

## **The Good Work Project Survey**

Sponsored by the Claremont Graduate University,  
Harvard University, and Stanford University

### **Draft December 6, 2004**

In fall 2004, De Anza College was invited to be one of 10 institutions to participate in a national survey identifying Good Work in higher education. The survey of students was a follow up to focus group discussions with De Anza College instructors in fall 2003. While official results from the survey will not be published until the spring of 2005, raw data was provided to De Anza College in November. The information is preliminary and should not be cited until officially released in the spring. Only selected tables are included below.

The fall survey of students used a random sample of registered students. The following criteria were used to derive the sample:

- 1) enrolled in the fall 2004 quarter as of October 9 attempting 3 units +
  - 2) had earned between 30 and 100 units prior to the fall quarter
  - 3) had a valid email address on file
  - 4) of the 6,036 – selected every 5<sup>th</sup> student (sorted by SID) for a sample of 2,360.
- 369 responses were received as of November 16. The 16% response rate was considered good for an email survey.

### **Respondents**

Based on the limited demographic information, it is not clear whether the survey respondents are representative of the overall college population.

- 93% of respondents had attended De Anza College for 4 or more quarters.
- 70% were single and had never been married.
- 42% indicated White for ethnic background.
- 96% indicated a current GPA of a C+ or higher.
- 60% were full time.
- 42% indicated that English was NOT their native (first) language.
- 31% of mothers and 24% of fathers had attended high school or less.

### **Preliminary Selected Results** (see tables below)

- 82% of respondents rated the entire educational experience at De Anza College as Good or Excellent.
- 81% responded either “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” that De Anza contributed to their development in “Acquiring knowledge and skills in specific fields.”
- 65% responded either “Not at All” or “Somewhat” that De Anza contributed to their development in “Contributing to your community, becoming a good citizen.”
- 82% responded either “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” that De Anza provided “Help in achieving your educational/professional goals.”
- 76% responded either “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” that De Anza provided “Intellectual challenge and stimulation.”
- 50% or of respondents answered “Not at all” or “Somewhat” that De Anza provided stimulating peers or friend who will be good to know in the future.

## How important to you is each of the goals listed below?

	N	Not Import.	Some what Import.	Quite Import.	Extrem. Import.
1 Acquiring knowledge and skills in specific fields	365	1%	5%	26%	68%
2 Understanding yourself and your goals better	363	2%	8%	33%	58%
3 Getting a good job	363	3%	7%	23%	67%
4 Developing leadership skills	360	6%	24%	34%	35%
5 Being challenged to reach excellence	364	3%	12%	42%	43%
6 Developing a personal code of values and ethics	361	6%	14%	34%	46%
7 Acquiring a broad liberal arts education	362	14%	31%	33%	22%
8 Preparing to actively transform society for the better	359	9%	22%	36%	33%
9 Learning to find contentment, happiness, satisfaction in your life	361	4%	7%	27%	63%
10 Getting to know students from different backgrounds	361	13%	32%	34%	21%
11 Getting up to speed academically	360	6%	15%	40%	39%
12 Making schoolwork relevant to your life	362	4%	20%	37%	39%
13 Learning to work with others	359	6%	21%	38%	35%
14 Getting the preparation needed for later academic success	359	3%	10%	33%	54%
15 Contributing to your community, becoming a good citizen	361	7%	23%	39%	32%
16 Pursuing your intellectual curiosity, getting to enjoy learning	360	2%	9%	33%	56%
17 Learning to think critically	363	2%	12%	33%	53%

## How much does your school contribute to your development in each area?

	N	Not at all	Some what	Quite a bit	Very much
1 Acquiring knowledge and skills in specific fields	360	1%	18%	50%	31%
2 Understanding yourself and your goals better	359	10%	36%	37%	17%
3 Getting a good job	469	10%	30%	48%	12%
4 Developing leadership skills	359	14%	43%	33%	9%
5 Being challenged to reach excellence	459	5%	26%	56%	13%
6 Developing a personal code of values and ethics	358	16%	37%	36%	11%
7 Acquiring a broad liberal arts education	351	13%	29%	44%	14%
8 Preparing to actively transform society for the better	356	16%	38%	34%	11%
9 Learning to find contentment, happiness, satisfaction in your life	357	15%	41%	31%	14%
10 Getting to know students from different backgrounds	356	9%	28%	39%	24%
11 Getting up to speed academically	357	8%	30%	47%	15%
12 Making schoolwork relevant to your life	355	12%	35%	41%	13%
13 Learning to work with others	353	9%	30%	46%	15%
14 Getting the preparation needed for later academic success	352	5%	22%	49%	24%
15 Contributing to your community, becoming a good citizen	354	21%	44%	28%	8%
16 Pursuing your intellectual curiosity, getting to enjoy learning	357	5%	30%	44%	22%
17 Learning to think critically	357	6%	26%	48%	20%

## To what extent does the school provide each of the following?

	N	Not at all	Some what	Quite a bit	Very much	NA
1 Intellectual challenge and stimulation	351	1%	22%	51%	26%	4%
2 Help in achieving your educational/professional goals	358	1%	16%	46%	36%	2%
3 Making friends who will be good to know in the future	339	16%	42%	27%	15%	7%
4 Availability of faculty	348	5%	26%	45%	25%	4%
5 A beautiful campus environment	353	5%	31%	39%	25%	3%
6 Getting to know students from different backgrounds	341	6%	26%	38%	31%	6%
7 Role models for an intellectually engaged life	312	13%	43%	30%	14%	16%
8 A winning sports team	185	47%	34%	14%	5%	93%
9 Help in adjusting (living on your own, finding a niche)	265	32%	37%	22%	10%	36%
10 Stimulating peers	308	16%	39%	36%	9%	17%
11 Up-to-date technology	342	3%	20%	52%	25%	5%
12 Emotional support and encouragement	288	20%	43%	27%	10%	25%
13 A prestigious degree	313	17%	35%	32%	17%	16%
14 The kinds of people you would like to date	241	36%	35%	20%	10%	50%
15 A value system consistent with your own (religious, cultural)	249	27%	34%	28%	11%	44%
16 Encouragement to dream big dreams	319	15%	29%	33%	23%	13%
17 A sense of community at your school	325	13%	32%	38%	17%	12%
18 Extra-curricular activities	260	19%	35%	28%	19%	39%
19 Recreational facilities	270	19%	39%	31%	11%	33%



## Student Bulletin

Dear Andrew,

We value your opinion of De Anza College and invite you to participate in a survey about your college experiences. You have been randomly selected as part of a small sample of students.

For about 15 minutes of your time, you can tell us what you think and enter into a drawing for a \$100 Amazon.com gift certificate!

The survey is sponsored by the joint Claremont Graduate University, Harvard University, and Stanford University Project on Good Work in an effort to find out what is and is not working for students. Your answers will help De Anza College serve you better. To share your experiences, please click on the link provided below:

<http://www.zoomerang.com/survey.zgi?p=>

**All information on the survey is kept confidential; we will only be looking at the collective data and not individual responses.**

Thanks for taking the time to voice your opinion.

De Anza College

(Please allow 6-10 seconds for survey to load)

# GoodWork<sup>®</sup> Project

## The De Anza Student Survey - Fall 2004

Thank you very much for participating in the Good Work Project. The survey will ask about your expectations, goals, and experiences in relation to De Anza Community College.

**Students at several different schools are completing the survey; if an item does not apply to you, please select "N/A".**

Your responses will be kept confidential. Please take your time to answer each question as accurately as possible: your input is critical. Participation is limited to students who have attended De Anza for at least one year.



### The Good Work Project Consent Form

*For questions about the study, contact: William Damon, Center on Adolescence, Stanford University, Cypress Building C, Stanford, California, 94305-4145. 650-725-8205.*

**Description:** *I agree to participate voluntarily in a research study of student experiences in outstanding institutions of higher education. The project is intended to be of benefit to society by advancing knowledge. I understand that my participation is confidential. I may skip any question and/or decide not to complete the survey. I will not receive payment for my participation in the study but I can choose to be entered in a raffle.*

**Risks and Benefits:** *There are no risks associated with this study.*

**Participant's rights:** *I have read this form and if I decide to participate, my participation is voluntary, and I have the right to withdraw my consent or discontinue at any time without penalty. I may decline to answer any questions and/or terminate my participation in the survey at any time without reservation whatsoever. My individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from this study, unless I give written permission to use my name.*

*If I have any questions about my rights as a study participant, or am dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, I may contact - anonymously, if I wish - the Administrative Panels Office, Stanford University, Stanford, CA (USA) 94305-5401 (or by phone (650) 723-2480 - I may call collect).*

Please print a copy of this consent form for your records.

**Protocol Approval Date:** 9/24/04

May 26, 2004

Martha J. Kanter, Chancellor  
Foothill-De Anza Community College District  
12345 El Monte Road  
Los Altos Hills, CA 94022

Dear Chancellor Kanter,

You may remember the study of “Good Work” in higher education that we have been conducting over the past several years. In 2001, you spoke with Susan Verducci and Jeanne Nakamura, research associates involved in this study, regarding Good Work at De Anza. That conversation contributed to Phase I of the study, which involved interviews with administrators, faculty and staff at each school. The September/October issue of Change magazine, which is enclosed with this letter, is just one of the pieces that have been informed by the research from this first segment of our study. As a result of the success of Phase I, we have been fortunate to be able to move into a new stage of the study, focusing on the experiences of students. We are writing to see whether you might wish to help us in this next step.

To review the project, over the past four years, research teams at Harvard, Stanford and Claremont Graduate University, under the guidance of Howard Gardner, William Damon and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi respectively, have studied schools that have attained and maintained excellence over time. (A profile of the three principal investigators is attached.) As previously mentioned, Phase I of this study focused on the insight of administrators, faculty and staff at each school. In Phase II, we will be exploring the alignment between the school’s educational goals and the students’ impressions of how their experiences reflect the achievement of these goals. The input from students is intended to allow institutions of higher education, students, and the community of educational researchers to better understand how a variety of educational goals are realized for undergraduates. We intend to conduct a brief survey of approximately 200 juniors and seniors at each of the ten institutions that were involved in Phase I of the project. The survey will be at no cost to the institutions, and may be administered via the web or with traditional paper and pencil methods.

We will be contacting your office shortly in the hopes that we may schedule a quick conversation with you to discuss the possibility of De Anza’s continued participation in the project, and to ask your guidance regarding how best to proceed. We understand that congratulations are in order for recently naming M. Brian Murphy as De Anza’s third president, and that this is undoubtedly a busy time at the college. If you are agreeable to the study, we will of course take your lead on proceeding in the manner most convenient to the college and its members. Liza Percer will contact your office at the beginning of next week to answer any questions that you may have and to discuss the possibility of De Anza’s participation in Phase II of the study. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact her at 650-725-9457 or [percerc@stanford.edu](mailto:percerc@stanford.edu). We would like to thank you once again for the help that you have extended to us so far, and to offer our thanks in advance for considering how we might continue our work with you.

With all best wishes,  
Bill Damon  
Principal Investigator

Liza Percer  
Research Associate

August 25, 2004

Stanford Project on Good Work  
Center for Adolescence, Cypress Hall C  
Stanford University  
Stanford, Ca 94305

In order to assist the educational researchers from the Stanford Project on Good Work in conducting a survey which will provide information useful for improving institutional performance, De Anza College will email a sample of enrolled students in the fall of 2004.

De Anza College will be one of 10 institutions involved in the survey. The research study will be exploring the alignment between the school's educational goals and the students' impressions of how their experiences reflect the achievement of these goals. The input from students is intended to allow institutions of higher education, students, and the community of educational researchers to better understand how a variety of educational goals are realized for undergraduates.

De Anza College will select a random sample of at least 1,000 upper level students (to ensure at least 200 responses) and email them with the link for the survey. The email may outline the potential usefulness of the survey for the accreditation self study process as a way soliciting a higher response from students. The email will be shared with the Stanford Project on Good Works before it is sent in October.

The Stanford Project on Good Work agrees that individual student responses will remain confidential and that student emails addresses will only be used for the purpose of the survey. The aggregate results of survey questions will be provided to De Anza College. The results, in which De Anza College is mentioned by name, may be cited in future publications.

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Liza Percer  
Stanford Project on Good Work  
Center on Adolescence, Cypress Hall C  
Stanford University  
Stanford, CA 94305

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Andrew LaManque  
De Anza College  
21250 Stevens Creek Blvd.  
Cupertino, Ca 95014

# Student Survey

Thank you very much for participating in the Good Work Project. Your input can help colleges and universities become better places for students. The survey will ask about your expectations, goals, and experiences in relation to <school name here>. Your responses will be kept confidential. Please take your time to answer each question as accurately as possible: your input is critical. Participation is limited to juniors who have attended this school for at least one year.

I agree to participate voluntarily. I may skip any question &/or decide not to complete the survey. I may choose to take part in a raffle by providing my contact information at the end of the completed survey.

## **Section A: General Information**

<School name here> can provide the general information in Section A, if you like. In that case, you do not need to fill it out yourself; please go directly to Section B.

I permit <school name here> to release the General Information in Section A.

• How many years have you attended this school?

< 1       1       2       3       4       5 or more

• Your sex:  Male       Female

• Your year of birth:      19 \_\_ \_\_

• Your marital status:       Single, never married       Married       Other  
 Living with partner       Separated or divorced

• Please indicate your ethnic background (mark all that apply) and your country of origin.

White/Caucasian       Mexican American/Chicano  
 African American/Black       Puerto Rican  
 American Indian/Alaska Native       Other Latino  
 Asian American/Asian       Other ethnic background  
 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

Country of origin (if USA, please state USA): \_\_\_\_\_

• Mark one box that best describes your undergraduate grade average:

A (3.75 – 4.0)       B-, C+ (2.25 – 2.74)  
 A-, B+ (3.25 – 3.74)       C or below (below 2.25)  
 B (2.75 – 3.24)       Other (e.g., pass/fail)

• Are you enrolled as a: (Mark one)

Full-time student?       Part-time student?

## Section B: Personal and Academic Goals

• How important to you is each of the goals listed below?

1 – not important  
2 – somewhat important  
3 – quite important  
4 – extremely important

- |                          |                          |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Acquiring knowledge and skills in specific fields                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Understanding yourself and your goals better                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Getting a good job   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Developing leadership skills                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Being challenged to reach excellence                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Developing a personal code of values and ethics                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Acquiring a broad liberal arts education                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. Preparing to actively transform society for the better             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. Learning to find contentment, happiness, satisfaction in your life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. Getting to know students from different backgrounds               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 11. Getting up to speed academically                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 12. Making schoolwork relevant to your life                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 13. Learning to work with others                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 14. Getting the preparation needed for later academic success         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 15. Contributing to your community, becoming a good citizen           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 16. Pursuing your intellectual curiosity, getting to enjoy learning   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 17. Learning to think critically                                      |

• From the list you just completed, which four goals are most important to you? Record the top four. (For ex.: If your top four goals include “Developing leadership skills,” enter 4 on the first line below; if they include “Getting a good job,” enter 3 on the second line; etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_

• Please indicate which one choice best describes the field in which you intend to pursue a career:

- Arts and Humanities
- Biological Science
- Business
- Education, Teaching
- Engineering/Applied Science
- Physical Science (math, chemistry, etc.)
- Medicine, Law, Architecture
- Nursing, Health Technology
- Social Science (government, economics, psychology, etc.)
- Technical (computer programming, drafting, etc.)
- Other

• If none of the choices above describes what you want to do for your career, please write the name of the job you intend to pursue:

\_\_\_\_\_

## Section C: Your College Experience

• This past year, approximately how much time did you spend during a typical week doing the following activities?  
(Mark one box in each row)

1 - None	2 - Less than 1 hour	3 - 1-5 hours	4 - 6-10 hours	5 - 11-15 hours	6 - 16-20 hours	7 - Over 20 hours	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Studying, homework						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Socializing (being w. friends/significant other, hanging out, partying, talking on phone)						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Exercising, sports (extra-curricular)						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Watching TV						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Performing music, visual arts, creative writing (extra-curricular)						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Working (for pay)						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer work, activism						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Classes, labs						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prayer, meditation, religious services						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Listening to music, reading for pleasure, going to museums, movies, concerts, etc.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Housework, caring for family members, eating, commuting						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal growth (reflection, etc.)						

• How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?

Poor       Fair       Good       Excellent

• What is it that makes your school a special place?

• To what extent does the school provide each of the following? Mark only those items that matter to you. For items you don't care about, mark "N/A."

N/A	1 - Not at all	2 - Somewhat	3 - Quite a bit	4 - Very much	
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Intellectual challenge and stimulation				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Help in achieving your educational/professional goals				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Making friends who will be good to know in the future				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Availability of faculty				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• A beautiful campus environment				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Help in learning to work with others from different backgrounds				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Role models for an intellectually engaged life				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• A winning sports team/recreational facilities				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Help in adjusting (living on your own, finding a niche)				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Stimulating peers				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Up-to-date technology				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Emotional support and encouragement				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• A prestigious degree				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• The kinds of people you would like to date				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• A value system consistent with your own (religious, cultural)				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Encouragement to dream big dreams				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• A sense of community at your school				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Extra-curricular activities				

## Section C: Your College Experience (continued)

• How much does your school contribute to your development in each area?

1 – Not at all	2 – Somewhat	3 – Quite a bit	4 – Very much	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Acquiring knowledge and skills in specific fields
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Understanding yourself and your goals better
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Getting a good job
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Developing leadership skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Being challenged to reach excellence
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Developing a personal code of values and ethics
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Acquiring a broad liberal arts education
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Preparing to actively transform society for the better
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9. Learning to find contentment, happiness, satisfaction in your life
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10. Getting to know students from different backgrounds
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11. Getting up to speed academically
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	12. Making schoolwork relevant to your life
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	13. Learning to work with others
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	14. Getting the preparation needed for later academic success
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	15. Contributing to your community, becoming a good citizen
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	16. Pursuing your intellectual curiosity, getting to enjoy learning
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	17. Learning to think critically

• In each of the contexts below, how often do you feel FULLY INVOLVED? Mark N/A if the item does not apply (for ex., if you do not have a job).

N/A	1 – Never	2 – Rarely	3 – Sometimes	4 – Often	
<input type="checkbox"/>	• In the classroom				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Doing homework				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• On campus outside of class				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• At job				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• At home				

• In each of the contexts below, how often do you feel BORED? Mark N/A if the item does not apply (for ex., if you do not have a job).

N/A	1 – Never	2 – Rarely	3 – Sometimes	4 – Often	
<input type="checkbox"/>	• In the classroom				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Doing homework				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• On campus outside of class				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• At job				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• At home				

**If you wish to stop at this point and receive one chance for the raffle, please skip to the end and complete Section D. However, you can help us enormously AND double your chances for the raffle by completing the next section of this survey.**

## Section C: Your College Experience (continued)

• In each of the contexts below, how often do you feel RELAXED? Mark N/A if the item does not apply (for ex., if you do not have a job).

N/A	1 – Never	2 – Rarely	3 – Sometimes	4 – Often	
<input type="checkbox"/>	• In the classroom				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Doing homework				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• On campus outside of class				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• At job				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• At home				

• In each of the contexts below, how often do you feel ANXIOUS? Mark N/A if the item does not apply (for ex., if you do not have a job).

N/A	1 – Never	2 – Rarely	3 – Sometimes	4 – Often	
<input type="checkbox"/>	• In the classroom				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Doing homework				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• On campus outside of class				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• At job				
<input type="checkbox"/>	• At home				

• What is the one thing that is most distinctive about the education that you are receiving at your school?

• For each area listed below, please indicate how important is it to your school's goals for students:

1 – Not important	2 – Somewhat Important	3 – Quite Important	4 – Extremely Important	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Acquiring knowledge and skills in specific fields
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Understanding yourself and your goals better
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Getting a good job
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Developing leadership skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Being challenged to reach excellence
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Developing a personal code of values and ethics
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Acquiring a broad liberal arts education
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Preparing to actively transform society for the better
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9. Learning to find contentment, happiness, satisfaction in your life
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10. Getting to know students from different backgrounds
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11. Getting up to speed academically
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	12. Making schoolwork relevant to your life
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	13. Learning to work with others
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	14. Getting the preparation needed for later academic success
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	15. Contributing to your community, becoming a good citizen
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	16. Pursuing your intellectual curiosity, getting to enjoy learning
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	17. Learning to think critically

## Section C: Your College Experience (continued)

• Who is the one person at your school who has influenced you the most? In what ways did s/he influence you?

• When you think about the most important things you have learned so far at this school, how influential has each of the following persons been?

- | 1 - Little or not at all | 2 - Somewhat             | 3 - Quite a bit          | 4 - Very much            |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | • Friends  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | • Classmates   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | • Teachers   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | • Other adults: coaches, clergy, etc. Please indicate who: _____ |

• What is the most important thing you have learned so far at this school?

• Is English your native (first) language?  Yes  No

• What is the highest level of education that your parent(s) completed? (Mark one box per column.)

- | Father                   | Mother                   |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | • High school or less                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | • Attended college but did not complete degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | • Bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S., etc.)         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | • Master's degree or higher                    |

• Do you ever feel worried that you may not be able to pay for your college education? (Please select one of the choices listed below)

- Never  Very rarely  Occasionally  Frequently  Almost all the time

• What qualities are students at your school expected to strive for? Do you agree or disagree with these expectations?

• Has attending this school affected your goals in life or changed you as a person?  Yes  No

If yes, how?

## **Section D: Conclusion and Follow-Up**

• Please provide your e-mail at <school name here> and another way of reaching you, if you would like to be contacted for any of the following reasons:

- I wish to be entered in the raffle.
- I would be willing to be interviewed or be part of a focus group in a later phase of the study.
- I would like to receive updates about the outcomes of this research.

E-mail @ <school name here>: \_\_\_\_\_

Other e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

***Thank you very much for completing the survey.***

***Please drop off the completed survey at <school location here-"Office of XYZ"> located in the <building/room location here>. Thanks!***

## **Mission Possible? Enabling Good Work in Higher Education**

Gary A. Berg  
Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi  
Jeanne Nakamura

All institutions are eroded by the passage of time. Improvements in technology, economic realignments, and changes in societal values render most organizations obsolete within a generation or two. Institutions of higher education are among the most permanent, but they too become irrelevant if they fail to adapt to changing conditions. The challenge all schools face is how to keep providing value under conditions of constant change. If the education that schools provide no longer appears to add value to people's lives, enrollments drop, public funds dry out, and donors find other targets for their beneficence.

In this essay, we consider how institutions can define and refine their missions so that they enable productive work in times of change. The evolution of institutions, like individual development, requires a balancing of continuity and change in response to the changing environment. This does not mean submitting willy-nilly to external forces. Rather it means that these forces be integrated with the institution's internal vision of a better reality. At the individual level, Piaget called this the balancing of assimilation and accommodation in the service of adaptation.

So how do institutions avoid becoming irrelevant or obsolete? How do colleges and universities sustain their core values with limited resources and in light of new expectations? And how do institutional choices concerning mission help individuals employed in higher education make their work personally meaningful?

These are the questions that this article intends to explore. We will do so by presenting and employing a systems model of what it takes to do good work in any context. This model is based in part on our previous work (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi & Damon, 2001) and in part on interviews we are conducting with stakeholders at exemplary colleges and universities across the nation. In earlier studies, we used a version of this model as a framework for analyzing the current state of journalism, genetics, and business as environments for individual and collective good work. The model helped us understand how institutional responses to existing and emerging conditions impeded or facilitated such work. It highlighted, for instance, the extent to which market pressures are perceived as a deformative force by veteran journalists, suggesting the need to examine systematically the sites at which these pressures act to obstruct accurate, even-handed, informative reporting – journalistic good work – and the processes by which this occurs. The model helped pinpoint why journalists today struggle to find meaning and enjoyment in their work even as they champion reporting as a noble and necessary endeavor.

In our current study, we are developing a version of the model that we hope will help frame and address fruitful questions about the conditions of excellent, ethical, and personally rewarding work in academia.

## The Constituents of Good Work

What constitutes “good work” in a profession depends, first, on the criteria for and standards of excellence that the domain imparts to its members. It also depends on the intended impact of the work on those to whom the profession holds itself responsible and how it aims to contribute to a larger good. These criteria, standards, and aims in turn determine in large part the degree to which an individual professional’s work provides personal enjoyment and meaning. For example, most researchers in the domain of genetics agree that work is “good” when it is done with rigor and care and aims to advance the state of knowledge. Such work can be a source of deep personal satisfaction for the scientists who do it (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, & Damon, 2001).

The concept of “ethics” derives from the Greek term ‘*ethos*,’ denoting the customs of a community. According to Aristotle, not only people but *institutions* can be ethical. In the *Rhetoric*, he uses the term ‘*ethos*’ to describe the “characteristic spirit, prevalent tone of sentiment, of a people or community; the ‘genius’ of an institution or system” (*Oxford English Dictionary*, *ethos*, 1). The complex domain of higher education contains many kinds of institutions – community colleges, research universities, liberal arts colleges, for-profit universities – filling very different roles. What constitutes individual and collective good work differs, sometimes dramatically, from one of these institution-types to the next – and to some degree also from one institution to the next. Each institution is distinguished by its own definition of excellence and of the social needs that it aspires to meet. However varied the missions may be, *our contention is that to survive and prosper, and to enable the good work of the people who work there, a school must live up to a set of ethical guidelines embodied in a mission that expresses the spirit of a community and constitutes an implicit contract between the institution and the wider society.*

**[INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE (see end of manuscript).]**

If its mission is to express the spirit of a community – if individual good work is to merge into a larger collective good work – a school must find ways to bring into alignment the energies of its multiple *internal stakeholders*; administrators, faculty, staff, trustees, and the current student body. To the extent that the interests of these groups conflict, the institution may be pulled in different directions.

The balancing act does not end there, however. If the mission is to connect the institution to its wider context in a productive, living way, a school must also bring about an alignment between itself and each of the three major sets of external forces that it confronts (see Figure 1). One set of external forces comprises the *domain and field of higher education* itself. The domain includes the multiple models of education and what it ought to accomplish, the curricula, pedagogies, and knowledge base on which colleges draw, as well as the standards of educational quality and means of assessing performance that they adopt. Associated with the domain of higher education is a social field made up of gatekeepers, such as accrediting agencies, who judge the performance of colleges and universities and evaluate the organizational, curricular, pedagogical, and other developments introduced into the domain. Alignment exists when the version of higher education that a school embodies possesses legitimacy by the lights of the domain and field.

A second set of forces, the school's *external stakeholders*, encompass all those individuals and groups outside the school who have an interest or stake in the direction and functioning of the institution; present it with needs, expectations, and demands; and confer legitimacy and resources on it. They include the school's alumni, governmental and business sources of funding, and (perhaps most important) the constituencies that the school serves: prospective students; employers; the local community; the state; and religious, ethnic, or other communities. Alignment exists when the institution provides what external stakeholders expect, need, and value.

Finally, schools are also confronted by a set of more general *social and cultural forces* – the values and attitudes that prevail in the culture at large, the economy, politics, and demographics. These broader forces present constraints on and opportunities for schools' action, supply social and cultural resources, and advance particular priorities and *desiderata*. For example, the value that the culture attaches to higher education versus other goods, as well as societal attitudes about the relationship between education and work, help define the context in which schools function. Alignment exists when the school's mission puts it in harmony with what the society and culture deem necessary or valuable.

When these sets of forces are working in the same direction, it is easier for colleges to determine what they ought to do, to express those aims as an institutional mission, and then to do good work in terms of that mission. The mission is both a result of alignment and its cause. It is often the integration of the various interests of parents, legislatures, teachers, and students that results in an institution's choice of mission. At the same time, a mission that provides a compelling purpose makes it easier to align conflicting claims: Stakeholders will be more likely to moderate their special interests if the common goal is meaningful to them.

But change, rather than permanence, is the basic condition of life, and a mission that at one time served well to bring together the energies of an institution may cease to do so. When a misalignment between mission and external circumstances develops, both institutions and individuals find it difficult to do good work.

Schools that do not recognize that a misalignment has emerged, or that do not address it with the full commitment of their energies, will have a difficult time surviving the pull of contrary forces. The entire institution must be dedicated to a mission that defines what good work is, in order to continue adding value to the lives of the community it serves. But misalignments are not without a silver lining. Differences, points of tension, obstacles, and conflict can dissipate energy – but they can also motivate internal stakeholders to reflect on and reaffirm a school's existing mission; to clarify and sharpen its goals; or to update, redefine, or even radically alter the institution's direction.

Changes affecting the institution can occur at any of the four key sites in Figure 1. A first set of changes that must be taken into account are challenges to the very definition of higher education by the *domain and field* – what its purposes or functions are. For example, instructional content and the criteria of accreditation change as a result of new developments in knowledge and in societal values. The *external stakeholders* of the institution also undergo transformation in their composition, needs, and values. Broad *social and cultural forces* evolve – for instance as a result of secularization, the aging of the population, the rise of knowledge workers – and some of these changes may threaten to render the values and practices of the institution obsolete. Finally, all these changes

occurring outside of the institution have to be reconciled by the school's *internal stakeholders*, whose composition continuously shifts through the impact of hiring, retention, and aging and whose priorities and commitments follow suit.

Changes at any of the four sites may require processes of realignment. It is out of the complex set of alignments identified earlier, as well as realignments in response to changing conditions, that institutional missions are created and, when necessary, transformed. For example, the goals of the *external stakeholders* and those of the institution must constantly be realigned. An increased need for revenues is perhaps the most pervasive force that institutions currently face, and they may resort to strategies for raising needed funds that are not in line with an institution's existing mission (Bok, 2003). As one respondent in our study put it: "I just believe that the goals of the corporate sector aren't necessarily consistent with the goals of providing an education to our students; and when that's going to conflict and money is involved, then we're going to be in trouble." Similar issues must be resolved at the interface between government bodies and public universities.

Figure 1 also points to the impact of emerging *social and cultural forces*. For instance, our culture has become obsessed with test scores and institutional rankings, and this obsession is communicated to the external stakeholders, primarily the parents of students. As a result, students may adopt a consumer's attitude towards education and choose the school whose degrees can be converted most readily into the highest-paying jobs. In part because of the need to attract such "consumers," universities increasingly compete for students, as well as raid each other for prominent faculty members. One administrator describes the effects of this pursuit of intellectual talent on the campus community. He complains: "We try to pick off the stars from each other, and if we can steal a star from [another university], then all the better. There's that kind of intellectual competition factor, which is certainly good in some ways, but also begins to break down that sense of service to the campus, that sense of involvement in governance." Lesser stars on the faculty are often neglected, which leads to the further erosion of community cohesion.

Within the *domain of higher education* itself, the growth of information technology is transforming our understanding of what students need to learn, as well as how they should learn it. The steep and continuing cost of incorporating technology into the educational process represents a significant revenue demand, among the many from which institutions feel increasingly intense pressure. At the same time, the traditional disciplines that used to constitute the core of a college education, such as classics, religion, or foreign languages, have all but disappeared from the curriculum. The competition between the sciences and humanities is a tension within higher education that is based in large part on the values of society at large. In the words of one art professor: "They give money to the sciences in this country. They don't give money to art."

In short, the alignment between the needs of the various internal stakeholders and outside forces is not easy to achieve. It is an ongoing process involving transparency, communication, compromise, and a huge dose of good will.

There is another set of stresses within the institution itself that need to be negotiated by the internal stakeholders. Administrators, trustees, faculty, staff, and students occupy roles that have different intrinsic interests. As the cultural importance of different disciplines wax and wane, the power within the institution shifts to different

faculty groups. When a new generation of students – or faculty, or administrators – enters the university, they bring with them values, mores, knowledge, and behaviors that can cause friction with other internal stakeholders. How is good work maintained in the face of such challenges to institutional mission, values, and identity?

### **The Evolving Institutional Mission**

Focusing the energies of an institution on common goals is not simply a matter of a few key administrators drafting a ringing statement. It is an organic process involving the entire community in response to forces acting both within and outside the institution. More than a written statement, the mission is an attitude towards one's job that permeates all levels of the university, channeling energies towards common goals and making work both meaningful and exciting. And it is an attitude that needs constant revision. Here we consider the questions an institution must address as it defines and redefines its mission under conditions of change, in the service of sustaining institutional and individual good work.

#### **1. What kind of school?**

Perhaps the first issue to take into account in terms of crafting or reinforcing a mission is: What version of higher education should **this** institution embody? In Figure 1, this question is reflected in the relationship between the *institution* on the one hand, and the *domain and field of higher education* on the other. The sorts of issues schools should address in relation to the kind of institution they want to become, or to turn into, include at the very least the following four: governance, curriculum, pedagogy, and the balance between the generation of knowledge and its transmission.

The issue of governance has to do with the distribution of power. Is the school relatively free to set its own mission, or does it have to answer to a religious, ethnic, or governmental authority? Which decisions will be influenced by business, professional associations, or funding agencies? The next set of issues concerns the content of the knowledge that the institution aspires to transmit and how it does that. What parts of a traditional curriculum need to be taught? What new subject matter is worth learning? And how should we teach it? Finally a mission should clarify the balance between teaching and research that the institution wishes to strike. Faculty salaries, promotions, appointments to prestigious committees are all too often motivated by efforts to retain successful researchers, not teachers. A mission that truly emphasizes teaching must be supported by policies that redress such priorities, or it will remain nothing more than a pious wish.

#### **2. To whom are we responsible?**

Figure 1 reminds us that a mission is defined not just by a selection from extant models of higher education or by a reaction against such models. To be a vital response to real conditions, the mission has to be aligned with the needs of a constituency of *external stakeholders*, and these needs change. It behooves an institution, first, to identify those stakeholders. Some institutions are more self-contained than others. Established, prestigious colleges can largely set the terms for the elite who desire a traditional liberal education. But most colleges must monitor and be responsive to the needs of the community they serve. One leader of a very successful historically black college says,

“Even decisions that should be made by the institution have to be tempered by the perception of the community.”

### **3. What are our strengths?**

To craft a credible identity, a school must identify its strengths and forge a mission around them. Bases for excellence might lie in a school’s outstanding programs and departments; the inspiration of its history, culture and location; the ways that it functions as an organization; its human or material resources; its student population. In affirming or redefining its mission, the school does well to build on these existing strengths as well as to identify incipient ones. Such features are its sturdiest basis for doing outstanding work.

Institutional identity is both visible in the character of daily life and embodied in special places and distinctive events. At Morehouse College, a Freshman Week ceremony is held in the chapel that ritually initiates the journey toward becoming a “Morehouse man.” The incoming students write down personal attributes that they wish to rid themselves of, and the pieces of paper are collected into a pile and ignited. The students’ parents write down their hopes and wishes for their sons, and these slips of paper are collected and placed in the obelisk that holds the remains of one of the college’s most revered alumni. By the end of the week, the new students know what the school expects of them: to change themselves and the world.

Schools with a clear identity also know what and who they are **not**. From the University of Chicago, which abolished its football program in the 1930s, to the University of Phoenix, which specifically disallows admission of students less than 23 years of age, exemplary institutions carefully circumscribe their identities.

### **4. Whom should we hire?**

A school’s continued good work depends, first and last, on the commitment of its faculty, staff, administrators, trustees to the mission and the values embodied in it. Whom a school hires is thus critical. A compelling mission that is communicated clearly and widely beyond the institution enables would-be faculty, administrators, staff, and students to sort themselves by their fit with it. But institutions actively seeking to redirect themselves cannot rely entirely upon self-selection. Therefore hiring practices – along with the socialization of new members – become crucial. “Missionaries, not mercenaries,” is the way one administrator summarizes a hiring stance that emphasizes a core set of purposes that all new hires should share. This stance is evidenced in a willingness to leave a position unfilled until an applicant can be found who shares the institution’s values and will take part in its work whole-heartedly.

Mission-attentive hiring practices may be particularly and perennially important for community colleges, whose charge is to respond to the evolving needs of the surrounding community. As a community’s demographics change and its needs shift, it becomes desirable to hire faculty, administrators, and staff who meet the changed expectations of the college’s external stakeholders. Many of our respondents also felt that in order to do good work, both the students and faculty of colleges needed to reflect the composition of their community.

When new faculty are hired not because they show promise to share the values that support the school’s identity but because they can show letters of recommendation

that certify their excellence in some other direction, the choice may foster neither the individual's nor the institution's good work.

### **5. Who shall lead?**

A central issue in the governance of any institution is the choice of its leader. A president might be selected because of strength in relation to the school's model of higher education (the *domain* in Figure 1), or in navigating the *social forces* that confront the school, or in interacting with the school's *external stakeholders*. In certain periods, schools look for academic *gravitas* in their leaders, in more recent times for political clout or fundraising savvy. While all of these attributes of leadership are necessary, the leader must be first and foremost the "aligner-in-chief," the person who can express the mission of the school in vivid prose, who finds ways to integrate the disparate needs of internal and external stakeholders, and who abides by the mission in his or her actions.

Recent studies of business leadership have identified some surprising traits in the leaders of the most successful organizations. For example, effective leaders are rarely big stars brought from the outside. Instead they are individuals who are promoted from the inside, who are steeped in the company's culture. They are characterized by an uncompromising zeal to make the organization they lead the best of its kind, coupled with personal modesty and self-effacement (Collins, 2001). It is likely that such findings are applicable also to the leaders of educational institutions.

### **6. When to change?**

The question is not if but when to change. Sooner or later, often in small ways over time, either the knowledge base of the domain, the values prevailing in the culture, the needs of the external stakeholders, or the internal composition of the school will make some aspects of the institution's mission obsolete. Unfortunately, it is not always obvious when that time has come. Peter Drucker, the well-known business scholar, has suggested that the process of questioning the mission to see if it is still meaningful and in alignment with the values of stakeholders be continuous (Drucker, 1986). Change is positive when it is managed well, in line with evolving values of the field, domain, and stakeholders.

Threats to good work arise when changes are induced that stakeholders view as diverging from institutional values and identity. For example, the increased fees that public institutions are forced to charge students are inadvertently leading to the exclusion of lower-income students. Meanwhile, in an environment of diminished resources, wealthier students gravitate towards selective publics, which can then become more selective than some independents. If the University of Southern California, an independent traditionally known for serving upper-class students, is now only a few percentage points behind the University of California at Los Angeles, a public institution, in terms of low-income students admitted, we are possibly approaching an inadvertent change in mission for both institutions. The result of this disjunction to a school's internal stakeholders is dissatisfaction and less personally meaningful work.

### **Why Clarity of Mission Matters**

Having a clear, agreed upon, and relevant mission matters because it functions to focus the energies of both the institution and the individual who works in it. It does so in at least three related ways. First, as the preceding pages have shown, a clear and shared

mission mediates the relationship between the institution and the outside world. It provides the institution with a compass for navigating a course when tension or outright conflict arises, either between the school and its environment or between sets of external forces that touch the school.

Second, a clear and shared mission helps integrate the institution's internal stakeholders, channeling their energies in complementary directions. Finally, a clearly defined institutional mission establishes an overarching goal toward which any given individual worker can meaningfully direct his or her energies. Let's consider the last two points in somewhat more detail.

**Making institutional decisions.** A well-defined mission can be a great help to align institutions internally. For example, for faculty and staff of the schools we studied, fiscal matters loomed as the primary obstacle to doing good work. State legislatures slashing budgets, loss of endowment income after the stock-market downturn, cuts in government support for research, restriction of alumni contributions – all of these were lamented as roadblocks to giving students the education they deserved. Administrators, faculty, and staff were keenly aware of the importance of revenue in meeting their institutional goals. "Money is important because it limits. You have money and vision, you can solve problems," an administrator at a public university pointedly said.

In the absence of a clearly defined and widely agreed-upon institutional purpose, a great deal of time and energy is wasted in futile negotiations, frustrating meetings, and even in inter-departmental warfare and sabotage. When the people involved in running a school share clear goals and value the same processes and outcomes, it is easier to eliminate waste, cut expenses, divide resources in ways that are seen as fair, and abolish programs that are no longer vital. As one trustee contended, "the bottom-line isn't just financial. It's philosophical.... Whatever is being brought to the Board, does it strengthen the mission? Has it appropriately passed through that filter?" Or as one president said,

When you make day-to-day decisions and you don't have to discuss first principles but you know that you share them, it makes it easier to do hard things.... Then a lot of things are easy, and the hard things are hard because they're genuinely hard, not because you're struggling to orient yourself in the first place.

**Finding personal engagement with work.** To reinstate our original premise, what we call good work is likely to happen when three conditions are met: the work lives up to the best practices of the domain, it responds to societal needs, and it is experienced as meaningful and enjoyable by those who do it. Much has been written about how a clear institutional mission facilitates the achievement of the first two of these goals. Relatively less well understood is the connection between mission and the experience of administrators, students, and faculty.

The quality of experience of those involved in any activity is enhanced when the activity has clear goals and well-understood rules and provides unambiguous feedback. For example, players can become completely involved in games that have such characteristics – whether it is chess or baseball – even if no other reward is forthcoming except the enjoyment of the game. When, in addition, the activity serves ends that the person embraces whole-heartedly, it becomes deeply engaging. This is true of involvement with music, a dramatic play, the reading (or writing) of a good novel. And

the same applies to work in higher education: it becomes engaging when the job has a goal that the worker finds clear and worthwhile, when the tasks are well-marked and doable, when the worker knows that his or her effort makes a difference (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002).

When these elements are lacking and the goals of the activity are uninspiring and ambiguous or contradictory, the rules confusing, and feedback erratic, a person soon loses heart and becomes either bored or stressed. Motivation and performance decline. Under such conditions educational outcomes suffer. The institutional mission provides the ground rules as well as the inspiration for the “great game” of higher education, one that can fill all those who participate in it with passion and purpose.

It takes a great deal of leadership and good will to integrate often conflicting forces into an identity bolstered by a compelling narrative and expressed in congruent action. Yet this is what schools that do good work often accomplish, and this is what all others aspire to do. Perhaps the issues raised here may begin a dialogue that is useful for those in institutions of higher education who are struggling to formulate or regain a sense of collective values and mission.

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Figure 1. THE DYNAMICS OF GOOD WORK IN HIGHER EDUCATION – For the educational outcomes of a school to qualify as “good work,” the institution must be able to align a number of potentially conflicting interests. These arise from within the institution itself, where different internal stakeholders (e.g., faculty, staff, students) pursue different goals. In addition, the school must align into a distinctive mission elements of the currently accepted models of higher education, the expectations of external stakeholders, and the pressures emanating from society at large, in the guise of economic, political, and ideological opportunities or obstacles. Good work is possible to the extent that the school is able to integrate these often-divergent forces, and thus provide the best possible educational outcomes with minimal friction. In the figure, some highlighted lines of influence are illustrated by only one-way arrows; in reality, all of the forces are reciprocally influential.

