

SCHOLAR-4, 4/23/90, ELB/dmo,dee, SP

## Chapter 1

### SCHOLARSHIP OVER TIME

In 1837, Ralph Waldo Emerson presented to the "president and gentlemen" of Harvard's Phi Beta Kappa Society his famous address "The American Scholar." In that provocative statement, described by Oliver Wendell Holmes as America's "intellectual Declaration of Independence," Emerson envisioned the role of the scholar in the new democracy. He called for the rejection of a past that was alien and debilitating and for the adoption of a new approach to scholarship that would be vital and self-confident--in his words, "blood warm."

Emerson's address was not so much an assertion of intellectual nationalism <sup>it was</sup> as a statement of his own struggle with <sup>^</sup> ~~the problem of~~ vocation, with the nature and meaning of scholarly work in a changing society. <sup>^</sup> ~~But~~ When Emerson spoke of the American scholar he was referring to "man thinking." The scholar could be engaged in a wide variety of activities including teaching, service of different sorts, and what would later be called research. He was struggling to break away from the dominance of "the learning of other lands," from patterns of deference that engendered self-doubt and the depreciation of new, adaptive roles.

It is this same issue--what it means to be a scholar in an evolving democracy--that confronts faculty in American higher education today. And colleges and universities are, once again,

wrestling with the appropriate way to define scholarship for the contemporary American scholar. There is a growing conviction, we believe, that the current definition of scholarship may be singularly inappropriate for the rich diversity of colleges and universities--the educational mosaic--that has become the hallmark of American higher education. And many are now asking: Is it possible to define the work of the professoriate, other views of the role of the scholar, drawn from our own history, that are applicable today?

Within a relatively short history, the view of scholarship in American higher education has moved through three distinctive, yet overlapping phases. First, we had the teacher-scholar; this influential tradition came over with the British and was built into the colonial colleges. The second uniquely American tradition focused on service. And the third, borrowed from the continental universities, emphasized the role of <sup>re</sup>scholar~~s~~ as researcher~~s~~, with special attention in recent year<sup>s</sup> to the publication of results.

The colonial college, with its strong British roots, had embedded within it a view of scholarship that focused<sup>1</sup> first, on the student--the building of character and the preparation of a new generation for civic and religious leadership--and, second, on community. <sup>2</sup>One of the first things the Puritan settlers of Massachusetts "looked for, and looked after," in the words of a 1643 proclamation, "was to advance learning and perpetrate it to Posterity" (Handlin, p. 6). → 3

← Harvard College, patterned after Emmanuel College of Cambridge, was founded to provide the new colony with a continuous supply of learned clergy and the Massachusetts Puritans hoped to create a city upon the hill that would bring redemptive light to all of mankind. The life of the mind was expected to nurture and sustain the larger social and, ultimately, religious vision. ← (2)

cal The commitment to building character and community in this broader sense shaped the <sup>for many yrs later</sup> ~~early~~ American college. In 1802, the President of Bowdoin, Joseph McKean, put it this way:

It ought always to be remembered, that literary institutions are founded and endowed for the common good, and not for the private advantage of those who resort to them for education. It is not that they may be able to pass through life in an easy or reputable manner, but that their mental powers may be cultivated and improved for the benefit of society (Rudolf, p. 59).

The democratic implications of the American Revolution quickened the impulse to found new colleges, an impulse already driven by the new nation's pervasive sectarianism.) Independence, and then later the Jeffersonian and Jacksonian movements, diffused political power and rendered suspicious those in positions of privilege or laying claim to exclusive status. In education as in enterprise, opportunity was to be available to all.

A key element in the missions of Kenyon and Oberlin was "the education of the common people with the higher classes in such a manner as suits the nature of republican institutions" (Handlin,



p. 21). It was Lyman Beecher, however, who, in 1836, defined the democratic vision, most fully, for education: "Colleges and schools," Beecher declared, "break up and diffuse among the people that monopoly of knowledge and mental power which despotic governments accumulate for purposes of arbitrary rule, and bring to the children of the humblest families of the nation a full and fair opportunity . . . , giving thus to the nation the select talents and powers of her entire population" (Rudolf, p. 63).

Mission statements, then as now, are given to overstatement and the small liberal arts colleges of the nineteenth century did not have the impact on society that was so often promised. Still, what the liberal arts colleges did provide was a sense of place and identity--of home--in an America where frontier, freedom, and change were the watchwords. In a world where people were moving from region to region, class to class, religion to religion, and the farm to the city, the colleges focused on the building of community. The curriculum was concerned with the maintenance of tradition, the centrality of language, and the obligations of citizenship.

The role of the faculty member in the early colleges was not particularly scholarly, certainly when measured against contemporary expectations. And teaching, the prime factor, often involved listening to dreary recitations, while the building of character meant disciplining unruly teen-aged boys. Still, despite frustrations, faculty in the colonial colleges and, later, in their more mature ~~twentieth-century~~ versions, had a view of the teacher-scholar that could give dignity and meaning

*(get elements on re "idealized role of teacher-scholar")*  
to work. Among the many colleges sponsored by the evangelizing Protestant denominations--Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians--much was made of teaching as a Christian "vocation." Teaching in a church-related college was a "calling" honored every bit as much as the ministry.

*There were 60,000 in 1900.*  
~~Although the communities served by the nation's colleges~~  
were often parochial--sectarian and local--~~faculty were called~~  
upon to ~~garner their intellectual resources to address the~~  
~~critical issues that held the local community together.~~

~~Sometimes this meant defending religious traditions~~ *+ defend religious traditions* and local  
mores frequently under assault in a rapidly developing and highly individualistic society. Just as often, however, faculty drew upon their scholarly acumen to critically assess the ~~community~~ *college* itself, raising inconvenient questions about issues seen as vital to the interests and stability of those tight-knit communities.

In 1955, Hofstadter and Metzger in their definitive history of academic freedom tellingly refer to what they call "the teaching profession" (p. 274). Their chapter on "The Old-Time College" relates one account after another of faculty struggling with questions related to religious freedom, civil liberties--abolition, particularly--and the introduction of new scientific theories. These distinguished historians conclude that, "long before college presidents and professors used the phrase 'academic freedom' they were invoking the spirit of tolerance, the right of conscience, freedom of speech or the press, and the clauses in college charters against religious discrimination."

This was not the kind of detached, analytical scholarship later to be identified as research. Rather, it was engaged inquiry and debate over substantive issues emerging from the formation of community itself and teacher-scholars were often revered by the college for embodying the values and strengths of the institution. In fact, in visiting liberal arts campuses across New England, Ohio, and Iowa the main college buildings will frequently be named in honor of those faculty--scholars of a special sort.

More frequently, faculty deeply committed to maintaining scholarship found themselves at odds with the orthodoxies and parochialism that gave these small colleges their constituencies. Because of their questioning--critical thinking, we would call it today--members of the faculty were often asked to leave the college. These teacher-scholars also took the formation of community seriously, but their names will not appear on the cornerstones of college buildings. They will be long remembered, however, by students whose lives were shaped by these exemplars of intellectual and personal courage.

In this liberal arts tradition, the ideal institution continued to be Oxford with its small residential colleges, fine libraries, close interaction between the teacher and student, and time for independent study. The image of the teacher-scholar persisted in undergraduate education and can be found among faculty across the several sectors of American higher education. But it continued to be most fervently defended and clearly articulated among the small liberal arts colleges. The



present Davidson College Faculty Handbook captures this ideal by declaring the college professor as a "widely respected scholar excited about learning and capable of communicating this excitement to others, a teacher deeply concerned with the welfare of students and eager to have them learn and grow. . . ."

In this enduring liberal arts tradition, the commemoration of the life of a venerated faculty member invariably concludes with Chaucer's description of the Clerk of Oxford, "and gladly would he learn and gladly teach." <sup>thus,</sup> The life of the scholar, <sup>rooted in the liberal arts tradition</sup> in ~~this tradition~~ <sup>community</sup> pivots on the ~~nexus~~ <sup>connection</sup> between learning and teaching. The assumption is that faculty cannot be good teachers unless they continue to take seriously (and gladly) their own learning--their scholarly development. ➔

The second ~~scholarly~~ <sup>line of scholarship</sup> thread running through the fabric of American higher education focuses on utility and service. The War of Independence and the pressure to build a new nation brought a marked shift in the character of American higher education. The press was clearly--to use the rhetoric of the time--toward the "practicality" and "usefulness" of knowledge. In 1824, more than a decade before Emerson's celebrated call for intellectual independence, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute was founded in Troy, New York, and RPI was, according to historian Frederick Rudolf, a reminder that "America needed railroad builders, bridge builders, builders of all kinds."

Pivotal in this transformation of higher education was the passing of the Morrill Federal Land Grant Act of 1862. The land-grant colleges were established primarily for the purpose of applying knowledge to the ~~enormous~~ agricultural and technical problems confronting society and their utilitarian mission matched the mood of an emerging nation. That scholarship could play a pivotal role in the development of the nation became a compelling and uniquely American theme as the United States expanded both its confidence and its frontiers.

The Hatch Act of 1887 added ~~emergency~~<sup>energy</sup> to the effort by providing federal funds for the creation of agricultural experimental stations that made the rich resources of the college and university available to the farmer.)

Private universities, as well as public, took up the challenge of applying what was being learned on campus to the challenges of a nation in transition. By 1908, President Eliot of Harvard could claim:

At bottom most of the American institutions of higher education are filled with the modern democratic spirit of serviceableness. Teachers and students alike are profoundly moved by the desire to serve the democratic community. . . . All the colleges boast of the serviceable men they have trained, and regard the serviceable patriot as their ideal product. This is a thoroughly democratic conception of their function.

~~Much about this~~ colonial concern for liberal learning and the maintenance of a cultural tradition diminished as the drive to institutionalize the Jacksonian preoccupation with the immediately useful took hold. The gains were enormous: the



land-grant college became the common school for advanced learning; it became a primary source of economic and social mobility for the nation's citizens; it brought the government, both state and federal, to the support of higher education; and, most important, it transformed a major portion of higher education into an instrument of service.

→ In his book The Voice of the Scholar, David Starr Jordan, the President of Stanford, declared that the entire university movement "is toward reality and practicality." There should be no separation between the scholar and the man, he argued, knowledge was to be judged by its "ability to harmonize the focus of life." Useless learning was held to be diverting and unimportant (Veysey, 61).<sup>a</sup> At the turn of the century, Jordan's view of scholarship echoed across America, but found greatest resonance in the Middle West, and particularly in Wisconsin.

In 1909, the noted journalist, Lincoln Steffens, gave national visibility to "The Wisconsin Idea" in his widely read article entitled "Sending a State to College." The university at Madison, Steffens said, offered "to teach anybody--anything--anywhere." University classes were held in every part of the state. Scholars, particularly in the new social sciences, flocked to Wisconsin confident that they had both the scholarly expertise and the moral obligation to reform society. University scholars, particularly the economists, sociologists, and political scientists in the state schools, played a key role in the social reforms initiated during the Progressive era.

Thus, since the 1860s, service has been a major source of motivation for scholarship in the American context and has expressed itself in both substantive and instrumental ways.

~~Scholarship as service found expression in these two different ways.~~ For many faculty, service had moral meaning; they were motivated by their commitment not only to students and an individual college, but the building of a better society and world. Certainly, this was the motivation of the economists who first organized the American Economics Association under the leadership of Richard Ely. Ely had recently joined the faculty of the newly formed Johns Hopkins University and he wrote to his president, Daniel Gilman, of his confidence that the fledgling economics association would help in the diffusion of a sound Christian political economy and, as an expression of the depth of his convictions, the phrase "Christian socialist" appeared on his stationery (Haskell, p. 182).

For other scholars service was understood in more instrumental. The primary purpose of university scholarship was to promote economic growth and in an individualistic, enterprising nineteenth century America, this was one--powerful--understanding of what was later to be called "professional service."

When young American scholars began to travel to the new seats of learning in Göttingen and Heidelberg, a third view of scholarship emerged. To the notion of the teacher-scholar, with its concern for the student, and the notion of practical

scholarship in service to the ~~region and~~ nation, was added the view of scholarship as research. The dominant thrust of the work of the scholar shifted from conserving--the central priority in the classical curriculum--to searching.

This third understanding of scholarship was embedded in the powerful influence of Darwinism that helped unlock the creative potential of American science. From the Enlightenment onward, in America as in Europe, there was a steady shift from faith in authority to reliance on rationality, and to men like Daniel Gilman this new approach to scholarship--based on the conviction that knowledge was attainable by the use of reason, applied objectively to evidence gained through research or experimentation--called for a new university. <sup>of</sup> The mission of ~~research in American universities has been irrevocably associated with the founding of Johns Hopkins by Gilman in 1876, an event described by Edward Shils as "perhaps the single, most decisive event in the history of learning in the Western hemisphere"~~ (Geiger, p. 7).

At first, the vision of the American research university <sup>sought to</sup> shifted to break with the long tradition of undergraduate education, and Johns Hopkins originally was established as a <sup>center for</sup> graduate ~~school~~ to free itself from the responsibility for young students.)

<sup>at Johns Hopkins and elsewhere,</sup> In the end, of course, the European university model was <sup>in 19th century</sup> molded to the colonial college model <sup>and</sup> conflicts over priorities ~~were introduced~~ that have persisted to this day. <sup>At</sup> In the new university, at its best, a clear distinction was to be



maintained between collegiate responsibilities and university work. But for most professors the distinction was also clear. William Rainey Harper, President of the University of Chicago, charged that the American college system had "actually murdered hundreds of men who while in its service" felt "that something more must be done than work in the classroom" and who therefore had either shriveled intellectually or "died from overwork."

At the emerging university, considerations of service also were to be set aside, although most institutions continued to pay lip service to this tradition. These were distractions to professors, it was argued, ~~and they~~ distorted the scholarly enterprise <sup>inward,</sup> by tying research to value commitments and vested interests. The Germanic ideal of scholarship saw the professor as a figure above the battle, someone who viewed the world, so far as possible, with a degree of distance and objectivity--intentionally removed.

An important distinction was soon made between "practical" or "applied" studies and "pure" research. Interest in immediate utility and practical ends gave way to the more general task of what came to be called, in a disarmingly American phrase, "advancing the frontiers of knowledge." ~~Thus, the changing role of the professoriate set the stage for tensions that penetrate contemporary higher education.~~ <sup>and the work, the program</sup> 13 <sup>to make</sup>

~~But there was another force at work. From those early days, scholarship was linked to status and prestige, and what would later be referred to as the academic hierarchy.~~ <sup>social professor</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville was the first to warn that in a democratic America,

*In reality the work of the professor was linked to scholarship*

with its lack of formal class boundaries and little reverence for tradition, status anxiety and self-doubt would abound--Americans would be without a sense of place. And the historian, Burton Bledstein, argues that, in the face of questions of status endemic to a democracy, middle class Americans turned to the culture of professionalism to find a basis for authority, opportunities for mobility, and the standards for judging merit and success; and the pivotal institution in this cultural development was the American university.

Thus, in a very short period--between 1890 and 1910--scholarship was professionalized influenced by forces both within the academy and beyond. Scholarship was segmented and institutionalized in newly organized professional associations and a burgeoning university system. Slowly the discipline-based departments became the foundation of scholarly allegiance and political authority in academic life.

For many years, ~~however~~, the research university model was the exception not the rule. ~~It's true, of course, that the~~ definition of scholarship was slowly changing and institutions such as Hopkins and Berkeley were committed to the advancement of research. But <sup>as a compelling mission</sup> in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, research funds were restricted and laboratory facilities, very crude. ~~(GFT DATA)~~

It was not until after World War II that this profession, institutionalized as it was in the research university, came to full power in the society and that the aspirations of the few became the inspiration of the many. It was a revolution fed by a

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federal commitment to research that expanded dramatically prospects for funding. *at last on way 15*

Research as the preferred work of the professoriate also was advanced by the proliferation of employment opportunities. As new Ph.Ds, trained at the ranking research centers, <sup>who</sup> took positions on campuses across the country, <sup>new goal was</sup> ~~they were determined~~ to replicate, if not surpass, the status of the graduate institutions from which they had recently come.

During these years of breathless growth, scholarly activity that had previously been conducted in nonacademic settings was drawn under the extended umbrella of colleges and universities. Prior to this period, scholars--particularly those in the humanities and the arts, but even those in such fields as economics and psychology--often carried out their work independent of academic institutions. The new sources of funding and the rising prestige and influence of the academic scholar made a collegiate appointment, not only convenient, but almost irresistible.

*almost overnight it seemed*  
Thus, being a scholar became virtually synonymous with being an academic professional, and ~~a powerful image of what it meant~~ to be an "academic scholar" took hold. <sup>It</sup> What ~~has~~ evolved <sup>was</sup> is a hierarchical conception of scholarly <sup>type</sup> ~~excellence~~ that is tied to the advancement of research and defined in zero-sum terms. <sup>essentially had</sup> Hit particularly hard by the ~~current tension about professional~~ <sup>we're</sup> ~~priorities are faculty at~~ comprehensive universities, ~~community colleges,~~ and ~~many~~ liberal arts institutions--those institutions responsible for the education of the majority of the nation's

*The model fit well the large multi-universities that were energy, with their ~~student~~ students & research facilities and many of the nation's higher learning*

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students. Faculty at these places <sup>of the</sup> are appointed to educate <sup>an</sup> increasingly diverse student population. Yet ground rules for promotion and status, both on and off the campus, are often ambiguous at best.

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Much about life is defined and shaped by socially constructed fictions, patterns of meaning that cohere in a particular time and place. Nowhere in the contemporary world do socially constructed fictions have more power than in the professions. And no profession--with the possible exception of medicine--takes its own professional imagery more seriously than the academic. Reference needs only to be made to the years of graduate school socialization and to the power that academic mentors have in the lives of their proteges to make the argument.

14  
The image of the academic scholar that emerged during the expansionist days of higher education not only shaped the self-conceptions of faculty but informed institutional policies and determined, in large part, who received promotion, tenure, and such amenities as leaves of absence and funding for travel and research.

In a 1968 essay on the professions, Talcott Parsons described the "educational revolution" he saw sweeping America. Fundamental to this revolution was the process of professionalization, a process that he regarded as "the most important single component in the structure of modern societies." According to Parsons, the keystone in the arch of the professionally-oriented society is the modern university, and "the profession par excellence is the academic."

Parsons also described the impact of professionalization on the role of the typical faculty member. He writes that:

(14) The typical professor now resembles the scientist more than the gentleman-scholar of an earlier time. As a result of the process of professionalization, achievement criteria are now given the highest priority, reputations are established in national and international forums rather than locally defined, and the center of gravity has shifted to the graduate faculties and their newly professionalized large-scale research function.

What is most striking about this statement is that what Parsons describes is not the day-to-day reality of a typical professor. What he articulates is the dominant fiction by which typical American professors measure themselves and their colleagues as professionals.