. The fifty-four to fifty-eight units devoted to general education were distributed among six different academic groupings: communication (twelve to eighteen units), social science (twelve units), natural sciences (eight units, including one lab course), history (eight units, with six in Western civilization), humanities (eighteen units, including eight for religion), and physical education (four units). Within those groupings, students could select from one of several different offerings. The new general education program constituted 48 percent of the total units required for

graduation, a 20 percent increase from previous requirements. The percentage of units devoted to courses in the major and the minor remained unchanged (thirty-six units for the major, with twenty-four of them upper division units; eighteen for the minor, with six being upper division credits). Although the changes were dramatic, for some reason no general education goals were clearly articulated, setting a precedent that prevails to this very day.⁹

For the next two decades, the structure of both general and special education at George Pepperdine College varied only in degree and configuration. In 1960, foreign language and social science requirements were eliminated, while mathematics and speech were added. The net effect was a ten-unit reduction in the total number of general education credits necessary for graduation. By 1965, however, both foreign language and three units of one of the social sciences had returned to the curriculum. The total number of general education credits now exceeded 50 percent of all those necessary for graduation. Other than English composition, speech, and religion, none of the courses, however, were taken by all undergraduates.¹⁰

The founders of the general education movement in the early twentieth century saw it as a means of helping students to orient themselves to different ways of knowing and then to integrate what they had learned into some kind of coherent whole. Fundamental to this concept was instruction that transcended disciplinary lines and that assumed there was unity of all knowledge and truth. Ironically, George Pepperdine College was more capable of delivering this kind of education when its doors first opened than after three decades of operation. Over the years, the drive to make the academic major and its sponsoring department the function and focus of the curriculum became an irresistible force, especially in the aftermath of the launching of Sputnik in 1957. By 1970, sixteen academic departments offered thirty-eight different degrees to a student body of 2,430. And

⁸ Levine, 359-63; Lucas, 250-51.

⁹ *George Pepperdine College Bulletin, 1953-1954*.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1960-1961 and 1965-1966.

general education requirements that assumed a unity of knowledge were met by a variety of course options. Integration of knowledge had given way to fragmentation, and an interdisciplinary curriculum had defaulted to a disciplinary one. Trained in research universities, some members of the faculty saw this development as progress. Others saw it as a reversion to the nineteenth century when over-specialization and educational dilettantism characterized courses of study of individual students.¹¹

Following a decade of student activism, Pepperdine University opened its Malibu campus in 1972. This notable event in the history of the institution was accompanied by vigorous debate as to the curriculum and organizational structure of the new facility. The discussion ranged between two poles: would the campus provide pre-professional training with enough general education requirements to give it the appearance of a liberal arts college, or would it offer liberal learning experiences premised upon the integration of knowledge and guided by an interdisciplinary faculty? For answers, planners such as James Wilburn, Grover Goyne, Paul Watson and Ed Rockey informed themselves of curricular experiments occurring nationwide, namely those at the University of California at Santa Cruz, Brown University, Chicago University, and especially Hampshire College. By the end of the 1969-1970 school year, they developed a fairly clear concept of the kind of curriculum and school they wanted at the Malibu campus.

Above all, Pepperdine-Malibu (renamed Seaver College in 1975) would be a liberal arts school as opposed to a pre-professional one. Its academic program would be interdisciplinary, the object of which would be to unify knowledge rather than to fragment it. Specific goals would be 1) to integrate the Christian religion into the total university curricula, unifying knowledge around Christian truth; 2) to emphasize the basic ideas underlying all knowledge as a foundation for new knowledge that a student will acquire after graduation; 3) to ap-

proach complex social problems with insights from multiple disciplines; 4) to encourage teaching as the primary task of the faculty; and 5) to avoid the limitations of over-specialization. Moreover, Pepperdine-Malibu would build the academic program not around traditional disciplines as on the Los Angeles campus, but around four new divisions, specifically Communication, Humanities, Natural Science, and Social Science. The Religion and Fine Arts divisions were added within a year.¹²

To earn a Bachelor of Arts degree, the only one to be offered, students would have to complete 128 semester units of course work. Since all courses would be valued at four units, it would require thirty-one courses to graduate. Ten of those courses would have to be upper division; four one-unit physical education courses would also be required. The lower division component of the general education curriculum would consist of fourteen broad and intensive common learning experiences (fifty-six units) that crossed interdisciplinary lines. Each of the six divisions would provide at least one of the large integrated lecture courses,¹³ while all but one of the divisions would also offer a series of small elective seminars. Some divisions, additionally, provided self-paced courses. To complete the core curriculum, students would need to take one upper-level, cross-divisional course during their senior year to provide a capstone experience for their entire education. General education courses would comprise 50 percent of the proposed curriculum. In keeping with the mood of the 1970s, neither mathematics *per se* nor foreign languages would be a part of the core curriculum.

Given their objectives, planners envisioned majors not only in traditional liberal arts areas but in interdisciplinary programs as well, not to mention student-initiated contracts. So long as

¹² *Pepperdine University Bulletin, Malibu Campus Catalog, 1972-73*, 12-13.

¹³ These included "Culture and Communication," "Introduction to Fine Arts," "The Western Heritage I and II," "Man and Science," "Introduction to the Bible," and "Man and Society."

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1971-1972.

the course of study included six upper-division classes (twenty-four units), the student would be given fairly wide latitude in the choice of courses. The same was true in the selection of as many as eight electives. No minor concentration was initially envisioned.

Initially, the Malibu campus was planned as a small, experimental and innovative program with a student body capped at 450. The larger liberal arts campus would remain in Los Angeles. A pilot program was launched in 1971 on the L.A. campus as a "school within a school." When fund raising exceeded expectations, administrators took advantage of their good fortune and elected to make Malibu the primary campus. When the altered plans were presented for their consideration, the L.A. faculty was decidedly unenthusiastic. Whether their antipathy sprang from deep-seated opposition to a second campus, to the minimized role of the L.A. campus, or to the innovative curriculum proposed for Malibu is unclear. One thing is certain, moreover, the lack of enthusiasm foreshadowed a fairly sustained faculty effort to modify the Malibu program once it was in place. Indeed, the history of the Seaver College curriculum is a story of one attempt after another to modify the interdisciplinary model instituted with much hope in 1972.

Shortly after the dedication of the Malibu campus, pressure for curricular change welled up among faculty, students, and parents. Modifications quickly followed. Within a year, the faculty added seven vocationally-oriented Bachelor of Science degrees. Within two years, they offered a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, and they also dropped the senior-level capstone course, reducing the total number of general education units to sixty. Within five years, the administration and faculty had restructured the college so that both Education and Business were important academic programs and so that a newly-established Graduate School offered eight Master of Arts degrees. By 1977, Business Administration was a regular academic division, and by 1977 Fine Arts had been combined with the Humanities

Division. After a dozen years of adjustments, the curriculum instituted in 1972 was less interdisciplinary and less committed to the integration of knowledge than when it was initially conceived. It was also more committed to careerism. Those changes aside, the original structure of the curriculum remained unchanged.¹⁴

Considerations both external and internal to Seaver College dictated a review of the curriculum. In the mid-1980s, for example, major studies by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Association of American Colleges, and the National Institute of Education focused nation-wide attention on the state of undergraduate education.¹⁵ These studies expressed concern with deficient writing skills, disinterest in foreign languages and cultures, and disregard for self-discovery, critical thinking, and values clarification as educational outcomes. They also decried on the part of the faculty an absence of commitment to general education and a failure to impart shared values and knowledge that bound the population together as a society.¹⁶

Within Seaver College, a new dean, John Wilson, and the Academic Programs Task Force of the Strategic Planning Committee of Seaver College expressed serious concern about the quality of general and liberal studies. Among other things, they were concerned that the twelve-year-old curriculum had been designed more to balance unit-load distribution among the divisions than "to achieve sound theoretical

¹⁴*Pepperdine University Bulletin, Malibu Campus Catalog, 1973-1974 and 1974-1975; Pepperdine University Bulletin, Seaver College Catalog, 1975-1976 through 1980-1981.*

¹⁵ William J. Bennett, *To Reclaim a Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education* (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Humanities, 1984); *Integrity in the College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community* (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges, 1985); and National Institute of Education, *Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984).

¹⁶See William B. Boyd, "Athens or Atlantis? The College Reform Movement," *Holmes Group Occasional Papers* (December 1987), 3.

and academic goals.”¹⁷ To make every course worth four units of credit seemed unnecessarily restrictive, while omitting mathematics, foreign languages, and speech from the general education curriculum seemed pedagogically unconscionable. The dean and the Task Force were also concerned that some major requirements were disguised as general education requirements, that the core lectures had lost their interdisciplinary orientation, that the freshmen seminars were neither attended by freshmen nor organized as seminars, and that teaching composition divorced from literature was unsound. For them, the 1972 curriculum was little more than a shell of what its founders had intended, and it had lost its power to bring coherency to fragmented knowledge or to unify knowledge around Christian truth.

Simultaneously, the University was in the midst of a “Wave of Excellence” Campaign, a high-profile fund-raising effort that could hardly be separated from academic endeavors. For Dean Wilson and other administrators, it seemed like an appropriate time to rethink Seaver’s general education program. Indeed, they encouraged the faculty to assess “the GE program without regard to cost.”¹⁸

Given the internal and external concerns, the Curriculum and General Education Committee of the Seaver faculty, chaired by Norman Hughes, undertook a careful and thorough review of the general studies program during the 1984-1985 academic year. At the end of the year, the committee proposed a complete re-vamping of the then thirteen-year-old general education curriculum. It recommended as core requirements a three-course lecture/discussion sequence in Western heritage, a two-course sequence of English composition/literature, and a two-course sequence in religion (subsequently

changed to three three-unit courses). The committee also proposed a Freshman Colloquium that would emphasize oral and written skills. It advocated as distribution requirements a laboratory course in the natural sciences; a psychology, sociology, or anthropology course; a course in speech and rhetoric; two courses selected from among American history, economics, or political science; a mathematics or computer science course; and an upper-division seminar in any discipline outside the student’s major as a capstone (subsequently changed by the Seaver Academic Council to one course in non-Western civilization). The committee also recommended that students take four units of physical education and establish competency in one foreign language.

Although the total number of units devoted to general education did not change substantially from the earlier curriculum (some 50 percent of the 128 units required for graduation), the recommended configuration of courses in 1985 was significantly different. Rather than have students experience general education in divisional lectures and seminars where an interdisciplinary perspective was suspect, the proposed curriculum would have them experience it in a program of stipulated core and distributed courses. The goals and principles underlying the committee’s recommendations were more implicit than explicit. Nonetheless, they yielded more substantive results from a national perspective than were achieved at comparable liberal arts institutions, both private and public. The emphasis upon Western Heritage, foreign languages, mathematics, and non-Western heritage placed the new Seaver curriculum on a level of its own.¹⁹

Although the Seaver Academic Council approved the curriculum changes in July 1985, three years passed before they were fully operational. Although Associate Dean Nancy Magnusson Fagan had the responsibility of putting

¹⁷ Report of the Curriculum and General Education Committee to Seaver College Academic Council as Amended and Passed by the Council, July 23, 1985, Records of the Seaver Academic Council, Office of the Dean of Faculty, Seaver College.

¹⁸ “General Studies at Seaver College, 1990-1992: Assessment and Recommendations” (unpublished report of the General Studies Committee, March 1992), 3.

¹⁹ Ibid. Each member of the committee did prepare a working list of general education goals and objectives, but no common list was ever fashioned, much less adopted.

the new program into operation, the Curriculum and General Education Committee carefully monitored the process. Launching the Freshmen Seminars proved especially difficult; the Western Heritage sequence and speech course were only less so. Everything took more space, faculty, and money than was envisioned or available. How to fit Great Books, an innovative four-semester sequence inaugurated in 1985, into the curriculum represented another challenge. Permitting Great Books to substitute for freshman seminar, English composition, an American heritage requirement, and the upper-division religion requisite solved that problem, but others refused to vanish. By 1990 a review of what had been done seemed prudent, as well of how well it had been done, and of what remained to be done. In the 1990-1991 academic year, President David Davenport and Dean John Wilson charged the General Studies Committee, chaired by Stan Warford, to launch such an inquiry.

The committee conducted business with great diligence. Over the course of more than a year, it polled students, faculty, and administrators about the content and effectiveness of the courses comprising the new general education program. In March 1992, members concluded that the new curriculum, because of the increased emphasis on English, foreign language, and mathematics, was “a significant improvement” over the pre-1985 curriculum. Even so, the committee saw room for considerable improvement, proposing among other things that Seaver College curtail the use of part-time adjunct faculty and revamp Freshman Seminars. It also recommended changes in the distribution requirements of the general education program, even though members themselves could not reach a consensus on any one of the two particular plans proposed.²⁰

The two distribution plans offered as alternatives to the 1985 curriculum had common features. Both, for example, would have reduced the unit value of all but two courses from four to

three units, separated the Fine Arts out of the Western Heritage sequence and made it a free standing course, and added another science course. One differed in that it would also have limited the religion component of general education to two four-unit courses rather than three three-unit courses. Of importance to the committee was that both of the alternative plans would reduce the total number of units (although not courses) devoted to general education.²¹

The General Studies Committee struggled with the fact that the theoretical goals of the “new” general education program had not been defined explicitly prior to its adoption. It noted that the Mission Statement of Seaver College committed the institution to transmitting the “noblest ideas of Western culture” and to “sharpening of the mind...ennobling of the heart, and...broadening of the vision,” and that the *Seaver College Catalog* spoke of “thinking clearly, communicating effectively, feeling keenly, and exploring thoroughly.” But since these objectives had been prepared *after* the adoption of the 1985 curriculum, the committee assumed that they had not informed the initial design of that program. Subsequently, members tended to look more at particular courses and their specific goals rather than at how those courses contributed to some larger programmatic objective. Put differently, they looked at the parts of general education at Seaver College rather than the whole.²²

The Seaver faculty devoted much of the Winter term in 1992 to consideration of the report and recommendations of the General Studies Committee. Like the committee itself, the faculty failed to reach any consensus on the alternative distribution requirements. Those who taught Heritage and Religion especially objected to the proposals. Not surprisingly, then, beyond an effort to re-focus the Freshman Seminar and a general agreement that full-time faculty were preferable to part-time adjuncts, little came of the two-year review process. Ap-

²⁰ “General Studies at Seaver College, 1990-1992,” 39-41; 46.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 41-43.

²² Quoted in *Ibid.*, 5.

parently, members of the Seaver faculty were fairly comfortable with the design and content of the established general education program. And they had some reason to be: the curriculum retained natural science, mathematics, literature, and foreign language requirements when the national trend was to eliminate them, and the total number of hours devoted to general education almost doubled the national average.²³ But for the members of the committee, given their investment of time and energy, the unheralded demise of the report was painfully frustrating. Dean Wilson was no less frustrated. He had hoped that the report would concern itself with the articulation of general education objectives and provide an appraisal of how best to achieve them.

Over the years, faculties at both George Pepperdine College and Seaver College have never been satisfied with the shape of the curriculum. That circumstance has led to fairly frequent reviews and reformulations of the general education, or breadth component of the total curriculum. In those cases, a centrifugal force almost always operates, causing the faculty to prefer specialized programs over interdisciplinary ones and to favor a part of the curriculum rather than the whole. That was not quite the factor at work in 1985, but it certainly was the one operating in 1992. Except those associated with strategic planning in 1988 and in 1996, no college-wide curriculum review occurring over the past six decades has focused on the theoretical goals and objectives of the major component of the curriculum beyond specifying the number of units that comprise a major course of study.²⁴

²³ William E. Simon, "The Dumbing Down of Higher Education," *Wall Street Journal*, March 19, 1996; Lynne V. Cheney, *Humanities in America: A Report to the President, Congress, and the American People* (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Humanities, 1988), 4.

²⁴ The Seaver College strategic planning processes in 1988 and 1996 did undertake to review various academic programs, including majors. A document prepared by Dean Wilson, "The Nature of Undergraduate Education," helped guide the 1988 review. On the basis of that evaluation many of the so-called interdisciplinary degrees

Such evaluations are presumably the prerogative of the academic department. Equally notable is that, over time, the faculty has not been much interested in the co-curriculum of the college, which, members generally believe, is the responsibility of the Dean of Student Affairs.

offered by Seaver were "harvested" on the grounds that they lacked significant depth.

CHAPTER 2

DEFINITIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Definitions

It is appropriate that we define the terms and articulate the assumptions employed in this report as precisely as possible. Our definitions are fairly standard, supported by common usage and relevant scholarship. We recognize, however, that in any community, and especially in an academic community, most definitions and assumptions are debatable.

Liberal Learning: Early on scholars associated the classics, languages, literature, history, and philosophy with the liberal learning and saw those disciplines as a means of nourishing and transmitting the noblest ideas of Western culture. Most modern observers find such a definition inadequate. They associate liberal learning with emancipation from ignorance, provincialism, and philistinism; with the development of broad analytical skills rather than narrow technical brilliance; with self-assurance, self-reliance and self-control; and with loyalty, manners and respect for ceremony. Liberal learning, moreover, facilitates a search for meaning in an age of meaninglessness, induces a sense of moral obligation, and promotes civic engagement. Those who engage in liberal learning, to quote Plato, become “lovers not of a part of wisdom...but of the whole...[and are] able to distinguish the ideas from the objects which participate in the idea.”²⁵ Such learning finds its end

²⁵ Quoted in David G. Winter, et al., *A New Case for the Liberal Arts* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1981), 3; Jacques Barzun provides essentially the same definition for “education,” that is, “the cultivation and tempering of the mind so that it becomes flexible and strong, and acquires control of powers that are enhanced through learning to control them. Control includes being able to summon up these powers, and put them to work in one’s pleasure or under examination by others. And this

in truth that, according to Scripture, both frees the learner and affirms the reality of God.

At least for the first one-half of this century, educators tended to associate liberal learning with the general education curriculum only. A report in 1945 by the Harvard faculty broadened the definition to incorporate both specialized (vocational or major) and general education.²⁶ More recent studies convince us that the co-curriculum should be included in the definition as well.²⁷ We, therefore, define liberal learning much like the Seaver College mission statement, that is, as the sum of general educa-

command of one’s mind goes with important arts now thought trivial accomplishments: the ability to talk and write coherently, to notice detail and be accurate about it without being enslaved to precision, and to depart, not on principle but with judgment, from conventional opinion or practice holding all the while a fund of knowledge with which to acquire more.” See *The American University: How It Runs, Where It Is Going* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 218. Alexander Meiklejohn of Brown gave an even more poetic definition of liberal learning in 1908: “The American college is not primarily to teach the forms of living, not primarily to give practice in the art of living, but rather to broaden and deepen...insight into life itself, to open up the riches of human experience, of literature, of nature, of art, of religion, of philosophy, of human relations, social, economic, political, to arouse an understanding and appreciation of these, so that life may be fuller and richer in content; in a word the primary function of the American college is the arousing of interests.” Quoted in Lucas, 182. For a study of liberal education over time, see Bruce A. Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers: A History of the Idea of Liberal Education* (New York, NY: Teacher College Press, 1986).

²⁶ See Report of the Harvard Committee, *General Education in a Free Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1945). Known as the “Redbook” because of its red binding, it sold more than 50,000 copies.

²⁷ William H. Willimon and Thomas H. Naylor, *The Abandoned Generation: Rethinking Higher Education* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Erdman’s Publishing Co., 1995).

tion, specialized education, and the co-curriculum. At the same time, liberal learning is not a mathematical formula that can be calculated according to units, hours, and courses. As a process, the whole is always greater than its parts.

Life of Usefulness: Given his own background and the times in which he spoke (1937), it might be assumed that George Pepperdine meant “life of usefulness” as a synonym for a life of full participation in the nation’s economy. Certainly that was part of it, but even a quick reading of his autobiography, *Faith Is My Fortune*, reflects that usefulness to him meant, in addition to vocation, serving others via church involvement and civic engagements, exercising family responsibilities, and accounting to a sovereign God for one’s stewardship of the “little things” in life. We see no reason to modify Mr. Pepperdine’s definition of “life of usefulness,”²⁸ which, as President Davenport notes, is a brilliant “polar star” that will give direction and purpose to liberal learning in the Twenty-first Century.

Knowledge: We affirm with John Henry Newman that all knowledge is unified, because the grist of knowledge is little more than the acts and work of the Creator. “[K]nowledge forms one whole, because its subject-matter is one,” he said, “for the universe in its length and breadth is so intimately knit together, that we cannot separate off portion from portion, and operation from operation, except by a mental abstraction... [Indeed, the Creator] has so implicated Himself with it, and taken it into His very bosom, by His presence in it, His providence over it, His impressions upon it, and His influences through it, that we cannot truly or fully contemplate it without in some main aspects contemplating Him.”²⁹ The Creator re-

vealed himself in Christ, in whom, the Apostle Paul wrote, “all things hold together” (Col. 1:13). Given his firm belief in the unity of knowledge, Newman understandably viewed the segmentation of knowledge into so-called academic disciplines as “distracting and enfeebling of the mind.”³⁰

Christian College: To us a Christian college is designed, organized, and conducted to integrate Christian faith with learning and scholarship and to equip persons for Christian vocation and service. In such an institution, all of life is studied for the discovery of divine truth; and the Christian worldview permeates the totality of college life, including curriculum, co-curriculum, and faculty scholarship. The quest for transcendent truth both in and out of the classroom brings coherence and wholeness to a student’s course of study, as well as fellowship and meaning to faculty pursuing narrow research questions.³¹

Seaver is a Christian college. Its definition of itself in its mission statement leaves no room for argument, and its record of faithfulness to the vision of its founder, despite difficult circumstances, is unquestionable. At the same time, weekly convocation, three courses in religion, a “dry” campus, and a “critical mass” of faculty who are members of the Churches of Christ do not constitute evidence of a Christian

³⁰ Ibid., 105.

³¹ Robert T. Sandin, *The Search for Excellence: The Christian College in an Age of Educational Competition* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1982), 15-16. See also Stephen V. Monsma, “A Christian Worldview in Academia: One Person’s Vision” (an unpublished paper given at a Pepperdine University, Seaver College faculty colloquium, January 13, 1992), and Ronald R. Nelson, “Faith-Discipline Integration: Compatibilist, Reconstructionist, and Transformationalist Strategies,” in *The Reality of Christian Learning: Strategies for Faith-Discipline Integration*, ed. by Harold Heie and David L. Wolfe (Grand Rapids, Minn.: Christian University Press, 1987), 317ff. Gertrude Himmelfarb argues that the quest for truth, knowledge, and objectivity is the central function of the Christian college, and, taking a swipe at post modernists, insists that they are not social constructs. See “The Christian University: A Call to Counterrevolution,” *First Things*, January 1996 (59): 16-19.

²⁸ For an insightful analysis of how Mr. Pepperdine’s personal philosophy impacted the college he founded in 1937, see Hughes, “Faith and Learning At Pepperdine University,” 584-87.

²⁹ John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, ed., with an Introduction and Notes by Martin J. Svaglic (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), 75 and 38.

college if classes and curricula embrace a secular and presumably neutral worldview.³²

Values: “Values are social principles or standards by which we judge ourselves, which form a picture of who we want to be, aspects of the character we hope to have.”³³ Others have argued that values are the glue that holds society together. To us, they are primarily Christian virtues that resonate with the Sermon on the Mount and the Golden Rule, namely honesty, fairness, caring, responsibility, respect, loyalty, citizenship, and self-control. Significantly, these characteristics are widely acknowledged as being absent from the nation’s moral culture, a circumstance giving rise to the Character Education Movement that is presently sweeping the nation’s K-12 schools.³⁴ Unquestionably, values should be of major importance to any curriculum designed to prepare students for lives of usefulness in the Twenty-first Century. In any college, but especially one that is Christian, they should be clarified, debated, judged, exemplified, demonstrated, and tested.

Learning Community: “A community is a partnership of people committed to the care and nurturing of each other’s mind, body, heart, and soul through participatory means.” Communities become *learning* communities, when the settings are on college campuses and students and teachers are concerned about each other’s well-being and are committed to sharing, caring, and participating rather than owning, manipulating, and controlling. There is open communication as well as commitment to the shared values and common purposes of individual members. Learning communities are also built on a foundation of equality and justice; they are adaptable and open to conflict resolution; and members

feel empowered to shape and influence the direction of the group.³⁵ A learning community need not be Christian, but a Christian college must be a learning community.

Assumptions

We will further our quest for clarity by articulating assumptions basic to our report. For us, assumptions are those circumstances and trends that are stable and predictable. They are factors upon which we can depend to shape the internal and external worlds that will impact liberal learning at Pepperdine University in the Twenty-first Century. We could provide a lengthy list of assumptions, but in the interest of brevity and cogency, we include only those that are especially relevant to liberal learning. Moreover, we group them into two distinct categories: assumptions that relate to the institution and assumptions that relate to the student body.

Institutional Assumptions

One: Although Seaver has not fully realized the promise of a Christian college as we define it, and few have, it is making measurable progress. We expect that progress to continue. We also expect Seaver to remain faithful to its historic ties to the Churches of Christ by retaining a serious commitment to Biblical Christianity, introducing curricular innovations such as a strong vocal music program that will feature the cultural contributions of that tradition, assembling and retaining a “critical mass” of faculty who are active members in the Churches of Christ, and increasing the percentage of Seaver students committed to that faith tradition from 15 to 25 percent.³⁶

Two: Classic liberal arts colleges study the liberal arts and the liberal arts only. Few such colleges exist today, and certainly Seaver is not one of them. George Keller, noting that 60 percent of its degrees were vocationally related,

³² For an elaboration of this argument see Richard John Neuhaus, “The Christian University: Eleven Theses,” *First Things*, January 1996 (59): 20-22. The development of Pepperdine University and Seaver College as a “Christian College,” and the difficulties associated with that task, is well told in Hughes, “Faith and Learning At Pepperdine University.”

³³ Willimon and Naylor, 64.

³⁴ See “Concerned Parents Push Character Movement,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 16, 1996, A8.

³⁵ Willimon and Naylor, chpt. 10.

³⁶ Twenty-five percent is the target figure established by the Religious Standards Committee of the Pepperdine University Board of Trustees. The Seaver strategic plan stipulates 20 percent.

humorously described Seaver as a pre-professional school pretending to be a liberal arts institution. That conclusion ignores the strong general education, or liberal arts component (50 percent) of each degree granted. With such an emphasis, we may assume that Seaver will remain a liberal arts college, albeit a modified one with significant pre-professional programs. The goal, as former Yale University President Bart Giamatti said, will be to educate for both life and livelihood.

Three: Seaver will remain a residential (as opposed to commuter), undergraduate college with limited enrollment of 2500 FTE, whose student body will retain many traditional characteristics, especially age (eighteen to twenty-two year olds). More than one-half of all students will live on campus in university housing, while many of the remainder will live in private housing a short distance away. Assuming a holistic approach to education, the co-curriculum will become even more important as the college strives to meet the demands of liberal learning. Therefore, Seaver will leave to others the instruction of older adult learners and the heavy use of “virtual university” technologies.

Four: Compared to state and even other private schools, Seaver will remain a high tuition college with high fees for room and board. Thus, demographic and economic factors that will transform higher education elsewhere, especially in southern California, should only minimally impact the composition of the student body. Because of the high percentage of economically privileged students, Seaver will have a special responsibility to prepare them for a world they have not yet experienced but upon graduation soon will.

Assumptions About Students From The General Population

In 1993, historians William Strauss and Neil Howe published *13th GEN: Abort, Retry, Ignore, Fail?* in which they explored the mindset and circumstances of today’s college students. The study has many critics, but members of our commission found that it helped explain

and define the behaviors and perspectives manifested by many of Seaver’s current students. With the onset of the Twenty-first Century, however, all but the last of the 13th Generation, also known as “Generation X,” will have matriculated college, ready to give way to a successor cohort known as the Millennial Generation. So far, very little has been written about this newest group, but since their parents are the Boomers (born between 1943 and 1960), we endeavored to learn something about the children by studying the parents. We also assume that some of the characteristics of Generation X will also mark the Millennial Generation. Because most of the literature tends to be fairly critical, we acknowledge that our general profile of Twenty-first Century college students may be unnecessarily bleak. At the same time, the accepted canons of scholarship demand that we remain faithful to our source materials. We, therefore, assume the following about the *general student population* that will seek a liberal learning experience in the Twenty-first Century.³⁷

One: Studies show that one of every two students eligible for college at the dawn of the next century will have grown up in a severely dysfunctional family. These families will grapple with problems ranging from parental divorce, to illegitimacy, to sexual abuse, to chronic household debt, to self-absorbed fathers and mothers who have time neither for children nor for civic engagement. Described as “abandoned” by theologian William Willimon, the prospective college student will have spent an average of four hours per day since birth watching television. Alcohol and prescription drugs

³⁷ Howe and Strauss, *13th GEN: Abort, Retry, Ignore, Fail?* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993). See also Geoffrey T. Holtz, *Welcome to the Jungle: The Why Behind “Generation X”* (New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 1995). Although the literature on the Boomers is extensive, we found Wade Clark Roof, *A Generation of Seekers: The Spiritual Journeys of the Baby Boom Generation* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994) to be particularly helpful. For an innovative look at generational types in the development of American history, see Strauss and Howe, *Generations: The History of America’s Future, 1584-2069* (New York: William Morrow, 1991).

will have been easily accessible, and some students will have been arrested for drunk driving and drug consumption. Most students will have attended church irregularly, while some will already have contemplated suicide.³⁸

Two: Knowledgeable observers predict that Twenty-first Century learners will have little patience for hypocrisy and that they will evaluate people on the basis of deeds rather than on words. Suspicious of the work ethic, they will look for “short cuts” to complete assigned tasks. Most of the Millennial Generation will have minimal loyalty for basic institutions--government and school--and they will exercise a highly subjective religious life, rejecting the church but embracing the spirit. Although technologically sophisticated, next century learners will celebrate the traditional values of chastity and the nuclear family; they will also approve of women working outside the home, of interracial marriages, and of gay relationships.³⁹

Three: Citing the decline of SAT scores as evidence, scholars also predict that the general student population will be poorly prepared for the academic rigors of a liberal learning experience. Currently one-third of all freshmen nationwide need remedial courses of one kind or another, and one-half of California State University’s entering freshmen failed to pass their mathematics or English proficiency examinations. Similar measurements suggest that geographical literacy is equally suspect. The difficulty most Twenty-first Century learners will have with written and oral communication means that most of them will seldom love reading enough to check a book out of the library. Students of the next generation will have erratic personal schedules, ill-formed study habits,

³⁸ The serious implications of watching television are discussed in Robert D. Putnam, “Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 28(Dec. 1995): 664-683. For church attendance figures, see Larry B. Stammer, “Church Attendance Falls to 11-Year Low,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 2, 1996.

³⁹ Douglas Brinkley, “Educating the Generation Called ‘X,’” *Washington Post Education Review*, April 3, 1994, 1; Roof, 27.

short spans of attention, and little aversion to cheating. With a high school academic year encompassing only 180 days (compared to 210 in Europe and 240 in Japan), and with seniors excused from one-half of those, collegiate freshmen will not be prepared for a rigorous liberal arts curriculum.⁴⁰

Four: Studies suggest that many students of the Twenty-first Century will suffer seriously from lack of self-esteem. This malady helps explain why suicide will continue as the second leading cause of death among the Millennial Generation. As the children of narcissistic adults, learners of the next century will have a survivor mentality, confronting problems on their own and classifying people as winners or losers. They will have little respect for tradition, and even less for authority. When something goes wrong, they will tend to blame themselves. According to Willimon, meaninglessness, fragmentation, and isolation will mark the lives of Twenty-first Century students. And since many of them will have no sense of responsibility, education will represent not so much an opportunity to change the world as to get a job.⁴¹

Assumptions About Students Who Will Actually Choose to Enroll In Seaver College

More than ten years of statistical data gathered from applicants, admitted students, enrolled freshmen, and graduating seniors at Seaver College enable us to identify trends that doubtless will continue into the Twenty-first Century. Those trends enable us to make some fairly clear assumptions about what future

⁴⁰ G. Phillip Cartwright, “Technology & Underprepared Students: Part One,” *Change* 28 (January/February, 1996): 45. A 1989 study revealed that 98 percent of the high-school students surveyed said they had let others copy their work. A subsequent survey of 3000 students indicated that 78 percent had cheated on tests in high school. See Robert J. Grossman, “Student cheating: tough test for society,” *Rotarian*, June, 1996, 25.

⁴¹ Willimon and Naylor, 13, 6, 15, and 17. Richard Morin, “Much Ado About Twentysomethings,” *Washington Post* National Weekly Edition, Jan. 31, 1994, 27, argues that Generation 13 does not suffer from disaffection or displacement.

classes will look like on the Malibu campus. Significantly, the profile of those classes will differ substantially from the general profile of the Millennial Generation described in preceding paragraphs.

One: Students who elect to come to Seaver in the Twenty-first Century will be better prepared academically and have more resources economically than their peers in other institutions. SAT scores will average 1140 (compared to 1013 nationally), and the number of students with family incomes above \$100,000 will exceed 33 percent (compared to 13 percent nationally). We also assume that students entering Seaver in the next century will be less interested in developing a meaningful philosophy of life than in being financially affluent. At least 60 percent of students will choose the college because they think Pepperdine graduates get better jobs than do graduates from other institutions. Seaver freshmen in the Twenty-first Century will be far more interested in raising a family than in promoting racial understanding and in becoming an authority in some field of knowledge rather than in being involved in environmental cleanup projects. More than one-half of them will have had experience with alcohol consumption. Students entering Seaver in the next century will be divided between conservative and liberal attitudes regarding sexual conduct. Some 75 percent of them will insist that just “liking” someone is not sufficient grounds for sex, 68 percent will think that abortion should be legalized, and 69 percent will sanction homosexual relations.⁴²

Two: Six out of every ten students enrolling at Seaver in the Twenty-first Century will be women. Available data show that a student body with women in the majority will demand a strong general education program as well as a major that prepares students for careers in one

of the professions, principally legal. A majority of women will stimulate social activism on campus and will work to make the political climate more liberal. More women will also mean an increased preference for sexual abstinence in female/male relationships, and, interestingly, for hard liquor as the binge drug of choice.⁴³

Three: Survey data suggest that the ethnic composition of the Seaver student body will not change significantly in the next century. The college’s strategic plan envisions an ethnic minority population of 20 percent, with international students making up an additional 10 percent of the overall student body. Since 60 percent of our students will come from California, the preponderant ethnic groups will likely be Asian and Hispanic.

Four: The Religious Standards Committee of the Pepperdine Board of Trustees envisions a student component from the Churches of Christ that would equal 25 percent of the entire Seaver student body. Given the historic tension between the college and the Churches of Christ and the modest economic means of most members of that fellowship, achieving a 25 percent level may be difficult. Reaching it, however, will not jeopardize the academic quality of the entering class. Indeed, data suggest that more students from the Churches of Christ will likely improve academic quality.⁴⁴

Five: Survey data suggest that students of the next century will come to Seaver with less interest in joining a fraternity or sorority than did their peers of a generation earlier. They will come to college, moreover, with less experience

⁴² Institutional Research, “Seaver College Faculty and Entering Freshmen Comparisons, Fall 1995” (unpublished analysis presented to Provost Steve Lemley, October 28, 1996) and “Seaver College: Student Characteristic Study, Fall, 1995” (unpublished analysis presented to the Blue Ribbon Committee, Fall, 1995).

⁴³ “Seaver College: Student Characteristic Study, Fall, 1995”; and various graphs and charts attached to Norman Fischer to David Baird, July 8, 1996, Files of the Blue Ribbon Committee. For data of alcohol usage see “Drug and Alcohol Analysis, Seaver College, 1993” (Unpublished analysis prepared for the Dean of Student Affairs, 1993).

⁴⁴ For data relative to the SAT and ACT scores of enrolled Churches of Christ students, both freshmen and transfers, see Paul Long, “Enrolled Students Only: Fall Semester, All Enrolled VS Church of Christ,” (unpublished analysis presented to Distribution, July 11, 1996).

in doing volunteer work and with less of a commitment to church attendance.⁴⁵

By combining our assumptions about college-age students in general with those relative to the smaller population that will actually enroll in Seaver College, we can deduce a fairly accurate profile of Twenty-first Century freshmen. The picture we infer from the data, while not always encouraging, provides no pretext for despair. Indeed, what we see represents a significant opportunity for Seaver to fulfill its mission as a Christian college.

⁴⁵ Various graphs and charts prepared by Institutional Research and enclosed in letter from Norman Fischer to David Baird, July 8, 1996, Files of the Blue Ribbon Committee.

CHAPTER 3

THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

We live in a world of dramatic change. In the span of one lifetime, the industrial age has metamorphosed into an information age, and a capitalist society has mutated into a knowledge-based society. These transformations have made ours the richest nation in history, but the dividends have come at a cost and have not always been evenly distributed.

In the next century, change will most likely accelerate. What will happen in the domain of technology demonstrates this point. According to Bill Gates, computers connected to the information “Superhighway” will reconfigure Twenty-first Century culture as dramatically as Gutenberg’s press transformed society in the Middle Ages. Every social institution or enterprise will be affected, including home, workplace, school, government, church, and leisure activity.⁴⁶

Because of the “Superhighway,” students of the next century will have access to unimaginable quantities of information. Today, the store of knowledge doubles every few years. In the Twenty-first Century knowledge will most likely double in a matter of months. There seems to be a relationship between the amount of knowledge generated and the ability of the computer to process it. In the past twenty years, for example, capacity of the average personal computer has increased from 4,000 to eight million characters of memory. In the near future memory capacity will exceed one billion characters. As the growth in PC memory capacity suggests, information creation will continue at such a stunning rate that cognitive overload will be an ever-present danger.

The Information Age will substantively alter the Twenty-first Century workplace. Technology will make many jobs obsolete. Between 1950 and 1982, for example, 140,000 telephone operators lost their positions as a result of microelectronics. But what technology takes away it can also give back. The great majority of the job categories recognized by the U.S. Bureau of Census in 1990 were created within the past fifty years, most as a result of technological innovation. But the new “jobs” are substantially different from the old ones.⁴⁷

Jobs in the Industrial Age were tightly defined positions that generally involved the making and moving of goods within a larger organization. By the year 2000, such traditional jobs will account for no more than one-eighth to one-sixth of the work force in developed countries. The remainder, or untraditional “jobs,” will be held by what Peter Drucker calls “knowledge workers” and “service workers,” the successors to Industrial Age capitalists and laborers.⁴⁸

Organizations of various kinds will employ knowledge workers to use information to solve problems. These specialists will work as members of a team, making singular contributions toward a group solution. Because each assignment may require different information, knowledge workers will frequently have to retool and retrain themselves with minimum direction from the organization. Many knowledge workers will

⁴⁷ Herbert Applebaum, “Work and Its Future,” *Future* 24 (May 1992): 340; Gates, 253.

⁴⁸ Peter F. Drucker, “Toward a Knowledge-based Society,” *Current*, February 1993, 4-6, from Electronic Collection #A13663742, Expanded Academic Database. This particular article is a chapter from Drucker’s *The Post-Capitalist World* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), 89-100. See also Drucker, “The Age of Social Transformation,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, November 1994, 53-80.

⁴⁶ Bill Gates, *The Road Ahead* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1995), 9.

keep flexible schedules and work out of home offices.⁴⁹

Service workers, according to Drucker, will find employment in an array of different activities. They will occupy positions as health-care providers, correction officials, human-service workers, and retail cashiers, to name only a few.⁵⁰ The social challenge of the Information Age will be to ensure the dignity of service work and the service worker. If Drucker is correct, that endeavor, along with caring for those who find it impossible to survive without external support, belongs not to government or the corporation, but to the social sector. Society in the Twenty-first Century, therefore, will depend upon non-profit institutions and volunteers to dignify the contributions of service workers and to minister to the social and economic needs of the unfortunate. In the next century the social sector of society will offer unparalleled responsibilities and opportunities for those Seaver students who will live lives of usefulness and for the faculty who will train them.⁵¹

The world's demographic profile in the next millennium will be as different as its workplace. By the year 2010, some 60 percent of all American households will contain no person under the age of eighteen. Ten years later some 20 percent of the total population will be over sixty-five years of age, of which nearly 10 percent will be eighty years of age or older. The over-sixty-five age group, George Keller has noted, will control some 60 percent of the nation's disposable wealth. Consequently, that part of the population age eighteen or under has less capital resources now than ever before. Thus, traditional students attending Seaver College in the next century will be fewer in number than previous generations and will have fewer

monetary resources than did their parents or grandparents.⁵²

In the next century, liberally-trained college graduates will live and work in a society characterized by ethnic diversity and social pluralism. In 1994, twenty-two million persons, or 8.5 percent of the total population of the United States, was foreign born, a figure some 3.1 percent higher than thirty years before. Each year the United States accepts more immigrants than the rest of the world combined. Over 80 percent of those who immigrated during the 1980s originated in non-European areas such as Asia, Mexico, and Central America. Most immigrants settled in only six of the fifty states, with the greatest percentage choosing California. By the year 2000, "minority" groups, many of whose members are native born, will comprise California's majority population. The number of Hispanics in the general labor force will increase by 36 percent between 1994 and 2005, and the number of Asians will increase by 40 percent.⁵³

Twenty-first Century Seaver graduates will enter a workplace that features almost as many women as men. Between 1982 and 2005, the percentage of women in the work force will increase from 43 to 48 percent. Men will likely retain numerical advantage in the workplace, primarily because more and more women will choose to delay a career until after completing a college degree. In the next century, therefore, students at Seaver can expect to have a higher percentage of females as classmates and subsequently as superiors in the professional world.⁵⁴

A diverse population and work place merely reflect a world that is speedily shrinking in size. Indeed, rapid transportation, world-wide media, and instantaneous electronic communi-

⁴⁹ Applebaum, "Work and Its Future," 40; and Jan M. Grell, "Flexible Schedules Energize the Work Force," *On the Horizon*, 2(3): 5, <<http://sunsite.unc.edu/horizon/pastissues/vol2no3/social1.html>>.

⁵⁰ Drucker, "The Age of Social Transformation," 53-80; Brad Edmondson, "Work Slowdown," *American Demographics*, March 1996, 7.

⁵¹ Drucker, "Toward a Knowledge-based Soc.," 5.

⁵² A. Stone, "Family 'shift': Most Households Have No Children," *USA Today*, May 8, 1992, 10A, from The Editors, "Childless Families Outnumber Families with Children," *On the Horizon*, February 1992, 1(2), 7 <<http://sunsite.unc.edu/horizon/pastissues/vol1no3/social4.html>>.

⁵³ Maryall Jacobi Gray, et al., "Student Access and the 'New' Immigrants: Assessing Their Impact on Institutions," *Change*, September/October 1996, 41.

⁵⁴ Edmondson, "Work Slowdown," 6.

cation have transformed our planet into a “global village.” Today we wear clothes manufactured in Indonesia, buy shoes crafted in Italy, purchase vacuum cleaners assembled in Mexico, and drive cars built in Japan. We eat beef produced in Argentina, plums grown in Chile, and apples ripened in New Zealand; we use oil produced in Saudi Arabia, buy diamonds mined in South Africa, and harvest medicinal plants found in Brazil. And on our local television stations we watch programs produced in other nations, including Mexico, Japan, Korea, Germany, and England. Not surprisingly, concepts like “nationalism” and “citizenship” have taken on new meaning. Rather than identify with a traditional nation-state, people think of themselves as citizens of the world. In the next century, this current trend toward globalism will accelerate and force most Americans, including Seaver graduates, to re-focus their attention on the Pacific Rim countries rather than on European states.

Socio-economic conditions in the Twenty-first Century will challenge the commitment of Seaver students to liberal learning set in the context of a Christian worldview. How to cope with the disparity between the richer and poorer elements in society will constitute one of the challenges. According to a 1994 U.S. Census Bureau report, the share of the total national household income obtained by the population’s lowest fifth has been dropping for years, falling from 4.2 percent in 1968 to 3.6 percent in 1993. In the same period, the share of the top fifth rose from 42.8 percent to 48.2 percent. Although the “rich” and “poor” were not static groups and the economic “pie” was probably smaller in 1968 than in 1993, more than 15 percent of the population still fell below the poverty line—an annual income of \$14,763 for a family of four. Some 20 percent of all eighteen year olds or younger fell into this group.⁵⁵

If Seaver graduates in the next century will have to cope with a shrinking middle class, they

will also have to contend with the causes and consequences of a weakened family structure. Assuming that present trends continue, each day in the new millennium some 2,500 American children will witness the divorce or separation of their parents. No more than one-half of all children between the ages of fifteen and seventeen will live with their birth-mother and birth-father. Between now and the year 2010, the number of households headed by a single person will climb from fifteen million to nineteen million, an increase of 21 percent and double the rate of married-couple households. Every day in the next century, more than 1,000 unwed teenage girls will become mothers, and ninety children will be taken from their parents’ custody and committed to foster homes. Every day, over 2,000 youngsters will drop out of school, 3,610 teenagers will be assaulted, 630 will be robbed, and 80 will be raped. Every day, 100,000 high school students will bring guns to school, 500 adolescents will begin using illegal drugs, and 1,000 youngsters will begin drinking alcohol. Every day, twenty-nine Americans age fourteen to twenty-four will die violently, thirteen by their own hand. Given the instability of many Twenty-first Century families, students who enter Seaver College will arrive psychologically wounded and socially fragmented. Their understanding of community and commitment, moreover, will be immature and incomplete.⁵⁶

The same pathology afflicting the family--self-indulgence, fragmentation, and disengagement--will impact all society in the next millennium. Alcohol consumption and substance abuse will continue as a major national problem. Today college students alone drink on an average thirty-four gallons of alcoholic beverages per person per year at a total cost of \$5.5 billion dollars, or \$446 per person.⁵⁷ Marijuana use is on the increase, as is crack cocaine, he-

⁵⁵ Ronald Steel, “The Domestic Core of Foreign Policy,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, June 1995, 85-86; Howe and Strauss, 35.

⁵⁶ Howe and Strauss, 33, 58; “Census: Household Growth to Slow Through 2010,” May 2, 1996 <http://...ies/librarywire/96wireheadlines/05_96/N96_05_02_fzd.html>.

⁵⁷ Willimon and Naylor, 8.

roine, and other “recreational” drugs.⁵⁸ Fear of AIDS has tempered but hardly eliminated sexual promiscuity.⁵⁹ The plagues of gang warfare, crime, racism, materialism, neighborhood blight, and white flight will continue to trouble urban America. An even more pressing problem for the Twenty-first Century is what sociologist Robert Putnam in his famous “Bowling Alone” article identifies as the disappearance of “social capital.” Other scholars attribute the same malaise to the decline of participatory democracy.⁶⁰

Putnam defines social capital as the networks, norms, and trust that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives. Social trust and civic engagement—both manifestations of social capital—are critical to a functioning democracy. According to Professor Putnam, America’s stock of social capital has been shrinking for more than a quarter century and is likely to continue to do so. Participation in many conventional voluntary associations, such as the PTA, Elks club, the League of Women Voters, the Red Cross, Boy Scouts, labor unions, and even bowling leagues, has declined by roughly 25 to 50 percent over the last

two or three decades.⁶¹ And Americans are spending less time than they did a generation earlier in socializing, participating in a political rally or a town meeting, and attending a literary discussion or a church service. Moreover, they are voting less in both national and local elections. Put differently, they are disengaged from civic involvement.⁶²

What accounts for this anemic democracy and why are Americans “bowling alone”? The biggest reason by far, Putnam says, is “the technological transformation of leisure” or the emergence of television. The typical adult watches eighteen hours of television programming per week; the typical teenager twenty-one hours per week; and the typical child as much as forty hours per week. Whether there is a negative correlation between television watching and community involvement is not yet clear, but scholars do believe that tenacious viewing generates pessimism about human nature, makes leisure a private affair, induces passivity, retards reading, and may even increase aggressiveness. Indeed, most observers conclude that too much time before the television leaves Americans disengaged from civic responsibilities, a circumstance that makes their society vulnerable to attacks from both within and without. Social disengagement, says Putnam, is “the single most important problem facing America.”⁶³ And it is a condition that presents a special problem for

⁵⁸ Alexander Astin in *What Matters in College: Four Years Revisited* (San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass, 1993), 119-22, defines as “Hedonists” those new freshmen who come to college with habits of drinking beer, smoking cigarettes, and staying up all night and who also support legalization of marijuana. This population comes to the university with low high school grades, poor study habits, and a high level of boredom. At college their hedonism is generally enhanced “by joining social fraternities and sororities, socializing and partying, and being involved in intramural sports.” Moreover, “the student’s hedonistic tendencies may be weakened...by involvement in religious activities, engagement in academic work, commuting, and getting married.” Astin’s study is based on a 1989 follow up study of almost 25,000 freshmen who entered colleges throughout the U.S. during the 1985 fall term.

⁵⁹ See “Fewer college freshmen endorsing casual sex, survey finds,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 13, 1997, 1-4.

⁶⁰ Robert D. Putnam, “Bowling Alone: America’s Decline in Social Capital,” *Journal of Democracy* 6 (January 1995), 68-70.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Putnam, “Tuning In, Tuning Out,” 666, 677-80. A recent poll published by the Roper Center for public Opinion Research at the University of Connecticut argues that Putnam’s conclusions “are premature—if not simply wrong.” See “So Much for the ‘Bowling Alone’ Thesis,” *The Washington Post National Weekly Edition*, June 17-23, 1996, 37.

⁶³ Ibid.; Scott Heller, “‘Bowling Alone,’ A Harvard Professor Examines America’s Dwindling Sense of Community,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 1, 1996, A10-11. See also Dan Fost, “Farewell to...,” *American Demographics*, January 1996, 42-43. The civic disengagement Putnam identifies and worries about would seem to nullify the viability of what Drucker calls the “the social sector,” the non-profit segment of society that would minister to those who fail as knowledge and service workers.

Seaver College. How can students be engaged in liberal learning when they have been disengaged from social reality most of their lives?

The religious environment of the Twenty-first Century will be as unique as the socioeconomic environment. If present trends hold, church attendance will decline from contemporary levels. A national survey completed in January 1996, for example, found that only 37 percent of Americans said they had attended church in the previous week, down 12 percent from 1991. Only 17 percent, some 5 percent less than in 1991, said they had attended a Sunday school. Church attendance dropped most significantly among the Baby Boomers but continued about the same in the Generation 13 cohort.⁶⁴

According to sociologist Wade Clark Roof, the structures and nature of American religious life will change substantially in the next millennium. Primarily because of birth rates, the percentage of Protestants in the United States will decrease from 66 to 50, while Catholics, primarily because of immigration, will increase from 23 to 30 percent. Fifty percent of all Catholics in 2005 will be Hispanic. "Other" religious groups will increase from 1 to 10 percent of the population. Within this category, Islam will be the fastest growing religion. Judging from developments over the past two decades, pluralism will continue to distinguish American religion in the new century. Eighteen years ago a scholar counted 1200 different religions in the United States; more recently he counted 2200.

Although more than 80 percent of Americans will claim to be Christian in the Twenty-first Century, one-half or more of them will be unchurched and know little about religious tradition. For many, the spiritual journey will be more important than identification with a particular denomination or church. They may speak in spiritual talk, but traditional religious language, e.g., sin and redemption, will be alien

to them. Instead, they will seek wholeness, healing, and connectedness in a varieties of venues. Most Americans will believe that one can be a good Catholic/Jew/Protestant without going to church.

Present trends suggest that in the Twenty-first Century a "New Spirituality" will permeate American religion. Of principal concern will be "woundedness," a notion that individuals are victims of society, family, the church, and themselves. Rather than talking about Christ, seekers of the new religion will speak about "recovery" from personal wounds and will bond with fellow seekers over needs and feelings. They will define religion as a journey to realize self potential and gather in small-group situations to share their stories, much like Twelve-step programs do today. In sum, the religious landscape anticipated for the next century will take exception to the assertion that wholeness and healing come through an active belief in Jesus Christ lived out in a community of believers.

Whatever the domain--technology, workplace, population, family, society, or religion--the Twenty-first Century will present both challenges and opportunities to all liberal learners. Those who will live lives of usefulness in the new millennium will do so by choice rather than by chance. Moreover, they will manifest particular qualities, possess detailed knowledges, and employ certain skills that will be available primarily through a broad educational experience, such as provided by Seaver College.

⁶⁴ Larry B. Stammer, "Church Attendance Falls to 11-Year Low," *Los Angeles Times*, March 2, 1996, B4-B5. See also article on recent poll in *The Washington Times*, Jan. 18, 1997.

CHAPTER 4

QUALITIES, SKILLS, AND KNOWLEDGES REQUIRED FOR PRODUCTIVE LIVES IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Lives of usefulness in the Twenty-first Century will demand more preparation, sharper skills, keener insight, and a larger faith commitment than they required in former times. Indeed, the professional and popular press is preoccupied with discussions and articulations of the different qualities, skills, and knowledges that the coming century will demand of each individual. To provide a comprehensive list of those characteristics is beyond the scope of this report, but we can identify those attributes that must be the concern of institutions of liberal learning. The Blue Ribbon Commission assumes that if the basic qualities, skills and knowledges required for productive lives in the Twenty-first Century are known, educators can more easily design a curriculum that will produce them.

Qualities

A life of meaning and purpose in the next millennium will acknowledge and model the reality of God. For such a life, the Sermon on the Mount will define “authentic Christianity.” It will embrace also those values that are basic to human society, namely honesty, fairness, caring, responsibility, respect, loyalty, citizenship, and self-control. A context of trust will distinguish the useful life: the truth will be spoken, promises will be kept, and worthy leaders will be followed.

The Twenty-first Century will require men and women to have the inner strength and courage to stand up for what is true, good, and beautiful, even when that position may be unpopular. Those who live successfully in the next century will think and act independently, and they will be able to accommodate diversity (po-

litical, socioeconomic and intellectual) without assuming that all behaviors and ideas are of equal value. They will have empathy for those who are struggling or who are in pain. They will also have an ability to adapt to different situations, the capacity to live with ambiguity, the genius to accept a multi-vocal society, and faith to participate in deliberative democracy.

To lead a useful life in the next millennium, one must embrace the principles of a pluralistic society. These standards will require respect for minority interests even when those interests are in conflict with majority goals. These standards will also promote compromise when disagreements threaten the peace of the community.⁶⁵

Out of concern for the community, productive citizens of the Twenty-first Century will promote the development of “social capital.” Thus, they will join in common cause to support individuals who have been marginalized by the Knowledge Society, who are ill physically or mentally, who have lost the capacity to care for themselves, who lack hope because of self-abuse or the abuse of others, and who subsist day-to-day without any sense of God and his graciousness. Useful citizens of the next century will have the self-confidence to live in a highly competitive environment and will possess the ability to learn from mistakes and to deal with failure.

Workplace Skills in the Information Age

⁶⁵ David R. Hiley, “The Democratic Purposes of General Education,” *Liberal Education* 82 (Winter 1996): 20-25.

Knowledge workers in the Twenty-first Century, says Michael Dolence, must be “broadly educated problem solvers who can acquire knowledge in a wide range of ever-changing hybrid disciplines. In blunt terms,” he concludes, “the Information Age may demand the primacy of broad-based liberal arts education.”⁶⁶ In other words, the new knowledge workers must know how to learn, to communicate effectively as speakers and as writers, to listen actively, and to think independently and critically. Above all, they need to know how to use information or data to solve problems. Workers in the Information Age must be able to act with self assurance in leadership roles; they must know how to make decisions, understand the consequences of those decisions, and accept the responsibility for them. In addition, they must have effective interpersonal skills (listening, conversation, courtesy, and civility), an ability to adapt and be flexible in different situations, a sensitivity to multi-cultural issues, and a willingness to exercise self control for the sake of broader loyalties.

In the Twenty-first Century successful workers will need a new set of skills. To deal with the ever-shrinking “half life” of information and technologies, they must know how to learn continuously and independently with minimal direction from the organization; to translate general preparedness into specific preparedness; and to be able to work in teams that are constantly reformulated. Knowledge workers in the next century must know how to resolve controversy without conflict and to access, screen,

assimilate, and associate rapidly gargantuan amounts of information. They must also be able to complete an assignment with total accuracy on time and to work efficiently and effectively without complaint. The knowledge worker, moreover, will benefit from having had some kind of prior work experience.

Knowledges

In addition to qualities and skills, a life of usefulness in the next century will require an in-depth grasp of multiple knowledges. Among these is the knowledge of the Christian world view, that is, comprehension of the Bible as God’s revelation of himself, an understanding of the sovereignty of God, and a recognition that faith is a legitimate “way of knowing” truth but that “without works, [it] is dead.”

Useful lives in the Twenty-first Century will have knowledge of those events and acts in time and space that give texture, meaning, and coherence to the human experience. They will work diligently, furthermore, to extend the traditions that give significance and definition to the human story.

In the Information Age, Peter Drucker asserts that successful stakeholders will have mastered one or more specialized knowledges. This type of erudition, however, will have little value unless it is applied and made productive in combination with other specialized, but different knowledges.⁶⁷ Because of the obsolescence of expertise or the requirements of a new task, workers will often have to acquire new and different knowledges. Some advance understanding of different ways of knowing can best accommodate that process. Workers fully prepared for the Twenty-first Century, therefore, will know something of the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and aesthetic arts.

In the next millennium, Information Age workers must also understand the planet as a “global village” rather than as a multitude of independent nation-states. Goods, services, and information will flow without regard to political boundaries. Because supplies of natural re-

⁶⁶ Dolence, 43. Ironically, Richard Hersh, President of Hobart and William Smith Colleges, recently found that parents and students placed higher value on salable technical skills necessary to find and fill the all-important first job than the supposed benefits of the classic liberal arts education. He also found that although the business community gives lip service to valuing a liberal learning experience, they fault liberal arts programs for not developing good work habits, not encouraging maturity and independence, not promoting ethical behavior, and lowering academic standards. See Lois Graff, “Social--What is an Undergraduate Education All About?” *On the Horizon* <<http://sunsite.unc.edu/horizon/pastissues/vol3no3/social.html>>.

⁶⁷ Drucker, 64-68.

sources are finite, depletion of the rain forest in Brazil and pollution of the atmosphere in the Ukraine will impact the entire world.

Thus, the qualities, skills, and knowledges necessary to live lives of usefulness in the next

millennium are complex, profound, and extensive. Significantly, those same qualities, skills, and knowledges are also the focus of liberal learning as defined by the Blue Ribbon Commission.

CHAPTER 5

LEARNING EXPERIENCES NECESSARY TO PROVIDE THE QUALITIES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGES REQUIRED TO LIVE LIVES OF USEFULNESS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

We have previously identified some of the qualities, skills and knowledges required to live lives of usefulness in the Twenty-first Century. Our task now is to describe and reflect upon the nature and design of various learning experiences that can help provide those necessary attributes. We look first at the undergraduate or baccalaureate degree program as a whole, and then at each of its three component parts: general education, specialized education (the major), and the co-curriculum.⁶⁸

The Undergraduate Degree Program

Any curriculum that will prepare students for the Twenty-first Century must aspire to the highest possible level of quality. In late 1995, the Education Commission of the States identified twelve attributes of quality undergraduate education. These attributes, based upon extensive research, are worth including here without elaboration. Educational quality begins with an organizational culture that 1) values high learning expectations, 2) respects diverse talents and learning styles, and 3) emphasizes the early years of collegiate study. A quality curriculum requires 4) coherence in learning, 5) synthesis of experiences, 6) ongoing practices of learned skills, and 7) integration of education with expe-

rience. Finally, quality instruction incorporates 8) active learning, 9) assessment and prompt feedback, 10) collaboration, 11) adequate time on task, and 12) out-of-class contact with faculty.⁶⁹ Because Seaver is a Christian college, a quality curriculum also requires 13) student dedication of their talents to the service of God and of men in the name of Christ.

The organizing principles for quality liberal learning at Seaver College are not only humanistic, historical and philosophical, but they are also theological. They are humanistic because they support the idea that the proper study of mankind is man. Since this humanistic study is as applicable to literature as it is to the natural sciences, the content of subject matter is of less interest than the concerns of subject matter. The principles are historical because man cannot be understood except in the context of his historical experiences. Furthermore, historical research is the foundation of scholarship in any field, and an historical orientation is the point of departure for almost every learning experience at the collegiate level. These principles are philosophical because general education must encourage reflection, that is, concern for general principles rather than details; meanings rather than sequences; interpretation and evaluations rather than descriptions. And the principles are theological because the ultimate objective of the Christian in scholarship is the clarification of theological meanings. A clear understanding of the content of the Christian faith should be the

⁶⁸ The most recent and authoritative study of the undergraduate curriculum is Jerry G. Gaff and James L. Ratcliff, ed., *Handbook of the Undergraduate Curriculum, A Comprehensive Guide to Purposes, Structures, Practices, and Change* (San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996). Those who chart Seaver's curriculum for the Twenty-first Century should read this work first.

⁶⁹ Quoted in "What Research Says About Improving Undergraduate Edu.," *AAHE Bulletin*, April 1996, 5.

most urgent concern of all who study and work at Seaver College.⁷⁰

The thirteen attributes of a quality undergraduate education and the four organizing principles of liberal learning are foundational to all that is accomplished at Seaver College in general education, specialized education, and the co-curriculum.

General Education

Although general education has been part of the undergraduate degree program at Pepperdine/Seaver College since 1937, its goals have never been precisely articulated. The literature on what future goals should be is extensive, considering the general education reform movement that has swept the nation over the past decade. Previous goals included “sharing a common heritage,” “developing mutual responsibility,” “making a commitment to moral and ethical behavior,” and “integrating diverse groups into larger society.” The common denominator was a character education that would prepare students for the duties of citizenship in the modern world.⁷¹

As a rule, general education has been delivered by the survey courses in the humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, communication, and religion. These courses supply what John Henry Newman calls “the great outlines of knowledge” and “the principles on which it rests.” The survey courses represent the conserving and transmitting functions of the college and university. And like others in the general education curriculum, they are designed to “broaden” students’ knowledge and help them “see connections” between disparate subject areas. Careful study of the great books of Western civilization, as the experience of Seaver College suggests, can achieve the same objective. In-depth study and research in the discipline lie in the province of specialized educa-

tion. The major prepares students for a job, but general education prepares them for life.⁷²

Not all educators, scholars, politicians and parents agree that general education translates into a composed and useful life. Many students who graduate from college today do not seem to have the characteristics of a generally educated person: “that is, having such qualities as a broad base of knowledge in history and culture, mathematics and science, the ability to think logically and critically, the capacity to express ideas clearly and cogently, the sensitivities and skills to deal with different kinds of people, sophisticated tastes and interests, and the capability to work independently and collaboratively.”⁷³

A new concept of general education is emerging. No longer does general education equate with breadth and involve a sampling of courses from the broad array of academic disciplines. Simple exposure to different fields of study is inadequate. General education should instead:

- provide students with a generous orientation to the intellectual expectations, curricular rationale, and learning resources of the institution;
- enable students to acquire specific skills of thought and expression, such as critical thinking, writing, speaking and listening, that should be learned “across the curriculum” in several different courses;
- permit students to learn about another culture and the diversity that exists within our own culture in terms of gender, race, ethnic background, class, age, and religion;
- help students integrate ideas from across disciplines to illuminate interdisciplinary themes, issues, or social problems;
- encourage students to study subjects not part of their majors at advanced levels;
- provide students with an opportunity near the end of their course of study to integrate

⁷⁰ Sandin, 83-84.

⁷¹ Quoted in John L. Rury, “Inquiry in the General Education Curriculum,” *The Journal of Education* 45 (1996): 179.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 180-81.

⁷³ Jerry G. Gaff, *Strong foundations: Twelve principles for effective general education programs* (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges, 1994), ii.

their learning experiences in a senior seminar or project; and

- ensure that students experience a coherent course of study, one that is more than the sum of its parts.⁷⁴

Significantly, the current Seaver College general education curriculum reflects much of the new paradigm. Freshmen Seminars provide a measure of orientation to the resources of the college; the non-Western requirement provides insight to other cultures; Western heritage employs an interdisciplinary approach; most majors require some kind of minor or concentration outside the specialized field of study; and many majors require a senior project. But in other ways, the current curriculum is lacking, especially in “across the curriculum” activities, capstone learning experiences, coherent courses of study, opportunities to pursue detailed studies beyond the major, and interdisciplinary illumination of themes or social problems.

Fundamental to any successful general education program, of course, is a clear articulation of learning objectives. At Seaver College, we feel, those objectives are not always apparent. Students, faculty, and staff should engage in a *great conversation* about the goals of general education and the *learning experiences* required to meet those goals. To begin that conversation, we propose as general education outcomes student acquisition of certain skills that are learned within particular contexts, explicated by certain individual perspectives, and deduced from the interconnectedness of the learning process.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Ibid., iii-iv.

⁷⁵ In the preparation of these specific outcomes, we have been influenced by the experiences of Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts, and Saint Francis College in Loretto, Pennsylvania, and the recommendations of Robert Sandin. See “Contexts, Perspectives, Connections: Grounding General Education Outcomes in Professional and Liberal Arts Majors” (a paper presented to the AAC&U Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., January, 1996), “Report from the General Education Task Force” (a report presented to the faculty of Saint Francis College, Loretto, Pennsylvania, April 20, 1993), and Sandin, chpt. 4.

We define the components of the proposed general education program as follows:

Skills

- Effective Thinking. Seaver students should think effectively in a variety of reasoning processes, including critical, creative, and scientific. One who thinks *critically* can logically interpret the ideas of others through analysis and evaluation. A *creative* thinker takes risks, draws on inner resources to advance original ideas, and recognizes connections between seemingly unrelated ideas. One who thinks *scientifically* engages systematically in observation, presumption, experimentation, and analysis. Students should be able to combine the critical, creative, and scientific thinking methods to solve problems in vastly different fields and endeavors.
- Effective Communication. Seaver graduates should be able to receive and convey known facts and interpretations without difficulty. Effective communicators read, listen, and view actively. They transmit clearly the result of their own thinking in written, spoken, and visual presentations.
- Information Literacy. Students who graduate from Seaver should be able to identify, access, manipulate, use, and present information from a variety of sources and media.
- Life Management, Career, and Interpersonal. Because the complicated problems of society and workplace require creative solutions, Seaver students in the Twenty-first Century must have the ability to work as part of a team, to conduct independent research, to execute project-oriented tasks, to engage in life-long learning, and to complete assignments accurately when requested. Moreover, graduates must possess a sense of self-worth, the ability to make informed decisions, the desire to act as agents of change, and the willingness to challenge as well as passively accept the status quo.

Global Contexts

- The Natural World. The men and women who graduate from Seaver College should be comfortable with scientific vocabulary, method, and reasoning in their cultural role as stewards of the natural world. They should be able to apply the skills of effective thinking, effective communication, and information literacy to the natural world. They should appreciate and understand science as a cultural imperative, given its relationship to health, safety, and environments, whether natural or man-made. Students should also understand the limits of scientific knowledge and the proper use of scientific experts.⁷⁶
- The Social and Cultural World. Seaver students prepared for the next millennium will understand that human beings live in a heterogeneous world remarkable for its interdependence and diversity. To contribute to this world, graduates must base their decisions about other individuals and groups on historical, philosophical, economic, linguistic, and political realities. Graduates will know that members of one culture behave and speak differently from another. Moreover, they will be able to place their academic, professional, and personal experiences within international and multi-cultural contexts.⁷⁷

Individual Perspectives

- Spiritual. Without an understanding of the Christian faith as revealed in Scripture, students will leave Seaver with an incomplete education. In a world where competing ideologies are commonplace, students must systematically grasp the basic philosophical

and ethical implications of Christianity and understand the relevance of those ideas to the life-situation of man. Moreover, they must be able to discriminate between the Christian faith and non-Christian philosophies and religions. Students should understand that an individual's concepts of virtue, truth, character, and of a "life worth living" are determined by their faith in God, His revelation in Israel, and in Jesus Christ. Students should also appreciate the historical contributions of the Churches of Christ, especially that tradition's strong commitment to biblical Christianity and to rational religious thought.

- Historical. History links the past and present and points the way to the future. It offers both explanations and predictions. The historical perspective enables students to see that, over time, the natural world and the social/cultural world have been connected. Students can also unify their accomplishments through personal histories that connect past experiences with present and future achievements.⁷⁸
- Aesthetic. Education is incomplete unless it nurtures an aesthetic sensibility that awakens receptivity to the beauty around us. A mathematical proof might be elegant, a bridge's outline striking, a film moving, a concerto exquisite, an idea beautiful, or an essay finely crafted and harmoniously presented. Exposure to the major accomplishments of world cultures, both past and present, should incite a continuing appreciation of, and appetite for, those artistic elements that enrich the entire human experience.
- Personal. Intellectual understanding does not always imply engagement. To become one's own person, the student must apply and internalize concepts, approaches, and knowledges from a personal perspective. Rendering an ethical judgment transforms a

⁷⁶ Morris H. Shamos, "The Myth of Scientific Literacy," *Liberal Education* 82 (Summer, 1996), 49.

⁷⁷ For the international requirements on the curriculum, see American Council on Education, *Educating Americans for a World in Flux: Ten Ground Rules for Internationalizing Higher Education* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1995).

⁷⁸ Lynne Cheney in *50 Hours* proposes a six-semester core course to address this context. See pp. 19-25.

person; acting out of a sense of social responsibility reflects commitment; service to another enhances learning.

Interconnectedness

- **Connections.** “The student who can begin early in life to see things as connected...has begun the life of learning,” said Mark van Doren. Technological, economic, and demographic changes have guaranteed that the world of the future will be highly interconnected. A coherent education will help prepare students for this unique environment. Students must have structured opportunities to apply skills learned in one context to solve problems presented in another. An inter-connected curriculum impresses upon students that learning does not end at the classroom door or the college gate, but rather continues throughout life.⁷⁹

A single, core course, or one chosen from a distribution of courses, may achieve the general education outcomes proposed above. Our commission also believes that those goals can be achieved through learning experiences repeated and reinforced across the curriculum. This latter approach assumes that learning does not necessarily equal teaching, that course completion does not equal student learning, that one program of general education does not fit all students, that individual courses are not “owned” by the instructors who teach them, or that important learning occurs only in the classroom.

An effective general education program requires some campus agency or person to certify courses that are a part of the curriculum and to determine whether the outcomes expected of the program are being achieved.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ For the connection between values education and “across the curriculum” approaches, see Bruce Jennings, et al., “Values on Campus,” *Liberal Education* 82 (Winter 1996): 26-31.

⁸⁰ Pat Hutchings, *Using Assessment to Strengthen General Education* (Wash., D.C.: American Association for Higher Education, 1991).

Since useful liberal learning in the Twenty-first Century requires an effective general education curriculum, we propose the following:

Recommendation 1. Because in Christ “all things hold together” and Christianity alone transcends academic specialties, we recommend that the Christian worldview permeate every aspect of the curriculum. At Seaver College the integration of faith and knowledge must be an imperative in every classroom, laboratory, studio, extra-curricular activity, and student service. To implement this recommendation we urge the Dean of Seaver College in cooperation with division chairpersons to organize faculty and staff workshops, seminars, and conversations that explore how best to incorporate the Christian worldview more fully into the life of the college.

Recommendation 2. To achieve clarity and coherence in the program, we recommend that faculty and staff undertake a great conversation as to the measurable learning objectives of general education appropriate for Seaver College. Once those goals are determined, adopted and published, the faculty should recommend a system as to how the desired outcomes can best be achieved, that is, through core courses, a distribution of courses, or through across-the-curriculum instruction.

Recommendation 3. In the interest of integrity and coherency, we also recommend that the Dean of Seaver College appoint a member of the faculty to serve as director of general education, with the responsibilities of publishing the goals for the program, evaluating courses or programs that would meet the

general education requirements, and assessing the overall effectiveness of the program.

Recommendation 4. Although general education goals can be met in a variety of ways, we recommend widespread use of “across-the-curriculum” learning experiences, espe-

cially those relating to Christian values and to skills in critical thinking, communication, information literacy, and interpersonal activities.

Recommendation 5. Integrity of the curriculum also demands that the Seaver Academic Council undertake or charge academic divisions to undertake a periodic review of every course in the Seaver catalog to see that course syllabi clearly state learning objectives, and that those objectives relate directly to the goals of general education and specialized education, as well as to the Christian mission of the college.

Recommendation 6. Since information retrieval is a competency demanded in a Knowledge Society, we recommend that skills such as e-mail, word processing, and information gathering be introduced both in Freshman Seminars and English 101 classes and, thereafter, pursued across the general education curriculum.

Recommendation 7. Because literature enriches society and enthusiastic readers contribute to the formation of social capital, we recommend that the literature and composition faculty recast the goals of English 102, with the basic course objective to be appreciation of literature rather than development of critical thinking skills.

Recommendation 8. Given the importance of a global perspective in the Twenty-first Century, we recommend that the Dean, faculty, and staff internationalize Seaver College and incorporate international students more fully into the life of the campus, by taking advantage of the rich diversity of cultures found in Los Angeles, by allowing an international dimension to permeate the academic curriculum, by sensitizing the faculty to international issues, and by capitalizing upon the full potential of Seaver's study-abroad programs.

Recommendation 9. Because of the location of Seaver College on the Pacific Rim and the increasing importance of non-Western cultures in world affairs, we also recommend

that the appropriate faculty globalize the Western Heritage component of the general education program to the extent that the contributions of certain non-Western cultures are included, namely Islam, African, Native American, and Asian.

Recommendation 10. Accountability to parents, employers, alumni and students demands an ongoing, longitudinal assessment of general education as well as the entire baccalaureate program. We recommend, therefore, that the Seaver Academic Council undertake the organization and administration of such a general assessment program.

Recommendation 11. We recommend that no student leave Seaver College without an understanding and appreciation of the historical roots, cultural contributions, and theological emphases of the Churches of Christ.

Specialized Education (the Major)

Alfred North Whitehead, an educational philosopher of the early twentieth century, proposed that students receive both general and specialized education. "The general culture is designed to foster an activity of mind," he stated, but "the specialist course utilizes this activity." An education should provide a person "with something he knows well and something he can do well."⁸¹ At Seaver College the responsibility for such an education falls upon the major course of study.

Seaver presently offers undergraduate degrees in thirty-six different major programs. Some majors require as many as seventy-three credit units of both lower- and upper-division work, or more than one-half of the total number of credits necessary for graduation, while other majors require as few as twenty-eight. The structure of different major programs also varies widely throughout the college. Characteristically, science and business administration curricula have hierarchical arrangements in which one set of courses leads to--and is a prerequisite for--the next level. Most humanities and social science

⁸¹ Quoted in Levine, 263-264.

programs have more flexible structures, where the curricular paths are less well defined and the possibility of individual choices are substantially greater. Many of the courses in these programs are open to all interested students without prerequisites.

Our committee believes that an in-depth study in specialized fields advances liberal learning. No one can master all the content and methods of all the areas in a liberal arts curriculum, but the major allows the student to dig deeply into the content and methodology of a single subject. But as the student masters the academic method in one area of study, he or she implicitly learns a great deal about the academic method used in other fields, for all academic disciplines understand, criticize, and create knowledge similarly.

A metaphor from the Great Plains will help illustrate this point. Our general studies courses survey the surface layer of earth. The major allows the students to drill down in separate areas located on the surface. When they bore deep enough, they strike the water table below and find a river connecting all the specialized areas. Whereas students thought of themselves as separated into different “holes,” they begin to understand that they were involved in very similar endeavors, that is, mastery of creative, analytic and critical skills common to all academic processes.

At least twice in the last dozen years, the faculty at Seaver College has subjected major programs to in-house reviews. To our knowledge, however, there has been no systematic evaluation of the role and function of the major in the curriculum, no assessment of its relationship to liberal learning, no articulation of the educational outcomes or goals desired, and thus no assessment of the effectiveness of the programs. The quality of our majors is fairly high, but Seaver students would be better educated if the faculty substantiated this conclusion with solid data.

National studies suggest that successful undergraduate majors at colleges like Seaver will have the following characteristics.⁸²

- *The major course of study has clearly articulated intellectual goals.* These goals might range from preparing students for graduate education to training them for ministry, from preparing them for positions in the workplace to training them for world citizenship. The goals of the major reflect the philosophy of the department, and they are consistent with the mission of the college, including the clear assertion that the source of all knowledge, or truth, is God.
- *The organizing principles of a major course of study are clearly defined.* Some majors are organized by units of time, by place, by analytic approach, by sub-fields, or by a combination of some or all of these. Other majors have a sense of logic, a progression of knowledge and techniques that move in sequential order. And majors can be organized around a set of problems or contested issues. All majors have at least one appropriate organizing principle.
- *Students are introduced to the subject matter in depth.* Depth, however, does not arise merely from the existence of an extensive factual base. A course of study has depth only if it offers a complex structure of knowledge, a basis for subsequent work, a central core of method and theory that introduces the explanatory power of the discipline, and if it unites all students who join in the study in a shared understanding of its character and aims. Depth is not achieved solely by exposure to greater quantities of a specified subject matter.

⁸² See *Integrity in the College Curriculum* (2nd ed.; Wash., D.C.: Association of American Colleges, 1990); *The Challenge of Connecting Learning* (Wash., D.C.: Association of American Colleges, 1990). See also *Reports from the Fields* (Wash., D.C.: Association of American Colleges, 1991); *Report of the Commission on Undergraduate Education [at Stanford]* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University, 1994); and Joan S. Stark and Lisa R. Lattuca, *Shaping the College Curriculum* (Needham Heights, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon, 1997).

- *A major course of study has a coherent and progressive curriculum that has a beginning, a middle, and an end.* The beginning courses are frequently well-organized surveys or introductions. The middle courses are generally sequenced, where successful performance in a 400-level course demands the knowledge or technique acquired in a 300-level course. As students advance, they work more with the primary materials of their concentration--texts, documents, artifacts, substances, works of art--and not with edited collections and laboratory codes. Students learn how to extract meaning from such materials according to the values and standards of the discipline. The end course provides learners in the major with an integrating experience.
- *Each course in the major has a complete syllabus.* The individual course syllabus explains the content and procedures of the class, but it also explains, within the context of both the major and general education, why students are taking the course.
- *Every major has a synthesizing experience for seniors.* Characteristically a synthesizing experience provides advanced students with an opportunity to integrate their knowledge, to make connections, and to demonstrate their capacity for independence and creativity.
- *Each major has a realistic assessment program.* Without indulging in frantic memorization, students demonstrate what they know and how well they can synthesize it by using portfolios, intellectual autobiographies, and interpretative essays.
- *Each major provides competency certification.* Faculty can certify the ability of the student to participate in active learning, assume and execute responsibility for outcomes, remain connected to knowledge networks, and pilot their own learning enterprises.
- *Successful majors have concerned and informed faculty advisors.*

Because liberal learning in the Twenty-first Century includes a well-designed and an effective major course of study, the commission makes the following recommendations.

Recommendation 12. To ensure academic integrity in the several specialized courses of study at Seaver College, we propose that faculty teaching in the major re-examine the goals and objectives of their program every three to five years, and that it articulate how those goals, objectives, and structures contribute to the major and to general education.

Recommendation 13. Because coherence in the major is desirable, we recommend that the appropriate faculty should structure the major course of study so that students move progressively to higher levels of understanding and skill.

Recommendation 14. Because general education is central to the mission of Seaver College, we propose that no course of specialized instruction should comprise more than 40 percent of the total number of hours required for graduation (excluding general education courses that may serve as prerequisites for the major).

Recommendation 15. To demonstrate the interconnectedness of knowledge and equip Seaver students with integrative skills, we recommend that every major course of study have some kind of unifying or capstone experience such as a senior project or thesis.

Recommendation 16. To ensure coherence and integrity in the curriculum, we urge Seaver Academic Council to approve no course in the major unless its syllabus indicates how the class's objectives further the goals of the major, the goals of general education, and the mission of the college.

Recommendation 17. We recommend that students completing a major course of study undergo some kind of assessment experience which will permit faculty to validate their appropriate capacity for life-long learning. Students would be asked to demon-

strate competency in active learning, a willingness to assume and execute responsibility for outcomes, an ability to navigate knowledge networks, and capacity to formulate their own learning enterprises.

Recommendation 18. To demonstrate the interconnectedness of all knowledge, we recommend that the Seaver faculty meet in regular seminars to explore the links between different disciplines.

Co-Curriculum

By definition, the co-curriculum is that part of the college educational experience where the affective part of the self is changed. Typically the co-curriculum includes everything outside the classroom that affects the lives of students, including social life, emotional well-being, physical health, spiritual life, and personal life. At the center of the co-curriculum is the development of the body and soul.⁸³

In the past, college officials managed the co-curriculum by dividing its concerns among different departments and people, i.e., intramurals, spiritual life, campus life, counseling, and volunteer center. Those staff members directly involved had common goals, but each department was in charge of its own domain of the student's development. The result was a co-curriculum that often had no unifying principle.

Recently, administrators and staff concerned with the co-curriculum have organized their work according to a new paradigm. This approach assumes that the educational promise of the co-curriculum can best be realized if it is organized around a guiding principle that impacts both the co-curriculum and the academic curriculum.

For Seaver College, the guiding principle is wellness--intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, physically, and socially. Wellness is achieved

when peace replaces depression, contentment replaces striving, goal setting replaces lack of direction, and hope replaces hopelessness. Students who are well realize wholeness and engage in self-actualization. Wellness is movement *away* from the destructive lifestyles encouraged by modern culture. It is movement *toward* the life of usefulness envisioned by George Pepperdine. Only "well" students will be healthy, contributing citizens of the next century.

The success of the wellness model requires a holistic approach to curriculum in particular and education in general. It works best when it is grounded in a learning community that relies heavily upon the assumption that students, faculty, and staff are "seriously concerned about each other's well being."⁸⁴ Faculty and staff participate in the planning of the co-curriculum and are present in the everyday lives of the students outside the classroom, i.e., eating in dining halls, visiting in residential halls, participating in Bible studies, and becoming involved in service-learning activities. Faculty and staff have training in basic counseling techniques, understand the importance of confidentiality, and work in partnership with the counseling center. The relationship among faculty, staff and student is *in loco amicus* (Aristotle's wise friend) rather than *in loco parentis* (surrogate parent). According to Willimon and Naylor, "The University should be the place where individuals are given the time and space for friendships to develop, where the virtues required of friends are cultivated, and where we are not clients, customers, caregivers, adversaries, but friends." Friendship then becomes the guiding metaphor for life on campus.⁸⁵

To achieve wellness by means of the co-curriculum at Seaver College, responsible units must plan sustained programs that integrate principles of the Wellness Model instead of see-

⁸³ For a careful study of the potential of the co-curriculum as a learning experience, see George D. Kuh, *Student Learning Outside the Classroom: Transcending Artificial Boundaries*, ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 8, 1994 (Wash., D.C.: Graduate School of Education and Human Development, The George Washington University, 1994).

⁸⁴ Willimon and Naylor, 146.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 93, 95. See also Barbara J. Thayer-Bacon and Charles S. Bacon, "Caring Professors: A Model," *JGE, The Journal of General Education*, 45 (1996): 255-69.

ing different activities as ends in themselves. Intramurals, for example, emphasize the development of life-long physical activity skills, rather than focusing merely on athletic competition. Additionally, the integrated units of Student Affairs units (Campus Life, Residential Life, Student Services, and Student Development) should plan programs and activities which support wellness education, and address such issues as eating disorders, stress and depression, and date rape.⁸⁶

The wellness model works best when students, faculty and staff are all involved. It must foster a co-curriculum that includes the social, ethnic, gender, and religious diversity of the campus. The co-curriculum will also integrate international and under-represented student groups into the life of the community. It, moreover, will identify leaders in each of those groups, and it will provide opportunities for them to develop and employ their skills. The co-curriculum makes campus diversity a characteristic to cherish rather than deplore.

Wellness also implies that the spiritual development of all students is a primary concern of the co-curriculum. With strong ties to the Churches of Christ, Seaver College should nurture the spiritual needs of students from that faith tradition without neglecting the needs of students from other religious backgrounds.

Finally, the co-curriculum is a foundation of any "learning community." "A community," according to Willimon and Naylor, "is a partnership of people committed to the care and nurturing of each other's mind, body, heart, and soul through participatory means."⁸⁷ Important characteristics of college learning communities

are communication, commitment, friendship, shared values and common aims. Real communities are grounded on a foundation of equality and justice, and they feature attributes of empowerment, adaptability, and conflict resolution. Learning communities give meaning to life and a glimpse of heaven.

To fulfill the promise of the co-curriculum in the Twenty-first Century, we recommend the following:

Recommendation 19. So that both faculty and staff can relate more effectively to current and emerging generations of students, we recommend that the Dean of Seaver College organize faculty and staff development workshops, seminars, and conversations based on the qualities and characteristics of those unique cohorts. As resources for these discussions, the Dean should use Student Affairs professionals as well as members of the faculty.

Recommendation 20. To provide structure, unity, and healing to students who come to the University with fragmented and unscheduled lives, we suggest that instruction on time- and money-management, communication and relationship building, and goal-setting and career choice be offered through a variety of venues, namely convocation, the Career Center, Residential Life Office, and inter-Greek council.

Recommendation 21. Because of the weak to minimal religious commitment of many students who will enter Seaver in the Twenty-first Century, we recommend that the co-curriculum incorporate even more opportunities for students to encounter God and His church. Among these opportunities might be a series of faith development seminars taught by a cadre of faculty and staff featured in the Convocation Series, more volunteer activities as expressions of Christian ministry, and empowerment of students of all religious backgrounds to contribute to the spiritual life of the campus.

⁸⁶ Thayer-Bacon and Bacon, *ibid*, emphasize that alcohol is a major problem on college campuses. See also William H. Willimon, "Reaching and teaching the abandoned generation," *Christian Century*, October 30, 1993, 1016-1019; "Drug and Alcohol Analysis" (Survey completed by Seaver College, Pepperdine University, 1993); and Henry Wechsler, "Alcohol and the American College Campus: A Report from the Harvard School of Public Health," *Change*, July/August, 1996, 20-25, 60.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 145. For other characteristic of the "learning community," see pages chpt. 10.

Recommendation 22. To better confront the pervasiveness of violence, depression, malnutrition, substance abuse, eating disorders, and dysfunctional relationships, we propose that the Dean of Student Affairs use the professional staff that reports to her to program regular activities that would promote wellness and wholeness in the co-curriculum. We suggest also that the university should provide financial resources sufficient to hire part-time staff trained in drug counseling, nutrition, and health education.

Recommendation 23. To more effectively minister to students from all religious traditions, we recommend that the university hire a professional trained in pastoral counseling.

Recommendation 24. Because a “learning community” is central to a Christian college, we propose that it become a strategic priority for Seaver College, with the Dean of the college organizing a special initiative to inform both faculty, staff, and students of the dimensions and value of such a community. Among other things, the college may want to create apartments for faculty and student affairs professionals within the residential community.

Recommendation 25. To help students manage their time better and to replenish the “social capital” among the Seaver student body, we recommend that the faculty, staff, and administration promote service-learning projects, encourage participation in volunteer activities, organize innovative reading programs, support intramurals activities and club sports, and themselves participate in Residential Life Office educational programs. Construction of the proposed recreational village would further this objective.

Recommendation 26. In light of social pressures and dysfunctional families that leave students with little sense of self or community, we propose that Seaver College strengthen residential life on campus by differentiating particular residential halls according to interest, age, or length of stay on campus. In addition to the current freshman halls, sophomore halls, and quiet halls, we would suggest international halls, wellness halls, and academic halls.

CHAPTER 6

DELIVERING LEARNING EXPERIENCES

IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Toward the end of his career as a baseball manager, a reporter asked Leo Durocher why he was retiring. "Sit Down! Shut Up! Listen! won't work anymore," he said. During the course of his three decades of managing, a major paradigm shift had taken place. An equally dramatic shift has taken place in education. How liberal learning will be delivered in the Twenty-first Century will vary widely from how it was delivered in earlier centuries. In the next millennium the paradigm will be learning rather than teaching, out-puts rather than inputs, ends rather than means.

Effective learning paradigms can be captured in seven categories: 1) self-directed learning (initiative learning), 2) creative learning (exploratory or discovery learning), 3) expressive learning (learning by doing), 4) feeling learning (attitude learning), 5) on-line learning (experiential and service learning), 6) continual learning (risk-taking learning), 7) reflexive learning (observing ourselves learning). The different learning paradigms have emerged simultaneously with the Information Age. No human being can transfer all the knowledge generated in the new age. The task of the university, therefore, is not to communicate information but to create communities in which students as learners discover and construct knowledge as well as solve problems.⁸⁸

In the Twenty-first Century, Seaver College must foster active learning rather than passive learning. Passive learning includes textbooks,

lectures, note taking, multiple choice tests, and desultory participation in wooden discussions. It has been described "as the transfer of pre-selected bits of information without requiring analysis, synthesis or original expression. Its style is solitary learning in competition with peers."⁸⁹

Active learning, however, is shared learning. To stimulate active learning, Seaver faculty must possess broad bases of knowledge, nurturing behaviors, technical skills, and mastery of a particular discipline. The faculty must also establish meaningful relationships with students, for research establishes that the student/faculty relationship--not ratio, but *relationship*--is the strongest determinant of student success at the collegiate level. Of course, such a relationship is fundamental to the existence of a learning community.

Learning communities and active learning are indivisible. In learning communities, participants communicate openly, share goals freely, build trust systematically, and learn collaboratively. Collaborative activities, scholars have demonstrated, are especially effective in helping students attain higher levels of learning and of character.⁹⁰

In the Twenty-first Century, Seaver College must be a learning community. It can achieve that status through a variety of techniques. Other institutions have found it useful to initiate students into a learning community by means of a "shared" educational experience during their first academic year. At Seaver, faculty and staff could group eighteen or so students into a single

⁸⁸ Robert R. Barr and John Tagg, "From Teaching to Learning--A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education," *Change*, November/December, 1995. See also "The Search for Next-Century Learning," *AAHE Bulletin*, March 1996, 3-6.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Boyd, 8-9.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

cohort and arrange for them to take three or four identical classes, namely freshman seminar, English composition, Western Heritage, and speech. Faculty of those classes might collaborate on assignments that would integrate the disciplines and promote collaborative learning. Such an arrangement would help students transition to college and develop a network of supportive peers. It would also help them understand that knowledge, like community, means connection and integration. Cohort learning, moreover, would simulate the Twenty-first Century workplace.⁹¹

Seaver as a learning community will offer a wide range of experiential pedagogies. Learn-by-doing opportunities range from internships to cooperative educational experiences, from study-abroad programs to field-study activities, from science laboratory projects to student publications, from teacher training to studio work, from peer tutoring to service-learning projects.⁹² Experiential learning frees students to dare and to create, confident that failure will not mean censure or humiliation, and that faculty will not be threatened by inquiring, skeptical, or egotistical students. Learn-by-doing activities, especially service-learning, respond to a compelling need to resuscitate altruism and to reinvest in "social capital."

The convergence of new educational approaches with new technologies has changed the traditional classroom. Colleges and students spent about \$9 billion on hardware and software for desktop computers in 1996--up from about \$5 billion in 1991. And the best estimate sug-

gests that one-half of the fifteen million U.S. college students and three-quarters of the faculty have access to e-mail and the World Wide Web. Students can deliver papers, get their homework assignments, check their course syllabi, send e-mail, look up library books, and interact with anyone in the world who is linked to the electronic network. Such amazing technological advances has not and will not make the traditional classroom obsolete, but they are certainly going to change the nature of the interaction that goes on in the classroom.⁹³

The Information Age has already changed the library. No longer is Payson Library, for example, a place where collections of books are managed, periodicals are housed, archives are stored, and research is conducted in the collections. The purpose of Payson now is to provide access to information through on-line services and CD-ROM data bases. A secondary objective is to train students in the use of information sources. The library staff provides on-line catalog services to the rooms and offices of both students and faculty via the local area network.

In this dynamic environment, the role of teachers is changing. They are co-inquirers, facilitators, knowledge navigators, researchers, synthesizers, architects, evaluators, certifiers of mastery, and above all mentors.⁹⁴ More than ever before, teachers also recognize that students learn in different ways. They think in terms of learning opportunities rather than of teaching "loads." Teachers define the classroom as a place where love for subject matter,

⁹¹ Vincent Tinto, et. al., "Building Learning Communities for New College Students: A summary of research findings of the Collaborative Learning Project" (paper presented to the AAHE Conference on Assessment, Wash., D.C., June 1996 and prepared under the auspices of the National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning and Assessment, School of Education, Syracuse University).

⁹² Patricia Sullivan, et. al., "Redefining Excellence: Experiential Learning Comes Into Its Own" (Presentation at the Annual Meeting of Association of American Colleges & Universities, Wash., D.C., January 1996), 2; see also Michel Marriott, "Taking Education Beyond the Classroom," *New York Times*, Aug. 4, 1996, Sec. 4A.

⁹³ "Technology big part of college experience," *The Star*, Aug. 12, 1996. There are a fair amount of observers who think that technology is highly overrated. See Clifford Stoll, "Invest in Humanware," *The New York Times*, May 19, 1996, OP-ED. Kenneth C. Green, "The Coming Ubiquity of Information Technology," *Change*, March/April 1996, 24-31, makes clear that use of information technology in the classroom has not gone much beyond putting slides and over-lays on the computer, and that getting full use of the technology is much more complicated and time-consuming than once thought.

⁹⁴For an excellent discussion of the teacher as mentor, see Laurent A. Parks Daloz, et al., "Lives of Commitment, Higher Education in the Life of the New Commons," *Change*, May/June, 1996, 11-15.

love for each other, and love for God's creation integrate to give meaning and purpose to life.

The forces that are transforming the role of the teacher in the Information Age are challenging the definitions and structures of academic time. Traditionally, academic credit has equated to the number of hours spent in the classroom, with one hour of "seat time" over a fifteen week semester equaling one unit of academic credit. To receive four units of academic credit, a student enrolls in a class that meets four hours each week for fifteen weeks. No one is permitted to enroll after the first week, and no one is permitted to complete the course early. Credit for a course by means of a challenge examination is rarely given to a student. Because of technological advances, different levels of student preparation, and the needs of the Information Age work place, Seaver College must provide a more flexible system of awarding academic credit in the next millennium.⁹⁵

In the Twenty-first Century, the baccalaureate degree should measure learning rather than "seat time." Many educators doubt that well-prepared high school seniors need four years of college work to meet the goals of the baccalaureate, and they also doubt that poorly-prepared and socially disadvantaged students can meet those same goals in four years.

Effective learning requires continual assessment, not only of the entire course of study, but of individual courses as well. An effective teacher builds into each course a cycle of assessments and feedback which ask and answer the question for each student and for the class as a whole. Assessment is to teaching what the tremble factor was for the architects of Ancient Rome, who were required to stand under their arches while the supports were removed. Teachers have traditionally used tests "to sort, screen, and certify...students," says Alexander Astin. The new learning paradigm requires longitudinal and comprehensive assessments of student development, one technique for which is

the student portfolio. Such evaluative techniques, infers Astin, enables teachers to focus upon the meaning of excellence, that is, the "values...that undergird our principal assessment activities in higher education."⁹⁶

To deliver liberal learning in the Twenty-first Century so that it meets the needs of a new generation of students, the Blue Ribbon Commission makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 27. To encourage wider use of active-learning techniques, we urge the Dean of Seaver College to organize summer workshops for faculty who wish to learn how to employ those techniques in their own classrooms.

Recommendation 28. To recognize excellence in the use of active-learning techniques, such as service- and computer-based learning in the classroom, we propose that the Provost of Pepperdine University establish a monetary award that would be given annually to deserving faculty, much like the present Luckman teaching awards.

Recommendation 29. To encourage community, connected learning, and retention, we recommend that Seaver College organize its freshman class into cohorts that would take three to four of their first semester classes together, with the teachers of those classes collaborating on common assignments and in-class discussions.

Recommendation 30. To help students address the meaninglessness in their lives, to demonstrate the connectedness of learning, and to introduce students more fully to the Christian mission of Seaver College, we recommend that freshman seminars include some common curriculum, perhaps based upon a single theme, preferably something

⁹⁵ Dolence, 27 and 81. See also Levine, chpt. 9, for an informative account of the structure of academic time, and pp. 158-61, for a history of the credit system.

⁹⁶ Boyd, 11-12. See also D. John Lee & Gloria Goris Stronks, eds., *Assessment in Christian Higher Education: Rhetoric and Reality* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, Inc., 1994) and Alexander Astin, *Assessment for Excellence: The Philosophy and Practice of Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* (San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass, 1993).

similar to the “Search for Meaning” theme used at Middlebury College.⁹⁷

Recommendation 31. Since “an institution that lacks refined instruments of program evaluation and rigorous instruments of student assessment is contributing to the debasement of baccalaureate education (says the AAC),” we propose that the Pepperdine University Board of Trustees mandate that no Seaver College faculty member should receive tenure, promotion, or step salary increases who does not use sophisticated assessment protocols in his or her teaching. We propose as well that Seaver College should terminate all academic programs that fail to establish an assessment procedure within the next five years. Although there are several longitudinal and comprehensive assessment techniques, the portfolio, such as that used in English composition classes, is highly recommended for individual courses.

Recommendation 32. Since skills in information retrieval are the *sine qua non* of the Twenty-first Century, we recommend that the university fund Payson Library to the extent that it can provide on-line services and CD-ROM data bases appropriate to the needs of active learning pedagogies.

Recommendation 33. Because students come to Seaver College with varying skills and backgrounds, we recommend that the Dean of the college appoint a Task Force of faculty and administrators to re-examine questions relating to academic time, especially self-paced learning, subject matter challenges, and number of units required for graduation.

Recommendation 34. To provide students with a sense of the wider world and enhance on-campus instruction, we recommend that the University Provost allocate funds annually to bring to Seaver campus major figures in literature, arts, politics, business, or religion.

Recommendation 35. To encourage use of experiential learning opportunities, we rec-

ommend that Seaver College faculty see such pedagogies as a substitution for traditional classes rather than as an addition to them. In this connection, the faculty should give students academic credit for compensated summer jobs pedagogically appropriate.

Recommendation 36: To enhance the classroom effectiveness of Seaver College faculty, we recommend that the dean establish a center for teaching and learning. This center should provide leadership and coordination in such areas as a) student learning assistance, e.g., peer tutoring assistance, advising, study skills assistance, disabled student assistance, research skill enhancement, and technological assistance; b) faculty development, e.g., summer workshops, team teaching, teaching methods development, interdisciplinary dialogue, colleague mentoring; and c) general education, e.g., faculty achievement awards, curriculum development, freshman seminar programs, curriculum adjustments, international program coordination, academic assessment, course evaluation, classroom assessment, alumni feedback, and general education student achievement awards.

⁹⁷ For the syllabus of this course, see Willimon and Naylor, 163-169.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The members of the Blue Ribbon Commission have endeavored in this report to discern how liberal learning can prepare students to live lives of usefulness in the Twenty-first Century. With more description than prescription, we have defined terms, articulated assumptions, and developed a likely profile of students who will enroll in Seaver College at the dawn of the next millennium. After reviewing the development of the current liberal arts curriculum at Seaver, we identified some of the technological, economic, social, and spiritual parameters of the next millennium that students will encounter once they graduate. Additionally, we identified the qualities, skills, and knowledges Seaver students will require if they expect to live usefully in an Information Age environment.

In our report, we devote considerable space to identifying the kinds of learning experiences--general, special, and co-curricular--that Seaver College must provide its students if it wishes to equip them for life in the next century. We also discuss some of the challenges associated with delivering the required learning experiences. Our report contains thirty-six recommendations. If embraced by faculty, staff, and students, our

recommendations, we believe, will help liberal learning at Seaver College fulfill some of its promise and ensure that Seaver graduates will be better prepared to live lives of usefulness in the Twenty-first Century.

We could have expanded every section of our report. The literature describing, assessing, and predicting the technological, economic, and social outlines of the next millennium is vast. Similar quantities of literature are available on other subjects addressed in the report, and more is being published every day. We did not intend for our report to be complete, only suggestive. Our goal was not to exhaust the topic of liberal learning in the next century, only to start a conversation. By identifying some of the issues, referencing sources for further study, and making specific recommendation, we hope that the conversation will be focused, structured, and informed. Above all, we pray that the conversation will end in action. Without action, we believe, the ability of Seaver College graduates to live lives of usefulness in the Twenty-first Century stands in jeopardy