

# American Democracy Project

aascu



The New York Times

## Participating Institutions

The interest in the project continues to grow. We now have 166 institutions involved, representing more than 1.5 million students. The complete list of institutions is on the AASCU website at [www.aascu.org/programs/adp](http://www.aascu.org/programs/adp)

## Materials

[Educating Citizens : Preparing America's Undergraduates for Lives of Moral and Civic Responsibility](#) by Anne Colby, Thomas Ehrlich, Elizabeth Beaumont, and Jason Stephens. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 2003. Discounts are available thru Jossey-Bass. Retail price is \$28.00. There is a 40% discount for orders of 100 + copies (\$16.80/copy) and a 32% discount for fewer than 100 copies (\$19.04/copy). Contact Sam Testa at [stesta@wiley.com](mailto:stesta@wiley.com) to order.

## Lewis & Clark and the American Democracy Project

(This was written by Tom Ehrlich and first distributed in June. Since some of you didn't join the project until later, I am including it again).

As a former university president, I have some sense of the competing pressures on your time, energies, and resources. My AASCU colleagues and I are committed to ensuring that your commitment to the Project will bear significant returns in the civic education of your students.

Many know that this is the bicentennial of the great exploration of the North American continent by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. What is much less well known is the extent of the preparations for that great journey. Under the guidance of Thomas Jefferson, and while living in the White House, Lewis collected a wide array of tools, and learned how to use many that were new to him (chronometers, sextants, and other scientific instruments; medical equipment; and so on). With the help of some extraordinary teachers and mentors, including Albert Gallatin, Benjamin Rush, and others, he mastered the knowledge that he would need (in geography, botany, natural history, astronomy, commerce, and American Indian culture) and learned scientific techniques that would allow him to use his explorations to expand the boundaries of knowledge. Before assembling a team, he thought hard about what kind of men he needed and how he could maintain a cohesive corps. Lewis collected the best existing maps, however incomplete they were, and out of his experience with those maps and the integration of the disparate bodies of knowledge he had studied, his plans took shape. These preparations helped to chart the course of the Lewis and Clark journey and the adjustments they would make in response to unexpected barriers and events. When the extensive preparations were finished and the explorers set out, their direction may have been only slightly different than it would have been with less preparation, but over many months of travel the initial shift in trajectory and the continuing, responsive alterations no doubt led to a route distinctly different from the one they would have taken without such extensive preparations. The scientific, political, and cultural success of the expedition was critically dependent on lessons learned during the preparation period.

## National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

The American Democracy Project and NSSE have joined together to conduct work on a set of pilot questions to measure civic engagement among students. Twenty-three AASCU campuses already participating in NSSE have formed a consortium to develop a set of questions and administer them during the 2003-2004 academic year, sharing the results among the members of the consortium. We hope that this effort will create a set of questions about civic engagement that campuses can use to develop baseline and progress measures for their efforts in the American Democracy Project.

## Lewis & Clark and the American Democracy Project (cont.)

Those preparations are an apt metaphor for what a college education, at its best, can provide for students. They are also an appropriate image for what we seek to accomplish in the American Democracy Project. You and your faculty colleagues hope and expect that, like Lewis and Clark, your students will not just be traveling forward and trying to complete the journey but also learning and accomplishing valuable things along the way. You also hope that the college experience will shift graduates' life trajectories and give them new ways of responding to later experiences, as the explorers' preparation did, so that the shift in direction will be magnified over time, making the long-term impact substantial and influential.

Both personally and professionally, today's college graduates will be doing many things in their lives, and they cannot predict the many roles they will take on. But, whatever else they do, they should become active and morally responsible citizens of their communities. That is not only important for them, in order to lead full lives; it is also important for our country. If our democracy is to persist, then we must prepare the generation to come to be full participants. That civic engagement goal should occupy a prominent part of the "pre-expedition" preparation students undertake in college.

This is the aim of the American Democracy Project, beginning with the Academic Affairs meeting this summer in Utah, where the provosts and chief academic officers from all the participating institutions will discuss how best to shape the campus conversations on civic engagement that will continue throughout the year to come.

College is a critical time for "educating citizens," as my Carnegie Foundation colleagues and I discuss in our new book by that title. Unfortunately, however, for many students, undergraduate education is simply a collection of separate courses and other experiences with little cohesion or coherence. No less troubling, many campuses make little effort to structure undergraduate learning to ensure that civic learning is infused throughout the curriculum and co-curriculum—that it is an integral part of the campus culture. AASCU will be sharing materials with you designed to help you and your colleagues grapple with the pressing need to make the civic learning of undergraduates a priority. We also welcome the partnership of *The New York Times*, and the use of *The Times* as a national source of contemporary news and analysis for participating campuses.

Tom Ehrlich, May 14, 2003  
Senior Scholar, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Palo Alto, California  
(Text adapted from "Educating Citizens" (Jossey-Bass, 2003))

## Meetings and Events

### 5 November 2003

Morning meeting of Louise Mirrer and 17 City University of New York (CUNY) provosts with Tom Ehrlich at *The New York Times*; afternoon meeting with representatives from the State University of New York (SUNY) system

### 7 November 2003

Afternoon meeting with 22 representatives from seven campuses in Wisconsin plus Western Illinois University

### 12-13 November 2003

Meeting with representatives from all eight Indiana University campuses at the Kokomo campus

### 24 November 2003

Tom Ehrlich meets with presidents and chancellors of participating ADP campuses at the AASCU Annual Meeting in La Costa, California.

## Ideas for your Campus Audit

I recently sent out the draft Campus Audit Tool (September Newsletter, also attached to this Newsletter) and a sample-completed audit from Devorah Lieberman at Portland State University. When I sent it out to you, I also sent it to members of the Project Advisory Committee (for a complete list of members, see

<http://www.aascu.org/programs/adp/about/advisory.htm>). Several members of the Advisory Committee had suggestions to make the campus audit more useful.

Liz Hollander, executive director of Campus Compact, suggested the following: "There is a very good set of questions attached to the President's Declaration of the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education; both the Declaration and the questions are great conversation starters. See <http://www.compact.org/presidential/plc/declaration.html> and <http://www.compact.org/presidential/plc/assessment.html>. In addition, on our Campus Compact web, we also have a section for getting campuses into the self-examination mode. It can be found at <http://www.compact.org/advancedtoolkit/default.html>."

Another member of the Advisory Committee, George Kuh, Director of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), offered the following suggestions and resources:

"If you and your staff haven't already looked at the Involving Colleges campus audit protocol, which is an appendix in my 1991 Jossey-Bass book with the same title, I'd recommend doing so. It would be easy to adopt much of that approach to this project. I've listed some other works at the end of this material that might be helpful. Also, we're completing our round of NSSE Institute site visits to the schools in DEEP (Documenting Effective Educational Practices) and used a similar, updated protocol to conduct those campus audits, so I offer the NSSE Institute and its affiliates as a resource for campuses that want to get into this work in a serious way.

## Al Gore to Present Democracy Lectures to ADP Campuses

Former Vice-President Al Gore will present two lectures about democracy and civic involvement on the Middle Tennessee State University campus as part of the national American Democracy Project. The lectures are available for ADP campuses via satellite.

For more information:

<http://www.aascu.org/programs/adp/default.htm>

## Resources from the Summer

The core question in the project is this: What's the issue? Why are we focusing on this question of civic engagement? Robert Putnam, author of Bowling Alone, argues that we are losing the social connections that link us as a nation, and that the loss of connectivity has profound and negative implications for our democracy. For a quick synopsis of Putnam's Bowling Alone, I encourage you to read the relatively short (17 page) article that appeared in 1996, written in a lively style as a mystery story: "The Strange Disappearance of Civic America." American Prospect, Volume 7, Issue 24, December 1, 1996

<http://www.prospect.org/print/V7/24/putnam-r.html>. I think it is a wonderful introduction to some of the issues of the project.

A companion but recent article, only four pages long, discusses trust and the importance of trust for effective government and effective society. Jedediah Purdy begins the article by describing how important trust is in every aspect of our daily lives. He ends the article with a provocative image. "A vivid way to imagine the alternatives is to look beyond America's borders to Norway, where 65% of people say they trust their fellow citizens, and to Brazil, where 3% do. Climate aside, most people would prefer the orderly, egalitarian society to the crime-racked and corrupt nation of well-protected rich and restless poor." "Suspicious Minds." The Atlantic Monthly, January/February 2003.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2003/01/purdy.htm>

## Interesting Ideas for Civic Engagement

"1% For The Planet" was started in 2001 by Yvon Chouinard, founder of the clothing company Patagonia, Inc., and Craig Mathews, owner of Blue Ribbon Flies. Patagonia has contributed one percent of its annual sales or 10 percent of net profits, whichever is larger, to grassroots environmental organizations for 15 consecutive years. It did so as a small North American business, and continues to do so as a medium-sized global business.

The need for action to support environmental organizations is urgent. Ten years ago, the prestigious Worldwatch Institute reported that, "If growth proceeds along the lines of recent decades, it is only a matter of time before global systems collapse under the pressure." Recently, in its State of the World 2000 report, Worldwatch had this to say: "We hoped that we could begin the next century with an upbeat report, one that would show the Earth's health improving. But unfortunately, the list of trends we were concerned with then – shrinking forests, eroding soils, falling water tables, collapsing fisheries and disappearing species – has since lengthened to include rising temperatures, more destructive storms, dying coral reefs and melting glaciers."

Hundreds of thousands of non-governmental organizations (in excess of 800,000 in the U.S. alone) that are devoted to solving the world's problems already exist. "1% For The Planet" believes that they are far more capable of providing responsible environmental stewardship than multinational corporations or bureaucratic government agencies are likely to be. The problem is, these nonprofits are dependent on small donations to fund their good works.

The intent of the "1% For The Planet" alliance is to help fund these diverse environmental organizations so that collectively they can be a more powerful force in solving the world's problems.

<http://www.onepercentfortheplanet.org/what.html>

## September Progress Reports

We have received almost 100 progress reports; some are still missing. If you are among the recalcitrant, please submit your report as soon as possible.

Look out! Next week I will be sending an email with a variety of random samples from the progress reports. We will also post sections of the reports on our website.

## Web

The Times (<http://www.nytimes.com/college/collegespecial2/>) and the AASCU (<http://www.aascu.org/programs/adp/default.htm>) web sites are up and running, and we are adding content to the sites almost daily. I welcome your reactions to the sites

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## Recent Youth Survey

A recent survey that compared the civic knowledge and understanding of the DotNet Generation (ages 15-25) to older Americans offers yet another view of younger Americans (<http://www.ncsl.org/public/trust/citizenship.pdf>). It reinforces the concern about increased cynicism and decreased participation among this generation. The survey was produced by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), which has begun an important new project on civic engagement, Representative Democracy in America: Voices of the People. This project is producing an enormous amount of material, including a video series, television documentaries, and a resource kit. For more information, contact the Trust for Representative Democracy, National Conference of State Legislatures, 7700 East First Place, Denver, Colorado 80230. 303 364-7700. [trust@ncsl.org](mailto:trust@ncsl.org)

## Resources

Kuh, G.D., Schuh, J.H., Whitt, E.J., Andreas, R.E., Lyons, J.W., Strange, C.C., Krehbiel, L.E., & MacKay, K.A. *Involving colleges: Successful approaches to fostering student learning and personal development outside the classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991.

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Schuh, J.H., & Kuh, G.D. "Evaluating the quality of collegiate environments." *Journal of College Admission* (1991, Winter): 17-22.

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Kuh, G.D. "Appraising the character of a college." *Journal of Counseling and Development* 71: 661-668."