

White Paper on Graduate and Undergraduate Programs
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It was a year ago this week that I met most of you for the first time at the reception held next door in Cunningham. While that day was a bit of a blur of faces and names, it marked the beginning of my reflections on the challenges and opportunities that would face our work together here at Point Loma.

My comments today are an attempt to do several things. At a minimum, this is the White Paper called for in the CPR recommendations (specifically responding to CFR 1.1 on Academic Freedom, and CFR 2.2 on Graduate Programs). Believe me; Keith Bell has heard several times about how excited I was to read the words "*the new Provost will*" in the WASC report! In completing my "assignment", these comments also attempt to raise questions and state positions that might help our continued conversations about academic life at Point Loma.

In unpacking these remarks, I am beginning at a broader level of abstraction that what would be required by the CPR. In other words, rather than beginning with the specific concerns raised in the data analysis of the Standard Two section (perceptions of support, nature of scholarship in graduate education, questions about adjunct usage and their orientation, etc) I want to begin with the largest question of institutional context and identity and work my way back to the other important issues.

Some of the ideas I'll explore today I have introduced in other contexts, at least in passing. Others are conversations I had with the search committee and the president

prior to coming to Point Loma. Yet others have come from reflections on the varieties of academic programs that have been a part of my professional journey to this point.

I want to begin with considerations of how we can articulate our common mission and identity as a Christian, Wesleyan, Californian, and Institution of the Church of the Nazarene. With that as a general context, I'll give some attention to our Regional Centers in Education and our Masters programs in Nursing, Business, Religion, and Biology. Third, I want to explore the relationship between the work of individual professors, departmental programs, and the curriculum as a whole. Within that context, I'll say a few things about the nature, opportunities, and limitations of academic freedom.

I'm still in what I'm calling my "*first time through things*" process. I'm offering myself some wiggle room in that because I may well find that my first read missed some significant realities. I also expect you to have questions, disagreements, challenges, or alternative views that will require us to remain in dialogue on these issues for some time to come.

And because this is only the beginning of a dialogue, you should not expect to hear any promises in these remarks that will constitute a de jure explication of The Way Things Will Be. For that matter, I need to point out that I'm not bound by similar promises my predecessors may have made at this podium. In other words, my thoughts today are meant to suggest a general direction for us to head ("*Go West Young Man*" and not a Garmin StreetPilot "*turn left in 3 tenths of a mile and go for 1.4 miles*").

1. Our Educational Context: Over the past quarter century, the world of higher education has changed dramatically. That time period has seen tremendous fluctuations

in traditional undergraduate enrollments as the Baby Boomlet came and went. The percentage of females has increased in universities across the nation. Interest in professionally oriented education has consistently increased as the costs of living (especially of college tuitions) have focused students and parents on their potential earning power.

Expectations placed on faculty members have grown as have expectations faculty members have of their institutions. Faculty members have to be professionally trained, doctorally qualified, and committed to scholarship, excellent teachers, great mentors, statisticians, governance experts, and media consultants. The institutions are expected to place faculty governance, clear decision making processes, and transparency at the heart of administrative lives. What a far cry from the days Kirkemo describes where President Wiley saw himself as the head professor who was also the sole decision maker.

Graduate programs, once the property of state research universities, have exploded among the smallest institutions. Degree completion programs, once found on military bases and in airplane magazines, became reputable offerings accredited by regional accrediting bodies (who would have imagined that the University of Phoenix would be easily accredited by North Central!). Today they can be found at a surprising number of mission-driven liberal arts institutions. Institutions built relationships with other institutions and began experiments in disparate campus locations.

Organizational structures became more complex as a result of increasing specialization, professionalization, and pursuit of programmatic accreditation. Academic Deans became Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs who became Provosts. A cadre of

full time faculty became surrounded by a team of adjuncts with differing levels of loyalty to the institution.

In response to governmental pressures, the regional accrediting bodies introduced us to the idea of assessment. No longer was it sufficient to simply demonstrate that an institution had the right kind of inputs and resources (except to US News and World Report) but instead that institution must be able to show that it makes a difference in the lives of its students. (I wish I could take the time to explore where the belief that this had to be demonstrated came from but I'll leave that for another time).

As I read about our sister institutions, both within the Church of the Nazarene and outside, I see colleges and universities pulled in many different directions. The possibility of silo mentalities, by program or by location or by degree, seems to require constant vigilance. Finding common language around mission, meaningful organizational structure, shared ethos, and planned future is otherwise blocked by these inabilities to see the world in the same way.

By now many of you will point out that the portrait I have painted doesn't describe all institutions. There are, you observe, places like Westmont and Messiah that have resisted some of these innovations of the last 25 years. And I would agree.

But our story has never been quite the same as those outliers to the general trends I have described. We launched our first Masters program in religion in the 1940s, the Masters of Education in the 1960s and the Masters of Ministry in the 1980s. In fact our first experiences with regionally based education occurred when we left the MAE behind in Pasadena in 1973. We have consistently sought to balance professionally oriented programs and our commitment to a common core of liberal arts courses.

As I look at the environmental context and read what other schools are confronting, I am deeply encouraged by how well our systems are working. In reading the list serves of the Council of Independent Colleges and attending their annual conference, I'm often amazed at how other institutions are raising questions we settled long ago. It has allowed me to share from what we've learned on several occasions. For example, last month Maggie Bailey and I participated in a conference call with graduate program leaders at another CIC institution who were trying to figure out how to handle governance within their several graduate programs. Our VPGS model was something they were looking for. In this way, explaining what we are doing well institutionally is a significant part of what Prominence and Voice can be all about.

2. Our Common Understandings: As I have entered the Point Loma community, I have been encouraged at how the core understandings of the university show up in regular conversation. While the full mission statement is an excellent statement of educational identity, it seems to be well represented in the shorthand, "Teach, Shape, and Send". What we haven't explored as much is the concomitant commitment of "Learn, Grow, and Go". It is these paired triads that become the basis for the linguistic devices that tie all of our programs together.

Our common mission as educators, at any level, should call us to a concern about the impact we have on our students. At the very least, we are asking our students to develop the commitment to be active partners in their growth. And there are many times when we are aware of our own Learning, Growing, and Going (or service), sometimes because our students are the ones Teaching, Shaping, and Sending.

Let me explore a couple of implications this raises for me. First, the role of scholarship in service of teaching rises to a point of significance. It is because we are learners ourselves that we teach others. To teach is not to simply proclaim what is known. It is to experiment with the very ideas that are the subject matter of our courses. We are all committed to scholarship in its varied forms because it puts us in the place of learners enthused and changed by the subject matter we love. And we share that scholarly activity with others at conferences and in our writing because we want to share the learning in which we're engaged.

Ernie Boyer's four forms of scholarship help us see that the approaches to teaching and learning are as varied as the subject matter we confront. The point of scholarship is not a count of quick publications on one's vita but an ongoing attitude of exploration accompanied by the discipline of recording what you learn and then sharing that with others. This exploration will take a different form in a nursing or business program than it will in literature or theology, but we all have the exploration in common. If we are learners together in our teaching, then the scholarship of teaching and learning is something that could distinguish us in all disciplines, but especially in our graduate education programs. What a wonderful opportunity to have all of your students sharing from different classroom experiences and different techniques! Consider the possibilities of actually tracking growth in a teacher's self-efficacy over time! Those of you in education could partner with your colleagues in other disciplines to develop metrics to test hypotheses about what constitutes "shaping". Why, it could even make assessment seem worthwhile!

What I am suggesting here is that our teaching and scholarship are formalized activities constituting our institutional mission and our shared identity. It is these common understandings that form the basis of our life as a faculty body.

Of course, even these grandiose ideas contain a structural contradiction. Our individual scholarship, when separated from our common identity as a faculty, runs the risk of committing our allegiance to the Guilds above our colleagues. If when we do our work we find our audience drawn to a handful of disembodied specialists living in journals occasionally becoming manifest at professional conferences, we run the risk of moving away from our common identity as teacher/scholars. The correction is to keep our focus on the teaching/learning pairing. To divorce either of the pair from its partner is to engage in the kinds of work that create separation within the community.

3. Our Commitment to Graduate Education: You were probably wondering if I was ever going to get to the purpose of the CPR assignment. I could have jumped in earlier, but I felt it was important to set a broad context.

First, some comments about our graduate programs -- especially those located off the Point. For those of us who have joined the community in the last four years (and that's over 60 folks) we may not be aware of the rapid growth of graduate programs. Pasadena moved to Arcadia, we started Bakersfield, added the MBA, the MSN, the Inland Empire, and the BioMasters. These happened because creative people who were passionate about their subject matter saw a need and were committed to fill it. They received encouragement from the university, but maybe didn't always get as much attention as they deserved. Sometimes we treated them like missionaries heading off to

a foreign land; remember them in our prayers and send the occasional Christmas card. But it's not clear that there was a common identity the way we should have shared it.

The separations created by location, time of day, nature of the student population, and structure of the program contributed to a sense that the graduate programs are different from what the rest of us do. It also added to a fast paced series of changes that made it seem like things in graduate education were always in flux.

What started under Darrell's leadership and has continued over the last nine months is the development of a sense of system to graduate education. A large number of people have engaged in difficult negotiations to move us from isolated programs toward common definitions and processes. This progress (especially in education) started through the hard work of those in the Regional Centers and has catalyzed in the last six weeks as Maggie has stepped into the VPGS role. Over the next year, I hope we can do similar analyses in our current programs and chart the protocols for conversations about future programs.

There is still more work to do in graduate programs. We need to move our thinking from simply offering classes to building programs. This will enable us to move from focusing on the minimums to break even and have the confidence to think about mature programs.

We need to learn how to project expected enrollments so that we can develop our five year plans and then work the plans. This will protect us from surprises on the downside and the temptation of "*chasing rainbows*" on the upside. As we communicate a clear sense of how decisions are made, a stronger sense of transparency and shared knowledge will result.

As we learn to work in five to seven year planning horizons, we will be able to make good choices about the balance between adjunct and full time instruction. Better long-range planning will allow us to insure that our assessment methods in graduate programs demonstrate our common commitments to teaching, shaping, and sending.

4. Program Planning, Assessment, and Quality Enhancement: What I've described in graduate programs has direct parallels in all of our work together. A Point Loma education is the sum total of our common endeavors and cannot be reduced to a single program's strengths and weaknesses.

Here is a direct implication of the enrollment cap that I have been wrestling with over the past 12 months. In an expanding institution, one argues for program expansion by estimating the new students such an innovation would bring thereby showing that it has an excellent return on investment. It's a standard modernist economic explanation of institutional development. If Program X can gain 15 undergraduates by doing Y and Z, we should certainly do it. Institutional viability and visibility are the natural result.

But the cap creates a zero-sum game. Program X is only going to get those 15 students because last year they were majoring in Program D. There won't be any more students and therefore no more revenue to invest (except for the relatively small incremental impacts of tuition increases).

I don't have all this figured out yet, but I'm beginning to think that the new model of program planning involves articulation of impact on enhanced student learning. This is one of the new mantras of WASC and according to a letter we received from Ralph Wolff (WASC executive director) the new mantra of federal regulators. As I said in

November, addressing questions like these in our own strength of mission is far preferable to having it forced from outside.

As a result, the assessment movement and the program review process become more important than ever. When we say we are moving to a culture of evidence, it is the reality of asking the question “what difference did this make?”. But the fact that it is the new mantra from outside is of limited relevance when Point Loma’s approach to program planning is tied up in improved quality of learning. We aren’t concerned about outcomes because THEY said we had to be, but because it’s our primary metric of institutional mission. It’s a poor analogy, but what I’m describing is related to the difference between the church growth movement and the church health movement. The former is interested in how we can reach new (hopefully unchurched) people for the kingdom while the latter is focused on what happens to them in terms of discipleship over time.

There is an additional implication of an approach to program development on the basis of quality and not simply inputs and outputs. That implication is that we are in this together. Our common commitment to mission and our understanding of our environment leads us to be responsible for each other’s programs. The biology department has an interest in what the School of Business is doing. The Bakersfield Regional Center is committed to what is happening in the School of Theology. It almost starts to sound like the Apostle Paul talking about the church as the Body of Christ.

5. The Meaning of Academic Freedom: The CPR suggested that we need to spend time thinking together about the nature of academic freedom. The current statement in the faculty handbook does an interesting job of balancing freedom and

responsibility. It states that a faculty member is free to teach one's subject or conduct one's research in a manner demanded by one's expertise. At the same time, it counters that freedom with a reminder of the importance of discretion, compassion, and context in one's craft.

The other night I saw a debate on C-Span between David Horowitz (author of *The Professors*) and Cary Nelson (AAUP president and literature professor at Illinois). They largely talked past each other. Horowitz seemed overly concerned with professors espousing political views students found offensive and especially those when the grade depended on aligning one's views with the professor. Nelson argued that there are many safeguards within higher education that make Horowitz's view extreme.

I found myself thinking that the debate wasn't about academic freedom at all. It was about faculty members who thought the center of the educational enterprise was located on the podium directly in front of them. It was about students who were not committed to being learners, willing to grow and go, but who wanted to become "educated" without being challenged in their previous views.

The question of academic freedom arises when one is prevented from expressing one's legitimate views about a topic in one's expertise. That prevention may come from external forces who don't understand the nature of academic life, for whom having easy answers to simple questions is the path to holiness.

Academic freedom does not guarantee one the right to use whatever book one wants if it detracts from overall departmental or institutional goals. It doesn't allow a professor to take pride in attacking a freshman's naiveté. It does not give one the right to say whatever is on one's mind to colleagues. (Alexander Astin has argued that much

of what passes for academic discourse is an exercise in proving one is smarter than the other people in the room – I had a colleague at an earlier institution who was a master at this!).

One of the things we were talking about in the Wesleyan lunch yesterday is the importance of intellectual humility. This arises out of Wesley's recognition that our assurance of the Spirit doesn't free us from error. As Lodahl pointed out, it's more frequently the Spirit who points out our error and calls us to repent and build relationship.

It is in our collective commitment to our craft that we find our academic freedom. This means that we each are promising to bring all of ourselves -- as teachers and learners, shapers and growers, senders and goers -- into community.

I am very proud of how this institution and its administration has worked to stand alongside those whose research has taken them to places that some outside the institution don't understand. It is incumbent on us collectively and me personally to do the hard work of educating our various publics on the true meaning of our task. Some of you know I tried to do this in a small way this year around the topic of Christian feminism. The complainer wasn't impressed by the brilliance of my argument but it was excellent practice for me to be able to articulate the values of the individual professors within the context of our commonality as a Christian academic community.

I recognize that my attempt to construct a communitarian approach to academic freedom may not feel satisfactory to an individual who feels under attack, as one of my former colleagues is today. But I remain convinced that it is in the strength of our common endeavor that we find our individual freedom.

There is still work to do. I believe that those who have suggested that the handbook could be reviewed in this area are probably right (and the Provost's Council can tell you that I have my own list of handbook ideas). I will work to educate the academic affairs committee of the board on what academic freedom means, what it doesn't mean, and what to do when issues arise.

6. Conclusion: This point about our collective commitments to one another is at the heart of what I wanted to say today. It's where our strength as an academic institution can be found, in the classical meaning of a collegium. We will face new opportunities that we can only begin to imagine today. That should not be a point of concern. New possibilities and new constructs do not, in and of themselves, threaten the identity of the university. Together we are a resilient bunch. As we stay in dialogue with one another we find that our commitments to teach, shape, and send give birth to our commitments to learn, grow, and go. For goodness sake, how many places can move an entire university seventy miles and strengthen their identity in the process? It happened because our common commitments, supported by the Spirit of God in our midst, kept us from fear and division. At the end of the day, we were able to rest in our confidence in God's leading. It is that same confidence that will continue us along the journey together.

So Keith should be pleased that he can cross two of the 83 recommendations off his list. But these thoughts do provide the context for our ongoing work together. We will discuss them for some time to come. But let's get a start in our remaining time today. I welcome your questions and comments...