

From Multi-versity and Mega-versity, Back to Uni-versity: The impossible Dream of Changing “Incentive Structures” and “Business Model(s)”?

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Abstract: Higher education dailies lead with “The Return of College as a Common Good,” never asking what or when it was or defining either “good” or “for whom.” Slogans, myths, and isolated anecdotes substitute inadequately for documented history and contextual understanding. Seldom acknowledged is 1) how long it has been going on—at least from the 1960s; and 2) universities’ own complicitness in this long, complicated, and contradictory process. Myths intertwine inseparably with slogans to echo yet another “lost cause.” Our collective, as well as individual pasts, provide essential lessons if we know how to read and learn from them. More complicated is imagining a plausible better future for universities. Prompted in part by retirement after almost 50 years as a professor, I strive to learn the best and the worst, and much in between—in other words, the lessons of the crucible in which our dissatisfaction forms.

Résumé: Les quotidiens de l’enseignement supérieur commencent par « Le retour de l’université comme bien commun », sans jamais demander ou définir « bon » ou « pour qui ». Les slogans, les mythes et les anecdotes isolées ne remplacent pas suffisamment l’histoire documentée et la compréhension du contexte. On reconnaît rarement 1) depuis combien de temps cela dure – au moins depuis les années 1960 ; et 2) la complicité des universités dans ce processus long, compliqué et contradictoire. Les mythes s’entremêlent inséparablement avec des slogans pour faire écho à une autre « cause perdue ». Notre passé collectif et individuel fournit des leçons essentielles si nous savons comment les lire et en tirer des leçons. Il est plus compliqué d’imaginer un avenir meilleur plausible pour les universités. Poussé en partie par ma retraite après près de 50 ans en tant que professeur, je m’efforce d’apprendre le meilleur et le pire, et bien d’autres choses entre les deux, en d’autres termes, les leçons à partir duquel notre insatisfaction se forme.

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Higher education dailies lead with “The Return of College as a Common Good” (Karin Fischer, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Oct. 3, 2022), never asking what or when it was or defining either “good” or “for whom.”¹

As is the norm in higher education discourse, slogans, myths, and isolated anecdotes substitute inadequately for documented history and contextual understanding. Seldom acknowledged in all the hand-wringing over the many headed Medusa of the “decline” or “failure” of the modern university is 1) how long it has been going on—at least from the 1960s; and 2) universities’ own active and passive complicitness in this long, complicated, and contradictory process. Myths intertwine inseparably with slogans to echo yet another “lost cause” with all the elements of structural inequality that that US slave South slogan carries.

A frequent topic of discussion and debate among my colleagues across disciplines, ranks, and ages--some of them former senior administrators--is the present and future condition of the (post)modern university. As a historian, I try to understand the history of higher education, and what it can and cannot teach us. In the 21st century, this is rare.

Our collective, as well as individual pasts, provide essential lessons if we know how to read and learn from them. Few are transparent, although we incessantly grasp for that. Prompted in part by retirement after almost 50 years as a professor, I strive to learn the best and the worst, and much in between--in other words, the lessons of the crucible in which our dissatisfaction forms.

More complicated than past or present is imagining a plausible better future for universities. Creative, knowledgeable imagination is in short supply among higher educational leaders today. More than ever before, they lurch from one ignorant, empty, and misleading slogan to the next with hardly a breath in between. At my own university, *The Ohio State University*, they range from “One University” for a disconnected 65,000 student main campus in which the colleges and departments, and many students, have no connection with another to “If you need to know: Ask Brutus Buckeye,” the sport’s team cartoonish mascot.

More recent are “the model 21st century land grant university” based on no knowledge of the racist, sexist, and narrowly vocational history of land grant institutions, and a misconception of the turn-of-the 21st century data “cloud” as “the future.” Most recent are the “Scarlet and Gray Advantage Plan” to reduce

student debt *without* reducing costs, neither a mileage nor a credit card. It is also a logical and numerical impossibility. (Ohio State is my major example. It is representative of common problems if an extreme example.)

Let's begin with basics. There is no "golden age" for higher education, no peak from which we have fallen, no nadir from which we've risen. I for one see the conflicted, deeply divided and debated 1960s and early 1970s as a modern formative era and a point of comparison. Others disagree. I write as a historian and an undergraduate and graduate student from 1967 to 1975.

In this essay, I consider the past in relationship to the present and the future; and simultaneously the top—university leadership; the bottom—students, most of whom pay overpriced tuition; *and* those in-between—the increasingly understaffed, underpaid faculty and staff. I risk confusion, but without focusing on all the major pieces, in however awkward relationship with each other, we cannot understand or attempt meaningful changes.

To confront that challenge, we must face the simple but thundering/resounding fact that higher education has lost its purpose(s) along with its history. As headline after headline bombards us, applications, enrollments, and graduates all decline, differentially across institutions. Stereotypical "purposes" sway contradictorily across forms of post-secondary education from "preparation for life"—including "higher learning;" a place for 18-22 (now 18-28) year olds to "grow up"; *and* job training. With the supposedly unavoidably conflicting elements never connected, universities and colleges falter and contribute to the loss of their own purpose and population. This is today's reality.

Clinging to never-accurate slogans and anachronistic notions of "missions"—as if on a voyage to "discover a 'new world'" or convert a population, universities can be their own worst enemies *and* worst supporters. A far greater proportion of the public, including students and their confused families, many faculty, and non-administrative employees recognize this than the overflowing ranks of assistant, associate, and vice provosts and presidents, let alone provosts, presidents, chancellors, and Boards of Trustees.

Not only redundant, these "officers" are disconnected and segregated from each other and their "clients" or "customers." Ohio State Student Life has at least 11 associate vice presidents, most without job descriptions.

The Provost's Office, aka Academic Affairs, has more senior administrators than I can count, adding new ones almost monthly. Unlike Legos or Lincoln Logs, they do not fit or work together. They have no discernable effect other than steadily increasing the ratio of administrators to faculty, and the average gap in administrative salaries compared to faculty. Both are the highest in the former Big Ten and among the highest in the nation.

Nevertheless, I argue that the best path forward lies in learning, carefully and selectively from our past by transforming through connecting: a new game of "lost and found." One translation is problem solving at once in multiple context.

To stimulate debate, let me pave a (re)new(ed) set of pathways with a first coat of new paint.

Proposition One.

I. A rediscovered, updated, broadly-based, integrated, and coherent set of purposes, carefully discussed at all levels—itsself a unifying project—agreed by consensus within the recognized boundaries and structures of authority. A collective sense of purpose, on the one hand, replaces an out-of-date, meaningless "mission statement." Distorting dichotomies are replaced with lessons learned from our own histories including conflicts and contradictions.

In a phrase, we must urgently replace eye- and ear-catching, empty slogans—that emanate from marketing departments or ad agencies (SloganSlings, for example)—with unifying, accurate, self-knowledgeable, inclusive, and service-oriented affirmative recognizable and realistic statements. To link campus populations, *connectedness rooted in reality* must be our guide. Such statements should be action and future-oriented, with realizable realities.

II. *New statements of common purpose should build on documented history and tradition—including past errors—as they enunciate and define goals with concrete plans and programs.* Each step must have a concrete plan, realistic budget, timetable, and terms of accountability. Today, sloganeering for campus area safety, debt-free graduation, "innovation districts," DEI—diversity,

equity, and inclusion—and much more lack most if not all of these elements. Unbalanced aspirations with no foundations—and funding—must stop.

III. Relatedly, *the uses and abuses of comparison, competition, and rankings must be reined in*. At least every 5 years, national and international rankings are exposed as ridden with cheating scandals, instructively paralleling college admissions and athletic recruitment. A brief storm erupts but is soon forgotten, until the next time. Why? Too much money is at stake. This must change. No institution, group, or individuals win.

Taking a more encompassing view, national and international rankings at best compare the noncomparable. At worst, they bear no relationship to any realities of either academic or extracurricular student, faculty, or staff life. They are uncontrolled marketing and promotion “gamifying,” to quote an exceptional college senior whom I know. They misled both student applicants and investors.

IV. *Fake amateur college sports must be redefined*. I do not have a solution but the inseparable connection between the professionalism of pseudo-amateur athletics *and* the abuse of athletes—from sexual to physical and educational abuses including illiteracy—justified with the promise of paltry sums for most from NIL—name, image, and likeness—must be regulated at all levels both internally and externally. The damage is incalculable.

At Ohio State, the football coach is now paid more than \$11 million per year, the university president less than one-tenth of that amount. Big-time football and basketball make money especially from TV contracts, but sports programs overall lose money and contribute *nothing* to either academics or university’s overall costs. Slogans and myths are a dense smoke screen.

Do big-time college sports necessarily distort all other purposes of higher education? I call for a debate on that. At the same time, *I call for a rebalancing act: putting students, faculty, and staff over and above team sports*. I wager that almost all *sober* alumni and most Board of Trustees member will follow the current.

V. In a sentence, *I am calling for the active, transparent use of all resources to define and advance the clear, collective, and public purposes of the university.* I add the proviso that all purposes must be reviewed periodically.

Proposition Two

A. **Universities must be conceptualized and designed step-by-step, level-by-level as “training grounds”—many metaphors and analogies compete here— for individual and collective futures.** At the same time, they never stand alone or in isolation, despite collegiate self-promotion to the contrary for at least one thousand years. Social, cultural, political, and economic forms of connection lie in cooperation, democracy, civility, mutuality, respect, maturity, the individual, and the collective in a realistic balance.

B. **In a phrase: *neither academics***—including teaching and research always in need of closer mutually enriching relationships—**nor *vocationalism or social life stands alone.*** Despite appearances to the contrary on many campuses, this should never be the case in daily, weekly, monthly, or semester life.

As sites of growing up, broadly defined, with mutual teaching and learning across groups, ages, ranks, and interests—together and separately—at their core, intellectual maturity and both disciplinary and cross- or interdisciplinary advancement are central. We must connect these threads creatively.

C. In another phrase, the secret (so to speak) to transforming humanely and educationally the mega- or multiversity—even Ohio State’s 65,000, Arizona State’s larger student population, Florida’s, or Texas’—lies in ***using size constructively, cooperatively, and creatively: Being big; playing and living smaller.*** In other words, realistically and honestly transforming what could be no more than another slogan into multiple, variable realities.

Ohio State’s former president Gordon Gee’s false proclamation on his agent’s marketing site that he created “One university” is a sloganeering aspiration, an empty metaphor, never a description

per se. ASU's Michael Crow's assistants produce book-length slogans. (See, for example, Crow and William B. Dabars, *Designing the New American University* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015. Note the pages of endorsements from other college presidents unfamiliar with its contents). Pretense, promotion, and ignorance intertwine without bounds.

Crow is not alone; Johns Hopkins University Press rushes to publish these tomes, certain of sales to their alums. Anyone concerned with these issues should not depend on any one, two, three, or four self-declared experts, each with their own complaint and marketing. Begin with reputable history but *caveat lector*. Too many uncoordinated axes grind loudly.

D. In active institutions, *the parts will necessarily be larger than the whole*. That reality does not preclude them from functioning in productive, constructive balances and relationships, more rather than less. Just as there was never a golden age of universities or a site of perfection, unblemished relationships and balances represent false goals. Successful universities, unlike today's ungoverned and disconnected megas and multis, function between the extremes.

Proposition Three

The most pressing questions revolve around “ways and means”: in other words, relationships and in particular *linking the horizontal and the vertical dimensions* to transform—that is, *reconstruct—the connections among and between students, faculty, staff, and administrators*. The most difficult task, I learn repeatedly since 1967, is the elementary schooling of the senior administrators beginning with the president, director of admission, and chair of the Board of Trustees.

Outside small liberal arts colleges, provosts and especially presidents know almost nothing about their universities. This includes all the presidents I have observed at Northwestern, University of Toronto, University of Texas at Dallas, University of Texas at San Antonio, and most dramatically Ohio State University. At the latter, the 5 presidents I have known (dys)function as if ignorance of their institution is the first line in their job description. The previous, ordered to resign OSU president recently informed the President's and Provost's Advisory Committee of Eminent and Distinguished Professors that, unlike

all her predecessors, she had no need to report to them. That is the opposite of the committee's *raison d'être*.

My project in this essay is *not* to draft a handbook but rather a broad outline from which to begin set of the long-term tasks.

These specific reconceptualizations provide the bases for reconnection:

A. **Administrators on different levels and in different roles regularly meet and come to know not only each other (rare with overflowing, redundant, undefined banks of highly paid administrators now) but also students, faculty, staff.** That in itself would be unprecedented and the basis for possible transformations.

A firm principle of a (re)new(ed) uni-verity for the 21st century: **Administrators must *serve* faculty, students, and staff, not solely or primarily Boards of Trustees, Athletic Director and football coach, donating alumni, and state legislators.** To do their jobs, administrators must connect with the other bodies of universities beginning with faculty and students.

At Ohio State, not only does the recent president ignore regular faculty, but also students who follow her office's procedures to complete an application and write a short essay in order to request a meeting with her unanimously report that no student has received a call.

In my vision of renewed universities, administrators must demonstrate fulfillment of their responsibilities, complete annual reviews that include input from other components, and be engaged in broadly integrative relationships.

B. **Accompanying these goals, at least as important are new, more transparent, interrelated *budget and incentive models* that are appropriate to the needs and demands of the uni-verity**

Budget models and incentives to accommodate and facilitate new purposes must:

Substantially reduce administrative bloat, excess, redundancy, and excessive salaries. All universities, regardless of size, need *more fulltime tenure track faculty and trained qualified staff*. Today's universities, especially larger ones, cry out for

professors and staff who provide managed, effective services. They must be reviewed regularly and fairly as appropriate to position and rank. The now largest rank is instructors, untenured year to year, term to term, course to course. Their numbers must be reduced dramatically. The future of graduate studies—including research and teaching—not only in the humanities but also in the social sciences and basic sciences is at risk.

Use all resources well including endowments. “Cutting corners” always backfires. Ohio State, for example, goes to extremes *not* to spend its \$2 billion endowment. That is self-destructive failure to invest in its own purposes, perverse economics, and bad business.

C. Perhaps most important, the common internal budget model must be transformed as counter-productive and contradictory to the very foundations of a uni-versity. *Budgeting and its relationships to student admissions and course enrollments must be redesigned for and to serve a continuing university, not a technical or a business institute that responds to short-term, sometimes cavalier or unstable economic shifts. In other words, a balance between long-term and short-term, whole and parts.*

At many, perhaps most, larger public universities, course enrollments are the primary drivers of the budgets of colleges and departments. While that might make seemingly simple intuitive sense, enrollments do not exist in a vacuum.

Course enrollments derive first from admissions to the university by intended major area of study and second from general education or core requirements. Both are extremely variable; both are manipulable. Neither are straight-forward reflections of student choices or abstract preferences. Both can be unfairly or inappropriately predetermined.

Take a representative Ohio State example. Around 2010, the then (but soon gone) director of admissions decided without research or consultation to substantially revise admission of entering first-year students to *over-admit STEM students and correspondingly under-admit all other students including natural science and social science as well as arts and humanities*. Since no explanation was ever offered, his motivations are not clear. But

the degree of his reorientation signified that much more than “simple market conditions” or “demand and supply” were the predominant factors.

Faculty, including my colleagues and I across the targets of disciplinary discrimination—arts, humanities, social sciences, natural sciences—responded loudly and clearly with simple arithmetic. Calculation, not calculus or statistical models, is no longer, if ever, the strength of administrators (nor politicians). Of course, we were not heard.

The results were predictable and predicted: over-admission in STEM meant under-admission across all other fields of study. It meant larger and sometimes over-enrollments in STEM courses but under-enrollments elsewhere and many courses canceled with insufficient enrollments. As I will explain, the shaping—that is, the ideological political economy—of general education requirements for first and second year course options plays directly here.

In the current illogical, anti-institutional, economic, and political model, rises and falls in course enrollment underwrite rising or declining departmental and college budgets. Those budgets in turn determine numbers of tenure track and sessional faculty, and numbers of courses offered. Smaller budgets mean fewer faculty, and quality of faculty, and fewer courses, in many arts and humanities departments today, are insufficient to sustain a viable major. Multiple vicious cycles spiral out of control. Few senior administrations, Boards of Trustees, or politicians understand this. The mega-university descends into the structurally unequal multi-versity, and the uni-versity is lost.

Among the predictable tragedies is that over-admission in STEM leads to high rates of students dropping out, many among them failing out, and too many transferring out. Some are unable to complete the work; others are pushed into the fields quite apart from their own interest, a result of our cultural economics, poor media, flawed student counseling, and misled parents. Not only is the rest of the university damaged but so too are many students. No College of Engineering mentions a word of this.

At Ohio State, the endless sloganeering about racial equity and affirmative action in STEM by first black president Michael

Drake actually paralleled a decline in racial minority admissions and enrollments. Contradictions abound.

I do not understand why anyone who claims to observe universities, and who either or both writes about or leads them is surprised. Yet they are. The contradictions are endless.

Proposition Four

Misleading, self-promotional, and sloganeering elements of university recruitment and admissions combine with the conflict-ridden failure of general education and state politics. These forces shape secondary school curricula and influence junior and senior high school students and their parents. States like Ohio encourage schools to designate certain secondary school courses as qualifying for college credit with no explicit standards or monitoring. These differ from traditional Advanced Placement courses that have a national standardized exam.

This is raw politics of deception, pretending to reduce college costs with the cooperation of universities in order to raise applicants and enrollments. The result is underprepared students who often are placed out of requirements rather than gaining the credits they expect to reduce college costs.

This is a cat-and-mouse game with collusion among state governments, universities, and high schools. Of course, there is no golden age of secondary school guidance counselors to recall. Private, for-pay counselors take their place for those who can afford them. Current college advisors, especially but not only outside areas of concentration, also fail to advice responsibly more often than not. And some people wonder why many in the public distrust universities.

Once again, we see the results of the massive gulf and disconnect among administrators, faculty, and students at all levels.

Closely related is the uncivil war conducted across colleges and departments about general education requirements and options. Not surprisingly, the *general education* of students is lost in the kerfuffle of Western and/or World Civilization vs. ever-changing careers for some undefined “future.”

Lost in the myths of “rising” vs. “falling” from never dated zenith or nadir are *broadly connective general education requirements* once known more or less accurately as the common core.

Let me be clear about what I argue. I do not mean the never-representative Great Books programs rooted in a general misconception of literacy, especially reading by itself. Versions of one “canon” or another once fashionable at Columbia and Chicago and some small liberal arts college were never the norm. To assert otherwise, recently fashionable is mythical, fictitious, and self-promoting.

Throughout the 20th century, *elective systems* were most common, with a focus on commonality, relationships, and/or distribution, in other words, a *limited range of choices*. In recent years, even decades, any sense of connection and commonality has been eclipsed, by dilution of genuine choice with general education “requirements” weakened into a rank competition of departments and colleges competing for enrollments. Education per se is lost in the uncontrolled pursuit of enrollments and credit hours rooted in the anti-educational, anti-student, and anti-university budget model. Both students and university are lost and forgotten.

So too is relevant career preparation ranging from common communication skills that all graduates, regardless of major or job will need, to STEM graduates actually knowing the history and results of previous STEM “solutions,” to take one relevant example.

The best response, contrary to many writers in the out-of-date *Chronicle of Higher Education*, is **a *new common core* that at once links the major branches of teaching and research, faculty, and students.**

Almost all of the undergraduates with whom I have spoken over decades and now in retirement while living in a University District desire a more connective education in general but especially in their general education requirements. For example, engineering students desire courses that integrate history and philosophy of science and technology with the latter.

Business majors wish for courses that combine literature, ethics, and history with business. Many, perhaps most, wish to write better. Among my 21 year old engineering majoring friends, two are currently using elective hours to study World Literature

and eighteenth and nineteenth-century philosophy, respectively, because they value those subjects and miss reading. They are not unique.

Faculty must lead administrators and their departments and colleges in remaking requirements. Budget and incentive models must change. The stakes are enormous. They include the future of higher education, students' education, and our collective futures. I cannot exaggerate this. Provosts and presidents must respond to faculty *and* students—to our larger society, and then lead deans, department chairs, and boards of trustees in creating the new university. Think of all the public relations and slogans they will get to sling!

Faculty must both *lead and respond*. In turn, administrators from deans to provosts to presidents must follow and then lead. New levels of cooperation—within and across departments, colleges, and what I call disciplinary clusters—are required. (See my *Undisciplining Knowledge: Interdisciplinarity in the Twentieth Century* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015).)

Means and ends—organization, methods, incentives—must be reconciled. For example, well-established as desirable and successful *team-teaching across disciplines and disciplinary clusters is one direct path* to meet the traditional and new rhetorical commitments of uni-versities and the contemporary needs of students across complex institutions with different programs and divergent student goals.

Over decades, the principal obstacles to successful team teaching—whether called multi-, cross-, or interdisciplinary—are budget models and lack of incentives for faculty. Not intellectual or university visions. There are countless administrative solutions to budget models that obstruct serious and sustained, absolutely necessary transgressing and repaving of artificial lines.

There are even more incentives for faculty. They range from intellectual and collegial opportunities for reciprocal learning and cooperation to the opportunity to offer two sections of or back-to-back semester offerings of a new course preparation. Other possible incentives include release time or small grants. Many faculty across ranks will leap at these opportunities for mutual teaching and learning.

Another, closely related path lies in cross-disciplinary clusters to mount offerings that meet redesigned general education guidelines. Both choice and sequencing may be advanced in that way.

Rather than viewing curricular revisioning as opposed to disciplinary specialization, **such planning will connect, deepen, and broaden majors.** Rather than opposing specialization and specializations, for example in STEM and business, it will offer a fairer, student friendly and advancing set of opportunities.

Choice of both major and upper-division electives will be enhanced. All specializations will play on a less lopsided field of play without fewer artificial obstacles. First-year course choices will return, as in my own undergraduate days, to introducing and sampling opportunities. They should introduce students to a range of possibilities, including possible majors--in other words, provide intellectual enticements and more informed decision-making.

During the past 20 years, a variety of cross-disciplinary faculty groups have proposed of the anti-university GE. I was a member of several of them. One in particular with faculty from arts and humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences attracted the eye of then president Gordon Gee. In his usual outgoing but empty way, he invited us to his large office several times, served us the proverbial free lunch, smiled at us as we worked. But he did nothing to support us. Nothing. No provost or other president paid reform efforts even that much attention.

Proposition Five

Critical to my reconceptualizations is the return of tenure track faculty to a central role in undergraduate as in graduate advising. For good reasons, faculty have little role in first years' general education advising—especially check-off the boxes forms of meeting requirements. We are not very good at that. Even in my 1967-1968 freshman year, a full-time non-departmental advisor played this role.

But the now-common exclusion from advising fails students daily, weekly, monthly for the next three years of study. And it excludes faculty from one of our most important—and rewarding roles. Many faculty miss these encounters.

Faculty cannot be removed from one of higher education's most consequential responsibilities. It was long central to our self-definition. We must return to that.

Proposition Six

The literature on the relationships of "academic affairs" and "student life" or "student affairs" either explicitly or implicitly opposes the two. The seldom explicated and misconstrued condemnation of non-faculty student programs as constituting a "shadow curriculum" or an attempt illegitimately to steal authority speaks volumes of destructive ignorance and false conflicts.

If the interests of students rank high, let alone first, across universities, their "academics" and "life" must inform each other. The overlaps and sometimes repetitions are inescapable at the same time that programs at least superficially conflict. Their respective offices stand far apart. Each side unknowledgeably belittles the other, typically in ignorance and with scant regard for their tuition-paying "customers" or "clients," formerly known as "students."

At Ohio State, not only are there almost no collaboration or cooperation, let alone conversation. The Dean of Students is one of 11 Associate Vice Presidents in Student Life with no formal connection to Academic Affairs. He seems uninterested in the overall failings of student advising.

I personally have proposed to one Associate Vice President of Student Life the imperative need for a four-year curriculum for undergraduates in the dormitories and off-campus housing for **concrete, interactive connections to general education**. After professing agreement, he followed the senior administration's order to cease all communication with me. A year later, nothing has been done. Along with colleagues and off-campus neighbors, I have proposed some of this for almost 20 years with no results.

The needs and opportunities literally cry out; student behavior demands action. The scores of students I speak to in my neighborhood as a retired professor absolutely desire and need an informal and formal, classroom and beyond foundation in civic life, democratic values and actions, civility and sociability, cooperation, and both local and national laws. This should begin and end with

students' own legal, including student and tenant rights—and responsibilities.

But no: that's too difficult and not in the interests of landlords who profiteer from students *and* donate millions of dollars to the university in order to make false claims.

Proposition Seven

This is inseparable from the university's and Student Life's ignorance and neglect especially of off-campus students. It is reflected superficially in ignorant, offensive slogans to the contrary posted on sign boards in lawns. At Ohio State, this ranges from meeting the need to know by "Ask Brutus," the sports teams' cartoonish mascot, to announcing that most but far from all students do not drive their vehicles after consuming "five drinks."

Not only is there no university responsibility, including Student Life, for the majority renting private, off-campus overpriced, uninspected housing, there are no warnings that large private corporate landlords who claim to be OSU Student Housing (and make multi-million dollar contributions to the university) are nothing of the sort. Nor that OSUlive, OSUproperties, or OSUapartments have no permission to use that name and no relationship to the university. Yet, a sense of vetting if not recommendation is implied.

Student Life does not publicize their own weak student ratings of landlords and properties nor issue any warnings about which property owners are the subject of 100s and 1000s of complaints to the understaffed and underfunded Student Legal Services as well as the "big three" who are regularly sued by former tenants who are cheated as part of their "business model." Zoning violations and breaches of contracts are business as usual. The responsible landlords want a stronger annual survey and report.

The university, its Campus Partners non-profit (aka "at a loss") "development arm," and Student Life ignore repeated proposals for the university to use a small amount of its \$2 billion endowment to purchase for-sale house in its adjacent University District to serve as "theme houses."

A variety of theme houses are long established at some universities, and newly popular across the nation. They are very successful, ranging from pre-professional (health areas, law,

business, science, engineering) to social issues (social justice; racial, gender, or ethnic issues or studies); disciplinary interests; scholarship sources, and service. These formations sometimes begin during required first, or sometimes second years (to enrich university income) of required living in dormitories.

Some universities have used combining purchase of vacant houses with student extra- or extended curricula with neighborhood preservation and stabilization. Ohio State refused all such possibilities without investigation, consultation, or explanation. There is no excuse for the lack of meaningful ongoing interactive relationships between swelling Offices of Student Life or Students, and academics. That is, unless there is no vision of a uni-versity with students at its center.

Proposition Eight Conclusion

“The new uni-versity” is not slogan or pipe dream. It is attainable. Ways and means are clear. They are challenging. They demand new levels of responsibility, communication, mutual respect, openness to change, and mutual interactions based in collegiality from administration, faculty, staff, and students. The latter must grease the proverbial *and* the 21st century wheels. The present and future well-being of all parties, including mental health, must be a central and uniting concern.

As I reflect on my own advisors and model professors and my more than 50 years in universities, **I regularly return to our efforts to unite teaching and learning across all levels as the very core of my professional and personal efforts.** I could not have endured my three mismanaged and disorganized public universities without the constant combination of teaching and learning among colleagues and students at all levels, near and far. In retirement, I continue, happily without a formal classroom, gradebook, or the poorly constructing and often misleading uses of RateMyProfessor.

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