

# Searching for Success in Higher Education

BY VIRGINIA MYERS KELLY

*Accountability, yes, but for what purpose? To determine appropriate accountability procedures for higher education, we must begin with a clear idea of what we expect our higher education institutions to accomplish, what they should be held accountable for. Virginia Myers Kelly interviewed and recorded the thoughts of 23 individuals on what constitutes success in higher education.*

—Editors' note

## Defining the Goal

**W**hat is success in higher education? It is becoming increasingly important that we address this question as the drumbeat grows from public officials around the country to install more “accountability” in higher education. This call for accountability often seems to focus on *devices*. Accountability is usually framed as a question of which system, which device—graduation rates, standardized tests, performance funding, vouchers, etc.—should be imposed on higher education in order to make decisions about funding or de-funding particular institutions.

Rarely, however, are critical prior questions addressed—for example, what are these institutions actually supposed to achieve, what constitutes success for them? Is it possible that we know enough right now to make an assessment about whether the institution is achieving its goals? How would any particular new accountability instrument measure and further success? Does the accountability instrument add something substantive to the procedures already in place?

For example, there is a growing movement to reward or punish colleges on the basis of their six-year graduation rates. Whether this makes sense or not, however, depends on our initial premises of success. If we believe, for example, that it is essential to get students in and out of college quickly in order for the institu-

tion to be successful, then graduation rates might make a good accountability measure—if students are given the financial wherewithal to achieve that goal. But if we believe that one element of success in higher education is accessibility, and we recognize that students who work may need to attend classes only part time, then rewarding or punishing colleges for achieving quick graduation rates wouldn't make sense at all as an accountability measure. This article will focus, not on accountability mechanisms, but on what constitutes success for higher education in the first place.

## **Method**

We followed a two-step procedure in addressing this subject. First, we conducted a review of literature on success and accountability. Our exploration included studies that looked at success and accountability from the national, state and local perspectives. Several national higher education organizations have been examining the levels and kinds of learning that colleges produce. Many of these projects were developed after the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education issued its first “report card” on higher education, *Measuring Up 2000*.

The projects and studies we looked at included, among others:

- The National Postsecondary Education Cooperatives' (NPEC) activities in the area of “Student Success.”
- The American Association for Higher Education's Assessment Forum, which disseminates good practices in assessment.
- The Pew Charitable Trusts' Quality of Undergraduate Education project and various writing assessment projects, all linking assessment to the improvement of undergraduate education.
- Indiana University's National Survey of Student Engagement, a measure of good educational practice that has surveyed over 160,000 college students at over 470 colleges and universities (and has developed a new version of the survey for community colleges).
- The Business-Higher Education Forum (BHEF) initiative on Public Accountability for Student Learning in Higher Education. BHEF is a national organization that draws its memberships from American business and higher education leaders.
- RAND and the Council on Aid to Education's efforts to develop a value-added assessment of undergraduate learning.
- The American Association of Colleges and Universities' general education

assessment project

- Regional accreditation associations' reform movements that insist that institutional effectiveness be judged in terms of student learning.
- We found that many of these studies, which outlined a list of benchmarks or indicators for successful higher education systems, had been employed to develop state-wide goals assessments and performance reports.

Common themes began to surface from these readings: analytical thinking, productive work life, intellectual tradition, support for the economy, robust cultural life and accessibility. Based on these themes, we developed an initial working list of six indicators of success in higher education. These factors addressed either the impact of the educational experience upon individual students or the kind of impact the university or college made on society at large.

The elements of success for students were identified as follows:

- The ability to think analytically, and to present reasoned, clear arguments about complex issues using logic and creativity.
- Preparation for a productive life as a technical, intellectual or artistic worker.
- Exposure to intellectual traditions and high-quality work in humanities, sciences and social sciences.

Elements of success in terms of the institution's impact on society were summarized as follows:

- Creating a knowledge base that would support a strong and diverse economy—in other words, that would meet the community's economic needs, fill the jobs that need filling, and support public institutions with research and problem-solving opportunities.
- Creating a robust culture through art, providing a showplace and forum for cultural endeavors.
- Creating a more democratic, ethical and just society by providing educational opportunities for all and by promoting mutual understanding among students and the community at large.

With this information in hand, we conducted interviews, most by telephone, with 23 individuals, chosen for their experience, expertise and perspective.<sup>1</sup> Participants included faculty members, board members, university presidents,

policymakers, legislators and students. We discussed with the interviewees the working criteria we had developed, but only to get the conversations going. In general, the conversations were largely unstructured. What elements would success include? What would it look like? What focus would it have? What elements are more important than others?

While we do not pretend that our readings and interviews could cover fully the terrain of thinking about collegiate success, we did find that the elements of success developed through our readings and interviews resonated with individuals concerned about higher education from a variety of walks of life. Faculty members, for example, were not limited in seeing success primarily as the ability to “think great, esoteric thoughts.” Legislators were not limited to “churning out workers and saving money.”

## **Discussion**

In his book, *Achieving Academic Excellence*, Alexander W. “Sandy” Astin, director of the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA, outlines different outcomes from the university and college student point of view.<sup>2</sup> The three he emphasizes are education benefits (e.g., knowledge, skill and value acquired), existential benefits (e.g., a college experience that was stimulating, positive, etc.), and fringe benefits (e.g., the later advantages of a particular “name” school or acquaintances and friends picked up during college).

Often definitions of “success” in higher education center around the experiences of individual students. One student counted among her expectations of a college, “meeting cool people.” Here are some of the major marks of success for individual graduates identified in the literature and in our interviews.

### **Success in offering broad access**

Many of the interviewees emphasized that a successful institution should be one that achieves broad diversity of access. Certainly public colleges’ and universities’ stated missions are to open their doors to all qualified comers and to create a plural environment, says Astin. “We need places where people learn how to participate in a plural institution and a plural society.” Educators should take advantage of the inquiring and inclusive environment nurtured on campus, to show students what the world could be like. The hope is they will carry and spread that sense of inclusion and community

throughout their lives, wherever they are after graduation.

“One of the strengths of American society in terms of our notions about ourselves is trying to be a society where a diversity of people, opinion, background, religion, ethnicity and attitude are a part of the fabric we wrestle with,” says John Austin, a member of the Michigan State Board of Education. Successful higher education, our participants argued, should play a paramount role in helping students and society at large meet that challenge. Steve March, an Oregon representative who sits on the state’s education policy committee, would add diversity of age to the mix. Such systems as Portland State University, where citizens age 65 and older can audit classes on a space-available basis, expand horizons for all students. “Diversity of ethnicity plus diversity of age will give a much richer tapestry of learning,” says March.

A successful postsecondary school ensures access and success for every student, of every socioeconomic status as well. This applies not only to community colleges, which often function as gateways for people who might not have access to more elitist institutions, but to all institutions of higher learning. James Earl Davis, a sociology professor at Temple University, insists success includes a diversity of students across the spectrum of higher education institutions.

Lara Couturier, at the Futures Report, agrees. “A successful higher education first and foremost recognizes that all students can succeed and all students deserve the chance to succeed. . . regardless of their background,” she says. Couturier recognizes differences in demographics and the challenges those present, but insists the universities must not use those challenges as excuses—some institutions have been successful in educating all kinds of students, and others must find a way to follow their example.

Reginald Robinson, a member of the board of regents in Kansas, quotes Bill Clinton when stressing the importance of success for every student: “We don’t have a person to waste;” Robinson believes institutions must stop being so selective and find ways to serve all the people, not just the cream of the crop. They need to train everyone to participate successfully in the workforce—not just giving them specific skills and certificates, but teaching them how to learn and instilling a love of learning so they are equipped for changes in their lives and in the marketplace.

Most institutions in America today are committed to increasing access and diversity in their student body, although cutbacks in federal and state funding for both institutions and students is making that increasingly difficult. The story of one of our interviewees, Adam Mangana at Brown University, illustrates the difficulty of achieving full access in practice. Mangana was one of the few African American students at Brown, and an economic minority besides. His experience growing up in subsidized housing had not prepared him for the expectations of this elite college. He had to learn deeply—not just regurgitate information. He also had to make football practice and games, hold down a job, and adjust to a culture different in many ways from the home he'd left behind.

Mangana dropped out. While he doesn't blame Brown for losing him after two years, he points out that success in higher education must include not just access for all, but attainment as well. "It's one thing to get students in the door, but is it good enough to do that and not get them through?"

When Mangana left the university he picked up some construction work. Then one day one of the crew was electrocuted. In the aftermath, his co-workers asked him why he was there. The conversation went something like this: "If I had the opportunity you had, dude . . ." He realized they were right – he couldn't pass up the opportunity to graduate from Brown, and he returned to classes.

Mangana wonders whether his graduation this past May was due to innate drive or circumstance, whether it was because his mother laid it out for him, telling him, "You're either weak or you're strong, you can make that choice," or whether there were enough systems in place at the university to welcome him back to campus. He is the only one of five friends, all African American, who graduated, he points out—and he did it a year later than he'd planned.

"I don't like to put the blame on the university," says Mangana. "I think it's all the individual's responsibility." But if universities are looking for places to improve, he suggests providing an outlet for the frustration experienced by outsiders new to campus culture. "Even for white students who come from the wrong side of the railroad tracks, it's quite an adjustment. We don't summer in Aspen, so you feel like you're coming up a little bit short when you have conversations and you haven't been to another country. It can wear on your self-esteem."

Mangana is pleased that a new social organization at Brown, the Brotherhood, has been formed as a support group for black males, whose numbers are small on this New England campus. In his own experience, he felt he had no one to talk to at college.

Uncomfortable with professors, he felt patronized when they told him his work was good enough and didn't push him further—he says they were afraid of being perceived as racist.

### **Success in instilling analytical ability, preparation to think and argue**

More than any collection of credits and courses, analytical ability is considered paramount for any graduate to be considered successful. Analytical thought, also referred to as critical thinking, is “the sweet spot of higher education,” says George Kuh, who directed the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to measure student experience beyond test scores. Defined as the ability to discern among many sources of information and rhetoric, critical thinking also engages the impulse to question and probe and challenge the world around us. If one tries to solve a problem in a conventional manner and fails, an educated individual naturally turns to more resourceful, creative, and perhaps less obvious solutions until the matter is resolved.

Closely linked to critical thinking is the ability to communicate, both in written and spoken form: the ability to argue one's points. For Joshua Smith, director of both the Center for Urban Community College Leadership and NYU's program in higher education, real success in the classroom occurs when he's able to provoke students into discussions—sometimes by taking ludicrous positions—and then watch them at the end of class, arguing with one another as they go out the door.

This ability to think critically and communicate effectively also is highly valued in the business world. If one were to ask the chief executive officer for any American business what was important, he or she would most likely say that it goes beyond the degree. In its position paper on student learning, the Business-Higher Education Forum surveyed its business and higher education members and found that they are looking for a “combination of skills and knowledge, including proficiency in leadership, teamwork, problem solving, analytical, critical thinking, communication, and writing skills.”<sup>3</sup>

Why be able to argue passionately and effectively? Bill Scheuerman, president of United University Professions in New York, emphasized the importance of critical thinking because it trains people to see the potential in the world, and helps them make the world a better place.

### **Success in offering diverse educational opportunities**

One surprise of the research is how many people identified an exposure to the liberal arts as a basic component of educational success. This identification was expressed not just in traditional liberal arts institutions, but also in two-year community colleges. A liberal arts education, with its broad palette of disciplines and emphasis on opening minds to new ways of thinking, rather than restricting them to facts, figures and technical skills, is one of the most cherished values among the faculty members and administrators, as well as the many policymakers and legislators, with whom we spoke, and among others who voice their opinions in public discourse on education. It enables students to have the flexibility they'll need upon graduation, when they encounter myriad challenges and interact with a polymorphous population outside the doors of academia. It allows them to exercise their brains so they are prepared for a thoughtful, productive life.

Conversely, says Chris Goff, a member of the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation of the University of Oregon, "A lot of emphasis is placed on providing students with 'skills' that are essential for the workforce. I see this to be more training than education." Goff, who is completing his dissertation in sociology, suggests such a standard reduces students to "nothing more than workers who will be cogs in some particular branch of industry." It would be better to emphasize critical thinking, and watch as economic skills follow. Combining liberal arts with critical thinking in this way ensures, he says, that students will "not only contribute to the workforce, but will become leaders within it."

And a liberal arts education is not the exclusive territory of four-year institutions. Our interviewees felt it should be part of the community college experience as well. Students may be earning more technical degrees, but they constantly will be thrust into situations where they'll need an ability to learn and to learn quickly. "A good college education provides students with the skills and curiosity to navigate and explore," says John Thelin, a professor of history at the University of Kentucky.

Students value that exploration and want to make their own choices about what directions to take. Stephanie Gross, who just graduated from SUNY-Oneonta, relished the myriad opportunities at her school. “We are very fortunate to have a very large system of schools, so there really are any and all opportunities available,” she says. “Students can broaden their horizons in their majors and outside their majors and take more than one major, and really develop so many different skills.” Gross, who completed two majors and a concentration in a minor, was also the student representative to the SUNY board of trustees for two years. Having ownership over her education, she was able to add this political experience to her college years.

For Tina Collins, a research assistant at the University of Pennsylvania, that kind of off-campus opportunity is essential. She defines success as a balance of academic research—in this case in history and education—and the ability to communicate and apply that research outside of academia. At Penn, graduate students involved in outside activities are encouraged and, says Collins, “that’s beneficial for the university as a whole, because it trains people to communicate to a broader audience the work they do in their fields.”

### **Producing graduates who, in turn, enjoy success in their careers**

We constantly see for ourselves the economic benefits of higher education. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2003 the average full-time worker with a bachelor’s degree earned \$49,900, 62 percent more than the \$30,800 earned by a worker with only a high school diploma. The correlation between higher level of education and higher earnings is seen amongst all racial/ethnic groups and for both men and women. Any college experience produces some sort of financial benefit when compared with none, but the financial gap between high school graduates and college graduates is increasing.

Some of the students we interviewed, like Itiah Thomas, are clearly focused on the economic benefits of education. A rising junior at Brown University, she plans to use the school’s prestigious name to her advantage and sees part of the university’s success as propelling her into a fruitful career. She is already working as a peer career counselor to build up contacts among the advisors.

Indeed, as Joshua Smith says, one must first “get the wrinkles out of the belly” and be sure one can put food on the table before addressing the more existential

benefits of education. Productive participation in the marketplace is an undeniable element in creating a holistic success. The education offered in college may enhance this, in Smith's view, by including hands-on experience, such as internships and service learning, and integrating liberal arts with application, giving theory a chance to come to life in real world situations.

Flexibility is another essential element of success and is closely linked to analytic thought: The ability to think through any given situation successfully, not just situations closely related to one's field of study, is undeniably necessary in today's economy. Educators and policymakers clearly value the concept of "learning how to learn," and instilling in students a willingness, even an eagerness, to explore new ideas. Conversely, a technical education that is too specific to a chosen area of study can be limiting in a dynamic world that often presents and may even require changes in careers. Students need to be prepared for change.

John Austin uses an analogy to illustrate this point: the old career ladder has been knocked down, he says. Instead, universities must equip students for rock climbing, in a world with no career ladders—equip them for a fast-changing environment, equip them to organize information efficiently—so they can find a nonlinear path when necessary to get to where they want to go or possibly to discover a destination they hadn't even considered.

Many who are deeply involved in educational research are convinced that, rather than being in competition with one another in a mutually exclusive stance, liberal arts and career success are complementary. "We want people who are economically self-sufficient," says George Kuh (NSSE). Graduates, he says, must have "skills and competencies that allow them to work productively." That involves gaining knowledge in their field of study—but remembering that the half-life of such knowledge will only sustain them for a short time beyond college. Graduates therefore also need "aptitudes or habits of the mind and heart to allow them to obtain new skills and competencies." They must be able to manipulate numbers and symbols, but also know how to work with others in a meaningful way, particularly with those from different backgrounds. Brian Fitzgerald, executive director of the Business-Higher Education Forum, counts teamwork as crucial for college graduates, and a skill they need to practice in school. "That's what life in organization is about today," he says. "It's dealing

with very complex problems and solving them in teams.”

### **Success in instilling an ability to live in a heterogeneous world**

Students need to be able to negotiate a heterogeneous world. Successful institutions must produce students who “work and function as effective, informed citizens in an increasingly diverse society,” says Jeff Milem, in the Department of Education Policy and Leadership at the University of Maryland. “It’s a matter of institutional liability. If you look at who the students are going to be, it’s increasingly students of color and students who have been underserved.”

For many students, the university experience is the first opportunity they have to face a diverse environment. “That’s an incredibly important way to define success,” says Milem. If students learn to move in a diverse community at college, they will take that skill with them when they leave and live in a world much broader than the ethnically, racially, ideologically limited one they may have come from. In such an expanded world, they will encounter more opportunities for their own success. And, as they move in increasingly broader circles, they themselves expand the reach of higher education to new populations.

How can universities accomplish this, according to Milem? Through good pedagogy, in chemistry class as well as sociology class. By bringing diverse opinions into the classroom discussion.

### **Success in enhancing civic engagement**

Civic engagement was emphasized repeatedly in our interviews, both in terms of ensuring that institutions provide broad access to the educational experience and in terms of ensuring that college graduates develop a sense of responsibility to society.

In a successful graduate, the practicality of finding a job is balanced by responsibility to society. Noting the trend among state and federal agencies to measure only easily quantifiable outcomes, such as job status and earnings, Sandy Astin suggests focusing on more important, if less tangible, results. “With simplistic measures like earnings we ignore what are, from a societal point of view, far more important qualities such as social and civic responsibility, tolerance, generosity, honesty, promise-keeping, leadership, parenting, citizenship and so on,” he says.

Carrying a sense of community and engagement away from college is the truest measure of success among many of the students that sociology professor James Earl Davis has encountered. Davis has found that, particularly among low-income and some racial and ethnic minority students, success after graduation means not just a financially successful career. It means students going back to their communities and participating vigorously in civic life. In this population, there is a greater sense, he says, of the old adage, "Where much is given, much is required." You don't go to Harvard to get a good job, he says; you go to bring back something of that experience. Access to elite institutions, for populations newer to the higher ed milieu, is crucial to feeding this trend—because the kind of institution a student attends increases the social capital he or she is able to bring home.

There are myriad ways to encourage civic responsibility and action: out-of-class experiences, including participation in sports, newspapers, student government and drama were among those most frequently cited as successful. Service learning was another—"at least part of their existence [should] be devoted to something beyond themselves," says Reginald Robinson. Involvement in the community beyond campus, and interaction among diverse groups on and off campus, are key. Professors should be rewarded for engaging in their broader communities, for providing public forums for thorny community issues.

Mark Soskin, an economics professor at the University of Central Florida, addressed water problems with the town's aquifer by bringing opposing viewpoints together on campus. "Citizens aren't born, they're made," says George Dennison, the president of the University of Montana. He belongs to the National Campus Compact, an organization of more than 950 college and university presidents committed to providing opportunities for students to become involved in their communities. At the same time, Dennison feels responsible for supporting the state economy, to some degree, by being cognizant of its specific needs. Montana has two-year vocational programs in its college of technology, geared toward workforce development as well as providing for an educated citizenry.

Out-of-class activities are called a rich "smorgasbord" and a "miraculous kingdom" of opportunity. While assignments and exams may build knowledge, these elements of a college education build character. "Intellect without values and character has declining appeal to me," explains history professor John Thelin.

He and many others recommend giving students opportunities to interact with people they might not otherwise come into contact with, encouraging them to work together toward a common goal.

And don't think civic engagement must stand apart from economic success. "Some people," says George Kuh, "want to put civic engagement and economic productivity at odds." They think that somehow because civic engagement is "purer," moving too close to economic activities will somehow compromise the university. While that does happen, there are ways to maintain distance from economic engines and influences, ways to provide economic success but also instill civic engagement in graduates. It's a matter of balance, and emphasis.

John Austin talks about success in higher ed being a "three-fer": (1) teaching individuals skills and competencies that help them participate in the economy; (2) cultivating a broad approach to thinking about and adjusting to the opportunities that arise or can be created; and (3) helping students understand their role in civic, community, social and political life.

"I think institutions need to assume some responsibility for all such outcomes," says Sandy Astin, considering the civic elements in education. "I personally feel that it would be in [the states'] interest to be equally focused on citizenship, civic responsibility, tolerance, leadership and self-understanding, given that many of our most severe state problems are closely connected to such qualities."

Add ethics to that list, says Brian Fitzgerald, at the Business-Higher Education Forum, where ongoing initiatives work to build a sense of ethics in a future corporate America. "A successful institution has a demonstrable impact on the community," says Rich Novak, at the Center for Public Trusteehip and Governance. That means not just students, but faculty, administrators and trustees must build bridges and address local and state challenges, beyond their campus gates. He especially would favor further "greening" on campuses to support a more environmentally sustainable future. "We want universities to be leaders of society in terms of how they do things as well as the students they produce."

## **Goals and Realities**

While our interviewees were largely in agreement about the principles of success, some of them expressed concern that higher education is moving away

from these principles, toward a market model that values training above education, buildings over scholarship, earners instead of learners. Bill Scheuerman points out the danger when universities and colleges begin to behave like businesses with profit, instead of education, at their core. “We’re pursuing criteria that belong in the private sector, where the goal might be to save dollars,” he warns. “Education might become secondary.” Education leaders are so worried about doing more with less, their goal becomes finding how to educate “on the cheap.”

“That’s a mistake. . . . The purpose of an education is to open your mind, expose you to new ideas, and get students to grow and change intellectually,” says Scheuerman.

Lara Couturier points this out most effectively in the Futures Report, released in 2005. Universities and colleges, she argues, pay too much attention to—and spend way too much money on—flashy buildings and programs designed not so much to educate as to draw more students and more tuition money in from a competitive field. Schools are paying for things like kayaking pools, with built-in whitewater, and multimillion dollar recreation centers. “We don’t compete over ‘Hey, this college graduates 98 percent of our low-income students,’” she says. Administrators rarely direct donors away from new stadiums and toward need-based scholarships.

Even less extravagant improvements should be considered carefully. Remember, says John Thelin, bricks and mortar are “at best a stage for the educational drama. Preoccupation with creating, extending and maintaining a massive campus can draw attention away from more essential features.”

While colleges and universities may get wrapped up in their own world of academia, it is important to remember that they serve individuals—and the public at large. Thelin harks back to the first colleges in the U.S., with their “noble” statements of purpose. Their aim was to groom privileged youth to contribute to civil life. Thelin suggests that today institutions should begin to move away from higher education for individual gain, and move back toward higher education as a “social good.”

“Lots of students are going to college so they can make a lot of money,” says Joshua Smith. “What I would like to see . . . is that they emerge with the idea that even if they make a lot of money, they still have an obligation as citizens to other people in the society in which they live.”

The same can be applied to the institutions themselves. “When you work for the common good,” says Smith, “quite frankly, all the boats float.”

## **Conclusions**

We began our interviews with a few working ideas about what counts most in evaluating success. What should we be looking for in a successful institution? Our informal survey sustained these initial premises, which were:

### **For Students**

- The ability to think analytically, and to present reasoned, clear arguments about complex issues, using logic and creativity.
- Preparation for a productive life as a technical, intellectual or artistic worker.
- Exposure to intellectual traditions and high-quality work in humanities, sciences and social sciences.

### **For Society**

- Creating a knowledge base that would support a strong and diverse economy—in other words, that would meet the community’s economic needs, fill the jobs that need filling, and support public institutions with research and problem-solving opportunities.
- Creating a robust culture through art, providing a showplace and forum for cultural endeavors.
- Creating a more democratic, ethical and just society by providing educational opportunities for all and by promoting mutual understanding among students and the community at large.

While the survey sustained these initial thoughts, we have reported that other issues surfaced as well. Most notably, our sampling of interviews placed great value on *civic engagement* as an indicator of success, both for institutions and for individuals.

Similarly, *inclusion* was seen as an important factor. Not only must colleges involve all kinds of students, regardless of race, ethnicity and socioeconomic background, by accepting them to their institutions, but colleges also must work with students to keep them on campus until they graduate. This was closely tied to concern about maintaining a *pluralistic environment* as a marker of success. Universities are the places where students and scholars of all backgrounds can encounter variant and diverse ideas, learning from one another.

Emphasis on *liberal arts* also came to the fore. Students must be educated not only to think for themselves but also to use the broad knowledge afforded by a liberal arts education to engage effectively in a dynamic and ever-changing world.

All of this suggests that policymakers should not start addressing accountability with an unexamined assumption that colleges and universities need “more.” Instead, policymakers should develop a clear understanding about what constitutes institutional success and then examine both new and existing accountability measures in light of this concept of success. New accountability measures should be considered only when it is apparent that they would add data important to achieving success and would not duplicate or harm existing measures. By tailoring our measures of accountability to our definitions of success, we can have a system of higher education whose internal procedures further its missions.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> The following individuals were interviewed by the author for this article:

Alexander W. Astin: Allan Murray Cartter Professor, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, UCLA; Director, Higher Education Research Institute.

John C. Austin: Vice President, Michigan Department of Education; Nonresident Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution; Senior Fellow, University of Michigan School of Education—Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education (National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good).

Roger Benjamin: Rand Corporation’s Council for Aid to Education.

Roger Bowen: General Secretary, American Association of University Professors.

Tina Collins: Research Assistant, University of Pennsylvania; Political Director, Graduate Employees Together University of Pennsylvania/American Federation of Teachers.

Lara K. Couturier: Higher Education Policy Consultant / Former Interim Principal Investigator, Associate Director and Director of Research, Futures Project: Policy for Higher Education in a Changing World.

James Earl Davis: Temple University Education Leadership and Policy Studies

George Dennison: President of the University of Montana.

Brian Fitzgerald: Executive Director, Business-Higher Education Forum.

George D. Kuh: Chancellor's Professor of Higher Education and Director, Center for Post-secondary Research, Indiana University Bloomington School of Education.

Christopher Goff: Women's Studies Department Steward, Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation, University of Oregon.

Stephanie Gross: student member of the State University of New York Board of Trustees.

Adam Mangana: recent graduate of Brown University.

Steve March: State Representative from Oregon (D-District 46).

Jeffrey F. Milem: Associate Director and Graduate Program Director for the Higher Education Administration Program, Department of Education Policy and Leadership at the University of Maryland.

Rich Novak: Executive Director, Center for Public Trusteeship and Governance, Association of Governing Boards.

Robert O'Leary: State Senator from Massachusetts (D-Cape and Islands District); Chair, Higher Education Committee.

Reginald Robinson: President and CEO of the Kansas Board of Regents.

John R. Thelin: University of Kentucky Educational Policy Department.

William E. Scheuerman: United University Professions, SUNY president and chair of the AFT's Higher Education Program and Policy Council.

Joshua L. Smith: Emeritus Professor of Higher Education at the School of Education, New York University and former president of the Borough of Manhattan Community College.

Mark D. Soskin: Associate Professor, University of Central Florida Department of Economics.

Itiah Thomas: current student at Brown University.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander W. Astin, *Achieving Academic Excellence* (Jossey-Bass Inc Pub, April 1985).

<sup>3</sup>The Business-Higher Education Forum, "Public Accountability for Student Learning in Higher Education: Issues and Options" (Washington, D.C.: The Business-Higher Education Forum, April 2004): 10.