# The Renewal of Community in Higher Education[1]

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*In November, 1995, Palmer gave the keynote address at a conference of annual faculty development conference of The Collaboration for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning in Bloomington, MN. The following is the talk he gave, lightly edited.*

When I was first invited to speak at this conference, the Bush Foundation was still the sponsoring organization. At some point the sponsorship changed, and I remember clearly the call I got one day from someone who identified herself as so-and-so from "The Collaboration." I thought, "This is really cool—this is just like Berkeley in the sixties!" Back then you would

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[1]Chapter 1 *New Paradigms for College Teaching.* 1997. Wm. E. Campbell & Karl A. Smith, Eds. Interaction Book Company.

answer the phone and someone would say, in a hushed voice, "This is Susan from The Conspiracy..." So I thought, "I'm really glad I signed up for this conference!"

Well, even though this is *not* the same as Berkeley in the sixties, it's a wonderful collaboration, and it builds on a movement that is happening all across this country—a movement toward the renewal of teaching and learning, a movement that cares about students, that cares about the world, a movement that cares about all the connections that this word "community" suggests to us. I want to spend a little time this morning trying to talk about some of those connections, trying to offer some images and frames of both the theoretical and the practical sort that might support the probes of those of you who are on the front lines of the struggle to reform higher education.

The world is always with us, and this week it's with me in an especially painful way because of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. I'm still in the process of mourning that. And in an effort to use my grief creatively, I turned to some literature that I think is so important for higher education in the 20th century. It's the literature about the complicity of higher education in the Third Reich, the complicity of learned people and institutions of teaching and learning in the great evil of Nazi Germany.

I read about a group that has always inspired me, a group that was known as the White Rose. The White Rose had a short life—from 1941 until 1944—but it was a group of students from the University of Munich, finally joined by one of their professors, who took on the life-threatening task of publishing a newsletter that called for resistance to the evils of Nazism. I want to read their names to you because we need to remember them: Hans and Sophia Scholl, Christl Probst, Alex Schmorell, Willi Graf, Jurgen Wittenstein, Traute Lafrenz, and Kurt Huber.

Most of them were executed by the Nazis for their resistance, but they lived and died as people who had overcome the profound deformations of the classical German form of higher education—deformations that we live with to this day—in order to stand as free women and men of conscience in a society not unlike our own that was filled with shadows. They transcended their education and spoke a voice of truth.

In reading about the White Rose, in trying to remember this history, I came across this quote, and I want to offer it as a way of framing our entry into the work of this conference. The quote is from a book called *Hitler's Death Camps* by Konnilyn Feig:

> We have identified certain "civilizing" aspects of the modern world: music, art, a sense of family, love, appreciation of beauty, intellect, education... [But] after Auschwitz we must realize that being a killer, a family man, and a lover of Beethoven are not contradictions. The killers did not belong to a gutter society of misfits, nor could they be dismissed as just a collection of rabble. They were scholars, artists., lawyers, theologians and aristocrats.

We cannot assume that a traditional higher education in the humanities and the sciences will consistently yield justice or even humanity. Too much is missing in such a course of studies—we have a fair amount of evidence that traditional higher education does not always work towards such noble ends.

In preparing for this gathering, I asked myself *what* is missing in traditional higher education that makes it *not* a contradiction to know the great books and yet still to do evil, and the answer I came up with involves the three major emphases of this conference.

The missing elements in the form of education that helped fuel the Third Reich were *community, diversity,* and larger forms of *social accountability*—the three emphases of this conference. Community, diversity and the kind of social osmosis that Lesley talked about a

moment ago between higher education and the rest of the society—these were not a part of the elitist, tradition-bound, hierarchical, and objectivist forms of higher education that deformed people into the habits of evil and complicity with evil. In the context of this particular week in 20th century history and its tragic events, I don't know any better way of saying how important are the concerns that you are exploring in these two days together.

Before I dig in more deeply, let me say a word about each of these three themes: community, diversity, and larger forms of social accountability. Community is a tricky one, because a good case can be made that the Third Reich was one of the most powerful forms of community that has ever been known. There are forms of community that are more of the shadow than of the light, so we should not be using the word in a romantic way. We should be using it with great critical discernment.

Community can be sexism and community can be racism as well as forms of liberal democracy that enlarge and enlighten people's lives. But most of the forms of community that I see rising in our society do not have the qualities of light. I think most of the forms that are arising in our time are forms of community that exploit the phenomenon of the empty self, of people who lack a sense of identity—not least because education involves such a culture of judgment that it takes identity away rather than giving identity to people.

People without identity, educated or not, are very susceptible to forms of community that come along and say, "You want to know who you are? We'll tell you who you are. Here's the script you follow; here's what you should think; here's what you should believe; here's what you should feel. If you go along, you are one of us, and if you don't, you're among the damned." So

let us not use the word community in a romantic way. The reminder of the Third Reich itself should remind us that community can partake of deep darkness.

The word "diversity" names one of the things we need in order to open community to its richer, more complex and life-giving forms. Diversity is precisely the quality that fascist community lacks. It is precisely in this inability to embrace diversity, difference, variety, to find in variety light and challenge and growth and energy, that community becomes demonic instead of life-giving.

I want to say just a little more about diversity before I move along because I'm troubled sometimes about how that gets translated. Let me take an example from outside of higher education which it may be a little easier for us to hear. I do a lot of work with church groups around the country, usually churches on the liberal, activist side of the spectrum. And one of the commonest complaints I hear is about "the homogeneous white congregation." But I have come to the conclusion that there is no such thing as a homogeneous white congregation. There's only a group of white people working very hard to keep their differences under cover, expending an enormous amount of energy to avoid those points of conflict that are already in their midst where something new might happen, something that would be challenging and demanding and frightful, but something that would open the door into the possibility of true community. When a community of white people is characterized by a systematic evasion of the differences that are already among them internally, why would anyone who bears an external difference ever want to join them—when that community can't even cope with the diversity that is already there?

I think you can draw your own parallels to the situation in higher education where we have too often cheapened this issue of diversity by saying "Let’s try to get some folks who don't look

like us to come here," only to leave those folks isolated, alone, without resources, without context, without support. Perhaps our first task is to learn to deal creatively with the differences that are already within us and among us and to create a community that meets the real test—which is the capacity to embrace the conflict that diversity always brings in creative and life-giving ways.

Third, and finally, in these prefatory notes, the whole issue of larger forms of social accountability, of osmosis between the semi-permeable boundaries of higher education and the rest of the society, is another crucial strand in this nexus of moral and educational concerns that I think we all share. I'm thinking here about the value of service learning, of engagement with folks outside the academy. This is something that I learned a lot about a two years ago when I spent a year as a visiting professor at Berea College in Kentucky.

Some of you may know this fascinating institution that has a mission to the young people of Appalachia. You can't go to Berea College if your family can afford to send you to college. And Berea charges no tuition because many kids who end up there don't have a cent in the world. Berea College has one of the most remarkable service learning programs that I have ever seen called 'Students for Appalachia." I found that if I wanted to find on that campus students who were moving beyond fear, who were learning to be at home in their own skins and at home in a complex world, the traditional classroom was not the place to find them. I went instead to the meetings of Students for Appalachia where a rich mix of cognitive insight and engaged experience was happening—and that's where these particular young people were being freed from all that constrains a young woman or a young man who has grown up in a “holler” in the Appalachian mountains. That was where the vitality was happening.

I don't think community can exist without boundaries. I think when we say we're in community we're automatically saying something about "us" and "them." But I think the key issue in community is how does that community relate to the stranger who is outside the boundaries. Do we avoid the stranger because we're afraid of the stranger? Do we kill the stranger because our fear has grown so deep that we don't know how to live with that otherness? Or do we do something that's deep in our spiritual tradition and deep in the liberal humanism that informs higher education—offer hospitality to the stranger, not simply for the strangers sake, but for the sake of the largeness of our own lives.

That's what was happening in the service learning programs at Berea. Community was being enhanced by teaching young people to walk across the communal boundary and come back with a deeper sense of identity that is enlarged by creative encounter with the other, with the stranger.

I hope I've established a context of meaning for this conference at the level that I feel it in this particular week of our particular time—and in the work that you're committed to—around the three themes we are here to consider: community, diversity, and the connections between higher education and the larger world.

I want to offer a concrete model for such an education in a moment. But before I do so, I want to say just one more word, again in the spirit of trying to make creative use of my own grief about the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, a word about my own educational experience vis-a-vis the Third Reich. I was taught in high school and college and in graduate school the history of Nazism by some very fine professors, probably some of the best objective historians this country has to offer. But I was taught that history in such a way that for many years I somehow felt that

all of that—the murder of six million Jews, of God knows how many gay and lesbian people, gypsies, persons with mental retardation or physical disability, anyone who didn't fit the mold—that all of that had happened on another planet to another species. I've never known how to say that because it was a perception or intuition that had nothing to do with the words that were said to me in those courses.

None of my professors ever said "other planet, other species." They were not revisionists. But the feeling level of the information I got, my personal relation to that knowledge, was one of immense emotional distance. There were two things I never learned that I should have learned, things that I think are relevant to this conference. I never learned that the community that I grew up in—Wilmette, Illinois, on the north shore of Chicago—practiced its own systemic form of fascism in the 50s and the 60s. If you were a Jew in that part of the world, you lived in Glencoe. You didn't live in Winnetka, Wilmette or Evanston. You lived in a gilded ghetto called Glencoe which was sustained by systemic real estate practices that we all in one way or another collaborated with. I never learned that the big story of Nazi Germany intersected the little story of my own life. And my understanding of the little story of my own life was shallow and false as a consequence of that.

The second thing I never learned was that I have within me a little Hitler, a shadowy force, that will, when the difference between you and me becomes great—when your otherness from me becomes too challenging to my sense of identity or worth—this shadow force within me will find some way to kill you off. I won't do it with a gun or gas chamber, but I will do it with a word, a category, a dismissal of some sort, a kind of spiritual Nazism that renders you lifeless to my universe. "Oh, you're just a fill-in-the-blank—Republican, administrator, romantic,

deconstructionist, or whatever." We do that kind of thing a lot in the academic community, and our study of history should help us move beyond it.

To be an educated person is to understand how the big story of the Third Reich can illumine and check and correct the little story of your own life. I've thought a lot about how that failed to happen for me. It didn't happen because any teacher ever said directly, "This has nothing to do with you." It happened because the data that we were offered were almost always the abstract words and numbers that served the purposes of objectivism—which is precisely the commitment to distancing the knower from the known, distancing the student from the field, in the service of "objective" truth.

In those courses, as far as I can recall, we never saw the art produced by the children who died in those camps; we never read the poetry written by the survivors; we never saw the photographs of the bodies piled up like cordwood. And I think the reason we never looked at those things is that all such data are too subjective to be entertained within the puristic assumptions of traditional higher education—the very same assumptions that led German higher education into complicity with great evil.

I think that what we're talking about during these three days is terribly important. And I would suggest that these remarks, although they come from deep feeling in me, have not overpainted the picture. I think what we are reflecting on is no less about life-and-death than some of my images may suggest.

Now, how does one put wheels on these concerns? How do you implement a commitment to community in higher education? I've never felt that a lecture of this sort is the place for a "how-to-do-it." But I have found that telling true stories from the real world can at

least encourage us to believe that if real people in real space and time are doing something like this somewhere else, maybe we, in our space and time, could do it too. And so I want to construct in our midst here a little paradigm, a little model, that comes from a real story of the real world in higher education. Then I want to walk around it awhile and see, in a period of dialogue before we have to end, where it is that you might like to go with it.

Several years ago I was on the west coast at a major research university. I had talked for a couple of days in workshops and other formats about community in higher education. A man came up to me at the end of the last day and said, “I'd like to take you out for a meal and tell you my own story about community in higher education. I'm the dean of the medical school," he said, "and I think that we have accomplished something here that might interest you." So we went to dinner and he told me the following tale.

Six or eight years earlier some faculty and administrators of this particular medical school had begun to get very discouraged with the outcomes that medical education was having. They had young women and men coming into medical school with very high levels of compassion for patients and for human suffering—that's why they were there. But they followed the same curve, the dean said, as all of the other research that we read around the, country, which indicates that two, three and four years later those high levels of compassion are almost gone. The very movement of the heart that had brought these young women and men to medical school had been crushed in the process of medical education itself. Then, he said, we wonder why too many doctors learn to behave like mercenaries, like people interested in nothing other than their own economic survival.

The dean said they were also very concerned about the failure of ethics in their program and in the practice of medicine itself. This school, along with other medical schools, frequently had the experience of a professor assigning an article on reserve in the library, and by the time the fifth or sixth student went to get it, it had been razored out of the book so that the cutter would have a competitive edge over those yet to come. With that kind of deformation, the dean said, we shouldn't really wonder why there's a lack of ethical behavior in the later years of medical practice.

In addition to the loss of compassion and the failure of ethics, they were concerned that the traditional model of medical education simply was not preparing young men and women for the rapidly evolving nature of the disciplines that go into the practice of medicine, where the information they get today is simply not valid tomorrow, where the need is not simply to have today's information, but to know how to generate the new information, to check it, to critique it, to research it, to do all of those things that a practicing scholar of a field has to know how to do.

And so, the dean told me, on the basis of those concerns they struggled for a couple of years to institute a new curricular and pedagogical model. He told me that the model had been invented at McMaster University in Canada, and then come down to Harvard, and then hop-scotched across the country to several places ending up at this particular west coast university.

To describe this model to you, the dean said, I want first to give you an image of traditional medical education. The image—which is an oversimplification but nonetheless has truth in it—is that through the first couple of years of med school, we kept those young people seated in rows in auditoriums while someone with a pointer in his hand standing on stage next to a skeleton hanging from a rack went through the bones and asked those students to memorize the

connections. "The foot bone connected to the ankle bone, the ankle bone connected to the shin bone, the shin bone connected to the knee bone..." (I asked him if they ever got to, "...and hear the word of the Lord...," but he was not acquainted with the phrase so we moved quickly on!)

The dean said that for two years, these young women and men who came to medical school with a passion to know and to help whole persons, found those whole persons stripped down to the objectified skeletal form hanging from that rack—and then we wondered why two years later when they had their first clinical experience they tended to treat their patients as objects! Obviously their whole formation, or deformation, for two years had been the objectification of the patient herself or himself.

Now, he said, in this new model of medical education, which we adopted from McMaster, from day one the students are seated in small circles around a living patient with a real problem. They're trying to discern what's going on with this patient. They're trying to come up with a diagnosis, and ultimately with a prescription. There's a mentor seated in that circle to make sure that they don't do grievous harm to the patient in question. But the students themselves are learning to talk to this person, they're learning to discern what's going on with this person, they're learning to pick up clues from the patient, from their own hunches, and from each other, and the mentor is guiding them in that process.

From that central hub of the wheel, as it were, there are spokes in this curriculum that move outward so that students can go from that hub to a lecture hall where they get some information that's necessary to go back to the circle the next day and be more precise about their diagnosis; they move along another spoke to a laboratory; they move along another one to an independent research project or library study; along another one to a consultancy or a seminar.

But always, at the core of their education, they are being asked to do the very thing that brought them to school in the first place—to be a doctor, even before they have the "book learning" for it, and that core experience drives them out into a whole variety of places where the knowledge and information necessary to function well at the core might be gained.

The dean said a very interesting thing about the students: "Of course, on one level, they don't know much. They may have had a pre-medical curriculum, but they've never been in a clinical situation. On that level they're really groping in the dark when they attempt to understand this patient at the center of the circle. But on another level they know a lot. They know a lot simply because they are human beings with bodies. They have had illness themselves, or they know people who have had illness. And they remember things, and they pick up things, and they intuit things. They know things in a bodily way, an experiential way, that prove to be very, very relevant in performing the task that's at the core of their medical education from day one."

The dean told me that when they first instituted this curriculum, it passed by the narrowest of margins. He said that the dissenting faculty made a prediction once the new curriculum had passed. They said that, yes, compassion levels would stay steady and maybe even go up because there's a real person at the heart of this way of learning to be a doctor. They predicted that ethical behavior would probably increase because that person at the center of the circle is a focus of accountability. You don't razor the article out of the book on reserve when you know that the reason that somebody needs to look at it is to help the next person they're going to see, and not just to beat you in a competition.

But, the dean said, the dissenting faculty predicted that despite all of those "fringe benefits," the worst possible thing would also happen: objective test scores would go down. And, he said, no field is more filled with objective testing than medicine.

Then he said, "Guess what?" Of course, I could guess, because in the academic community you don't take people out to dinner to tell them about your failures. "Not only have the test scores not gone down, but they've gone up. Every year since we've started practicing this curriculum [and it had been five years by then] the objective test scores have risen."

He and I then began a fascinating conversation about why it is that this form of community in higher education makes people smarter faster. And this is the image of education-in-community that I'd like to offer you, the concrete and practical image of educational community that goes beyond what the skeptics like to call "fringe values"—you know, "fringey" things like compassion and ethics and human decency! This form of educational community is also about people's capacity to grasp and understand and be able to employ complex, rigorous, demanding information in a way that makes them *smarter faster* than the old top-down objectivist models of higher learning can do.

There is a strong case for educational community that's based not only on human compassion, not only on ethical behavior, not only on our ability to be good citizens in a very difficult world—though God knows those arguments should suffice. But you can make an argument for community that's deeply connected to the core mission of higher education, the mission called knowing, teaching, and learning. I mean knowing, teaching, and learning around demanding and difficult things that range all the way from the humanities to the sciences to vocational subjects to making a difference in the world. You can make a case for education-in-

community that is not only about affect but also about cognition, not only about the heart but also about the head, not only about ethics but also about information. Ultimately, it seems to me, this is the case we have to make if we want education-in-community to prevail.

Why is it that this communal model makes people smarter faster? Why is it, I asked the dean, that you have had such success with a form of education that everyone thought was simply about the soft stuff and not about the hard stuff at all? As I bring these remarks to a close, I want to make a few comments about what's underneath or behind this model.

It seems to me terribly important that when we look at a model like this, we not ask ourselves what I think is a dead-end question, which is, "How can we replicate this exact approach in our situation?" I don't think that's the issue here. I think the issue here is to understand the underpinnings of the model itself. How it is that knowing, teaching, and learning are enhanced, not just by a particular form of community, but by engendering a "capacity for connectedness?" Our challenge is not to reduce good teaching to a particular form, model, methodology, or technique, but to understand its dynamics at the deeper levels, the underpinnings, to understand the dynamics that make connectedness a powerful force for learning in whatever form it takes.

I want to make a brief parenthetical comment here, because the turning point I'm trying to make is to me very important, and I feel like I haven't said it very clearly yet: good teaching cannot be reduced to technique. Good teaching comes out of the identity and integrity of the teacher—as that identity and integrity find ways to create the capacity for connectedness that is the magic of this model.

Different teachers are going to create those connections in different ways. Different subjects are going to demand different ways of creating those connections. I'm very worried that we are so addicted to methodology, so captive to the tyranny of technique, to reducing all questions to matters of methodology, that, as the culture war starts to wane, we have merely replaced it with the methodology war, the pedagogy war. People who advocate collaborative learning are lining up against people who are devoted to lecturing as arch enemies, and vice versa.

I think that's fruitless nonsense. I think the standard we all ought to be held to is not our adherence to a particular teaching method, but rather how we are helping create this capacity for connectedness no matter what method we are using. That capacity is at the heart of the model that I've just offered you, and that capacity can be engendered by many different teaching methods—if the method emerges from the identity and integrity of the teacher.

Let me give you a concrete example from my education at Carleton College. (I know some Carleton folk are here, and I hope that I'm not embarrassing the college with what I am doing this morning!) I had a professor at Carleton who lectured non-stop. He just couldn't stop. He was so aflame with a passion for his subject that we would raise our hands with a question and he would say, "Wait a minute, I'll get to that later..." But later in the hour, later in the week, later in the month, later in the year, he still hadn't gotten to it—and now it's thirty years later and my hand is still up and he hasn't called on me yet! What that means, of course, is that my mind is still engaged with some of the things he was teaching about—a powerful testimony to his non-collaborative form of teaching!

This man taught the history of social thought, and it was absolutely extraordinary. He would stand over here and make a Marxist statement and argue for it vigorously while we were taking notes like crazy, and suddenly he'd get a quizzical look on his face and stand over there and argue with himself from an Hegelian standpoint! Years later, I understood: he didn't need us to be in community! Who needs eighteen-year-olds from the North Shore of Chicago when you're hanging out with Marx and Hegel?

I was the first person in my family to go to college. I had never seen such a model of the intellectual life, offered up with such passion and such rigor—and I wanted more than anything in the world to get into that world, the world this professor inhabited and carried inside of him. That was the incredible gift that he gave me—and, believe me, he was casting pearls before swine! There was no way for us at that time to understand what he and his life were all about, and yet some of us were awakened from our dogmatic slumbers and wanted to come into this engaged life of the intellect that also constitutes a capacity for connectedness.

This professor drew us into connectedness in the most remarkable and mysterious way—and had someone sat him down and said, "You *won't* get tenure unless you learn collaborative teaching techniques," the result would have been both grotesque and tragic, tragic both for him and for us. In talking about good teaching, we have to open the methodological questions into a wider and more generous way of honoring many modes of teaching, while asking the same question of all of them: how does this method help create the capacity for connectedness that's at the heart of a truly educated self?

So what is behind this medical school model? What is the infrastructure that supports students in getting smarter faster? I'll just tick off a few things, and then I want to open up a time for dialogue.

What's behind it, first of all, is that communal, connected methods of higher education simply reflect the web-like nature of reality in all of the fields we study. We came into this century with non-communal models of reality. We came into this century with a model from physics that imaged reality as constituted of little discrete "bits" called atoms floating around in the void—a model that has had tremendous power over the fragmentation of imagination in the twentieth century.

But that's not what physicists are telling us today about the nature of reality. One of my favorite professors at Carleton, Ian Barbour, quotes a physicist named Henry Stapp who says, roughly speaking, "You can no longer talk about atoms as if they were isolated discrete particles. You can now only image an atom as a set of relationships reaching out for other relationships." In systems thought, in ecology, in the Gaia hypothesis: wherever it is you want to look, both in orthodox and unorthodox science, community is the name of the very physical reality in which we are embedded.

I was at the University of Michigan a couple of years ago. I was giving a talk on community in higher education and noticed in the audience a very distinguished looking gentleman with a three-piece dark suit and long white hair. In the conversation period after my talk he arose and introduced himself as “the Distinguished Professor of Biology Emeritus." He used those very words, and I thought, "I'm about to catch my lunch..." But in his comment, he

said, "I don't understand what all this fuss about community in higher education is about. After all, he said, it's only good biology." And he sat down.

For a minute I thought I'd been attacked, and then I realized I had been supported and affirmed! He and I proceeded to have a dialogue about how the metaphors of biology have evolved from competition, and nature red in tooth and claw, and all of those images that fed Social Darwinism, into a new understanding of ecosystems, of collaborative living and dying. It's not that death is no longer happening out there, but that it's now understood as being in the service of larger life.

When we study things in ways that are not isomorphic with the things themselves, there's disconnect, there's dissonance, and the hidden curriculum isn't working on our behalf. In the disciplines that have most to do with our elemental condition, in physics and in biology, the very realities we study are best represented by communal models. If reality is communal we must teach and learn them in ways that are communal—that is one secret to helping people get smarter, faster.

My second point is that this kind of model of community in higher education also reflects our newest and deepest insights into epistemology, into how human beings know. The model that I was educated with was an epistemology of objectivism which insisted that in order to know truth, you must maintain a radical separation between the knower and the known—and that translated into radical separation between the student and the subject. But in every discipline I know about today, this objectivist epistemology, this epistemology of distance, is being challenged and changed. It's not just that such an epistemology is ethically deforming by removing us from the world we know—it's that such an epistemology simply does not describe

how human beings have ever known anything! Human beings do not know things at a distance. Human beings know by holding together a very complicated paradox of the subjective and the objective, of the intimate and the removed.

Some of you know my favorite story along these lines—the story of the great biologist Barbara McClintock who died a couple of years ago at age 93, arguably the greatest American scientist of the twentieth century, responsible for breakthrough findings into genetic transposition that have given us a whole new understanding of the life process. When McClintock was in her early eighties, another scientist, Evelyn Fox Keller, came to her and said, "I want to write your intellectual biography—how did you do this breakthrough science? What is the secret of your journey into genetics?"

McClintock thought for a moment and said, "Well, all I can really tell you about the doing of great science is that you somehow have to have a feeling for the organism."

Keller, the biographer, pressed her again: 'What more can you tell me about this journey into great knowing that you have taken in your life?"

McClintock, thinking back to the ears of corn she had studied ever since she was in her early twenties because they were cheap and plentiful and she had a hard time getting grants, said, "All I can say about doing science is you have to somehow learn to lean into the kernel."

Obviously, you don't win a Nobel Prize if you *don't* honor logic and data, and Barbara McClintock was one of the most logical, rigorous, and empirically precise scientists we have ever known. But when she's asked to choose those images and metaphors that describe the heart of the scientific enterprise for her, she talks about "feeling" and "leaning into." That is, she chooses images of connectedness, of community, with—of all things—an ear of corn.

In the book that Keller wrote about McClintock, Evelyn Fox Keller wrote a sentence that I find brilliant. She said, "Barbara McClintock, in her relation with ears of corn, practiced the highest form of love—which is intimacy that does not annihilate difference." Keller names love as an intellectual virtue—when it enables us to hold together the paradox of subjective engagement with objective understanding. That's great knowing and that's part of what underlies the success of that medical school model, where students become intimate with a person who has a problem *and* are asked not to reduce that person to their own convenient ways of thinking, to step back and look again.

There's so much more to say but my time is almost gone. I'll just say one more thing and then we'll have a little time for conversation.

If we ask ourselves why it is that we have such struggles with community—however we define it or understand it—in higher education, I think that one of the most compelling answers has to be that we live in a culture of fear. Fear, more than anything else, is what keeps us from getting connected.

Fear keeps us from getting connected too deeply with our subjects, lest they make a claim on our lives. Fear keeps us from getting too deeply connected with our students, lest they make a claim on our lives. Fear keeps us from getting too deeply connected with each other, lest we make a claim on each other's lives.

I think that conferences like this, and work like this, and the new movement for teaching and learning, are, at bottom, efforts to move beyond fear, to break the academic culture out of the fearful bonds that have held it in rigid place for far too long. We have all kinds of reasons to want to move beyond fear. Some of them are moral and ethical, some of them are personal and

humanistic, and some of them are intellectual and scholarly. Neither persons nor ethics nor great thinking thrive in a climate of fear.

I wish you well in your journey into ways of teaching and learning that transcend fear, and that can take us toward forms of community that are real and compelling and healing for us and for our wounded world. Thank you very much.

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