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Albert Borgmann

University of Montana-Missoula, albert.borgmann@umontana.edu

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The Headaches and Pleasures of General Education

Albert Borgmann

Regents Professor of Philosophy

UM-Missoula

[Albert Borgmann, Regents Professor since 1996, joined The University of Montana's Department of Philosophy more than 32 years ago. During his tenure at the University, he has earned international recognition as "the most rigorous and original philosopher of technology in the world," in the words of one notable scholar. Yet another colleague referred to him as "one of a small handful of genuinely important philosophers active in the United States today." His research has been focused on the character of contemporary society, particularly the increasingly important role of technology in shaping our lives. His most prominent works, *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life* (Chicago: 1984), *Crossing the Postmodern Divide* (Chicago: 1992), and *Holding On to Reality: The Nature of Information at the Turn of the Millennium* (Chicago: 1999), have become important texts for scholarly study, discussion, and publication around the world. He is the recipient of the University's Humanist of the Year Award, Distinguished Teacher Award, Burlington-Northern Research Award, and the Jane I. and George M. Dennison Faculty Award. Yet I have no doubt that Albert takes more pride in the contribution his Philosophy Forum makes to the intellectual life of the campus than he does in these awards.

I regard it as an honor and high privilege to introduce his latest work to the readers of *The Montana Professor*.--George M. Dennison, President, The University of Montana]

Historical Notes

General education is one of the glories of American higher education; it is one of its major headaches as well. The concern for general education highlights some of the distinctive virtues of American universities and colleges. First it illustrates the ability to be open to different traditions and to forge them into something new. Liberal education, the older and still widely used term for general education, is the bequest of British higher education where it was taught to an elite of young gentlemen, destined for careers in politics and the professions. The notion of the well-rounded gentleman in turn goes back to the Renaissance. Its authoritative portrayal was Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (1528), translated into English within little more than a generation.^{/1/} The tie between liberal education and the seven liberal arts reminds us that general education has still deeper roots in the Middle Ages and classical antiquity.

Liberal education was common in the early American colleges. Henry Adams has left us a picture of the staleness it had suffered by the middle of the nineteenth century at Harvard.^{/2/} (I will be using Harvard throughout as a backdrop for our local challenges.) Not that Adams was any more enthusiastic about that other model of higher education that at just about

this time was coming from Germany.^{/3/} It had been designed by Wilhelm von Humboldt for the newly founded University of Berlin early in the 19th century. The feature that became crucial for American universities was the location of research at the university, rather than at special institutes or societies, and the combination of research and teaching.^{/4/} The tension between general education and departmental majors has been with us ever since.

American scholars and scientists were flocking to Germany, and the news of special fields that they brought back was given institutional reality by (among others) Harvard's Charles William Eliot, who during his tenure as President (1869-1909) developed the system of departments, majors, and general education that has become standard for American higher education.

In the great variety of American colleges and universities, there are significant differences in emphasis between the majors and general or liberal education. But it is rare to find one entirely without the other. Institutions of higher education in this country want to educate students as well as train them. Just as important, faculties at American colleges and universities have been willing to take inclusive and corporate responsibility for this enterprise. All students have to meet the requirements of a program that has been designed and enacted with the cooperation and approval of the entire faculty. This is the second highlight that general education produces on the picture of American higher education. The tension between general education and major has been a continuous vexation as well.

A third and final mark of distinction is shared governance. Here too Harvard has left us a milestone. In 1943 President James Bryan Conant appointed a University Committee on the Objectives of a General Education in a Free Society. The initiative came from the administration. The real work was to be done by the faculty. Two parts of the charge to the Committee appear from its name. As Conant put it, what was needed was "a general education--a liberal education--not for the relatively few, but for the multitude."^{/5/}

"Liberal education" is surely the term that is historically more resonant and therefore, *ceteris paribus*, preferable. Alas, it is no longer informative for the majority of people who need to know about it, and for some it is in fact misleading. I have heard a university president report that when his university wanted to establish a major in liberal studies, a regent replied that politics should be kept out of the curriculum, whereupon the

president proposed to balance things with a major in conservative studies. "General education" of course occasions misunderstandings, too. It is sometimes thought to consist of instrumental knowledge that is basic to all majors and needs to be gotten out of the way as quickly as possible. This is true only of one part of general education, i.e., of the skills or competencies that I am setting aside in this essay. On balance, "general education" seems preferable. It is less mystifying and conveys the democratic intent that President Conant had in mind--it is education that should be common to us all.

In 1943 general education was emphatically meant to serve a civic purpose, one that had become clearer and more precious in the shadow of fascism and communism. In 1945 the Committee published its report under the title *General Education in a Free Society*, the famous "Red Book." Here is more evidence for the first virtue of American higher education--the readiness to meet the currents of the time through the re-affirmation of democracy and the recognition of higher education for the many at first, for the majority of high school graduates now, and for all who are willing and qualified eventually.

Civic virtue has remained central to the aspirations of higher education. As a public good, Gordon Brittan has said in the previous issue of this journal, higher education "makes possible the effective functioning of our democracy."⁶ Prof. Brittan has also put his finger on what is really the heart of education, its most important and most difficult part. He described it in terms of three crucial roles, the roles of preserving the culture, of responsible criticism, and of fostering the full development of personality.⁷ Gordon Brittan's good sense is clear from the parallel of his vision with that of John Buchan, diplomat, author, and first Baron of Tweedsmuir. In his commencement address to Harvard's class of 1938 he held that a liberal education should impart (in Brittan's sequence) *humility* in the face of "the treasures of the world's thought," *humor*, for "[t]he answer to all sort of folly is laughter," and *humanity* because "[w]e need a deepened respect for human nature."⁸

This brings us to the headaches. If general education is the heart of higher education, disagreements about the general education program can become a struggle for the soul of the university, and as the recent troubles at the University of Chicago have shown, such struggles can become heated.⁹ Everyone, of course, wants the heart of education to show wholeness and strength. The lack of these virtues at the Harvard of the early forties distressed the Committee on General Education as much as the threats to freedom and the demands of democracy. They found little

definition or, as they put it in the blunter language of sixty years ago, little prescription: "Probably the most striking characteristic of the present curriculum" they said, "is precisely this: there is virtually no prescription except of form, and even this is extremely flexible."/10/

The antidote turned out to be the celebrated Core Curriculum with its division of courses into the humanities, the social studies, and science and mathematics. The hallmark of the Core Curriculum was a limited number of courses with substantial content, specifically designed for general education. "We should have some courses in the college," the Committee said, "which seek to fulfill the aims of general education exclusively and not incidentally, courses which are concerned with general relationships and values, not with the learning and the technicalities of specialists."/11/ The stress on substance and content strikes me as most remarkable. The Committee forthrightly suggested the (two semester) humanities course be called "Great Texts of Literature" and characterized its chief aim thus: "The aim of such a course would be the fullest understanding of the work read rather than of men, periods represented, craftsmanship evinced, historic or literary development shown, or anything else. These other matters would be admitted only in so far as they are necessary to allow the work to speak for itself."/12/ They did not hesitate, naturally, to give some prescription regarding particular authors and texts and said: "A list from which a selection would be made might include Homer, one or two of the Greek tragedies, Plato, the Bible, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Tolstoy."/13/

They were less confident of substance and content in the social sciences and recognized that the required (two semester) course would have to concentrate on "certain significant movements and changes in Western society."/14/ But even so they suggested "that in the writings of Aquinas, Machiavelli, Luther, Bodin, Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Adam Smith, Bentham, and Mill, to mention no others, one can find materials admirably suited to serve the purpose of such a course."/15/

When it came to the content and substance of science and mathematics, the Committee was least prescriptive and tended more toward method and viewpoint. The courses in this area, the Committee said, "should be taught so as to convey some integrative viewpoint, scientific method, or the development of scientific concepts, or the scientific world-view."/16/

The Present Situation

Thomas Bender has saluted Harvard's accomplishment, saying that it "was widely adopted in American higher education and it provided a charter for

liberal education and the humanities in particular." But in the next sentence Bender notes: "That charter seems to have exhausted itself." /17/ As if in reaction to that exhaustion, there has been a widespread reconsideration and refashioning of general education. In a recent survey, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) found that among its 567 member institutions seventy-eight percent had revised their programs in the decade of the nineties and that fifty-six percent had made changes since 1994. /18/ Not surprisingly, then, Montana State University-Bozeman and the University of Montana-Missoula, too, have undertaken reviews of their general education programs. MSU began an ambitious reform program in 1998 with support of a \$150,000 grant from the Hewlett Foundation, later supplemented by a \$30,000 grant from the Provost. These efforts have meanwhile produced remarkable and interesting results. The University of Montana began a much more modest effort in 2001. Both enterprises demonstrate the benefits of shared governance. At MSU, Adele Pittendrigh, Associate Dean of the College of Letters and Science, has provided leadership and support. At UM, it was Provost Lois Muir who appointed, charged, and supported a Task Force on General Education. /19/

Reforms face three central problems. Ranked in order of visibility they are: (1) the challenge of national diversity and global integration, (2) the collapse of consensus on substance and the rise of procedure, and (3) the failure of general education to inform American culture.

The first problem leaps to mind when we look back at the Red Book. The voices of women, of ethnic minorities, and of homosexuals were yet to be heard, and the dawning division between the industrial democracies and the communist countries overshadowed global integration. It is important to realize, however, that the Red Book's core program could have met these challenges through modification rather than restructuring. It would have required a truly inclusive canon in the humanities and a global reorientation in the social sciences. Greater inclusiveness, after all, had been a challenge that was successfully met before. At one time, the Red Book reminds us, scholarship "had only a shelf of Greek and Latin authors to tend." /20/

The canon on that shelf was made more inclusive by deletions and substitutions. The Red Book's sketch of a canon, so traditional by our lights, contained but four classical authors and had added four relatively new ones (not counting the Bible on either side of the divide). But the deletion-and-substitution approach is at length overtaken by dilution and arbitrariness. Enlargement would be a far better route to inclusiveness. It requires wresting space and time from majors and accreditors--a struggle

that is overdue.

The loss of consensus on what is important is really the deeper and more intractable problem. There are two manifestations of how consensus has been eroded, and remarkably--or perhaps not--the erosion overtook Harvard too. The first sign is the invasion of the core curriculum by departmental courses. In 1997 a sharply divided Harvard faculty voted to include such courses. Over a quarter of Spring 2003 Core course offerings (44 out of 158) consists of departmental courses.^{/21/} Yet, whether by core or noncore courses, any increase in the number of core courses disassembles general education into more and more components so that the cohesion of the pieces a student happens to pick becomes more and more questionable. At a discussion of the core program at Harvard in November of 2002, James Engell, Professor of English and comparative literature said: "It is possible to complete the Core, and to study for example, no major or canonical author from any literary tradition. It is possible not to study very large areas of Western history, Eastern history, American history, or world history, ancient or modern."^{/22/}

Still, to the extent that the number of general education courses is a measure of dissoluteness, Harvard is doing better than the University of Montana. Harvard is offering 158 courses this semester (Spring 2003), the University of Montana 245. It seems fair to say that at least to some extent the vigor and the fate of general education is reflected in the number of different courses. The poor state of the University of Montana's program in 1983-84 was evident from the number of courses it contained--524.^{/23/} When under the inspired leadership of Jim Flightner, then Professor of Spanish, the new program had been put in place, the number dropped to 190. By the fall of 2002, it had climbed back to 441. By contrast, Montana State University's traditional core offers 249 different courses, a respectable number, though it too has grown by some ten percent within a year.

The second indication of how general education has been eroded amounts to the rationalizing and sanctioning of the dissolution that is occurring and that, once approved, remains unchecked. The current trend is being blessed through a shift from substance to procedure and from content to approach. Harvard's Core Program now stresses that the Core "does not define intellectual breadth as the mastery of a set of Great Books, or the digestion of a specific quantum of information, or the surveying of current knowledge in certain fields. Rather the program seeks to introduce students to the major *approaches to knowledge* [their emphasis] in areas that the faculty considers indispensable to undergraduate education."^{/24/}

The far-flung, well-financed, and well-organized Association of American Colleges and Universities has for its purpose the advancement of general or, as it prefers, liberal education. The Association is admirable in its commitment to the democratic aspect of liberal education, and it particularly champions universal access to higher education. But when it comes to the substance of liberal education, the Association preaches procedure. In its most recent and ambitious project, *Greater Expectations*, you will find many a mention of "substance" and "important knowledge." But at the crucial junctures, greater expectations come to this: "Liberal education is an educational philosophy rather than a body of knowledge, specific courses, or type of institution.... The philosophy of liberal education depends less on a particular subject matter than on an approach to teaching and learning."/25/

Does the same broom serve to sweep the many different mansions of literature? Do we really take the same approach to "Fairy Tales and Children's Literature" as we take to "major 18th-century autobiographical, fictional, and philosophical texts that explore the paradoxes of the modern self," to take two examples from Harvard's Core? And what does the approach to "physical processes that formed the Earth" have in common with the methods employed to study "the evolution, over the past three centuries, of our concept of time" (also from Harvard)?/26/ In fact, what do the approaches of a poststructuralist theorist and those of a new historicist to Shakespeare's plays share if not their content?

The Current Crisis in General Education

It does not seem likely, then, that the resort to procedure and approach lends much commonality or generality to general education. But neither does it seem reasonable to assume that the widespread turn to method is simply due to a mistake on the part of recent reformers of general education. Procedure is in fact an important element in democracy, in the economy, and in athletics. Who gets to be President of the United States is not determined by divine sanction, heredity, or virtue, but by a procedure; and the integrity of democracy depends in part on the refusal to violate (but also on the willingness to reform) procedure when substance is compromised. Similarly, economic power is not distributed by government decree or a rational, *a priori* plan, but by the rules of the market. The results in most sports, finally, are warranted not by effort or valor, but by following the rules of the game.

But there is also a darker side to the triumph of procedure. To see it, consider the broad analogy between procedure and substance on the one

side and means and ends on the other. Powerful means promise to put us in control of the ambiguities and difficulties of ends. A GPS receiver in your car disposes of unclear instructions, wrong turns, and dead ends that lurk between your car and your friends' house. A powerful search engine cuts through the thicket of overworked reference librarians, interlibrary loan delays, incomplete encyclopedias, and out-of-date dictionaries. What we want to give our students are instruments that will serve them well, come what may. The rise of procedure is part of a profound and finally questionable cultural shift, as I will try to suggest.

What gets lost when we subordinate substance to procedure? We are giving up on the understanding that we inhabit a common world of distinctive dimensions, illuminating horizons, and crucial landmarks. But let us back into this difficult issue by starting with the hermeneutics of embarrassment. What are the things that, if half or more of our students' knowledge did not include them, would by their absence embarrass us as teachers in higher education? What if they had never heard of John Winthrop, had no conception of dark matter, believed that African-American babies are less talented when it comes to learning English than are white babies, and could not locate Israel or Iraq on an unmarked map?[/27/](#)

A ready reply to such embarrassments claims that these are just "disconnected facts" that students had to learn through "mindless memorization," and that in the information age we are past such "rote learning." Students need to become "active learners" and "critical thinkers," so the reply continues. And, it is often added, these are things students should have learned in high school anyway. Here it is necessary to distinguish between what is necessary and what is sufficient for general education. If someone cannot locate Iraq and Israel, then critical insight into the dangers that Iraq poses to Israel, as opposed to the United States, is simply impossible. If graduates know nothing of the influence of Puritanism on the founding of this country, they will have a hard time understanding and criticizing today's conjunctions of high-mindedness and bigotry. If one is unacquainted with the fundamentals of evolutionary theory, one cannot intelligently participate in a discussion of creationism. If the basics of astrophysics are *terra incognita* to our students, they are reduced to gut reactions when it comes to the theory of "intelligent design." Unfortunately, we cannot rely on high schools to have provided students with this necessary intellectual provender, and even where we can, a more sophisticated and penetrating recapitulation is needed at the college level.

Thus there are necessary core components of general education that we

want to leave with every student. We want more, of course. We want students to integrate these components into a coherent vision of the world. But no such vision is possible if the world our students are to inhabit is not shown to cohere itself. In fact, core components *are* related to one another in an order from the most encompassing to the most central. Astrophysics gives us both a cosmic view and an account of what the world is like at its largest and smallest. Evolutionary theory tells us how life developed on this particular planet and what sort of evolutionary background conditions govern the human condition. A global survey shows how humans have appropriated their world. A survey of United States culture reveals the achievements and burdens of the society we live in. Knowledge of democracy, human rights, and the high-minded moral vision of which they are parts gives students an explicit and intelligent grasp of the ethical norms that have a claim on everyone in this country.

High-mindedness is an easy target of ridicule, sarcasm, and more generally of the hermeneutics of suspicion. Of course, bigotry and oppression have sometimes arrogated the mantle of pious idealism, and deflating pretensions, as Brittan and Buchan have reminded us, is a central office of the university. But when the torch has been put to all ideals whatever and nothing of significance is left standing except resentments and grievances, we begin to look around again for rightfully high-minded authority, and we must do so now.

There is, then, something like important substantive knowledge that we should all have in common. But there is a diversity of such knowledge, too. There are, to start with, different aspects and emphases in the approaches to common core knowledge. One can give a cultural or a political emphasis to a global survey. One can teach American culture from the point of view of Native Americans, of women, or of Italian immigrants. Such diversity is helpful as long as the crucial divides, peaks, and high-water marks are given their due and it is understood that a common world is being disclosed.

When it comes to literature, the arts, religions, and specialized social science courses, however, we should recognize that diversity rules the centers of life in this country. Though the idea of an inclusive canon should not be abandoned forever, right now, it seems to me, a student whose father is from Morocco may have a reasonable desire to study the Koran rather than the Bible. A Jewish student may want to study Moses Maimonides rather than Thomas Aquinas. A student of Japanese ancestry may be more interested in the Meiji Restoration than the Franco-Prussian War. And so with a preference for jazz over classical music, of calligraphy

over painting, of psychology over sociology, etc. In the short term, the marketplace of ideas should decide what is being (and can be) taught. Though knowledge in this part of general education has to be diverse, it should not be whimsical or arcane. Here too we serve our students best if we direct them to what is thought best and most important by the leading lights in these several fields.

Not to be disingenuous, however, we have to recognize that diversity is clouded by controversy. But it is shrouded even more by confusion. To clear it up, albeit in the most tentative way, we need to distinguish between shallow and deep diversity. The former kind consists of diverse briefs for a larger share in one and the same culture, the contemporary culture of power and affluence. Though some of the underlying grievances are justified, the fact remains that to prevail is often to exchange one's heritage for a house with a three-car garage.

Deep diversity would consist of allowing the history, the literature, the arts, or the religion of one's ancestry or affection to engage and to challenge one's facile assumptions and to inform one's daily life. People who so engage their several and diverse traditions or concerns have more in common with one another than with the mainstream culture of consumption. But they do so only if they face up to a task that is, or at any rate ought to be, more explicit and daunting for them than it is for the mainstream culture--coming to terms with democracy and human rights, moral norms that are central to the cultural identity of this country. Though we allow private organizations such as the Catholic Church to discriminate against women and homosexuals, most faculty in higher education, I would guess, would agree with me that such discrimination constitutes an outstanding task rather than a legitimately cherished tradition.

I would suggest, then, that diversity is divisive and destructive to general education when it is shallow. We are still in a period of transition and confusion, and my hope is that deep diversity will prevail eventually and become a cooperative and constructive force that in time will produce a common and fairly inclusive cultural canon.

How much can we hope to teach our students in the areas of common and of diverse knowledge? The goal must be something like "informed acquaintance and critical appreciation," as Henry Rosovsky calls it.²⁸ Determining that level and helping students attain it will always be a pedagogical challenge and one that is most likely met in courses specially designed for general education.

Conclusion

Opponents of substance and content like to point out that little content and substance are recalled by students within a few years after graduation; hence, so runs the inference, teaching them skills rather than content should be the goal of general education. This brings us to the least visible and apparently most difficult challenge of general education. Here, too, it helps to back into the problem by way of simple observations.

We make students read literature, but we do not make them into readers of literature. We teach them history, but we do not instill a hunger for historical information. We teach them "the scientific perception of our world," as the Harvard Core has it, but we do not leave them with an abiding curiosity about how the great puzzles of astrophysics are being and still remain to be solved. If substance is aimed at, it evidently does not take. If skills are the goal, they are definitely not being exercised.

Gordon Brittan has got it right when he says: "Year after year alumni come back to campus not seeking to recover their youth so much as to link up once again with that sense of possibility, of community, of the disclosure of mystery that lies at the core of a university education."²⁹ I would add to this observation, or perhaps simply stress what it suggests, that there is a wistfulness in these returns and ruefulness in the attempts at recovery.

The fact is that we send our generally or liberally educated students into a world that is utterly indifferent to "that sense of possibility, of community, of the disclosure of mystery" that we have tried to impart to them. If the world at large were openly hostile to these things, maybe students would notice and resist. But it is instead pleasantly uninterested and offers inducements and rewards that are entirely different from the pleasures of general education. Thus the specter of utter futility hovers over general education.

What is it in contemporary American culture that so foils general education? There is much helpful material toward an answer that has been assembled by journalists, social scientists, and social critics and theorists from all kinds of disciplines and professions. But the stuff is scattered and divergent, and universities and colleges have not assumed any sort of corporate and pedagogical responsibility for recognizing the question and beginning to respond to it. To have an answer and to help students understand it may be a necessary condition for general education to have an afterlife.

As I have tried to indicate, we live in a common world that is disclosed in and by astrophysics, evolutionary theory, world history, American culture, our shared democratic and moral convictions, and that finally harbors a great richness of the arts, humanities, religious, and social sciences. But it is not really a common world if the several disclosures are the bailiwicks of specialists, nor can there be a sense of community if there are only scattered enclaves of well-educated ladies and gentlemen. Beyond those little precincts, there is little to allude to, less to presuppose, and nothing to talk about in depth. The deeply disclosed world of general education is very nearly the possession of everyone or of no one. Such a world obviously has to be a matter of things known rather than an affair of approaches at-the-ready.

It is a world and a community of knowledge worth laboring for. We know, when we get to experience one of its pocket editions in a circle of friends, that there are no pleasures like sharing and being at home in the rich and resonant world that general education has taught us to inhabit.[/30/](#)

Notes

1. See Harvard University Committee on the Objectives of a General Education in a Free Society, *General Education in a Free Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945), 242-47 (this is often, and in what follows, referred to as the Red Book); Thomas Bender, "Then and Now: The Disciplines and Civic Engagement," *Liberal Education* (Winter 2001): 6-7; Donald Kagan, "What is a Liberal Education?" *The McDermott Papers* (Irving, TX: University of Dallas, n.d.), 2.[\[Back\]](#)
2. Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* (New York: Modern Library: 1996 [1918]), 54-69.[\[Back\]](#)
3. Adams, 70-81.[\[Back\]](#)
4. Bender, 8-9; Kagan, 3.[\[Back\]](#)
5. Red Book, iv.[\[Back\]](#)
6. Gordon G. Brittan, Jr. "Public Goods, Private Benefits, and the University," *The Montana Professor* 13.1 (Winter 2003): 5.[\[Back\]](#)
7. Brittan, *ibid.*[\[Back\]](#)
8. Quoted by Henry Rosovsky, *The University: An Owner's Manual* (New

- York: Norton, 1990), 101.[\[Back\]](#)
9. Thomas Bartlett, "The Smearing of Chicago: A University Improves Its Teaching of Classic Texts, But is Accused of Gutting 'Western Civilization,'" *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 28 June 2002, A10-A12.
[\[Back\]](#)
 10. Red Book, 186.[\[Back\]](#)
 11. Ibid., 195-96.[\[Back\]](#)
 12. Ibid., 205.--I.A. Richards was on the Committee. So we hear in this quotation the inflection of the then new criticism. But the substantive point remains.[\[Back\]](#)
 13. Ibid., 207.[\[Back\]](#)
 14. Ibid., 214.[\[Back\]](#)
 15. Ibid., 216.[\[Back\]](#)
 16. Ibid., 221.[\[Back\]](#)
 17. Bender, 17.[\[Back\]](#)
 18. James L. Ratcliff, D. Kent Johnson, Steven M. La Nasa, and Jerry G. Gaff, *The Status of General Education in 2000: Summary of a National Survey* (Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2001), 9.[\[Back\]](#)
 19. Full disclosure: I am chair of the Task Force, and while I have learned much from my colleagues, I am not speaking on their behalf, nor am I speaking for Provost Muir.[\[Back\]](#)
 20. Red Book, 205.[\[Back\]](#)
 21. Debra Bradley Ruder, "Faculty of Arts and Sciences to Vote on Revisions to Core Program," *Harvard University Gazette*, 15 May 1997, available 10 February 2003 at <http://www.hno.harvard.edu/gazette/1997/05.15/FacultyofArtsan.html>. List of Core Courses available 12 February 2003 at <http://www.registrar.fas.harvard.edu/Courses>.
[\[Back\]](#)
 22. Andrea Shen, "Discussing the Core Curriculum," *Harvard University Gazette*, 14 November 2002, available 10 February 2003 at <http://www.hno.harvard.edu/gazette/2002/11.14/11-core.html>.[\[Back\]](#)

23. UM was under the quarter system then, and there were actually 786 quarter courses. I have converted them for comparability into semester equivalents, sacrificing some accuracy to intelligibility.
[\[Back\]](#)
24. Core Program available 10 February 2003 at http://icg.harvard.edu/~core/redbook_2002.html.[\[Back\]](#)
25. *Greater Expectations: National Panel Report* (Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002), 25.[\[Back\]](#)
26. See note 21 for reference.[\[Back\]](#)
27. Bijal P. Trivedi, "Survey Reveals Geographic Illiteracy," *National Geographic News*, available 25 November 2002 at http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2002/11/1120_021120_GeoRoperSurvey.html. For historical illiteracy, see Caren Benjamin (AP), "Students Find U.S. History a Foreign Topic," *Missoulian*, 28 June 2000, A1.[\[Back\]](#)
28. Rosovsky, 105-6.[\[Back\]](#)
29. Brittan, 6.[\[Back\]](#)
30. I am indebted to Richard Walton for helpful comments.[\[Back\]](#)

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