

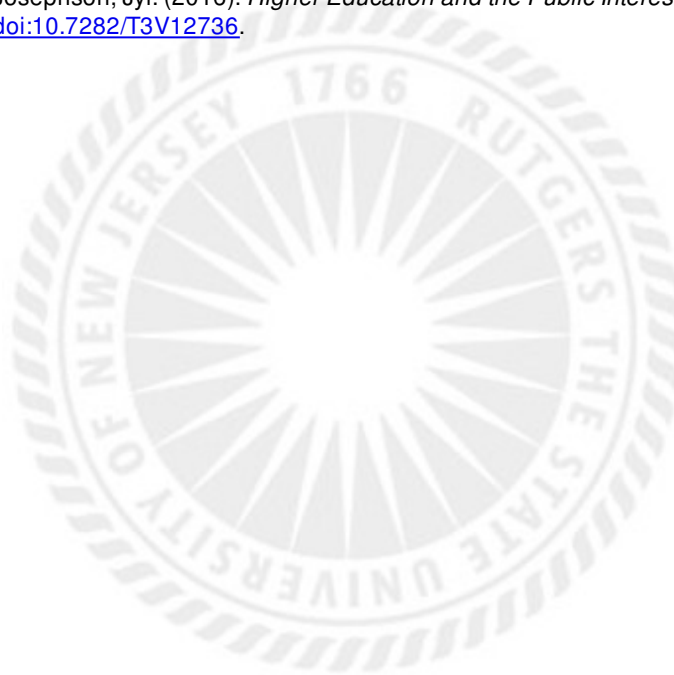
## Higher Education and the Public Interest

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## **Higher Education and the Public Interest**

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*“But if it would be arrogant to think that we could change the world, it would be even more irresponsible to act as if we couldn’t.”* Paul Brest, “The Fundamental Rights Controversy: The Essential Contradictions of Normative Constitutional Scholarship,” *Yale Law Journal* 90 (1981) 1063-1109, p. 1108

### **Political science, higher education, and the public interest**

Political science has been slow, as a discipline, to bring our disciplinary tools to the study of the system of higher education in the U.S. (Sapiro 2013). Sapiro urges political scientists to think more about higher education, and in particular to think about higher education as a set of institutions and a public policy system that is both complex and diverse, well-suited to the lenses political scientists might bring.

Fortunately a number of scholars, including Sapiro, Susan Gluck Mezey, Danielle Allen, and Rogers Smith, among others, have begun to address this gap (Mezey 2014; Sapiro 2013; Smith 2015; Allen 2016).

Political science is still a pluralistic discipline, which may have disadvantages (Gunnell 2015), but here I want to suggest, as Sapiro argues, that both the empirical and the normative tools of this diverse discipline are useful to understanding the complex system of higher education in the United States. In particular, political theorists have some expertise on the purposes of higher education in democratic life, and the empirical tools of the discipline might be particularly useful in thinking about the institutional and public policy aspects of higher education.

I have two purposes in this essay: First, I want to argue for a particular view of the relationship between higher education and democratic public life in the U.S. context. Drawing on the idea of political rationality, I want to suggest that a healthy higher education sector, and in particular well-supported

public institutions such as community colleges, colleges, and universities, serve the democratic public interest. This is likely an uncontroversial assertion when expressed to professional political scientists. So second, and more specifically, I want to suggest that thinking of these public purposes in terms of the public interest, rather than as “public goods”, is a better way to see the role of public universities in democratic public life. I conclude by discussing some of the implications of this view.

### **Education and the democratic public interest**

*“I have been working a long time--still with inadequate success--to try to think clearly about the market system and about democracy. One difficulty may be that we--meaning people all over the world--have actually tried the market in many of its possible forms, learning greatly from both its flaws and its merits; but we have not yet tried democracy, only distant approaches to it.”* Charles E. Lindblom, 1995 Gaus Lecture

*“A constitutive view sees institutions first as relationships, as definitions of the manner in which members of a political community take account of each other.”* (Stephen L. Elkin 1985, 262).

Professor Lindblom wrote the above words for a public lecture given almost twenty years after the publication of his classic book, *Politics and Markets* (1977). And, in the twenty years since that lecture, matters have only gotten worse in the balance between democracy and markets. By this I do not so much mean rising economic inequality in the US and internationally—although this is a significant political problem for democratic polities—but rather the ascendance of economic rationality that has taken primacy over political rationality and democratic political processes (Elkin 1985).

Economic rationality is a familiar framework for thinking about public policy: to get the most benefit for the least amount of input. In contemporary discussions of higher education this typically turns up in

arguments about the kinds of majors that students should, or should not be permitted to pursue, and in arguments that the primary purpose of higher education is to produce workers trained with particular sets of skills, ready to be employed. These arguments are also familiar from discussions of the problem of student debt in the U.S., which is often linked to arguments about supposedly inappropriate fields of study. Often these critiques are coupled with arguments for more 'market-based' solutions, and explicitly or implicitly arguing for the end of public support of higher education, drawing on the notion that markets are always a better solution than government provision. (And also in some cases promoting a good bit of their own economic self-interest as synonymous with the public interest).

Political rationality is less familiar, probably even to political scientists. As Elkin argues, political rationality requires a constitutive view of political institutions. So it is a particular kind of institutionalism, one that sees political institutions themselves as ends, not simply means to outcomes or ends. As Elkin developed the idea, political rationality requires a relational understanding of institutions that sees political institutions as the way that members of a polity relate to one another, and thus sees the character, structure, and ongoing functioning of the institutions as essential to the character of the polity (Elkin 1985, 2006).

When we apply the idea of political rationality to the institutions of higher education in the U.S., we see the complexity of the system as part of its design. It is a fractious system, designed both intentionally and by default to answer to contradictory purposes and goals, some political, some economic, some democratic, some highly undemocratic. The point here is that it is a complex system that will not be responsive to simplistic solutions (MOOCs! Markets! For profits! Free college!).

Many scholars who study higher education have noticed this problem (Smith 2015, Mezey 2014, Sapiro 2013). In the next section I outline the ways that even those who seek a more complex way of framing understandings of higher education still find themselves floundering in economic rationality. I will

suggest that the language of “public good” has been so dominated by market-based thinking and economic rationality that we need another way to frame our thinking, and will suggest that “public interest” might be one way to do this.

### **The limitations of the “public good” framework**

What is needed is a way to talk about the democratic values that are served by public investments in public institutions of higher education in the American constitutional system, and to talk about this in specific political and institutional terms. Many scholars of higher education have drawn on the idea of a public good to talk about the value of public universities and colleges: there are many books on higher education that use the idea of the “public good”. In this section I show how, given how this term is usually framed, these arguments generally stay within economic rationality, or market-based framing. These arguments are thus limited by the basic normative assumption of economic rationality regarding public goods: that the less public goods there are the better. But this cannot always be the case; and it is certainly not the case with respect to higher education.

A classic way of talking about higher education and public goods is offered by economist David E. Shulenburger (2012, 86-88), who catalogs the economic benefits, not just to individuals but to society, of higher education. The analysis is framed primarily in cost-benefit terms, and Shulenburger argues that public research universities are economically good investments for state governments. This economic rationality argument is surely a useful one as far as it goes, and Shulenburger argues for restored public funding of public universities, based on the economic returns to society. Presumably, if higher education were not a good investment for the purposes of economic rationality, then the state should not invest in it. This argument even comes with a specific breakdown of public versus individual cost-sharing. Shulenburger cites Walter McMahon, who calculated that based on economic returns, the public should pay 52% of the costs of higher education, and individuals should pay 48% (Shulenburger

2012, 86). Clearly, there may be limits to using economic rationality as the primary framework in defense of public higher education.

Another example of the limits of economic rationality is evident in economist Nancy Folbre's discussion of the importance of the "commons" (2010, 17) and of understanding the importance of social capital and human capital in fostering social cohesion. Yet, while she is trying to capture the ways that the benefits of higher education "reach well beyond the market economy" (20) and are to the advantage of the polity as a whole, not just the individual, her framework is still an economic one, in costs and benefits that can be measured in monetary terms. Ultimately, Folbre is arguing that state universities in particular need to focus their purposes around the "common good". Clearly, political rationality will provide us with a better framework for thinking about higher education, particularly if we are trying to persuade the public and policy makers of our public purposes.

It is worth noting here a clear source of public and policy-maker confusion, which is also in my view a benefit of the complex system of higher education in the U.S. In addition to public benefits, higher education obviously does provide private benefits, individual benefits, to those who pursue it, especially to those who complete their degrees. Clearly these individual benefits are not the only benefits, particularly for a democratic society, yet it is often difficult to separate the economic rationality basis of these arguments from the normative assumptions of economics.

Yudof and Calaghan point out this confusion very clearly, and argue that public universities in particular should be seen as a hybrid good, part public and part private. That is, there are "private returns" for those who pursue higher education and attain degrees that benefit their lives personally and in economic returns. But there are also "benefits that flow to the entire polity—in the form of economic growth, cultural transmission, more democratic participation, health care, higher tax revenues, fewer incarcerations, and reduced welfare payments." (Yudof and Callaghan 2012, 68).

However, there is still a problem with this way of framing our understanding of higher education: it is still framed in terms of economic rationality. This way of thinking about higher education takes an instrumental view of institutions, not a constitutive and relational one, and this is part of what is problematic about it (Elkin 1985).

Whatever one thinks of online message boards, the point I am making is emphasized in Yudof and Callaghan's analysis of the (admittedly flawed) source of online commentary in response to news articles about tuition increases at public universities (2012, 70). Overwhelmingly, public commenters frame their understanding of the purpose of higher education as an individual private good, one that many members of the public--or at least, those who have time to comment on public comment boards--seem to resent the provision of tax dollars to support. The point is not that this is a statistically representative sample of the public, but rather that this common misunderstanding of higher education and its purpose in a democratic society is shaped by an economic rationality framework. Of course individuals who complete their degrees reap individual benefits from their studies. But so does the public. But economic rationality makes it difficult to see the common purposes served by higher education.

I will discuss one final example of an effort to connect universities to public, democratic purposes. Simon Marginson tries to reclaim the terminology of public goods for public purposes by making a distinction between public goods (plural; derived from economic frameworks) versus public good (singular; based on a normative logic). The questions that he is asking are deeply political, and I suggest below that answering them requires political rationality:

"At best, public good ties universities into a larger process of democratisation and human development. At worst it is joined to empty self-marketing claims about the social benefits of education or research with no attempt to define, identify or measure the alleged benefits. As with public goods (plural), the questions 'whose public good?' and 'in whose interests?' arise." (Marginson 2011, 418).

Thus Marginson's idea of "public good" links the purposes of the university to accountability to the larger political community, again a deeply political concept (2011, 418). But Marginson sees politics as primarily an impediment to solving these problems, and seeks a solution in the global networks that are possible in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: in a kind of global academic political community. But political theorists will note this massive effort to sidestep the issue: we cannot avoid politics in answering these questions. Politics in this deeply normative and material sense is at the heart of the contemporary debate over higher education (Vazquez-Arroyo 2016). And here is where political science, and in particular political theory, can be helpful: we need normative and empirical arguments to answer this challenge.

One problem here is that it is often posited, particularly by those making the arguments, that arguments based on economic rationality are not normative. This happens in arguments over higher education in part because of the absence of political theorists from most of this discussion. But of course they are deeply normative; a common critique of economic rationality by political theorists is that it simply naturalizes the notion that maximizing economic utility is not a normative argument. (There has been so much discussion of this in political science and political theory, particularly in relation to the debate over public choice theory, that these arguments should be familiar). And a key point here is that this perspective makes institutions into tools, simply means to ends, and not themselves constitutive of relationships that create the polity and the meaning of the meanings and purposes the institutions are created to fulfill.

My point in cataloguing these various ways that scholars frame higher education as a public good is to show how, even as all of these scholars are attempting to argue for collective, common, shared, long term interests—interests that are better understood with political or democratic frameworks—they still, intentionally or unintentionally, slip into market-based frameworks and analogies. The arguments are still based, at their root, on economic rationality. Thus, I am suggesting that public goods frameworks



fall short if we wish to make the kind of normative and empirical arguments that need to be made about the nature of public higher education in a democratic polity. In particular, these frameworks lose sight of politics and the value of public life. All of these authors are clearly trying to get at the notion that an activity—in this case, public higher education—serves public purposes that are distinct from markets and these purposes are political and normative in nature. But the framing of “public good” in terms of economic rationality limits the reach and scope of these arguments. In the next section, I suggest that to argue that higher education serves the public interest is to argue that it serves the public purposes of a democratic society.

### **The advantages of the “public interest” framework**

*“Great themes of political theory are obviously in contention here. But unlike the great schools of political thought, we are actually going to have to decide the question, in the practical realm of affairs. And unlike many protagonists in the public debate, I for one do not think that the answer is altogether obvious. I do not think we expect the university to teach just as the citizens want or just as the academics deem fit.” (Anderson 1993, 43).*

*“The core of constitutional thinking...is to keep in balance the tension between politics as instrumental activity...and politics as creating and maintaining durable modes of association among a people that enables them to cope with a world that reveals little beforehand of the dilemmas, possibilities, and conflicts it will pose.” (Elkin 2006, 109)*

*“Political institutions...are ways in which citizens experience one another.” (Elkin 1985, 261)*

How do we think about higher education and universities in terms of political rationality? It is clear at this point in the argument that, to understand the public interest in a democratic polity, we need to

think in both normative and practical terms. In a democratic polity, universities, and educational institutions more generally, are essential, and thus are political institutions in the sense that Elkin outlines: political institutions are constitutive of political relationships and are based in a specific historical context (Elkin 2006; Elkin and Soltan 1993; Ostrom et al 2007).

Thinking in terms of political rationality requires us to go back to the basic purposes that universities serve. At root there are two basic purposes: to pursue knowledge, and to educate students. These two purposes are both intertwined and always in tension with each other, and should be (Anderson 1993). Public universities in particular cannot be just what the citizens expect, nor can they be just what academics want them to be. If inquiry and education are different parts of the same mission, they are still also always in practice in productive tension with one another: the university may think that it knows something in particular, but the process of producing that knowledge, and the processes by which knowledge is disseminated, are as important as the substance itself.

If we think in terms of political rationality, then, political institutions such as universities are not simply instrumental—they are not simply the means to some particular end—in our case, perhaps, the end of an educated citizenry and of greater knowledge of the universe and our particular place in it. Rather, institutions create the relationships among participants that make it possible to realize the values of the polity—for example, an engaged democratic citizenry. In a democratic polity, then, one crucial set of institutions are those that ensure access to the education that in turn makes it possible to participate in democratic political life, and to create the knowledge and innovation that will help the polity to flourish.

As Anderson notes, the American university was invented to prescribe the life of the mind for its students (Anderson 1993). But that very point should also make us uncomfortable—for what do universities know, and how do they know it? Anderson argues that practical reason is what citizens need, and it is also what is needed in each profession—so what students learn through the practices of

their disciplines or interdisciplines is also what they need to learn to be good citizens. “Thus it is better to teach politics than political science, writing than literary criticism” (Anderson 1994, 34). This statement may be as or more provocative today among political scientists than it was twenty years ago. But these controversies within the discipline of political science are instructive in this respect: it seems safe to say that there is no settled consensus across the subfields of the discipline about what precisely “political science” or “politics” is. Yet this very fact is, in my view, a strength of the discipline, as it provides students, if the curriculum is designed and taught well, a broad education in “politics” and in ways of seeing politics and political life.

Of course it is not always clear what exactly constitutes useful knowledge, and the benefits of research driven by questions that arise through gaps in knowledge identified by experts may not be immediately apparent and yet are a valuable and central function of research. But in political science in particular there is certainly a place for research questions that arise from practical public problems as well. Some of these may be easily identifiable by researchers, and other questions may not. There are times when the public may know more about the kinds of research that would be useful for solving public problems than do university-based researchers. This is why it is fruitful to think about the relationship between universities and their communities as a reciprocal relationship; I will pick up on this point in the final section of the paper.

Thinking in terms of political rationality also helps us to be clear about what universities should not be. As Anderson noted in response to a review of the book, he wanted to contest the idea that universities simply should be run like a business, and that making universities more responsive to capitalism would solve the problems that he saw with higher education (Anderson 1994, 34). Certainly the voices of those who wish for the university to see its purpose as simply responsive to the needs of capital markets have only grown louder in the past two decades. And yet, Anderson was also saying that there is a great deal wrong with business as usual at universities in the US, and a great deal of shaking up was needed to

make the university a place “where real learning can take place” (Anderson 1994, 35). This can be true at the same time that we can see how simply responding to the needs of capitalism is a deeply denuded and insufficient idea of the purpose that higher educational institutions serve in a democracy.

Another disadvantage of economic rationality is that it leads us to think in terms of scarcity (Elkin 1985, 268-269). In the case of education this is a particularly inappropriate framing of what is at stake.

Intrinsic to the pursuit of knowledge, and to education, is the creation of bounty: of more than can be captured in a simple description. The relationships created through democratic processes create social networks that can in turn create additional benefits and again it is helpful to think of these in terms of political rationality. The terms we often use for this additional benefits are derived from economic rationality: social capital, a multiplier effect. But the additional benefits that many participants in, for example, broad-based community organizations such as IAF affiliates gain are about relationships between people as citizens (Warren 2002; Shirley 2005; Orr 1999). The fact that we must struggle to find language for these benefits that is not described in economic terms is a symptom of the problem we face as political theorists and political scientists in an era where economic rationality dominates most thinking about social and political life. We can think of these benefits as related to the value of social networks, or of public spiritedness, or of civic virtue, or perhaps as self-interest rightly understood.

So, we have circled back now, and can ask again, why is thinking in terms of the public interest more useful than using the idea of the public good? We can offer at least the following reasons: first, it avoids confusion with economic frameworks regarding public goods, and helps us to think in terms of political rationality, not economic rationality. Second, it makes clear that norms and values and institutions are deeply intertwined. Thus it avoids the false dichotomy problem often encountered in these discussions of focusing on arguing over values versus engaging in designing and assessing the specific political institutional arrangements that we need to consider. That is, helps us to think in institutional terms.

“...to know what we value in the context of political practice requires knowing what it takes to realize

it.” (Elkin 2006, 130). Third, focusing on the public interest makes us focus our attention on the practical problems at hand in contemporary U.S. higher education policy. We may draw on moral philosophy, ethics, law, or economics, but to do so we will use practical political reason and attend to the specific material and historical context that we are analyzing (Anderson 1993; Elkin 2006; Vazquez-Arroyo 2016). Thinking in terms of the public interest helps us to move away from economic frameworks for thinking about the role of higher education in public life, and thinking in terms of the norms and the practical problems of democratic political life. So finally, thinking about political rationality and the public interest helps us to think more clearly about the goals and purposes of higher education in a democratic polity. “Republican constitutional thinkers thus must have some conception of the direction in which they wish the political order to go....shipbuilders have ports, constitution makers have the public interest.” (Elkin 2006, 109) So what to what general port should public universities be headed?

### **The “public” in the public interest for the twenty-first century**

*“Political rationality relies on an ‘internal’ relationship where the end resides in having some activity done well.” (Elkin 1985, 269)*

*“Such an analysis does not abandon values. To pursue it means that we take our general orientation from the traditional values of liberty, equality, democracy, and popular participation in policy making.” (Lindblom 1977, 6-7)*

Political rationality helps us to see that political problems—such as thinking about the future of higher education in the U.S.—require that something practical actually be done, and that a key component of achieving our purposes is the policies and institutions that are devised are capable of actually

accomplishing their intended purpose. If we are thinking of the public interest in the contemporary United States, it helps us to see that if we want to secure a particular political way of life, “we must create and maintain the institutions at its core” (Elkin 2006, 130). But, as Suzanne Mettler notes, “Almost everything requires upkeep.” (Mettler 2014, 42). Institutions and public policies do not maintain themselves, but need care and maintenance. The current state of our higher education system has evolved through separate policy choices over several decades, not through a process of forward-looking decision making (Mettler 2014; MacMillan Cottom 2017; Folbre 2010). As Mettler also points out, because this is a complex institutional system, some of the problems are created not by design but by separate policy decisions that, working together, create new public problems. Our higher education system, especially in relation to public universities and the public interest, needs some maintenance. Despite the many criticisms, the public remains broadly supportive of publicly supported higher education (Mettler 2014).

For example, the problem of funding state universities is not one where we have collectively decided by some thoughtful deliberative process that we do NOT want to fund public higher ed—or that we really want to fund prisons more than we want to fund universities. It is rather separate decisions over time that have led to the decay in public funding commitments to higher ed, the results of which require our earnest attention.

Clearly, with such a complex system of institutions, there are many things to be said about the public and the public interests served by higher education. Here I focus on two points; first the idea of the “outside in university” as a way to think about the relationship between publics and public universities, and second, the idea of “full inclusion” and the responsibility of public universities in particular to seek out talent and provide opportunities for communities historically excluded from higher education (Sturm et al 2011; Lewis and Cantor 2016).

How does using the public interest framework serve us better to make arguments about the purposes of public higher education at the present moment? Giving content to the “public interest” must include addressing the question of who is the public whose interest is served? Public higher educational institutions must be responsive to the whole polity, and this requires institutional forms that create opportunities—not ones that serve elites only.

So, we need to look at how the institutions, especially public universities, serve the public interest, and how the institutions can be made to do that better. Thinking in institutional terms helps us to focus on key features of the institutional structure of the higher educational system. And this helps us see why a discourse dominated by the views and interests of elite private institutions leads us astray when talking about the public interest and the higher education sector. The elite private institutions were not designed to and do not have the institutional capacity to serve the whole of the public interest in higher education. This specifically is why it is better to look to the history of land grant colleges and to the movement for urban universities in the 60s and 70s. The elite institutions have their place. But they do not need our attention in the way the public sector institutions do, and especially because these are the institutions that serve the majority of students.

What would it mean to serve the public interest well through the activity of public colleges and universities in the twenty-first century? Who is the “public” and how should public universities relate to their publics? A constitutive view of universities helps us also to see how members of the university, students and alumni of universities, and the broader public, should be seen in relation to one another. If we think in terms of political rationality, we cannot see the university only as a source of knowledge and expertise that is bestowed on students and the public—as standing apart from the polity. Rather, the relationships created by the institutional functioning of the university must be seen as creating public relationships that are political, that contribute to the well-being of a democratic polity. Knowledge seekers, and sources of knowledge, do not exist solely in university faculty offices or in classrooms.

Knowledge seekers and sources exist in every community of which universities are a part. Seeing knowledge production and dissemination in terms of political rationality helps us to think more broadly about the role and goals of the university in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

And this surely makes faculty nervous: who are we if we are not the experts, those who set the agenda of the university? But we are also citizens of the polity, citizens with perhaps a particular knowledge about the public purposes of higher education.

Thinking in terms of political rationality also helps us to see that the nature of the relationship between public universities and the public is of crucial importance. And if we think of the idea of the outside-in university, inspired by the history of land-grant universities but based in the problem of university-public relations that confronts us in the twenty-first century, we see that first, there must *be* a relationship, and it must have an institutional form that creates the conditions for its own renewal (Cantor 2009, 2016; Sturm et al 2011). How to do this is not entirely obvious and in fact there are likely multiple ways that such institutions could be designed. The idea of anchor institutions is one important way to think about this relationship, but again the role of the public and the form the institutional relationship takes is very important. Offices of university-community partnerships can take many forms; one thing that service learning and community engagement have taught us over the last decade is that it is not enough to simply send students out to community organizations and hope for the best. Nor can the university simply see itself as the source of expertise to be beneficently bestowed upon surrounding communities.

The process of renewing public universities to more effectively fulfill their mission is a practical political process—it does not require an ideal deliberative process, but it does require a participatory process and the creation of institutions that will foster ongoing participatory decision-making. The recent democratic strategic planning process at my university was a process of collective deliberation about the nature, purposes, and future of a particular public university. It fostered a strategic plan and an



implementation process, but it also did more: it engaged the university's constituents in a collective decision-making process that in itself led to members of the university community re-engaging with the purposes and mission of the university. It also brought in more talent and broadened the idea of talent at the university (Rutgers University-Newark Strategic Plan 2014).

We can look to history as well as to the specifics of contemporary challenges as we use political rationality to think about higher education and the public interest. We can think about the institutional history of public colleges and universities as well as the new challenges to their institutional well-being. The Morrill Acts are a good place to start, though we need to update our understanding of them given the challenges of the twenty-first century (Humphries 1992; Mahoney 2012; Diner 2013).

My second point is that "diversity" is too thin a concept, at least in the ways that it is usually articulated, for thinking about how to change public universities to make them really responsive to the needs of a twenty-first century public. The idea of "diversity" often assumes that what universities are doing is just fine, and they just need to bring different people in and continue to conduct business as usual. But this is simply not the case; much of what universities have been doing in student recruitment and retention has not been successful in creating greater opportunities. But there are models of what does work, and it requires a more expansive understanding of the mission of public universities.

Simply put, it is not justifiable if we are truly considering the public interest, to waste the talents of the citizenry by not cultivating those talents, by failing to provide opportunities to educate and develop the skills and capabilities of members of the polity. This is especially the case when the institutional means are available to do so if the institutions are properly maintained and supported. It is not hard to see that current educational arrangements in the U.S. waste an enormous amount of talent. Seeing educational resources in terms of economic rationality contributes to the idea that they are a limited commodity, one that must be reserved to the most talented and those most able to access them—but we know from

decades of research that social inequality creates inequality of access, regardless of talent. It is time to think differently about education and higher education (Allen 2016).

One way to think about this is through the concept of “full inclusion” (Sturm et al 2011). Look around the room; look around your university: who is not there? And are there spaces within the university where only some are welcome, and not others? How can the institution be reformulated, restructured, reimagined, to support the presence of everyone? One can think of this as similar to the kind of reimagining necessary to make spaces inclusive for people who are differently abled. There is no particular reason that a light switch or a kitchen counter must be at a height where only some, and not others, can reach it. How can we rethink our institutions to be more fully inclusive?

Another way to think about this is through the concept of “compelling interests”, an argument that fits well with the idea of the public interest discussed here (Lewis and Cantor 2016). Outlining the demographic shifts that are taking place in twenty-first century America, along with the growing inequality in access to higher education, Lewis and Cantor highlight the ways in which it is in the compelling interest of the democratic public in general, and of the higher education sector in particular, to develop institutional forms that are deeply inclusive.

To conclude on a further provocative note, I think rethinking public higher education has deep implications for the discipline of political science. Thinking institutionally helps us to see why the scholars who argue for the teaching of political science in very broad ways are on to something about the place of the discipline in higher education in contemporary American public life (see e.g. Valelly 2014). It is crucial that the practice of practical reason as applied to political life continue to be taught, considered, applied to new problems, etc. In my view this can only be accomplished with a very broadly defined discipline (Anderson 1993). Arguing for the value of public higher education, and for education that serves the public interest, is a normative argument about the nature of democracy and the place of

educated citizens in a democracy. A political science discipline that avoids the normative cannot make claims about the public interest.

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