# MULTIPLE ROLES OF CURRICULUM

# IN THE DEVELOPMENT

# OF A PROPOSED UNIVERSITY

by

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## Abstract

A new university provides faculty and staff with numerous opportunities to engage in participatory, active learning. While curriculum is useful for guiding student learning, the process of developing, refining, and updating of curriculum potentially is a tool for quickly involving faculty and staff in building a system of cooperative governance, effectively empowering faculty and staff as they strive for best practices and academic excellence. The many logistical, legal, and other challenges in such an effort are opportunities for faculty and staff to develop leadership skills that ideally will benefit the university, learners, the local community, and other educational institutions while creating a model for transformative education.

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## Introduction

During the past two years, a small group of Christian leaders have pursued formation of a nondenominational university in or near Roseville, California. Until recently the group focused on a potential partnership with Patten University which was considering establishing a campus in the area. However, Patten ceased to be interested when two other Christian universities announced plans to move to or create a new college in the region.

Although Patten has ceased negotiations, the vision has not died for the following reasons:

1. Several members of the group have experienced visions or prophecies that foretell the creation of a university. The first of these visions occurred more than 10 years ago (Rick Bazacos, personal communication) and have become increasingly common and more widespread during the past three years.
2. The scope of desired educational programs far exceeds that of programs planned by either of the two universities that plan to locate in the region.
3. The educational and religious philosophy of the proposed university is substantially different from either of the two universities that plan to locate in the region.
4. Existing public institutions are finding it increasingly difficult to meet the local demand for higher education.
5. At least two denominations have expressed interest in innovative distance education programs for training of pastors and church leaders.

This paper further explores the possibility of creating a new university. Rather than focusing on market assessment, financial needs, accreditation issues, and legal requirements (several of which are addressed in Smith, 2003a; 2003b; 2003c; and 2003d), this document

explores opportunities for curriculum to be used as be a tool for achieving meaningful learning through authentic learning experiences.

The first section presents the vision of the proposed university and outlines goals and regulatory considerations that must be addressed to transform the vision into reality. The second section discusses the role of curriculum as a guide for student learning. The third section discusses the role of curriculum as a tool for fostering a system of cooperative governance and empowering faculty as they strive for best practices and academic excellence. The fourth section addresses the role of curriculum, faculty, and staff in the development of the university. The final section presents a summary and conclusions.

## Mission and Institutional Setting

### *Mission and Vision*

Alexander and Serfass (2002) state, "Vision is very important for constancy of purpose . . . . [It] sets direction for your organization" (p. 11). Whitley (1991) indicates that a vision presents "a vivid picture of an ambitious, desirable future state that is connected with the customer and better in some important way than the current state" (p. 26, as quoted in Alexander and Serfass, p. 11).

The organizers of the proposed university (herein referred to by its tentative name—Sacramento Valley University) are considering the following proposed mission statement and desired learning outcomes:

> The mission of Sacramento Valley University is to prepare men and women for leadership roles worldwide through an educational program that integrates faith and learning, is distinguished by intellectual maturity and Christian character, and excels in equipping learners for careers in science, humanities, engineering,

business, education, medicine, government, the arts, music, ministry, and other fields. We propose to accomplish this mission by:

1. Promoting best practices in education and related research.

2. Modeling integrity, humility, wisdom, commitment, and Christian character.

3. Becoming a Christ-centered institution known for educational excellence in the arts, sciences, and professional studies.

4. Creating learning experiences that link ethics, Christian values, and a common core curriculum with experiences that develop knowledge and competencies needed for specific career fields.

5. Offering experiences beyond the classroom that help develop broadly educated individuals and competent professionals.

6. Fostering a spirit of scholarship, inquiry, critical thinking, and independent study that stimulates and provides a background for lifelong learning.

7. Encouraging members of the university community to develop personal relationships that sustain spiritual, intellectual, physical and social growth and increase professional competence.

8. Creating and fostering a Christian environment that values quality education, quality research, dialogue, and critical thought within the context of common faith.

Each SVU graduate should possess:

1. The ability to think analytically and critically.

2. The ability to understand the thinking and culture of others and appreciate the value of all men and women.

3. The ability to communicate effectively and creatively.

4. The ability to serve as leaders, role models, and competent professionals.

5. An understanding of factors that influence one’s own physical, mental, and spiritual growth.

6. Attitudes that lead to responsible participation in local, regional, national, and/or world political and environmental affairs.

7. An appreciation of God's role in creation and of the role in science, the humanities, and the arts in increasing understanding (Smith, n.d.).

The organizers are considering an aggressive agenda that calls for developing, within ten years, undergraduate and/or graduate degree programs in fields listed in Table 1. To serve local and distance learners, educational programs will be offered on campus and via the Internet (although some degree programs may only be available in one delivery mode).

### *Goals and Regulatory Considerations*

Regional accreditation is a short-term goal. Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), the regional accreditation entity that covers California and neighboring states, indicates that the accreditation process takes a minimum of six years to progress through eligibility and candidacy to accreditation (WASC, n.d.). Private postsecondary education in California is governed by the Private Postsecondary and Vocational Reform Act of 1989 (California Education Code §§ 94700-94999). Section 94739 (b) (7) exempts institutions that are accredited by the senior commission or junior commission of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (hereafter referred to as WASC) from the provisions of the act, instead relying on the accrediting entity and the accredited institution for quality control (Joyce Leslie, personal communication). During the initial accreditation process, the university must comply with California's postsecondary licensing requirements and be guided by WASC's Handbook of Accreditation (2001).

Another short-term goal is to offer degrees and programs that equip learners to become educators. Achieving this goal requires programs that adhere to credential program standards adopted by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.  Such standards exist for agriculture, art, business, English, health science, home economics, industrial and technology education, languages other than English, math, music, science, and social science. The standards

Table 1

Sacramento Valley University's proposed fields of study.

| Sacramento Valley University's proposed fields of study. |
|---|
| Agriculture |
| Ancient Languages |
| Art |
| Biblical Studies |
| Biology |
| Broadcasting |
| Business |
| Chemistry |
| Christian Education |
| Computer Science and Engineering |
| Drama & Performing Arts |
| Early Childhood Education |
| Earth Science |
| Engineering |
| English [composition, journalism, creative writing, ESL, literature] |
| Environmental and Land-Use Planning |
| Geography |
| Fire Science |
| History |
| Industrial Arts |
| Liberal Arts |
| Library and Information Science |
| Management of Not for Profit Organizations |
| Mathematics |
| Ministry/Pastoral Studies |
| Missiology |
| Modern Foreign Languages |
| Organizational Management |
| Music |
| Nursing |
| Philosophy |
| Physical Education |
| Physical Therapy |
| Physics |
| Police Science |
| Political Science and Government |
| Primary and Secondary Education [credential and graduate programs] |
| Psychology |
| Social Science |
| Sociology |
| Theology |

Source: Modified after Smith (2001)

also address quality and effectiveness of teacher preparation programs (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2003).

Private colleges and universities may be either for-profit or non-profit institutions. The former raise capital from investors who expect a financial return. The latter typically seek tax-deductible donations and manage their operations to benefit a community. While it is technically possible to operate a private, for-profit, religious institution, doing so sets up a potential ethical dilemma: Which master—God or money—does the institution serve? (See Matthew 6:24 and Luke 16:13, KJV). Ferren and Kinch (2003) report that (a) curriculum reform efforts face fiscal reality on many of today's college campuses and (b) losses from the resulting clash between idealists and realists are measured not only in dollars but faculty goodwill. While acknowledging that many customer-centered for-profit universities benefit their community of learners, staff, and faculty, future investors—stakeholders only in a financial sense—might seek to significantly alter the vision and mission of the institution while seeking to increase financial return on investment. Simply put, profit-minded shareholders potentially could overrule the desires of faculty and learner communities and, perhaps, even sell all facilities and operations to a non-educational entity. For these reasons, religious universities are usually established as not for profit charitable organization and must adhere to provisions of the Internal Revenue Code (Internal Revenue Service, 2003).

The proposed university also will need to interact with regulators such as the U.S. Department of Education (which, among other things, administers student loan programs), various State of California agencies, and agencies of cities, counties, states, and countries wherein the university has or plans campus sites and offers instruction (Smith, 2003d). These

entities may have a number of concerns including, but not limited to environmental impact, facility permitting, business licensing, fund raising practices, and workplace health and safety.

## Curriculum as a Guide for Student Learning

In “Turning Points in Curriculum,” Marshall, et al., describe the evolution of American curriculum theory, using the ever-changing American culture as a backdrop. Curriculum theory experienced shifts almost as often as did popular music, styles of dress, social issues, and technology. This fact should not really be all that surprising because educators and local communities often influence curriculum by suggesting and, at times, demanding, that information being taught reflect current, important social issues (e.g., civil rights). The most recent example of social influence on curriculum might be the inclusion of an “ethics boot camp” for new MBA students at the University of California, Davis (UCD). Sirard (2003) notes that while ethics has been discussed in UCD business classes for years, the new “mandatory program comes at a time when too many segments of corporate America have had major ethical failings and eroded public trust” (¶ 3). Clearly UCD determined that business ethics warrants a greater emphasis.

Marshall, Sears, and Schubert (2000) state, “The goal [of curriculum] is to help each student achieve his optimum intellectual development" (p. 50). Henderson and Hawthorne (2000) add, “[A] curriculum can be viewed as an educational path that leads students toward a particular conception of the good life" (p. 3). Unfortunately, when too much content is devoted to a university’s “conception of the good life,” student needs may not be met. After analyzing Patten University’s curriculum, Smith (2002) observed that degree requirements were composed of general education requirements, university distinctives, and requirements related to the major each learner chooses to pursue. The latter requirements are often driven by entities outside the

university. Some professions are licensed by individual states that have adopted required educational content. For a university to issue degrees without regard to state licensing requirements leaves students ill-prepared for professional life. Smith stated:

> To illustrate the issue, California's Board of Geology and Geophysics has set some recommended course content for geology majors. Most geology programs require about 30 semester units of geology courses, plus chemistry, calculus, statistics, physics, and biology prerequisite courses. In essence, programs that don't cover all of this content will be matriculating students who [may not] meet the state's minimum standards for licensure. Also, to meet the state's single subject requirement for geoscience, courses in meteorology, astronomy, oceanography and botany are added [about 46 semester units total]. After quickly checking out the other single-subject credential majors (art, business, English, health science, home economics, industrial arts, math, music, PE, biology, chemistry, geoscience, physics and social science), I suspect that we'll find similar limitations in almost all (¶ 3).

Smith noted that Patten’s distinctives required 39 units of religious studies content and only 36 units in the learner’s major. Patten distictives plus general education requirements comprised so much of each degree program that learners could, at most, only take 42 to 45 units in their major (assuming that all electives were in the major field), which isn’t enough to satisfy some single-subject teaching credential requirements. Patten’s approach leaves students with zero flexibility and severely limits the university’s ability to put students in control of their own learning program unless, of course, students decided to complete more than the 120 units required for the degree; however, doing so delays graduation and increases cost to learners, the university, or both.

Pinar (2000) noted, "[Everyone] will not . . . and need not become terribly interested in everything. That all students must take all the major disciplines beyond, say, a middle school level of acquaintance is not educationally sensible" (p. vii). Pinar also charged that universities often adopt general education requirements so that “each of the politically powerful disciplines

gets a piece of the student enrollment (which equals budget) pie" (Pinar, p. vii). Ferren and Kinch (2003) observe,

> “Even if a campus had all the resources it needed to create its ideal program, student resistance would still present an imposing obstacle. Students tend to view general education programs as an incoherent set of required courses of little relevance to their career interests. They readily explain that they do not work as hard in classes they don't like, and they develop resentment if they get lower grades in courses that they feel do not play to their strengths. The psychological cost of student resistance also takes a toll on faculty who feel they are dragging along students whose only goal is "to get it out of the way." The real dollar cost to the institution is apparent when students repeat a failed course or take their tuition dollars to the local community college to fulfill a dreaded requirement” (¶ 16).

SVU organizers acknowledge these sorts of problems and assert that general education serves two basic functions: (a) equip learners with basic skills needed for success in all academic programs and (b) enable the university to achieve the mission and learning outcomes expressed on pp. 2 and 3 above. An example of a course that contributes to the former might be English composition because learners routinely will be expected to compose papers and properly express themselves on tests and other written assessments in almost all university courses. Examples of the latter might be a course that explores some aspects of environmental science, especially as it (a) involves developing critical thinking skills, (b) might touch on cultural issues, and (c) would help inform learners about environmental issues and impacts of personal choices.

Admittedly, all learners might benefit from any course that the university offers, and there is much to be said in support of a broad-based liberal arts education. But, as Ferren and Kinch (2003) note, “Reform efforts must address the gap between ideal outcomes of a general education program and the reality of the needs and behaviors of the students” (¶ 17). Not everyone needs business math or calculus, physics or chemistry, art history or music. However, most learners might benefit from a basic understanding of the concepts of risk and return on investment, income tax basics, or cost of automobile operation.

One possible approach to general education requirements, prevalent in the early 1970s, required learners to develop their own general education program. At Humboldt State University, for example, learners had to select two science courses, two math courses, two humanities courses, two English/communication courses, and so on. Some courses required for specific majors (e.g., beginning chemistry and physics—courses that are required for most science majors) could satisfy some of these breadth requirements. This sort of approach empowers learners to take charge of their own learning. However, for it to be effective, learners may need an introductory course so that they can “understand their own role in constructing a compelling whole out of their education, rather than drifting through a fragmented experience” (Ferren and Kinch, 2003, ¶ 18). Such a course might involve (a) explorations of possible careers and documenting the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for success in those careers, (b) helping learners to develop personalized degree completion plans, and (c) exploration of opportunities to enhance the learner’s personal development.

The university could enable learners to build a knowledge management system wherein a learner could deposit his or her research on potential career fields so the information could be used and updated by subsequent learners. Furthermore, learners could include comments about successes and failures in their planning (e.g., “I wish I’d taken English composition before Speech because . . .”); such comments would enable (a) learners to better understand the connections between specific courses and careers, (b) faculty to improve advising capabilities, and (c) prerequisites to be added, modified, or deleted.

General education requirements and distinctives should further the mission of the university and desired learning outcomes. SVU organizers included specific learning outcomes in an attempt to address two issues that are particularly troubling:

1. Fundamentalist interpretations of the Bible in ways that disenfranchise and seek to subjugate women.
2. Assertions that the Bible must be interpreted literally and that, therefore, scientific findings are incorrect and incompatible with Christianity and Islam.

Organizers note that few public colleges offer courses in religion and that relatively few religious colleges offer degrees in science and engineering. Thus, the opportunities for dialog and increased understanding among believers and scientists are becoming fewer and the debate over topics such as evolution and age of the Earth is becoming more acrimonious (Giberson and Yerxa, 2002).

The above discussion acknowledges that curriculum is value-laden. As Henderson and Hawthorne (2000) state, "Curriculum work is a value-laden set of activities in which those involved try to create ways for students to acquire the ideas, perspectives, and skills deemed most worthy of good education . . . . From start to finish, curriculum is embedded in politics . . ." (p. 3). Similarly, null curriculum—that which is not taught—is value laden and political. One accrediting entity, Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools [TRACS] (2001), requires colleges to (1) teach that the universe and all organisms were created in six literal days and (2) all board members, faculty, and staff must agree with this (and other) biblical foundation standards (pp. 15-16). TRACS schools tend to limit the content of basic science courses and present a one-sided view. SVU organizers believe that such restrictions (a) hinder critical thinking and (b) tend to create programs that focus more on indoctrination than on true education and should be avoided.

## Curriculum as a Governance Tool

Henderson and Hawthorne (2000) suggest that curriculum should be used as a vehicle for empowering faculty and fostering cooperation; they refer to this effort as transformative leadership. Henderson and Hawthorne note:

> According to Snauwert (1993), transformative leadership must be "conceived . . . not in terms of control, but rather in terms of guiding others to higher levels of judgment and self-governance" [p. 7]. In other words, transformative leaders make a point of challenging others to engage in a life of continuous growth (p. 15;).

Rosenberg (2002) states that effective e-learning strategies "must . . . focus on critical success factors that include building a learning culture, marshaling true leadership support, deploying a nurturing business model, and sustaining change throughout the organization" (p. xvi). Smith (2003b) adds:

> "There is great pressure to do it well—not doing it (online learning) well risks loss of accreditation, which affords significant competitive advantage. Also, loss of accreditation would serve [the university's] former and current students ill, sending a very public signal that previously awarded degrees might be or are (a) suspect, (b) inferior, or (c) substandard" (p. 13).

Although the authors of these two quotes were discussing online learning, their statements also pertain to institutions that offer face to face learning:

1. "There is great pressure to do [learning] well" (as evidenced by the No Child Left Behind Act; after Smith, 2003b).
2. "Not doing it [learning] well risks loss of accreditation" (after Smith, 2003b).
3. Effective learning strategies "must . . . focus on critical success factors that include building a learning culture, marshaling true leadership support, deploying a nurturing business model, and sustaining change throughout the organization" (after Rosenberg, 2002).

Western Association of Schools and Colleges (2001) identifies four standards for accredited institutions:

1. Defining institutional purposes and ensuring educational objectives.
2. Achieving educational objectives through core functions
3. Developing and applying resources and organizational structures to ensure sustainability.
4. Creating and organization committed to learning and improvement (p. 14).

The WASC standards exist to, among other things, (a) “guide institutions in self review as a basis for assessing institutional performance and to identify needed areas of improvement” (p. 15) and (b) “assist . . . in defining institutional quality and educational effectiveness, and in promoting the development and sharing of practices leading to the improvement of quality” (p. 15).

WASC requires periodic institutional reviews to assure compliance with the standards. One WASC review criterion is: “The institution’s faculty exercises effective academic leadership and acts consistently to ensure both academic quality and the appropriate maintenance of the institution’s educational purposes and character” (p. 27). Other criteria address evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process and using the results for improvement.

Mager (2000) indicates that clear instructional goals are necessary for effective evaluation. He suggests that prior to choosing material or method, it is important clearly identify goals because only clearly stated goals will enable students to demonstrate their achievement. “When clearly defined goals are lacking, it is impossible to evaluate a course or program efficiently, and there is no sound basis for selecting appropriate materials, content, or

instructional methods” (pp. 66-67). For tests to be useful "they must measure performance in terms of the goals" (p. 67).

Baldridge National Quality Program [BQNP] (2003) states, “Pursuit of educational excellence requires a strong future orientation and a willingness to make long-term commitments to key stakeholders—your community, employers, faculty, and staff” (p. 3). BQNP identifies 11 core values and concepts as embedded beliefs and behaviors commonly found in high-performing organizations (Table 2). Kouzes and Posner (2002) identify five practices and ten commitments of leadership (Table 3). Several of the underlying themes of these two references are quite similar. Both focus on vision, valuing employees, innovation, and continuous improvement.

Kouzes and Posner indicate that “modeling the way” includes (a) setting an example through daily actions that demonstrate deep commitment, (b) relentless effort, steadfastness, competence, and attention to detail, (c) spending time with colleagues, working side by side, and

Table 2

Core values and concepts that form a foundation for a results-oriented framework in a high-performing educational organization.

| |
|---|
| Visionary leadership |
| Learning-centered education |
| Organizational and personal learning |
| Valuing faculty, staff, and partners |
| Agility |
| Focus on the future |
| Managing for innovation |
| Management by fact |
| Social responsibility |
| Focus on results and creating value |
| Systems perspective |

Source: Baldridge National Quality Program (2003), p. 1

Table 3

The five practices and ten commitments of leadership.

| PRACTICE | COMMITMENT |
|---|---|
| Model the Way: | 1. Find your voice by clarifying your personal values.<br>2. Set the example by aligning actions and shared values. |
| Inspire a Shared Vision: | 3. Envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities.<br>4. Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations. |
| Challenge the Process: | 5. Search for opportunities by seeking innovative ways to change, grow, and improve.<br>6. Experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from mistakes. |
| Enable Others to Act: | 7. Foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust.<br>8. Strengthen others by sharing power and discretion. |
| Encourage the Heart: | 9. Recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence.<br>10. Celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of community. |

Source: Adapted from Kouzes and Posner (2002, p. 22)

(d) asking questions to get colleagues to think about values and priorities (pp. 14-15). Regarding vision, Kouzes and Posner note, "[People will not follow until they accept a vision as their own . . . . [Visions] seen only by leaders are insufficient to create an organized movement or a significant change in a company" (p. 15). Furthermore:

> Exemplary leaders enable others to act. They foster collaboration and build trust. This sense of teamwork goes far beyond a few direct reports or close confidants. They engage all those who must make the project work—and in some ways, all those who must live with the results . . . . [Cooperation] must include peers, managers, customers, clients, suppliers, citizens—all those who have a stake in the vision (p. 18).

University governance typically involves a board and a chief executive (both of which are required by Internal Revenue Code), plus a faculty governance component (typically an academic senate). Membership in the board and academic senate usually is controlled in a constitution, bylaws, or other formally adopted instrument. Larger universities may limit membership in the academic senate to tenured faculty or a subset thereof. Smaller institutions, such as Patten University, may include all full-time faculty plus some representative part-time and adjunct faculty.

One way to combine all of these concepts and ideals is to use curriculum as a vehicle to develop a participatory leadership structure. In effect, this follow Henderson and Hawthorne's (2000) transformative approach which typically involves four steps:

1. Deliberating about a school-based curriculum platform
2. Building an overall vision of the curriculum
3. Assessing student learning
4. Planning the curriculum in the classroom (pp. 85-86).

Henderson and Hawthorne indicate that building an overall vision of the curriculum involves pulling together the following:

1. Problems, issues, themes, or topics intended to focus student engagement and connect content over time
2. Content: Key ideas, perspectives, values, skills, and ways of knowing
3. Key forms of student inquiry, problem solving, and related learning activities
4. Supportive materials and equipment (p. 86)

For example, suppose the university determines that Tucker and Codding (1998) are correct—that public schools have produced many students who lack the skills needed to support

a family and are ill-equipped for future learning. (Cavanagh [2003] indicates that recent SAT and ACT scores confirm that few high-school graduates are educationally prepared to earn even mediocre grades [a C] in freshman-level math and science courses.) Further suppose that a substantial number of those students apply to the university. Rather than simply rejecting these students, the faculty might be challenged to (a) consider the issue, (b) formulate an appropriate entry pathway, and (c) help assure the success of the new learners. Note that the definition of "success" doesn't mean attending class and meeting minimal participation requirements, but instead ties directly to the desired outcomes presented on p. 3 above. In this case, each learner's success includes acquiring "The ability to serve as leaders, role models, and competent professionals."

This sort of approach also helps assure that a WASC requirement is met. WASC (2001) indicates that the university needs to assure that the mission and educational objectives are conveyed to and broadly understood by the institution's communities, and to assure that accreditation standards are continuously met. In this case, involving the faculty in planning and problem solving encourages discussion of and reflection about problems, issues, mission, and effectiveness. Empowering the faculty to address curriculum issues on an ongoing basis also helps achieve WASC's directive that the university continuously pursue accreditation standards.

Admittedly many faculty may never have experienced management by consensus, comprehensive strategic planning, or both. Thus, key leaders will need to "model the way" ala Kouzes and Posner (2002, p. 22) through active participation, coaching, and other techniques. One might ask, "Will this approach work?" In essence, the approach requires that faculty become leaders. Kouzes and Posner cite Warren Bennis as stating, "Leaders learn by leading, and they learn best in the face of obstacles" (p. 17). Furthermore, "Leadership is a team effort. Grand

dreams don't become significant realities through the actions of a single person" (p. 18). Leadership requires a willingness to (a) venture into the unknown, (b) change the status quo, (c) search for opportunities to innovate, grow, and improve, and (d) experiment, take risks, and be willing to fail. Ideally the failures are small and offset by frequent small wins that help build the confidence of team members. Through this participatory leadership, everyone's capacity to deliver on promises gradually is strengthened and constituents are themselves transformed into leaders.

This approach to leadership probably also will help equip education professors with skills and knowledge that they can pass on to their students and that might help solve the crisis in today's public schools. Tucker and Codding (1998) describe a community wherein students were not challenged to learn, employers were willing to settle for employees who were less skilled than those available in many third world countries, and educators who knew the school was failing students:

> How could this have happened? How could all of us be willing to settle for so little when we could have so much more? The answer is that each group in this drama sees itself as trapped, unable to move. The employers would like more capable applicants, but they see themselves as having to select from among the students who are available. The teachers want more for themselves and the students, but they see themselves as powerless to change the institution in which they work. The parents see the school as responsible for educating their children, and they do not see themselves in a position to change what the school does. For most of these people, changing the schools is someone else's job, not theirs. So we drift. And the students coast (p. 246).

Tian (2002) charges that colleges that train teachers "major in mediocrity" (p. 14A), recruit mediocre students, undermine state standards, and resist educational reforms. He also asserts that education professors prefer trendy approaches rather than traditional approaches to learning. Tian encourages colleges to (a) shrink the sizes of teacher training classes, (b) become more selective, and (c) operate local charter schools that can serve as teaching clinics. So, (a) if the university

becomes skilled at governance by consensus, (b) opens a charter school and extends this governance approach to that school, and (c) involves student teachers in the governance of the charter school, then student teachers have the opportunity to experience and learn these governance techniques. Admittedly, after graduation, these student teachers might find themselves in institutions where such approaches are discouraged, but (a) change must begin somewhere and (b) the university might be able to direct many graduates to progressive schools.

While the university wants a progressive and exciting educational environment, Ferren and Kinch (2003) report offer insights about curriculum planning and available resources:

> Typically, general education planning sessions are highly energized as committee members debate how best to enrich the curriculum, enhance pedagogy, engage faculty, and ignite the minds of students. The committee will tend to "dream big," calling for resource-intensive innovations such as small freshmen seminars taught only by full-time faculty . . . (¶ 4).

This can lead to two problems. First, the committee usually will be “reluctant to jettison promising strategies” (¶ 4); second, the committee may opt for compromises such as relying on voluntary faculty development or providing insufficient guidance for the program, either or both of which may hinder the program.

Rather than simply involving the faculty in curriculum development and risking the disconnect with available resources, SVU organizers propose to continuously involve the faculty in reviewing available resources, identifying additional needs, setting priorities, and obtaining and allocating the additional resources. Through this participation, faculty will be grounded in fiscal reality. However, faculty will also be empowered to continuously improve programs and processes, create new visions, propose them for adoption, and involve themselves in the process of transforming the visions into reality. Ferren and Kinch (2003) suggests that there are substantial benefits to such an approach:

> To stimulate the kind of intellectual inventory necessary to discover where resources for reform exist, the committee and the administration need to foster active, reflective communication among faculty. Although expensive in terms of time, substantial and intellectually stimulating conversation is the least expensive stimulus for change and an essential foundation for a vital curriculum. Faculty instinctively respond to intellectual camaraderie; indeed, they complain bitterly when a deficit of intellectual exchange with faculty peers diminishes their sense of engagement with a broader academic community. Constant campus conversations about student learning can result in reformed pedagogical practices and more intentional curricula without changing requirements, lowering class sizes, or inventing new courses" (¶ 14).
>
> During bleak fiscal times, faculty must fight off malaise and remind themselves that they still control the quality of classroom engagement. Good teachers are constantly engaged in pedagogical self-reflection, refining assignment sequences, and rethinking the fundamental practices of their teaching. A good administrator fosters that endemic process by encouraging and connecting faculty and thus optimizing the effect of good teaching by multiplying it across the curriculum to create a shared sense of purpose (¶ 15).

## Curriculum's Role in University Development

Henderson and Hawthorne (2000) state:

> Progressive leadership requires the school administration to look beyond short-term gains and focus on conditions that will ensure not only steady achievement gains but also improve teaching and learning for years to come. Rather than depending on top-down administrative direction, it encourages teachers as learners to engage in collaborative problem solving, collegial professional development, and shared decision making for the good of students (Barth, 1990). As a result, performance of both students and adults will increase" (p. 18).

Empowering faculty and staff to (a) use a team approach in setting goals, (b) consider content and values, and (c) develop curriculum for various degree and certificate programs helps establish that they:

1. Are personally valued;
2. Should be ever mindful of changing conditions and community needs;
3. Are responsible for helping one another learn, grow, and improve; and,
4. Should be proactive in modifying and adjusting curriculum.

Growth of the university requires several key resources:

1. An enthusiastic faculty, willing to learn, take risks, and succeed.
2. Money.
3. A local community that is willing to express its needs and desires and interact with the university.
4. Administrators, support staff, and a board of directors who (a) willingly empower faculty and staff and (b) participate as equals in collaborative governance.

Items 1 and 4 in this list clearly follow from the discussions in previous sections of this paper. The fact that money (Item 2) will be required also is fairly obvious. Item 3 warrants further discussion.

SVU organizers recognize that communities and their needs change with time. Yesterday's small, sleepy railroad and farming communities of Roseville and Rocklin have been replaced with a vital and growing high-tech community. Placer County's population in 1940 was only 28,108 (California Department of Finance, n.d.) but grew to 275,600 in 2003 (Department of Finance, 2003). While farms exist nearby, homes, schools, retail and industrial centers are common. Major employers in the county include Hewlett-Packard, Pasco Scientific, Union Pacific, Surewest Wireless, Kaiser Permanente, Sutter Roseville Medical Center, SBC Communications, Pride Industries, and TASQ Technology (Sacramento Regional Research Group, 2003). Approximately 1.9 million people live within a 30-minute drive of Roseville. As new employers move to the region, demand for an educated workforce will expand. Technological advances may require employees who have new skills; thus the programs of the university ideally will evolve along with the community.

For the university to remain relevant, SVU faculty and staff must interact with the community, continually seeking input regarding the community's needs and desires, and conveying information about the resources that the university requires to adequately satisfy those needs. Faculty also should be encouraged to share insights with the community, ideally in ways that help inspire young learners to excel in school and attract potential adult learners. Through these activities, faculty and staff will be challenged to (a) hone their communication and data gathering skills and (b) develop relationships with other elements of the local community. It is likely that faculty and staff also (a) will learn of additional local and regional needs, (b) will have opportunities to develop new collaborative relationships with outside entities, and (c) will need to learn how to balance the needs with available resources while maintaining the quality of education and continually striving toward the university's mission. These challenges provide additional opportunities for "authentic learning experiences" (Henderson and Hawthorne, 2000, p. 2) for faculty and learners at Sacramento Valley University.

## Summary and Conclusions

Henderson and Hawthorne (2000) suggest that curriculum can be a tool for achieving meaningful learning through authentic learning experiences. This paper has outlined numerous opportunities for faculty and staff of a proposed new university to engage in participatory, active learning while using the process of developing, refining, and updating of curriculum as a tool for promoting collaborative governance. Admittedly, there are many logistical barriers that must be overcome to make the proposed institution a reality and a center of academic excellence. However, these many barriers and challenges are opportunities for faculty and staff to develop leadership skills that ideally will benefit the university, learners, the local community, and other educational institutions that will employ university graduates and former faculty and staff.

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