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NETWORK LOOKING AT BUSINESS ABOVE THE CLUTTER AND CONFETTI

Pegasus

Introduction

February *Pegasus* addresses some of the major events that have taken place in Minnesota over the past few months and years. It also discusses how a renewed focus on higher education is vital to the future of our republic.

Steve Young and Matt Bostrom, one of our fellows and the former Ramsey County (MN) Sheriff, argue that we need a new approach to policing and justice in Minneapolis. Community relations with law enforcement have grown increasingly brittle over the past few years. In order to improve things in our communities, we need to come together to establish a "measurable set of shared values guiding every decision our city makes – from the mayor's office to the patrol car, from city council chambers to neighborhood block clubs."

A shared set of values, moreover, must be discovered together, not issued from on high. "When citizens act honestly, respectfully and in service of one another – and when police mirror those same actions – the conditions for discord are systematically removed," they write.

They close their essay with a call for deeper, shared civic engagement. "The question is not whether we can afford to undertake this work. After the turmoil we have experienced, the question is whether we can afford not to."

The essay cites Sir Robert Peel's work on improving the police force in London with the Metropolitan Police Act of 1829. Helpfully, we include Peel's nine principles of policing that have resonance nearly 200 years later.

In another essay about community building, "Minnesota Business Leaders Need to Get Engaged," I attempt to make the case that business leaders, once a powerful force for good in the Twin Cities, need to re-find their footing. The essay makes the case that business leaders have largely been shunted aside or have chosen to stay out of important community and regional debates. Along with stepping up more bravely, civic leaders also need to invite this cohort more actively into key discussions. There's a lot of talent and skill among our large companies and entrepreneurs. We need to bring them in from the cold. Otherwise, we are allowing a huge asset to our state to whither.

Stepping back to provide a larger picture of what ails our communities, Michael Hartoonian's essay, "Higher Education, Reclaiming its Purpose," makes the case that universities need to rediscover their essential role in our republic.

"Both professions and citizens must be responsible searchers of the contested truth, as well as critically love the institutions and nation in which they spend their life's time. The tension is displayed in debate, defined by civility, intellectual rigor and the character to be able to consider the possibility that you, or any of us, hold misconceptions about how the world works," he writes.

He adds: “Without universities teaching this content and these skills, we live on borrowed time. These abilities are not innate. They are the result of long training and rightful habits. And the goal of this training, the first goal of higher education, is to teach competence in virtue and reason.”

Michael’s article argues that strong higher education is required for our republic to thrive. He calls for a new enlightenment and engagement in the complex and important core aspects of the university. He also adds a stark reminder of how higher education can shape a polity:

“If you want a totalitarian government – teach fear.

If you want a monarchy – teach symbolism.

If you want a republic – teach virtue and reason.

Do we desire a republic?”

Dave Kansas
Editor-at-Large
Pegasus

A New Foundation: How Shared Values and Procedural Justice Can Rebuild Minneapolis

Stephen B. Young and Matt Bostrom

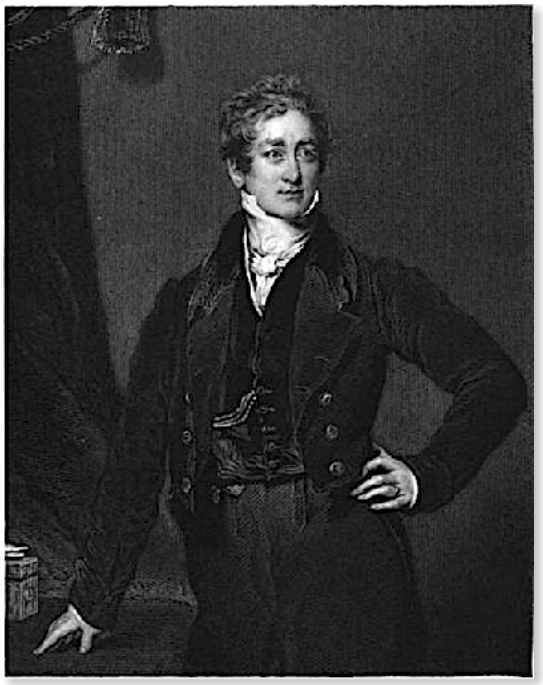
(Note: This article originally appeared in the Minnesota Star Tribune.)

Minneapolis stands at a crossroads. The unrest that has tested our city revealed deep fractures in the relationship between community members and those sworn to protect them. But within this challenge lies an extraordinary opportunity – not merely to repair what was broken, but to build something stronger and more durable than what existed before.

The path forward requires something radical in its simplicity: a clearly measurable set of shared values guiding every decision our city makes – from the mayor's office to the patrol car, from city council chambers to neighborhood block clubs. When those values are genuinely practiced by everyone, they produce what researchers call procedural justice: being treated with dignity, having genuine voice in decisions that affect you, encountering neutrality rather than bias and witnessing trustworthy motives in those who hold authority.

A Principle Nearly 200 Years Old

In 1829, Sir Robert Peel established the foundational principles of modern democratic policing. He argued that the police are the public and the public are the police – that officers are simply citizens paid to give full-time attention to duties incumbent on every citizen. He insisted that police effectiveness is measured not by arrests, but by the absence of crime and disorder and that law enforcement must secure the willing cooperation of the public through demonstrated impartiality – not through force.



Sir Robert Peel

Nearly two centuries later, these principles are not relics. They remain a vital blueprint for addressing Minneapolis's challenges. The fractures we have experienced are not evidence that Peel's vision was wrong – they are evidence of how far we have drifted from it.

A Two-Way Obligation

Procedural justice cannot be a one-way demand. We cannot ask city, state or federal public employees hired to enforce our laws to embody these principles, while their own departments treat them without fairness, voice or dignity, fail to train them in these foundational behaviors or ask them to put fairness to one side while performing their duties. Nor can these officers wait for the community to demonstrate respect before offering it. Community members cannot wait for police to earn trust before extending good faith. Both must move simultaneously toward shared values – not because they are required to, but because it is the right thing to do for everyone. In other words, treating others the way we wish to be treated.

When community members witness public safety officials behaving in alignment with values that lead to procedurally just outcomes, their trust grows. When officers witness the community engaging with those same values, their trust grows in return. This creates a reinforcing cycle: trust begets trustworthiness, which begets more trust. The spiral moves upward rather than downward.

Cooperation With Law Cannot Be Optional – For Anyone

Our vision must confront an uncomfortable truth: there is growing pressure on law enforcement to selectively enforce laws based on the political character of those breaking them. Minneapolis has witnessed this directly – protesters blocking roadways, disrupting religious assemblies and obstructing federal officers from carrying out lawful duties, while some voices demanded police stand aside because the cause seemed righteous.

Consider the mirror: what if protesters with opposing convictions blocked access to a licensed medical clinic, physically obstructed healthcare workers and disrupted lawful health services? Would we still argue that law enforcement should stand down? The principle must be consistent or it is not a principle at all – it is mere preference dressed up as justice.

Officers are sworn to uphold the U.S. Constitution, the Minnesota Constitution and ordinances passed by duly elected legislators. They should not be asked to ignore the law because of political pressure – from any direction. Selective enforcement is not community policing. It is a direct violation of the neutrality that lies at the heart of procedural justice. If a law is unjust, the answer is to change it – through organizing, voting, advocacy and the legislative process. Impatience with the time it takes to change a law cannot supplant the legislative process. Mob rule is dangerous for everyone. Until laws are changed, our officers must be required to enforce them fairly and consistently for all people.

The Path Forward

Minneapolis must now engage both community members and public safety personnel in identifying shared values – not imposed from above, but discovered together. Those values must be translated into measurable behaviors, modeled by city leadership, practiced in every department and applied consistently in every interaction. When citizens act honestly, respectfully and in service of one another – and when police mirror those same actions – the conditions for discord are systematically removed.

The downstream effects are profound. Safer communities attract investment. Investment creates jobs. Jobs strengthen families. Strong families produce better schools and better health – including mental health. This is not idealism. It is a proven chain of causation that begins with one link: shared values producing procedurally just outcomes in every interaction our city facilitates.

This does not require abandonment of what is working well for the city. It requires a calibration of culture. This will not happen overnight – after all, it has taken the city more than 150 years to get to this point. It does not require vast sums of money, but it does require commitment and intentionality on both the small and large matters facing Minneapolis.

The question is not whether we can afford to undertake this work. After the turmoil we have experienced, the question is whether we can afford not to. Minneapolis has the opportunity to lead.

Let us lead in this.

Stephen B. Young is Global Executive Director of the Caux Round Table for Moral Capitalism.

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Sir Robert Peel's Principles of Policing

Sir Robert Peel was instrumental in having the "Act for Improving the Police in and Near the Metropolis" (also known as the "Metropolitan Police Act of 1829") passed in the English Parliament in 1829. Peel had a specific vision as to the principles under which the police should operate. The nine principles that he penned nearly 200 years ago are just as important to proper police operations today as they were in early 19th century London:

1. The basic mission for which the police exist is to prevent crime and disorder.

2. The ability of the police to perform their duties depends on public approval of police actions.

3. Police must secure the willing cooperation of the public in voluntary observance of the law to be able to secure and maintain the respect of the public.

4. The degree of cooperation of the public that can be secured diminishes proportionately to the necessity to use physical force.

5. Police seek and preserve public favor not by catering to public opinion, but by constantly demonstrating absolute impartial service to the law.

6. Police use physical force to the extent necessary to secure observance of the law or to restore order only when the exercise of persuasion, advice and warning is found to be insufficient.

7. Police, at all times, should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police, the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence.

8. Police should always direct their attention strictly towards their functions and never appear to usurp the powers of the judiciary.

9. The test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with it.

Minnesota Business Leaders Need to Get Engaged

Dave Kansas

While many Minnesotans are proud of how they united to face down the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) surge, there are unintended consequences starting to surface. Restaurants and small businesses are hurting. Schools who dealt with emergency remote learning are warning of education deficits. And leaders of the state's large cohort of big companies increasingly wonder about the future of Minnesota as a great place to build a business.

To be fair, business leaders did issue a statement amidst the ICE surge. As with any document written by a large group of constituents, it left many readers dissatisfied. Protestors wanted full-throated support. Those who backed the surge, a far quieter group getting little to no air in the media, wanted their point of view supported. The document proved, once again, that the King James Bible remains the only successful group edit in history.

Friends on the coasts and overseas have expressed astonishment that Minnesota so frequently features in national and international news. Our reputation as a quiet, friendly, neighborly place, has been eroding for some time. The polarization that infects the country has infected even sturdy Minnesota. Our politics remain resolutely blue on national ballots – we've not voted Republican for president since 1972. It's a great datapoint, but it elides the fact that native son Walter Mondale carried only his home state (and Washington, D.C.) when running against President Ronald Reagan in 1984.

State-wide, Republicans haven't won an election since 2006. Our senators remain reliably DFL (Minnesota Democratic-Famer-Labor Party). Beneath the top line, however, our state has become almost perfectly purple. The Twin Cities are deeply blue, the rural parts much more red. Our state house and senate are nearly perfectly divided, as are our eight congressional seats.

Not that long ago, the DFL had a stronghold in the Iron Range, located in the state's north. But the urban priorities that animate much of the DFL today have become less popular on the Range, steadily turning it red. It's hard to imagine in our blue-red divide, but the Communist Party had a small stronghold across the Range for some time. Native Iron Ranger Gus Hall became head of the American Communist Party and ran for president four times, the last time in 1984.

Being so perfectly purple means that the conflicts of the day are all very close to the surface. Large swaths of the country have become more deeply blue or red, which means a lot of people spend time agreeing with one another. That's not the case in Minnesota.

The recent violence and terrible killings of two citizens have also pushed the story of Minnesota's large fraud problem into the background. The fraud issue hasn't been fully resolved, but the U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Minnesota, made great progress ahead of ICE's arrival. During the surge, the U.S. Attorney's office imploded, with a large chunk of assistant attorneys resigning under protest – including almost everyone who had worked on the complex fraud cases.

One of the most significant problems that comes alongside all this national notice is the disengagement of our business leaders. Throughout much of the last several decades, business leaders spearheaded several important initiatives to improve the quality of life in Minnesota. Many of these leaders embraced moral capitalism – doing well, while doing good. They established a strong spirit of philanthropy, pushing for companies to set aside 5% of profits for charitable giving. They supported world class arts institutions like the Minneapolis Institute of Art, the Walker, Minnesota Orchestra and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, among others. They supported a bustling professional sports market. They pushed for better education, the upkeep of a beautiful parks system of lakes, creeks and parks. In many ways, large companies and entrepreneurs knew that having great amenities, great schools and terrific parks and lakes made it easier to attract great talent and keep it here. Despite our brutal winters, the Twin Cities has often topped lists of the best places to live in the U.S.

But since 2020, in the wake of George Floyd's death, business leaders have pulled back from their previous levels of engagement. Some of this stems from higher pressure to focus more on business than the community. It also reflects a lack of courage. Sticking one's neck out when the region is embroiled in ferocious debates reflecting our purple polity requires some guts. That quality has been lacking for the last several years. The Itasca Project, a group of regional executives focused on doing good things for the Twin Cities and state, withered away and was effectively shuttered in October of last year.

While some are happy to see business leaders out of the picture, the loss of strong leadership from business has removed a strong cohort who could contribute more to our state. We still have an inordinately large number of major companies based in the Twin Cities, such as Target, 3M, Medtronic, Cargill and Best Buy. Twenty years ago, folks could name many of the CEOs of these enterprises. Now, they are suits seldom heard from.

Something I never thought I'd hear is now floated more often in casual conversations. Will we become the next Detroit? Rick Kupchella, a former news anchor in the Twin Cities, produced a bracing documentary last fall called *A Precarious State*. In it, he focused on the power of left-leaning politicians, arguing that they are hampering business and pushing business leaders out of key discussions. He uses the backdrop of a still struggling downtown Minneapolis to make his point. Big office buildings are selling at drastically reduced prices or sit empty. Downtown St. Paul's office building situation is even worse.

Without the powerful pillar of business leadership and engagement, the Twin Cities and state are playing with one arm behind their back. And yet, many politicians see little benefit in engaging the business community in meaningful ways. While they like political contributions, precious little is being done to tap the talent and genius that created a place that is the headquarters for 17 Fortune 500 companies.

And while it's great to have a bunch of headquarters, increasingly, these companies are expanding elsewhere. 3M has announced reductions at its Maplewood headquarters. Ecolab has 48,000 global employees, a fraction of whom are in Minnesota. Likewise, Target has trimmed its staff presence in the Twin Cities.

Our civic and political leaders need to rethink an approach that has pushed business leadership to the background. Until all the legs of the stool are working together for the greater good of the Twin Cities and Minnesota, we are likely to remain in our current, troubled, fractious space. While business leaders would benefit from a bit more courage, some encouragement from other leaders would likely pull thoughtful, successful people into broader discussions about the future of our state. This kind of engagement is needed now more than ever.

Dave Kansas is Editor-at-Large of Pegasus.

Higher Education

Reclaiming its Purpose

Michael Hartoonian

The philosophy of the schoolroom
In one generation,
Will be the dominant philosophy
Of government in the next generation.
-Abraham Lincoln

Introduction

What is the relationship between higher education and how people are governed? What forms of government are available to us? What criteria guide our choice of the best system of order and justice? Who should ensure the transmission of that knowledge necessary for the exercise of civic agency?

These questions will guide us, starting with the proposition that popular sovereignty – people able to govern themselves – necessitates a high level of literacy in the content of what Adam Smith called "moral sentiments" and what the Federalist Papers and John Adams understood as foundational to self-governance – "virtue." These ideas, for those who care to listen, are but echoes from Cicero and Confucius, among others.

Athens is a school where we understand that,
If our society does not educate its warriors to be philosophers,
and its philosophers to be warriors,
We will have our wars fought by fools,
And our philosophy crafted by cowards.
-Pericles, King of Athens

As we look around the world today, why are we witnessing an increase in fools and cowards? Why are so many nations, states and groups ignoring virtue and truncating our ethical, economic and social wisdom through such things as behaviors that obscure truth, fabricated immigrant hysteria or nations taking authority over others' intellectual/human rights, as well as real property? Have we come to a time in history where one individual or random group has the power to keep telling citizens the depth of their ignorance until the people believe it? If these claims have any validity, then we are witnessing a serious decline in literacy – reasoning, historical perspective, aesthetics and ethics.

As citizens, we often lack the instinct to spot deception or admit our own errors – abilities crucial for true, popular sovereignty. Without them, some surrender their freedom out of ignorance and complacency.

Have we forgotten the intellectual obligations of holding the office of citizens (and of leadership) and the humility to see the limits of our individual and collective knowledge? Do we understand the purpose and responsibility of a learning society?

To address these questions and others, cultures have developed professions to help. Indeed, cultures created and hold responsible four fundamental professions for a flourishing society – education, medicine, religion and law. Within the context of a democratic republic, there is another quality and that is a civic tension between enlightened citizens and these professions. However, both professions and citizens must be responsible searchers of the contested truth, as well as critically love the institutions and nation in which they spend their life's time. The tension is displayed in debate, defined by civility, intellectual rigor and the character to be able to consider the possibility that you, or any of us, hold misconceptions about how the world works.

Without universities teaching this content and these skills, we live on borrowed time. These abilities are not innate. They are the result of long training and rightful habits. And the goal of this training, the first goal of higher education, is to teach competence in virtue and reason.

The Cultural Narrative

As with the ancient Athenians, every society creates a mythical cultural narrative. That narrative reflects a more ideal identity and purpose and becomes that culture's curriculum. That curriculum, when critically studied, informs survival. Early on in the evolution of human society, it was clear that survival would depend on a family's or a community's memory and ability to discern truth in order to discriminate among those cultural elements that should be passed on to the next

generation and those that should be left behind, as well as elements to be created anew. Mostly, these ideals were taught in stories, sung or told by the old to the young. These cultural values, which have a half-life of one generation, implicitly demand that people have to evaluate these essential characteristics and teach them to each other and to their children. As societies advanced, this task became more complex and professions were created by cultures to do that work. In other words, who would help deal with and explain death, the cosmos and the mysteries of the hidden soul? Who would explain the need for order with justice? Who would deal with the sick and the nature of health? And who would take these ideas and intentionally and critically pass them on to the next generation?

Certainly, other groups of people would administer and guide the implementation of the cultural concepts, but the professions were created to judge which ideas and narratives were necessary for cultural survival. This is and has always been tricky business because of the changing nature of the cultural context and the nature of being human. Because of this complexity, citizens must cultivate a deep civic inquisitiveness in order to acquire a built-in crap detector. When the culture works well, the professions, working in concert with one another – and the general wisdom of the people – debate, synthesize and recommend principles and policies that create more gentle and beneficial cultural changes on the landscape. What this means is that the professional's first responsibility is to the veracity of the content or knowledge of the discipline in which they work. Thus, a medical doctor's first responsibility is to the science of medicine, not the patient. If she doesn't know the science, the patient suffers. Likewise, knowledge of the law is more important than the lawyer's client. And in education, the student does not come first; the content of the discipline does. All of this is encased in a deep sense of humility. You can only teach what you know and to the degree that you put students, patients, clients or parishioners before disciplined inquiry, to that same degree, you corrupt their learning and well-being by making them less responsible for their own choices.

Social, economic, political and technical personnel, including managers, assess, apply and review professional content. Ongoing improvement and recommendations are essential, focusing on enhancing individual and institutional integrity. This approach promotes feedback loops and continuous learning, enabling greater independence and effective collaboration among members of society.

Without deep learning and critical debate, social change tends to be harsh and violent, creating challenges for democracies and market societies. Professions emerge to guard against weak understanding and misinformation. They teach citizens to think conditionally, always questioning outcomes: "If we do X, will Y follow?"

As listed above, the four classical professions so charged to attend to this challenge are education, medicine, religion and law. These four professions were created out of the ongoing need for cultural sustainability and crafted to protect, enhance and transmit the culture to the next generation. However, once a profession atrophies, caused either by outside or inside venality, it loses its first purpose and becomes irrelevant, corrupt and the larger culture is put in danger. This often happens when intellectual laziness, selfishness or an irresistible dogma or ideology infects the cultural DNA. The task of the profession is to understand and mitigate the issue, so it doesn't destroy truth. Within a democratic republic, this evaluative transmittal is even more necessary, since a democratic republic is based on a set of principles sustained through enlightened legal and ethical arguments among responsible, healthy and educated citizens. For example, any inequitable distribution of justice, manifested in different rules and sanctions based on such differences as class, geography or ethnicities, diminishes the republic and leaves all citizens vulnerable to disillusion and cynicism. This does not mean, however, an abandonment of knowledge, as the behavior of the fearful and closed-minded would suggest, prohibiting ideas simply because they disagree. What it demands is a debate regarding the limits of law, faith and science. Enlightened citizens, who constitute the most important branch of government – The People – are responsible for continuing civil and civic debates. The principles of any republic are and always have been goals that are at odds with one another and in need of serious debate. There have and always will be tensions between the law and moral sentiments. However, the law cannot be disregarded. It is always in play within the civic and civil arguments that move the republic forward toward justice. To engage in the civic debate, an individual and group needs to have an

ethical grounding, historical knowledge and the understanding that we are held together by a set of shared values – in a word, that set we call character.

To this end, all four professions teach about self-governance and responsibility, which is uncomfortable. Yet, all learning is uncomfortable. Indeed, you will never learn a thing if you refuse discomfort! We have a choice: be comfortable or be truthful with evidence. This is the case because learning starts with the confession of ignorance. The educated person doesn't just try to prove someone else's argument incorrect, but works to prove his or her personal theory or argument incorrect. Teachers spend a lifetime trying to understand the long historic perspectives, empirical research, subjective faith and logic in deciding what knowledge to teach and in a republic, that knowledge is what and how to teach the general tenets of enlightened citizenship.

Each citizen, theoretically, possesses power and agency because no individual should stand above the law. But citizens must put this theory into practice and help each other create a fair political and economic playing field. In the same way that we rely on doctors to clarify principles of good health, we depend on educators and legal experts to explain the standards of justice and truth. When citizens of a republic share this common knowledge, they are better prepared to talk about and tackle important issues, both personally and as part of society. The simple truth is that people thrive when professionals help everyone learn how to apply and balance democratic values.

If professions do not teach these things, citizens will become subjects, meaning that they will not have the knowledge or will to live civil, healthy, productive and happy lives. In so many ways, this knowledge and ability separate citizens from subjects. Citizens place importance on character. Subjects put their faith in image. Character is destiny. Image is mercurial. Character is doing what is right and often hard. Image is following the path of least resistance. Character is asking what I can do for family, school and community. Image is a belief that family, school and community exist for your benefit. Character means governing

yourself – a necessary condition in a free market and just society. Image means following others and mimicking behavior and taste. Character means citizen, while image is the defining attribute of a subject.

What Higher Education Teaches

The first obligation of the profession of higher education is to teach the duties of holding the office of citizen. Our first attribute of identity is and must be that of the citizen.

Being a citizen is not and should not be comfortable. If we want the comfort of not thinking for ourselves, simply drop that burden and follow your separate demigods, be they the media, a political party, a loud blowhard or your uncle – and lose your republic.

As we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence and Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, it is fitting to note again the relationship between higher education and the kind of government we would want.

If you want a totalitarian government – teach fear.

If you want a monarchy – teach symbolism.

If you want a republic – teach virtue and reason.

Do we desire a republic?

If we do, then we must understand universities not as glorified vocational schools. They are not the economic engine of the state or region. That is not their mission. Their mission is to be a civic virtue engine of the state or region – period. Within a republic, if the university does not intentionally teach civic virtue and reason, it becomes irrelevant to students, to the economy, to the culture and finally, to itself.

Universities can mark the 18th century Age of Reason as a time to look deeply into its purpose and its service to a society that needs a reawakening of virtue and reason.

Need For a New Enlightenment

Over two hundred years ago, the Age of Enlightenment took root in Europe and on the North American continent. Three prime questions were addressed again: how shall I come to know anything? How shall I conduct my life? How shall I be governed? These questions directed people within this geography and beyond to design new frameworks for understanding knowledge, self and the larger, interconnected world. Mostly, it addressed the alignment between human nature and the possibilities for self-government and free commerce.

These questions were discussed by individuals in touch with the literature of the world and they were courageous enough to try and live by these ideas. This was a great experiment, resting on the will and literacy of the people. In the 18th century, British publishers sold more books in the colonies than in London, reflecting widespread engagement with important issues. Jefferson emphasized that education is essential for civilization and personal growth, stating: "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be."[1] He argued that education makes people better, not just better off and that a republic depends on informed civic virtue.

The 250th Anniversary: An Opportunity to Relearn an Idea

The United States is an idea, sustained through civic and civil arguments. What's the argument about? This profound truth slips by most citizens, primarily because they see citizenship as a gift and not a responsibility. Because of the nature of being human and the historical story of the human race, it seems clear that "the argument" has not occurred to many. History has also taught us that when the argument stops, violence happens. So, what is the argument about and why is it not taught or practiced? Perhaps because practicing civic virtue is simply too hard and people, in general, are too intellectually lazy to trouble themselves at any deep level with ideas like freedom, equality, ethics, law, unity, diversity, common wealth or private wealth. Instead, they use these values as slogans – without meaning or purpose. It is easier to sit back and let "George" do it. Of course, when George does something we don't like, we complain, but still do nothing.

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[1] Gordon C. Lee, ed., *Crusade against Ignorance: Thomas Jefferson on Education* (New York: Publications Bureau, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1961), pp. 18-19.

So, what is higher education's responsibility for the citizen's understanding of the ideas and sustaining arguments upon which any democratic republic must be constructed? The answers to these questions are worth celebrating, as they define what it is we are celebrating in the first place.

A Spirit of Education

This connection between education and (realizing) democracy becomes critical as culture changes. For example, in America, for the first 100 years or so, universal education meant the elementary school years. During what historian R. Freeman Butts called the Republican era (roughly from 1770s to 1870s), the ideal was some education for all and much education for a few.[2]

While Thomas Jefferson believed that some people may be more educable than others, he maintained that everyone deserved and required some education. Jefferson might be described as a democratic aristocrat. His 1779 "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge" (an idea already implemented in the Land Ordnance of 1775) called for each county to establish an elementary school, where every child would receive three years of free instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic. This bill carefully spelled out the location and requirements, including accountability measures, of the elementary schools. From these early elementary grades, the school master would select the most promising boys to study Greek, Latin, geography and higher levels of mathematics at one of the 20 grammar schools to be set up throughout the state. After six years of grammar school, one half of those who survived the rigors of study and showed superior talent would go on to attend William and Mary College – the second oldest in the nation, after Harvard, established in 1693.[3] Jefferson's plan was the work of someone who valued the integral and indispensable role of education in the nascent republic. It was awesome in its comprehensiveness and unique in its structure.

Jefferson's plan was revolutionary for the time. Prior to this, in colonial days, schooling was sparse and often punitive. Although some colonists viewed schools as important to an emerging society, no more than ten percent of school age

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[2] R. Freeman Butts, "Search for Freedom – the Story of American Education, *NEA Journal* (March 1960), p. 42.

[3] Gordon C. Lee, *Crusade Against Ignorance*, p. 89-90.

children attended. The *New England Primer* was the most distinctive of the colonial schoolbooks, whose ostensible purpose was to teach reading, but its many lessons also served as religious indoctrination. A typical passage from the *Primer* reads, "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of the child, but the rod of correction shall drive it from him." Typically, the distinction between those attending and not attending was along class lines. Children of the poor and lower classes had no formal education, while those of the upper, property classes received as much as possible, often through college.

With Jefferson's ideas, the nation began its quest to achieve the twin goals of excellence and equity. These goals would begin on diverging paths. Excellence in classical studies would be for the most privileged to prepare for the professions and politics; equity in the basics for others. Jefferson's educational aspirations had only modest success and his 1779 bill did not become law. Yet, his ideas inspired the common school movement and with it, seeds were sown for public schooling by capable educators throughout New England and the Midwestern states during the 1800s. The most dedicated and influential of these leaders was Horace Mann (1796-1859), who became the first secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education in 1837.

Mann was an uncompromising champion of equality in education. Like Jefferson, he argued for the general diffusion of skills and knowledge, but he was less concerned about advanced liberal education for enlightened leadership. In his words, "The scientific or literacy well-being of a community is to be estimated not so much by its possessing a few men of great knowledge as having many men of competent knowledge." Mann's work was an initial break from the republican ideal that guided the nation's schooling through the first century.

During his 12 years as head of the Massachusetts board, Mann produced annual reports on timely aspects of education. Following travels to Europe, where he

witnessed the Prussian schools, Mann returned to praise their civility and progressive techniques. The Prussians had adopted the methods of Johann Pestalozzi, who emphasized love and patience for the young and used real objects in teaching. This seventh of his annual reports aroused considerable protest among Boston educators. In his twelfth annual report (1848), Mann called for financial support from businesses and large property owners, arguing that sound schooling would offer far more protection than any police force because it went to the root of crime in society. Schooling, he wrote, was the best way to eliminate poverty and ignorance.[4]

Awakening a New Civics Framework

Democracy is an idea, sustained through argument. Again, what's the idea and what's the argument about?

To address a republic's modern identity, it's essential to recognize and discuss its cultural tensions. These arise both from the values embedded in long-standing institutions and from the fundamental beliefs tied to democracy and capitalism.

Identity

We normally think of identity as the character a person or people create through their history and location on earth. And there is truth in this assertion. As the saying goes, "tell me where you live, what you read and the language you speak and I'll tell you who you are." However, when it comes to a republic, we find something more and something different. This may be the case because, as citizens and not subjects, we feel that we have inherited and inhabit a special place. We are exceptional in the way we define our identity. Because we interpret history more widely, there are natural law integrations that shine a new and transcendent light on conceptions of nationality, ethnicity or national origin, thus, redefining citizenship through ideals or values. Democracy becomes an idea and all you have to do in order to be a citizen is embrace that idea. But what kind of an idea is it? Is it an idea that we are born with? Must it be learned? Is it one idea or many?

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[4] Lawrence A. Cremin, ed., *The Republic and the School: Horace Mann on the Education of Free Men* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1957), pp. 54-56, 100.

The point is that (the idea of) democracy is fundamentally an argument. And through the performance of argument, we shape our identity. The attributes for the performance and attending identity are 1) civility, 2) delayed or delaying judgment and gratification and 3) love of learning and love of community.

The late cultural critic, Neil Postman, put it best in suggesting that the American experiment has been formed, maintained and shaped on the principle of continuous argument. "We know what happens," he said, "when argument ceases. Blood happens." All Supreme Court decisions are arguments, including some deeply embarrassing ones, such as the Dred Scott v. Sandford (1857) decision. Two years later, the Lincoln-Douglas debates, during the 1858 U.S. Senate campaign in Illinois, became our most well-known and perhaps most skillfully crafted arguments.

If a republic is an argument, what is the argument about? To begin with, the argument is over whether or not a republic can be developed and sustained on a grand and ethical scale. It is also a dispute over the merits of democracy and whether or not it is possible to have a nation "by the people, for the people and of the people." That is, popular sovereignty.

At a deeper level, the history of a successful republic can be seen as a persistent argument, carried out by citizens' discourse over four sets of value tensions:

-Law vs. Ethics
-Private Wealth vs. Common Wealth
-Freedom vs. Equality
-Unity vs. Diversity

(See *The Idea of America: How Values Shaped a Republic and Hold the Key to the Future,* Hartoonian, Van Scotter and White. Colonial Williamsburg, 2013.)

While each value set inherently is in conflict, there also is a vital synergy to them. For example, private wealth is never fully realized, nor secure, without a robust common wealth. Likewise, our freedom is impoverished if not accompanied by a sense of equality that provides a moral infrastructure in which to encase that freedom. Similarly, our laws are never good unless guided by a higher conscience. The quest for cultural unity is inconsistent with democracy if it does not also recognize the rich diversity of a pluralistic society. These values must be balanced, as the logical extension of any one of them, if not balanced with its

counter value, will destroy the republic. The logical extension of freedom is anarchy. The logical extension of equality is anti-freedom and will also destroy the republic. Citizens argue to balance – law with ethics, private wealth with common wealth, freedom with equality and unity with diversity. To the degree that a country leans toward one value or the other, to that same degree, the republic becomes problematic.

Citizens should be able to address the following questions with a high degree of competence:

1. Why are persistent arguments over conflicting values necessary to the health of a republic?

2. How have these value conflicts been handled by legislatures, courts, universities, individuals and communities to help define contemporary society?

3. How can citizens use history to more clearly understand political, economic and cultural tensions, as well as ways to reconcile them?

4. Why is it important to understand competing and seemingly conflicting values on such issues as immigration, citizens' well-being, environmental quality, economic justice and opposing ideologies?

5. Why is the democratic mind essential to a democracy?

Conclusion: What Role Does Higher Education Play in Supporting a Society's Efforts to Maintain its Republic?

If we refuse to teach and understand the value tensions of democracy and remain ignorant of the ability and will to debate and balance these values, we will sail rudderless in a sea made ever more turbulent by the vagaries of technology, political inaptitude, economic ignorance, social isolation and cultural amnesia.

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