

Educating for Civic Agency

By

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Introduction: Why Spirituality Matters to Civic Development

For me, I think of civic engagement on its own as a microwave, right? It can get hot and you can get stuff done quickly, but with spirituality, civic agency becomes an oven. You can do a lot more with an oven. The battles that we are going to be fighting for social justice, it's not just a one-time volunteer deal, it's going to take decades. If we are in it to win it, then we need something guiding us to get us through those hard days and through those times when we are not seeing results. That can be through religion, or that can be through that inner relationship with nature or a higher power, but change needs ovens, not microwaves.

— College Student

Painting a picture of academic acculturation at the expense of spiritual and civic development in higher education means looking for what is missing. I have noticed a few things over the five years I developed and managed the Puksta Scholars Program, a four-year developmental civic engagement program and intentionally diverse community at the University of Denver. Each year I updated the annual application for incoming first year students in order to seek out what I was really looking for: students who have a sense of who they are, who can exhibit critical thinking skills, and who are interested in further developing their civic and spiritual identities and capacities. Throughout the application development process I learned to ask students what they think and believe, who they are, and who they want to be—not what they have accomplished.

In reading over 500 hundred applications, I was surprised to see an overwhelming number of students mention in their essays the very direct connections between their

values, understanding of injustice, and motivation for civic engagement as it relates to either membership in or experience with a spiritual and/or religious community. I am not surprised, however, that such membership provides motivation for civic engagement through either teaching such values as a sense of brotherhood/sisterhood and responsibility to the poor, or providing experiential vehicles for learning and reflection such as youth group programs, one-time volunteer opportunities, and weeklong service trips. In fact, I identify my own civic development with experiences of service through domestic and international short-term service trips that were part of my experience growing up in a United Church of Christ congregation. What surprises me is how easily incoming students articulate these connections and the choice to include this “spiritual” aspect of their life on a college scholarship application in such an open and candid way. Reflecting on my surprise, I realize that I am not used to hearing college students talk about their spiritual life, or how it is connected to their civic identities and community-based work.

When students get to campus, they often silence the spiritual aspects of their life and identity. In a community organizing course that I taught we started the quarter with a self interest assessment—identifying various identities, personal experiences, and core values that shape an individual’s sense of self and how that then relates and is in connection to the larger community. Part of this activity is to identify one’s core values and the influential people and life experiences that contributed to this value-development. In addition to listing examples, including various religious and non-religious influences to value-development, I also use self-disclosure as one way to indirectly indicate to them

that talking about religion in the classroom is okay. Even after I have self-disclosed that my own values originate in large part from the Protestant Christian tradition, students will still generally avoid spiritual and religious references entirely.

Out of frustration and curiosity, I took the time to talk about this dichotomy with some of the students who I know have active spiritual and/or religious lives. I asked them why they do not talk about their spiritual-religious lives and identities when we are discussing things such as the development of core values, and why they think other students might also be hesitant to share. Their explanations generally fall into a two-part acculturation process of learning how to identify and behave within the college environment: 1) They have had campus-based experiences which have directly or indirectly taught them that spirituality and religion are not welcome or acceptable topics or identities within the college environment; which leads to, 2) A strictly compartmentalized spiritual life that is separate from their academic and campus lives and relationships—sometimes even restricting spiritual-religious activities and conversations to familial or high school relationships. Contextualized by their stories, this acculturation process seems to emerge from issues inherent in the positivist academic culture.¹ These issues center on the exclusive use of reason to acquire understanding and knowledge, and the perceived mutually exclusive relationship of rationality and education to subjective understanding and belief in a higher power.

¹ Positivism is an epistemology, or philosophy of the nature and scope of knowledge, that relies on sense, experience, and positive verification to authenticate knowledge (Adorno et al. 1976). Emerging from the Enlightenment's "scientific method," the intellectual lineage of positivism begins with French philosopher Auguste Comte, whose work was later revised by French sociologist Émile Durkheim among others. Critical theorists such as German sociologists Theodor W. Adorno and Jürgen Habermas criticize positivism's apolitical and anti-social approach to knowledge.

As a result of their experience of acculturation to the academy, students are left to either compartmentalize aspects of their identity, or struggle on their own with the development of a holistic and integrated identity in which they can bring their spiritual and civic lives together in a meaningful way. As an educator in the civic development field this troubles me. Students are not well-practiced in identifying, articulating, critically reflecting, and acting on their core values and the ways in which they make meaning of self, “other,” and the world. As a result, how could they possibly know how to engage in this same foundational process with others in order to effectively identify and address critical community issues that violate our collective democratic values?² These two processes of spiritual and civic development are interrelated, and few students in higher education are well supported and intentionally encouraged to engage with the development of their spiritual identities and civic capacities—let alone integrate them. This current culture in higher education is detrimental to the personal development of each student and to our larger democratic society.

² In the United States, core democratic values outlined in the Declaration of Independence (1776), The Constitution (1787), and the Bill of Rights (1791) include: governance by and for the people, responsibility to the common good, equality, justice, liberty, and truth (The U.S. National Archives).

Integrating Spiritual and Civic Development for Civic Agency³

The purpose of this book is to present an inclusive, credible, and practical argument for the integration of spiritual⁴ and civic development as an imperative for developing student civic agency for the democratic context. It is an argument for a new, third paradigm of civic agency that pushes beyond the previous two paradigms of the Civic Engagement Movement: 1) the liberal, or mobilizing, model, and 2) the communitarian, or volunteer model.⁵

The liberal paradigm, or mobilizing approach to civic engagement, treats individuals and the masses as passive, without agency or the ability to co-create their own society. It is a consumer model of political engagement where citizen consumers subscribe to predetermined agendas of elite experts, follow the rallying cries of leaders who draw on emotions to identify self as good and “other” as bad. The liberal approach polarizes power and interests, pitting “us” against “them,” rather than building diverse communities of mutual interest. In the mobilizing process, everyday citizens do not build civic skills or agency because politics is ultimately privatized and professionalized to the

³ Civic agency is the capacity of the individual and community to work across difference to co-create the world they wish to live in—a world that better aligns with their personal and collective values—and to imagine and act beyond the constructs of the current environment. This definition is from the scholarly work of Harry Boyte who describes, “The concept of civic agency highlights the broader set of capacities and skills required to take confident, skillful, imaginative, collective action in fluid and open environments where there is no script” (Boyte, 2008a, 1).

⁴ Spiritual development is the cultivation of spiritual engagement, or one’s ability to make meaning of self and other, and to bring our inner and outer lives together with integrity through our actions and engagement with self and other. See “Chapter Two: Spiritual Development in Higher Education” for further discussion.

⁵ The discussion of the three paradigms references a conversation with the author, Harry Boyte, 23 Sept. 2011. A summary of the three paradigms can also be found in his writing, Boyte 2005a.

experts. Although mobilizing is not a sustainable method of co-creation or civic development, mobilizers may achieve agenda items.

The second paradigm, a communitarian philosophy or community service model, emphasizes building a sense of community through volunteerism—in contrast to a culture of hyper-individualism. Such a paradigm emphasizes the social aspect of society while downplaying politics and power. For civic development practitioners, community service is a valued method for developing civic values and a sense of responsibility to community. However, a communitarian approach is more about developing the individual volunteer and less about developing civic agency within a community. The community service approach uses a deficit model, understanding the individuals and communities served as in need—in deficit—of the assets of the volunteer. The volunteer might discover personal values and a sense of social responsibility; however, he/she is not building individual or collective civic agency or political power. The “ideal citizen [as] compassionate volunteer” is a model that “neglect[s] to teach about root causes and power relationships, fail[s] to stress productive impact, ignore[s] politics, and downplay[s] the strengths and talents of those being served” (Boyte 2005a, 12; brackets added).

At the least, both paradigms neglect to build civic agency. At their worst, these civic engagement models actually strip civic agency from everyday citizens⁶ resulting in a powerless citizenry, incapable of engaging in democratic culture and politics. In

⁶ The term citizen is used here, and throughout this book, to define those who live in community together and therefore have a civic responsibility to one another, as well as civic rights within a democratic context. This term is not meant to define legal status provided by a government, but rather is used to describe the natural political relationship between people living in community with one another.

contrast, the civic agency model as a new, third paradigm involves everyday citizens as co-creators, actors—individuals and communities with the ability to solve problems and to take action (Boyte and Mehaffy 2008, and De Souza Briggs 2008). Civic agency includes building civic skills in order to critically evaluate problems and issues, collaborate across difference to solve problems, and create new cultures and institutions that better reflect our collective values (Boyte and Mehaffy 2008). It is not an avocation or a hobby—something we do when we have free time. Instead, civic agency is the work of a democratic culture.

The civic agency paradigm aims to push the Civic Engagement Movement beyond the “volunteer-vote plateau,” or the current stagnation of the civic engagement field.⁷ For the past thirty years, the Civic Engagement Movement has struggled to create a broadly applicable and democratic pedagogy, or theory and practice of teaching and learning, that moves students beyond basic volunteerism—one shot or short-term volunteer opportunities, which usually provide a direct service. Such volunteerism is one level of activity within the civic engagement spectrum, and often an entry-level activity. Volunteerism provides a direct service *to* others, it does not directly strengthen community capacity because it does not increase agency of the people within the community or build long-term, reciprocal relationships and partnerships. In addition, this

⁷ The plateau of the civic engagement movement as identified at the 2004 Wingspread conference, Institutionalizing University Engagement, where 41 leaders of the civic engagement movement met to assess civic progress in U.S. institutions of higher education. Their assessment identified valuable activity, but a lack of institutionalization or cultural reform, which resulted in raising the question: “Is it [higher education] ready for the radical, institutional change such a [community engagement] commitment will require?” (Brinkardt et al. 2004; brackets added).

type of volunteerism maintains the status quo, not addressing root causes or collaboratively solving critical community issues.

Currently, college students are largely disempowered and lack the knowledge of political concepts and public skills to be true civic agents (Boyte 2008a). Since the initial service-learning movement of the early 1990s, which transformed into the broader Civic Engagement Movement, higher education has come to an impasse, struggling to breach the “volunteer-vote plateau.” Civic engagement efforts have largely included co-curricular volunteerism and voting,⁸ and curricular service-learning and community-based courses, essentially a service provider or consumer model that is criticized for not achieving its goals (Boyte 2008a; Saltmarsh and Hartley 2011). While there have been discussions and efforts to increase capacity and depth within the civic engagement field, there is not as yet a broadly-accepted solution (Boyte 2000a, 2008a; Butin 2010; Levine 2007; Saltmarsh and Hartley 2011).

Pushing beyond the “volunteer-vote plateau” would include students actively engaging in the public work of systemically addressing critical community issues towards the development of engaged and lifelong civic identities, and more just and democratic communities. I propose that the addition and integration of spiritual development with civic development provides a powerful method to increase such civic agency.

⁸ Assessment of student civic engagement is generally quantified by how many hours of service are performed by students, the regularity of the service, and whether students are registered and exercising their right to vote. Civic engagement is less often measured through objectives such as the creation of public goods (co-creation), the number of community members involved (reciprocal collaboration), or measurable impacts that address community-identified needs (effectiveness of engagement). However, requests for impact-based assessment are increasing, such as in the 2010 and 2011 President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, which was redesigned by the Obama administration to include quantified community impact (Corporation for National & Community Service 2011).

Underlying the argument for the inclusion of spiritual development in higher education is the presumption that spirituality is simply a part of the human condition. Humans have a particular ability and desire to make meaning of self and world.⁹ In these efforts at sense-making we are often searching for truths, answering “big questions”, as Sharon Daloz Parks refers to queries about the purpose of life and how to live it (2000). Daloz Parks defines this process as “faithing,” or “the weaving of an overarching ‘canopy of significance’ that embraces, orders, and relativizes all of our knowing and being” (24). For many, holy texts and structures of religious organization create a framework for the meaning-making process; however, finding meaning through spiritual development can come both through religious and secular terms (7). While an innate human trait, spirituality is also developmental (Daloz Parks 2000). Moving from an implicit to explicit understanding of one’s spirituality is a developmental process, which educational and community-based environments can support. Spirituality can develop and strengthen, just as for most people emotional intelligence or physical fitness advances through awareness, intentional engagement, interaction, and practice.

Higher education is one sample system within U.S.-American society that struggles with talking about spirituality and democratic politics. For the past few decades, public dialogue about faith and politics has been largely confined to, or dominated by, the religious right. In response to this trend, moderates and liberals often disengage from publicly identifying how their spirituality informs their politics. Faith, religion, and diverse forms of meaning-making and value-development are innate to the human

⁹ “We are all meaning-making creatures. From our earliest days we are trying to make sense of our world” (Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm 2006, 131).

experience (Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm 2006); just as Hannah Arendt would argue that politics is part of the human condition (Arendt [1958] 1998). Bringing these two aspects of human experience together enhances spiritual and civic development, ultimately strengthening the goal of civic learning.¹⁰

The relationship between spirituality and democratic politics¹¹ is an important and usually absent component to the discussion of re-directing the Civic Engagement Movement. Scholarly literature on the importance of spiritual and civic development is increasing, but the literature generally defines spiritual and civic development as two separate and unrelated processes. However, the integration of the two processes is critical for personal and broader societal democratic development, and I propose the community organizing method as a framework to bridge the gap.

Community organizing is a relational and community-based civic framing—as opposed to a traditional framework of civic access only through official titles, systems, and structures—that emphasizes the public skills necessary for social change. Although the “grandfather” of modern organizing, Saul Alinsky, and his successor and former Industrial Areas Foundation (I.A.F.) President Ed Chambers were critical of the compatibility of community organizing and higher education, I argue that the community

¹⁰ “Civic learning enables people to practice civic politics, or self-directed public action” (Boyte 2008a, under “Civic Engagement: The Next Stage”).

¹¹ Aristotelian definition of politics incorporating the ideas that the political association (polis/city) are made of individuals coming together for good, and that democracy is a form of government shared by the citizens (Aristotle 1995, I.V-VII).

organizing method is both appropriate and essential for the context of civic development in higher education.¹²

The community organizing method is rooted in a history of organizing through churches to create powerful, faith-based community organizations that impact the decisions that affect their communities. Churches—and eventually synagogues and mosques—provided an ideal context for organizing, because they are pre-existing communities in which members are already organized around a set of core values (Alinsky 1989b). For other contexts, not as purposefully organized around core values and belief systems—like higher education—the organizing model should begin with the explicit identification and articulation of core values, first personal and then for the collective group. In community organizing, this process leads to the development of “self interest.” In contrast to “self-interest” as the selfish core precept of liberal individualism, community organizing uses “self interest” to identify the self in relationship to others, as the space between selfless and selfish (Alinsky 1989b; Chambers and Cowan 2003; Gecan 2004).¹³ Self interest is the framework for how individuals and groups learn how to interact with one another around specific issues. It is at the core of identifying whom you can work with, and how to work with those who are different. In this sense, self interest is directly related to democratic politics, defined as people coming together to

¹² Alinsky and Chambers identified social knowledge as the necessary wisdom for effective organizing, in contrast to the objective, rational, rigid, and unimaginative “mental makeup” manufactured by the educational system (Alinsky [1971] 1989, 166). Chambers wrote, “Formal education and degrees are basically irrelevant. Avoid Ph.D.s. They can’t act. They get lost in writing books for one another...The knowledge that matters for a potential organizer is social knowledge...” (2003, 110).

¹³ For further description of self interest as a community organizing concept see “Chapter Five: A Community Organizing Learning Model for Spiritual-Civic Development.”

make decisions about their community, and becomes a useful tool for engaged pluralism.¹⁴

In order to develop spiritually engaged civic agents who have the capacity to engage their communities and the democratic process towards systemic social change, students will need to develop public skills and build community with those who are different. They will also need to discuss, develop, and make explicit their own values and beliefs and bring them into dialogue with our collective democratic values. Such an inclusive spirituality and civic nature are foundational for the development of civic agency that rises above the suggestion that volunteerism and voting are any citizen's maximum capacity for civic engagement.

Integrated spiritual-civic development and learning models could go a long way toward ameliorating the epidemic loss of civic agency as evidenced by the spiraling polarization of political "debate," corporate management of public interests and resources, and growing economic disparity. If faculty and staff across universities, in any department, understood that corresponding learning objectives could simultaneously address both civic and spiritual development, implementation might be more prevalent in higher education. Implementing the Community Organizing Learning Model could help change the culture of teaching and learning, supporting the broader institutional reform

¹⁴ Pluralism as active engagement and participation with diversity, requiring the "cultivation of public space where we all encounter one another" (Eck 1993).

necessary for higher education to move from rhetoric to practical fulfillment of its civic mission.¹⁵

The arguments within this book are in response to the deteriorating democratic and civic fabric within the United States. I have chosen one sector out of many and particularly the higher education sector because it could serve as a role model by fulfilling its historical civic mission as an institutional community member and educational space where students can learn to become effective citizens.

Scholarly dialogues about spiritual and civic development are each in their own transitional stages. The area of spiritual development¹⁶ continues to struggle with legitimacy and place within higher education, and lacks a clear and accepted definition and pedagogy that are inclusive, qualifiable, and quantifiable for the higher education context. The importance of, and interest in, spiritual development is gaining more attention as higher education responds to the national frustration centered around the destructive impact of an increasingly individualistic U.S.-American culture. Yet, secular schools and those schools not deeply tied to their religious affiliation struggle with what inclusive spiritual development might look like—how does one include the deeply religious and atheist alike, along with everyone in between?

¹⁵ One of eleven key priorities for the next generation of the civic engagement movement as articulated by leaders in the field during a 2008 meeting at the Kettering Foundation, and summarized by Derek Baker: “Make the democratic role of higher education explicit as the top institutional priority. Although many institutions have incorporated civic engagement rhetoric, established centers, or implemented projects, in most cases the democratic role of higher education is not infused throughout the institution. Individual projects and programs are not enough to generate culture change. Instead, colleges’ and universities’ commitments to civic engagement should integrate reforms in a variety of areas, including promotion and tenure, disciplinary norms, curriculum design, pedagogy, student life, and institutional governance” (Saltmarsh and Hartley 2011, 8).

¹⁶ See “Chapter Two: Spiritual Development in Higher Education” for a history of the spiritual development dialogue in higher education.

In contrast, the Civic Engagement Movement¹⁷ has experienced a faster development over the past thirty years with a more defined purpose and structure, broader national and structural support, and a national call to refocus on the historical civic mission of higher education. The Civic Engagement Movement has now come to a point of re-orientation and is searching for a more focused vision and direction as it attempts to move beyond the fizzling service-learning movement that dominated the 1990s. In this process, the Civic Engagement Movement is finding renewed vitality as it looks to meet the current demand for outcomes-based assessment in higher education, and structural and cultural institutionalization of civic engagement efforts.

The resulting re-direction of the spiritual and civic development fields along with revived calls for higher education to fulfill its civic mission provide fertile ground for the introduction of new and effective theory and practice. In order to successfully argue for such new theory and practice, I have constructed theoretically and practically robust understandings of spiritual and civic development, as well as development and learning models that are in dialogue with a new vision for civic development.¹⁸

Educating for Civic Agency first aims to re-claims higher education's civic mission. *Chapter One: The Legacy of Higher Education's Civic Mission* presents a

¹⁷ Since the 1990s, a movement has been growing in higher education to teach students not only discipline-based knowledge, but civic skills, political and community-based concepts, and values for the public good that will help to develop citizens capable of working within the tensions of globalization (Jacoby 2009; Colby et al. 2007). See "Chapter One: The Legacy of Higher Education's Civic Mission" for a history of the civic engagement movement and emerging civic development dialogue in higher education.

¹⁸ The methodology behind this research includes: comparative construction of published interdisciplinary qualitative and quantitative research, reflections on my practice as an educator in the civic engagement field, and participatory action research and dialogical reflection with undergraduate students in the University of Denver's Puksta Scholars Program. See "Appendix A: The DU Puksta Scholars Program and Participatory Action Research Methodology" for further description of the Puksta Scholars Program and the participatory action research methodology used in this book.

historical and contemporary framework for the relevancy and significance of the Spiritual-Civic Development Model and Community Organizing Learning Model introduced later in the book. In this chapter, I situate the thesis of the book within the legacy of the historical civic mission of U.S.-American higher education through a summary of select critical historical moments from the development of higher education. This select history highlights the predominant civic purpose and accompanying spiritual aspects of higher education. The chapter ends with reflections on the current Civic Engagement Movement and the growing call for a new democratic epistemology, or philosophy of the nature and scope of knowledge, and pedagogy that can advance, authenticate, and institutionalize higher education's historical civic mission.

My primary argument and concern is the development of civic agency, and I understand spiritual development as a necessary component for this deeper civic development. However, I have intentionally chosen to structure the larger civic development argument by first exploring spiritual development (chapter two) in order to address the often polarizing use of “spirituality” and “religion” within the current U.S.-American socio-political sphere and higher education sector. I expect that for many readers an inclusive, credible, and practical discussion of spiritual development is a necessary precursor to the central argument for a new civic development learning model that integrates spiritual development.

Contemporary scholarly dialogues on both spirituality and civic development in higher education are in transitional stages and lack unified language that could strengthen each respective movement. In response, both chapters two and three, *Spiritual*

Development in Higher Education and *Civic Development in Higher Education*, identify constructed core concepts and present robust understandings of spiritual and civic development. Practitioner stories are included throughout each chapter to illustrate and illuminate core concepts.¹⁹

The fourth chapter, *A Model for the Integration of Spiritual and Civic Development*, integrates the work of the previous two chapters to construct a praxis-oriented Spiritual-Civic Development (SCD) Model, which both bounds the theory and applies it to the student development context of higher education. Chapter four demonstrates the correlations between spiritual and civic development using the SCD Model to illustrate developmental context, outcomes, and trajectories that lead to the development of spiritually engaged civic agents.

Using the SCD Model as a framework, chapter five, *A Community Organizing Learning Model for Spiritual-Civic Development*, applies the community-based philosophy and practice of the community organizing tradition to a foundation of critical pedagogy in order to construct a Community Organizing Learning (COL) Model for Spiritual-Civic Development. This new learning model addresses the critical gaps within current civic engagement efforts and suggests that the integration of spiritual-civic development is key to developing civic agents who can sustain change over time in the face of resistance.

Finally, chapter six, *Educating for Civic Agency in Higher Education*, discusses implications for the implementation of the COL Model in higher education. This chapter

¹⁹ See “Appendix B: Spiritual and Civic Development Dialogue Selection Criteria”

identifies key criteria for the inclusive and non-ideological integration of spiritual and civic development and suggests recommendations for practical application, as well as areas for further research.

Personal Motivation and Significance

In reflecting on my vocational direction and commitment to spiritual and civic development work, I recognize that the social justice-oriented Christianity I was taught as a child is my true operating foundation. This set of core values and beliefs about how the world “should be,” and how we should treat each other, strongly governs who I am and how I act in the world. The realization about how my faith-based values, appreciation for diversity and difference, and belief in our collective democratic values all interact, leads me to inquire about the relationship between spirituality, democratic politics, and social change.

In a professional context, as former associate director at the University of Denver’s Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning (CCESL), I taught community organizing, developed and managed student civic engagement programs, and consulted with service-learning faculty. In this capacity I witnessed with frustration the lack of knowledge, skills, and sense of power amongst students to change their community for the better—and conversely the frustration of faculty who want to teach civic skills, but don’t know how to teach differently or democratically. I also saw a growing superficiality; students who do not explicitly know what they value and believe, who they are, or who they want to be. They do not know because they are not encouraged to engage with deepening questions, critically reflective practice, and meaning-making

that requires subjective and objective reasoning to work together—not in isolation. Sometimes I fear that we are educating spectators; future leaders who will watch the world go by, unskilled and incapable of effectively engaging with others to create the world they would prefer to live in—a world in better alignment with their core personal values and collective democratic values.

I used to be discouraged, but I feel increasingly motivated to engage with this problem of spiritual and civic loss. My personal stake in this book is that I know students have the capacity to be civic agents for social change; and I can be part of the solution to increase the personal and collective sense of agency and public skills amongst college students. I can learn to teach differently; I can write and speak to change others' practices; and I can work with others to change the systems and structures that keep citizens unskilled, uneducated, and disempowered about their role in making decisions that affect our communities.

“Write what you know,” sage advice from my NYU Journalism Professor William Serrin, who encouraged me to focus on my passions. I have both written what I know, and what I desperately wanted to know. I wanted to know what role spirituality plays in civic agency, because it is a large part of my life narrative. I wanted to know first for myself, for better self-understanding, direction, and civic agency. Secondly, I wanted to know how to help others through this process. The integration of spiritual and civic development has been so critical in my life, and the lives of the students I work with that I suspect it may be critical for others too.

Spiritual and Civic Development Narrative

It is important to share my personal spiritual and civic development narrative in order to communicate my motivation, to illuminate possible biases, and more importantly to join on equal ground through self-disclosure with those who took part in this research and shared their stories with the reader and me.

I grew up as a minister's daughter, and I loved my home church congregation as a family. It was a community in which I felt supported, safe, and strong. I started developing core values based on the social justice-oriented Gospel, the influence of my parents' progressive religious and political orientation, and through experiences and relationships with "others" while participating in domestic and international Habitat for Humanity work trips to build houses *with* people living in poverty. For most of my youth, I was a spiritually motivated volunteer with a growing desire to more systemically address the injustices I experienced and witnessed.

A paradigm shift came in the form of my first year at college where I struggled with my spiritual identity. Having grown up in a predominantly Christian community I was now a minority in New York City, where I perceived the dominant culture of my classmates as either atheist/agnostic or Jewish—both religiously and culturally—and where the interplay of New York skepticism and academic objectivism created a cultural and identity clash in my soul. I tried to find a new spiritual community in what I realize now was an attempt to find support and orientation. I went to various churches each Sunday, started an on-campus ecumenical Protestant worship service, attended Christian-based student organization meetings, and joined the student-led gospel choir. These experiences were isolating, short-lived, occasionally cultish, and at times unwelcoming.

Nothing felt right, and nothing met my need for spiritual growth and support while also embracing the diversity and difference of the broader communities I belonged to as a student at New York University (NYU) and resident of Greenwich Village in New York City.

I started to develop a civic identity during college in addition to my spiritual identity, but these identities were not equally supported, nor encouraged to engage with one another. It created a dissonance because I could feel the connection between my spiritual and civic identities, but I could not articulate it and I did not know how to develop it. The discord became institutional as I witnessed the segregation of students by religiously-oriented campus communities, and as I learned that spirituality was not welcome in the classroom. My first-year composition professor once told me that I was “too passionate about my religious writing” as part of her feedback on assignments in which each student was allowed to pick the writing topic. At the time, this message was supported elsewhere by the general avoidance of the topic of spirituality or religion in the majority of my courses. Classroom assignments did not generally encourage students to critically reflect on or apply textual knowledge to personal or collective values, or multiple ways of knowing. As a result, I came to understand that religion and spirituality were not acceptable in college, and I slowly started shutting down my spiritual identity. Instead, I focused on my civic development, continuing work with Habitat for Humanity.

While I experienced and witnessed structural spiritual and religious isolation and segregation in college, I also learned a great deal about other religions and spiritual cultures through personal relationships—many connected to my civic efforts. I met and

made friends with orthodox and reformed Jews, Muslims, a variety of Christians, Atheists, and Agnostics, along with others with spiritual identities. These relationships became the diverse community of growth and support that I needed, and my spirituality grew in unexpected ways—outside institutional walls.

Then one morning during my junior year, I experienced another paradigm shift. I felt the earth shake like a massive train passing beneath my feet as the Twin Towers collapsed, and streams of New Yorkers ran past me, heading north on Broadway. That night I took a bike ride with a couple of friends to what was soon dubbed “Ground Zero.” It was a ghost town filled with an eerie quiet—a peacefulness that you never find in New York City. Quietly riding my bike with wind in my hair, I felt an awesome quiet, a holy peace. I was not afraid. I was not angry. I was not sad. I was witnessing the powerlessness of devastation, but also the peace of knowing that not everything was, or could be fully destroyed—a moment of transcendence. It was the calm before the storm; before the hundreds of first responders and security personnel took over, before the media and politicians became obsessed with “terrorism,” and before the knee-jerk reactions and wars that would kill so many more.

I spent the next week wandering around the Village, as those remaining created community in such a desolate place. Shop owners opened their doors and gave to the community and the movie theater ran free movies, but it was not joyful. It was a somber affair as we cared for one another as a *community* of diverse New Yorkers that we had never been before. It was one of the most beautiful experiences of my life.

That spirit slowly faded as our community was ripped apart by searches and detentions of Muslim neighbors, as fear outweighed hope and love within our national psyche, and as violent retribution became our nation's final reaction. I felt the most powerless I had ever felt. I was unable to stop the disintegration of what had become my spiritual and civic community. I was angry that what brought my diverse community together so beautifully had so quickly started to segregate us so far apart.

I started graduate school a couple of years later, getting involved with campaign politics over the summer in order to meet new people with similar values. Once school started the spiritual isolation within academia returned. During this time, there were also critical incidents in our family's church and the Church at large that negatively affected my nuclear and extended family. The hypocrisy and the injustice violated my core values, and I shut down my spiritual identity even harder, but my civic involvement grew. During my Master's degree I even co-organized a rally to end the genocide in Darfur, but still I searched for ways to make a systemic impact through my studies—sensing that protesting on the Capital steps of Denver, CO, would not likely end genocide a continent away.

During my doctoral studies, I worked professionally in two different environments, one a non-profit where the majority of staff identified with as Evangelical Christian conservatives, and the second developing and teaching civic engagement programs and classes in secular higher education. Both environments made me spiritually numb, unable to identify with the justice-centered, loving, inclusive Christianity of my

youth, and left feeling like a spiritual zombie in academia. While my personal spiritual and civic disconnection grew, so did my insight into spiritual and civic development.

I finally started to see the connection between spiritual and civic development more clearly through the struggles of the students I worked with, my doctoral studies, and my development as an educator in the Civic Engagement Movement. Looking back at my life, I see that while I did not know how to frame or integrate my spiritual and civic identities, I was naturally compensating. I flexed between each identity as I lost communities of support or experienced violations of my values, allowing one identity to carry me through the period of struggle with the alternate identity. My spiritual and civic identities have always been integrated and each has supported the development of the other—particularly when I felt in a place of struggle.

Learning about the history, philosophy, and practice of community organizing helped me to articulate and practice what I had understood early on in college as a connection between my spiritual and civic identities. As I build relationships with students and learn about their lives, I find that their stories are also laced with tension between their civic and spiritual identities, and particularly within the environment of higher education. I just hope it does not take them as long to learn that an integration of these identities is not just okay, but it is a place of strength and wisdom, and something to be nurtured.

I come to this topic and research with intersectional identities and experiences that embody access to and experiences of structural, contextual, and perceived privilege and oppression. Although not exhaustive, the following identities and experiences shape my

worldview: white, female, heterosexual, educated, and able-bodied; I am a U.S. citizen with immigrant and colonizing ancestors dating back to the Mayflower; I am culturally a New Englander and U.S.-American; I am English speaking and Spanish speaking as a second language; I grew up in an upper-middle class immediate family and community, and come from a working-to-middle class extended family; my spiritual identity is founded on social justice-oriented values of Christianity, the acceptance of multiple forms of spirituality, and a global sense of community; my civic identity is founded on democratic values and a sense of both local and global citizenship; and I am an educator and lifelong student, an artist, a mentor, a daughter, and a partner. While I do my best to identify and acknowledge my identities and experiences, and the potential biases they may present, I may hold biases that I am not able to self-identify.

As a researcher, I bring a critical lens to my related experiences and subjective knowledge. This subjective lens is useful in truly and holistically understanding what students are experiencing concerning spiritual and civic development in higher education. I must be careful, however, to understand and analyze the experiences of others as their own experiences, and not mine. When looking for themes in the data I work to avoid imposing my experiences or beliefs, and to allow the narrative of the data to expose its own themes and new understandings.

Reflecting on my own spiritual journey, I am keenly aware of the critical role higher education plays in either stifling or nurturing a young person's spiritual development. I understand the deep importance of developing a solid spiritual foundation, which is both necessary for personal fulfillment, but also for meaningful and

democratic civic engagement. I have a great appreciation for the diversity of religious and non-religious paths to meaning making and spirituality that humans embrace. I also differentiate between that which is institutional (i.e.: religious doctrine and dogma), and the actual beliefs, practices, and experiences of individuals. This study focuses on the actual beliefs, practices, and experiences of individual students who are developing their spiritual life and civic agency, and is not intended as a theological work.

The primary assumptions regarding spiritual and civic development that I bring to this research are:

- 1) All humans have the capacity for spiritual development, because we are by nature spiritual beings that make meaning of self, “other,” and the world we live in;
- 2) Humans are by nature political beings meant to live in community, where politics is about how we make decisions together as a community with mutual and varied interests;
- 3) Spiritual and civic development are synergistic processes and that due to this synergy spiritual development is necessary for the development of civic agency and public work; and
- 4) The development of civic agency amongst the citizenry is critical to a successful democracy.

I hope that by looking at *how* spirituality is connected to civic development, rather than *whether* it is, will provide greater insight into how higher education can support the development of spiritually engaged civic agents.

Chapter One: The Legacy of Higher Education's Civic Mission

I feel this real sense of urgency. How could I have all these resources and not do something? How could I have this knowledge and not act upon it to help other people in a similar situation, or even in a different situation? How could I *not* do something?

— College Student

A divisive national discourse, lack of public action and accountability around critical issues, and a priority of market values over what is good for “the people” dominates current U.S. American civic and political culture. There is a desperate need for a revived citizenry with democratic values, civic skills, and the capacity to take action on issues that matter. A renewed civic mission in higher education could respond to this need, but would require institutional reform and a reinvigorated public purpose and agenda.

In the last thirteen years, a spiritual development dialogue has emerged to accompany the legacy of higher education's civic mission. Specifically, emphasis on spiritual-civic development supports the public good and addresses individualism and consumer culture. It also pushes against extremist epistemological trends of overly subjective or objective reasoning within higher education.

Although recently stimulated, the idea of a democratic civic mission within U.S. American higher education is actually over 260 years old, marked by the founding of The Academy of Pennsylvania, the first college with a mission to educate citizens. This inaugural civic mission has fluctuated throughout higher education's history, sometimes lost when institutional focus turns to job preparedness and economic growth, and away from personal and civic development. However, a civic purpose need not be antithetical to professional development and economic security. During the U.S. American and industrial revolutions, the civic mission of higher education experienced growth, then decline during the 1900s as an economic focus pushed higher education towards a consumer model and the commonwealth became more private and individualistic in nature (Harkavy and Hartley 2008).

In order to frame the growing need for democratic pedagogical reform in particular, I have summarized select major historical moments within the development of higher education's civic mission, including the development of the Civic Engagement Movement. Markers of what could be called higher education's "spiritual mission" are woven throughout as supporting historical actors to the intentionally predominant civic history.²⁰ The legacy of higher education's civic mission now rests on the growing

²⁰ The proposed *spiritual* mission of higher education as relative to the definition of spiritual development in chapter two, and differentiated from the legacy of the historical *religious* mission of the first colonial colleges and universities. The College of William and Mary (Church of England), Harvard University (Puritan-Congregational), Yale University (Congregational), and Princeton University (Presbyterian) were the first colonial colleges founded by clergymen in order to train men for the clergy and political leadership within their respective colonies (Hoeveler 2002). This book focuses on an inclusive and democratic civic mission of secular higher education. However, it should be noted that there is a parallel historical narrative for religiously affiliated institutions that is not included in this book.

national call for a democratic epistemology and pedagogy that can authentically support the rhetoric and *practice* of higher education's civic mission.

The Revolutionary Birth of Higher Education's Civic Mission

The history of higher education in the United States begins with the majority of institutions founded between the 17th and 19th centuries having some level of religious affiliation, primarily Protestant. How the affiliation manifested itself varied widely from institution to institution, including practices such as denominational financial support and leadership, religious courses and curriculum, and mandatory chapel attendance (Boston College 2011). The structural connection, however, was institutionally loose; religion primarily provided values-guidance and cultural norms, but was not as structurally imbedded as the Roman Catholic Church was for early European universities (2011).

The founding of Colonial Colleges in the American British Colonies prior to the start of the American Revolution in 1775 was the infancy of U.S. American higher education. We now call those universities the Ivy League. At that time, a college education was reserved for the wealthy and clergy preparation through the classics and theology. U.S. Founding Father Benjamin Franklin had a different idea, and worked with others to found the first liberal arts curriculum that was open to students of varied social stratus, focused on both classical and practical education, and maintained a commitment to public service. The Academy of Philadelphia—now University of Pennsylvania—started taking students in 1751.²¹ (Harkavy and Hartley 2008)

²¹ It is important to note that at this time the civic mission of higher education, while open to a broader socio-economic group of men, did not include women or minorities. For example, women were not

After the American Revolution (1775-1783), a new priority for higher education emerged as U.S. Americans became concerned with the future success of their democracy and sovereignty; as a result, colleges were founded with a democratic and civic purpose. For example, Thomas Jefferson founded the University of Virginia in 1819, with a focus on educating leaders for public service.

Later as the industrial revolution (1820-1870) grew, there was an economic need for vocational and technical education, in contrast to the tradition of liberal arts education. With the 1862 Morill Land-Grant Act, federally granted land encouraged states to establish colleges that focused on agricultural, engineering, and scientific disciplines in order to “promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life” (Legal Information Institute 2011). The practical nature of the Morill Land Grant Act increased access to higher education for the growing working class. There was an inherent public aspect to these institutions, which were researching and educating for the greater good of their state, and to “encourage active citizenship” (Harkavy and Hartley 2008, 13).

After the U.S. Civil War (1861-1865), many institutions²² moved away from their Protestant Christian identities toward secularized curriculum (Boston College 2011). The scientific revolution that led to the Enlightenment model of education prioritized science

admitted as degree-seeking students to the University of Pennsylvania until the 1880s, and African-Americans in the 1890s—129 years after the University started admitting students. However, two Native American men were admitted in 1755, a third in 1756 (Lloyd 2001; Franklin 2008).

²² For example: Harvard, Princeton, Duke, Boston University, and Stanford.

and reason, swinging the educational pendulum away from religion.²³ As the enlightenment model grew, empiricism moved through the natural sciences, and then the social sciences and humanities, uplifting objective reasoning and stripping away subjectivity and devaluing liberal arts education models.²⁴ The subjective knowledge gained from human experience includes varying perspectives, ways of knowing (i.e. intellectual, spiritual, emotional, sensual, experiential), contexts, and relationships that all work together to determine “truth.” Such a subjective framework focuses on holistic education and student development, employing the variety of ways humans can generate knowledge and understanding in order to critically evaluate the world around us. Liberal education that once focused on the development of values alongside reason is marginalized today, and for many universities has disappeared (Geary Schneider 2005).

The Perfect Storm: Cultural Transformation and Civic Mission Drift

The early twentieth century saw further reform across the Midwest with regards to the civic mission of higher education. This movement was highlighted by the Wisconsin Idea (1903), or the principle that “education should influence people’s lives beyond the boundaries of the classroom” (University of Wisconsin-Madison 2006). At the time,

²³ The Enlightenment model of education can trace its intellectual lineage to Cartesian epistemology, which values reason as the primary method for knowledge generation as described in René Descartes’ *Discourse on Method* ([1637] 1968) and *Meditations on First Philosophy* ([1641] 1968).

²⁴ Liberal education or liberal arts education during the 20th Century focused on “engaging the ‘enduring questions’ of mankind, as an orientation to disciplines concerned with ‘basic’ research, and as a form of study ‘worthy in itself,’ without reference to any potential applications” (Geary Schneider 2005, 129). Gary Schneider references Bruce A. Kimball (1995), and points out that “many proponents made the absence of practical application a defining feature of liberal education, the characteristic that differentiated it from preprofessional education” (2005, 129). This definition of liberal arts education during the 20th Century is also in contrast to the service-learning, experiential, and community-based learning of the civic engagement movement.

Wisconsin's public university played a large role in the state legislative process, and faculty often served on public boards (2006).

However, higher education's commitment to civic education and engagement quickly diminished as the twentieth century progressed, along with holistic education models that supported spiritual development. Ira Harkavy and Matthew Hartley (2008) identify this change as an economic response. College enrollment of high school students grew from four percent in 1900, to forty-five percent in 1970 (2008, 14). The resulting financial strain on the higher education sector was essentially subsidized through an increase in federal research grants. This funding in turn moved the focus of faculty and institutions toward the objective nature of empirical research agendas, and away from undergraduate education and development (2008). Meanwhile, the U.S. American culture increasingly understood education as an economic tool, a path to a higher paying job, not a place for personal and moral development (2008). This consumer model of higher education trumped higher education's civic mission, negatively affecting both student spiritual-civic development and the institutional role of higher education in local communities. As Karkavy and Hartley aptly identify, the higher education mission transformed into "a private rather than public good" (2008, 14).

In the 1960s through the 1980s, college and university administrations were also likely dis-incentivized from further investing in meaningful student development of civic agency and power for fear that students would in turn confront and challenge institutional hierarchies and power. The social context during this transformational period included the volatile campus culture and legacy of the 1960s in which students took over

university buildings, made demands of administrators, engaged with police, and set fires on campus (Horowitz 1986). In 1970, student unrest culminated in the largest student strike in U.S. history involving over two million students on over 450 campuses, in response to the shooting of student anti-war protestors by Ohio National Guardsmen at Kent State, as well as Nixon's invasion of Cambodia, which signaled military escalation (Fry 2007). One can imagine that institutionally colleges and universities were likely focused on maintaining power and security, not encouraging student civic agency.

In the 1960s, college students reacted to unjust and undemocratic domestic and foreign policy through organized activism in the Civil Rights and anti-war movements as well as campus-based demonstrations that aimed to hold universities accountable for their own unjust and undemocratic practices and policies (Horowitz 1986). Students organized to create the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). The SDS was well known for its involvement in the anti-war movement and SNCC was a major player in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement (Carson 1981).

In addition to navigating the 1960s culture of student activism—often against higher education itself, colleges and universities faced demographic changes with the passage of The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments to the Civil Rights Act, which banned discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance. As a result, campus demographics and culture shifted as more students of color and women diversified the once upper class, white, male dominated university.

As campus demographics changed, the evolution of higher education mimicked another cultural shift in the United States. During the 1980s, U.S. American public life was increasingly replaced by individual and private life. Political engagement for college students—minimally measured by knowledge of current political affairs and voter turnout—saw its height in the mid-1960s and early 1970s (CIRCLE, 2009). Within a decade, once activist and perhaps idealist student populations of the 1960s grew cynical of the world and their political power within it by the 1980s (Saltmarsh and Hartley 2011, 30).

The Beginnings of a Movement

By the early 1980s, the political alienation of young adults was identified as a threat to American democratic politics and quickly became a catalyst for civic renewal in higher education (Saltmarsh and Hartley 2011, 30-31). New initiatives, national associations, conferences, and organizations emerged to address the civic crisis within America's youth.²⁵ One of the earliest and major networks established to support student civic development was Campus Compact. Founded in 1985, Campus Compact is a national coalition of college and university presidents committed to fulfilling the civic mission of higher education (Campus Compact 2011b). Now with state, regional, and national offices Campus Compact provides training and support to over 1,100, of 6,900²⁶

²⁵ International Partnership for Service-Learning and Leadership (founded 1982), National Youth Leadership Council (founded 1983), Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL) (founded 1984), Campus Compact (founded 1985) (Saltmarsh and Hartley 2011, 31).

²⁶ Number of accredited postsecondary institutions as identified in the U.S. Department of Education's Database of Accredited Programs and Institutions, accessed June 25, 2011.

accredited postsecondary institutions, to deepen “their ability to improve community life and to educate students for civic and social responsibility” (Campus Compact 2011b).

As a corrective effort, the Civic Engagement Movement in higher education emerged in the 1980s with a focus on volunteerism, operating under the developmental assumption that as students volunteered they would naturally develop social responsibility, therefore becoming better citizens. As described earlier, this communitarian philosophy, or community service model, avoids learning and emphasis on root causes, power, politics, productive impact, and asset-based community models—the meat of civic agency (Boyte 2005a). As a result, the volunteer model did not meet its intended outcomes of increased citizenship and civic skills.

The 1990s introduced service learning as the next iteration of the Civic Engagement Movement as an effort towards pedagogy that integrated curriculum with community-based experience and service to the community. During the 1990s, higher education saw a continuation of volunteerism, joined by the use of service-learning pedagogy, and the beginning of engaged scholarship for faculty. American education leader and expert, Ernest Boyer, promoted the scholarship of engagement in his seminal book *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (1990), which argued for a re-prioritization of teaching, contrasting the priorities of research and publishing with the engagement of scholarship with community. The mid- and late 1990s also brought national attention to the civic mission of higher education and civic engagement efforts, and became part of the agenda for the American Association for Higher Education and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (Harkavy and Hartley 2008).

At the federal level, President George H. W. Bush signed, and Congress passed, the National and Community Service Act of 1990, providing grants to colleges and universities in order to increase service-learning efforts and for national service programs that targeted college and university students (National Service Learning Clearinghouse 2011). President Bill Clinton furthered this work through the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, which established the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNS), creating AmeriCorps and the AmeriCorps Learn and Serve America Higher Education (LASHE) programs, which provided educational awards to college students for their service in the community (2011).

A Flurry of Activity Lacking Impact on Civic Outcomes

The initial civic goals of the Civic Engagement Movement lost direction as the 1990s unfolded. On a national level, volunteerism and voting remained the depth of civic development efforts. For too many in higher education, a focus on academic legitimacy and learning outcomes presupposed efforts to address critical community issues, assess community impact, or work towards a more just society. The civic mission of creating a stronger democracy by developing skilled and active citizens, and engaging campus with the community became a “subsidiary consideration, a hoped-for byproduct” (Harkavy and Hartley 2008).

At the very end of the decade, the discontent with the state of civic engagement in higher education amongst leaders in the field bubbled into broad-based discussion. In 1999, the Presidents’ Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education, signed by 565 presidents of public, private, and two- and four-year colleges and

universities, emerged from a conference sponsored by the American Council on Education and Campus Compact. The Declaration identifies higher education's "public purpose and its commitments to the democratic ideal," acknowledges that current volunteerism has not achieved the goals of active citizenship, and calls for a renewed effort to teach civic skills and democratic values (Campus Compact 1999b). Also in 1999, Harry Boyte, a leader in the civic development field, and Elizabeth Hollander, then president of Campus Compact, wrote the *Wingspread Declaration on Renewing the Civic Mission of the American Research University*. This was a result of two conferences spanning 1998-1999. Both Declarations called for reform, a restructuring of both the Civic Engagement Movement and higher education. By the late 1990s, many at the leadership level in higher education were clearly aware that they were not meeting their civic mission (Hartley 2009).

In contrast to these revolutionary Declarations, during the same year the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Institutions—comprised of 24 presidents of land-grant universities—released an open letter to the presidents of state universities and land-grant colleges, titled "Returning to our Roots: The Engaged Institution." The letter describes university engagement by presenting seven "guiding characteristics" of engaged institutions: responsiveness [to community needs], respect for [community] partners, academic neutrality [university as neutral facilitator for issues of social, economic, and political consequence], accessibility [of university expertise and resources for the community], integration [of service mission with scholarship], coordination [of campus service activities], and resource partnership [financial support of

service activities] (Kellogg Commission 1999, 12; brackets added). In critique of the letter, Matthew Hartley, notes that the goal is a “less ‘ivory tower-ish’ university” where “‘value neutral’ engagement is an advantageous stance for avoiding messy entanglements in contentious local issues” (Saltmarsh and Hartley 2011, 42). The “engaged” university stands in contrast to the Presidents’ Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education, which envisions faculty, administrators, and students with “moral and civic imagination, judgment, and insight” (Campus Compact 1999a).

One might look at the difference between the Declarations and Letter as a matter of the inclusion or exclusion of spiritual development. The Declarations call for a focus on the articulation of and acting on public and private values, meaning making, civic imagination, and co-creation of public work—learning outcomes of spiritual-civic development, as outlined in the following chapters. The exclusion of spirituality is the value-neutral, responsive but non-relational, direct service model of the “engaged” university outlined by the Kellogg Commission, which “looks surprisingly like the traditional university” and is the “prevailing conception of ‘engagement’ on many campuses today” (Saltmarsh and Hartley 2011, 43). The contrasting arguments hint at the difference between the inclusion of spiritual development as a method to achieve higher education’s civic mission, versus the exclusion of spiritual development resulting in the maintenance of the status quo—“civic” activities that lack impact on civic outcomes.

It was not until the late 1990s that the beginnings of the spiritual development movement emerged within higher education. At this time, it was evident that religious diversity was increasing on college campuses, and campus chaplains and ministers felt

that programs intended to address this diversity were either non-existent or inadequate (Laurence 2004). The second revelation was that an increasing majority of students were identifying as “spiritual, but not religious,” changing the religious paradigm towards a broader understanding of human spirituality (2004).

Starting in 1997, Parker Palmer, leader in the field of spirituality in education, was formally offering programs through his Center for Courage & Renewal. Programming aimed to help teachers, among others, to “rejoin soul and role” by developing their spirituality in relation to their vocation.²⁷ During the same timeframe in 1999, Patrick Love and Donna Talbot published the foundational article, “Defining Spiritual Development: A Missing Consideration for Student Affairs,” which came at a time when scholarly dialogue about spirituality in higher education was absent. In fact, Love and Talbot state that in the fifteen years prior to their writing, ostensibly 1984-1999, “only one short essay addressing spirituality or spiritual development appeared in any of the major student affairs journals” (1999, 261).

Ten years after this start of the spirituality in higher education movement, there has been little systemic study²⁸ on student spiritual development, until the recently

²⁷ The work of the Center for Courage & Renewal is particularly based on two of Palmer’s books, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher’s Life* (1998), and *Let your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation* (2000) (Palmer 2011).

²⁸ Despite the extraordinary amount of research that has been done on the development of college students (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991, 2005)—more than five thousand studies in the past four decades—very little systemic study has been done on students’ spiritual development. Indeed, in the latest comprehensive review of the literature that examines the effect of college on students (Pascarella and Terenzini 2005), there are no references to “spirituality” and only two references to “religion” (Astin, Astin, and Lindholm 2011, 1-2).

published results of a seven-year study²⁹ by Alexander W. Astin, Helen S. Astin and Jennifer A. Lindholm (2011). It is the most comprehensive national study of spiritual and religious student development to date. Their findings show that students are increasingly identifying as “spiritual,” personally engaging with the idea of “spirituality,” and articulating that their spirituality is important to who they are and how they understand the world.³⁰ However, there is little structure or curriculum in higher education to support students in the exploration and development of spirituality.³¹

Over the last ten years, those efforts to address the lack of structure and curriculum for spiritual development have ranged from the research, teaching, and organizational efforts of individual scholars and educators, to university-based national efforts such as Education as Transformation housed at Wellesley College, which aims to support spiritual development within K-12 and college-level teaching. Additionally, forerunning efforts such as the Jon C. Dalton Institute on College Student Values at Florida State University, founded in 1991, are now met with increased discussion at the national level through the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U).

²⁹ Spirituality in Higher Education: A National Study of College Student’s Search for Meaning and Purpose, conducted out of the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

³⁰ Four in five students “have an interest in spirituality” and “believe in the sacredness of life,” and more than two-thirds identify that their religious and/or spiritual beliefs “provide me with strength, support and guidance” (Astin, Astin, and Lindholm 2011, 3).

³¹ “While higher education continues to put a lot of emphasis on test scores, grades, credits, and degrees, it has increasingly come to neglect its students’ “inner” development—the sphere of values and beliefs, emotional maturity, moral development, spirituality, and self-understanding. For us, *how* students define their spirituality or *what* particular meaning they make of their lives is not at issue. Rather, our concern is that the relative amount of attention that colleges and universities devote to the “inner” and “outer” aspects of our students’ lives has gotten way out of balance.” (Astin, Astin, and Lindholm 2011, 2)

In hindsight, the late-1990s may someday be identified as the beginning of a spiritual-civic development movement in higher education. This potential movement responds to higher education's positivist, individualist, and consumer extremes, and calls for inclusive and holistic epistemology and pedagogy. Additionally, higher education may be called to incorporate student development of spiritual-civic purpose and meaning, along with disciplinary and professional knowledge and skills.

While there is a lack of structure and curriculum in higher education that supports student spiritual development, civic engagement efforts continuing into the first decade of the 2000s still have not met their intended civic outcomes. Unfortunately, these efforts at civic development are consistently undercut by programs that limit students' civic potential to the volunteer model of community engagement (Colby et al. 2003). Such volunteer-based programs often rest on the same theory of the 1980s, which assumes that exposure to community through direct service intrinsically increases civic skills, critical thinking about community issues, evaluation of systemic root causes and potential areas for structural change, and an understanding of democratic values such as justice and equality. "Disciplinary preparation [as experienced through service-learning] and democratic participation are potentially complementary ends but each requires a purposeful strategy" (Hartley 2009, 25; brackets added). For most civic programs, the strategy is still missing despite large-scale efforts to support civic development.

Reimagining and Institutionalizing the *Political* Civic Mission of Higher Education

A 2006 report from The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and

Engagement) titled “Higher Education: Civic Mission & Civic Effects,” is an honest evaluation of higher education’s civic mission in the contemporary context. The report identifies that evidence shows civic declarations of commitment by institutions of higher education and their administrators are not always translated into action. While there has been an increase of research on the issue of civic engagement, overall pedagogical practice has not responded to this research. Higher education has created its own impasse with words that clamor for civic commitment, yet actions that resist behavioral and institutional changes that could support a civic mission. What is needed is an authentic civic mission, one that can be proclaimed and practiced.

The same report provides a contemporary definition of higher education’s civic mission:

Being good institutional citizens that serve their communities in multiple ways; providing forums for free democratic dialogue; conducting research on democracy, civil society, and civic development; and educating their own students to be effective and responsible citizens. (Carnegie Foundation 2006, 1)

I would alter this definition to clarify that colleges and universities should not *serve* their communities, but rather they should work *with* their communities to address critical issues *collaboratively* through the co-production of knowledge, co-development of citizens, and co-creation of public work.

A “service” model puts higher education in a patronizing and privileged role of power, knowledge, and resources. In turn, institutes of higher education understand communities as oppressed, lacking power, knowledge, and resources—a deficit-based approach. This subtlety is a major contributing factor to higher education’s inability to make progress on civic development. If educational institutions continue to frame their

role in the community as only one of service to others then we cannot expect students will ever move beyond a service model themselves. A reimagining and institutionalization of higher education's civic mission would see institutions, faculty, and staff as participants in the democratic, constructive, dialogic, and relationship based method of public work.³² A public work model brings together a variety of everyday people to co-create, valuing community as people and places of power, knowledge, and resources.

The most recent assessment of the Civic Engagement Movement warns that current efforts are too apolitical—literally taking the “civic” out of “civic engagement” (Saltmarsh and Hartley 2011). A positivist epistemology in which academics apply their expert knowledge *to* the community often ignores issues of power and democratic process, which can negatively impacts student civic development (19). The positivist framework of engagement in higher education:

- 1) Fails to teach students the “political dimensions of their activities because questions of power typically are left out of the context of objectified knowledge production and the way that ‘service’ is provided to communities” (19).
- 2) “Perpetuate[s] a kind of politics that rejects popularly informed decision making in favor of expert-informed knowledge application” (19).
- 3) Separates politics from “the dispassionate pursuit of knowledge because it is understood in terms of competing partisan positions and opposing ideologies” (19).

³² Public Work defined by Harry Boyte: “Sustained, visible effort by a mix of people that creates things—material or cultural—of lasting civic impact, while developing civic learning and capacity in the process” (2008b, 14).

As a result, politically-oriented “civic” engagement, or civic development for civic agency, is avoided by faculty and the academy at large, prohibited by federal mandate within community engagement programs supported by federal funding (i.e.: AmeriCorps), and understood as contentious particularly for public schools (6, 19).

The Civic Engagement Movement seems to have “hit a wall,” against which “academic norms and institutional reward policies” are not supporting the necessary reform of the practices that could shape a more civic institutional culture: epistemology, curriculum, pedagogy, and scholarship (Saltmarsh and Hartley 2011, 23). Deep structural and cultural institutional change is required to meet the civic mission of higher education, yet the Civic Engagement Movement continues to operate within the current, limiting structures of the academy, “accommodated to the dominant expert-centered framework” (23). If the Civic Engagement Movement continues to oblige the undemocratic, hierarchical, objectivist, and apolitical epistemology of the academy, then student civic development and the civic mission of higher education will “remain a marginalized activity, and its sustainability is questionable” (23).

There is a clear historical civic mission for higher education in the United States, which emerged in parallel to the birth of the United States as a democratic republic free from British colonial rule. While the implementation of this civic mission has varied over the last 260 years, we are now at a time when the need for civic skills and democratic values is critical both for the future of the United States and the larger global community. However, broadly applicable and democratic pedagogical models that can deliver these civic outcomes have been slow to materialize or institutionalize. I offer one example,

spiritual-civic development and learning models, which leverage spiritual development to achieve deeper civic development as a strategic approach towards the development of civic agency and fulfillment of higher education's civic mission.

Chapter Two: Spiritual Development in Higher Education

Without spirituality we cannot progress as civic agents. We would always stay at one level and would never be able to fully engage with our community. If we don't know how to fully examine our own beliefs, and our own self, then how can we effectively act within a community?

— College Student

The contemporary dialogue on spirituality in higher education is both a call to focus on the critical inner lives of our students, and a movement for a more effective epistemological balance in education—where the pendulum might rest somewhere in between objective and subjective learning, rather than at either extreme. While much has been written about the inclusion of spiritual development in K-12 education, much less of this work has been directed at higher education.

The early 2000s have brought necessary attention to the critical role of intentionality around spiritual development in higher education. Much of this attention is likely in reflection of the overall U.S. psychological and cultural response to specific events of the decade (2000-2010), including the paradigm-shifting September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks by suicide bombers from the international terrorist network Al-Qaeda, which operates under the ideological banner of Islamic fundamentalism. As a result of the attacks on the whole, U.S.-Americans were forced to struggle with a profound loss of

their previously privileged sense of safety and security, questions and confusion about the motivations and rationale behind such violence, and misunderstandings about Islam as a peaceful religion separate from the extremist, ideological, and religio-political fundamentalism of Al-Qaeda. In the proceeding years, a culture of intolerance reared its ugly head, economic insecurity came to match the perceived loss of physical security, and fear has become the modus operandi for many. The result of this spiritual struggle has been great spiritual damage and loss for the U.S. culture as a whole.

This spiritual damage and loss includes the loss of meaningful engagement with “other,” and the loss of public relationships that help to form communities across difference.³³ Instead, people react to fear with intolerance for difference, demonstrated by limiting their social circles to those who are like them.³⁴ The broader spiritual struggle within the United States underlies the movement to address spiritual development in higher education, but there is not yet a large-scale effort of institutional and pedagogical adoption. I expect that we are coming to a tipping point³⁵ in higher education, but the question remains whether we will know what to do when we reach that point. The

³³ “Spiritual damage and loss” defined in relation to the core concepts of spiritual development identified within this chapter.

³⁴ For example, research shows that U.S. American public attitudes about Muslims and Islam have become more negative. In 2005, 25% of U.S. Americans held unfavorable opinions of Muslim Americans, which grew to 29% in 2007. With regards to Muslims more broadly, 32% of U.S. Americans held negative views of Muslims in 2004, and 35% in 2007 (The Pew Research Center 2007, 4). The largest influence on negative public opinion of Muslims is the media, 48% of those who hold a negative opinion of Muslims say that what they see or read in the media is the largest influence, with personal experience being less influential. In contrast, personal experience is cited “far more often” by those with positive views of Muslims (2007, 4-5).

³⁵ Malcolm Gladwell defines the tipping point as “the moment of critical mass, the threshold, the boiling point” (12) of change and suggests that “ideas and product and messages and behaviors spread like viruses do” (7), slowly through “little things” that eventually grow to make a “big difference,” as the title of his book suggests, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (2000).

operational understanding of spiritual development presented in this chapter, as well as the practical theories and teaching model for integrated spiritual and civic development to be explained later, can support the necessary paradigm shift within higher education.

Spiritual Engagement: A New Vision for Inclusive Spiritual Development in Higher Education

There are two interesting themes emerging out of the contemporary dialogue of spirituality in higher education that suggest a civic affinity:

- 1) Spirituality is required for democracy;³⁶ and
- 2) Experiences of service combined with spirituality lead to a civic future.³⁷

Simply put, spiritually engaged citizens strengthen democracy, and spirituality combined with the practice of citizenship through service to the community supports long-term civic engagement and the development of a civic identity. While these two themes are less common concepts within the scholarly dialogue, they are an emerging understanding of what I argue is the intimate relationship between spiritual and civic development.

Spirituality is required for democracy: This civic theme was constructed based on the understanding that democracy is the premised structure of our governing and cultural organization within the United States. Whether or not we live fully into this professed value is not the focus of this work. Rather, the emphasis here is that we espouse to include the voice of the people—or everyday citizens—in how we conduct ourselves in the context of making decisions for our communities. Further, if direct public voice is

³⁶ Astin, Astin, and Lindholm 2011; Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm 2006; Daloz Parks 2000; Palmer, Zajonc, and Scribner 2010

³⁷ Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm 2006; Diamond 2008; Hoppe and Speck 2005; Kazanjian and Laurence 2000; Palmer, Zajonc, and Scribner 2010; Tisdell 2003

absent—whether due to representational governance or otherwise—we espouse to make decisions for the common good, which includes the consideration of “other”—those unlike us—within our communities. If democracy is about diverse people coming together in order to make decisions for their community, then it is also about inclusivity and effectively engaging with diversity. Parker Palmer describes, “Working with people who hold conflicting values in a democratic society brings the realities of leadership and politics to life” (Palmer, Zajonc, and Scribner 2010, 88). These are values worth holding onto within the United States, and higher education could help to co-create such an inclusive and diverse democratic society.

The role of spirituality in democracy is also about the balance and tension between developing personal and collective values. We are required to evaluate information through both value-based and reason-based lenses within the context of the complexity of the world, in order to make decisions and take action for the common good. There is also a strong correlation between democracy and the critical reflection and deeper understanding of self and “other” as part of spiritual development. Sharon Daloz Parks explains this balance and tension, and also indicates the role of higher education in this development process:

Democratic societies are dependent upon a complex moral conscience—a citizenry who can recognize and assess the claims of multiple perspectives and are steeped in critical, systemic, and compassionate habits of mind. Initiating young adults into viable forms of meaning and faith that can undergird these tasks is a critical feature of our vocation as a species on the edge of a new cultural landscape. (Daloz Parks 2000, 10)

If we support spiritual development for our college students, we can expect that they will develop civic futures, and become citizens with long-term—even lifelong—commitments

to their communities and civic action. This transformational process is about building integrity, where students can integrate their critically developed values into their life and career, and do so in conversation with larger collective democratic values of society such as justice, equality, liberty, and dedication to the common good.

Lastly, spiritual development is required for democracy because it is through the context of relationship and community that we both develop our spiritual natures and practice democracy by making decisions together for the common good. One might think that democracy is a sentimental, idealistic idea; certainly given the state of the world today where corporate entities have gained influence in the political realm, requesting better treatment than everyday citizens with regards to taxes, property, and other rights and responsibilities. The key here, however, is that democracy is not sentimental, but rather a mark of humanity. Humans are inherently social and interdependent; we learn best and are most successful at survival when we are in community with one another. One way to be in community is through a democratic decision-making and organizational system. In order to achieve successful democracy, we must engage on a spiritual level to make meaning of self and “other.” David Scott uses the phrase, “engaged citizens for an enlightened democracy” (Kazanjian and Laurence 2000, xi). For democracy to be meaningful, to work well, and to move beyond the sentimental, citizens must be spiritually engaged at the individual and communal level.

Experiences of service combined with spirituality lead to a civic future: The work of developing citizens is about supporting students to develop their own civic future, long-term and lifelong commitments to their communities and to civic action. A

civic future is both part of one's identity (who I am) and a value for how an individual expects to live his/her life (what I believe that informs how I think and act). This personal development in turn affects the larger culture of society as individual civic futures form a collective civic fabric and future of engaged citizens. Educators can support student development of individual civic futures by combining experiences of service with spirituality.

The scholarly dialogue around the theme of “experiences of service combined with spirituality lead to a civic future” is generally referring to the combination of experiential and service learning with critical reflection. I agree that rigorous critical reflection—the processing of experiences of service—is a necessary and often underutilized component of community-based teaching strategies. I also believe that how we define “experiences of service” directly affects the potential role of spirituality, and the development of civic futures.

Experiences of service are not about doing something *for* someone deemed “less fortunate.” The difficulty with such traditional understandings of service is that it can function to create mental models that separate self from “other” based on an initial value judgment of the worth of the other person. These value judgments stem from a hyper-orientation towards identifying unfavorable differences (less money, less education, less family support). When someone is judged and labeled as “less than,” it creates a hierarchy of power and privilege that influences how we relate to one another. These kinds of service or volunteer mental models create a hierarchy between server and served, where the served are dependent on the server to meet their needs, removing agency and

power from the served. A more democratic and spiritual understanding of service focuses on creating a relationship with someone who is different from you through the context of sharing your skills, time, energy, and yes, spirit. Relationship is the space where spirit emerges; where we identify with “other” as someone who has value—not deficit—and work towards finding commonalities from which to create a connection. In this sense, relationships of sharing are more equal, each person having power and value.

One of my former students had this to say about her experiences of combining service and spirituality:

I’ve had a couple of volunteer experiences at college that have kind of shaped the way I see [spirituality]. Most recently I went to a day center for homeless women, or just women seeking support, and I sat down with a woman at lunch and I asked her, I think I had asked her why she came [there], and she said, “I come for the food, *what are you here for?*” She looked back at me and I just kind of looked at her, and I said, “I’m here to care for, and love on you.” And you could just see it in her face and everything in her, it was like her guard went down, and we could actually talk, and I just thought of how many groups or students, or whoever, had approached her and just been like, “I’m here to volunteer!”—and they hadn’t tapped in to what the real purpose was, and I think as two spiritual beings we kind of just were looking into each other and seeing more.

I think my spirituality is like my way to test the environment everywhere I’m at. There have been times when I can enter rooms, especially when I’m working with girls, and I can, I feel like I can determine what’s going on with them and where they’re at just by kind of listening and utilizing spirituality to really listen to what they are saying, or to listen to what’s going on with them. And quite often I feel like I’m growing myself, but I can have more of a heightened sense of responding to them if what I’m saying is really coming from my heart, and coming from a lot more than just me.

In these experiences of service, the student engaged spiritually, seeing value in the people she was with and attempting to build relationships by being fully present to others and perhaps more importantly with herself. Her authentic presence came in the form of honesty and deep listening for places of connection and sharing. Her experiences of

action-oriented service that suggest a larger purpose and in which she developed relationships with those who are different, demonstrate how her spirit transformed toward a commitment to a civic future. These are the experiences that frame our lives and alter our worldview as we start to see what life is like for “others” while making deeper connections through relationship.

Experiential and service learning that include critical reflection are teaching strategies that can support spiritual development, which may guide students towards a civic future. I also argue for democratic and relational engagements with “other” as key aspects of these pedagogies. In such learning environments, students are supported to explore vocational calling, which often results in long-term commitment to serve (Diamond 2008, 123). Affirming my own experience with young adults, Jon C. Dalton describes that during the experience of community service “beliefs are forged into commitments that have long-range implications for career and lifestyle decisions” (Jablonski 2001, 22).

One of the strongest formative experiences of my life came from participating in a Habitat for Humanity work camp trip to Guatemala when I was eleven, and in the sixth grade. I worked alongside the future homeowners casting and then laying cinderblock, I dug out a foundation from hard earth, and I played and built relationships (although temporary) with the children that I met. Working *with* a diversity of people towards a common goal and building relationships of commonality—not deficit—broadened my sense of community and interconnectedness from the extremely local—a small town in

Massachusetts—to the global, as my parents continued to provide similar service-travel opportunities as I grew older.

Through working together on common goals and building relationships, I began to learn about the systemic impact of poverty and global inequality. I met a young girl, my age, living in a small one-room home constructed from corrugated metal. As the eldest female child, she spent her days taking care of her younger siblings and her family's farm animals while her parents worked, and therefore she could not attend school. Growing up in a suburban-rural community I lived in a house with multiple bedrooms, I went to school, and did small chores for an allowance—most of which I probably spent on penny candy after school, not on necessities. At eleven years old, I abruptly came to understand inequality and injustice. Upon returning home, I did not want to enter my house. I remember thinking how unfair it was that just because I was born here, I should have so much; and just because she was born there, that she would have her right to an education denied, limiting her future options. I had always been told that I could achieve and do anything I wanted, and at that moment in my driveway, at 11 years old, I came face-to-face with my privilege—although this took many years to fully understand. I do not know that this experience of service would have had the same impact if I was not working with and building relationships with local community members. I do not think it would have had the same depth of impact, or led to the same critical reflection.

This transformational experience was part of my process of spiritual and civic development. It was a challenge to my values and the way I understood and made

meaning of the world that then caused me to critically reflect on my identity and to form new meaning. It was also the beginning of a sense of connection, an interconnectedness, love, and compassion for humanity. I found purpose and direction, and was set on the path to a civic future as the years went on and I continued to build relationships with “others” and take action together around our shared core values.

But this is not just my story; I have heard similar stories of meaning-making and transformation from those whose lives are dedicated to the common good. It might have begun through a family and church-related experience like mine, or an experience in the Peace Corps or AmeriCorps. Or maybe it was through taking care of a neighbor, an alternative spring break during high school or college, a service-learning course, or a volunteer opportunity. These are just a few examples of experiences of service that could potentially trigger spiritual reflection, providing the opportunity and spiritual space for a transformational process.

As educators, we cannot leave spiritual and civic transformation to chance. We have a pedagogical opportunity where higher education can intentionally serve as a vehicle that supports spiritual growth and reflection, particularly through meaningful civic engagement that also fulfills higher education’s civic mission. These two civic themes—“spirituality is required for democracy,” and “experiences of service combined with spirituality lead to a civic future”—are the lenses from which to view and understand the development of spiritual engagement in higher education, and its relationship to civic development, as defined in the next chapter.

Towards a Constructive Understanding of Spiritual Development in Higher Education

The spiritual development movement in higher education is not a call for the inclusion of religious indoctrination, but rather a call to focus on the humanity of education, the ways in which we make meaning out of our lives and how we connect to one another on a deeper level. For some, religion, or a mix of religious traditions and beliefs may play a part in their spiritual development, and others may define their spirituality without religion or any sense of theism; for example, they may identify as agnostic, atheist, naturist, or humanist.³⁸ It is of less importance which labels are used, and of primary importance that individuals engage in the process of developing their spiritual life, and for higher education to find a supportive role in this developmental process as it relates to increasing civic agency.

There are problematic definitions and usage of the identity terms “spiritual” and “religious” within the historical dialogue of spiritual development in higher education. Such problematic definitions serve to create exclusive in- and out-groups, or overly vague, undefined groups—both issues likely contributing to a lack of engagement and acceptance of spiritual development in positivist higher education contexts.

For example, the presentation and evaluation of data from “Spirituality in Higher Education: A National Study of College Students’ Search for Meaning and Purpose,”³⁹ a

³⁸ Sharon Daloz Parks (2000) uses the term “faith” to describe a similarly broad concept of spirituality based on the works of theologian and human development theorist James W. Fowler (1981) and Christian theological-ethicist H. Richard Niebuhr (1989) who both identify faith as inclusive of atheism, agnosticism, and humanism.

³⁹ Research study “Spirituality in Higher Education: A National Study of College Student’s Search for Meaning and Purpose,” conducted out of the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and presented in the book *Cultivating the Spirit: How College Can*

recent comprehensive, longitudinal study of spirituality in higher education becomes problematic as it serves to separate religiousness and spirituality into two identities that are mutually exclusive. As a result, the data narrative comes across as privileging spirituality as a more pro-social identity in better alignment with the culture of higher education and traditional college outcomes.⁴⁰ In contrast, religiosity develops an isolating and anti-social—therefore less “spiritual”—identity according to the study’s measures. This study utilizes a mutually-exclusive definition of spiritual and religious, in contrast to how such terms have been defined in some prior research where spirituality and religion are used interchangeably—or by defining spirituality exclusively as a practice *of* religious life. An interchanging or homogenization of the terms “spiritual” and “religious” is confusing, and more importantly it is exclusive of those who do not identify as religious, but who may identify as spiritual. This exclusive usage of terms serves to maintain structural privilege—and therefore structural oppression—within religiously dominant cultures such as the embedded Christian meta-culture of the United States.

I’d like to suggest a different understanding, and definitional hierarchy of sorts, by presenting spirituality as the broader, inclusive human experience around identity, experience, and meaning-making, in which religion will play a part in some students’ spiritual development, but not for others. Within this “spiritual umbrella” framework, a student could identify in various combinations of spiritual-ness combined with a spectrum of religiosity, ranging from non-religious to very religious. This approach is an

Enhance Students’ Inner Lives (2011), by Astin, Astin, and Lindholm.

⁴⁰ Traditional college outcomes as described by the study’s authors: academic performance, leadership skills, psychological well-being, and satisfaction with college (Astin, Astin, and Lindholm 2011, 115)

intentionally more inclusive and humanistic approach than the previously discussed mutually exclusive presentation of spirituality and religion, or understanding of spirituality as an exclusively religious experience.

Humans are by nature spiritual, by which I mean we engage our subjective and objective reasoning together to make meaning of self, our experiences, and the world around us. We have the capacity to develop our spirituality, regardless of the identity labels involved in traditional methods of measuring religiosity. In contrast to the theological or religious studies approach, which identifies spirituality as a subset or equivalent to religiosity, I am suggesting—as is the contemporary dialogue of spiritual development in higher education—that we broaden our scope to include those who come to a sense of spirituality by non-religious means.

The spiritual development movement in higher education is also a call to support students who are in a particular developmental stage. As scholar Sharon Daloz Parks⁴¹ highlights, the residential college-bound young adult is at a different developmental stage; moving away from the foundation of family and community that have helped to structure the student's spiritual development (2000). Young adults starting college are entering a new environment where they will encounter, and hopefully critically engage with, new and different people and ideas—both in the classroom and through campus-based relationships. Each student is then faced with doing the inner work of bringing both

⁴¹ Sharon Daloz Parks' developmental theory emerges from the foundational work of educational psychologist William G. Perry, Jr., particularly his research and theory on student development as outlined in his book, *Forms of Ethical and Intellectual Development in the College Years* ([1968] 1999). She also drew from the intellectual trail of constructive developmental psychologists Erik Erickson and Jean Piaget, as well as, Robert Kegan, Carol Gilligan and James Fowler.

old and new values and worldviews together in a way that has meaning for how they live their lives, view the world, and interact with others. This process requires attention and encouragement so that students are not left confused and frustrated by the inevitable complexity and paradox they will encounter, but are instead supported in developing their own authenticity, a place of strength where their values, words, and actions can meet and have meaning (2000).

In reflecting on the developmental context of higher education, I have intentionally selected conversation partners who are specifically writing to the higher education audience, and/or a general adult audience. I understand that most of these scholars have written with the traditional college demographic in mind. Young adults 18-25 years old, full-time students participating in the culture of residential college life; coming to college directly from high school, or matriculating after one or two years of work or volunteer service after high school. They are single—without a life partner or children of their own.

However, the traditional college demographic and experience is increasingly in flux. More students are choosing to live off-campus and at home to save money, and they may work full-time while attending school out of financial necessity. They may attend a two-year vocational school for less expensive career advancement degrees and certifications. Many more students are returning to college later in life after years of work experience, military service, or an entire career. Some are also managing the responsibility of a family while in college.

These demographic changes within higher education are important to identify, and may present demographic-based implications to a spiritual development model oriented out of traditional student development theory. For example, Daloz Parks' developmental model is based on young adult developmental theory, and therefore uses a traditional college demographic lens (2000). However, those experiences Daloz Parks (2000) outlines as part of being a college-bound young adult—encountering change, new environments, and experiences with “other”—can occur throughout life and trigger critical reflection that results in the construction of new meaning. I understand the traditional, residential college setting—along with the transition from high school and living at home—as particularly ripe for spiritual development, but also understand that other transitional life stages can be similarly fertile ground for such growth.

Research shows that we are in an era of “extended young adulthood.” Young adults, ages 18-35, are taking longer to move out of the transitional stage of young adulthood and settle down and assume independence and traditional “adult” roles (Settersten, Furstenber, and Rumbaut 2005). When adulthood is starting for some at 18 and others at 35—or beyond—it is difficult to argue for an age-based developmental model as it relates to spiritual development. Certainly with life experience, the older we get the more spiritually developed we may become; however, some people might not spiritually engage with their “inner” self until well into adulthood.

I understand spiritual and civic development as on-going, lifelong processes, and expect that the information and core concepts constructed out of the dialogue of higher education will have broader application beyond the traditional 18-25 year old

demographic.⁴² My primary concern, however, is how to integrate spiritual and civic development within higher education, and therefore, I draw from scholarship aimed at the higher education audience, and speak to the same audience. I have also chosen to draw on scholars writing for higher education because they understand the cultural and institutional barriers, and are therefore better equipped to identify alternative areas of potential support for spiritual development. Most importantly, these scholars know how to communicate about spirituality in ways that are more likely to be accepted within the secular and positivist culture of higher education.

While spirituality in higher education is a more limited field of publication within the broader field of “spirituality in education,” it is important to separate this scholarship from the K-12 context. Higher education produces new and different relational cultures that are in a position to support, ignore or discourage spiritual development as it pertains to student-student, student-faculty/staff, faculty/staff-institution, and student-institution relationships, among others. I have also chosen to put into dialogue the main scholars of the field who have written about spirituality in higher education in the last eleven years, since the 1999 publication of the foundational article “Defining Spiritual Development: A Missing Consideration for Student Affairs,” by Patrick Love and Donna Talbot. The inclusion of authors for this constructive dialogue is reflective of this timeframe, and focuses on works published from 2000-2011.

⁴² Stephen D. Brookfield is one scholar who works with and writes about adult learning, as opposed to young adult. Brookfield uses critical theory as a method to access transformational learning (1987; 2005a). See chapter five for discussion of critical theory.

Authors and editors⁴³ included in this dialogue⁴⁴ are those who are critically defining spirituality for the higher education context by: basing their work on developmental and critical theory; performing and evaluating qualitative and quantitative research with higher education as their research site; engaging in research with students and faculty in order to use their language to create a new and contemporary understanding of spirituality; building off of the history of literature regarding holistic, experiential learning, and service learning, as well as, the practical liberal arts tradition; and often working in an interdisciplinary nature in order to construct new understandings.

While there are various terminology used to describe “spirituality,” numerous pedagogical suggestions, and of course institutional recommendations, the major scholars in the field of spirituality in higher education reveal an interesting pattern of thought which relates to the civic mission of higher education. Yet, only a few authors⁴⁵ are explicit about how the development of spirituality in young adults also supports civic development and engagement. Those who do not specifically engage this idea, or do so with less emphasis, add value because they contribute to the relevant core concepts of spirituality.

⁴³ I’ve chosen to name editors, rather than the contributing authors to edited books and journals, because core concepts emerged when looking at the work as a whole. Individual chapters or articles were not able to stand alone, and therefore, I am not crediting their authors with the broader thematic work, but rather, referencing the editors that chose to put the contributing authors into dialogue together.

⁴⁴ Alexander W. Astin, Helen S. Astin, Arthur W. Chickering, Sharon Daloz Parks, Jon C. Dalton, Miriam Rosalyn Diamond, Sheryl L. Hoppe, Margaret A. Jablonski, Victor H. Kazanjian, Jr., Peter L. Laurence, Jennifer A. Lindholm, Parker Palmer, Megan Scribner, Bruce W. Speck, Liesa Stamm, Elizabeth J. Tisdell, and Arthur Zajonc.

⁴⁵ Astin, Astin, and Lindholm 2011; Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm 2006; Daloz Parks 2000; Palmer, Zajonc, and Scribner 2010.

Core Concepts within the Dialogue of Spiritual Development in Higher Education

Eleven core thematic concepts emerge from the scholarly dialogue on spirituality and the possibility of a renewed theory and practice of spiritual development in higher education. I have identified these core concepts based on their importance and rate of occurrence within the dialogue of the field; however, their organization here is based on my constructive usage of the concepts towards an integrated model for spiritual and civic development. In labeling these core concepts, I have tried to thoughtfully and critically use the original terminology of the authors as often as possible. However, in order to summarize and categorize the ideas of various authors, the terminology I have chosen may not reflect the exact language used by every author. Throughout this constructive work, it was to my benefit that several of the authors referenced one another in their efforts to define key terms. For example, Parker Palmer is often cited for his work with the “authentic self”, or the “undivided self.” Similarly, Diana Eck, co-founder of The Pluralism Project at Harvard University, is commonly cited for her vast work on “pluralism,” defined as more engaged and constructive than “diversity” work, which connotes a low-level tolerance. As a result, there were certainly some concepts that required less construction on my end, as the authors in the field had done much of the work in coming to agreement on key terms.

Emerging from the dialogue on spirituality in higher education are the following constructed core concepts:

Table 2.1. Core Concepts of Spiritual Development

- 1) Action orientation
- 2) Future-oriented focus of purpose and direction
- 3) Agential transformation
- 4) An imagination to develop new and better ways to live in the world
- 5) Relationships and community as the context for spiritual development
- 6) Meaningful engagement with “other”
- 7) A sense of interconnectedness beyond self
- 8) Identity as the authentic self
- 9) Values to navigate and make meaning of the world around us
- 10) Love and compassion as core values
- 11) Comprehension and acceptance of complexity and paradox

Spiritual Core Concept 1: Action Orientation

An action orientation requires that our spirituality move beyond what we think and say, to be embodied in what we do—how we act—all three together determine who we are as the authentic self. It is through action that we internalize spirituality as part of

our identity. The more we act on our spirituality, the more it becomes central to our identity, building consistency amongst our beliefs, words, and actions (Stanczak and Miller 2004, 36). It is through our *interaction* with others, those both similar and different from our own culture, and continual practice—the habitual acting out of spirituality—that spiritual development matures.

In contrast to action-oriented spirituality is a sense of spirituality as only an internal experience, idea, or feeling, which could produce a divided life or hypocrisy. For example, someone may find momentary moral meaning from a religious sermon, meaningful song, or from a poem read during meditation, but does not then integrate the moral meaning into their lives through his/her actions. Spiritual development requires congruence between espoused beliefs and how one lives life. Examples of action-oriented spirituality include engaged Buddhism, philanthropic humanism, and social justice oriented Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

In particular, an action-oriented spirituality is what bridges spirituality towards social justice work, service, and other civic capacities. Sharon Daloz Parks suggests that spirituality (“faith” in her terms), particularly during the young adult (18-30) mode of meaning-making is in part about “cultivating a capacity to respond—to act—in ways that are satisfying and just” (2000, 6). The other two parts of the meaning-making process for Daloz Parks are “becoming critically aware of one’s own composing of reality” and “self-consciously participating in an ongoing dialogue toward truth” (2000, 6). Acting in “satisfying and just” ways requires connecting our actions with our truths—personal core values and collective values such as the democratic values of justice and equality. It also

requires awareness that individuals are constantly composing worldviews that shape reality—affecting how we understand and treat self and other.

A natural next step from this more personal action-orientation of spirituality is to develop intentionality around our individual and collective capability to compose reality. Individuals and communities can move beyond critical awareness to intentional composition and creation, or civic engagement that activates collective truths in order to create a more just and equitable world. The research at the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) by Alexander and Helen Astin corroborates this connection between action-oriented spiritual development and civic engagement. The Astins found that for college students, spirituality is positively associated with increased civic responsibility, or responsible action towards one's community (Hoppe and Speck 2005).

One potential form of action-oriented spiritual development for the educational context is service-learning, a pedagogy that combines traditional classroom learning with community-based learning through service. At its best, service-learning should be a mutually beneficial partnership, both adding value to classroom learning for the students and creating impact around community-identified issues. The action-oriented spiritual connection emerges from critical reflection on experiences of meaningful engagement with “other” in which we are challenged to act on our core values, redefine current values, or develop new core values as a result of reflection upon our actions and engagement. Ken Koth identifies service-learning efforts that intentionally incorporate reflection on personal meaning, spiritual values, and vocational “calling,” as an effective method for student development of “long-term commitments to pursue positive social

change” and “stronger commitments to service” (Diamond 2008, 129). In essence, spiritual development that incorporates acting out our spiritual values and is followed by critical reflection, leads to further action-oriented spirituality and presumably authentic personal and vocational identities in which one’s beliefs and actions are in closer alignment.

Action-oriented spiritual development is a reciprocally generative effort: the more one acts on their current core values, the more integrated their spiritual engagement; and the more one critically reflects on their past actions, the greater their capacity to refine and develop new core values. Dalton describes this process through a service-related action orientation by quoting from the book *Common Fire*,

The call to service is a spiritual imperative...through the experience of caring for others and taking responsibility for helping to solve social problems, students are better able to stay in touch with their moral feelings and beliefs. (Parks Daloz et al. 1996, 22)

It may be as simple as “practice makes perfect.” The more we take action in our community around our values, the further developed our values become. However, this is not to say that our values always stay the same. Engagement with “other” can sometimes cause us to critically reflect and adjust our previously held beliefs and values as we become more aware of the global context and diversity of our communities at large.

The underlying argument for an action orientation to spiritual development in higher education is a reflection of the current, traditional, positivist education model. Ethical thinking and action are natural partners, but are too often ignored in current learning environments (Palmer, Zajonc, and Scribner 2010, 31). In contrast, higher education should be supporting this meaning-making process with a more balanced

pedagogy that includes spiritual development. If we develop students to only trust objective reasoning—to understand the world only through one lens—then we are directing their future actions and vocations as separate, or compartmentalized, from ethical thinking and acting. Sharon Daloz Parks describes this critical issue by noting how our spirituality (“faith” in her terms) is revealed in our actions:

Faith is intimately related to doing. We human beings act in accordance with what we really trust—in contrast to what we may merely acclaim. We act in alignment with what we finally perceive as real, oriented by our most powerful centers of trust (or mistrust). Thus our acts, powered by a deeper faith, often belie what we say (or even think) we believe. Our faith is revealed in our behavior. (Daloz Parks 2000, 26)

Incorporating spiritual development into higher education addresses this issue by providing the support and space for students to engage in critical development of their core values, “truths,” including development through action, and action that supports the integration of these values and truths into their identities.

This integration of action-oriented spirituality is best described by a student in the Puksta Scholars Program,

I think that for me spirituality is religion, and being religious. If I don’t apply it to my daily life, to what I do for myself and other people, if I don’t make it religious, then religion by itself with no practice doesn’t mean anything, and it’s empty, it’s blank. It’s just a theory you have of, “ok this is what my religion is all about,” but if you don’t apply it to your daily life and what you do for yourself and others, I think it’s not for me. It doesn’t mean as much because it’s empty, it’s not fully there.

Spirituality as action-oriented is the practice of what we believe to be true. Without this practice and action, we cannot spiritually mature, and as this student describes, we will remain spiritually empty.

Spiritual Core Concept 2: Future-Oriented Purpose and Direction

One development in the dialogue of spirituality in higher education since 1999 is the separation of one of Talbot and Love's defining propositions into two related but distinct concepts.⁴⁶ The original proposition, "spiritual development involves deriving meaning, purpose and direction in one's life" (1999, 366), is now more commonly separated into two core concepts: 1) the development of values to navigate and make meaning of the world; and 2) a future-oriented purpose and direction. Contemporary scholars are starting to identify these as two interrelated concepts that gain greater value and distinction when identified separately.

Love and Talbot define their original proposition around meaning, purpose and direction, as follows: "the content of spirituality and the focus of the process of spiritual development is greater knowledge and greater love; it is knowledge and love that help provide meaning, purpose, and direction in one's life" (Love and Talbot 1999, 366). They describe knowledge as a larger worldview, understanding our communities through the roles of power, values and assumptions (366). Love is then described as *agape* or the "unselfish love of one person for another" (366). For Love and Talbot, spiritual development of meaning, purpose, and direction come from a larger worldview and

⁴⁶ Love and Talbot's foundational article to the dialogue on spiritual development in higher education preferred five propositions towards defining spiritual development in higher education, which would acknowledge a wide range of beliefs, both religious and otherwise. These propositions are that spiritual development involves: 1) An internal process of seeking personal authenticity, genuineness, and wholeness as an aspect of identity development (364); 2) The process of continually transcending one's current locus of centrality (365); 3) Developing a greater connectedness to self and others through relationships and union with community (365); 4) Deriving meaning, purpose, and direction in one's life (366); 5) An increasing openness to exploring a relationship with an intangible and pervasive power or essence that exists beyond human existence and rational human knowing (367).

unselfish love, yet it is unclear how this process functions to create direction that leads to action.

More recently, contemporary scholars have described the process of meaning making separately from the development of a life direction. Meaning making includes the development of both personal and cultural values as the way to understand self and world so that life and community may have meaning and value. Some scholars define this process as character development (Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm 2006), while others use the term “purpose.” How scholars use the term “purpose,” however, comes across as static, or philosophical when used with the terms meaning-making, values, and ethics. Meaning and purpose are synonymous, and simply defined as finding an intrinsic value for life and community.

In contrast, a future-oriented purpose and direction has an explicit action orientation, rather than the more philosophical nature of “meaning-making” alone. Purpose is not just who I am or why I exist, but now it becomes more about who I want to be. It requires critical thinking about what actions I take, and intentionality about how I live my life so that my living is in alignment with my values, and sense of interconnectedness or transcendence. It is a forward and active direction, defined by terms like “spiritual quest” (Andres Nino in Kazanjian and Laurence 2000), or “aspiration” (Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm 2006). Elizabeth Tisdell explains this forward movement as “the great spiral,” the process of “standing in the present moment and spiraling back to explore significant events and spiritual experiences that shaped both

one's spiritual journey and life journey and identity thus far in order to move forward to the future" (2003, 94).

The defining characteristics of a future-oriented purpose and direction are time and imagination. Values to navigate and make meaning of the world develop in the present with reflections on the past. This indicates how one lives his/her life on a daily basis as a result of critically reflecting on past experiences and present values⁴⁷—continually re-visioning the way one makes meaning. In contrast, a future-oriented purpose and direction necessarily includes the past, present, *and* future—movement beyond daily activities to a larger vision and goal. Imagination is how we construct new ways and ideas for our future, composing new realities and visions. These two defining characteristics lead us to answer the question, “Who do I want to be?” or for the civic collective—“Who do we want to be?” Meanwhile, creating a life philosophy, meaning, and values answers the question “Who am I/we?” In contrast, asking the question, “Who do I/we want to be?” initiates the process of creating a future-oriented purpose and direction, or a life vision that requires directed action to reach.

Spiritual Core Concept 3: Agential Transformation

Agential transformation is concerned with how our actions will change as we move into the future through the process of spiritual development. Sometimes the movement of spiritual development manifests in minor adjustments, and sometimes it is a major change, or transformation. Such a transformation might manifest as a drastically

⁴⁷ Parker Palmer would identify this as part of the process of creating an “undivided life,” a process founded on “identity” and “integrity” (2007). For further explanation, see “Spiritual Core Concept 8: Identity as Authentic Self” within this chapter.

shifted sense of self, “other,” or worldview—how we understand the world around us. This drastic shift results in a change in our ways of knowing, being, and doing. In this sense, transformation is closely linked to an action orientation. As we change from one form to another, we must also change our actions and practice to be in alignment with our new form in order to maintain integrity and a sense of wholeness. In addition to a change of actions, transformation can result in a new or adjusted future-oriented purpose and direction. In particular, agential transformation occurs when new or deeper understanding is so compelling that it requires a major change to how we understand self and others, how we act in the world, and what our future-oriented purpose and direction will be.

Agential transformation is both a descriptor of the process of spiritual development and a goal. Spiritual development is always moving, always changing. We do not become “spiritually developed” as an end goal, but rather we may become spiritually engaged as our spirituality becomes more mature and integrated into our lives. Even mature spirituality is still evolving in order to accompany us throughout the various changes in our life—those life experiences that give us new meaning about self and the world.

Sometimes we prevent spiritual transformation, because change can be destabilizing. Holding tightly to our values and worldviews, and always acting on them in the same way might make us feel more stable in the face of new information and understanding. Eventually a tension will arise between the new information and our tightly guarded spirituality, and this tension will cause such a discomfort that we will be faced with two directions, 1) deny the new information, or 2) incorporate the new

information. Denial is a refusal to believe a painful truth, and results in a disengagement from reality. As you might imagine, this is not a spiritually healthy place from which to operate as it lacks integrity and authenticity. The opposite direction, incorporating the new information, is a more spiritually healthy option as it is explicitly about building integrity and authenticity.

An example of preventing spiritual transformation might be the situation of a parent who holds traditional values about love and sexual orientation. This parent's worldview is one in which heterosexual relationships are the foundation for sexual relationships and family formation. Then one day this parent—a mother—finds out that her son is gay. Unwilling to understand, process, and incorporate this new information towards other core values—such as love for her child—she heads in the direction of denial. The denial is about the truth of who her son is, and results in a disengagement from the reality of the broad spectrum of diverse sexual relationships and family formations that exist. This is not a spiritually healthy place for the son or the mother, and prevents the spiritual transformation necessary to restore a critical relationship for both child and parent. It also shows a resistance to the natural fluidity of spiritual development, which is directly impacted by new experiences and information.

Agential transformation only occurs through an openness to its fluid nature, and can be triggered by particular experiences and relationships, such as: empathetic and imaginative experiences (Palmer, Zajonc, and Scribner 2010, 106), holistic learning (Tisdell 2003); experiences of social problems (Jablonski 2001); and mutual discovery through pluralism (Kazanjian and Laurence 2000). These triggers reflect other core

concepts of spiritual development as agential transformation privileges relationships and community as the developmental context, meaningful engagement with “other,” love and compassion as core values, and an imagination in order to develop new and better ways.

Additionally, the fluid process of spiritual development applies to agential transformation itself as a process. One does not become transformed and move on. Transformation is a developmental experience and lifelong spiritual maturity requires the capacity to sustain the process of transformation over time and to experience transformation multiple times. Oftentimes transformational experiences require a lot of effort, leaving one physically, emotionally, and spiritually exhausted. Imagine that mother engaging in transformation rather than denial about her gay son. Even if she got to a point of acceptance, she would still need to work continually at constructing her new worldview, putting her core values into a different meaning-making structure that would include the sexual orientation of her son as a viable truth. She would have to practice this new understanding through her daily actions, and revision her future-oriented purpose and direction, particularly regarding her role in relation to her son. She may have previously presumed that her son would find a nice young woman, have a wedding, and start a family. Maybe the mother doesn’t have any daughters and was looking forward to building a relationship with a daughter in-law. Whatever her future image for her son and her future purpose in relation to that image, they will both need to be re-imagined. This re-imagining takes time; it is a fluid process that requires the capacity to sustain transformation over time and an openness to multiple transformations throughout the process of spiritual development.

Spiritual Core Concept 4: An Imagination to Develop New and Better Ways to Live in the World

Imagination is clearly defined as separate from fantasy, or the unreal, but rather is about creating new and better ways of living in the world based on our images of the current world, and in movement towards how we would prefer the world to be.

Imagination is an act of creation and composition that precedes implementation, or action. We develop first in our minds, and then in real life, a world that better integrates our core values. By developing new ideas that push us beyond the status quo—from the past and present, on into a future-oriented purpose and direction—imagination is the mechanism for progress and part of agential transformation.

Imagination is one aspect of the fluid and changing nature of spiritual development, a composition tool that helps us re-image self and “other” when we go through transformational experiences. Development of the imagination is like exercise to a muscle; it strengthens and makes the tool—or muscle—better able to work in the future. We need strong imaginative skills in order to comprehend and accept the inherent complexity and paradox of the world around us; to create an image of self and “other;” to develop a meaningful worldview; and to put our values into a framework that has integrity. Imagine a paint brush that pulls together the right colors in the right places on a canvas to compose an image that has meaningful form. In the same way, imagination is the mental tool that pulls together the right values, meanings and contexts to create valid, well-formed understandings for a spirituality that can successfully guide us forward.

The creative nature of imagination is everywhere. We create ourselves in the image of what we value (words, actions, and physical presentation); we create our

collective cultures through the arts, and our political and economic life; we design the world around us through buildings and natural spaces; we invent new medicine, technologies, and languages; and we create meaning through religious ritual, music, and art. It is through imagination that we “entertain the great questions of our time and craft the dreams we live by” (Daloz Parks 2000, 105).

Imagination is critical to progress, but it can also be used as a tool of destruction. For spiritual development, imagination must be used to develop new and *better* ways of being in the world. This requires an engagement with our values, especially core values of love and compassion. It also connects to the civic component of our lives, with an expectation that we imagine and create a better world for and with the collective—not just the self. Alfred North Whitehead explains the imaginative trajectory on a global scale, “Imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution” (Palmer, Zajonc, and Scribner 2010, 57). Imagination is the creative process that transforms empirical knowledge, giving birth to new understandings and ways of acting in the world—attending to both our spiritual and civic capacities.

Spiritual Core Concept 5: Relationships and Community as the Context for Spiritual Development

Relationships and community are the context in which we “best” learn, develop our identity, and find belonging (Palmer, Zajonc, and Scribner 2010). They form the environment in which we develop our identity as the authentic self, and our values that help us navigate and make meaning of the world we live in. Relationships and community can both positively and negatively inform our development, fostering

constructive and destructive values and worldviews. In the context of supporting spiritual development, relationships and community are meant to be life-giving, safe, and capable of challenging us to be our best selves. This core concept is not meant to sound idealistic, but rather as a way to understand how we learn in the context of others, as social beings.

We form new understanding through dialogue and interaction with diverse people. The concept of brainstorming, for example, is about people coming together to learn from one another as a way to solve a problem, building on one another's ideas until the group finds the best solution—a solution that not one individual could have come up with on his/her own. From the dialogic pedagogy of Socrates (Plato [Stephanus 1578] 1974) to Sharon Daloz Parks' emphasis on the value of mentor communities (2000), to Myles Horton's Highlander rocking chair circles of openness and honesty, to Paulo Freire's problem-posing learning within culture circles that pushed against traditional banking model education (Freire 2000b), we learn with and from each other. The critical characteristic is the dialogic nature of learning; it is the back-and-forth knowledge construction of relationships and community. In contrast, a traditional learning model focuses on transmission of information from a superior source, to an inferior source—the teacher to the student. Some might call this indoctrination. Spiritual development includes and goes beyond transmission to focus on mutual discovery, and the resulting construction and creation of spiritual engagement.

This relational context is a deeply dialogical experience, one well described by Martin Buber's "I-Thou" relationship construction, which defines the more spiritually transcendent category of relationships possible between humans (Palmer, Zajonc, and

Scribner 2010; Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm 2006). In the community context, this broader relationship could be described as *Communitas*,⁴⁸ the “emotional, sacred character of the community formed between and among people” (Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm 2006, 176). Relationships and communities that fall into these categories allow us to deeply connect with others, provide a sense of belonging and identity, and support critical reflection and development. For many years, spiritual development has been relegated to religious institutions because they were not just institutions, but rather communities of people who could connect deeply around shared values and purpose, a place to belong, an identity that had larger meaning beyond the self. Our institutions of higher education could serve a similar purpose, a place for spiritual development, where people can come together to learn from one another in a community that supports the development of diverse personal and shared collective values, provides an intellectually and spiritually safe place to belong, and the opportunity to develop an identity larger than the self.

The spiritual nature of community is based on the development of relationships that not only support our internal reflection and development, but also help us to connect deeply with others. It is through our relationships and connection to community that we are able to dig deeply into our own inner lives, and at the same time expand into a larger sense of “global consciousness” (Tisdell 2003, 11), in order to take our spiritual and civic place in the “new global commons” (Daloiz Parks 2000, 10). Building community is part of addressing the human need for “belonging” (Chickering, Dalton and Stamm 2006),

⁴⁸ The term *Communitas* as originally described by Kathleen Manning (2000).

which might be found in one community or multiple “networks of belonging” (Daloz Parks 2000). “Everyone needs a psychological home, crafted in the intricate patterns of connection and interaction between the person and his or her community. Faith is a...relational activity” (Daloz Parks 2000, 89). In higher education, we must provide the space, structures and support for students to find such a “psychological home,” to build relationships and community that support spiritual development, rather than destructive behaviors.

This need to belong can also lead us towards tribalism, a loyalty to a group that is necessarily exclusive to others. At its extreme, tribalism can manifest as religious wars, patriotism at the expense of rationality, and unequal treatment based on difference. While we may all need tribe (Daloz Parks 2000),⁴⁹ we also must cultivate a more global understanding of community for the modern context. The importance of inclusivity beyond tribe points to another development within the dialogue of spirituality in higher education that has emerged since the publication of Love and Talbot’s processes of spiritual development in 1999. Many scholars writing after 1999 identify the need for meaningful engagement with “other,” as a necessary component of spiritual development. Palmer describes that “truth is communal and interactive,” meaning that we cannot find truth, or spirituality, in isolation (Kazanjian and Laurence 2000). It is also true that we cannot find truth in cultural isolation—engagement with those very similar to us—but rather that truth-seeking requires building relationships with those who are different, or beyond each person’s immediate tribe.

⁴⁹ This understanding of tribe as part of spiritual development emerges from the intellectual lineage of James Fowler’s and H. Richard Niehbur’s work around defining and structuring “faith.”

Spiritual Core Concept 6: Meaningful Engagement with the “Other”

Meaningful engagement with “other” is a move beyond diversity work, or mere tolerance.⁵⁰ Diversity is a fact that describes the modern world, not a method or way to engage with difference (Kazanjian and Laurence 2000), and tolerance connotes a low-level acceptance of another’s existence—not meaningful engagement. In contrast, meaningful engagement connotes a depth of interaction, the building of relationships, and an intentional effort to move beyond tribe. Engaging with “other” is an important process that both helps us learn how to deal with the complexity and paradox of the world—an important skill for young adult development—and additionally helps us reflect on, learn about, and further develop our own self-understandings (Daloz Parks 2000).

Through meaningful engagement with “other” we reflexively learn about our own presumptions and worldviews, allowing for critical reflection about the assumptions we each carry about who we are, and who everyone else is in comparison (Daloz Parks 1993). In the contrasts of deeply engaging with “other” we more deeply engage with self. Encountering such difference may help us identify values and beliefs that we were previously unaware of, help us to critically reflect, and then decide if those values and beliefs continue to help us make meaning, or if they need to be adjusted or replaced. Therefore, this encounter with “other” supports critical thinking and the dialectical and reflective process that is necessary for spiritual development. This kind of engaged

⁵⁰ Many of the scholars within the dialogue of spirituality and higher education described this core concept through reference to Diana Eck’s work on religious pluralism, as a movement beyond tolerance to engagement (The Pluralism Project 2006).

pluralism provides transformational potential for both self and other (Kazanjian and Laurence 2000).

The core concept of meaningful engagement with “other” is critical to the dialogue of spirituality in the higher education context, and remains the key development of this dialogue over the past eleven years. While Love and Talbot address the importance of the context of relationship and community, their primary descriptions of these relationships are “family, neighborhood, school, and church” (1999, 365). These relationships are what Sharon Daloz Parks refers to as “tribe,” or those with whom one relates or finds similarity (2000). Even those who live in an urban, racially and ethnically diverse setting have an urban tribe, which differs from the suburban or rural experience. Meaningful engagement with “other” is an essential difference in how spiritual development in higher education must occur at a time of increasing globalization, pluralism within borders, and growing tensions between diverse communities and peoples. Higher education has a particular role, when for some students college is an environment where they might first encounter and engage with others who have radically different beliefs or cultures. Some students entering college may have only encountered the tribal sense of relationship and community, with others like them, or those similar enough not to cause tension or critical reflection. Or, they may have encountered significant difference but through more superficial means, not through meaningful engagement.

Higher education can intentionally structure and support the spiritual development process through potential opportunities for meaningful engagement with “other” such as,

“working with people who hold conflicting values” (Palmer, Zajonc, and Scribner 2010, 88); the development of “significant personal relationships with people who are different” (Tisdell 2003, 201); and “active engagement with diversity” (Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm 2006, 183). For example, when assigning a group project, attention to this core concept might lead to creating intentionally diverse groups and teaching students how to effectively work in groups where they will face difference and tension. Service-learning is another pedagogical structure that can provide a diverse community setting in which to both develop relationships with community members and forge peer relationships across difference in the context of group work. Through experiential and service-learning educational contexts “we are often challenged by the worldview and values of those we meet. Those we meet can think, feel and act so differently than we do. Such experiences awaken us to our own culture, mores, and behavior” (Palmer, Zajonc, and Scribner 2010, 88). Engaging with “other” holds up a mirror to our backside—those aspects of ourselves that are difficult for us to see, or which we often ignore—prompting deeper spiritual development than we might experience through engagement with those like us.

The impact of such engagement moves beyond the personal development of spirituality or self-understanding to embrace the larger community. As we start to understand “other” through meaningful relationships—both private and public—we begin to truly understand what it means to live in a pluralistic world. The ability to comprehend and engage in the pluralistic world will impact our politics—how we make decisions as

communities—and how we lead, whether it is in the classroom, a board room, on the playing field, or at a community center.

Meaningful engagement with “other” addresses the potential liability of spiritual development that occurs only within the context of relationships and communities of congruence. The liability is the potential for disunity, polarization and even cult-like belief if we do not intentionally engage in building relationships and community with “other” as part of our spiritual development.

Finally, the core concept of meaningful engagement with “other” is a leading connector between what should be integral pedagogies, those of spiritual and civic development. The deeper meaningful nature of engagement with “other” is a part of spiritual development that responds to our,

Longing for communion with those who are profoundly other than the self, not as a matter of mere political correctness, or ideology, or ethical commitment, but as a longing in the soul for an embodied faithfulness to the interdependence that we are. (Daloiz Parks 2000, 102)

This interdependence moves us beyond tribe to find belonging amongst the boundless diversity of humanity, and requires that we challenge ourselves towards a broader comprehension and acceptance of the vast complexity and paradox within humanity.

Meaningful engagement with “other” is a challenge to judge less and love more, and to take a more global, transcendent sense of belonging.

Spiritual Core Concept 7: A Sense of Interconnectedness beyond Self

A sense of interconnectedness beyond self incorporates three paths: 1) transcendence, 2) interconnectedness through a higher power, and 3) inter-being. These three categories represent a more inclusively diverse approach to defining spirituality in

higher education, while all arriving at a common spiritual outcome of meaningful interconnectedness beyond the self. Interconnectedness allows us to both look inward and outward at the same time, deepening our inner or personal spirituality through a larger sense of connectedness and communion with that which is beyond the self. Such a sense of interconnectedness should support a meaningful and foundational framework for building relationships and community, engaging with “other,” and developing a future-oriented purpose and direction.

Transcendence is a sense of connection that is beyond one’s own ego (Astin, Astin, and Lindholm 2011; Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm 2006; Daloz Parks 2000; Diamond 2008; Hoppe and Speck 2005; Jablonski 2001; Palmer, Zajonc, and Scribner 2010), those experiences that are difficult to define for our self, let alone to explain to another person. An experience or sense of transcendence is “beyond” because it is intangible, indefinable, outside of the accepted ways of understanding or knowledge production. Transcendence is so beyond our understanding that some call it mystery—the unknown and unexplained (Astin, Astin, and Lindholm 2011; Daloz Parks 2000). The transcendent is particularly difficult to discuss in academia’s positivist culture, which is often uncomfortable with the unquantifiable. There are other terms that may seem more familiar, and some of which might be more acceptable in the effort to define transcendence for the academy, “intuition, inspiration, the mysterious, and the mystical” (2011, 4). Transcendence might be considered the sixth “subjective” sense, knowledge that is understood beyond our physical “objectivist” senses such as hearing, sight, touch, taste, and smell.

A sense of interconnectedness through a “higher power” gives more form to transcendence, which is no longer an indefinable beyond-ness, but a formed power beyond the self (Astin, Astin, and Lindholm 2011; Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm 2006; Daloz Parks 2000; Diamond 2008; Hoppe and Speck 2005; Jablonski 2001; Tisdell 2003). “Higher power” is defined in many terms; for some this power takes form through a religion or spiritual philosophy, and is named God (Daloz Parks 2000; Hoppe and Speck 2005; Tisdell 2003), Great Spirit,⁵¹ Buddha, Allah, YHVH,⁵² or Brahman.⁵³ For others, it is a particular pattern of meaning outside of religion and structured spiritual philosophies, such as quantum physics (Wheatley 1999), cosmic energy (Tisdell 2003), “Life-force” (Tisdell 2003), and Mother Nature.

Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh coined the term “Inter-being” to express the interconnectedness of all things. This interconnectedness is not simply connection, but presents an understanding of the “self” as an illusion; the self exists only because everything else exists (Hanh 1988). As a sense of interconnectedness beyond the self, “inter-being” pushes further beyond transcendence towards oneness of all things (Palmer, Zajonc, and Scribner 2010, 55). The Native American Sacred Circle of Life⁵⁴ symbolized by the “medicine wheel” expresses inter-being as a “unity and oneness of all things” (Kazanjian and Laurence 2000, xiii). This sense of universal unity is also described by psychiatrist Carl Jung who uses the term synchronicity to describe “the collective

⁵¹ English translation for the various Native American tribal names for the creator, Great Spirit.

⁵² English translation for the four-letter Hebrew name for God. Within the Jewish community, it is common practice to use the term HaShem, “The Name,” to reference YHVH.

⁵³ English translation of Hindu, Sanskrit term that identifies the universal Spirit.

⁵⁴ Attributed to Brad Drowning Bear.

unconscious and unity of all things” (Tisdell 2003, 74). Inter-being is more specific compared to the idea of transcendence, but without the structure of a higher power as the medium for interconnection beyond the self.

These three paths—transcendence, interconnectedness through a higher power, and inter-being—are part of a more inclusive approach to spirituality within the higher education discourse. Inclusivity comes from a broad approach to understanding the variety of ways an individual can define his/her sense of interconnectedness. Spiritual development focuses less on legitimizing how an individual finds interconnectedness, and more on the individual’s ability to make meaning of his/her life through the understanding that we are each part of a larger whole, power, or essence. This meaning-making beyond the self serves as a motivational force to find a larger purpose for our personal lives and our communities.

In the last decade, scholars have combined and expanded two of Love and Talbot’s five spiritual development propositions, 1) “continually transcending one’s current locus of centrality” (1999, 365), and 2) “openness to exploring a relationship with an intangible and pervasive power or essence that exists beyond human existence and rational human knowing” (1999, 367). These two propositions are about moving beyond self-centeredness to either enlightened self-interest or a more global-centeredness, and the development of an exploratory relationship with what Love and Talbot specifically identify as God from the Western traditions, and also acknowledge is inherent in Eastern philosophies, such as Buddhism and Taoism—however, they do not provide an alternative term. In the modern dialogue of spirituality in higher education, Love and

Talbot's two separate concepts fit within one more inclusive concept of a sense of interconnectedness beyond the self, which also includes the third new path of inter-being

The two separate propositions of Love and Talbot are indistinguishable because they occur simultaneously, and are two paths to the same outcome of interconnectedness. As an individual transcends the self (ego), he/she creates a deeper sense of interconnectedness (transcendence, interconnectedness through a higher power, or inter-being); and conversely, as an individual deepens his/her sense of interconnectedness (transcendence, interconnectedness through a higher power, or inter-being), he/she moves further from self-centeredness. These are not two separate propositions as Love and Talbot imply, but they are parts of a singular process and the broader nature of spirituality,⁵⁵ which "is both infinitely transcendent (beyond) in character and simultaneously immanent (living within)" (Daloz Parks 2000, 24-5).

The new and more inclusive nature of the concept of interconnectedness beyond the self is apparent through the interchangeable use of terms that represent the three paths to interconnectedness within scholarly writings. The message emerging from the dialogue on spirituality in higher education is simply that spiritual development requires a meaning-making connection to something greater than the self, but it is not to direct or define what that connection should be for a particular individual. My hope is that this more inclusive understanding will make spiritual development more palatable within secular higher education, which at times avoids spirituality for fear of religious indoctrination. Such an inclusive approach will better serve the growing number of

⁵⁵ Spirituality is my term for what Sharon Daloz Parks names as "faith."

students who identify as “spiritual, but not religious” while also including students who do identify religiously. A more inclusive understanding of spiritual development embraces both identity groups without diluting the powerful, relational, and purpose-driven aspects of interconnectedness for either group.

Spiritual Core Concept 8: Identity as the Authentic Self

The nature of the higher education environment encourages identity development as students leave home to face a new independence and environment where they will be challenged to maintain their identity, adjust it, or even re-create it. The development of identity as the authentic self is about finding true self. Authenticity is that which is real and genuine, and it emerges when we find integrity in our lives. At its simplest, integrity is wholeness; to be whole the different parts of our identity and lives must be in alignment. When what we think matches what we say and what we do, we come into alignment; we are true and authentic. The authentic self shudders in the face of superficiality, resisting situations that violate its core values, and wants meaningful relationships with others—not just superficial “friends.” This is not to say that the authentic self is static and rigid, but rather that authenticity is about honest engagement with identity development and transformation—both continually moving processes.

Unfortunately, many of us are out of alignment, driving through life with one wheel pointed left and another pointing right. Improper alignment causes an inner tension to grow, which like the earlier example of preventing transformation, will force you towards, 1) denial, or 2) engagement. Going down the path of denial shoves down core values, and then the deal making begins as the mind attempts to quell the discomfort of

disregarded core values—it's just for a little bit, just this one time, or I'll do it differently next time. Such denial is self-deception that results in further misalignment—not a spiritually healthy practice. The alternative, engagement, is the work of spiritual development and the development of an identity as the authentic self. Engagement requires the capacity to identify what is out of alignment, to locate dishonesty, falseness, and cognitive dissonance in our lives. Engagement then requires one to address that tension by identifying core values—including love and compassion—in order to make a plan and take action towards bringing beliefs, words, and actions into closer unity.

Within the dialogue on spirituality in higher education, the concept of identity as the authentic self draws heavily on Parker Palmer's teacher development work. Palmer describes the "undivided self" by using two key terms, identity⁵⁶ and integrity⁵⁷. Bringing these two concepts together, Palmer explains that, "*Identity* lies in the intersection of the diverse forces that make up my life, and *integrity* lies in relating to those forces in ways that bring me wholeness and life rather than fragmentation and death [italics in the original]" (2007, 14). Authority is also key to Palmer's definition of the "undivided self." Palmer notes the root of "authority" is the term "author," in which "Authority is granted

⁵⁶ "By identity I mean an evolving nexus where all the forces that constitute my life converge in the mystery of self: my genetic makeup, the nature of the man and woman who gave me life, the culture in which I was raised, people who have sustained me and people who have done me harm, the good and ill I have done to others and to myself, the experience of love and suffering—and much, much more. In the midst of that complex field, identity is a moving intersection of the inner and outer forces that make me who I am, converging in the irreducible mystery of being human." (Palmer 2007, 13-14)

⁵⁷ "Whatever wholeness I am able to find within that nexus as its vectors form and re-form the pattern of my life. Integrity requires that I discern what is integral to my selfhood, what fits and what does not—and that I choose life-giving ways of relating to the forces that converge within me: Do I welcome them or fear them, embrace them or reject them, move with them or against them? By choosing integrity, I become more whole, but wholeness does not mean perfection. It means becoming more real by acknowledging the whole of who I am." (Palmer 2007, 14)

to people who are perceived as authoring their own words, their own actions, their own lives, rather than playing a scripted role at great remove from their own hearts” (2007, 34). Developing authority—becoming the author of your life—is part of the spiritual process of developing an identity as the authentic self.

A critique of Palmer’s description of the “undivided self” is that it emerges from liberal individualism—where identity is entirely self-possessed. I think he suggests more of a mixture of individualism and communitarianism. The “diverse forces” that make up one’s life include social conditioning, relationships, family, and culture. “Authority” is not the extreme of individualism, but rather a healthy navigation of the tensions between social conditioning and self-creation. Whether in an individualistic or community-based society, individuals receive ascribed identities based on how the surrounding family, friends, community, and society see and understand the individual as well as his/her identity group. For the individual these ascribed identities may not be true, or authentic, because they are based on perception or socio-cultural structures. Perception is an understanding derived from the combination of both the lens or worldview of the perceiver and the outward presentation of the perceived object. Authorship of identity prevents the denial or death of the self by the perceptions of others.

Palmer’s description of the undivided self does not need to be individualistic, however, there is a potentially greater and deeper tension between identity and integrity for oppressed groups and identities. For example, the ascribed group identity for black males in U.S.-American society is the violently hyper-heterosexual (rapist), uncontrollably violent criminal (Welch 2007). This ascribed identity does not accurately

represent the majority of black males. For a minority of black males some of these descriptors may describe actual behavior, but not authentic identities. Individuals trapped, demobilized, and disempowered by how society defines them can sometimes end up performing to societal expectations against their authentic identities as a coping or survival mechanism. Acting outside of ascribed identities or stereotypes can be extremely difficult and ironically unsafe, even when those identities and stereotypes are negative or anti-social. Such dichotomy of identity creates a deep tension between socially ascribed identity and the individual's authentic identity, resulting in restricted and paralyzed authority. The development of authenticity is particularly important and tension-ridden for individuals in oppressed identity groups.

Identity development has the potential to be empowering, but too often amongst young adults identity seems to manifest as uncritical and unintentional. Students seem too willing to change who they are in relation to who they are with, creating misalignment and disunity within. In contrast, clinging too tightly to a rigid identity can cause tension when engaging with those who are different, as an overly structured sense of self can serve to exclude rather than include. A sense of identity is not static, but rather it is fluid and develops over time in relation to our life experiences, meaningful engagement with “other,” and within the developmental context of relationships and community. We use our imagination to create our authentic identity, integrating new experiences and knowledge with our past while looking towards a future-oriented purpose and direction, answering, “Who do I want to be?”—not just “Who am I?” A sense of wholeness and authenticity is not about a static identity, but rather about being at home with the dynamic

self; intentionally, critically, and actively creating an authentic self within a complex world.

The demands of a multicultural and mobile society create liabilities for an overly static understanding of the authentic self. In the modern era, it is increasingly rare for individuals to be able to identify monoculturally; more individuals identify as *mestizo*—racially mixed. The nature of relationships and family are crossing traditional boundaries of race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, and culture, and growing globalization blends cultures through economic, technologic, political, linguistic, media, and idea-based exchange. This cultural mixing and boundary crossing can create unity as well as tension. As traditional lines of group identity become blurred some cling to vestiges of heritage and purity in order to safeguard their own identities—often becoming exclusionary, while others breach the tension by embracing a broadness that may leave them feeling ungrounded—becoming inclusionary to the point of losing their identity of self. These are two extremes of a spectrum that briefly illustrate the tensions of power, culture, and identity in a complex world.

The development of the authentic self must include both finding integrity and finding comfort with flexibility. Just as spiritual development is an ongoing lifelong process, so is the development of the authentic self. The authentic self is always in dialogue with the world around us—dialogue as a constructive and creative endeavor, rather than argument that emerges from a rigid and fixed position.

Rather than some form of static essence, developing an identity as the authentic self requires intentional and critical evaluation of self and “other” that leads to

construction of self. This process engages questions such as: Who am I and who do I want to be? What people and experiences have influenced who I am? Who am I in relation to others? What are my core values and are my words and actions consistent with these values? Am I being true to myself? Put simply, an identity as the authentic self is about “What you see is what you get. What I believe, what I say, and what I do are consistent” (Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm 2006, 8). It is about finding a genuineness⁵⁸ and wholeness (Daloz Parks 2000).

The dialogue of spirituality in higher education universally agrees upon this core concept of authenticity because it directly challenges the modern culture of capitalism and consumerism, which forces a superficial focus that devalues authenticity and wholeness. As renowned scholars Alexander and Helen Astin describe, “A focus on the spiritual interior has been replaced by a focus on the material exterior” (Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm 2006, viii). The related critique of our educational system conforms to this capitalist culture by promoting the development of consumer cogs rather than the development of authentic learners. Such a superficial focus is detrimental to spiritual development as a whole, and particularly to an identity development that is meaningful, authentic, and true. Instead of engaging in spiritual development, our students are encouraged to let others dictate who they are—whether it is the media, cultural norms, their parents, or school—rather than being challenged and supported to imagine, create, and author their own identities and meaning for self and community.

⁵⁸ Margaret A. Jablonski (2001), and Sherry L. Hoppe and Bruce W. Speck (2005) reference the processes of spiritual development from Patrick Love and Donna Talbot (1999); the first component of which is the process of personal authenticity, which includes genuineness as an aspect of one’s identity development.

Spiritual Core Concept 9: Values to Navigate and Make Meaning of the World around Us

The development of an authentic self is dependent on the development of consciously held and explicit values that help us navigate and make meaning of the world in which we live. The developmental process includes critical evaluation of current tacit values, which may come from family, community, religion, and various cultural influences, and the confirmation, rejection, or restructuring of current values and the adoption of new values—often the result of an encounter with difference or a novel life experience. As with developing an identity as the authentic self, values-development can cause connection as well as alienation. Identifying and developing a value-based meaning-making framework may unite us closer with those who share similar values, and it may separate and cause tension with those who hold different core values.

Some values might even compete with each other, causing tension. For example, many of the students I have worked with who come from strong, interdependent family backgrounds get caught in the tension between two of their core values—family and education—when they attend college, particularly if the college is away from their hometown. Many of these students still feel responsible to their families, taking care of and mentoring younger siblings, helping their parents and grandparents. Yet, they are also committed to their education, particularly those who are the first generation in their family to attend college. When these students go off to college they are overwhelmed with the time and energy it takes to maintain these two core values along with building a social life, working, and maintaining their health.

These students should be supported to intentionally and critically engage in evaluating and further developing their core values so that they can make meaning of the new world around them. My experience is that those students who ignore this critical value-development process are the least successful; life quickly gets out of control with too many responsibilities and commitments that emerge from their core values. Or, another unsuccessful solution is that one of the two core values takes priority to the disregard of the other. The student chooses to focus only on school and does not have the accustomed support of family to carry him/her through stressful periods, and this negatively impacts his/her emotional and psychological well-being. At the same time, the family feels abandoned and negatively reacts to being cut out of the life of the college student, which may take on the form of constant phone calls and demands of time from the student. On the other hand, the student might choose family over school, maintaining familial responsibilities and relationships while their grades start to slip.

Engaging in a critical evaluation of these two core values might help a student to be more intentional about *how* they will remain committed to both core values. This thoughtful engagement might take the form of creating a plan that allows the student to outline specific commitments to his/her core values. Such a plan might include dedicating one weekend a month to go home if that is possible, weekly calls home on a particular day, and the setting aside of specific days and times for study that the family knows to respect as time the student needs without interruption. The connection to authentic self is that these core values have integrity through thoughts, words, and actions. A student with developed values and identity as the authentic self would know to communicate with

his/her family regarding expectations for how core values will be lived out within the new context of college, and also be responsible to his/her agreed upon commitments. Being critical and intentional about defining and living core values allows for the unity and integrity of the authentic self to develop. Critical evaluation and action will not always eliminate all tension, but should provide better engagement and management of these tensions.

While discussing integrative forms of teaching, Parker Palmer identifies the difference between objectivist education and learning that promotes “ethical thinking and action” (Palmer, Zajonc, and Scribner 2010, 31). By bringing this kind of integrative teaching into higher education, students have the opportunity to critically reflect on who they are and to identify and develop their own set of core values in conversation with a community of diverse cultures as well as their own community of origin. Moving from a tacit to an explicit understanding of one’s values is an important task for a young adult in transition from a childhood that is often directed by the values of parent(s) or other close adults. The inclusion of spiritual development in higher education supports students in developing a critically conscious “philosophy of life” (Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm 2006), which might challenge, adjust, or reaffirm the values of their childhood.

The development of consciously-held values is best supported by meaningful engagement with “other,” and occurs within the context of relationships and community (Daloz Parks 2000). It is a communal process that both supports individual development, and also manifests through cultures of “shared beliefs, values, behaviors, language and ways of communicating and making meaning among a particular social group” (Tisdell

2003, xi). This process is an intentional, dialogical movement, a back-and-forth that requires critical reflection, “deep learning” (Dalton via Jablonski 2001, 18), and the development of “moral reasoning” (Diamond 2008). Such a process moves the individual and the community beyond blindly accepting values imposed on them, to using reason and reflection to develop and author one’s own understanding of “truth” (Kazanjian and Laurence 2000).

Spiritual Core Concept 10: Love and Compassion as Core Values

This core concept may seem overly value-laden. One might ask, “Can a person be spiritual without the core values of love and compassion?” Within the scholarly dialogue on spirituality in higher education the answer is no, in large part because of the connection of love and compassion to the core concepts of relationships and community as the developmental context of spirituality, and the development of a sense of interconnectedness and transcendence. Core values of love and compassion allow a person to build meaningful relationships, to understand community, and identify as part of a community. Additionally, love and compassion are ways in which we understand our interconnectedness; whether that is through the love *from* or *for* a god, love of creation, or the love that emerges from the connection to sense of sisterhood and brotherhood of humanity.

Spiritual development includes the “capacity to love” (Daloz Parks 2000, 16), both loving others, as well as, a “compassionate self-concept” (Hoppe and Speck 2005, 33). One must have a deep love of self in order to develop an identity as the authentic self. If we truly love the self, we would prevent self-harm. This principle then translates into

compassion, or love of others. When we love others we want to prevent harm from reaching them. We take action to alleviate the suffering of our family members, community members, and our global community.

For example, it is love and compassion that motivate donors from across the globe to send money and supplies to those suffering after natural disasters. I use this particular example because some might argue that dealing with long-term and potentially “controllable” issues—such as alleviating global poverty or stopping the spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS—is not simply an altruistic effort. In these cases, one might consider the economic impact or expansion potential these issues have to affect our individual and communal standard of living and health if not addressed on a global level. These concerns may be a purely selfish (individual), or in organizing terms a “self interest”—concern for self among others (individual and community). In contrast, immediate responses to unexpected natural disasters indicate less of a concern of “How this might affect me and my well-being?” and more of a compassionate response for others.

Spiritual development requires that we move beyond self-serving love towards a broader all-encompassing love for all, which then leads to compassionate action. Rabbi Michael Lerner calls this “emancipatory spirituality,” which includes, “love and care for the universe...love and respect not only for those of similar political and spiritual philosophy, but also for those who do not share that philosophy” (Tisdell 2003, 174). Core values of love and compassion are part of our sense of interconnectedness, especially an interconnectedness that expands as a result of meaningful engagement with

“other.” Such core values move us beyond our private interests of health and prosperity, both individually and as larger communities on the global scale.

This core concept is not just a utopian, warm and fuzzy ideal; it is supported by research. A recent study of college student spirituality found that “highly ‘spiritual’ people tend to exemplify certain personal qualities such as love, compassion, and equanimity” (Astin, Astin, and Lindholm 2011, 4). Love and compassion for self, family, other, and God are also core concepts of many recognized major religions.⁵⁹ Many religions emphasize the loving nature of God as seen through roles of parent, creator, and caretaker. Love and compassion are core values of humanity and operational stances for spiritual development, and a spiritual way in which we see and engage with self and others.

Spiritual Core Concept 11: Comprehension and Acceptance of Complexity and Paradox

Comprehension and acceptance of complexity and paradox is a core component that strikes in direct contrast to much of what we understand about religion through the lens of mainstream media. Such media would have us believe that religious people are all fanatics who steadfastly hold on to narrow ideas and promote those ideas through judgement, exclusion, and even violence. In the dialogue of spirituality within higher education such narrow perspectives, exclusionary and hate-filled attitudes and tactics are not spiritual, but rather demonstrate a true lack of spirituality. In contrast, spiritual development requires a connection to community, meaningful relationships with “other,”

⁵⁹ Astin, Astin and Lindholm describe love as “at the root of all the great religions” (2011, 21).

and love and compassion as core values. These core components of spiritual development promote engagement, understanding, and acceptance that our world is complex; that there is constant contradiction. As such, strict dogma and narrow-mindedness defy spiritual development. In a globalized world our everyday experience is increasingly complex and paradoxical. Comprehension and acceptance of such complexity and contradiction develops spiritual strength. In contrast, students who misinterpret, deny, or become upended by this complexity and contradiction may remain in a spiritually unstable or uncentered developmental space.

Complexity and paradox may provoke cognitive dissonance, or discomfort experienced when we try to maintain two dissimilar ideas simultaneously. Cognitive dissonance theory explains that the way to reduce this discomfort comes from either changing our original idea, or denying the truth of the new idea (Harmon-Jones and Mills 1999). In Elizabeth J. Tisdell's edited volume, Tamara H. Rosier suggests a method to resolve cognitive dissonance in the classroom environment (2003). However, must we always "resolve" the discomfort? Might we also learn to better comprehend paradox, and then accept that there are many truths in our world, and multiple ways to view these truths? Can we find comfort in our discomfort; a peace with the vast difference and diversity in our world while maintaining our core values alongside a flexibility and openness to new understandings?

Resolving the discomfort caused by complexity and paradox is not always possible, especially when the complexity and paradox is beyond the self. For example, I might be able to resolve internal paradox by developing my authentic self, bringing my

beliefs, words, and actions into alignment. I may even be able to work with others in my community to address and resolve complex issues when our collective values are not represented by community leadership, processes, or structures. However, there will always be certain complexities and paradoxes that I cannot fully resolve, and I must still find spiritual strength and wholeness through comprehending and accepting these complexities and paradoxes—not resolving them.

Astin, Astin, and Lindholm use the term “equanimity” as one of the major indicators in their study of spirituality in higher education. In describing this term they reference the Eastern concept of “equal vision,” or “the capacity to weigh contradictory or conflicting ideas, emotions or events and to find commonalities” (2011, 23). The concept of equal vision is also described as “the attempt to perceive the same divine presence in all beings” (Omkananda, 1999). Acceptance of paradox does not mean agreement, but rather an acceptance of difference and contradiction as characteristic of the world we live in.

One of the findings from the same study showed that equanimity is “strengthened by experiences...which inevitably expose students to people who are different from themselves” (2011, 59). This research speaks to the core concept of meaningful engagement with “other” as a way to better maneuver the world as it exists with a sense of flexibility, openness, and grounding amidst complexity. We live in a modern era of growing “complex global challenges” (Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm 2006, 98). In order to address these challenges we must resist the urge to live in denial, to sequester ourselves with those who are like us, and ignore the often times turbulent reality around

us. Meaningful engagement with “other” increases our understanding of difference and diversity, which can foster more effective efforts to address complex challenges.

The “ability to live with the paradox and tension of opposites” is part of a lifelong process of spiritual development (Tisdell 2003).⁶⁰ Contemporary U.S.-American youth have more opportunities to create meaningful relationships with “other,” in large part because our communities are becoming more diverse and integrated compared to previous generations. Specifically, institutions of higher education intentionally work to create diverse environments, recruiting students from across the country and world, as well as students of various ethnic and racial identities. In addition, youth are increasingly globally connected through the internet, gaming, and other media. As a result, college-aged young adults have an increased exposure to complexity and paradox as they build relationships and community amongst a diversity of people, cultures, and truths. Such exposure encourages the ability and skills to comprehend and accept complexity and paradox as part of a broader spiritual development.

Spiritual Development in Higher Education

This constructive understanding of spiritual development is based on the core concepts of the last eleven years of scholarly dialogue on spiritual development in higher education, and is reflective of the broader history and purpose of higher education as well as the teaching and practice of spiritual development. Looking through the particular lens

⁶⁰ Elizabeth J. Tisdell (2003) builds on related arguments in James Fowler’s *Stages of Faith Development: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (1981) and James Loder’s *The Logic of the Spirit* (1998).

of spiritual and civic development integration⁶¹ the following understanding of spirituality emerges for use within the higher education context:

Spiritual development is the cultivation of spiritual engagement, or one's ability to make meaning of self and other, and to bring our inner and outer lives together with integrity through our actions and engagement with self and other.

Cultivating spiritual engagement requires:

- *the development of one's identity as the authentic self, values to help navigate and make meaning of the world we live in, love and compassion as core values, a sense of interconnectedness through a force larger than the self, and an imagination to develop new and better ways to live in the world;*
- *an action orientation, and a future-oriented purpose and direction that support agential transformation; and*
- *an understanding of relationships and community as the context for spiritual development, which requires meaningful engagement with "other," and a comprehension and acceptance of complexity and paradox.*

The core concepts of spiritual development are closely connected to the core concepts of civic development discussed in the next chapter. In particular, the connections between spiritual and civic development speak to the two civic themes that emerge out of the dialogue on spirituality in higher education: 1) spirituality is required for democracy, and 2) Experiences of service combined with spirituality lead to a civic future. These two themes suggest a civic affinity within the spiritual development process, and support the integration of spiritual and civic development as a best practice for the development of each respectively.

⁶¹ The integration of spiritual and civic development as indicated by the two civic themes of the new vision for spiritual development, which identify spirituality as a requirement for democracy, and that experiences of service combined with spirituality lead to a civic future.

Chapter Three: Civic Development in Higher Education

I am a civic agent, because I don't see another choice. I see myself and my sister and the kids that I've worked with through the years and it is impossible for me to have met such amazing people in my life and just move on. I feel like if I didn't do something about it, if I'm not working to better the situation that I came from, and the situation that these kids are in, that I'd be doing such a disservice to all the people who have been passionate in my life, and helped me get to where I am now. I feel like it would just make everything a waste, there would be no purpose.

— College Student

Our society's political fabric is torn by partisan politics, values- and issue-based polarization, and a devaluing of "the people" for the market—including the preeminence of corporate interest and the buying of votes through campaign donations and gifts. As a result, a national discussion on the need to improve civic skills and democratic values in the United States has renewed interest in civic development. Yet, there is a lack of sophisticated theory and practice of teaching, institutional commitment, and prioritization of civic development in the higher education context. Civic engagement has long-term implications of service and volunteerism. Even our primary reference for civic development—civics courses—generally focus on imparting knowledge of how the system works, rather than on developing civic capacities or agency.

In the last ten years, scholars have been looking beyond service-learning in search of a more robust model for civic development in which service-learning may be one of

many tools, rather than the primary teaching methodology. The most current trend is the use of deliberative democracy as a way to teach the skills of public discourse and deliberation. Briefly defined, the theory of deliberative democracy brings deliberation back to the people to make decisions—legitimizing democracy, rather than the people voting yes or no on the undemocratic deliberations of a select few—elected representatives, lobbyists, and other elites.⁶² While the *theory* of deliberative democracy is valuable, I fear that the *practice* of this model in higher education will too easily play to academic strengths—emphasizing discussion and deliberation, without equal attention to action.⁶³

Despite this concern, it is clear that the dialogue on civic development in higher education is indeed progressing and gaining momentum. From my professional experience in the civic engagement field I see strength in the scholarly dialogue, but ambiguity as civic theory is put into practice. As a result, there is a wide gap between intention and impact. On the whole, practice and teaching do not seem to be reaching their desired results of developing meaningful civic skills, attitudes, long-term responsibility, and engagement. In part, this is because the traditional constraints and definitions of civic engagement have led to a thin understanding of the capabilities and

⁶² Deliberative democracy was first termed by Joseph M. Bessette (1980). Many others contributed to the development of the theory, most notably sociologist and philosopher, Jürgen Habermas.

⁶³ For example, Nancy Thomas, director of The Democracy Imperative housed at the University of New Hampshire describes deliberative democracy within the civic engagement movement of higher education: Deliberative democracy focuses on public discussion and deliberation around issues, and then asks what each person or group can do about the issue with regards to their respective roles. Deliberative democracy requires citizens to be “skilled in sophisticated methods of democratic dialogue, deliberation, and public reasoning... Policymakers accept the responsibility for being accountable to the public for their choices and action” (Thomas 2008, 10).

capacities of higher education to play a central role in civic development. A new vision for higher education's civic mission is necessary, along with new definitions and learning models for civic development.

A New Vision for Higher Education's Civic Mission: Developing Civic Agency for Public Work

Civic agency⁶⁴ is the capacity of the individual and community to work across difference to co-create the world they wish to live in—a world that better aligns with their personal and collective values. This co-creation requires the capability to imagine and act beyond the constructs of one's current environment “in fluid and open environments where there is no script” (Boyte, 2008a, 1). In a democracy, each citizen is responsible for developing their civic agency and working with others to do public work.

Since the late 1980s democracy and civic engagement scholar Harry Boyte has promoted “Public Work” as a model for civic engagement. The model emerged at a time when the service-learning movement started to lose its sense of direction and purpose, moving away from aspirations of community impact and social justice toward proving pedagogical legitimacy through a focus on learning outcomes (Harkavy and Hartley 2008). This mis-direction lasted through the 1990s where civic engagement hit the “volunteer-vote” plateau and into the 2000s where higher education is now in the midst of a dialogue around reviving its civic mission and contemplating how to accomplish it.

⁶⁴ “Civic agency involves capacities of communities and societies to work collaboratively across differences like partisan ideology, faith traditions, income, geography and ethnicity to address common challenges, solve problems, and create common goods. Civic agency requires individual skills, knowledge, and predispositions. It also involves questions of institutional design, particularly how to constitute groups and institutions for sustainable collective action. Civic agency can be seen from a cultural vantage as the practices, habits, norms, symbols, and ways of life that enhance or diminish capacities for collective action” (Boyte and Mehaffy 2008, 1).

Public work is not a service-model, but rather it challenges citizens to imagine what they would like their community and world to be, and then to work together to create it. It is not an idealistic approach; it is grounded in reality and provides more creative power to “the people” of a democracy than the power-limited avenues of voting and volunteering. Most importantly, public work demands that citizens develop and use civic agency to co-create the world, rather than operating from the passive roles most citizens embody—where things happen *to* us. Boyte describes civic agency as,

Our abilities to be the agents and architects of our own lives and to work together across differences on common problems and tasks...developing civic agency means recognizing diverse talents. It also calls for renewed appreciation for local communities in which people live and work as the root system of democracy. (2008b, 24-25)

Civic agency does not passively relegate decisions to elected officials, but requires citizens to actively solve their own community problems, both at the local and national levels.

Civic agency, or the capacity to work with others in public settings as creators of our own future, relies on the development of civic skills and democratic values necessary to engage in public work. Public work is essentially the product of the practice of civic agency in a community, or society. The etymology of “Public Work” traces the origins of the separation of everyday labor and public life—thereby separating everyday citizens from public work—as conceptualized by Greek political philosophy and many modern social and political theorists such as Hannah Arendt and Jürgen Habermas (Boyte and Kari 1996). In contrast, Boyte and Nancy Kari bring together everyday labor and public

life to describe public work as the marriage of “practical work with a larger civic vision” (1996, 211).

The idea of public work is in opposition to the current state of citizenship which functions as a technocracy—rule by specialists—where “experts” are in control of making decisions about public problems without the input of everyday citizens (Boyte and Kari 1996). Public work, as a form of citizenship, is the co-creation of our world. It addresses critical public issues through building public relationships and creating cultures of diverse inclusion and engagement, where communities can work together to take action. Most importantly, public work is accomplished by ordinary citizens, and it occurs in everyday spaces, organizations and associations.

In order to do public work, everyday people must develop civic agency, and this is best accomplished through the *practice* of democratic values and skills with others. As such, higher education is in a unique position to provide the opportunity, guidance and constructive space for civic development, both in and beyond the classroom, potentially providing civic development opportunities to campus and community stakeholders.

Core Concepts within the Dialogue of Civic Development in Higher Education

In an effort to push the dialogue around civic development beyond the “volunteer-vote” plateau, I have intentionally focused on the works of scholars whose writings are based on civic engagement for the development of active democratic citizens⁶⁵. These

⁶⁵ Those authors and editors included in this comparative construction are: Elizabeth Beaumont, Harry Boyte, Dan Butin, Josh Corngold, Anne Colby, Patti Clayton, Tomas Ehrlich, Ira Harkavy, Matthew Hartley, Barbara Jacoby, Caryn McTighe Musil, Sharon Daloz Parks, Cheryl H. and James P. Keen, Peter Levine, Laurent A. Parks Daloz, John Saltmarsh, and Nancy L. Thomas.

scholars also share an interest and experience in moving theory to practice, have practical knowledge on civic development, and engage at a national level in critical dialogue and work that is moving the civic mission of higher education forward through national collaborations, institutional work, and teaching. I have excluded those authors who primarily write about democratic theory that is detached from practice, as the purpose of this project is a theory-based, practical model for civic development. I have also limited this scholar group to those writing in the last fifteen years, as this is the span of the contemporary movement reinvigorated at the end of the 1990s. In addition to the work of individual scholars, I have reviewed the guiding statements and related writings of five national civic programs and initiatives.⁶⁶

Within the dialogue of civic development in higher education, eleven core thematic concepts emerge.⁶⁷ As with the spiritual core concepts of the previous chapter, the civic core concepts presented in this chapter reflect the most frequently occurring concepts within their respective scholarly dialogue. In contrast to the dialogue on spirituality in higher education, civic engagement scholars utilize a greater diversity of terms and meanings within the dialogue of civic development in higher education. Such diverse terminology required increased comparative construction in order to organize similar ideas into a workable set of terms and concepts.

⁶⁶ These national programs and initiatives include: Campus Compact; The American Association of State Colleges and Universities' (AASC&U) Civic Agency Initiative in partnership with the Center for Democracy and Citizenship; the Association of American Colleges and Universities' (AAC&U) Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement program; the AAC&U's Core Commitments: Educating Students for Personal and Social Responsibility; and The Democracy Imperative's Statement of Principles.

⁶⁷ The order of the list of core concepts is for constructive purposes and does not indicate frequency or importance of concepts within the broader scholarly dialogue.

Table 3.1. Core Concepts of Civic Development

- 1) The development and practice of public skills
- 2) Cultural capacity
- 3) Civic efficacy
- 4) A civic imagination in order to create a better public future
- 5) Public relationships and the community of “the people” as the central civic context
- 6) Ability to work with “others” across difference and an open engagement with alternative ideas
- 7) A sense of interdependence and global citizenship
- 8) Civic identity
- 9) Democratic values
- 10) A personal orientation of hope and compassion
- 11) An understanding of complexity and paradox, and the ability to constructively engage with these tensions

Civic Core Concept 1: The Development and Practice of Public Skills

Public skills are quite simply that set of skills necessary to work with a diversity of people in a public and civic setting. Arguably, this could be a catchall category—and some authors treat it that way. There are, however, well-articulated lists of public skills

across the field, which I categorize into three major areas in order to give definition to such a sweeping term. These public skill areas include effective and strategic communication, collaboration, and a civic approach. This list is not an exhaustive summary of public skills, but it reflects the most commonly identified skills within the literature on civic development and civic engagement.

Table 3.2. Categories of Public Skills

- 1) Effective and strategic communication
 - a. Active listening
 - b. Development of a public voice
 - c. Writing
 - d. Informed civic discourse
 - e. Inclusive dialogue
- 2) Collaboration
 - a. Democratic leadership
 - b. Problem-solving, negotiation and consensus building
 - c. Ability to engage and effectively address conflict
 - d. Critical thinking to evaluate potential biases and assumptions
 - e. Collective action informed by evidence and a moral or civic lens
 - f. Public evaluation to hold all collaborators accountable
- 3) Civic Approach
 - a. Respect
 - b. Accountability
 - c. Analytical approach
 - d. Critical reflection

Effective and strategic communication involves developing active listening skills in order to understand and evaluate another person's opinion or stance.⁶⁸ Active listening is different from simply waiting your turn until you can state your own opinion, which disregards the opinions of others, or is out of relationship to what was previously stated. The development of a public voice accompanies active listening skills. A strong public voice is the ability to speak out publicly and effectively articulate your ideas (or those of a group you represent), and to do so with confidence.⁶⁹ Another area of communication that requires clarity is writing.⁷⁰ Writing is effective when the appropriate format and tone match each particular situation. Finally, effective and strategic communication requires inclusive dialogue that generates informed civic discourse.⁷¹ Inclusivity actively recruits a diversity of voices, bringing together all stakeholders around an issue with particular attention to historically marginalized voices and power. Such inclusive dialogue creates the space for civic discourse informed by multiple perspectives and interests.

The next set of public skills is *collaboration*—working with others towards a common goal or end product. This process requires negotiation, consensus building and collective action.⁷² Collaboration needs leadership, but not in the traditional sense where

⁶⁸ Such as in: AASC&U ADP 2011; Jacoby 2009; Levine 2007.

⁶⁹ Such as in: AASC&U ADP 2011; Campus Compact 2011a; Colby et al. 2007; Jacoby 2009.

⁷⁰ Such as in: Colby et al. 2007; Jacoby 2009.

⁷¹ Such as in: Boyte 2008b; Campus Compact 2011a; Colby et al. 2007; Democracy Imperative 2011; Levine 2007.

⁷² Such as in: AAC&U ADP 2011; Boyte 2008b; Colby et al. 2007; Democracy Imperative 2011; Jacoby 2009; Levine 2007.

one person is in charge and makes decisions for others. Rather, collaboration requires democratic leadership, where each person involved takes responsibility for the process and progress. It is a “self-organizing” in which those who may not be in positions of power can come together, collaborate and address critical community issues, rather than waiting for those in “leadership” roles to solve our problems for us (Boyte 2008b). This kind of collaboration requires problem-solving skills, the ability to engage with and effectively address conflict when it arises, and public evaluation skills that hold all collaborators accountable. This kind of civic collaboration also requires critical thinking that includes evaluation of potential biases and assumptions, decision-making only after the issue and all arguments are understood, and evaluation of issues and arguments through both evidence and a moral or civic lens (Ehrlich 2000). A moral or civic lens means that any civic decision should be in the best interest of “the people,” in contrast to market interests or the interest of a few individuals. Democratic collaboration generates informed judgments, which lead to informed, collective action.

Lastly, public skills require a particular individual and group *civic approach*. One might call it a civic temperament, which includes respect, accountability, analytical skills, and critical reflection. While some authors use the term “civility,” it seems to connote a soft politeness, when the reality is that truly democratic decision-making and action will not occur if we are merely polite to one another.⁷³ A more meaningful term here would be respect. In civic discourse and collaboration respect is paramount; respect for the equality of all people, respect for the diversity of ideas, and respect for different ways of

⁷³ Civility as used in: Colby et al. 2007; Jacoby 2009.

living and being in the world.⁷⁴ I can respect someone and disagree with him or her. If I do not respect that person I might still behave civilly towards them; but when it comes to a disagreement in the public sphere, civility will not provide the depth of understanding and sense of worth for that other person that is necessary in order for us to work through our differences and not stalemate or become “civil” enemies. Instead, respect promotes working public relationships, even across disagreement.

Accountability is public authenticity—responsibility for what one says he/she will do, where words match actions. When accountability within public relationships is based on mutual respect, it is also generally mutually beneficial. In the civic context, public evaluation is one way to hold collaborators accountable (Boyte 2008b). In order for civic collaboration to work, individuals and groups need to be accountable for and to their words, decisions, and actions. Otherwise, collaboration is likely to fail, transform into unbalanced teamwork where one or two members of the team do all the work, or face obstruction as one set of collaborators start to work against the interests of another.

Lastly, a civic approach requires the development and use of analytical skills and critical reflection.⁷⁵ Community issues need to be addresses by analyzing problems, power structures, and systems to look for root causes. We need to understand the different parts to the whole, figuring out the “why?”, rather than applying temporary Band-Aids to solve the problem. Analytical skills help us to understand motivations, biases, and the logic of arguments. Such an analytic approach looks at the world and asks

⁷⁴ Such as in: AAC&U Core Commitments 2011; Boyte 2008b; Colby et al. 2007; Jacoby 2009.

⁷⁵ Such as in: AASC&U ADP 2011; Boyte 2008b; Colby et al. 2007; Democracy Imperative 2011; Jacoby 2009; Parks Daloz et al. 1996.

questions such as: Who? What? Where? Why? And How?, rather than accepting an issue, an argument, or decision at face value. Part of the collaborative process is this kind of critical thinking and analysis, which should also include critical reflection. Critical reflection is the deep evaluation of self, other, and situation that answers questions such as: What really happened or was accomplished? How did I or others perform? How do I feel about this, and why? What can I learn from this for future application?

The development of effective and strategic communication, collaboration, and a civic approach are all skills that must be developed through practice.⁷⁶ They are not teachable through the traditional “banking model” of education, which Paulo Freire describes as the depositing of information (2000b). Rather, regular practice of public skills provides a civic foundation for students that will serve them throughout their lifetime. This practice could happen in a variety of contexts. Service- and community engaged-learning and research are just some ways that higher education can provide opportunities for engagement and the practice of public skills. Most importantly, the practice must be regular—habitual even—not merely voting every four years and volunteering sporadically in the community, although these are valuable starting points for further civic development. The habit or practice of public skills hinges on a culture of civic engagement, and vice versa.

⁷⁶ Practice as emphasized in: AAC&U Core Commitments 2011; Boyte 2008b; Colby et al. 2007; Democracy Imperative 2011; Jacoby 2009; Parks Daloz et al. 1996.

Civic Core Concept 2: Cultural Capacity

Developing cultural capacity requires understanding and knowing how to navigate a particular community, as well as recognition that culture and communities are human creations, and therefore can be changed or re-created. This approach balances respecting the history and present context of a community and looking forward towards imagining and creating the cultures and communities at their best.

Most authors in the dialogue of civic development in higher education focus on the first aspect, arguing that active citizens must be able to read culture—the way things are done—and then navigate these power systems and structures effectively.⁷⁷ The practice of cultural capacity at its weakest is described as “cultural awareness,” which implies a benign and passive understanding of a community. Alternatively, at its strongest, the practice of cultural capacity is about active engagement with the people and institutions of a community, the building of relationships that both teach knowledge and provide opportunities to navigate power structures in order to accomplish collective goals—creating culture.⁷⁸ Engaged cultural capacity will encounter tension and require deep critical evaluation of people and situations that leads to effective action.

Culture is how things work in a community, including: structures and systems, values, rituals, historical context, and power (Boyte 2008b, 87). Cultural capacity around structures and systems includes understanding about the “rules of the game (AASC&U ADP 2001),” which might come in the form of federal, state or local policy; domains of

⁷⁷ Such as in: AASC&U ADP 2011; AAC&U Core Commitments 2011; Colby et al. 2007; Jacoby 2009; Democracy Imperative 2011.

⁷⁸ Such as in: Boyte 2008b; Levine 2007.

government, corporate and non-profit structures and agencies; social structures that define “in” and “out” groups, or those who are most respected by the community.

History as a cultural capacity includes understanding the developmental context of a community. This might take the shape of national political history and theory regarding core principles and values of a democracy (Colby et al. 2007; *The Democracy Imperative* 2011); critical incidences within that community that hold cultural power; or a historical identity that may no longer be visible to an outsider but is still a powerful way that the community identifies itself in the present context. Historical analysis of a community helps to understand the present context and potential future directions. It also provides a lens to evaluate issues that develop over time such as: poverty and gentrification; race relations; and how property is managed for agriculture, single and multi-family residences, business, and public space.

Lastly, navigating culture includes power analysis to evaluate systemic, structural and historical cultures, looking for capacities to act—or those people who can make things happen in a community. Where are the people who have access and influence, the money that is used to make and back decisions, and the media that promotes information and opinions that help drive cultural viewpoints of a community? Power analysis pushes students to look deeper than face value. For example, one might assume that the mayor of a town or city has the power, access to money, and the ear of the media. However, this mayor may have long ago lost the faith of the people. The real power—the will of the people that can generate meaningful influence, money and media attention in that community—may now be with a local leader such as a clergy person, teacher or business

owner; or a locally organized group such as a social club, non-profit, congregation, or business association. The ability to navigate and create culture depends on first identifying real power, rather than perceived power.

Historical and power analyses of culture specifically relate to developing civic agency, but do not include all of the cultural ways in which humans relate to one another and their environment in order to create a common identity. For example, the arts are an important way that communities create and communicate identity and values and are potential forms of public work (Boyte 2008b). The underlying theory behind cultural capacity for civic development breaks away from the exclusively objective nature of higher education towards a critical understanding of subjectivity. Such a critically subjective lens “understand[s] that the self is always embedded in relationships of social location, and a specific historic moment” (Jacoby 2009, 62-3; brackets added). This kind of cultural analysis—beyond awareness—should lead to an “appreciation of the rich resources and accumulated wisdom of diverse communities and cultures” (Jacoby 2009, 62). Cultural capacity then becomes the basis or lens from which to develop asset-based approaches to public work in any community.

Commonly, people understand culture as static and often superficial, which is very different from the fluid, powerful, and meaning-making attributes of culture previously described. Someone might understand culture cosmetically as the food, dress, customs, art, or music of a community. A more critical reading of culture, however, might explain that food is tied to deeper issues such as a community’s economic context, colonial history, migratory history, or geographic location. As meaning-making

activities, music and art can express cultural and civic frustrations as well as joys and values of a community. Culture is how we live together, how we demonstrate our shared values and communal identity. Peter Levine, director of CIRCLE, The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, describes the meaning-making nature of culture, which supports the development of civic identity:

In order to be self-governing, a community or a nation must be able to illustrate and memorialize its values and present its identity to outsiders and future generations of its own people through works of art and literature, rituals and traditions, forms of entertainment, public spaces and prominent buildings. (2007, 34)

These traditional markers of culture can represent deeply shared histories of meaning. These cultural identifiers lose some of their utility, however, when communities subscribe to commercial culture, rather than creating their own cultures (Levine 2007, 35).

Culture is not static, but rather a creation that humans adjust and re-create over time. Communities can come together to decide their communal values and to determine their collective identity. A community might decide that it no longer wants to be known as the city with poorly performing public schools. The community members might come together, identify their shared values around education, and then develop a plan of action to change their school system: hire new leadership, raise financial support, get involved with curriculum development, lend their time to the schools, and assist teachers. Not only will the schools improve, but a community culture of engagement, power, and agency will grow, rather than the extension of apathy, poverty, and powerlessness.

As Harry Boyte points out, “It is usually more effective in changing patterns of prejudice and bigotry to find democratic aspirations in a culture than to attack from the outside” (Boyte 2008b, 83). Finding common values within a culture, which the community can draw on to transform itself for the better, will be more effective than federally implemented standardized testing, for example. The ability to create vital culture through the development of shared values, identity, and collective action is the second aspect of cultural capacity.

Civic Core Concept 3: Civic Efficacy

The path towards civic efficacy is the practice of public skills combined with cultural capacity. Together, public skills and cultural capacity engage communities at a deep level, investigating power structures and building the relationships necessary for public work. The identification of critical community issues occurs within these public relationships and through community dialogue. Community dialogue that allows community members to practice public skills and develop cultural capacity also provides opportunities to identify root causes of critical issues and recognize community assets. When communities use their assets to address root causes their civic efficacy increases—as opposed to communities depending on outside experts to attempt to solve what the experts deem as the problems of the community.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ In the community organizing method, issues are measurable, winnable, and actionable; while problems are so large and overwhelming that individuals and communities don’t know how to address them or feel that they could never make a difference anyway (Chambers 2003). “The number of children living in poverty in America is a problem; training for single mothers with children is a possible issue for an organization with some power” (84).

Civic efficacy is perceived and actualized, encompassing both the perception that you can make a difference—that your efforts are not in vain—as well as the actualization of your efforts causing their intended impact. A recent study found that 12.2% of college students and 19.4% of 18-25 year olds who are not in college do not vote because they don't “have faith in the impact of their vote” (CIRCLE 2011). In another study, students articulated that they choose to engage in direct service volunteer activities because they can see the immediate impact—unlike when they vote (CIRCLE 2007). These students also stated that they are less likely to get involved politically because they do not know the access points, and see politicians as talkers who do not take action to address critical issues (CIRCLE 2007). These young adults lack a sense of power—the ability to act—when it comes to major decisions and political structures. Teaching environments that provide opportunities for students to practice public skills and develop cultural capacity are more likely to promote the development of civic agency in students that leads to civic efficacy.

These studies demonstrate the importance of civic efficacy: if civic development provides high levels of civic efficacy, civic engagement and agency should increase, whereas if civic efficacy is low, civic engagement will decrease. Civic efficacy links the prior two civic core concepts: as students develop and practice public skills and cultural capacity, they experience efficacy. Building civic efficacy takes courage—the “development of the moral and political courage to take risks to achieve the public good” (Jacoby 2009, 63). Getting to know community members—building long-term relationships, talking together about hopes, dreams, and problems—so that together you

can identify the strengths of the community and work *with* the community—not *for* them—to address critical issues requires more courage than walking into a soup kitchen or after school program. Direct service is necessary in our communities, but educators should not be confused with the impact of such service. Direct service volunteerism, on its own, does not develop civic efficacy—for students or community. Civic efficacy increases through deeper, broader, and longer-lasting change that addresses root causes.

Civic efficacy differs from just *feeling* like you have made an impact by requiring community-based action to produce measurable and meaningful results. In contrast, direct service volunteer models of civic engagement emphasize the personal outcomes of the volunteer who *feels* better when he/she helps others. Another personal outcome of volunteering may be the development of love and compassion in the volunteer through direct contact with “other”—this is a starting point, not an endpoint for civic development. When looking at the example of poverty, serving a meal is ultimately not the desired result; although it addresses an immediate need, this kind of direct service merely maintains the status quo—the current level of poverty. The hungry individual has one more meal, but his/her agency has not increased so that he/she can sustainably purchase groceries. Instead, civic efficacy emerges from collaborative community-based work aimed at addressing the root causes, systems, and structures that continue to perpetuate the cycle of poverty. If the volunteer looked more deeply at the issue, he/she might realize that while direct service is always needed to alleviate immediate suffering, such efforts do not effectively address hunger and poverty, but rather maintain the status quo. The same would be true for the issue of education. Tutoring is important work, but

developing legions of after-school tutors is not effectively addressing the state of our educational system. Tutoring may be necessary, but it is a poor substitute for effective reform and change.

Higher education needs to aspire to developing civic efficacy, otherwise we are not engaging in adequate civic development. Most anyone can serve soup and pack boxes of supplies, but these activities do not build civic skills or civic agents—of our students or for members of the community they are “serving.” To effectively address the critical issues of our time, higher education should hold students to a higher civic standard; students should engage in developing public skills and capacities and practice them to develop civic efficacy.

Civic Core Concept 4: A Civic Imagination in Order to Create a Better Public Future

A civic imagination parallels the spiritual core concept of an “imagination to develop new and better ways.” This aspect of civic development elicits critical thinking, creativity, and open-mindedness to imagine what better communities and a better public future might look like, feel like, and be like. The development of a civic imagination propels civic agents forward into the depths of public work by envisioning the goal of a civic life.

As in the dialogue on spirituality, a civic imagination is not simply fantasy, nor the absurd. Instead, students simultaneously lean towards the novel and the possible to develop a “responsible imagination” that “seeks to put things together which belong together (Parks Daloz et al. 1996, 132). Parks Daloz et al. outline the process of imagination in their book, *Common Fire: Leading Lives of Commitment in a Complex*

World, a research study of one hundred individuals who demonstrated long-term commitment to the common good in the face of complexity. A brief summary of the

process includes the following continuous and cyclical steps:

- 1) Conscious conflict: You see injustice, often by sensing a contradiction.
- 2) Pause: A time for reflection, to process the contradiction
- 3) Image-insight: Reflection leads to an “aha!” moment where a new understanding helps you to start to make sense of the contradiction.
- 4) Repatterning and reframing: You start making connections between your lived experience and the new insight, creating new meaning.
- 5) Interpretation in dialogue: At this stage you make your new insight public, bring it into dialogue with others, test it, and then act on it. (1996, 133-4)

Students can engage in this process of imagination by entering at multiple points.

In a college or civic setting, the process of imagination could include research, community dialogue, and the use of cultural capacities. The American Association of Colleges and Universities’ (AAC&U) Civic Engagement Working Group created a civic learning model for K-12 and college contexts that lists the “development of civic imagination” as one of five outcomes for civic learning around skill areas (Jacoby 2009, 63). Jacoby describes that a civic imagination, as well as civic values and habits, can be developed in part through “exposure to the complex struggle for democratic justice that poses both enduring and contemporary questions in human history” (2009, 62). Such experiences seem to follow suit with step one of the process of imagination: exposure to injustice and contradiction in the world around us that causes us to pause and reflect,

asking questions about right and wrong, deciding whether something should be or could be done (Parks Daloz et al. 1996).

A civic imagination is closely tied to civic efficacy and agency. For example, someone who does not think he/she is effective in addressing injustice may avoid developing a civic imagination. That person may not even entertain ideas of what the world could be like. What would be the point, if he/she cannot change it? The individual may stop identifying injustice and contradiction in the world because the tension of seeing injustice and not believing you have the power to do anything about it is too much to handle. To avoid depression, denial might set in, creating a bubble world where one does not have to engage with the true realities of the world around him/her.

Have you ever met someone who does not follow the news, occupies his/her time with individualistic hobbies, or maybe spends all energy and money just living the “good life”? They may seem superficially happy all the time. Choosing to focus on that which they believe makes them happy—usually the surface level things—is one way people might disengage from the harsher realities of life. There may be many reasons for this, but one reason is that they do not believe they have civic efficacy or agency. Like the young, would-be voters who do not believe their vote matters, the disengaged get busy doing other things. Such disengagement functions as self-preservation. It is human nature to avoid or deny the things you want to change, but are afraid you cannot affect.

The ability to develop a civic imagination hinges on our belief that we can effectively address critical issues; and a strong civic imagination is our vision for what our communities and world *could* look like. In discussing free or public spaces, Boyte

describes, “Environments in which people experienced power and creativity through public life” (2008b, 26). Such free, public spaces are context for the development of civic agency which occurs when people come together to build power and engage creativity—efficacy and imagination.

Civic Core Concept 5: Public Relationships and the Community of “the People” as the Central Civic Context

As relationships and community are the context for spiritual development, they are also the context for civic development. The development of civic imagination, public skills, cultural capacities, and civic efficacy all occur in relationship to others and within community settings. Public relationships encourage equity within community partnership and collaboration. In contrast, collaborations and partnerships not founded on strong public relationships are more likely to model the traditional campus-community partnership model where university experts tell local communities how to be better and do better. Equitable partnership is part of a more recent movement in higher education around community-based research—or community-based participatory research—an asset-based approach founded on relationships where both partners are engaged in full process of research design, implementation, and data analysis and presentation (Israel et al. 2005). This equity-based approach addresses community-identified issues by bridging the skills and strengths of the community with the skills and strengths of university faculty, staff and students.

Harry Boyte might describe the traditional model—and often current practice in higher education—as technocracy, or the “control by experts who see themselves outside a common civic life, whose authority comes from book learning and formal credentials

and whose superiority is based on supposedly objective and scientific knowledge” (2008b, 22). In practice, technocrats do not appreciate that the everyday citizens who make up local communities have knowledge, strengths, and skills that are tremendous assets to solving critical issues. When “the people” are the central civic context, decisions are not just made with them in mind, but rather the people are part of the decision-making process. In a community-centered civic context outside experts can still play a role, but experts do not make decisions *for* the people, they make decisions *with* the people and under the presupposition that successful community change is at the determination and investment of the community itself. The democratic civic experience is not objective, and certainly not technocratic; it is subjective and follows the democratic maxim, “*of* the people, *by* the people, *for* the people” (Lincoln 1863).

When “the people” are the central civic context, individuals and communities make public and collective decisions for the direct benefit of the people and in protection of their rights. The public seems to be an afterthought in the current U.S. American political culture where decisions often benefit the private sector over the public, and corporations are the new central civic context. In this corporate civic context, elected representatives cast votes that support their corporate backers in preparation for the next election cycle, rather than voting for what the people want and what is in the current and long-term best interest of the public. Additionally, the mutual back-rubbing voting deals made behind closed doors—I’ll vote for your bill, if you vote for mine—place the civic context in the egos and agendas of individual representatives, rather than the people. These are just a few examples of how the central civic context of the U.S. American

democracy can move off course and lose focus. Effective civic development depends on a re-centering. Graduating business students, scientists, and engineers should understand that in a democracy their future corporation, research, and technical solutions are in the service of the U.S. American people (or global community), and not the other way around. Within a democratic society, “the people” are who you work with and in whose interest you make decisions, as such, they are the central civic context for civic development and engagement.

Civic Core Concept 6: Ability to Work with “Others” across Difference and an Open Engagement with Alternative Ideas

Public relationships and a central civic context of “the people” depend on a broadening beyond our private relationships and community with those who are similar in identity or belief. Moving from private to public relationships embraces the vast civic fabric of diverse identities and beliefs, and requires new skills and abilities to work with “others”—those who are different—across those differences. Much like the spiritual core concept of *meaningful engagement with ‘other,’* the civic context also requires engagement that moves beyond tolerance or diversity for diversity’s sake. Working with “others” means building relationships and co-creating public work, and presupposes an open engagement with alternative ideas. The ability to engage with alternative ideas is not just “hearing” or letting someone talk, but actively listening and considering new and different ideas.

The ability to work with “others” across difference and an open engagement with alternative ideas is a civic core concept on which most scholars passionately agree. Such capabilities are critical for a healthy democracy, and engagement with alternative ideas is

a core value of higher education, and in particular a liberal education (Colby et al. 2007, 21 and 61). In an effective democracy, citizens organize to address public problems, and complex problems require people with different skills, strengths, knowledge and connections; the complexity necessitates diversity (Boyte 2008b). Peter Levine gives the example of the impact of an inflammatory mass-mailing sent from a political organization. The message will likely mobilize some—those who already agree with the sentiments; however, on the other hand it polarizes the debate for both sides of the issue. “It may also reduce the chances that citizens will fully understand the nuances of an issue and find common ground with those different from themselves, which is bad for democracy” (Levine 2007, 10).

In the classroom, I ask students to give me an example of a time they felt politically engaged. Most of their responses involve holding placards on a street corner to “get people to vote” for a particular candidate, or wearing a messaged t-shirt and holding a sign at a rally. I ask them to think about their intended audience—most likely the “opposition.” I then ask them to think about how their actions affect the other person: How would you react if you looked out of your office window to see a mob of people chanting and waving signs at you that portrayed an edgy or angry message? We discuss the various responses, from arrogant laughter—who takes these people seriously?, to disdain that pushes someone even further away from engaging with the issue. The obvious next answer for the students to reflect on: did your efforts result in your intended impact? For students in my class, critical reflection on the few avenues of political engagement they’ve experienced, or that are made obvious to young people, generally reveals

ineffectiveness and, as a result, points to the effectiveness of meaningful engagement with “other.” I pair these kinds of discussions with assignments that require the practice of meaningful engagement with those with whom students already know they disagree in order to help students break down walls. I challenge students to move from looking at others as “enemies,” and to see them as neighbors—part of our diverse community of identities and beliefs.

There is certainly a space for protest politics in civic development and engagement: when it is an effective strategy to reach intended outcomes. My experience as an educator indicates that given limited options for political engagement, protest politics has become a primary civic skill for students, and naturally, it is often their first-level response to issues in their communities. For example, when I ask students what options they have to address various campus issues that they identify, often their first response is to write to the chancellor or president. Given the discussion, such a letter would tell senior administration what is wrong, and that they now need to fix it. Rarely is the chancellor or president the person with the appropriate power to effectively address the issue at hand. Oftentimes, a more effective first-level response is to: 1) find out the appropriate person to talk to—who has power around this issue and can actually help make change; then 2) engage “other,” or those who are making the decisions you disagree with, and first learn why they are making such decisions. Knowing someone’s motivations is key to knowing how to work with him/her to effect change, whether that work is mutually agreeable, or if it comes in the form of strategic pressure.

Working within a civic context to engage “other,” by first removing the dichotomous frame of “good” and “evil,” “self” and “enemy,” helps students to find a sense of open-endedness. The use of an open frame of engagement with “other” allows for deeper understanding of different people and issues. This is not to say that the student, or any other citizen, should be so open-ended that he/she has no stance, beliefs or values. Meaningful engagement with “other” requires deep awareness on both sides—knowledge of self in order to seek understanding of “other.” Self-knowledge comes before one can meaningfully understand another person and get to the depths of knowing what influencing ideologies, people, life experiences, and identities have framed the other person’s worldview and values.

Human development occurs through a process of engagement with various influences. We react to these influences and that reaction turns into values and worldviews. Rather than assuming the “other” is “evil,” we may discover that other people have different experiences in the world that shape different values and decisions. Understanding why people are different, and that difference alone is not wrong, provides opportunities for deeper-level discussion and understanding of how and why another person comes to the same issue from a different perspective.

This civic core concept also resonates for scholars because open-mindedness and a willingness to listen and take the ideas of others seriously—even to the point of critically reconsidering your own stance—are core values of the academy (Colby et al. 2007, 21 and 61). These values are part of the right to intellectual freedom; a protected right in higher education allowing faculty to explore the “edges” and engage in thought

patterns and ideas that are counter-cultural. To enjoy this privilege also becomes a responsibility to protect that same intellectual freedom for those with whom you disagree. This does not just mean tolerance or avoidance of different ideas.

Another value of the academy is intellectual rigor. To put your ideas up against others, submit your writing for peer review, and engage in dialogue that serves as critical evaluation and reflection is an opportunity to refine or change your ideas, or better defend them as they are in light of the feedback you receive from “others.” At its best, scholarly engagement with alternative ideas and viewpoints is dialogical, tension inducing, and ultimately for one’s intellectual benefit; much like the benefit of engaging alternative ideas for the civic context. In addition, the ability to work with “others” across difference and an open engagement with alternative ideas exercises public skills of effective communication and collaboration, strengthens cultural capacities, and increases civic efficacy and agency. Finally, engagement with “other” is at the very core of the historical definition of politics. Levine adeptly traces political theory lines from Aristotle to Hannah Arendt, noting that Arendt, “defines ‘politics’ much more broadly, as the interaction of people who are different on a common subject” (2007, 37).

Civic Core Concept 7: A Sense of Interdependence and Global Citizenship

A sense of interdependence and global citizenship is similar to the spiritual core concept of interconnectedness beyond the self, but pushes further to articulate a sense of responsibility because of that interconnection. The interconnection is at once practical—our basic survival requires interdependence, and it is also a moral responsibility as part of a civic contract—or unwritten agreement of our membership in humanity. Jacoby

describes the practical aspect of interconnectedness as the, “intricate web of interdependencies that are with us from childhood to old age” (2009, 61), while describing the context within which we all live and learn throughout our lives. There is also a moral responsibility of interconnectedness where,

A morally and civically responsible individual recognizes himself or herself as a member of a larger social fabric and therefore considers social problems to be at least partly his or her own; such an individual is willing to see the moral and civic dimensions of issues, to make and justify informed moral and civic judgments, and to take action when appropriate. (Ehrlich 2000, xxvi)

Scholars integrate both the practical and morally responsible aspects of the civic definition of interdependence⁸⁰ and global citizenship,⁸¹ making it difficult to identify each separately. Most often, however, scholars reference the value-based terms of social and civic responsibility.⁸²

Within the civic core concept of interdependence and global citizenship is an embedded expectation of action. This action-orientation moves beyond mere awareness of interdependence to responsible decision-making and action that involves others. Transnational efforts to address climate change, economic instability, and security are all examples of action-oriented interdependence. Furthermore, interdependence broadens from the local or national to the whole of humanity, embracing a sense of global citizenship, not just patriotic citizenship.

⁸⁰ Interdependence as in: Jacoby 2009; Parks Daloz et al. 996.

⁸¹ Global citizenship as in: AAC&U Core Commitments and Civic Learning 2011; Jacoby 2009.

⁸² Social Responsibility as in: AASC&U ADP 2011; AAC&U Core Commitments 2011; Campus Compact 2011. Civic Responsibility as in: Campus Compact 2011a; Ehrlich 2000.

The process of globalization mirrors the practical and morally responsible aspects of interconnectedness and global citizenship. Practically, global economies and politics are interdependent, and therefore require a moral responsibility for the welfare of the global community. The response of people across the world who provide donations of time, technical assistance, money, and goods when there is a major natural disaster is an example of global civic responsibility. A sense of interdependence and global citizenship are at once local and global, denoting a complex worldview that allows individuals and communities to maintain multiple identities and civic responsibilities.

Global citizenship increases and broadens through meaningful engagement with “others” as new relationships tie us to different communities with which we might not otherwise identify. For example, growing up in a predominantly white community in New England I may not have the opportunity to build a relationship with someone from Haiti. When I was in high school, however, I had the privilege of traveling to Haiti to work with local masons to build a women’s shelter just outside of the capital of Port-au-Prince. Although I was there for only two-weeks, it was enough time to start meaningful engagement and relationship building. While we worked, we got to know one another. We learned about each other’s lives, values and cultures; we discussed U.S.-Haitian relations, the high-interest loan schemes of the local banking model, the impact of historical U.S. intervention in Haiti; I tried to learn their language, Creole, and they practiced their already strong English; we labored together for a common purpose; and we ate, laughed, and at the end cried together. When I returned home I tried to learn Creole from borrowed language tapes and I wrote letters, but eventually we all moved on

in our lives and the letters slowed to a halt. Now the only Creole I can remember is a few lines of a song. Although these were not sustained long-term relationships, the meaningful engagement with members of a new community broadened my sense of civic responsibility to include the local and the global. I gained some cultural capacity, both in learning how things worked in another community through the lens of four Haitian young adults and in reflecting on my own culture and country's involvement in Haiti's history.

I also gained local construction knowledge, an understanding of population density, where and how clean water got to the capital city; and so when the news started reporting the 2010 Haiti earthquake I had a sickening understanding of what that impact might look like for the people and city of Port-au-Prince. I immediately went onto the Red Cross website and made a donation. I mention this because I have not responded with the same immediacy and inner sense of deep concern and social responsibility to other major disasters, and there have been many.

This natural disaster was different; I identified with the community. Identifying *with* a person or community is different from identifying *as* someone or *as* a part of a community. I cannot identify *as* a Haitian; I do not know what it is like to live in Port-au-Prince or what it is like to be Haitian. However, I can identify *with* a community as we learn from one another, engage with both our similarities and differences, and build on our common humanity. I discovered this sense of interdependence and global citizenship both from new and deeper understanding of our two nations' historical military, political, and economic engagement, and also in large part because I had once been dependent on Haitians for my basic needs and survival. When I was in Haiti members of the local

community took responsibility for me. They made sure I had clean water to drink so I would not get sick, and fresh food that would nourish. They made sure I knew not to burn my hands with lime powder when mixing concrete. They also travelled with me throughout the city, making sure I was physically safe and protected. I learned interdependence as both the practical need for survival and as a more meaningful social responsibility. My sense of citizenship expanded from my local community and nation to global citizenship.

The “College Learning for the New Global Century”⁸³ report articulates a growing consensus in higher education around necessary learning outcomes “for a world characterized by dynamic change, interdependence, destabilizing inequalities and volatility” (Jacoby 2009, 50). One of the four learning outcomes is personal and social responsibility at the local and global levels. As globalization increases higher education will continue to try to meet global learning demands. Part of this cultural change in higher education is the development of “global social responsibility” as a universal learning outcome,⁸⁴ and it is also a central core component of civic development.

Civic Core Concept 8: Civic Identity

A civic identity is both a personal understanding and public demonstration of the self as a civic actor; one who has power—the ability to act—and responsibility within the

⁸³ The National Leadership Council for Liberal Education & America’s Promise 2007.

⁸⁴ The following national associations and programs include statements regarding local and global civic and social responsibility: Campus Compact; the American Association of State Colleges and Universities’ (AASC&U) American Democracy Project, and Civic Agency Initiative; the Association of American Colleges and Universities’ (AAC&U) Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Program, and Core Commitments: Educating Students for Personal and Social Responsibility.

civic or public context. Such power and responsibility rely on a personal set of values that relate to the larger public by incorporating collective democratic values. Similar to the spiritual core concept of identity as the “authentic self,” a civic identity requires authenticity in the public sphere where democratic values, words, and actions are both in alignment and are principle aspects of the individual.

Colby et al. identify two elements of political motivation that are critical to long-term commitment and participation in democracy. The first is a “politically engaged identity,” and the second is “political efficacy” (2007, 16-17). Their definition of “political identity” is one of the more explicit found in the dialogue on civic development in higher education and states: “When values, ideals, and commitments that relate to democratic participation are central to one’s sense of self, we speak of that person as having a politically engaged identity” (2007, 142-3). A politically engaged identity does not have to look the same for everyone, nor does it mean everyone should find a job as a civil servant or elected representative. Professionals of any sector can develop a civic identity in which their work aligns with public needs and democratic values. When citizenship within one’s community, nation, and world is a primary identity, it places a civic lens on any professional engagement. Critiquing the often isolating nature of professionalism, Boyte describes “citizen professionalism,” where people “work collaboratively with others to solve public problems and create common things...on the basis of appreciation for the talents and intelligence of everyone, whether they are in your field or not” (2008b, 156). Acknowledging that people tend to view and engage with the

world from their specific discipline or profession, Boyte proposes a reverse order where a citizen identity is the lens through which to understand one's professional identity.

Civic identity is one of the civic core components that connects deeply with the process of spiritual development. Jacoby argues that while civic knowledge and skills are necessary, they provide incomplete civic development as “values, motivations and commitment are also required” (2009, 7). Developing a civic identity relies on the inner work of spiritual development, asking us to identifying what we value, what motivates us, and what is important enough for our long-term commitment within the public realm. What beyond self, matters? What actions will we take to animate these values—practice them and make them real? A civic identity also incorporates what Jacoby refers to as “affective qualities of character, integrity, empathy and hope” (2009, 63). A well-developed civic identity compels the individual to take action for the public good. If you know who you are, what you value, and are effective when acting on those values in the public sphere, you will likely develop and desire further growth of your civic identity as a way to practice and test the bounds of your civic agency.

Civic Core Concept 9: Democratic Values

Arguing that higher education should be intentionally and pedagogically supporting the development of personal and collective values of college students can be a threatening proposition for some both in and outside of academia. There are still many faculty and administrators who believe that teaching objective reasoning and disciplinary knowledge is mutually exclusive to supporting the development of values. There are other faculty who are unsure of how to support such value development without imposing

their own beliefs or leading the class into an insurmountable and contentious religious discussion. Research shows that,

[Faculty] concerns range from fears about being criticized by colleagues because discussions about spirituality may be perceived as antithetical to academic norms, to the need to maintain a separation between church and state, to feeling a lack of expertise, to worrying that such discussions might be perceived as a form of indoctrination or proselytizing. (Astin, Astin and Lindholm 2011, 141; brackets added)

A mixture of fear, uncertainty, and disinterest may lead many faculty to avoid the important work of supporting students in developing their own personal and collective values. Naming the development of democratic values as the overarching frame for values development can address these concerns.

In practice, a framework of democratic values encourages students to critically reflect, identify, and articulate their own values as they relate to the larger collective values of our democratic society. Collective democratic values are cultural and political values that we accept as part of our citizenship, or membership and participation, in the particular democracy of the United States. These same democratic values are also often broadly applied and globally accepted within other democratic nations, publics trying to achieve more democratic governance while living under dictatorship, and international governing bodies such as the United Nations.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Democratic values of the United Nations are clearly articulated by the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), which provides financial support for “democratization efforts around the world...[supporting] projects that strengthen the voice of civil society, promote human rights, and encourage the participation of all groups in democratic processes” (United Nations 2011a; brackets added); and the human rights arm of the United Nations which operates on the foundation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations 2011b).

In the dialogue of civic development in higher education, the terms civic and democratic values are used interchangeably. In the United States, our core civic and democratic values were framed in the writings of the Declaration of Independence (1776), the Constitution (1787), and the Bill of Rights (1791); all serving as foundational documents that codify the appropriate democratic relationships, rights, responsibilities, processes, and power structures between self, other, state, and federal government. The following is a list of democratic values from the dialogue on civic development in higher education. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather, to identify and categorize those democratic values that are at the core of this dialogue.

Table 3.3. Collective Democratic Values

- 1) Governance by and for the people
- 2) Responsibility to the common good
- 3) Equality
- 4) Justice
- 5) Liberty
- 6) Truth

Democracies come in various structures, with the underlying intention of governance by and for the people. The primary stakeholders in any decision are “the people,” and those making and implementing decisions are “the people” or their elected representatives. Such a governance structure depends on a sense of responsibility and

ownership for the government and its governance of communities and nation. The people are the governing structure, not separate from it nor under its authoritarian rule. Finally, if the government no longer serves the people, the people have the right to alter or abolish the government. As primary stakeholders, citizens have a responsibility to the common good, or to work towards the benefit of all people, not just self—or those who are like self. This is the basic theory behind democracy. The practice of democracy is far more complex, it is dialogical, and evolutionary. How we understand and implement democracy is in conversation with current socio-cultural lenses as well as awareness and understanding of our democratic history—both our democratic failures and successes.

In working towards the common good, citizens acknowledge and protect the rights of the people. These rights are equality, justice, and liberty. Everyone is equal under the law, and maintains the same rights and treatment regardless of their identity or associations. As equals, everyone must be treated fairly, receiving the same benefits and responsibilities as citizens. One of the greatest benefits of a democracy is that the people enjoy the right to freedom; freedom of belief, expression, political participation, and organization without the interference of the government, as long as these freedoms don't infringe on the rights of others, such as the rights of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" (U.S. National Archives, 1776). All of these values are only possible under the value of truth. That is, that the people and the government speak truth, disclose public information so that public decisions can be made, build trustworthy relationships, and that citizens act publicly with integrity—being honest to themselves and others, and living in accordance to their personal values and these collective democratic values.

Democratic values are about respecting a more “philosophical approach to politics...not an ideological or partisan one” (Boyte 2008b, 93); and require democratic participation, community engagement, and social responsibility (AASCU American Democracy Project, 2011). As a society, we aspire to these democratic values, but have not and do not always practice them. Even in their construction, the founding democratic values of the United States did not afford equality to women or African-Americans. These are living and breathing values, and as a society we must engage with and constantly reflect on whether we are living out our shared democratic values—this includes critically evaluating our personal values to test them against these broader democratic values.

In a civic context, the development and articulation of personal values are tested against the core set of collective democratic values. This “testing” process should encourage deeper reflection and discussion about how we develop our personal values, as well as how and why collective values are developed over time and history. Using an umbrella set of democratic values allows for guidance, framing, and critical dialogue around the difficult topic of “values development” in higher education. This democratic values umbrella can be used to prevent classroom—or public—discussion from going into dark caverns of isolated personal ideology. It maintains a focus on the civic context of why we even share our values, which is to learn how to work with one another—and particularly with “others”—towards a common purpose or goal. This is not to say that shared democratic values will mitigate all tension and potential points of conflict, but they can function as a guide to navigate through dialogical points of tension and conflict.

Civic Core Concept 10: A Personal Orientation of Hope and Compassion

Hope is the sense that the world as we imagine it to be—better than it is—is possible. Without hope there would be no use for the development of a civic imagination. Why bother with imagining a better public future if there is no hope of actualization? If we did not believe and feel that there was something more than the world as we know it, perhaps we would not even bother with democracy at all. Hope motivates movement beyond the status quo, it argues in our hearts for something better and more just. Hope gives us confidence that we can make changes, even when things look grim. When combined with compassion, hope provides the affective motivation to engage in democracy, and to work towards the realization of our collective democratic values and the common good for all people, including those who are different.

Compassion⁸⁶ is sometimes described by scholars as the development of empathy⁸⁷. I chose to use the term “compassion,” because it articulates a broader affective scope, set of affective and intellectual skills, and the potential for a developmental process through critical reflection. Sympathy is feeling *for* someone, and empathy is feeling *with* someone. If I feel *for* someone I don’t truly know what they are going through and I may not even try to understand. If I am sympathetic, I only understand what someone else is going through as it relates to not being in the same or similar position myself. Sympathy is a feeling of contrast, my feelings are generated *for* another through the lens of what I do not know or understand personally, because the

⁸⁶ Association of American Colleges and Universities 2011a; Colby et al. 2007.

⁸⁷ Association of American Colleges and Universities 2011a; Jacoby 2009.

other person's experience is in contrast to my current existence or life experience. Maybe I send a sympathy card because deep down I might feel sorry for that person's predicament and simultaneously grateful that I do not have to go through it myself. With sympathy, the end result is resignation, or acceptance.

Employing critical reflection and imagination to sympathy moves towards the development of empathy. I try to put myself in the other person's shoes, critically reflecting and imagining what life would be like under different circumstances. I start to empathize with the other person's situation, gaining deeper understanding. With further critical reflection and imagining I might move to compassion, both intellectually understanding the situation and feeling a sense of suffering that motivates me into action to help alleviate the suffering and injustice.

When I reframe from sympathy for one interpersonal relationship to empathy and compassion within the broader civic context, I find motivation to engage—to employ my civic agency and actualize our collective democratic values. I am not resigned, but filled with hope that I can help create a better public future. Even though I may have a different life experience than another person, I can use critical reflection and imagination to empathize with his/her situation. As a result, I can make compassionate decisions and take compassionate action toward the common good. Compassion evolves from meaningful engagement with “other,” through building connections and relationships with those who are unlike us (Parks Daloz et al. 1996, chapter 3).

Civic Core Concept 11: An Understanding of Complexity and Paradox, and the Ability to Constructively Engage with These Tensions

The core concepts around complexity and paradox are similar for both the discussions of spiritual and civic development in higher education. A skill of each concept is to both comprehend and accept—or understand and engage—with the various tensions presented by the complex nature of our world that many times presents itself in paradox. Some might think that spiritual development is rigid and produces a rigid worldview. In fact, spiritual development is more of a paradox, both requiring the development of a particular worldview while maintaining openness to new understandings. Spirituality is a space from which to engage with the world, both having confidence and self-awareness as well as an openness to learning new information that might change different aspects of one’s spirituality. I imagine it as the sand dunes of a large desert; they maintain their form, but are constantly shifting in reaction to the wind, weather, and animal and human trespassers; the peaks and valleys are never at the same exact location, height, depth or width, but at the core they maintain their identity.

Likewise, understanding and engaging with complexity and paradox in the civic context requires a particular worldview—for example, shared democratic values—and openness to difference and new understanding. The living nature of shared democratic values is complex and paradoxical itself. Democratic values are at once and always have been the same, but our interpretation and application has changed over time. For example, we have appropriated equal rights for women and African-Americans, but are restricting equal rights to those who desire same-sex marriage—and the legal rights and benefits such a status affords married couples in the United States. These are paradoxes

of our democracy. The paradox is the situation where as a nation, our policy on marriage equality—save a handful of states—is putting us in contradiction to our stated democratic and foundational values of equality. Understanding this paradox is the first step; constructively engaging with the tensions it presents is the second step.

To use a current issue as example, equal marriage rights are a highly contested issue. True civic development for the individual and the collective would focus on understanding the different arguments: where they come from, what personal and collective values they represent, and how they interface with our stated democratic values. Then the process would lead to constructive engagement with the tensions of the debate in order to find authenticity—the space where our values, words, and actions can come into alignment. This is not easy work. Tension is hot, it is messy, it can be very painful, and sometimes cannot be eliminated. Avoiding tension, however, removes the possibility of growth and progress, while negatively engaging with tension can cause further pain and might negatively affect your intended goals. In contrast, constructively engaging with tension builds tension-filled public relationships with those who are different. Within such public relationships, the “other” is not an enemy. Instead, all sides actively listen to understand one another’s motivations in order to help determine how to address each other’s hopes and fears and better understand how to might work together, even if there is not always agreement.

While describing community organizers from Minnesota’s ISAIAH collective, Harry Boyte points out that “They see everyone as full of contradictions and complexities; one’s opponent today may well be a crucial ally tomorrow” (2008b, 93).

Herein lies the importance of understanding and engaging with complexity and paradox. Each one of us can be contradictory in our own lives and when put into community with one another there is constant complexity and paradox. In order to constructively engage with complexity and paradox, we must first see each other as neighbors and fellow citizens with whom we try to work, not as polarized enemies or evil persons without any value or worth. Such an understanding of complexity and paradox and the ability to constructively engage with their tensions moves polarization and ideological politics towards democratic politics and public work.

While some scholars highlight the value of civility (Colby et al. 2007; Jacoby 2009), civility can be a tricky term when talking about engaging with the tensions of complexity and paradox. Civility connotes a politeness or cultural manners, which can be at the expense of direct engagement or full honesty when the culturally polite thing to do is to avoid or dance around tension. In the face of injustice or any other threat to our collective democratic values we need deep compassion for one another that manifests in mutual respect, honesty, and the ability to stand confident in what we believe while also keeping our minds open to new evidence and understanding that might change us. Constructively engaging with the complexities and paradox that lie within us and all around us requires that we move toward the tension with the heart and mind of engagement; not fear, avoidance, or hatred.

Defining Civic Development in Higher Education

A definition of civic development starts to emerge from this review of the last fifteen years of dialogue around the civic mission of higher education, the role of civic

development, and the teaching and practice of the broader Civic Engagement Movement. A definition for a new vision of civic development appears when looking through the particular lens of pushing past the “volunteer-vote” plateau of the previous thirty years of the Civic Engagement Movement and in reflection of these eleven core concepts:⁸⁸

Civic development is the cultivation of civic agency, or one’s capacity to do the public work of co-creating our collective world and future.

Cultivating civic agency requires:

- *the development of a civic identity, a sense of interdependence and global citizenship, democratic values, a personal orientation of hope and compassion, and a civic imagination;*
- *the development and practice of public skills and cultural capacities that build civic efficacy; and*
- *an understanding of relationships, community, and “the people” as the central civic context, the ability to work with “others” across difference with an open engagement to alternative ideas, an understanding of complexity and paradox, and the ability to constructively engage with these tensions.*

The requirements of civic agency are part of a broader discussion in higher education, as scholar-practitioners continue to try to find solutions for the civic loss within U.S. American culture and politics. A specific mixture of values-based orientations, identity development, practical skills, and affective approaches are required in order to develop civic agency and transform civic development efforts. With a clear definition of civic development as a foundation, higher education can realize its civic

⁸⁸ This definition draws on the work of Harry Boyte, who co-created the public work theory of civic engagement, promotes the development of civic agency, and has implemented his theory-based model for civic engagement through the work of the Center for Democracy and Citizenship at Augsburg College.

mission and do the work of educating and developing active citizens for the modern U.S. democracy and global citizenship.

Chapter Four: A Model for the Integration of Spiritual and Civic Development

The difference is how much of ourselves we are willing to put in that [community] space that we are going to be entering. Because a lot of people keep that wall up. I think a lot of our peers do. They understand it as: I'm on this side, I might come up to the wall, I might peek over, but I'm not going to interject myself into this situation to truly understand what's going on in this space. I think we've all been trained to do the opposite, and to still understand who we are and what we bring into these spaces, but to also allow ourselves to be influenced, to be changed, to be inspired, to be hurt, to be vulnerable in that space. People are afraid of conflict, they're afraid of tension, and they're afraid of being vulnerable. That's something that I'm less afraid to do than a lot of my peers.

— College Student

The scholarly dialogues of spiritual and civic development in higher education, as described in the previous two chapters, reveal clear correlations between concurrent core concepts. While some of the scholars from both civic and spiritual dialogues within higher education argue that our spiritual and civic natures are interrelated, very few delve into meaningful discussion of *how* they are related. More importantly, there is little discussion on how educators might address this connection in the classroom or within co-curricular programming in a structured, strategic, and integrated way. However, my research shows that the integration of spiritual and civic development could be synergistic, each more successfully developed by the merging of the two. In which case,

educators might better support spiritual-civic development for students through simultaneous, integrative efforts.

Correlations between Spiritual and Civic Development within Current Scholarly Dialogues

Many of the scholars from my literature review of the dialogue on spirituality in higher education argue that the combination of spirituality with civic engagement through service learning (Diamond 2008; Hoppe and Speck 2005; Palmer, Zajonc, and Scribner 2010), experiential learning (Palmer, Zajonc, and Scribner 2010), and community service (Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm 2006; Jablonski 2001, 22) leads to a civic future. Such civic futures include a sense of social responsibility (Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm 2006), commitments with long-term career and lifestyle implications (Jablonski 2001), and the development of a vocational “calling” (Diamond 2008, 123).

Conversely, while many scholars from the dialogue on civic development in higher education do not use the term “spirituality” explicitly, they address the topic through arguments that call for affective qualities of empathy, compassion, hope, and character development that has integrity (Colby et al. 2007; Parks Daloz et al. 1996; Jacoby 2009). For example, Caryn McTighe Musil argues that civic learning outcomes include the “development of affective qualities of character, integrity, empathy, and hope” (Jacoby 2009, 63).⁸⁹ These civic scholars also discuss the need for active citizens to develop “competence in ethical and moral reasoning and action,” which includes

⁸⁹ McTighe Musil describes learning outcomes as outlined in the Civic Learning Spiral, a theoretical civic learning model created in 2003 by the Civic Engagement Working Group of the Association of American Colleges & Universities’ (AAC&U) Greater Expectations initiative.

developing one's "own personal and social values" and "acting upon these values consistently" (AAC&U 2011c).

For the most part, however, the dialogues of spiritual and civic development in higher education are separate, except for a group of important scholars who are explicitly linking the two in some capacity (Astin, Astin, and Lindholm 2011; Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm 2006; Daloz Parks 2000; Palmer, Zajonc, and Scribner 2010). One of the strongest arguments for the relationship between spiritual and civic development comes from the dialogue on spirituality in higher education, where scholars argue that spirituality is required for democracy (Astin, Astin, and Lindholm 2011; Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm 2006; Daloz Parks 2000; Jablonski 2001; Kazanjian and Laurence 2000; Palmer, Zajonc, and Scribner 2010). The argument that spirituality is a requirement for democracy centers on the need for democratic citizens to: engage with difference, develop a moral compass from which to evaluate multiple and conflicting ideas, cultivate a sense of interdependence, and generate compassion that leads to action. Sharon Daloz Parks provides one of the clearest explanations of the interrelationship between spirituality and civic development and directly ties it to the role of higher education:

Democratic societies are dependent upon a complex moral conscience—a citizenry who can recognize and assess the claims of multiple perspectives and are steeped in critical, systemic, and compassionate habits of mind. (2000, 10)

The integration of spiritual-civic development addresses the need for young adults to identify and make meaning of self and other within the interdependence of communities of difference and diversity.

I have also noticed across the civic engagement field that there is a dichotomy in practice, which mirrors the separation between the spiritual and civic development dialogues. Educators and civic engagement programs generally emphasize either spiritual or civic development, but rarely join civic and spiritual development in a way that would mutually support the development of each at the same time. Secular and public schools tend to focus on civic development, while avoiding or skimming the surface of spiritual development. Conversely, religiously affiliated schools tend to focus on spiritual development and lack depth in civic development. More recently, those in religiously affiliated schools have felt pressured to focus more on demonstrable learning outcomes and sometimes feel they are “watering down” the spiritual aspect of their work. In either environment, those in the service-learning and civic engagement fields generally focus on one end of the spectrum between spiritual and civic development—not a deep integration of the two.

For my primary audience, secular higher education, the separation of spiritual and civic development may be preferable for educators. Civic development may seem like an appropriate fit for positivist educational institutions, and within this context, spiritual development remains a private and personal practice. Our civic natures are not objective, however, as some in higher education might argue based on their interpretation of the “separation of church and state.”⁹⁰ I am not arguing that religious institutions—or

⁹⁰ The separation of church and state as a cultural axiom of the United States derives from Thomas Jefferson’s letter to the Danbury Baptist Church (1802), in which he references the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution, as written in the Bill of Rights, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances”

corporations for that matter—should hold power over our government, or that our government should support any particular religion. I am arguing, however, that when we are in community we make decisions based on the integration of our capacities for intellectual, spiritual, emotional, sensual, and experiential knowledge. As a result, our civic capacities are inherently connected to our spirituality, which includes religion for some people. Integrating spiritual and civic development provides a frame for public conversations, in which our spiritual and civic natures are explicit and inclusive, rather than implicit and separationist.

The following Spiritual-Civic Development Model is a constructive effort to address the polarization and lack of depth in spiritual and civic development in higher education. In addition, the model aims to demonstrate that an inclusive spirituality is a compelling approach to student civic development and meaningful reformation of higher education's historical civic mission.

Spiritual-Civic Development Model

The following diagram of the Spiritual-Civic Development Model outlines seven development outcomes for integrated spiritual-civic development. Separate spiritual and civic development trajectories articulate the way students move through the model. Each

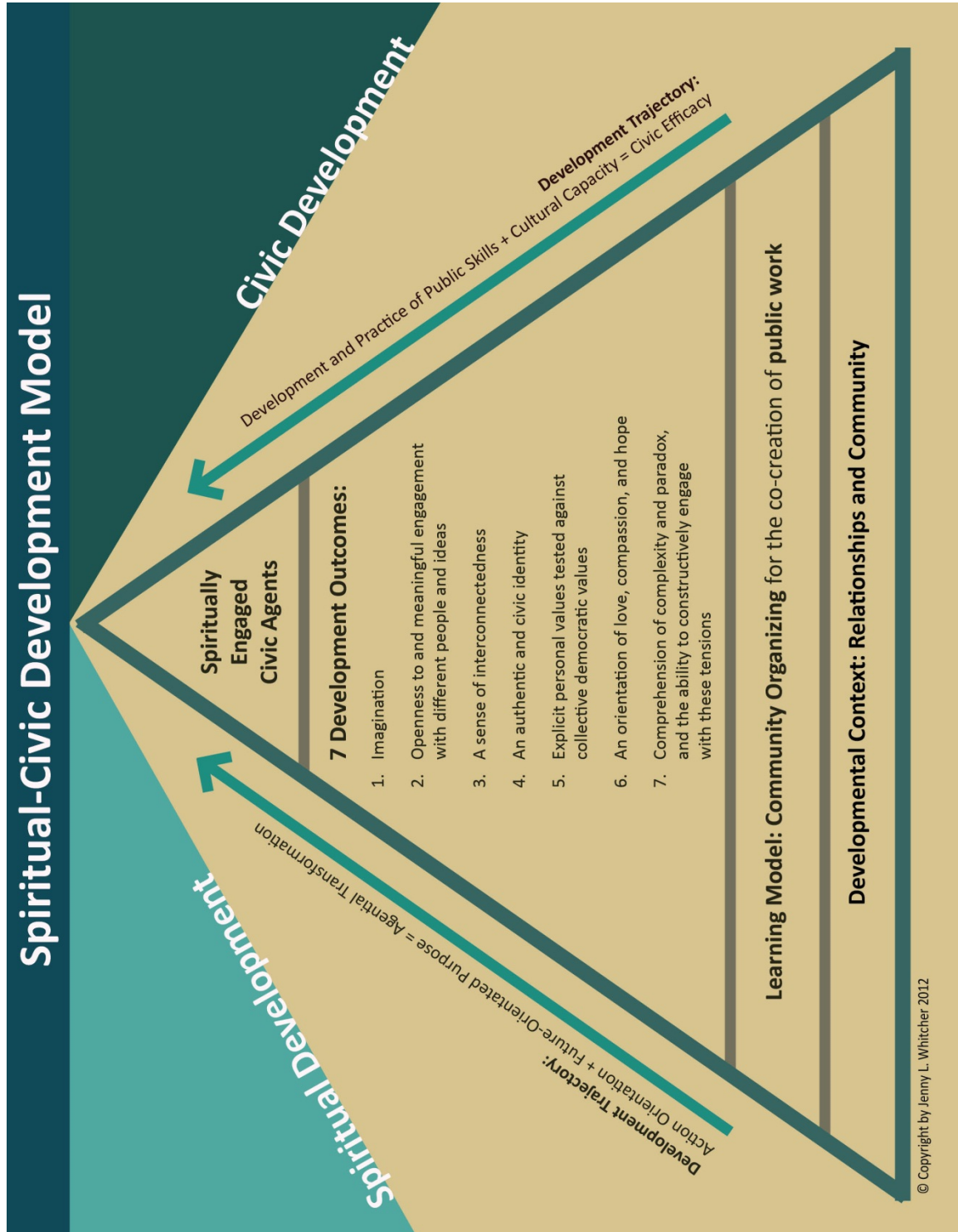
(The U.S. National Archives [1776] 2011). The intention of the religious aspect of the amendment was to protect religious freedom and individual thought; ideas that emerged from the founding father's understanding of John Locke's social contract political theory ([1690] 1952). Historically, separation of church and state was a motivator for one group of English settlers of the United States—pilgrims who were escaping religious persecution in 1620. Later in 1636, Roger Williams led the creation of Providence Plantation, a new colony to protect religious minorities. Culturally, the separation of church and state now implies a separation of religious and/or personal values and beliefs from politics as part of the objective approach to knowledge, rather than a more balanced approach that includes subjective and integrative knowledge.

development trajectory also describes the necessary orientation of assignments and activities, the development process, and the broader intended outcome for both spiritual and civic development. When students follow both spiritual and civic development trajectories, and agential transformation and civic efficacy meet, the result is the development of spiritually engaged civic agents.

Students mature through the spiritual-civic development model within the developmental context of relationships and community, as opposed to the alienation of authority-bound teacher-student hierarchy and traditional classroom settings. Finally, the Community Organizing Learning Model is one particularly effective method that educators can use to encourage student spiritual-civic development. I will discuss this learning model in the next chapter.

As my primary audience is secular higher education, I will use language appropriate to the college setting to discuss the Spiritual-Civic Development Model. Particularly, I will examine the Spiritual-Civic Development Model as it relates to a classroom environment, as an example of one of many types of learning environments. The Model is intended for use within a variety of learning environments, both curricular and co-curricular courses, programs, initiatives, and campus communities, by both faculty and staff, and within learning environments beyond higher education. My objective is to create an effective model for institutions of higher education; however, this model could also be effective within non-institutional and community-based associations or groups.

Diagram 4.1. Spiritual-Civic Development Model



Spiritual-Civic Developmental Context: Relationships and Community

Relationships and community address our spiritual need for belonging, provide a space for deeper understanding, and are the civic context for public work. Everyone needs a “psychological home,” a relational community of belonging where there are experiences of “connection and interaction” (Daloz Parks 2000, 89). Such belonging provides a spiritual sense of safety and security that emerges not just from relationships of comfort, but also from relationships that challenge (2000, 89). Both personal and public relationships and communities provide a sense of belonging, and the context that supports the formation of personal and collective—spiritual and civic—values and identities.

Spiritual-civic development and belonging occur within like-minded and diverse communities. Like-minded communities such as places of worship, issue-oriented advocacy groups, or political parties often reinforce similar values and beliefs. Reinforcement provides a sense of comfort, belonging, and group identity, but it can also set developmental limits. Relationships of challenge within like-minded communities may increase critical dialogue and understanding, or provide new direction for group identity. At the extreme, challenge within a like-minded community becomes divisive—dividing the group into two or more new communities, or forcing out individuals who bring too much diversity and challenge. What brings like-minded people together may also serve as either a deliberate or an unintentional justification to exclude those who are different or to disregard alternative ideas—unless meaningful engagement with difference is a stated and truly practiced part of the organization’s mission and values.

In contrast, relationships with diverse others generally offer increased challenge because there is less pressure to maintain similarity in order to maintain a group identity. Relationships with people who have diverse experiences, values, and beliefs can both comfort and challenge by opening new spaces for critical dialogue in which we can verify and question our own beliefs and values. Questioning may serve to verify, discredit, or alter previously held beliefs and may offer new understanding, all of which lead to a deeper, more critical understanding of self and other.

Understanding of self and others informs our worldview, and as a result, influences our public actions at the civic level. The combination of like-minded and diverse relationships and communities encourage authentic identity development, critical understanding, open-mindedness, as well as tested authority around core values—all necessary skills and approaches of spiritually engaged civic agents. In particular, diverse relationships offer new images and ideas that can spur imaginations to co-create new, inclusive realities for the self and the community.

For example, community-based research emphasizes the community as the research context, much like relationships and community are the context for spiritual-civic development. Historically, experts who do not have relationships with the community have tended to make decisions and policies that negatively affect community members, strip power and agency from communities, or do not adequately address the original problem. In contrast to scholarship that is ineffective and patronizing, there is a growing movement of engaged scholarship that emphasizes community relationships, the agency of the community, and an asset-based approach to community evaluation

(Saltmarsh and Hartley 2011).⁹¹ Such scholarship aims to develop relationships and community that support the co-creation of public research and work.

As the spiritual-civic development context, relationships and community require a depth of understanding and authenticity rarely found in the modern classroom. Such learning environments require meaningful engagement and the building of real relationships that can last beyond the classroom or academic term. Meaningful relationships between educators and students breach traditional hierarchical power structures. In order to create such relationships, the instructor, as the person who usually acts with power *over* the students, must create a learning environment where he/she has power *with* the students (Giroux 1997). For example, educators can create such democratic classrooms by developing meaningful relationships with students and modeling core values of self-disclosure, authenticity, integrity, and accountability. Most importantly, love for others builds meaningful relationships and community. I have never met a great teacher who did not love his/her students, and the most outstanding teachers love their students enough to get real with them, hold them accountable, and push them to succeed (hooks 2003). Love is looking out for what is best for another, not keeping the relationship happy and easy.

⁹¹ John Saltmarsh and Matthew Hartley provide a framework for “democratic civic engagement” that focuses on purpose and process to include such attributes as: community relationships that are reciprocal, maintain an asset-based understanding of community, and in which academic work is done *with* the public. Additionally, the agency of the community can be identified in an epistemology of co-creation of knowledge and shared authority of knowledge (2011, 22).

Spiritual-Civic Development Outcomes

The seven spiritual-civic development outcomes represent the integration of seven concurrent core concepts from the scholarly dialogues on spiritual and civic development in higher education. The rows within the below table demonstrate this integration.

Table 4.2. The integration of Spiritual and Civic Development Core Concepts into Spiritual-Civic Development Outcomes		
Spiritual Development Core Concepts	Civic Development Core Concepts	Spiritual-Civic Development Outcome
An imagination to develop new and better ways to live	A civic imagination in order to create a better public future	Imagination
Meaningful engagement with “other”	Ability to work with “others” across difference and an open engagement with alternative ideas	Openness to and meaningful engagement with different people and ideas
Sense of interconnectedness beyond self	Sense of interdependence and global citizenship	A sense of interconnectedness
Identity as the authentic self	Civic identity	An authentic and civic identity
Values to navigate and make meaning of the world around us	Democratic values	Explicit personal values tested against collective democratic values
Love and compassion as core values	Personal orientation of hope and compassion	An orientation of love, compassion, and hope
Comprehension and acceptance of complexity and paradox	Understanding of complexity and paradox, and the ability to constructively engage with these tensions	Comprehension of complexity and paradox, and the ability to constructively engage with these tensions

Rather than discuss the similarities between the spiritual and civic aspects of each development outcome, which are evident in reading chapters one and two, I will identify the relationships between different spiritual-civic development outcomes in order to present the Spiritual-Civic Learning Model as synergistic and accessible. I have chosen to focus on two illustrative spiritual-civic development outcomes that deserve more explication within the civic development dialogue as well as increased practice in higher education: 1) imagination, and 2) explicit personal values tested against collective democratic values. Although I will not address each development outcome, the following discussion is suggestive of how an educator could approach the learning model as a whole. Each spiritual-civic development outcome subsection will: 1) provide a nuanced description of the integrated spiritual-civic development outcome, 2) identify synergies between the outcome and other spiritual-civic learning outcomes, and 3) address potential tensions in the implementation of the spiritual-civic learning outcome.

Imagination is the way we compose current and potential new realities; a way of understanding our self and the world as it is, and also a way of composing the world as it should be—more aligned with our core values. Once a mental composition is achieved, both at the individual and community levels, we can start taking action to create a new reality for our spiritual self and collective civic life.

Art education scholar Elliot Eisner redefines cognition from a narrow understanding of knowledge as intellectual logic, to a pluralistic knowing that incorporates the senses (1994). Imagination is cultivated when students are immersed in stimulating environments and encouraged to make meaning of various forms of

representation. Eisner argues that students can use their senses to absorb information, conceptualize situations and construct new meaning, and then publically share new understandings through the creation of “forms of representation”—such as the arts. Forms of representation provide the space for public dialogue and critique of our personal understandings—creating even deeper knowledge and collective, public understanding. For Eisner, how we generate knowledge is much like the definition of imagination from Parks Daloz et al. (1996), where our perception of experiences and the information received through our senses are composed into an image, or understanding of reality. This composed understanding can be reframed or reimagined with the addition of new insights, and is then interpreted by testing our understandings publically in dialogue with others (1996, 132).

According to Parks Daloz et al. (1996), there are four types of images that can support lives committed to the common good—or spiritually engaged civic agents (145-146):

- 1) *Images that give form to a positive, connected, and centered sense of self* enable people to withstand personal, commercial, and political assaults on their self-esteem;
- 2) *Images that reveal the world as it is* along with images of “what should not be so” fuel the strength to engage the complexity and moral ambiguities of the new commons;
- 3) *Images that convey the overcoming of obstacles and discouragement* engender hope; and
- 4) *Images that hold a sense of paradox and mystery* enlarge the mind and sustain energy and spirit over the long haul.

Parks Daloz et al. outline an image typology for imagination that references several spiritual-civic development outcomes, including: *authentic and civic identity*; an orientation of love, compassion, and *hope*; and comprehension of *complexity and*

paradox, and the ability to constructively engage with these tensions. Engaging forms of representation—or images that promote conceptualization of the authentic self, the world as it is, hope for the world as it should be, and an understanding of paradox and complexity—can encourage the development of spiritual-civic imaginations. Imagination is what ignites action, an act of creation that pushes us beyond the status quo, and the mental process by which we literally create our individual and collective civic lives.

Framing spiritual-civic imagination as an observable and measurable learning outcome may seem like a complex task. The Lincoln Center Institute in New York developed the “Capacities for Imaginative Learning” framework of eight imaginative learning outcomes (2011). Their framework includes learning outcomes that support the development of a spiritual-civic imagination and include additional correlated spiritual-civic development outcomes. Four of the Lincoln Center Institute’s “capacities for imaginative learning” particularly demonstrate the definition of spiritual-civic imagination and the natural integration and synergy within the spiritual-civic development model (2011):

- **Creating meaning** to create your own interpretations based on the previous capacities, see these in the light of others in the community, create a synthesis, and express it in your own voice.
- **Living with ambiguity** to understand that issues have more than one interpretation, that not all problems have immediate or clear-cut solutions, and to be patient while a resolution becomes clear.
- **Exhibiting empathy** to respect the diverse perspectives of others in the community; to understand the experiences of others emotionally, as well as intellectually.

- **Taking action** to try out new ideas, behaviors or situations in ways that are neither too easy nor too dangerous or difficult, based on the synthesis of what you have learned in your explorations.

Spiritual-civic development outcomes represented in the imaginative learning capacities above include: *comprehension of complexity and paradox*, and the ability to

constructively engage with these tensions; *openness to* and meaningful engagement with *different people and ideas*; and an orientation of love, *compassion*, and hope.

Additionally, the “taking action” imaginative learning outcome hints at both spiritual and civic development trajectories. *Action-oriented spirituality* and the *development and practice of public skills* are two ways that students can “take action to try out new ideas, behaviors, or situations” (2011).

Effective implementation of imaginative learning outcomes will not occur within traditional college classroom and learning structures. The development of imagination requires a democratic learning environment, which encourages freedom of ideas, elevation of student ideas and voice as equal to that of the instructor during dialogue, engagement with multiple forms of knowing and sensing, and assignments where students create—rather than regurgitate. Cultivating imagination also requires the use of multiple tools to access the variety of ways that individuals sense, conceptualize, express, and dialogue about ideas, such as: writing, drawing, acting, singing, playing an instrument, storytelling, public speaking, poetry, mechanical construction—to name a few. In the next chapter, I will further describe democratic learning environments that support the implementation of spiritual-civic development outcomes such as imagination.

The development of **explicit personal values tested against collective democratic values** is a move from tacitly held values shaped by culture, family, and other authorities to consciously held values. This values development process includes the rejection and reconstruction of current values, as well as the adoption of new values, and the testing of these values against our collective democratic values of: governance by and for the people, responsibility to the common good, equality, justice, liberty, and truth. The development of explicit personal values informs the co-creation of or adherence to collective values and collective values inform the critical evaluation and further development of explicit personal values. The process of developing explicit personal values is dynamic and contextual, an ongoing and lifelong dialogue amongst personal and collective values and life experiences in which spiritual-civic development may transform personal and group, and private and public identities. When students develop explicit personal values and test them against the larger framework of collective democratic values it provides a meaningful mechanism for critical evaluation, which can lead to the development of: *authentic and civic identities, a sense of interconnectedness, openness to and meaningful engagement with different people and ideas, and civic efficacy.*

Authentic individuals who *meaningfully engage with “other”* weave together communities made of strong civic fabric. As Alexander and Helen Astin describe in their forward to *Encouraging Authenticity and Spirituality in Higher Education*, “If we lack self-understanding—the capacity to see ourselves clearly and honestly and to understand why we feel and act as we do—then we severely limit our capacity to understand others” (Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm 2006, vii.). Part of knowing ourselves is engaging the

process of making tacit values explicit, and critically evaluating and refining core values, which is a large part of the young adult developmental task (Daloz Parks 2000). This developmental task is difficult, particularly when values may go unnoticed until they are violated, or until we encounter someone who does not share our values.

Encounters with “others,” those who are different, often increases students’ capacity to articulate and move from implicit to explicit values (Daloz Parks 1993). In a higher education context,⁹² students are often engaging with new and different people and ideas while simultaneously evaluating those values and beliefs with which they grew up. The evaluative-engagement process is an interactive dance between the authorities of the young adult’s contexts of origin and the new authorities of higher education—peers, professors, and new fields of knowledge and their authors. Preexisting and new ideas and values come together in harmony and discord, a cacophony of inner movement seeking to fuse various beats together into one rhythm. The newly created rhythm has soul, an inner choreography from which a new authority emerges—picture John Travolta in a white suit emerging from a crowded dance floor—the self.⁹³

⁹² Research shows an increase in “extended young adulthood,” where young adults, ages 18-30 are taking longer to move out of the transitional stage of young adulthood and settle down and assume independence and traditional “adult” roles (Settersten, Furstenberg, and Rumbaut 2005). This indicates both the critical role of higher education in better preparing and developing young adults for adulthood, and the broader implications for spiritual and civic development outside of the higher education context.

⁹³ Developmental psychologist Robert Kegan argues that new levels of self develop throughout a lifetime. The “self” described here would fit within Kegan’s institutional period, in which the individual finds commitment to ideas and values that are larger than one’s immediate and temporary needs or interests—values are institutionalized. For some, this period further develops into the inter-individual period, where the individual understands that there are multiple and diverse forms of ethical action, which may be different from one’s own value system (1982).

“The self” refers to an intentionally formed ethical identity. Such identities develop when a young adult deliberately identifies and evaluates his/her subscribed values and their associated actions, which until this point were implicitly developed within an originating context. Although now dancing to a new soulful rhythm, this self while “healthy, vital, full of promise, [is] yet vulnerable” (Daloz Parks 2000, 82). This authentic and vulnerable identity is part of the developmental stage of young adulthood.⁹⁴

The developmental transition of young adulthood is critical to spiritual-civic development because it occurs at a time when young adults engage in critical thinking around actively choosing their truths and values (Daloz Parks 2000). Moving personal values from tacit to explicit includes finding authenticity amongst beliefs, words, and actions, and can lead to the development of *authentic and civic identities*. John C. Dalton identifies how the transition of adulthood in higher education can contribute to the development of authentic civic identities for students,

College students who are able to develop their moral convictions and integrate their beliefs into career choices and lifestyle patterns are likely to be active participants in social and civic communities. Such civic activism is essential in our political and social system since democracy requires citizen participation and commitment to such core values as justice, fairness, respect for others, and the common good. (Jablonski 2001, 24)

During the process of transitioning out of adolescence, the young adult engages with developing authentic and civic identity, developing a “newfound freedom to struggle for

⁹⁴ Young adulthood as defined by Sharon Daloz Parks’ developmental theory, which emerges from the foundational work of educational psychologist William G. Perry, Jr., particularly his research and theory on student development as outlined in his book, *Forms of Ethical and Intellectual Development in the College Years* ([1968] 1999). She also drew from the intellectual trail of constructive developmental psychologists Erik Erickson and Jean Piaget, as well as, Robert Kegan, Carol Gilligan and James Fowler.

an identity and to take responsibility for it” (Daloz Parks 2000, 63). Such development is not inevitable; however, research shows that it can be cultivated within mentoring environments and communities (2000). Mentoring is an effective method of meaningful engagement. Research also shows that relationships with “others” result in the development of action-oriented compassion (Parks Daloz et al. 1996). Therefore, building relationships and meaningfully engaging with those who are different from us is the key indicator for the development of individuals who demonstrate long-term commitment to the common good, or spiritually engaged civic agents (1996).

Relationships with “other” do not require identical value systems, and while meaningful engagement with “other” may support critical evaluation of personal values, it may or may not cause adjustment to or replacement of those values. Instead, such critical evaluation paired with *openness to different people and ideas* supports the development of the *comprehension of complexity and paradox, and the ability to constructively engage with these tensions* by allowing multiple truths to co-exist. Moving from meaningful engagement to relationships with those who hold different truths can create a new value—the relationship, which may supersede conflicting personal values. When the other person and the relationship to that person become the priority value, then conflicting values find a way to co-exist, and *a sense of interconnectedness* develops through connection beyond “tribe,” or like-minded communities of belonging.

In higher education, students are encouraged to adhere to ascribed values, whether through formal university codes of conducts, cultural mores about “college life,” student organizational culture, or the intrinsic values faculty write into course syllabi. There are

few structural opportunities in higher education that encourage students to critically engage with authorship of their explicit values. Providing opportunities for students to make their values explicit and to co-author collective values may seem difficult within the institutional structures and hierarchy of higher education. However, educators can support spiritual-civic development by providing such opportunities in curricular and co-curricular learning environments.

For example, at the start of the term educators could ask students to outline their personal values and learning goals as they relate to the class. Through a group share-out, students learn to navigate going public with their values by putting them into conversation with the values of others. As simple as it seems, even this brief exercise provides a rare reflective opportunity for students to think about answering the questions: What do I believe? What guides my actions? What values are so important that am I willing to become unpopular for them? Bringing what was previously private into public discussion creates new space for critical deliberation, both supporting personal and collective spiritual-civic development.

The intent of the deliberation is to allow the classroom community—both students and teacher—to collectively define class values and expectations around classroom behavior, dialogue, group projects, and grading. The classroom community might also define how they will hold each other accountable to their collective values, setting up expectations for both the instructor and students to call attention to, and effectively handle, actions that don't meet the collective stated values, even if that results in tension. Finally, an instructor could lead an evaluative discussion where students evaluate their

collective values against the larger society's democratic values to see how they compare and contrast. This kind of critical evaluation models for students how engage in their own process of developing explicit personal values and testing them against collective democratic values towards deeper spiritual-civic development.

In the classroom, instructors can also use exercises around core values development as a way to build meaningful relationships. Classroom introductions that start with “get to know you” questions like, “What did you do this summer?” or “What did you eat for breakfast?” might break the ice, but they do not provide information from which to build meaningful relationships. Learning about someone's core values teaches you about *who* they are—a depth beyond their vacation or daily activities.

Spiritual and Civic Development Trajectories

The spiritual and civic development trajectories demonstrate how students move through the spiritual-civic development process and model, as well as the necessary orientation of assignments, activities, and learning environment that allow for such movement. The outcomes of both spiritual and civic trajectories—agential transformation and civic efficacy—combine to result in the development of spiritually engaged civic agents. In discussing each spiritual and civic development trajectory I will: 1) describe the development trajectory “formula” ($a+b=c$), 2) suggest learning environments, activities, and/or assignments that support student movement through the development trajectory, and 3) identify the relationship between the development trajectory and the larger integrated Spiritual-Civic Development Model.

**Spiritual Development Trajectory:
Action Orientation + Future-Oriented Purpose and Direction = Agential
Transformation**

Agential transformation is the intended outcome of a spiritual development process that combines an action orientation and future-oriented purpose and direction. Throughout life, agential transformation is the fluid process of continual discovery and re-imagining that changes who we are and how we act in the world. Spiritual development requires both fluidity and openness to change and transformation, as well as a sense of groundedness, or roots that anchor us safely from passing storms. At their best, spiritual roots give us strength to endure the more difficult experiences of agential transformation in life's journey. At their worst, spiritual roots cling too tightly to destructive truths and experiences that do not provide the necessary water and nutrients for life, ultimately preventing constructive agential transformation. In the context of spiritual-civic development, agential transformation may be: a deeper connection with and understanding of ourselves, a shift in worldview or how we make meaning of the world around us, a change in how we relate to "other," a transition from self-focus to a broader sense of interconnectedness, or the development of a sense of transcendence.

Students who develop an action-orientation to spirituality move beyond thoughts (beliefs) or words (claims) to the embodiment of spirituality in action and interaction. Such spiritual embodiment joins a future-oriented purpose and direction to *answer* the question: who will I be? Answering this question encompasses the ability to exist in the present (who I am), look and move toward the future (who I will be), while understanding the significance of the past (who I was), which helped shape the present

and will influence the future (Tisdell 2003). Engagement with the past and present is a foundation for grounded, practical movement and action towards the future.

Action towards a future-oriented purpose and direction is meaningful and intentional. Students desire such a purpose that moves them into the future with a sense of direction, and clamor to know whether their life will have significance (Daloz Parks 2000). Finding such significance and purpose for our lives includes developing a sense of transcendence, or discovering the importance of that which is beyond the self. Agential transformation may include a transition from a self-serving, future-oriented purpose and direction, to one with a more transcendent nature.

The value of the spiritual development trajectory is that it places students as actors in their spiritual development with the power to seek, aspire, imagine and re-imagine, create, act, and experience agential transformation. In contrast to an agential spiritual development trajectory, a non-action-oriented and past-present-orientated purpose and direction only *asks*—and may not *answer* with actions that embody beliefs and claims—the question: who am I? The potential result of this alternative spiritual process is the development of inauthentic identities in which thoughts, words, and actions are not coherent. Another potential result is stunted development, because the student does not see him/herself as an actor in creating individual and collective futures, he/she may withdraw from engaging in the spiritual-civic development process.

In the classroom, instructors can model the action orientation of spiritual development through the embodiment of their own spirituality, bringing beliefs, claims, and action into alignment. When an instructor is authentic, and consistently demonstrates

his/her values, students are more likely to trust and engage in the spiritual development process.⁹⁵

In order to achieve agential transformation, classroom assignments and activities should be oriented towards action and future purposes and directions. Such activities and assignments might:

- Provide opportunities for students to engage “empathetic and imaginative” exploration of “unfamiliar cultures [or] a new human dilemma,” which are found in all academic fields (Palmer, Zajonc, and Scribner 20010, 106; brackets added);
- Engage the “cognitive, affective, and the symbolic domains” for holistic learning, which creates a learning environment in which “people can bring their whole selves” and “acknowledge the powerful ways they create meaning through their cultural, symbolic, and spiritual experience, as well as through the cognitive” (Tisdell 2003, 42);
- Provide opportunities for the “experience of seeing social problems in a deeply human context, up close and personal” (Jablonski 2001); and
- Engage students in “energetic engagement and dialogue” with diverse others, not “giving up our commitments,” but rather “opening up those commitments to the give-and-take of mutual discovery” (Kazanjian and Laurence 2000, xii).⁹⁶

In the classroom, this means bridging the subjective and objective; engaging critical reflection and analysis; providing opportunities for students to experience, explore, and address social problems and not just learn about them from a book; and learning about “others” through dialogue and relationships. Learning that supports agential

⁹⁵ Parks Daloz et al. discuss mentors as those who model commitment, therefore influencing the development of lives committed to the common good. “When they influence the formation of commitment, mentors usually embody that commitment themselves, often modeling ways of seeing problems and offering helpful analyses” (1996, 45).

⁹⁶ This excerpt directly references Diana Eck’s definition and work on pluralism.

transformation requires structures and spaces that encourage students to engage and integrate their affective, intellectual, perceptive, and imaginative cognitions in order to learn about self and other.

Service learning is one pedagogy educators can use to integrate spiritual-civic development and move students through the spiritual and civic development trajectories. Such experiential and practical learning provide opportunities for action and can address a future-oriented purpose and direction by addressing questions such as, How do we change the long-term trajectory of this social problem? Can we identify root causes in order to change the future direction? Additionally, the relational and community-based contextual environment of service learning supports student engagement with the seven spiritual-civic development outcomes.

The spiritual development trajectory is integrative to the entire Spiritual-Civic Development Model. Action is the key to connecting spiritual development with the development of civic efficacy. Practicing and acting on our personal and shared democratic values, combined with the relational and communal aspect of spirituality, requires that we work towards justice and equality as our shared democratic values. This action-orientation generates authenticity, and becomes a circular development process. *Practicing* spirituality results in a more just world and further develops one's spirituality, which then further challenges individuals and communities to address injustice.

Lastly, agential transformation is not limited to the individual spiritual development journey, but is applicable to the broader community. Communities can come together on an intentionally transformative path, or communities can transform as

each individual transforms, slowly changing the whole (Tisdell 2003). When a community comes together to take action towards a collective future purpose and direction, agential transformation is inevitable.

That moment just after transformation is critical—both for individual and community—because it has taken a lot of work, emotional, intellectual, and physical exertion to get to that point. A person or community might be inclined to rest. Such moments of temporary rest, or “evolutionary truces,” are part of the pattern of ongoing development, and offer “periods of dynamic stability or balance followed by periods of instability and qualitatively new balance” (Kegan 1982, 44).

There is a danger, however, for individuals and communities to become satisfied during their evolutionary truce, and resign from future efforts at improvement. For example, when an individual experiences spiritual transformation that leads to a new label: “I consider myself (fill in the blank: agnostic, atheist, spiritual, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhism, Jewish, Christian, etc.);” or a society reaches transformational goals such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The danger of transformational labels and achievements is that they may lead to a prolonged rest: I finally know who I am so I can finally stop searching, or discrimination is illegal so it no longer exists. Labels and achievements of agential transformation are not an *end*, but rather a *means* to ongoing understanding and development of spiritually engaged civic agency at the individual and community levels. An individual or community that experiences agential transformation will celebrate their successes, take a temporary rest, but ultimately they will stay grounded in the

complexities of the world, searching for ways to continue their transformation through finding future purpose and direction, and taking action.

Civic Development Trajectory:

Development and Practice of Public Skills + Cultural Capacity = Civic Efficacy

Using public skills to both navigate the existing culture and to create new culture engages community at a deep level, investigates power structures, and builds the necessary relationships for public work. When students engage with the civic development trajectory, they develop the tools, knowledge, and capabilities to identify critical issues, root causes, and community assets in order to effectively take action around critical community issues. This development process is the path towards civic efficacy, where individuals and communities develop the capacity to address public issues and achieve intended results.

Civic efficacy is both a *confidence* in one's civic power and ability, and the *evidence* that one's civic efforts are making their *intended* impact. The development and habit-forming practice of public skills are how we learn to work with a diversity of people within a civic setting, generating both inner confidence and outward evidence of civic efficacy. These public skills include: effective and strategic communication (i.e.: active listening, public voice, writing, informed civic discourse, and inclusive dialogue), collaboration (i.e.: democratic leadership, problem-solving, negotiation, consensus building, effectively addressing conflict, critical thinking to evaluate biases and assumptions, collective action, and public evaluation for accountability), and a civic approach (respect, accountability, analytical approach, and critical reflection). Students

can use these public skills to build cultural capacity, or the ability to understand and navigate a community's current culture, as well as work within a community to co-create new culture. The combination of public and cultural skills and capacities is the foundation for an asset-based approach that effectively addresses community-based issues and their root causes, ultimately resulting in the development of civic efficacy.

As students develop into spiritually engaged civic agents, they become confident in their civic capabilities and demonstrate efficacy in their public and collaborative efforts to address issues, root causes, and build more powerful and democratic cultures and communities. Within the development of such civic efficacy, individuals and communities build civic agency, the ability to act together for their collective interests.

The development of civic efficacy is different from volunteer development, but both are part of the same spectrum of civic engagement. Volunteer development within higher education is in large part a socialization of students to the broader community, and often an experience in which privileged students learn about oppression and injustice of "others," and related issues surrounding diversity and difference. Within traditional volunteer development models of civic engagement, students may learn about themselves, their larger community, and injustice; however, such direct service volunteerism does not necessarily develop civic efficacy.

The civic development trajectory is an intentional, outcomes-based model. This differs from a direct service volunteer development model, which may result in some civic development, but rarely would result in the development of civic efficacy, as this is not an intentional outcome of the volunteer model. One way to look at the difference in

practice within higher education is to think of volunteer development as an exposure approach: if students are exposed to community, “others,” and injustice, they will develop a sense of social responsibility, civic skills, and desire for long-term engagement. While this may happen for some, there is also the possibility that a one-time volunteer experience may reinforce negative stereotypes of “other,” reveal injustice as something entirely avoidable by choice—not structural, or decrease a sense of social responsibility (i.e.: “they” made poor choices, should have to live with those choices, rather than receive handouts).

John Saltmarsh, director of the New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERSCHE) at the University of Massachusetts-Boston and Matthew Hartley, associate professor at the University of Pennsylvania’s Graduate School of Education, differentiate the embedded epistemological difference between volunteer and civic efficacy development as “civic engagement” versus “*democratic* civic engagement” (2011, 18-22). Traditional civic engagement focuses on activity and place (the university is the center for expert solutions that are applied *to* communities), while *democratic* civic engagement focuses on purpose and process (democratic, reciprocal, and collaborative problem-solving and knowledge co-production). In outlining the “civic engagement” and “democratic civic engagement” frameworks, Saltmarsh and Hartley respectively define each model’s outcomes as, “knowledge generation and dissemination through community involvement” versus “community change that results from the cocreation of knowledge” (22). The civic efficacy outcome of the civic development trajectory aims in the same direction of “democratic civic engagement,” towards the democratic, reciprocal, and

collaborative co-production of knowledge, culture, and communities better aligned with our collective democratic values.

Within such democratic civic engagement learning environments, students work collaboratively with other students, faculty, and community members to learn and practice “cooperative and creative problem solving” (Saltmarsh and Hartley 2011, 21). In contrast, the traditional civic engagement paradigm, which currently dominates higher education, lacks intentionality around civic development outcomes,

Without the intentionality of process and purpose, there is a diminution of democratic potential. Students may learn, and important service may be rendered. But rarely does such an approach to engagement result in actively contesting a problematic status quo or engender concerted action to challenge and change it by every democratic means possible. To paraphrase John Dewey—who wrote in *Democracy and Education* (1916) that “mere activity does not constitute experience” (139)—mere activity in a community does not constitute civic engagement. (2011, 17)

Nor does mere activity—direct service volunteerism—develop civic efficacy.

Democratic learning environments and pedagogy support the civic development trajectory. Educators who model democratic practices create democratic learning environments by demonstrating the practice of public skills and cultural capacity for students. Democratic learning environments are founded on an epistemology that, “values not only expert knowledge that is rational, analytic, and positivist but also a different kind of rationality that is more relational, localized, and contextual and favors mutual deference between lay-persons and academics” (Saltmarsh and Hartley 2011, 20). Within a classroom setting the “lay-persons” are both students and community members, and an

inclusive and collaborative approach to all deliberation and work becomes the educational and learning culture.

Classroom assignments and activities should be oriented towards democratic principles of inclusion, collaboration, and co-creation (Saltmarsh and Hartley 2011). Instead of traditional service-learning courses or assignments that rely on “‘partnerships’ (relationships) and ‘mutuality’ (shared benefit),” a democratic approach moves towards “‘reciprocity’ (cocreation),” which (21):

- 1) Breaks down both the process and identities of who produces knowledge (higher education/experts) versus who consumes knowledge (students/community) (20);
- 2) Introduces multidirectional knowledge (students, faculty, community all bring expertise to the co-creation of problem-solving knowledge) (21);and
- 3) Shares power and authority (students, faculty, community) throughout the entire process of identifying and defining an issue, developing a problem-solving approach, implementing the approach in order to address the issue, assessment of implementation, and presentation of resulting co-created knowledge (21).

By engaging this democratic process and approach within learning environments and classroom activities and assignments, students will develop and practice public skills and cultural capacity towards the development of civic efficacy. I will describe the democratic learning approach in greater depth within the next chapter, which discusses the Community Organizing Learning Model for Spiritual-Civic Development.

The civic development trajectory itself is inclusive and collaborative, simultaneously co-developing civic efficacy amongst students, faculty, and community. A democratic learning environment and spiritual-civic development process are not isolated to student development, but should naturally include all participants who engage in the co-creation of knowledge, culture, community, and public work.

Spiritual-Civic Development for Spiritually Engaged Civic Agents

Spiritual and civic development are synergistic and integrative to the human condition. As such, it will take the practice of spiritual-civic development to meaningfully and effectively fulfill higher education's historical civic mission; contribute to the reweaving of the U.S. American civic fabric; and live out our democratic values of justice, equality, and liberty. It is common to hear educators in higher education—and in other sectors—talk about teaching and engaging students in social change and social justice work. However, it is inaccurate to suggest to students that they are engaged in social change and social justice, when they are generally engaged in trying to stop the bleeding (direct service volunteerism), instead of preventing the injury (systemic efforts of social change and social justice). If all Martin Luther King, Jr. did was serve meals to low-income African-Americans, where would we be today? Instead, King and other civil rights leaders facilitated the agential transformation of individuals and communities, who came together to take action towards a future purpose and direction. They habitually practiced public skills, built cultural capacity, and developed civic efficacy. King and others became spiritually engaged civic agents capable of organizing and co-creating public work. They co-created new ways of understanding and engaging with race and equality in America from the lunch counter, to the schools, to the halls of justice, and the office of the president.

In 1999, at the start of the current resurgence of dialogue around spirituality in education, some scholars understood the broader impacts of excluding spiritual development from higher education. The foundational article on spirituality in higher education written by Patrick Love and Donna Talbot states,

Unfortunately, the profession's [higher education's] failure to engage in discussions of spirituality and spiritual development may contribute not only to foreclosure on matters of spirituality, but also to a general narrowness of perspective and an inability or unwillingness to think critically, explore value-related issues, and question authorities. (Love and Talbot 1999, 363; brackets added)

The concerns highlighted by Love and Talbot are not just related to spirituality, but they are also civic development considerations. In response to these concerns, the Spiritual-Civic Development Model includes development outcomes of: open engagement with alternative ideas, critical thinking and engagement with complexity and paradox, and explicit personal values tested against collective democratic values. The model also pairs imagination with a cultural capacity that questions authorities by creating new cultures and better public futures *within* the context of relationships and community—not expert-driven, top-down decisions applied *to* communities.

The integration of spiritual-civic development most closely aligns with the research and writings of Laurent A. Parks Daloz, Cheryl H. Keen, James P. Keen and Sharon Daloz Parks in the book *Common Fire: Leading Lives of Commitment in a Complex World*. Their research study of one hundred adults who demonstrate long-term commitment to the common good found that,

These people learned to trust appropriately, act with courage, live within and beyond tribe in affinity with those who are other, to practice critical habits of mind and a responsible imagination, to manage their own mixed emotions and motives, and to live with a recognition of the interdependence of all life—manifest in a paradoxical sense of time and space. They help us imagine ways of building a more promising future. (1996, 19)

These findings support the constructed Spiritual-Civic Development Model, and are particularly pragmatic because the authors draw from a broad interdisciplinary

approach.⁹⁷ Such an interdisciplinary approach shows the very nature of spiritual and civic development as integrative to one another, and also to various academic disciplines, career paths, and ways of understanding humanity.

In the epilogue to *Common Fire*, the authors include orienting suggestions for various sectors that contribute to the common life. For the higher education sector, they suggest (223-225):

- Assessing the institution's actual and potential capacity to contribute to the life of the new global commons through campus-community partnership;
- Developing the institution into a mentoring environment around intellectual and vocational mentor relationships;
- Cultivating habits of mind that lead to practical wisdom through the practical and contemporary social application of texts using critical and systemic thinking; and
- Creating opportunities for constructive engagement with otherness in both identity and discipline through structured meaningful dialogue.

These are just a few prescriptive suggestions for higher education, which emphasize spiritual-civic development aspects such as relationships and community, and openness to and meaningful engagement with different people and ideas. I have mentioned other suggestions for spiritual-civic development within this chapter, and there is still much room for directed and structured efforts to integrate spiritual and civic development in higher education.

⁹⁷ The authors' primary fields include: their primary fields include "political science, social and educational psychology, constructive-developmental psychology, theology, and international development" (Parks Parks Daloz et al. 1996, 17). Broader sources in their work include fields of: leadership studies, education, human development, psychology, political theory, philosophy, religious and theological studies, feminist theory, anthropology, and communication.

In the next chapter, I suggest community organizing founded on critical pedagogy as a constructive learning model that can incorporate the seven spiritual-civic development outcomes and therefore support the learning trajectories of both spiritual and civic development, while operating within the development context of relationships and community. This Community Organizing Learning Model allows for deeper movement into the practice of integrated spiritual-civic development in higher education than the current service-learning and civic engagement models common in higher education.

Chapter Five: A Community Organizing Learning Model for Spiritual-Civic Development

Sometimes I see my peers afraid of conflict and afraid of tension, because they don't have the skills to say, ok, we're on different sides of this issue, but I'm going to have a one-to-one with you, I'm going to get your perspective, and then I have this model to work through. They don't have these public skills that we've learned through community organizing.

— College Student

As a community-based philosophy and practice, community organizing was not originally intended as a theory or method of teaching within higher education. However, with the foundation of critical pedagogy, the community organizing method can be used effectively as a framework for spiritual-civic development within the higher education context. In particular, the broad-based, relational community organizing method serves as a model spiritual-civic development strategy because organizing has a successful history of developing spiritually engaged civic agents who actively participate in direct democracy and public work.

In order to re-fashion community organizing for the higher education context, I pull from the guiding principles and methods of community organizing philosophy and practice, frame them onto a foundation of signature principles from critical theory and

pedagogy,⁹⁸ and construct the Community Organizing Learning Model for Spiritual-Civic Development. My intention is for the reader to consider community organizing as a model for the successful integration of spiritual and civic development within the community context, and then to imagine with me how this community-based model could effectively translate into the higher education context.

I have incorporated community organizing methods and practice in my own work with curricular and co-curricular teaching over the past six years. This integration has proven to be most successful with the University of Denver's Puksta Scholars Program, a scholarship-based, four-year, developmental civic engagement program and intentionally diverse community of students. Through participation in the Program, undergraduate students consistently demonstrate better integration of their spiritual and civic identities—which before tended to be compartmentalized, largely tacit, or not critically understood and articulated. Puksta Alumni have also demonstrated the integration of spiritual and civic development through critical evaluation of who they are and how they relate to others while taking on serious leadership roles within their communities after graduation.

The following construction of the Community Organizing Learning Model is both a theory and practiced-based formulation for the particular developmental role and environment of higher education. I am intentionally shaping community organizing to

⁹⁸ Critical theory is rooted in Marxist scholarship, and emerged from the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory at the Institute of Social Research at the University of Frankfurt. It was here, at the Frankfurt School, where Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse built the foundation of critical theory in dialogue with the philosophies of Karl Marx, Immanuel Kant, George W.F. Hegel, Max Weber, and Sigmund Freud. Paulo Freire is a key player in the dialogue of critical pedagogy, particularly because of his success in putting theory into practice within the oppressed populations of which the theory and pedagogy is concerned.

function within a new environment, a hierarchical and largely undemocratic institutional setting, because methodologically, organizing is a powerful approach to both develop spiritually engaged civic agents and to create institutional change. My ultimate concern is how these diverse areas of spirituality, civic engagement, community organizing, and critical pedagogy might come together more strategically in order to develop spiritually engaged civic agency for the American—and global—democracy.

Finally, it is impossible to do justice to the full history, philosophy, or practice of community organizing in one chapter. For greater insight, I suggest that readers who find this model compelling get involved in local organizing efforts⁹⁹ and read books¹⁰⁰ written by and about some of the most effective organizers in U.S.-American history.

The Tradition of Broad-based, Relational Community Organizing

There is a long and diverse history of community organizing from the settlement houses for social reform of the early 1900s, to the popular education model of Paulo Freire and Myles Horton, and the participatory democracy of Ella Baker during the Civil Rights Movement. What is understood as “modern” community organizing, however,

⁹⁹ As a starting point, you can find local affiliates and training opportunities from the four major national, broad-based organizing networks: Direct Action and Research Training (DART), www.thedartcenter.org; Gamaliel, www.gamaliel.org; Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), www.industrialareasfoundation.org; People Improving Communities through Organizing (PICO), www.piconetwork.org.

¹⁰⁰ Saul Alinsky’s *Reveille for Radicals* ([1946] 1974) and *Rules for Radicals* ([1971] 1989); Harry Boyte’s *The Citizen Solution* (2008b); Cesar Chavez’ *An Organizer’s Tale: Speeches* (2008); Edward T. Chambers’ *Roots for Radicals* (2003); Mario T. García’s *A Dolores Huerta Reader* (2008); Michael Gecan’s *Going Public* (2004); Mary Beth Rogers’ *Cold Anger* (1990); and Kristin Layng and Joe Szakos’ *We Make Change: Community Organizers Talk about What They Do—and Why* (2007).

started with the theory and work of Saul Alinsky (1909-1972)—well-known as the “father” of modern community organizing.

Alinsky was the first to put into writing a method and structure for community organizing in his 1946 book, *Reveille for Radicals*. For Alinsky, organizing was true democracy: a way for ordinary people to decide the rules and conditions of their lives, and to do this by building power—the ability to act—through organizing people and money. Developing power was the only path to social change within the capitalist, democratic U.S.-American society. With such power, everyday citizens could challenge and pressure elected and corporate leaders to be accountable to shared democratic values of justice and equality. Influenced by the union movement and formidable Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), not only did Alinsky create a particular approach to social change, he brought an intense public persona. Alinsky was confrontational, theatrical in his pursuit of those in power, politically astute, and strategic in his use of tactics (Horwitt 1992). He was also sexist—believing women could not be organizers, and full of himself (Horwitt 1992). To be clear, Alinsky was no saint, nor hero; however, he was extremely influential in developing and articulating methods for community organizing and development that support a non-partisan, non-ideological, values-based civic development for the U.S.-American democracy.

In 1940, Alinsky founded the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) as a national community organizing network, and during that time he also developed former seminarian, Edward T. Chambers, as an organizer. In 1972, Chambers became Alinsky’s designated successor, and served as executive director of the IAF until his retirement in

2010 from which he moved onto the board of trustees (IAF 2011). Under Chambers, the IAF focused on providing organizing training, which advanced Alinsky's method. Chambers incorporated the congregation-based model established by fellow IAF organizer, Ernesto Cortes, Jr., during his work with Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS) in Texas. This shift from Alinsky-style organizing to Chambers-Cortes-style organizing included women and lay leaders—instead of only men—in official leadership roles. The Cortes-Chambers model also places a greater emphasis on values-based motivation and focuses on the development of long-term organizational relationships (Pyles 2009; and Chambers 2003).

The emergent broad-based, relational community organizing method created by this lineage brings everyday people together around common values to build power in order to address issues in their communities. A broad-based model is inclusive and non-partisan, intentionally bringing a diversity of everyday people to the table in order to achieve a more participatory democratic style where all voices are heard and perspectives understood.

A relational organizing model starts with people building relationships around shared values, rather than mobilizing people around an issue as a first step—the latter being the more common form of popular ideological, partisan, and exclusionary activism.¹⁰¹ The combination of broad-based and relational community organizing provides a strong framework for truly democratic public work where intentionally diverse communities come together around shared values and interests to build relationships,

¹⁰¹ Critical theorist and educator Paulo Freire would call such ideological activism “massification,” “a state in which people do not make their own decisions although they may think that they do” (Freire 1974, 120).

power, and civic agency. Ultimately, these powerful communities take action towards the co-creation of “the world as it should be” according to their shared values. Community organizers are those who “agitate people to act on their values and interests in the world as it should be. Organizers teach engagement in public life as a means to moral meaning” (Chambers 2003, 107).

Guiding Principles of the Community Organizing Method

There are several guiding principles to community organizing that affect community-based practice as well as spiritual-civic development. These principles include the *definition of politics*, the *iron rule of organizing*, the *law of change*, *ends versus means*, and the *two-world dichotomy*. Community organizers *define politics* out of the Aristotelian tradition, as “adults coming together in public places as sovereign citizens to deliberate and act for the common good” (Chambers 2003, 18). Being involved in politics is part of democratic citizenship, and politics requires public skills that citizens should practice. In order to continue to develop citizenship and civic agency, organizers abide by the “*iron rule*” coined by Alinsky: “Never do for others what they can do for themselves” (Chambers 2003, 103). Organizing is about developing civic agency so that people can address issues in their communities; it is not about solving other people’s problems *for* them.

Addressing issues means making change. Change does not just happen; we cannot sit back and say, “That isn’t fair. They should fix it.” The “they,” here, are usually those in power who are upholding the unfairness, *they* will not change their ways just because it is unfair. “All change comes about as a result of threat or pressure,” known as direct

action in community organizing terms (Chambers 2003, 103). Organizers also understand the “*law of change*,” what Alinsky described as, “Change means movement; movement means friction; friction means heat; heat means controversy, conflict” (Chambers 2003, 103). Controversy and conflict are tensions. While many people choose to avoid tension, organizers embrace and try to insert tension because they understand tension as a space of possibility, the moment where something is about to happen—where transformation occurs.

In the process of creating change, many activists are highly concerned with “means,” they attempt to make social change through just means only—essentially operating in the “world as it should be.” Organizers, on the other hand, operate in the “world as it is,” a world fraught with injustice. To operate in the “world as it is” means to build public relationships with a diversity of people—including those who disagree with you, and to pressure those in power to create a more just world—the “end”—by the means necessary. Chambers describes the “*means versus ends*” paradigm stating, “Right things are done for wrong reasons, and bad things are often done for right reasons” (2003, 104). In dealing with the imperfection of current unjust structures, sometimes reaching just “ends” requires going around the formal processes for change, creating new processes, and figuring out and engaging the self interests, or motivations, of those who have the power to make change—even if you disagree with them. This “means versus ends” concept is what got Alinsky his reputation as a trouble-maker. Alinsky used unconventional means to reach just ends; including public embarrassment, outrageous

theatrics, and generally challenging the culture of affluence—the ways in which those in power operate and expect to be treated.

One final underlying principle in community organizing is pivotal to preparing effective civic agents in higher education. Community organizing operates on the *dichotomy of two worlds*. The world we live in, or “the world as it is,” and the world we would prefer to live in, or “the world as it should be.” The world as it is exists in tension with the world as it should be because there is injustice in the world, which is in disharmony with our core values (Alinsky [1946] 1974; Chambers 2003; Gecan 2004; Rogers 1990). Community organizers work within the world as it is, navigating the sometimes ugly realities of public work, while maintaining hope for change, and an imagination for the world as it should be. The community organizing method brings to the civic engagement field a realistic understanding of how to operate in the world as it is, when so many activists work out of a view of the world as it should be—an ineffective and unrealistic effort.

This community organizing worldview of “the world as it is/the world as it should be” is also referenced by many academics in the civic engagement, service-learning and leadership fields (Boyte 2008b; Butin 2010; Colby et al. 2007; Daloz Parks 2000; Jacoby 2009; Levine 2007; Preskill and Brookfield 2008). Such scholars recognize the need for students to embrace the complexity and paradox of the world as it exists without losing hope or an imagination for a better world. In student development and education, however, academics often operate from the world as it should be, while decrying the world as it is. Pointing out the ills of the world and teaching students how to address

issues while mentally operating from the “world as it should be” diminishes civic efficacy. Students need to know that the democratic work of co-creating a society that lives up to its collective democratic values can be messy, uncomfortable, tense, and defeating—as well as joyful, meaningful, energizing, and exciting. Organizers provide an effective worldview through the two-world dichotomy as they operate in the world as it is, with hope for the world as it should be, embracing and living in the tension between the two.

For example, Anne Colby and associates identify three developmental dimensions essential for political engagement in the book *Educating for Democracy: Preparing Undergraduates for Responsible Political Engagement* (2007, 13-17):

- 1) Understanding or knowledge of foundational political concepts and current events (i.e.: political theories and institutions);
- 2) Skills (i.e.: registering to vote, lobbying elected officials, deliberation); and
- 3) Motivation for the relevance of political issues in their own lives.

The description of the first developmental dimension is reminiscent of traditional civics and social studies classes that teach students the branches of the government, how a bill gets passed, and review current events from the daily news. These are all important for students to learn, but the critical next step is for students to learn how to really navigate these systems in the world as it is, not as it is supposed to be, because the systems do not work in the idealistic nature in which they were conceived.¹⁰² For

¹⁰² Traditional civics and social studies classes reproduce oppressive social hierarchies that distribute cultural capital—or political capital—to those already able to decipher the complex codes the dominant culture, but do not encourage the creativity and imagination necessary for everyday citizens to truly navigate within and around the oppressive systems (Bourdieu 1984; Bourdieu and Passeron 2000).

students to gain political efficacy, they must know how to operate within the system and how to ethically and effectively go outside of the system when the system stops working. This is a foundational difference between community organizing and current efforts in the Civic Engagement Movement in higher education. Community organizing is not a prescriptive model, but rather it requires imagination, cultural capacity, and courage to set a new path in order to create change when others may give up in the face of the oppressive status quo.

These guiding principles of community organizing are in relationship to several aspects of critical theory—discussed in the next section, and spiritual-civic development, including: the participatory and democratic nature of community and politics, the need to teach students to think and act for themselves—rather than having others think and act for them, the importance of operating from reality with hope for a better imagined future, and the urgent need for imaginative “outside-of-the-box” thinking when it comes to civic and public work.

A Foundation of Critical Pedagogy for a Democratic Learning Environment

Much like the philosophy and practice of community organizing, critical pedagogy seeks to attain a more democratic and just society by valuing the student as a whole person with agency, and the teacher as a collaborator in the classroom. This pedagogical model challenges purely objectivist thinking by critically engaging in the complexity and subjectivity of knowledge, and the inherent political nature of an education system administered by dominant power structures. Key to critical pedagogy

are specific understandings about students and teachers, knowledge and education, and the necessary teaching practices that emerge from these understandings.¹⁰³

Students are not empty vessels waiting to be filled (Freire 2000b). Instead, students bring lived experiences, knowledge, and agency to the classroom, all of which must be engaged and valued in order to achieve effective learning and to create democratic learning environments. Educators must operate out of authenticity, love, and trust. They must also be willing to take risks, do research, and use dialogue as a democratic learning structure—as opposed to a lecture where the professor transmits knowledge to students. The relationship between students and teachers is one of collaboration, not the top-down power structure of the traditional classroom setting.

Knowledge is understood as inherently subjective, because it is derived from human interpretation based on various lenses of perspective, lived experience, power analysis, and culture. This definition of knowledge is a reaction to the predominant educational culture of positivism, which upholds the scientific method as the ultimate process for acquiring knowledge, and prioritizes neutrality (Freire and Horton 1990), technicalization and hyperrationalization (Kincheloe 2008), technocratic rationality (Giroux 1997), and objectivity. Although knowledge is understood as inherently subjective, it is also understood as intellectually rigorous, not irrational or emotionally burdened as some might critique subjectivity. Additionally, knowledge is understood as

¹⁰³ This presentation of signature principles within the discourse of critical theory and pedagogy is intentionally broad and includes the work of the following scholars: Cathy Amanti, Stephen D. Brookfield, Lisa Delpit, John Dewey, Paolo Freire, Henry Giroux, Diane Goodman, Norma Gonzalez, Sandy Grande, bell hooks, Myles Horton, Joe L. Kincheloe, Peter MacLaren, Luis C. Moll, Sonia Nieto, and Kathleen Talvacchia.

complex and always changing. Because knowledge is subjective to human interpretation, truths change over time as new lenses are applied to previous understandings. As a result, the complex and fluid nature of knowledge and truth requires a collaborative and constructive approach to education, rather than a prescriptive approach.

Critical pedagogy understands that education is ideological, political, contextual, and community focused. Ideology is the Zeitgeist—or spirit of the times—which dictates the belief systems and meaning-making that supports dominant power in society (Kincheloe 2008). Such popularly accepted values, myths, and beliefs that appear to be true, actually function to maintain injustice (Brookfield 2005a). An example of such an assumed truth that has become part of the U.S.-American ideology is the belief that African-Americans perform poorly in schools due to their culture or race. While one could find statistical evidence that African-Americans are not performing as well as white or Asian students in U.S. public schools, performance is not empirically linked to a students' culture or skin color as a cultural value or genetic intellectual deficiency.¹⁰⁴ This kind of assumed truth has horrific repercussions in the classroom and society.

When teachers, who may be well meaning, treat black students differently by providing less-challenging work and lowering expectations because of the ideological assumption that African-Americans perform poorly in school, they can reduce chances for academic success within the African-American student population (Delpit [1995]

¹⁰⁴ For example, the controversial book, *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*, by Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray (1994), argued that racial differences in IQ are genetic. In response to growing criticism, the American Psychological Association (APA) established a task force charged with investigating the research from the book. The APA task force published a response report, "Intelligence: Knowns and Unknowns," which stated that there is no direct empirical evidence linking racial differences in IQ to genetics (Ulric et al. 1996).

2006). This then further perpetuates the ideological assumption that African-Americans perform poorly in school. Our educational systems are not neutral; they cater to privileged students, and do not give access to the “codes of power”—language, thought process, academic skill, and behavior of the dominant culture—to children of color (Delpit [1995] 2006).

This leads us to the inherently political nature of the educational structure, based on dominant ideology and education’s role in preparing youth to become law-abiding citizens (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990). In response to the structural political nature of education, critical pedagogy engages politics to intentionally attempt to change the power dynamics of society, preparing youth to be critically thinking and actively engaged citizens within democratic society (Giroux 1997). Such an approach is not about imposing political views onto students, but rather encouraging students to understand academic subject matter through a broader context, which includes the critical evaluation of ethics and social, political, power, and oppressive structures. There is room, however, for teachers to honestly share their opinions and beliefs while making clear that everyone has a right to their own opinions and beliefs, including students (Freire and Horton 1990).

The last understanding about education within critical pedagogy is the contextual and community nature of knowledge and learning. Knowledge is not self-contained or isolated, but rather, it is interconnected in multiple ways and at various levels. As a result, knowledge can only be understood contextually, within its relationship to other information (Dewey [1938] 1997). The community-nature of education runs from the micro, local level—such as the community immediately surrounding a school—to the

macro, ideological level (Kincheloe 2008). People acquire “real world” knowledge through the simple act of living and experiencing life in community with others, and in the creation of a culture of shared beliefs and truths.

Experiential, community-based learning is simply an everyday aspect of human development. Teachers can leverage this kind of everyday, lifelong learning by spending time getting to know their students and their families, and the cultural influences present in the classroom and broader community. Teachers may then tap into the relevant life experiences of their students as a starting point to teach new material. This approach is a more effective way to engage students in learning new information or concepts based on their current skill sets and knowledge base, rather than treating them as empty vessels ready to be filled with disconnected information out of context (González et al. 2005).

Finally, the primary teaching practices of critical pedagogy emerge from these understandings of students, teachers, knowledge, and education, and include: power analysis, a social justice orientation, cultivating the hope that change is possible, critical thinking and reflection, multiple perspectives and pluralism, and movement from theory to practice and action.

Critical pedagogy is concerned with hegemony, or the way power can dominate and form public consciousness, which is closely tied to the ideological nature of education. The role of the critical educator is to expose and challenge oppressive or dominant forms of power, such as socio-economic class elitism, Eurocentric ways of viewing the world, patriarchal oppression, imperialism around the world, linguistic and discursive power, gender, race, sexual orientation, and the role of the media in upholding

hegemony (Kincheloe 2008). In addition, democratic classroom practices provide opportunities for students to develop and practice agency. In a traditional classroom—and in the world outside of the classroom—the worldviews of the privileged create the collective and dominant reality and ideology, while the worldviews of those with less power are ignored (Delpit [1995] 2006). In contrast, critical teachers analyze power and learn to find consequence with the inconsequential, equalizing the power in the classroom.

Power analysis reveals the structural injustice within our society and world. As a result, education that takes critical theory seriously must be geared towards creating social justice. Critical teachers understand that our world is operating in an unjust system of marginalization (Kincheloe 2008), oppression (Freire 2000b), alienation (Marx and Engels [1844] 1988), domination and colonization (Grande 2004), and white supremacy (hooks 2003). With this understanding of the world, critical teachers support students to become more fully human, encourage students to challenge dominant power structures, support those who are undermined by the current educational and social system, and teach critical thinking and democratic practice (Freire 2000b). From the Native American tradition, this kind of “humanization” is about reaching wholeness in a “sacred society”—a pluralistic community of humanity that co-habits rather than dominates, and integrates spirit, body, and mind (Grande 2004). Full humanization requires the integration of spiritual and civic development.

At the core of social justice is the cultivation of hope that change is possible. Critical pedagogy would be in vain if there were not an underlying conviction that “the

world is not finished....it is always in the process of becoming” (Freire 2000a, 72). This belief fights against the prevailing determinism that argues people have little ability to change the way things are—to stop the suffering and injustice. This hope that change is possible is not an irrational or idealistic hope, instead it is based on the simple logic that the social structures that cause much of our suffering are human constructs and therefore this suffering does not need to exist, and can be ended through the will and action of the people and their leaders (Kincheloe 2008).

Power analysis, a social justice orientation, and the hope that change is possible all come from the practice of critical thinking and reflection. Critical thinking is the process of being critical of what we assume to be true, right, wrong, or causal. This process challenges the power structures that create and dictate the common-sense truths and ideologies of our society, moving us past mystification and blind obedience towards the practice of thinking for ourselves—acting with agency to create new understandings about the world around us. The critical thinking process requires that we understand reality as in process—not static—and it requires a strong sense of curiosity to question the way things are and how we come to understand things (Freire 2000a). By its very nature, critical thinking is a reflexive process that challenges us to critique our individual and collective knowledge, and our active role in that knowing. When we challenge the roles that power, justice, economy, race, class, gender, ideology, education, religion and other social institutions play in our society, we do so in an effort to expose their injustice and in order to work toward a more just society. Such reflection also causes us to question our own participation in these structures and the way they shape our core values

and commitments. Critical educators must practice such critical thinking, reflection, and action as the “dynamic and dialectical movement between ‘doing’ and ‘reflecting on doing’” (Freire 2000a, 43).

Critical education requires teaching and understanding multiple perspectives and engaged pluralism. There are various methods for producing knowledge and multiple perspectives on similar events, and therefore multiple realities (Kincheloe 2008). In order to navigate the inherent diversity of ideas and people in the world, students must learn the importance of understanding multiple perspectives. Valuing diversity is best practiced and developed through engaged pluralism, or the active engagement with diversity that moves beyond tolerance to a commitment to learn from one another, communicate, and relate to the larger world around us (hooks 2003; Talvacchia 2003).

Finally, critical pedagogy requires that theory move into practice and action. If the main concern of critical pedagogy is to create a more just world, it inherently requires practice and action. Praxis is reflection and practice that together transform reality (Freire 2000b). This synergy between theory and practice is what “elevates both scholarship and transformative action” moving beyond traditional theory that is not intimately connected to reality (Kincheloe 2008, 12).

You may already see the connections between critical theory, community organizing, and the dialogues of spiritual and civic development, such as shared democratic values, authenticity, relationship and community, hope and imagination, meaningful engagement with “other,” open engagement with alternative ideas, and complexity which we have previously explored. These connections place critical theory

as a springboard, providing a theoretical and pedagogical frame from which to launch into the practice of community organizing towards integrated spiritual-civic development in higher education.

Following is a table that arranges the core concepts of critical pedagogy in a way that illustrates their foundational relationship to the community-based practice and philosophy of community organizing (see Table 4.1). The final column of the table indicates how this relationship begins to undergird the integration of spiritual-civic development in higher education.

Table 5.1. Similarities amongst Core Concepts within Critical Pedagogy, Community Organizing, and the Spiritual-Civic Development Model

Themes	Critical Pedagogy	Community Organizing	Spiritual-Civic Development
Knowledge comes from the people and community	Developed in community, knowledge is subjective, complex, interconnected, and fluid as it is derived from human interpretation, lived experience, power analysis, and culture	Social knowledge and practical wisdom are learned through life experiences and constructed within relationships and community	Relationships and community as the developmental context
A collaborative, constructive approach that engages "other" and transcends hierarchy	Student and teachers work together as collaborators to engage multiple perspectives, critically analyze knowledge, and construct new meanings	Broad-based, bi-partisan approach to developing leadership and civic agency that engages different people and ideas	Openness to and meaningful engagement with different people and ideas
Democratic values	Social justice orientation and use of democratic pedagogy	Collective democratic values	Explicit personal values tested against collective democratic values
Guided by Hope	Hope that change is possible, because suffering is a human construction and therefore can be deconstructed	Hope that change is possible, because humans construct the world as it is, and can change it to be the world as it should be	An orientation of love, compassion, and hope
Evaluation through critical thinking, reflection, and power analysis	Education is inherently political and ideological, and requires critical thinking about assumed truths, reflection on experiences and knowledge, and power analysis	Builds power among everyday citizens, and uses critical thinking, reflection, and evaluation to analyze issues, power, and actions	Comprehension of complexity and paradox, and the ability to constructively engage with these tensions
Action-oriented	Movement from theory to practice and action in order to address injustice	Direct action in order to cause a strategic reaction	Agential transformation and civic efficacy

The Community Organizing Learning Model for Spiritual-Civic Development

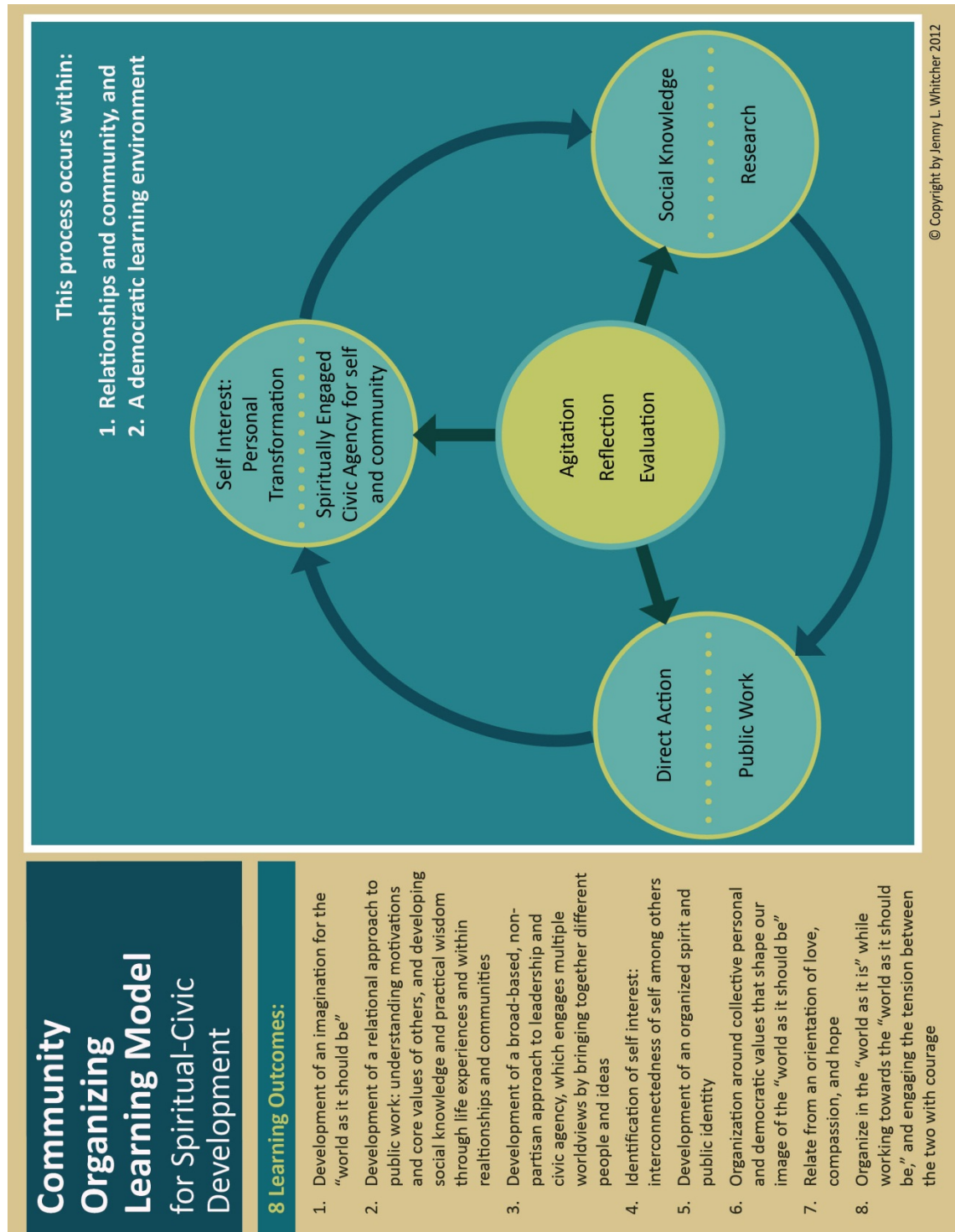
Ed Chambers identifies the practice of community organizing as “the trilogy: research, action, and evaluation” (2003, ch. 5). He also states that, “action is the middle term in a three-part formula, sandwiched between moments of hard reflection. The intentional discipline of IAF organizing requires that public actions begin and end in reflection” (15). I have also added reflection as the first step to the community organizing “formula,” as the critical and foundational step necessary for using a community organizing method in higher education towards the goal of student spiritual-civic development.

Framed on a foundation of critical pedagogy, the resulting continuous cycle of community organizing undergirds the Spiritual-Civic Development Model in order to support the construction of the Community Organizing Learning (COL) Model for Spiritual-Civic Development (see diagram 4.3). Within the COL Model, the outer ring of three light blue circles represents each step of the process, and the inner green circle indicates the axis around which the process moves—no learning or development occurs without continual reflection, evaluation, and agitation. Agitation is an acute form of reflection and evaluation used throughout the learning cycle when it becomes necessary to move students into deeper development or beyond moments of resistance or unaccountability.

The learning cycle starts with personal reflection and evaluation in order to begin the development and articulation of self interest (self among other). Next, students engage in research to develop social knowledge, followed by a period of reflection and evaluation. Students then move their evaluated social knowledge and accompanying

relationships into action through the co-creation of public work. Finally, another moment of reflection and evaluation leads to a deepening of self interest in which students gain explicit understanding of the spiritually engaged civic agency they have developed and practiced throughout the learning cycle. Building on their new understanding and skills, students continue to rotate through the cycle, deepening spiritual-civic development with each turn. A blue box encompassing the learning cycle indicates the necessary context for this process: relationships, community, and a democratic learning environment. Finally, the diagram articulates eight spiritual-civic learning outcomes constructed from the eight development outcomes of the Spiritual-Civic Development Model.

Diagram 5.2. Community Organizing Learning Model for Spiritual-Civic Development



Community-tested philosophy and practices of the community organizing method illuminate each stage of the COL Model in the following sections. In order to encourage the reader's imagination for application of the COL Model in higher education, I weave in illustrative teaching strategies and insights from my practice of implementing a community organizing method in higher education. The narrative description that follows is organized into the four large circles of the diagram: the three stages of the process (self interest for transformation, research for social knowledge, direct action for public work) and agitation as a unique community organizing reflection method. Reflection and evaluation weave throughout the narrative as they apply to the three learning stages. Finally, at the end of each sub-section I outline the *primary* learning outcomes that particularly apply to each stage of the learning model. However, all eight learning outcomes should be understood as interacting throughout the entire learning model.

Self Interest for Transformation: The first step of the COL Model is reflection towards the development of one's self-interest—or motivational understanding of the self among other. Community organizing is founded on self interest, and the cultivation of personal core values that can be translated into collective core values. When a group of citizens comes together around collective core values they can organize.

Self interest is placed in the middle of a spectrum ranging from selfless to selfish. Many of those committed to community-based work and social justice fall towards the self-less end of the spectrum, giving themselves away in time, money, and energy until they are depleted and burnt out. This is not a sustainable civic model. At the other extreme, the selfish end of the spectrum harbors greed, hyper-individualism, and

disregard for others. Ignoring a larger sense of interconnectedness, selfishness is a space of spiritual and civic recession. In contrast to either extreme, self interest is a healthier, sustainable space for spiritual and civic development of self and community. Outside of community organizing, this concept may be more commonly and broadly understood as “enlightened self interest.”¹⁰⁵

Before a student can truly begin organizing with others, he/she must first start to develop an “organized spirit,” as the “first revolution is internal” (Alinsky [1971] 1989). Organizers describe this reflective process as the development of one’s core self interest: identifying core values, experiences, and relationships that make you who you are, and are part of your motivational “story.” This story must also connect to the stories of others, representing kinship to the human condition and belonging through relationships and community built on shared values and experiences. As students find connection with others through their authentic story, they also learn to relate to others from an orientation of love, compassion, and hope. Love and compassion for those who have experienced violations of their values and for their community of belonging, and hope for their shared future. In contrast, a lack such connection through meaningful relationships and community can generate apathy, fear, and despair—disorganization.

A student’s core self interest is often tied to experiences of violations of his/her core values—what makes us angry—and it may also relate to aspects and lived experiences of our identity(ies). As discussed earlier, some students may not have experience with identifying and critically evaluating their implicit values in order to

¹⁰⁵ Enlightened self interest motivates one to strengthen the overall system that protects one’s welfare, as opposed to selfishness (Levine 2007, 7).

consciously hold explicit core values. As such, asking students the question: “What makes you angry?” can help them to identify implicit core values. Anger is a powerful emotion, and for organizers “cold anger” is the animating motivation for self interest (Rogers 1990). When an individual or community is able to cool down their red hot anger in response to a violation of their values, “cold anger” can become a powerfully effective tool for addressing injustice (Rogers 1990). While red hot anger blurs one’s vision, judgment, and action, cold anger redirects that energy towards powerful action for positive social change. For students who may be uncomfortable with anger—or out of touch with anger they may have suppressed—alternative questions can also start to draw out self interest: What is your core motivation? When have you felt the most/least powerful, why did you feel that way, and what caused it? What motivates you to work with your community?

The organizing tradition is a philosophical tradition, pulling from the wisdom of various people, histories, and cultures. One of the primary wisdoms of humanity is the age-old axiom, “know thyself.”¹⁰⁶ This first reflection is the start of transformation, an effort to develop an authentic spiritual-civic identity and purpose. As with the development of authentic and civic identities discussed earlier, self interest encompasses both a stability and flexibility, it is a place of strength and transformation. As students go on through the various stages of life, they will encounter new people and experiences, which may affect and transform their core self interest.

¹⁰⁶ Attributed to Socrates.

For example, as a woman I have experienced violations of my values, including the value of equality. Because of my personal experiences with unequal treatment, I am angry at such injustice and motivated not just to fight for my rights, and not only for women's equality, but to address issues of inequality for all oppressed groups. My core self interest is the equal treatment of self and others, and it is why I work to develop spiritually engaged civic agents in diverse communities, because I cannot do this work alone—it will take the work of many.

As an educator, my self interest is not just about *what* work I do, but also *how* I approach it. Self interest is one of several reasons I intentionally recruit a diverse community of students into the classes I teach and the civic development programs I have managed in the past. For example, the application for the Puksta Scholars Program is designed to challenge traditional structures of student evaluation that reproduce oppressive social hierarchies, which distribute capital—in this case economic capital emerging from scholarship monies that supports college access and civic development—to those already able to decipher the codes and navigate the dominant system (Bourdieu and Passeron 2000).¹⁰⁷

One way this is accomplished is by using the application to draw out self interest, by asking students to share who they are, what they believe, and how they think about the world around them, *not* what they've accomplished in high school. Not every student has equal opportunity to get involved with the after school activities that often qualify students for scholarships. Some high school seniors must maintain after school jobs in

¹⁰⁷ See "Appendix C: 2012 DU Puksta Scholars Program Application"

order to financially support themselves and/or their family, or take care of siblings while their parents work instead of engaging after-school leadership opportunities or regular community service. These students, who may not fit traditional value assessments for civic leadership potential, are equally deserving of the opportunity for spiritual-civic development in college. I also work to create intentionally diverse communities of students because it creates more democratic learning environments for all students, particularly as meaningful engagement with “other” is a necessary component for deep civic-spiritual learning.

The development of self interest, and particularly the critical evaluation of implicit values and those life experiences that help shape our values, is a critical first step for student spiritual-civic development. It not only directs student civic efforts towards more sustainable, longer-term, and meaningful relationships and community-based work, it can provide meaningful support as students develop their young adult identity(ies) in the new college environment. Self interest development can also support students in the identification of an authentically appropriate major, graduate school, first job out of college, career, and life goals.

For some, a core self interest may be static over many years or even a lifetime, but it is important to note that it is a fluid and developmental concept because it reacts to life experiences, just as our spiritual and civic lives are fluid. I have mentored several students through the process of self interest development. After identifying their core self interest, students find a sense of confidence, energy, and peace—even amongst challenge. Students who can articulate a core motivating self interest find a sense of direction, the

emergence of a path to follow that aligns with their core values, where before they felt rudderless, unmotivated, unsure of who they were and where they were going. While I guide students through this self interest development process, I do not see self interest itself as the end goal. Instead, I remind them that it is a developmental process, and suggest they move forward with confidence, and also with openness to new information, understanding, and direction as they go. Students, if not all of us, want nothing more than to be able to say, “I am.” I am a pre-med major, I am an actor, I am a lawyer... The function of “I am,” is about existence, identity, and the ability to relate to others, but it can often be identity narrowly prescribed. Balancing this need for identity with openness to growth and potential change is important for ongoing spiritual-civic development. Identifying and articulating a core self interest challenges students to know who they are spiritually, and to connect that with who they are publically and civically, creating authentic and integrated spiritual and civic identities.

The real world is a sea of varying and conflicting self interests—both core self interests and issue-specific self interests. Negotiations are not always clean, but these are also tensions, ambiguities, and realities that students can learn to navigate. To start this process organizers learn to identify their own self interests and those of others by focusing on values, motivations, and understanding one’s worldview of who they are and who they are in relation to others. This is a key piece that is often missing in the Civic Engagement Movement. College students need facilitation and mentorship around identifying their own core values, beliefs, and understandings about the world, and should engage in this process while in concert with learning and understanding the

different (not wrong) worldviews of others—those who comprise community and the citizenry.

Learning Outcome Guidepost: Self Interest for Transformation

- Identification of self interest: interconnectedness of self among other
- Development of an organized spirit and public identity
- Relate from an orientation of love, compassion, and hope

Research for Social Knowledge: The next step in the community organizing process is research, or the effort to develop “social knowledge,” or practical wisdom based on life experience and engagement with others (Chambers 2003, 16). This phase of the learning model demands a new epistemology within higher education, a more democratic epistemology that genuinely values multiple ways of knowing and the inherent knowledge of communities. In particular, social knowledge—*phronesis* in the Greek—is the practical wisdom gained from experience and relationships that results in a political wisdom, which is inaccessible from the traditional, isolated, and objective knowledge of the academy—*theoria* or theory (Chambers 2003, 16; Saltmarsh and Hartley 2011, ix). The ancient Greek teacher and rhetorician Isocrates identified such political wisdom as an ability to “distinguish between wise and unwise actions” based on the “capacity to weigh possible course of action against what is most important to people and then arrive at sound judgments” (Saltmarsh and Hartley 2011, ix).

An organizer starts research by building public relationships through the practice of one-to-ones, or directed relational meetings. Academics might frame this part of the organizing process as community-based research. While the structure and goals may be

different, the concept is similar in that organizing research aims at learning from the people, rather than from an expert. The goal of a one-to-one is to uncover the core motivations of another person, to learn what they value, to build a public relationship based on these understandings, and ultimately to decide whether you can work with the other person in a public and civic context.

A one-to-one is not a passive or casual effort; it is a probing interest in uncovering and understanding another person's truths. These relational meetings are about "one organized spirit going after another person's spirit for connection, confrontation, and an exchange of talent and energy" (Chambers 2003, 44). One-to-ones are a foreign concept to most college students today who primarily communicate electronically through text messaging and Facebook. Sitting down with another person, alone, face-to-face, to learn about who they are at the core level—and to care about who they are while you are actively listening—is a valuable public skill that many young people do not practice and may have not experienced. Through relational meetings students are able to learn how to work with difference, truly work *with* others (and not *for* others), and navigate current cultures and co-create new cultures (Levine 2007).

Service-learning, civic engagement, and leadership studies scholars agree that learning how to work with difference is imperative for success in the globalized world (Boyte 2008b; Brookfield 1987, 2005a, 2005b; Butin 2010; Colby 2007; Daloz Parks 2000; Jacoby 2009; Levine 2007; Preskill and Brookfield 2008). Community organizing understands that relationships with those who are different create the fabric of public life and the power behind organized people (Chambers 2003). Such relationships draw us

away from the current cultural illness of hyper-individualism towards a more balanced individual identity that effects, and is affected by, a synergy with the greater community.

Both organizers and academics also identify culture as a major concept that must be negotiated by civic leaders and these navigational skills taught to students. Cultures are important because they are creations of the people that shape the world in which we live by creating common understandings of what is valuable, how things work, who has power, and who doesn't have power. Students need to learn to identify, understand, and navigate cultural patterns that affect the social change process. Ultimately, one-to-ones are a relational skill for effective engagement with the "world as it is."

Through engagement with "other," students build cultural capacity and learn about differing worldviews, and ultimately come to an understanding that there is no one objective truth, but many truths (Jacoby 2009). In order to effectively operate in public space, students must learn to maintain open-endedness (Levine 2007), or what community organizers would understand as non-ideological, non-partisan politics (Chambers 2003). In the community organizing tradition, communities organize around collective values, not issues. By focusing on building relationships and a broad-based organization, organizers remain non-ideological and non-partisan in nature. Most often, political moderates make up the bulk of an organizing affiliate—not liberal progressives as one might imagine (Chambers 2003; Gecan 2004). These non-ideological political moderates are everyday people who come together around collective values and relationships to discuss what needs to change in their communities.

Values-based relationships are often forged over the sharing of meaningful stories,¹⁰⁸ stories of lived experiences that speak to common threads of human wisdom. “Telling personal stories that are connected to our hurts and our hopes, done in a well-designed and disciplined community of discourse, can help empower us to act” (Palmer, Zajonc, and Scribner 2010, 149). Part of this process is what Palmer describes as the natural deepening of relationships that occurs through storytelling when “the more one knows about another person’s story, the less one is able to dislike or distrust, let alone despise, that person” (2010, 139). Storytelling helps us bridge otherness to see one another’s humanness as part of the broader community of interconnected humanity. Storytelling also helps us to reflect on our own values, and to re-vision what we hold to be true and ethical when our experiential knowledge is broadened through the stories and truths of others.

As a conversational strategy, storytelling communicates information that is familiar to community organizers, but less prominent in the academy. Learning what is important to other people in your community is the starting place and foundational research for civic action. Efforts that work to eliminate isolation and alienation while promoting relationships and community, particularly across difference, will naturally create a greater sense of interconnectedness.

One-to-one relational meetings that build relationships and collect research about the values, interests, motivations, skills, and meaningful stories and truths of a community can organize a community. Students might bring these relationships together

¹⁰⁸ Storytelling is also a primary method of teaching and meaning-making within religious traditions, such as Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism.

at a house meeting of diverse people the students have determined—through one-to-one relational meetings—they can work with to create collective core values. During a house meeting the group publically discusses what is important to them about their community and why, which leads to the identification of collective values and the beginning of imaging the “world as it should be” according to those collective values. Discussion also includes raising problems in their community—violations of collective values. Problems are then broken down into actionable issues that are finite and measurable. The community may determine that more research is necessary to understand the issue and its root causes before they move to action. Additional research might include power mapping the issue—identifying stakeholders—then organizing one-to-ones with each stakeholder. At the end of each one-to-one meeting, organizers ask for the names and contact information of others with whom they should talk, expanding the research circle and power map.

A major aspect of research for social knowledge is identifying power. In community organizing, power is value neutral—neither good, nor bad. It is simply the ability to act (Alinsky [1971] 1989; Chambers 2003). Organizers research where power is in the community—who has the ability to take action or wield authority on the issue—and work to build power through organized people and organized money (Alinsky [1971] 1989; Chambers 2003; Gecan 2004). There is an additional, more modern source of power that is ignored by most authors within the community organizing literature, and that power is organized media. Media can function to change culture, effecting both institutional cultures and broader society through education and the power of knowledge

which ignites action (Boyte 2008b; and Bretherton 2010a; 2010b). The power of the media became visibly evident during the Arab Spring, a revolutionary movement across the Arab world. In unprecedented fashion social media has not only documented the revolution, but more importantly, social media served as a communication and organizing tool, which instigated and sustained revolutionary campaigns with the power to topple regimes.¹⁰⁹ Media created both by institutions and everyday citizens has the power to change institutions and cultures as a tool of cultural capacity—the ability to understand and create culture. Both the institutional world and community organizing literature tend to ignore the real possibility of change within cultures and institutions. A cultural lens focused on the power of knowledge and media challenges the traditional two-dimensional understanding of power as only organized people and money. Identifying and organizing power—people, money, *and* media—is part of the research phase of the Community Organizing Learning Model.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ In early 2011, popular revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt overthrew Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and led to the resignation of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Later the same year, a civil war broke out in Libya, in which Libyan rebel forces supported by the international community eventually captured and killed Libyan government leader Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi and established a new interim government.

¹¹⁰ Harry Boyte, conversation with author, 23 Sept. 2011.

Learning Outcome Guidepost: Research for Social Knowledge

- Development of a relational approach to public work: understanding motivations and core values of others, and development social knowledge and practical wisdom through life experiences and within relationships and communities
- Development of a broad-based, non-partisan approach to leadership and civic agency, which engages multiple worldviews by bringing together different people and ideas
- Organization around collective personal and democratic values that shape our image of the “world as it should be”
- Development of an imagination for the “world as it should be”

Direct Action for Public Work: In community organizing, the research phase eventually moves into reflection, a thoughtful and critical evaluation of the social knowledge collected, which leads to the development of a strategic action plan—or campaign—that answers the question: What actions would cause the appropriate reaction to address our issue? For many activists today, action is the end to itself—a protest. However, in community organizing a public action is the means to the end—the reaction. A campaign is strategically comprised of multiple public actions, addressing an issue that is a part of a larger problem. It is in this breaking down of a larger problem into manageable issues that allows organizers to address major structural and systemic injustices. (Alinsky [1971] 1989)

Both scholars and organizers emphasize the importance of action in civic engagement. The difference is that much of the “action” in higher education is conversation for learning purposes, or volunteer efforts disguised as social change efforts,

which are not systemic, nor effective in changing the status quo. Community organizing on the other hand is very specific about action, “it’s when more than one person, focused on a specific issue, engages a person in power directly responsible for that issue, for the purpose of getting a reaction” (Gecan 2004, 51). There is great strategy behind actions, all in an effort to create a reaction, a change to the status quo. In higher education, faculty often focus on what the students or community will learn as a result of, or through the process of action. Learning is important, and deep civic learning occurs within direct action that builds civic efficacy by actually addressing critical community issues and increasing students’ perceived and actual ability to cause an intended impact, or reaction.

For community organizers, action is directly related to power. Action is particularly about relational power, which includes the interests of others, rather than unilateral power, which only represents its own agenda (Chambers 2003). Relational power unifies the community, whereas unilateral power is limiting and divisive. “As you become more powerful, so do those in relationship with you. As they become more powerful, so do you. This is power understood as relational, as power *with*, not *over*” (Chambers 2003, 28). The relational nature of power works with love.

Richard Niebuhr had it right: ‘Power without love is tyranny, and love without power is sentimentality.’ In power and love, the interests of both parties matter. To power and love well is to respect the other and the self. (31)

Taking power—organized people, money, and media—to those in power is a confrontation of love, not apathy or hate. A direct action personalizes and polarizes an issue in order to get a reaction. Personalizing simply means selecting a specific and appropriate target, someone to focus attention on who has the power to address the issue

of concern. Organizers understand “targets” as public figures who may disagree with you one day and be with you another day—disagreement is not personal, it is public (2003). Polarizing is about creating tension around the issue and an expectation of a *positive* reaction from the target. Personalizing and polarizing essentially bring the need for change to the attention of those in power to make the change, and provides an option for how to make the change, or intended reaction. These techniques of direct action can sometimes be uncomfortable, full of tension and complexity, but to be clear “personalizing is not demonizing, and polarizing is not coercing” (85).

Direct action strategies of community organizing challenge long-held virtues of academic neutrality in higher education.¹¹¹ However, scholars of the spiritual and civic development movements are increasingly calling for higher education to have a “soul and role” when it comes to student development, community engagement, and fulfillment of higher education’s civic mission (Palmer, Zajonc, and Scribner 2010; Saltmarsh and Hartley 2011).¹¹² Within the Community Organizing Learning Model, faculty who invite students to engage in direct action would also be inviting students to engage in the prior phases of self interest development and research for social knowledge. Facilitating students to move through the full learning model builds student civic agency in which

¹¹¹ For example, The Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities identifies “academic neutrality” as one of seven characteristics of an “engaged institution,” and further describes, “Some of our engagement activities will involve contentious issues—whether they draw on our science and technology, social science expertise, or strengths in the visual and performing arts. Do pesticides contribute to fish kills? If so, how? How does access to high quality public schools relate to economic development in minority communities? Is student ‘guerrilla theater’ justified in local landlord-tenant disputes. These questions often have profound social, economic, and political consequences. The question we need to ask ourselves here is whether outreach maintains the university in the role of neutral facilitator and source of information when public policy issues, particularly contentious ones, are at stake” (1999, 12).

¹¹² “Soul and role” is a phrase attributed Parker Palmer (2004).

students are identifying and defining their own beliefs, values, and actions—not receiving indoctrination from faculty on values or issues.

In community organizing, action is immediately followed by reflection and evaluation. Chambers describes evaluations as organizing’s “school of higher learning. No undigested happenings allowed” (2003, 87). One way to facilitate reflection with students is to start with a brief check-in, asking students to go around the room and say one word that describes how they feel. From this emotional check-in, a teacher or student facilitator can get a sense of the emotional temperature of the room, which provides insight for facilitation of the full reflection and evaluation. Reflection turns into evaluation and critical analysis of performance and behaviors on all sides of the action. The full process should both evaluate emotions (How do I feel? How do they feel?) and actual performance (How did we do? How did they do?)—which may not always align. An evaluation should also identify the current political and relational status of the organizing group as a result of the public action. Understanding one’s political and relational status includes asking questions such as: What new or potential relationships did we create—what doors did we open? What relationships did we damage—what doors have potentially closed (for the time being)?¹¹³

The evaluation of the action becomes social knowledge that can build on earlier research in order to strategically restart the organizing cycle with reflection on the current situation and decision as to whether new information is needed to move forward: what do we know now? How does that affect our goals and strategy? What information and power

¹¹³ “In organizing there are no permanent allies and no permanent enemies” (Chambers, 84).

do we need to move forward? The organizing cycle restarts from this reflection, launching into another research phase to prepare for the next action, and so-on.

The purpose of the community organizing process is to create public work, develop civic agency, and achieve direct representation. Organizing leads to the creation of public work which involves everyday people working together to engage with difference, disagreement, and tension, in order to create and produce our culture, community, and world—rather than relinquishing our agency to those in elected or appointed positions of power (Boyte 2008b). Public work is accomplished in everyday environments often occurring in local organizations and community associations, and is not limited to the formal structures of governance such as city hall or the court (Boyte 2008b).

Organizing is not just about taking action on community interests and issues, but is also about developing civic agency. Organizers develop leadership amongst the people so that they can act on their collective values and interests. These are the people who make up the civic fabric of democracy. When people participate in collective research, action, reflection, and evaluation they create social capital, which increases power and agency (Chambers 2003, 70). “Developing our politicalness requires that we know and value what it means to have power, and that means developing the head, the heart, and the gut” (Chambers 2003, 70). Developing the head, the heart, and the gut is developing spiritually engaged civic agents.

Learning Outcome Guidepost: Direct Action for Public Work

- Development of an imagination for the “world as it should be”
- Development of a broad-based, non-partisan approach to leadership and civic agency, which engages multiple worldviews by bringing together different people and ideas
- Organize in the “world as it is” while working towards the “world as it should be,” and engaging the tension between the two with courage

Agitation: Our motivations for civic agency emerge from the tensions and anger we experience when our core values are violated, when we see and experience injustice, when we feel prevented from making decisions that align with our core values, and when we are constantly faced with the pain of living in the “world as it is” rather than the peace of the “world as it should be.” In this tension we might get stuck, lose faith in our own abilities, lose authenticity, or just take the easy way out. Agitation is the tool to get through these moments in life. “Organizers agitate people to act on their values and interests in the world as it should be” (Chambers 2003, 107).

In the spiritual-civic development context, agitation is a useful strategy to facilitate deep critical reflection and evaluation within individual students (mentor relationships) and communities of students (classroom environments). The role of the “agitator” is fairly simple, deep listening combined with Socratic questioning (Alinsky [1971] 1989). An agitator holds up a mirror to help the other person critically reflect. One of the easiest ways to do this is to simply ask the question, “why?” Why did you feel that way? Why do you think that happened? Why do you think this is your responsibility? Why else? The person being agitated with often put up walls, excuses or ways to avoid

being honest with him/herself. In response, an agitator pushes that person to move beyond excuses, or the mind-closing practice of responding with “I don’t know.” Sometimes suggesting to someone, “You may not be able to know for certain, but what do you think might be some reasons? Take some guesses; you don’t have to be right.” can move someone around the mental block of “I don’t know.” The purpose is to facilitate critical thinking that moves below the surface level.

Engaging the process of agitation can lead someone deeper into their core self interest by helping them make sense of those experiences of injustice in their life that have shaped their worldview and core values as they relate to living in community with others. The deeply reflective process may help them uncover their true motivations for how they want to live their life and be a part of their community, and support deep spiritual-civic development by moving through the Community Organizing Learning Model. Some of these motivations may stem from painful stories of injustice, and this requires compassionate, deep listening on the part of the agitator and the ability to help the other person tease out the meaning of the experience, rather than focus on the trauma of what happened.

Agitation is an art form, a honed skill of probing and challenging a person to be their true self. It is an opportunity to hold someone accountable to their beliefs and values, to who they say they are or who they say they want to be—not who *you* want them to be. It might be about calling into view a disparity between that person’s espoused core values and how they have been acting, or not acting in relation to those values. Often agitation is about breaking down the walls we each construct as a mechanism to distance

ourselves from our own truths. These walls also serve as protection against others finding out who we really are, where we hurt, and what makes us feel vulnerable. In this sense, agitation identifies vulnerabilities so that strength may build around them.

There are some important rules about agitation. It is never used to direct anger towards or attack another person, nor to cause them public embarrassment. In stark contrast, agitation is a way of loving someone. It can only be done within the context of a meaningful relationship, and out of love and concern for the other person.

Agitation can be uncomfortable; it shines a mirror into our dark places, and holds us accountable to our own truths when we are trying to hide from them. In addition, agitation can sometimes be an emotionally intense experience, and may not end in a tidy “aha” moment. Instead, it may be the start of further critical reflection. Ultimately, agitation is a very deep form of critical reflection about the self, and is meant to help the other person uncover who they are and what their core self interest.

Critical reflection and agitation are ways that we challenge one another—both on our personal and collective truths—in an effort to find meaning. They are tools of spiritual-civic development that require love, compassion, and hope as we stand open, vulnerable to discovering our truths, and ready to take action around what we learn about self and other.

Learning Outcome Guidepost: Agitation

- Development of an organized spirit and public identity
- Relate from an orientation of love, compassion, and hope
- Identification of self interest: interconnectedness of self among others

Addressing the Critical Gaps within Current Civic Engagement Efforts

The benefit of the Community Organizing Model for Spiritual-Civic Development is that it addresses critical gaps within current civic engagement efforts. Most civic engagement efforts organize around issues, often resulting in short-term interest and engagement of students who are regularly exposed to new ideas within the university context, and therefore habituated to continually change their interests and direction. In contrast, the community organizing method organizes around core values and motivations, reaching deeper into long-term and even lifelong self interests and resulting in longer-term and lifelong engagement.

Community organizing is also relational, challenging students to build public relationships with both those like them and those who are different, or with whom they disagree. While traditional civic engagement efforts might emphasize diversity in theory or words, rarely do these efforts give students the framework and skills to effectively engage with “other” around public matters. Leaders in the Civic Engagement Movement note that “diversity efforts have too often remained divorced from civic engagement efforts. But it is not clear what efforts might profitably be advanced to address this fragmentation” (Saltmarsh and Hartley 2011, 6). Similarly, related social justice efforts that encourage students to become activists rarely teach students how to work across difference and disagreement. In practice, activism often means acting out against others—not working with them. Such “protest politics” are ineffective, polarizing difference and leading to good-bad dichotomies that pit sides against each other, ultimately other creating enemies, not collaborative citizens for public work.

Also in contrast to contemporary activism and protest politics, community organizing holds a different view on civic agency as it relates to means versus ends. While many activists are concerned with the purity of their means at the sacrifice of their ends, organizing is first concerned with ends and then with means. For organizers, an orientation towards prioritizing end results means compromise—even with those who meet your ends for the wrong reasons. Activists might understand such a results-oriented worldview as a compromise of one's values. Ironically, organizers see activists in similar light—getting caught up in the process at the expense of change and action is a compromise of one's values and goals (Alinsky [1971] 1989; Chambers 2003). This is just one example of the grounding in reality that community organizing brings to the Civic Engagement Movement.

One of the greatest values of the community organizing method is that it is based in reality, the reality that sometimes right things happen for wrong reasons, and wrong things happen for right reasons. Teaching students to engage with the world as it is from a critical perspective about power and self interest is far more effective in building civic agency and its related public skills, than teaching students to operate from the world as it should be. So many of our civic engagement efforts are oriented around highly distilled theories of social justice and democracy. These theories are too removed from real-world practice, and are based on unreal idealizations of democracy where everyone has an equal say and everyone participates. This kind of civic orientation may coddle students into operating through heavily tinted, rose-colored glasses. In theory, this frame is quite comforting, in practice, it is destructive. Organizers operate in the world as it is, filled

with complexity and paradox, while moving towards the world as it should be (Alinsky [1971] 1989; Chambers 2003). Activists operate from a fantastical worldview—the world as it should be, and encounter discomfort with complexity and paradox, as well as those who do not share the same values-based worldview.

When students go out to practice civic agency from a worldview of the “world as it should be,” they may be abruptly slapped in the face by unequal power structures, people who don’t share similar worldviews and self interests, and leadership who are not interested in what the community wants if it is in contradiction to their own self interests. It is a demoralizing, disempowering, and disengaging experience. All of the wonderful ideals students are taught about democracy, civic engagement, and social change are not the reality of how the world currently operates; they are ideals of the world as it *should be*. Additionally, all of the “safe space” that prevents engagement with tension and the emotionally and spiritually detached dialogue we’ve created on campus for the purpose of teaching students these ideals do not actually exist in the public realm—it can be created, but it does not exist as part of the general environment.¹¹⁴

I value such democratic ideals, safe space, and intellectually rigorous dialogue, but my difficulty with this part of academic culture is that it creates an artificial

¹¹⁴ Safe space is used in various ways, but here I am referencing its use in the classroom or other group environments as a way to make students feel comfortable so that they can share without fear of reproach. In theory, I support the mutual agreement of participants to create a respectful and free space where various identities, ideas, and beliefs can be expressed and shared without fear. In practice, free space can serve to silent non-dominant and non-justice-oriented identities, ideas, and beliefs. This happens because the ideal of respect is turned into respect for a particular way of thinking, rather than respect for broader diversity that also requires intentional and meaningful engagement around our differences. As a result, free space does not encourage deeper exploration of difference because it attempts to avoid tension and engagement that is discomforting for participants—engagement that does not feel safe. From a community organizing perspective, tension is the moment of change and learning, it is something to value and to intentionally insert into your work and learning, not something to be avoided.

environment that is quite different from the world as it is—an artificial environment from which we are attempting to develop civic agents. At the very least, we should be intentionally clear with students about the differences in campus and community environments. At our best, we should adjust our teaching practices to prepare students for the real world of civic discourse, collaboration, and action, as well as the real connection between ambiguity, doubt, despair, and spiritual-civic development. Although well intentioned, insulating students limits their intellectual, civic, and spiritual development. To be successful students need to have strength and authenticity of personal and civic identity, courage, cultural capacity, public and relational skills, and a true understanding and ability to constructively engage with the tensions of complexity and paradox. From the start, students need to understand the difference between “the world as it is” and “the world as it should be,” and they need to be able to exist in and engage with the tension-laden space between these two worlds.

Sustaining Change over Time in the Face of Resistance

The capacity to sustain long-term spiritually engaged civic agency and public work rests on the spiritual-civic community organizing process itself. As individuals and communities mature as spiritually engaged civic agents, they also gain strength and capacity to sustain change over time and in the face of resistance. Once again, as with the Spiritual Civic Development Model, the Community Organizing Learning Model most closely aligns with the research study presented in the book *Common Fire: Leading Lives of Commitment in a Complex World* (Parks Daloz et al. 1996). This study of adults who demonstrate long-term commitment to the common good identified five “habits of mind,”

or practices that support commitment in the face of “diversity, complexity, and ambiguity” by fostering “humane, intelligent, and constructive responses” (108). Below is the list of five “habits of mind” from the study (108), followed by sub-bulleted corresponding and supporting learning outcomes from the Community Organizing Learning Model for Spiritual-Civic Development.

- 1) Dialogue, grounded in the understanding that meaning is constructed through ongoing interaction between oneself and others
 - Development of a relational approach to public work: understanding motivations and core values of others, and developing social knowledge and practical wisdom through life experiences and within relationships and communities
 - Development of a broad-based, non-partisan approach to leadership and civic agency, which engages multiple worldviews by bringing together different people and ideas
- 2) Interpersonal Perspective-Taking, the ability to see through the eyes and respond to the feelings and concerns of the other
 - Relate from an orientation of love, compassion, and hope
 - Identification of self interest: interconnectedness of self among others
 - Development of a relational approach to public work: understanding motivations and core values of others, and developing social knowledge and practical wisdom through life experiences and within relationships and communities
 - Development of a broad-based, non-partisan approach to leadership and civic agency, which engages multiple worldviews by bringing together different people and ideas
- 3) Critical, Systemic Thought, the capacity to identify parts and the connections among them as coherent patterns, and to reflect evaluatively on them
 - Development of an imagination for the “world as it should be”
 - Development of a relational approach to public work: understanding motivations and core values of others, and developing social knowledge and practical wisdom through life experiences and within relationships and communities

- Development of a broad-based, non-partisan approach to leadership and civic agency, which engages multiple worldviews by bringing together different people and ideas
 - Organize in the “world as it is” while working towards the “world as it should be,” and engaging the tension between the two with courage
- 4) Dialectical Thought, the ability to recognize and work effectively with contradictions by resisting closure or reframing one’s response
- Organize in the “world as it is” while working towards the “world as it should be,” and engaging the tension between the two with courage
- 5) Holistic Thought, the ability to intuit life as an interconnected whole in a way that leads to practical wisdom.
- Identification of self interest: interconnectedness of self among others

There is significant overlap of learning outcomes that support more than one “habit of mind.” This aligns with the description of the practices by Parks Daloz et al., which describe the “habits of mind” as “interrelated and developmentally sequential. Each undergirded by the previous ones” (108). The researchers also note that practices four and five (dialectical and holistic thought) were not found among those in their comparison group:

In this group there was less evidence of systemic awareness and a critical perspective. Some were on the edge of burnout, their loyalty was limited to their immediate constituency; they were locked into a single answer for complex problems; or they simple felt too overwhelmed to grapple with larger issues. (16)

The Community Organizing Learning Model supports the development of the key outcomes of dialectical thought, as the “ability to recognize and work effectively with contradictions (120),” which includes a meaningful value of different points of view (120), and holistic thought as the development of “practical” wisdom that both differentiates and integrates (123). These are skills of the spiritual-civic practice of community organizing, which can be applied in higher education through the inclusion of

spiritual development in our civic engagement efforts. The incorporation of spiritual development addresses the final critical gap within current civic engagement efforts by deepening civic development to teach students how to meaningfully engage complexity, paradox, difference, and diversity, and to value the practical wisdom gained from meaningful relationships and community. In the next chapter, I will discuss further implications of the Community Organizing Learning Model for Spiritual-Civic Development.

Chapter Six: Educating for Civic Agency in Higher Education

I consider myself a civic agent because I have the desire and the commitment to take my personal experience and channel it into something that helps others who are going through that same experience, and to address the system that keeps perpetuating that [injustice]. Three years ago, I was very much inclined to consider my personal experience as this isolated experience that wasn't a result of anything bigger, wasn't systematic, didn't have anything to do with power structures. It was just my life and I could deal with it, but now I feel like I am able to see every experience, day-to-day things, as something that relates to a higher degree of systemic structure. I have a desire to address [injustice] now, because I don't think it should continue. I am angry that it happened to me, and that there are things in place that could have stopped it, or that there are people equipped with the ability to help stop it. I feel that now I am in a place where I have the ability, the privilege, the resources, and the knowledge of who I am to address it. If I am in that place, then I have the responsibility to myself and to others to do so.

— College Student

At a time when colleges and universities are increasingly called upon to be “socially responsive institutions” (Saltmarsh and Hartley 2011, 10), it has become clear that the last thirty years of the Civic Engagement Movement have not adequately fulfilled the original purpose of graduating democratically skilled citizens and strengthening democracy (289). While there is growing engagement “activity” on college and university campuses—service-learning courses, volunteer programs, and campus-community partnership (291-2), these efforts operate within the bounds of the dominant hierarchical and expert-centered culture, structures, epistemology, and pedagogy of

higher education (23). When civic development accommodates such a non-democratic culture, it loses power to authentically develop civic agency. As a result, higher education and the Civic Engagement Movement find themselves at a moment in history when “what is required is a rethinking of the entire enterprise” (292).

An integrated model for spiritual-civic development presents a synergistic process of human development necessary for the deeper work of developing civic agents, and fulfilling higher education’s civic mission. By nature of our humanity, we are all civic and spiritual beings. At our best, we are working with others to create a better world, while also making meaning of self, other, and world. At our worst, we are isolated and destructive, finding no meaning in our life, or the lives of others.

In order to push past the “volunteer-vote” plateau of the Civic Engagement Movement, it will take change—a transformation of how we understand, value, support, and implement spiritual-civic development in higher education. Community organizing is one tool that is effective in supporting such transformation as accessed through the Spiritual-Civic Development and Community Organizing Models. I have presented a practiced-based theory for increasing development of civic agency as part of higher education’s civic mission, however, additional practice and research is necessary. A few recommendations for future work concerning these spiritual-civic development and learning models include:

- Longitudinal research on long-term spiritual-civic development, both during a traditional four-year undergraduate degree cycle, and post-graduation evaluation of alumni;

- Development and implementation of spiritual-civic assessment tools based on the development and learning outcomes of each model; and
- Evaluation of spiritual-civic development efforts with the aim of addressing potential problematics such as: maintaining commitment to inclusivity, supporting student identification and critical development of personal values without threat of indoctrination, and navigation of potentially contentious conversations that bring personal values into public dialogue with the personal values of others as well as collective democratic values.

In addition, there are implications for the implementation of both the Spiritual-Civic Development Model and the Community Organizing Learning Model in higher education.

Following are four suggestions of particular areas for cultural and structural transformation in higher education. These suggestions also address the tensions of engaging spiritual-civic development within what is currently a dominantly inhospitable institutional culture for such work. I do not presume that implementing spiritual-civic development in higher education will be an easy task. For many, it will be uncomfortable and tension-ridden, and in the community organizing tradition, tension is the necessary space of growth and transformation.

The following transformational suggestions are not an exhaustive list. Rather, this is a starting point to support further exploration—discussion, implementation, research, and evaluation—in imagining a new culture of higher education that could authentically support the development of spiritually engaged civic agency for students, staff, faculty, and community. Suggestions of areas for cultural and structural transformation in higher education include:

- 1) Transformation of the spiritual development dialogue in higher education towards increased integration with the civic development dialogue and Civic

Engagement Movement for increased access to campus and curriculum;

- 2) Transformation of religio-political extremism towards inclusive, democratic politics;
- 3) Transformation of the positivist culture and spiritual-civic dis-ease of the academy towards holistic reconciliation; and
- 4) Transformation of higher education through community organizing as a method of democratization.

This chapter discusses these four areas of cultural and structural transformation explaining transformational implications along with suggestions for implementation.

Transforming the Spiritual Development Dialogue in Higher Education

The fields of spiritual and civic development are still in their adolescence. At this moment in history, they are both at transitional and potentially transformational points of finding new focus, new ground, and increased impact and recognition. There is still uncertainty as to the most effective and appropriate structural formation and home for both spiritual and civic development within the larger community and structure of higher education as well as within U.S. culture.

In the last thirty years, higher education has prioritized and given more support to civic development, as identified by: institutional support structures (centers and institutes for civic engagement); national support and organization (Campus Compact, various civic-related conferences and publications; and federal funding through AmeriCorps and community work study financial aid); and university mission and vision statements dedicated to the common good. Spiritual development, on the other hand, while recently experiencing increased interest generally has far less structural support than the Civic

Engagement Movement.¹¹⁵ Often institutional responsibility for the attention to spiritual-religious concerns falls only to campus chaplains, whose work is non-structurally supported by like-minded individual staff and faculty as well as religiously affiliated student organizations. Overall, spiritual concerns do not yet have the same broad-based cultural impact and support within higher education as the Civic Engagement Movement.

The question, then, is how to proceed in the immediate term while the spiritual development field continues on its developmental path. The integration of spiritual-civic development for the purpose of increased civic agency could potentially allow spiritual development to gain legitimate access to campus and classroom—on the coattails of higher education’s civic mission and established Civic Engagement Movement. While this is not my primary concern, it is a consideration for those working in and interested in spiritual development, and not specifically involved or focused on the Civic Engagement Movement—my field and primary audience.

Transforming Religio-Political Extremism

While I have presented a theoretical and practical framework for the meaningful integration of spiritual and civic development in higher education, I also understand that implementation will meet various roadblocks. One of which is the larger socio-cultural understanding about how religion and politics interact, which informs understandings of spirituality and civic engagement in higher education. Over the last ten years since

¹¹⁵ At the institutional level, this is particularly true for secular private and state institutions. Religiously affiliated institutions generally provide more support to spiritual development comparatively; however, at the national level, civic engagement has a larger impact and greater support regardless of institutional affiliation.

September 11th, 2001, mainstream U.S. culture—and the world—has been in the midst of a particular religio-political struggle and possible transformation. Within domestic and international politics and relations, there is a dichotomy of attitudes. On the one hand, we could easily be convinced that religion and spirituality should be kept out of politics, because “value-based” or ideological religious rationale has been used to maintain unjust and unequal law, and to perpetrate global violence. On the other hand, the growing individualism, lack of interconnectedness, and fear-based orientation that have led to meaningless lifestyles, and political and corporate leadership that lack integrity could convince us that politics *should* be connected to spirituality and religion.

We are heading to a tipping point, where both fundamentalist religious ideology and value-less individualism will come into even greater tension. Either we let these two extremes battle it out, or we engage the middle ground to create a new culture of inclusive democratic politics. There are two primary criteria that support existence within the middle space of the spectrum that runs from religious fundamentalism to value-less hyper-individualism:

- 1) A framework that defines spirituality as inherent to our humanness, and religion as one of many valid paths that supports spiritual development; and
- 2) When we engage with the political arena, we do so in dialogue with, and responsibility to, our shared democratic values of our social contract.

The first criterion presents an inclusive definition of spirituality, neither privileging nor oppressing religion, atheism, naturism, or other means of spiritual development. It also maintains the claim that everyone is spiritual in nature, and therefore everyone can engage in spiritual development. Embedded in this line of thought is that no one is

neither completely good, nor completely bad—a dangerous dichotomy from which to view the world. As a society, we cannot continue to imprison, detain, and kill all of the people who we judge are “bad.” Nor can we continue to graduate technically efficient business leaders who are morally blind to their social responsibilities, and the evolution of their own spiritual development. Engaging people in spiritual-civic development fosters pro-social behavior and likely addresses the deep needs of those “bad” individuals by building authentic identity, agency, community, meaning, values, purpose, and the ability to more effectively work with difference and engage the tensions that emerge from the complexity and paradox in our lives and world.

The second criterion holds us accountable to our democratic commitment to one another. In the civic context, I cannot push my personal values onto others if those individual values are in conflict with our shared democratic values of governance by and for the people, responsibility to the common good, equality, justice, liberty, and truth. As a citizen, I have a responsibility to my community and to our larger purpose. Our collective democratic values are the foundation of our social contract: how we have agreed to live with one another, to govern our communities, and protect each other from harm.¹¹⁶

In order to transform the religio-political extremism of the larger U.S.-American culture, higher education can play a critical role. For example, colleges and universities can:

¹¹⁶ Social contract, both between the people and their government, and the people with one another, as defined through the intellectual lineage of: Plato (1984), Thomas Hobbes ([1651] 1996), John Locke ([1690] 1952), Jean-Jacques Rousseau ([1762] 1988), John Rawls (1971), Pierre-Joseph Proudhon ([1851] 2007).

- Create public space where inclusive, democratic dialogue and action can be practiced;
- Publically explore both the tensions and the value of a holistic developmental approach to politics that incorporates our spiritual and civic capacities, and the impact such understandings have on community and campus-based civic engagement;
- Engage campus and community in a recommitment to our collective democratic values through both rhetoric and practice, which would require a priority commitment to social responsibility that is not constricted by the complicity of academic neutrality that violates democratic values;
- Practice the Community Organizing Learning Model, which intentionally brings together people of diverse backgrounds, identities, and beliefs to co-create public work.

These suggestions aim to transform the religio-political extremism of the larger U.S.

American culture, and as follows, the culture of higher education concerning a renewed civic mission as well as the cultural capacity to engage spiritual-civic development work.

Transforming the Positivist Culture and Spiritual-Civic Dis-ease of the Academy

Narrowing from the broader U.S. culture to the culture of higher education, the next potential roadblock to the integration of spirituality and civic development is the positivist culture of academia that serves as the foundation for spiritual-civic dis-ease. The dominant, “value-neutral,” objectivist culture of the academy privileges research, teaching, and service that exemplifies and reproduces detached, apolitical, technical and expert knowledge and hierarchical leadership (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990; Boyte 2000b). Such a positivist culture disregards spiritual-civic development, democratic pedagogy, and critical epistemology that value multiple ways of knowing such as subjective and social knowledge, meaningful public relationships and community as collaborators, and participation in collaborative democratic efforts that evaluate power

structures and aim to have value-based political impact. The dominant culture of the academy is both at *dis-ease*—uncomfortable engaging the spiritual and civic aspects of humanity, and *diseased*—dysfunctional in its approach to research, teaching, and service that allows positivist philosophy to maintain control of the culture and structure of the academy and her civic mission.

While “spiritual development” as a defined process is not yet a clear priority of higher education, there is dialogue at the national level concerning the need for spiritual-civic development. Nationally, higher education leaders and educators are calling for colleges and universities to support student development of spiritual awareness, ethical and moral reasoning, identification of personal values, and consistent action around those values.¹¹⁷ However, faculty discomfort with spiritual matters is an obstacle to integrated teaching within universities and colleges, and particularly secular private and state schools (Astin, Astin, and Lindholm 2011). Faculty identify many reasons for their dis-ease with spiritual matters in the classroom, including: fear of being criticized by colleagues because spirituality is “antithetical to academic norms,” fear that others might think they are indoctrinating or proselytizing students, ideology around separation of church and state, and feeling a lack of expertise and ability in spiritual matters (Astin, Astin, and Lindholm 2011, 141).¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ American Association of State Colleges and Universities’ “American Democracy Project: Curricular and Co-curricular Rubrics.” <http://www.aascu.org/programs/adp/about.htm>. Association of American Colleges and Universities’ “Character Traits Associated with the Five Dimensions of Personal and Social Responsibility.” http://www.aacu.org/core_commitments/documents/CharacterTraitsofthe5Dimensions_000.pdf.

¹¹⁸ The available data presented here comes from a survey of faculty, which was not inclusive of staff. I presume that campus life staff, in particular, would have a higher interest in and demonstrated effort

What is interesting about such rationale is the appearance that cultural ideologies of the academy might be hiding—even oppressing—an underlying faculty interest and desire to engage self and students in spiritual development. According to a national survey, 57% of professors believe that the spiritual dimension of faculty lives has a place in the academy (Lindholm, Astin, and Astin 2005, 10). In addition, more than half of faculty agree that particular spiritual development components such as “enhancing self-understanding (60%), developing moral character (59%), and helping students develop personal values (53%)” are “essential,” or “very important,” goals for undergraduate education (2005, 9).

The presenting separation and compartmentalization of faculty spiritual and academic identities is a critical issue affecting the inclusion of spiritual development in higher education. Students report that their professors have little or no interest in spiritual matters, and therefore do not encourage student spiritual development at college (Astin, Astin, and Lindholm 2011, 38-39). Students also generally believe that those who pursue professional degrees—such as academics—are not religious at all (39). In stark contrast to student perception, 81% of faculty identify as spiritual, and 64% as religious (Lindholm, Astin, and Astin 2005, 3). There is a clear disconnection, and lack of

towards student spiritual development due to their more holistic focus and approach to student development, and reduced pressure around issues of objectivity and academic integrity. Although such staff may be more oriented towards student spiritual development, they may not explicitly identify their work as “spiritual development.” This is in part because such terms and understandings remain antithetical to the broader academy’s cultural norms, regardless of staff or faculty role. In reflection of this, I have addressed my recommendations specifically to faculty based on the available research. While I presume there are differences between staff and faculty experiences, I expect that my recommendations are also valuable to college and university staff with some translation for specific roles and duties, and work orientation, process, and context. For example, staff may work within a one-to-one or small group advisory or educational setting that occurs outside of a curricular classroom—all appropriate spaces for learning and development.

communication and authenticity between students and faculty regarding the role of spirituality in faculty lives and the spiritual trajectory for students as they complete their degree(s) and become professionals (2011, 6).

The academic culture of dis-ease concerning spiritual-civic development in higher education can transform towards more holistic reconciliation. My aim in providing the Spiritual-Civic Development Model and Community Organizing Learning Model is to demonstrate the correlation of the critical spiritual-civic aspects of human development, present their synergy in an inclusive and accessible form, and provide guidance for faculty and staff regarding meaningful and effective approaches to this work. The articulated spiritual-civic development and learning outcomes, development trajectories, and learning process provide guidance and structure for faculty in what can be a problematic arena. If faculty are able to clearly see and understand the associations between the core concepts of spiritual and civic development, they may be more likely to engage and cultivate both simultaneously.

As I was developing the model for the integration of spiritual and civic development, I had the opportunity to present a rough draft of the Spiritual-Civic Development Model at a national conference. I was particularly interested in gaining initial feedback from colleagues at the national level who had different disciplinary and campus-based institutional experiences and contexts. As we arrived at the question and answer portion of the presentation, a faculty person raised his hand with what appeared to be either a thoughtful or confounded expression on his face—I was hoping for thoughtful. He asked how I would see the model being implemented, and then continued to answer

his question, stating: “For example, I could easily see a faculty person using the core components of the diagram as learning objectives.” I smiled and vigorously nodded my head. This faculty person was immediately able to connect the implementation and assessment of integrated spiritual-civic development to his work and role as a faculty person in an “unrelated” field of study. Such anecdotal evidence, supported by national research showing faculty interest in engaging self and students in spiritual development suggests that transformation of the positivist culture within the academy is feasible with faculty leadership and administrative support.

In addition to academic cultural reconciliation, there is a level of spiritual-civic inner reconciliation necessary for individual faculty to be able to effectively engage student spiritual-civic development efforts. The implementation of the Spiritual-Civic Development and Community Organizing Learning Models is not easy work, and it can be painful. It can be painful to love your students and to engage them in spiritual-civic development when educational and larger societal cultures fight to keep students spiritually and civically powerless. Engaging in agitation, for example, takes courage and love. It also takes the willingness to have students be angry with you, avoid you, talk about you behind your back in a not so favorable light, and even leave the teacher-student mentoring relationship—either temporarily or permanently. However, I have found that it is worth the risk and worth the temporary discomfort and hurt for the long-term result of developing spiritually engaged civic agents. Long-term mentoring relationships with students—and alumni as they graduate—deepen and gain more meaning from enduring the tension and pain of developmental transformation.

Educators who reconcile their own inner life through engaging the spiritual-civic development process can withstand the temporary relational hurt from a student they love and mentor. The process of becoming aware of our own truths can be a painful process. As an educator, I understand this as a necessary aspect of the crucial human development process.¹¹⁹ In addition, I have been through it personally, and I will probably go through it at least a few more times in my life. There are some truths that we keep hidden from self and others for a very long time, and when they rise to the surface it can get ugly—denial, self-loathing, confusion, and identity crisis. It is not healthy to hide and bury our truths, neither for the self nor those around us. While there may be some truths we would prefer not to parade around in public all of the time, critical reflection and agitation around these truths is important to spiritual-civic development. This essential, yet difficult, painful, and potentially hurtful process brings us—individually and collectively—to a place of peace, understanding, and strength about who we are, who we want to be, how we relate to others in the world around us, and how to co-create a world in better alignment with our shared values.

In order to transform the positivist culture and spiritual-civic dis-ease of the academy faculty can work towards transforming their fear, discomfort, and even hurt into a larger purpose and commitment, by engaging in their own spiritual-civic development

¹¹⁹ In *Teaching to Transgress* (1994), bell hooks refers to this process as the self-actualization of teachers, stating, “Progressive, holistic education, ‘engaged pedagogy’ is more demanding than conventional critical or feminist pedagogy. For, unlike these two teaching practices, it emphasizes well-being. That means that teachers must be actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being if they are to teach in a manner that empowers students” (15).

process. For example, institutions or departments could support faculty spiritual-civic development through:

- Faculty development opportunities and support circles that encourage personal spiritual-civic development as well as reflective and constructive dialogue about epistemology and pedagogy;¹²⁰
- Campus-wide development of cultural competency regarding basic knowledge of spiritual, religious, and cultural traditions and an understanding of how these traditions relate to the core components of spiritual-civic development as outlined in the Spiritual-Civic Development Model as well as the disciplinary knowledge of academic content areas;
- The intentional development of disciplinary and departmental cultures (relationships and communities) that actively value the spiritual-civic development and identities of faculty—not just their “objective” intellectual contributions; and
- The structuring of job duties and reward systems—such as tenure and promotion criteria—that support and honor faculty who use spiritual-civic learning models and strategies, build meaningful mentor relationships with students beyond the bounded timeframe of the course term, and engage in democratic and collaborative teaching and research.

Changing the culture of higher education to support faculty spiritual-civic development, research, teaching, and service will require institutional organizing in which faculty and administrators come together to identify collective values and self interests, build power, and take collaborative action towards transformation.

Transforming Higher Education through Community Organizing

Developing civic agency in students can be a difficult task in higher education where technocracy and hierarchy are still such present aspects of how institutions

¹²⁰ Parker Palmers “Circles of Trust,” based on Quaker practices of trustworthy communities of spiritual-civic support is one method for this kind of faculty development work (2004).

function. Within the context of a college or university, when citizens (students) have power, it often concerns those “in” power (administration). Campus-wide, student agency is generally limited to formal student government and student organizations governed by predetermined structures, responsibilities, processes, and functions. In the classroom setting, faculty rarely allow students to wield power and take action: deciding what books to read, how to spend classroom time, what kind of assignments would be most useful, or facilitating discussion. My experience has often been that student agency in the classroom is most prominent during end-of-course student presentations, with presentation guidelines still prepared in advance by the instructor.

These power structures of the academy are all created, and therefore, can be re-created—transformed. Democratizing higher education, both in the classroom and institution-wide, would create the democratic space, practice, and process necessary to support student development of civic agency. Community organizing within the institution and across community-campus partnership is an effective method for achieving such democratization and transformation. Although community organizing began as a popular movement of everyday people—birthed outside of the academy, organizing can, and should, be taught and practiced in higher education. The Community Organizing Learning Model can be applied to various levels of the academy’s work, including: individual classrooms and departments, centers and institutes for civic engagement, administrative leadership, and university-wide community-campus public work partnerships.

My practice of the Community Organizing Learning Model in higher education involves the curricular community-based classroom (service-learning, community-based research, experiential, and immersive learning), community-campus partnership, and yearlong to four-year curricular/co-curricular civic programming. Applying the spiritual-civic models to this work is a blending of head, heart, and spirit with reflective development and engagement of the social wisdom gained from meaningful relationships, experiences of community, and reflective practices. The alchemic nature of this process and practice is difficult to explain in academic prose, which can become too technical—missing the spiritual-civic alchemy entirely. Throughout this book, I have attempted to weave in illustrative insight for educators interested in implementing the Spiritual-Civic Development and Community Organizing Learning Models. These illustrations highlight practices that I have found particularly useful in engaging inclusive and democratic student spiritual-civic development within a higher education context, including:

- Collaboration with students for the co-creation of programmatic and classroom structures, as well as public work beyond the boundaries of campus life;
- Development of meaningful relationships with students through long-term mentoring that continues beyond the bounds of traditional academic time frames (i.e.: course term, academic year, and degree program);
- Creation of student communities based on relational organization and accountability that serve as a developmental context, rather than traditional program structures that operate on rule-based organization and disciplinary accountability
- Recruitment of intentionally diverse student communities and classrooms; and
- Inclusion of the arts.

I hope that these examples provide insight for those interested in implementing the spiritual-civic models, and more importantly stimulate imaginative application that is contextually appropriate and powerful for the reader's particular skills, interests, scope, and environment.

At the broader institutional level, centers and institutes for civic engagement within universities—whether located under an academic provost or campus life—are a prime location for institutionalized implementation of the Community Organizing Learning Model. The civic engagement field within higher education enjoys wide latitude regarding operation and function compared to traditional academic disciplines. At their best, civic engagement centers have the capacity to practice varied and non-traditional teaching styles, exist as an interdisciplinary and interdepartmental umbrella for the university with a civic mission, and operate as mutually grounded with one foot on campus and the other in the community. These centers and institutes have the potential to take a lead role in organizing campus faculty and administration to work towards transforming higher education into a social institution that nurtures civic agency and spiritual engagement. To do this, centers and institutes for civic engagement will need to push the envelope and operate “outside-of-the-box,” using their community-based knowledge and insight to make higher education relevant within a world of constant change, injustice, and growing global democracy.

Conclusion

My foremost concern with the integration of spiritual and civic development is to move the Civic Engagement Movement forward towards effective development of civic

agency in students. This desire comes from a deep concern for students and our national and global future. I am pained to see students spend tens of thousands of dollars on a college degree to graduate not really knowing who they are, who they want to be (at least for the short-term), how their life and interests connect to their community and world, or how to take action around critical issues. The larger democratic society becomes deprived of its democratic oxygen—active citizens, when bright young adults are lost—spiritually and civically underdeveloped—without an authentic sense of self, a future-oriented purpose and direction, or a sense of civic agency.

Higher education will never effectively fulfill its civic mission if it continues to inhibit the development of agency by treating both spiritual and civic development as afterthought activities. Fully realized, the crucial integration of spiritual-civic development will require both a cultural and structural change in higher education that impacts: national discourse; epistemology and pedagogy; faculty development, support, and reward; administrative priorities; community-campus partnership; and that occurs within centers and institutes for civic engagement, campus departments, individual classrooms, and campus life.

Higher education is just that, *higher*; called to great and important purposes in our community and world. The historical mission of higher education is to educate the *whole* person towards a commitment to the common good. Taking this mission seriously, higher education has a heavy responsibility of spiritual-civic development in addition to disciplinary content education.

Too few students are currently graduating with ambitions combined with initiative: the knowledge and ability to take the first steps towards one's goals without being told what to do, and how to do it. A strong democracy depends on critical thinkers and creative problem solvers who can think and act outside of the box; have initiative and courage; and who both know how to and are comfortable living meaningfully in the gray areas of complexity. A strong democracy needs spiritually engaged civic agents, and higher education is one sector that is in a position to do the necessary developmental work.

Appendices

Appendix A: The DU Puksta Scholars Program and Participatory Action Research Methodology

The University of Denver's (DU) Puksta Scholars Program is a four-year, developmental civic engagement program and intentionally diverse community. Throughout their four-year undergraduate degree, scholars receive an annual \$6,000 scholarship and access to grant monies for trainings, conference attendance and presentation, public projects, and paid summer internships. Three new scholars are recruited into the Program each year as incoming first year students. In any given year, there are 12 Puksta scholars, three from each year of undergraduate education (first, second, junior, and senior). The Puksta Scholars Program supports students in integrating their academics; personal and democratic values, interests, and skills; and career preparation with the development of their civic identity and social responsibility as a global citizen. This integration is accomplished using the community organizing method, and includes curricular and co-curricular personal and civic development training, personal and group critical reflection, long-term community partnership, and multi-year sustainable public work projects, and mentoring.¹²¹ All of which occurs during:

- Two-hour Puksta Scholar community meetings held every two weeks throughout the academic year that are planned and led by students and/or the program manager;

¹²¹ Mentor relationships include the following constructions: program director/student, student/student, faculty/student, and community partner/student.

- One-to-one mentor meetings with the program manager (held at least once per quarter, and requested by either the student or program manager);
- One-to-one relational and mentor meetings with other scholars, students, faculty, and community partners;
- Two required courses for first year scholars taught by the program manager and open to other university students (fall quarter: Community Organizing, winter quarter: Denver Urban Issues & Policy);
- Regular community-based work by each student on his/her long-term public project; and
- Various annual events such as retreats, half-day trainings, and multicultural social enrichment events.

From 2007-2012, I re-developed and managed the DU Puksta Scholars Program with a spiritual-civic development approach. I chose to co-develop the program with current student scholars using participatory action research to explore and construct an intentionally diverse community and civic development program grounded in community organizing, critical pedagogy, and mentor models.

A participatory action research (PAR) method collects qualitative data in a critically collaborative and dialectical manner with the community in an effort to transform both theory and practice through evaluation of praxis (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). This methodology is particularly appropriate to this book as it aligns with critical theory to value subjective knowledge and democratic principles of collaboration and co-creation (Brookfield 2005a; Denzin and Lincoln 2005). Additionally, PAR includes concepts found in the democratic community organizing method such as shared ownership of research projects (i.e.: community/public work), community-based analysis of problems, and an emphasis on action (Denzin and Lincoln 2005).

As co-developer and manager of the Puksta Scholars Program, I am an insider. This positionality provides unique access and insight through my role as a mentor, educator, and co-creator. In this role, I have a working knowledge of student language and life stories; I have unique insight into trends and themes when looking through the researcher's lens; and I can pull together narrative threads from the academic, spiritual, community-based, and personal lives of the students to evaluate the broader, holistic picture. Being an insider is a strength of the participatory action research method. However, there are also limitations, a researcher can become too close and narrowly focused, and therefore unable to pull back to evaluate one's subjective and intimate knowledge through a more objective lens. I address this limitation by bringing my research with the Puksta Scholars Program into interdisciplinary dialogue with research in the fields of civic engagement, spirituality in education, community organizing, and critical pedagogy. This secondary analysis serves as a more objective frame, broadening my research lens.

Using the PAR methodological approach, and with approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Denver, I evaluated the role of spirituality in the development of civic agency within the Puksta Scholars community, using the following tools:

- “This I Believe” exercise with current scholars (AY 2010-11): Based on the work of This I Believe, Inc., this exercise served as both a pedagogical example and a sample of student articulated personal beliefs and values as a priming activity for the focus group.

- Focus group with current scholars (AY 2010-11): The purpose of the focus group was to explore and evaluate the relationship between spirituality and civic agency in a curricular and co-curricular higher education context. The larger purpose was to identify what role spirituality might play in the creation of a developmental model for civic agency.
- Research journal (2007-2012): Throughout the years, I have written out my reflections as an educator on student development and learning along with notes on the personal and group rationale for the changes that were made to the program structure and curriculum.
- Documentation collection and analysis (Jan-May 2011): quarterly critical reflections and bi-weekly group meeting notes.
- Demographic questionnaire of current scholars (AY 2010-11): The questionnaire demonstrates that the Puksta Scholars Program is a diverse community.

I analyzed the collected PAR data in conversation with the scholarly dialogues of spiritual and civic development in higher education, and in reflection of my practitioner knowledge and perspective of the civic engagement field. This broader comparative research analysis resulted in the construction of the core concepts of spiritual and civic development as outlined in chapters two and three, and the Spiritual-Civic Development Model and Community Organizing Learning Model discussed in chapters four and five.

In communicating the themes from this comparative and constructive research, I used a combination of reflective and descriptive analysis, representative quotations, exemplary narrative accounts, and visual representations. To encourage the interplay of theory and practice, these various illustrative examples from my professional practice and participatory action research weave throughout the book. My hope is that this integrated presentation of research will encourage the reader to continually engage his/her

imagination in the construction of practical applications for the “Community Organizing Learning Model for Spiritual-Civic Development” in his/her own work.

Appendix B: Spiritual and Civic Development Dialogue Selection Criteria

I applied an interdisciplinary, comparative method to constructively evaluate the contemporary scholarly dialogues of spiritual and civic development in higher education.¹²² Using the following criteria, I identified two *primary* groups (spiritual and civic) of scholarly dialogue partners whose work would support a credible and relevant comparative construction:

- *Historical Context:* In order to create practical and relevant development and learning models, I have included those scholars who are engaged with and writing for the contemporary transformational periods within the spiritual and civic development dialogues: the last 12 years (1999-2011) for spirituality and the previous 15 years (1996-2011) for civic development.¹²³ I define “contemporary transformational period” as the most recent phase of marked increase in national leadership, attention, energy, and movement within each field.
- *Locality:* In order to support reform within the higher education sector, I have included scholars who are credible within and relevant to higher education. This includes those scholars who are: critically defining their field for the higher education context, performing and evaluating qualitative and quantitative research with higher education as their primary research site, and connecting theoretical work with student development theory.
- *Praxis-oriented:* The purpose of this book is to construct theoretically and practically credible development and learning models. As such, I have selected scholars whose work integrates theoretical work and practice (praxis). This includes scholars who: use theory to inform practice and vice versa; build from critical, democratic, holistic, service, experiential, and practical liberal arts learning traditions; and have practical knowledge of their field and engage at the national level in critical and constructive dialogue and action towards moving theory and practice forward through teaching, public work, national collaborations, and institutional reform.

¹²² Further discussion of which particular scholars were included in these comparative studies and how and why they were selected can be found in chapters two and three.

¹²³ Further discussion of the contemporary transformational periods of each field and their respective histories can be found in chapter one.

- *Inclusivity*: A broadly applicable development and learning model must be inclusive of multiple and intersecting identities and ways of knowing. To support an inclusive construction I have selected scholars who: value and engage inclusive and pluralistic language, theory, and practice; work from an interdisciplinary approach; and value a balance of objective and subjective epistemology and pedagogy.
- *Agency*: This book argues for an agential form of spiritual-civic development. As such, I have included those scholars whose theory and practice support an asset-based approach and agency for all stakeholders (students, staff, faculty, and community).

By default, my *primary* group of dialogue partners excludes scholars who: were exclusively practicing and published prior to the mid-1990s, are primarily focused on sectors outside of higher education (i.e.: K-12 education), are theoretical scholars but not also practitioners—or practitioners who do not engage theory, take an exclusionary or overly narrow approach to the field, or argue for hierarchical or expert-driven theory and practice.

Appendix C: 2012 DU Puksta Scholars Program Application

The University of Denver's Puksta Scholars Program is a four-year, developmental civic engagement program and intentionally diverse community.

The Puksta Scholars Program requires meaningful commitment to community work; development of civic skills; and the creation of a sustainable four-year community partnership, mentor relationship, and public work project. While scholars work on independent or small group public work projects, they also work together as a larger Puksta community, supporting and mentoring one another and taking leadership of the program itself in collaboration with staff from DU's Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning (CCESL).

Scholars are supported to integrate their academics; personal and democratic values, interests, and skills; and career preparation with the development of their civic identity and social responsibility as a global citizen. This is accomplished using the community organizing model, and includes curricular and co-curricular personal and civic development training, personal and group critical reflection, and mentoring.

Current Puksta Scholars say they value the meaningful commitment to community-based social justice work that is strengthened by biweekly (every two weeks) program meetings, mentorship, and group collaboration. They also enjoy the inclusive community, which provides a sense of solidarity amongst diverse individuals, and an engaging and fun atmosphere that promotes long-term friendships and personal growth.

Scholarship: If selected, incoming first year Puksta Scholars receive an annual \$6,000 scholarship, which is renewable for four years of undergraduate study as long as the scholar is in good standing with the Puksta Scholars Program. Scholars also receive access to grants for trainings, conferences, public projects, and paid summer internships.

Eligibility: Colorado residents (defined as having graduated from a Colorado high school) who have financial need and a 3.0 GPA or higher. You must be entering your first year as a DU undergraduate student for the 2012-2013 academic year.

Selection Criteria: Puksta Scholars are selected based on their interest in developing civic skills, ability to critically reflect on their identity and life experiences as they relate to community and social responsibility, ability to translate personal and democratic values into action, value of diversity and difference, and interest in connecting their academic learning and future career(s) to the common good regardless of their field. Additionally, all applicants must demonstrate financial need and academic achievement (must maintain a 3.0 GPA or higher).

Selection Process: Written applications are reviewed by the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning (CCESL), exceptional applicants will be invited to campus for personal interviews (or online video or telephone interviews if physical travel is not possible). Financial need is evaluated by DU's Financial Aid Office.

Interviews: If selected for an interview you will be asked to appear at the University of Denver for a 20-minute interview within one week of the application deadline.

Acceptance: Accepted Puksta Scholars will be notified between April 18- 24, 2012.

Required Attendance: If accepted into the program your attendance is requested at the annual Puksta Passage Dinner on Wednesday, May 23, 2012, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. at the University of Denver.

The Puksta Scholars Program is committed to inclusive excellence and encourages applications from a rich diversity of students including but not limited to race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, nationality, age and disability.

Application Deadline: Monday, April 9, 2012

All Applications must be RECEIVED by 10:00 a.m.

You may submit your application:

1) Via email to: puksta@du.edu; or

2) By post mail to:

Attn: Puksta Scholars Program

DU Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning

2050 E. Evans Avenue, Suite 22

2012 DU Puksta Scholars Program Application

Please submit your application in Microsoft Word document (.doc) format to:
puksta@du.edu

Or mail hardcopy to:
Attn: Puksta Scholars Program
DU Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning
2050 East Evans Avenue, Suite 22
Denver, CO 80208-2604

Name:

DU Student ID:

Email:

Home phone:

Cell phone:

Street Address (include city and zip code):

High School Name and City:

High School GPA:

Weighted or Unweighted?

Intended major field of study at DU?

Diverse Identities: The Puksta Scholars Program is an inclusive and intentionally diverse community in which we learn how to work with those who may be different from us. We desire to bring together all identities within the Puksta community, and as a result we define diversity and identity/ies broadly. Diversity and difference come in various forms, which may include but are not limited to: sexual orientation, gender, socio-economic status, political beliefs, spiritual/religious identity/ies, race and ethnicity/ies, nationality/ies, etc.

Please share with us the various descriptors you use to define your identity/ies:

Justice Issue Area(s): Please list the justice issue area(s) or other community issue(s) you are interested in being actively involved with during college (see chart below for suggested areas, or you may identify your own):

Justice Issue Areas	
Economic Development and Labor	Education and Youth
Health Care, Disabilities, and Senior Services	Immigration, Refugee, and International
Environmental	Poverty, Homelessness, and Affordable Housing
Women, Gender, and LGBTIQA	Music, Theatre, and the Arts
Human Rights, Community Organizing, and the Political Process	Religion and Culture

Critical Reflections: Please provide a written critical reflection response to the following three prompts with no more than **300 words per question**. If you prefer, you may respond with an alternative form of communication such as poetry, video, music, or other visual representation. Please select the medium of communication in which you feel you best express yourself. For alternative responses, please include lyrics if appropriate and/or a brief written description so that someone who does not know you would understand your intended message if it is not explicit in your alternative response. You may also respond with a mix of written responses and alternative responses (i.e.: a video for question 1 and written responses to questions 2 and 3).

Regardless of how you choose to respond, you must respond to all three questions below. If you are submitting digital alternative responses, please make sure that you save in a widely acceptable format, and/or for a PC computer. Application materials will not be returned to applicants. Please keep any original artwork if it has meaning to you (i.e.: send us a photo instead of the original), and/or make a copy for yourself of any submissions.

Note to Applicants: Please do not approach these like traditional essays. We want to understand how you critically reflect on these issues, get to know who you are, and what your interests are in the community.

1. One form of motivation used in community organizing is *testimonio*, or personal testimonial narratives. Tell us a story that explains your motivation for participating in your community. What is your personal connection to the justice issue area(s) you identified above as something you want to be actively involved with during college? *This is meant to be a reflective writing, not a summary of your activities in the community or awards.*
2. One of the qualities of a successful Puksta Scholar is that they translate their values into action, choosing when to act and when not to. Describe a time when you experienced or witnessed a violation of your values. How did this affect you? How did you respond, both immediately and in the long-term? In hindsight, would you do anything differently, if so, why?

3. One of the characteristics that successful scholars have is being able to move beyond difference and unfamiliarity in order to work successfully in the community. Think back on an experience you had working with others who you feel are significantly different from you, describe the situation. How did you react, and what would you do differently now? In what ways were you encountering difference and struggling with it?

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