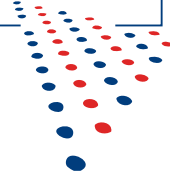


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CHAPTER

5

**“Education’s End” and the
Spirit of Philanthropy**

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“Education’s End” and the Spirit of Philanthropy

Judge Ken Starr: President & Chancellor of Baylor University

What is the purpose of a college education? Every institution of higher learning rightly asks and continuously re-visits this enduring question. Competing voices in the marketplace of ideas suggest a wide range of potential answers. These days, responses tend to cluster around highly practical goals. Most freshmen entering college today, along with their parents, appear to be more concerned with getting a post-graduation job—and a high-paying one at that—as opposed to discovering the meaning of lives well lived and the formation of character (Levine & Dean, 2011).

Even with recent encouraging news on the job front, these instrumentalist concerns are entirely understandable. Growing income disparities further highlight and exacerbate the problem. At the same time, thoughtful voices suggest that we would do well in higher education to try to focus more intentionally on first principles. Ancient and critical questions emerge: What does it mean to be human? What is the good life? What is the meaning of happiness? Why am I here?

Many informed observers have taken note of this existential shift toward collegiate pragmatism—a shift toward a transactional versus a transformational set of educational goals. In his haunting book *Education’s End* (2007), Anthony Kronman, former dean of Yale Law School, writes, “Why did the question of what living is for disappear from the roster of questions our colleges and universities address in a deliberate and disciplined way?” (p. 7). In like manner, Harry Lewis (2006), former dean of Harvard College, also comments, “The greater the university... the less likely it is to talk seriously to students about their development into people of good character who will know that they owe something to society for the privileged education they have received” (p. xii).

What to do? Higher education authorities Astin, Astin, and Lindholm (2011) seek to address how colleges and universities can prepare their students to understand fundamental issues of human existence. They write, “seeking answers to these questions is... directly relevant to the development of personal qualities such as self-understanding, empathy, caring, and social responsibility” (p. 1). This is the stuff of transformational, rather than transactional education.

“Focusing on philanthropy—especially through experiential learning—is not only the right thing to do, but it also helps prepare our students for productive, global citizenship, and has actually been linked to inspiring success.”



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Consider the concept of neighborly love and concern—a value at the core of human philanthropy. The earliest known usage of the term “philanthropy” is in Aeschylus’ play *Prometheus Bound* (written in 481 BC). Kratos, the titan of power, describes Prometheus as philanthropic, for he loved humanity and thus gave the gift of fire (Aeschylus 11). In Plato’s *Euthyphro*, Socrates describes himself as philanthropic, which he deemed an admirable quality (Euthyphro 3d). This *love of mankind* becomes one of the central ideas of Plato’s Academy, from which we of course derive the term *academic*. Warmly hospitable, the Academy cheerfully maintained an open door. Teaching was given to any and all who sought to learn.

Payton and Moody (2008) write, “The study of philanthropy takes us back to the core ideas of liberal education. Consequently, liberal education is grounded in the classic notion of education for responsible citizenship and the good life—that is, for participation as a citizen in the good society. The end of liberal education is preparation for action in society. The study of philanthropy, then, is pertinent to liberal education precisely because it examines the role of good works in shaping the good society and the good life” (p. 170).

At a foundational level, today’s college students would be well served by reflecting on basic principles of others-directed generosity—with one’s time, talent, and treasure. Happily, instead of simply listening to a lecture or reading a textbook, experiential learning opportunities are increasingly available—and increasingly attractive in our global, interconnected society. Dr. Andrew Hogue, a creative member of the Baylor faculty, took the initiative by launching a course designed to deepen students’ theoretical and practical understanding of philanthropy. Through the generosity of a private foundation, Dr. Hogue’s inaugural course received \$100,000, which the students distributed (after careful study and analysis) among deserving non-profit organizations in the local community. Entitled *Philanthropy and the Public Good*, this Baylor course allows students to cultivate a philanthropic spirit through hands-on experience. The course’s benefactor was inspired by the idea of a learning laboratory with the mission of instilling the spirit of generosity in the hearts of university students.

Here’s the way it works. The students are divided into research groups covering various categories of human need, ranging from health and wellness to hunger and homelessness. As part of the course, the groups conduct site visits—interviewing executive directors and key staff members. They look into the eyes of the clients themselves—into the very faces of those whom Jesus called “the least of these” (Mat. 25:40, New International Version). After their field work, the groups then report back to their colleagues with respective analyses and recommendations as to whether to provide financial support. Through vigorous dialogue, the seminar students collectively take up the vital task of actually allocating the funds. Appropriately, Dr. Hogue serves as an ex-officio member of the seminar’s board of directors.

The experiment in philanthropy proved to be an enormous success. In reflecting on this pioneer effort, Dr. Hogue said, “There was a deep sense of understanding that philanthropy isn’t something old rich guys do, but something that is for all of us” (Arnold, 2015).

Demand for a seat in Dr. Hogue’s seminar exploded. Responding to the rapidly-burgeoning interest, Dr. Hogue introduced a competitive application process for the second semester. With demand booming (including with students who had already completed the course) another supplementary course was created. This advanced seminar allows seasoned students the opportunity to mentor their peers—guiding them through the complexities of analyzing and selecting the recipient organizations. The students’ responsiveness presents Baylor with a valuable opportunity to begin implementing other means of exploring the cultivation of the spirit of philanthropy. Dr. Hogue has now taken to fundraising in hopes of turning this experimental class into a long-term commitment to our community. As one student put it, “Philanthropy isn’t just something that starts when you graduate. We really can change lives now” (Arnold, 2015).



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Experiential learning in philanthropy is entirely consistent with what 21st century higher education can be all about. A review of approximately 50 mission statements yielded several commonly-shared concepts and themes. Unsurprisingly, the word “knowledge” is used most often—some 40 times—in these statements. Other frequently-employed words include:

- commitment;
- community;
- educate;
- equip; and
- service.

This thematic similarity lends itself to the framing of a universal mission statement for American colleges and universities: *Our mission is to foster a community committed to creating, preserving, and disseminating knowledge in order to equip students to be productive, global citizens.*

This view is evident in Baylor’s mission statement: “...to educate men and women for worldwide leadership and service by integrating academic excellence and Christian commitment within a caring community” (Baylor University).

Why should we encourage philanthropy? Just because it’s the right thing to do? Focusing on philanthropy—especially through experiential learning—is not only the right thing to do, but it also helps prepare our students for productive, global citizenship, and has actually been linked to inspiring success. Dr. Adam Grant (2013), professor in The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania wrote this in his *New York Times* bestselling book, *Give and Take*, “Although we often stereotype givers as chumps and doormats, they turn out to be surprisingly successful” (p. 9). Not only does being generous breed success, it also has a positive impact on those around you. Grant writes, “Givers succeed in a way that creates a ripple effect, enhancing the success of people around them” (p. 10).

Every institution wants its alumni (with the utmost sincerity and purity) to ask the consummate question: what can we do to help? In my tenure of servant-leadership at Baylor University, I have heard this sweet inquiry several times and have searched for an answer that would touch the heart of the asker. More important than the answer, though, was the impetus of the question—which did not appear with the fading eyesight and graying hair of the inquirer. The motivation was seated in the asker’s spirit. Thus the answer was to be mutually beneficial to the institution as well as the donor—so all parties had something to love and nurture for years to come.

This suggests that the dominant transactional ethos in the rising generation can be leavened—and enlivened—by the culturally rich heritage of philanthropy. And that, in no small part, will help recapture the spirit of what can be—to draw from Anthony Kronman—education’s true and noble end.



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Judge Ken Starr, a distinguished academician, lawyer, public servant and sixth-generation Texan, serves as the chief executive officer of Baylor University holding the titles of President and Chancellor. In 2010 Judge Starr became the 14th person to serve as Baylor University's president and was named president and chancellor in 2013. The additional title, charged him with the task of increasing Baylor's influence in the nation and around the world.

Judge Starr serves on the faculty of Baylor Law School as The Louise L. Morrison Chair of Constitutional Law and teaches a seminar on current Constitutional issues. He is a board member of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU), Baylor College of Medicine, and Baylor Scott & White Health, and serves as President of the Southern University Conference.

In 2010, Judge Starr established his first fundraising priority: The President's Scholarship Initiative, a three-year challenge to raise \$100 million for student scholarships which was completed five months ahead of its goal. He leads Baylor into the future under Pro Futuris, a new strategic vision developed with the collective wisdom of the extended Baylor family.

Judge Starr has argued 36 cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, including 25 cases during his service as Solicitor General of the United States from 1989-93. From 1973 to 1983 he served as United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit, and as law clerk to Chief Justice Warren E. Burger and the Fifth Circuit Judge David W. Dyer. Starr was appointed as Independent Counsel for five investigations, including Whitewater, from 1994 to 1999.

Prior to Baylor, Judge Starr served for six years as The Duane and Kelly Roberts Dean and Professor of Law at Pepperdine, teaching current constitutional issues and civil procedure. He served as counsel to the law firm of Kirkland & Ellis LLP, and a partner from 1993 to 2004, specializing in appellate work, antitrust, federal courts, federal jurisdiction, and constitutional law. Judge Starr taught constitutional law at New York University School of Law, George Mason University School of Law, and Chapman Law School. He practices in California, the District of Columbia, Virginia, and the U.S. Supreme Court.

Judge Starr, author of more than 25 publications, including *First Among Equals: The Supreme Court in American Life*, published in 2002, was praised by U.S. Circuit Judge David B. Sentelle as "eminently readable and informative...not just the best treatment to-date of the Court after (Chief Justice Earl) Warren, it is likely to have that distinction for a long, long time."

