



Dialogue on the Concept of the Public Liberal Arts University

Friday, November 17, 2006

One of the major points of discussion during the University of Illinois at Springfield's 2005-2006 strategic planning deliberations was setting our sights on becoming a leading *small public liberal arts university*. Questions arose about the meaning of "liberal arts university" and the place of professional and graduate programs in such institutions. Those directly involved in the campus strategic planning participated in extensive deliberation on those questions. I believed it was important during the 2006-2007 academic year to broaden the dialogue to include all faculty.

With support from the Senate Executive Committee and the Deans, early in fall 2006 I asked all departments to consider the relationship between the learning outcomes in their discipline and the ideas of liberal education and the liberal arts university. To establish a context for the discussion, I distributed two very helpful documents from the American Association of Colleges and Universities, *What is Liberal Education?* and the *Statement on Liberal Learning*¹ and asked faculty to deliberate with their departmental colleagues on the following questions:

- Are there elements of the AAC&U statement on liberal learning that are **particularly** germane to your goals as a teacher?
- What is the relationship between ideas expressed in the statement and education in the professions, either undergraduate or graduate?
- What is the difference, if any, between a liberal arts university and a liberal arts college?
- Would you expect public liberal arts universities to have a character and commitments that differ from private liberal arts colleges or universities?
- How would you describe the relationship between public affairs and public policy issues and the kind of education offered at a liberal arts university?

¹ What is Liberal Education?

http://www.aacu.org/press_room/media_kit/what_is_liberal_education.cfm

Statement on Liberal Learning

http://www.aacu.org/About/statements/liberal_learning.cfm

On November 17, 2006, I hosted a lunch meeting attended by about fifty faculty and administrators with the aim of sharing perspectives on these issues. I asked representatives from five programs (intentionally selected to provide substantial representation from professional and graduate programs) to constitute a panel and to share the gist of their program's responses to these questions. The panelist's presentations were followed by open discussion among the attendees.

The following document is an edited transcript of the panel presentations and discussion.

Harry J. Berman
Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Harry Berman - I appreciate your coming out on this last day before Thanksgiving break. I have been looking forward to the conversation we are going to have this afternoon for quite a while. It is altogether fitting and proper that we get together from time to time just to talk without having any particular action to take - just conversation, just dialogue, and that's the spirit in which we're meeting this afternoon.

Today we're going to have a dialogue which, when all is said and done, is about the subject of identity and, in particular, the identity of the University of Illinois at Springfield. During the strategic planning process we labored, extensively, on the issue of the campus' mission, the vision, our values, our legacy, and it took most of a year. In the second year of the deliberations we also put forward something a little different, something that has to do with the identity of our institution in the context of institutions of higher education in the country as a whole, and we put forward the idea of our identity as a small public liberal arts institution and, as you remember from all the discussions, not only to be a small public liberal arts institution but to be a *leading* small public liberal arts institution.

I come at this issue of identity as a psychologist, so I'm putting my disciplinary cards on the table. When I think about identity I put my hand on the bible of uniqueness and say everybody is absolutely unique. I believe it in my heart of hearts that everybody is unique. Both in terms of DNA and in terms of life experiences, we're all individuals and we're all unique. That said, the fact of the matter is when people construct their identities they do it via identifications. They connect themselves with things that are outside of themselves and in part they create their sense of themselves by those connections. In a similar way, I think that we can understand the emerging identity of UIS.

The first point of comparison between an individual's identity and UIS' institutional identity is that we are unique; there is no place quite like us. For example, a number of years ago when we were working with the university administration on the matter of a new peer group for the campus, we had a very high-powered statistician from the National Center of Supercomputing Applications working with us. We were developing this peer group based on objective indicators. The consultant wanted to use a cluster analysis, a sophisticated statistical approach to determine the members of the peer group. There were more than 4,500 institutions in the population that being used for the statistical analysis and lots of discussions about how it would be done. At a meeting I will never forget, the expert came back and she said, "The first thing you need to understand is that there is really no institution like UIS. You're a cluster of one. If we sort of relax the definitions a little bit and the parameters a little bit, then we can bring in some other institutions that are sort of like you."

So one aspect of our identity, our uniqueness, comes out of our history as a senior institution and the changes that have taken place over the past number of years. But there is also the matter of identification and the kind of institutions that we are like. More than anything else, when we put that idea of small public liberal arts institution into the strategic plan, we were trying to talk about the institutions that we aspire to be like. Kent Redfield, I think, said it very well at the time. He said in large measure this phrase

“small public liberal arts university” is about the league that we want to play in. Amen. The league that we want to play in is the league of leading small public liberal arts institutions.

Going back then to the discussions that took place in Strategic Planning Committee, we struggled with what this identification means. There were well-grounded concerns about what calling yourself a small public liberal arts university means for the professional programs on campus. What does it mean in relation to our graduate enterprise? After lots of discussion, in the committee we ended up saying the following – UIS will be recognized as one of the top 5 small public liberal arts universities in the United States. We will achieve this by creating a world class liberal arts oriented undergraduate educational experience reflecting many of the characteristics and best practices of small private liberal arts colleges while building on our many strengths. Among those strengths are professional academic programs, graduate education, and public affairs activities.

So we reached a point of closure in the committee by expressing our identification with that category of institution, small public liberal arts universities. Also right at that point in the document we expressly stated our continuing commitments in the area of professional academic programs, graduate education, and public affairs. That’s what happened in the committee. But I felt that it really wasn’t enough that the statement just exist in the strategic planning document. When all is said and done, the number of people who were involved in those discussions was relatively small. I think this is an important enough issue for the campus as a whole that this kind of discussion go on more broadly, and that’s what I asked to happen earlier this fall.

There is a hidden agenda here and I am going to mention it right now. The hidden agenda is that as a personal follow-up to the deliberations in the Strategic Planning Committee last June I attended the annual meeting of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC), the organization of what I would call the leading institutions in this category of small public liberal arts colleges and universities. At that meeting I was exploring the possibility of our membership in COPLAC. In terms of curriculum, in terms of our value commitments, and in terms of size I am convinced we do belong in that group. But it is the case that they have an application process and the institution has to go through a site visit. The site visit itself would be very simple, very straightforward. COPLAC would send a couple of people from their membership committee here to campus and these people would wander around the campus and would talk to faculty -- on the 4th floor of UHB, the 3rd floor of UHB, HSB, PAC, Brookens, etc., -- and they would say, “Hey, you guys are applying for a membership in COPLAC. What do you think of that idea? Does that mean anything to you? Can you buy into that the idea of your university being a ‘public liberal arts university?’” That’s what they would do.

So before we have them here, I think we have to collectively be convinced that we’re ready for a visit like that and ready for conversations like that. Don’t you think? We won’t pursue this membership unless we really are ready and we believe that, yes, this makes sense as an identification for us. In order to get this dialogue started, I distributed earlier in the term a great statement from the American Association of Colleges and

Universities about liberal education and another one about liberal learning. I asked each program to do a little homework and review those statements and then I posed the questions that are on the sheet before you which you can read for yourselves.

To get us going this afternoon, I've assembled a panel of five distinguished faculty. They come from a variety of programs, but because of the topic and the concerns that were raised last year, the group is heavily oriented toward graduate programs and heavily oriented toward professional programs and I have included a token liberal arts person. Lynn, we think we know some of your feelings about this, but we want to hear from you anyway. I would like the panel members to very, very briefly convey the tone of the discussions, questions, and issues that came up in their departmental discussions of these questions. We will start with Allan Cook from Teacher Education Program, which is an undergraduate professional program.

Allan Cook – Teacher Education offers two certifications. We offer elementary certification that prepares candidates to teach grades K-9 and we offer secondary certification that prepares them to teach grades 6-12. In the secondary we have several areas they can choose from. We are approved to offer secondary English, secondary mathematics, science with a designation of biology or a designation of chemistry, and social science with a designation of history or political science or sociology/anthropology. If it were not for the participation of our colleagues in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, we would not be able to offer these certifications because our elementary candidates must have an 18 hour area of concentration in a liberal arts field and secondary candidates must have a 32 hour major or the equivalent of a 32 hour major. So we rely very heavily upon collaboration with colleagues in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. In addition, our candidates are required to take 30 hours of service learning before they can enter the program. Once they are in the program they do 120 hours of field experience. Before they student teach they do approximately 480 hours of internship or student teaching. So the candidates are right out there in the schools and in the communities. Our program also focuses on the teacher education's conceptual framework. The conceptual framework is basically what we believe our candidates should be able to do when they leave our program. There are four themes - policy teaching and professional practice, technology, diversity, and public affairs. Our statement on public affairs says that our certification candidates must demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of public affairs, including knowledge of educational policy and a commitment to service in order to better serve the diverse communities in which they will practice. This conceptual framework vision began with the public meeting which involved practitioners from the community and faculty, as well as students. We share these themes through our program meetings, we share them through public meetings with our practitioners, and we have a Council for Teacher Education, which is made up of folks from the community as well as folks from liberal arts and sciences, teacher education faculty, teacher education students - all the professional education programs. We think the themes that we have are consistent with the values of UIS as a whole and they are infused throughout the program - our program requirements, our coursework requirements, our methodology, our clinical experiences, and our assessment. Since the central mission of the U of I at Springfield has always been public affairs, our

faculty has really been at the forefront of connecting the education profession to the local and state context. From the very first educational foundation courses for graduate school, the faculty introduce candidates to the importance of professional teams within institutions, as well as the links between education and society. So as you can see, public affairs is a very integral part of what we are doing in teacher education.

Harry Berman – I don't think that people would have known that you all set out public affairs as one of the four components of your conceptual framework. Very interesting.

Lynn Fisher – As the token liberal arts person, I am in the Sociology/Anthropology Program, which is an interdisciplinary major – interdisciplinary between two social science disciplines, and we also offer minors in sociology and anthropology. We are a small program. I would follow up on what Allan said - we are obviously based in liberal arts, but we do our work largely through collaboration with other programs. This would be typical of many small social science programs we teach. The majority of our students are non-majors, but they are majors in various programs across the colleges. This is, I think, how we would interact with these questions of what liberal arts contributes to various kinds of education. We actually did discuss this in our program, because Harry asked us to, so I will just briefly summarize the aspects that we found in the liberal arts learning statement that were particularly key to what we teach in our classrooms. What we found we would most focus on in our classes is identifying cultural context of human action, social sciences – there are so many programs that are social science across all the colleges that we share an emphasis on rigorous methodology – and on engagement with a community such that you are exploring the ethical and social responsibility repercussions of the cultural and social perspectives, theoretical perspectives, and methodologies that you learn in social science classes. Just to talk about how we see the commitments of a public liberal arts university, the first thing that occurred to us when we considered what does it mean to be a public liberal arts university was actually access, and the price tag pops right into mind. Going on from that, if we are accessible to the local and the state community that means they can afford it, they can get in, and then what we do is teach. Something Brian Gillis said earlier made me think of this – although we often think of this in terms of a complaint as teachers in the classroom, in fact, I have valued this job tremendously here because when we teach, even though many of us come from all around the country, we are really teaching in a local community with students who are from here and who will have an impact on this particular local place. We're trying to bring them global perspectives and new kinds of contexts for thinking about their actions, but they are going to act in Illinois, central Illinois, and Springfield. Emphasizing those connections is, I think, where we as a liberal arts discipline would connect to public affairs. To give you a couple of quick examples: If we are teaching in context of the local community, obviously we as professors would aspire to acting as public intellectuals, actually in terms of our service to the community, being able to comment on, contextualize, and be active in what's going on in our own communities. But we also do this indirectly by trying to create a kind of a general education - an education within our majors that enables our students to analyze the systems that they are in. Just one example from my own teaching – I particularly love to have professional students, for example TEP minors, in my human evolution class. Because of having so many teachers in our

major, I have introduced a module in that class about the issues that face biology teachers tending to teach evolution in the public schools. I wouldn't have thought of this module if I hadn't been teaching professional students, I think, and it's something that enriches the course for all the students. So I think of that interplay between the community context of our liberal arts education, the public affairs mission, and the interplay between the liberal arts and the professional programs as a very valuable part of what we do here.

Harry Berman – Thank you. Very good. As we go along here we will come back to one of the points that Lynn raised, which is what the *public* in public liberal arts university is, and she put your finger on one of them with access.

Tih-Fen Ting – When Harry first approached me he asked me to talk about the relationship between liberal arts and public policy. To me that relationship is natural and instrumental because liberal arts education is all about cultivating democratic citizenship. To continue with that, I actually would like to share a passage by Aristotle in his book *Politics*. “The citizens of the state should always be educated to suit the constitution of their state. The type of character appropriate to a constitution is the power which continues to sustain it. The democratic type of character creates and sustains democracy. The oligarchic type creates and sustains oligarchy.” So I think that sums up very well that the centrality of a liberal arts education is to cultivate the next generation to have the sense of social responsibility and civic engagement. I think that the transition from liberal arts education to public policy should be seamless, and I really don't think that there is any demarcation between the two. Other than that, the liberal arts education actually provides the kind of thinking that is necessary for citizens to be able to engage in all sorts of policymaking and the process and citizens have to learn that it's not government making the decision. We the people actually have to participate and to inform the government what is necessary and needed. I have to admit that our program hasn't actually been explicitly having this dialogue on the public liberal arts university other than in some occasional hallway conversations that I have with my new faculty members. I am not here to speak on behalf of the department as a whole so they may disagree with me. Speak up if I say something that you don't agree with at this moment. But I want to stress the linkage between the amount of awareness and liberal education. I personally think there are times that we are trying too hard to try to make this distinction between a liberal arts degree and professional programs. I don't agree with that kind of demarcation because, in fact, the difficulties that liberal arts education is facing actually started out with that kind of demarcation, the differences between professional programs and liberal arts programs, and I really think that that shouldn't be the case. In terms of the Environmental Studies program, what we are doing is to really expand students' horizons to think about where we went wrong in terms of our relationship - human beings' relationship - with our environment, with nature. There may be big questions you can ask about who is responsible for the amount of destruction or what is the nature of the problem. But before we can actually address that kind of question we must examine what kind of framework we need to make any kind of analysis in terms of who is at fault or what needs to be corrected. What we really want to bring to our program is to show students that there are multiple frameworks of references. Each frame of reference has its own limitations, as well as strengths. What we strive to let students know is the

limitations of one single perspective on a set of complex problems. Ultimately, any time you run into any kind of problem, what it really boils down to is something to do with human behaviors and the motivation behind that. We also have to provide the materials for a student to reflect upon human beings and our nature. And, you have to actually go back to liberal arts education yet again.

Harry Berman – That was a splendid, articulate, and heartfelt statement. We'll come back to the idea of liberal arts education opening up a way of thinking which then has relevance to public affairs issues and to public policy, and of interdisciplinarity as an element of what we are trying to get at with liberal arts education.

Kent Redfield – One of the interesting things about being in the Political Science Department when I came to what was then Sangamon State was that Bob Spencer was part of the faculty and for a political scientist that's a little bit like having James Madison or Thomas Jefferson as a ready resource. So, I guess I was struck in looking at the statement of liberal education and the statement of liberal learning. I have to think that -- in fact I know that -- Bob Spencer would have been very, very comfortable with a lot of the language that's in that document about what universities ought to be about in terms of education. I think that certainly what we went through with strategic planning and what we have gone through with adding a freshman class has been horrendously gut-wrenching in terms of everybody's time, patience, psyches, and everything else. On the other hand, this truly is an opportunity and as we were going through the strategic planning process I was struck by the statement that Harry sent out one Monday regarding the vision at Sangamon State University about public affairs education and civic education. We certainly did wonderful things and the vision of the AST and the vision of the public affairs colloquia. These were wonderful, innovative ways to try to say how you do these sorts of things with transfer students and how do you integrate it into graduate education and professional programs. But, we have gone through what was the vision in 1970 and what was the reality in 2005. I think everybody, fairly, would say that there had been some slippage and that we had gone in a lot of different directions about what we were about and what our identity was. Again, I'm not volunteering ever, ever again to go through this process, but we have to take this as an opportunity to think about who we are and what we are about. I see two really important things here, and one is that what we have done with the undergraduate curriculum, the general education curriculum, is an attempt to really look at what we would broadly call public affairs education. That's just another way of talking about liberal learning and liberal education because it's not about passing bills or creating civic movements. It's about giving students both a set of skills that are disciplinary oriented and a context in a series of training and experiences in which to use these skills, which has always been kind of the core of the idea of a liberal arts kind of education. When we had one of those debates, one of my colleagues, in what was not exactly a compliment, said "So when my students get done with this as far as being undergraduates they are going to have a minor in civic engagement" and my response was "Yes." That's a cool thing to do. That's an important way of establishing our identity about what is a University of Illinois at Springfield student. I think that making great plans is the easy thing. Making good on them is the difficult thing. I am tremendously encouraged by what we are trying to do and sometimes we don't get the

resources and sometimes we don't get the support and everybody goes nuts but that's a great foundation. I think the real challenge here is how we then take that public liberal arts university vision and wed it to professional programs, graduate programs. There is also a faculty side to the liberal arts issue. In regard to public intellectuals, over in Champaign I am a member of the Institute for Government and Public Affairs, which is a three-campus public affairs research institute; committee members view it as if they have a mission to be public intellectuals but they don't expect it of their colleagues at least at UIC and particularly at UIUC. That's something that you don't do. That's not your role and not integral to your mission as a faculty member. And yet what we're doing here is really embracing the idea that every member of the faculty is a public intellectual and that means that it is expressed differently for everybody, but it is a way of thinking about who you are as a faculty member and how you teach and what's the purpose of education. I don't think we have settled that by any stretch of the imagination. I think these are the difficult things about how each faculty member in each program thinks about what is our identity going to be, what is our discipline and what are the important things that we need to teach our students so that they are good political scientists, accountants, environmental studies majors, biologists, and the whole range of things. How do we fit that in to this idea of a public liberal arts university? Because there certainly is an expectation there that a graduate of UIS is a citizen in a way, is civically engaged, and that we have an obligation and a commitment to our students when they come here. If it's truth in advertising about what we say we are doing, then we ought to be producing people, regardless of their discipline, who are going to be engaged. That's an article of faith for a political scientist, at least my branch of political science, that civic engagement empowers the individual, makes you more complete, and improves and makes society work. It's essential, you have to have it. These are huge commitments that we are making, and we are asking colleagues and programs to work through identities. I think, particularly in graduate and professional programs, there are other issues floating around, but I think these are the things we are going to have make good on. I am tremendously encouraged just because I think this is always a terrific place to be, with wonderful people, but we have a long way to go. We are present at the creation in terms of what our identity is going to be and how we are going to make good on all of this. I guess I differed with some of my colleagues who went through this. It isn't that the option was to give up or go back to being a public affairs university. We are who we are, we are where we are, and now we have set about a vision for ourselves that is of necessity going to involve this public intellectual and this civic engagement components of what we do. In some ways our job is harder than if we just said we are a class I research university, and we are going to turn out "X" kind of students and the people that take care of this other part of the world, that's their job. I may be being unfair somewhat to undergraduate education at other places, but I am going to stop at that. There is tremendous potential here and I think there is a really great vision. I wouldn't minimize the work that needs to be done in terms of achieving this, but I certainly have come to the position that we have made a good start.

Harry Berman – Kent, thanks very much. You actually added another question which is great to think about, and it's whether you would expect, or a person would expect, the faculty at a leading small public liberal arts university to have commitments that are

somewhat distinctive from those of faculty in a private university or other kinds of universities. Your answer is the faculty member as public intellectual. That's very interesting.

James Hall – I'm coming at this from two aspects. I was a student at Sangamon State in the 1980's -- I received my graduate degree in Business Administration; now I teach in the College of Business & Management which is primarily professional programs and graduate programs. So the question that comes to me when I hear we are going to be one of the top 5 liberal arts universities is what does that mean to the College of Business and Management. One way I approached that was to look at the Association of American Colleges & Universities' idea of what's in a liberal education. Summarizing from information on their website, it includes a core knowledge, transferable skills, social responsibility, a strong sense of ethics and values (I'm still with business here), multiple disciplines, diversity of ideas and experiences, and intellectual commitment. In my experience as both a student and a faculty member, these are all part of our programs at the College of Business and Management. I think we fit exactly in this area. When I went to Sangamon State I was working full time and most of my classmates were working full time - what a rich classroom environment that was. I think the liberal arts concept embraces this type of teaching and this type of pedagogy. I teach in Management Information Systems which has a technical component. We have talked with people and organizations who have conducted surveys asking what managers look for from graduates. If you get beyond the technical side and technical knowledge, what they say is the ability to communicate, to write, to interact, the ability to work in teams, the ability to problem solve creatively, and also a commitment to lifelong learning. I think that is also exactly what we are about on this campus. In my mind, we do fit the liberal arts model. Our College is in the process of going through accreditation with the AACSB and accreditation doesn't just depend on business content. Of course, our core business concepts are part of the curriculum, but also you have ethics, the global experience, cases, team building, and all these exercises throughout the curriculum and that's what AACSB in fact emphasizes. So going through this accreditation process fits well with this also.

My second point is that you can think about this issue in terms of what our university is now. Last weekend, I had an opportunity to attend an AAC & U (American Association of Colleges and Universities) convention in Chicago, along with Sandy Mills, Bev Rivera, and Sharron LaFollette, and I think we all agreed it was very interesting. The conference topics fit in very well with what we are doing right now. AAC & U had a session that I was particularly interested in on blended learning and where that is heading. The issues that other faculty and administrations are stating to face are right on to where we are at. In many ways, I think we, as an institution, believe in this engagement in learning because we are focused on the more complex learning, not just memorization; but much more involved learning with our students. In many ways, I think we are on the forefront of this.

Harry Berman – Thank you.

Martin Martsch - We met as a faculty and discussed the questions that Harry had distributed. It was not a very pleasant meeting, nor professional, but I think we were able to arrive at some sort of consensus. In fact, we voted 5-1 in favor of liberal education. As a social work program is a professional program, we are accredited through the Council of Social Work Education. We recently had to write our self-study and part of that was to justify how our students are getting a strong liberal arts foundation and it's actually one of our program goals. I want to read quickly four goals here that I think fit particularly well with the statement on liberal learning.

1. Prepare students for generalized practice with various social systems by teaching skills in critical thinking, communication, research, and working with colleagues and supervisors building on a liberal arts foundation;
2. Building on a liberal arts foundation, provide knowledge concerning the history of the profession, social structures, social policy, and relevant theoretical frameworks;
3. Teach students to practice in accordance with social work values and ethics; and
4. Provide a model of empowerment to address social and economic justice and improve the quality of life around persons with specific attention to diverse groups and at risk populations.

In the statement that we read on liberal learning, a lot of the same sort of concepts, commitments, and values seem to be in both our goals and in that statement. We talked a little bit about what the difference may be between a liberal arts university and a liberal arts college would be, and we didn't really come up with much information other than maybe the size of the institution and the history of the institution, and what would be expected from a public liberal arts institution versus a private institution. We talked about how there is a commitment to serving, for example, the residents of Illinois as a state institution and how that seems to be a big part of what we do versus maybe a lesser emphasis on that in the private institutions that some of our faculty had attended. We talked about the ivory tower kind of concept of what education is that might be found in private institutions and the more practical, less theoretical education that may be in public institutions. We tend to view our students' relationship with liberal arts – that they receive a general foundation– and then as they move into the majors they move into our core classes it becomes more specific towards social work. But the way we teach is still from a liberal arts perspective. That is, we still teach critical thinking and not just specific skills and technical aspects of working with people, even though the content might be more specific to working with people in social work settings. The way that we go about teaching the classes in the curriculum is still very much in the liberal arts spirit.

Harry Berman – Thank you. Very good. And, about that five to one vote, was it majority rule?

Martin Martsch – Yeah!

Harry Berman – Thank you all up here for the very thoughtful statements and highlighting different facets of this issue. Now I'd like to hear from the rest of you.

Terry Bodenhorn – In some ways I feel like I am reconstituting the role I played on strategic planning, and I'm sure that some people would like to kill me for it. I want to follow up on something that both Tih-Fen and Kent stressed: I got a sense that when we talked about public affairs or the public element of liberal arts we were talking about something in service of the state. I don't think anybody meant that intentionally, but I thought that was an underpinning in some of the discussion – that is, that we are educating people to be civically responsible. Why? So that they play a meaningful role in the state. That is to me certainly a central element of the liberal arts but it is not the only element. What I didn't hear much about was the significance of liberal arts to the development of individuals, and I think that is really important. In the AAC&U statement there is something about liberation from ignorance and empowerment of the individual – empowering for what? Well, I think it is for self-awareness and self-development as much as it is to make a contribution to the state. And, I think this was part of the tension that I was feeling a year and a half ago when we were doing the strategic planning process, where I always felt like the orientation here was ultimately in the service of the state. I guess I think of liberal arts as either a balance between service to the state and service to the individual or maybe I would lean the other way.

Kent Redfield – Let me just say something because Terry and I have had these conversations. I don't think I'm articulate enough sometimes. To me it is civic society, civic space, that is involved. It is not religious and not family, and not individual and not government, and not economics. There is a civil society and a civic space there that has to do with making decisions about the norms and values and how we get along and how we interact. So, the last thing I'm interested in is getting people that go out and are cheerleaders for the status quo. I think by developing individuals who are aware and have very broad knowledge then they are much better able to engage the state and institutions and question them. So, I think you and I share a lot of the same sentiment, and I think it is just being inarticulate on my part. I still think that there is an obligation for the aware person to engage society and not only in terms of responsibility, but then I believe that people are more complete if they interact. It's hard for me, given my discipline and my experiences, to understand why people wouldn't be interested in politics and society and these kinds of issues. I think we have to constantly make sure that we are not communicating in ways that emphasize differences. There are differences, but we have to find language. So clearly, if there is something I said that framed it that narrowly, I think that is wrong, and we just have to be vigilant about it.

Pinky Wassenberg – In response to Terry's concern, I think what we have the obligation to do, and it goes back to what Lynn was saying earlier, is to teach our students to be constructively contrary. Regardless of the forum in which our students engage, whether it's private or whether it's public, it's important that we socialize them out of passivity, that we socialize them out of disciplinary silos, and that we get them to ask "well why, so what, who says," but we must also teach them how that's done in civilized society to fit that image that Tih-Fen was talking about from Aristotle's *Politics* of people who aren't taught to be victims. I have two kids in high school right now and am watching the just incredible mind-numbing experience of what we do to people in high schools. I think the

thing we need to do, and that we do in general education and the Capital Scholars Honors Program is drag them out of that passivity, shake them, and tell them they are supposed to think and to give them the tools. To me, that's the heart of liberal arts education and why we have been doing it since Bob Spencer forward.

Kathryn Eisenhart I support a liberal arts education because I didn't have one. I was one of those people that started out in a community college in a professional program, moved to a four year university, finished my professional training, and then went to law school. So, I'm getting my liberal arts education here. You know, that's one of the nice things about being in a small school, but then that means as both as an educator and as a person there are holes in my education. There is stuff I don't know. I mean, I had a little of this and a little of that. But from a liberal arts education you get a real foundation in your own culture and how we got to where we are. Here, I teach law and I love history of American Law and I never took a philosophy course. I wouldn't know Locke if I fell over him. I had to learn all these things on my own because I didn't have a liberal education. So, I support it because I know how difficult it is to know how come we are here when I have to do all the digging on my own. And I agree with Pinky. One of the things I would love to do is go around and shake every single student and say, yes, you have to think, I'm not going to give you the answers, and you can't just puke it out on a multiple question test. I encourage my students to question me, to question all authority, to take nothing for granted. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. Thank God it works some of the time. I'm really glad for a four year school even though some times it's a real pain in the butt, Karen.

Karen Moranski – I'll keep that in mind.

Tih-Fen Ting – I just want to say that if my interpretation of the relationship between liberal arts and public policy made Terry, or any of the rest of you, think that my point is to make people to serve the state, you totally, totally misunderstood my point because, after all, what makes up the state? The collective us. We all agree that institutions serve people, people don't serve institutions. How do institutions serve people? We, people, make the kind of institutions that we want.

Margot Duley – You know the way I would frame the public engagement mission of UIS is to engage with the critical issues of our time. That may very well lead us in opposition to the same, but it is something that I think we need to have a very serious discussion about, as an institution, because we are publicly funded, unlike private colleges that are insulated from a lot of political pressures by reason of huge amounts of assets. I think we need to have a serious discussion of how comfortable we are as faculty and as administration in pushing the envelope. To fulfill our mission, we have to have a certain critical distance from society and to feel free to criticize when criticism is legitimate. In looking at some of the kinds of critical issues that engage our society at this point, I have been quite struck by the relative lack of debate or dialogue on campus about some of those issues, and I think we need a serious discussion on why that is. In part, I think it is the student culture, but I also wonder how many self-imposed limitations have existed in the past couple of years. Obviously, my time at UIS has been quite

limited. I wonder as well in the history of Sangamon State whether in a strange sort of way that history, which is shared by the surrounding community, rightly or wrongly, has now become a kind of false restraint. I think we need to air that as a community. And sometimes I feel it intensely as a dean when I get complaints from Peoria – doesn't play well in Peoria, generally not, would be my response. But, I think we need a discussion about that – the cultural context in which we are out there.

Marva Leatherwood – Harry, in reading the web materials you sent out ahead of time, I was struck by the distinction that is drawn between a liberal education and a liberal arts education. I always go back to all of the conflicts that we have had over what we may claim are simply a matter of semantics, but sometimes those conflicts over semantics have, shall we say, deep roots behind them. I am wondering in listening to you read the vision and mission statements, or whatever we may be terming those this afternoon, if we have somewhat moved away in our language, although not in our spirit, from what a liberal education is. I think in spirit we are all applauding liberal education but perhaps when we continue to use the phrase liberal arts education we are confusing the matter?

Harry Berman – The language and the different phrases are confusing because there is liberal arts education but in our statement of strategic intent we talk about liberal arts universities as a class of institution. Then you have to sort of sort out the relationship between liberal arts universities, liberal education, and liberal arts education. For sure we can sort of segregate off the liberal arts universities side – that's the population of institutions we are looking to.

Marva Leatherwood – By the time high school students have reached us, they have lived in a world where they are self-sanctioning for fear of very real repercussions from other people if they come out of who they want to be to their peers. And for those of us that live in that world with them, we know that the sanctions are very real and very negative for being an individual. So, we have to help them through that.

Pat Langley – I want to raise the question of how faculty not just teach liberal arts in the classroom – critical thinking, understanding context, often swimming upstream in terms of the status quo and the culture and the society – but I also want to build slightly on what Margot was talking about. How do we do that if we don't do those ourselves at our workplace? All this discussion about engagement – we want our students to be engaged and we want our students to criticize and to challenge ideas and to engage in civic dialogue which is often disagreement. We want them to know what they think, what they value, and to articulate that and use all of that to impact the world in which they live. And - I am in a grumpy mood today – I'll lay that right out on the table - one of the things I'm watching is a faculty – this is gross over generalization, which is what I say to my students – that is afraid to do that because there is an administrator in the room or that just says, gee, we don't know what we are supposed to do so I guess we can't do it. It's the kind of behavior that if our students watched us do that we would be giving them the exact opposite lesson of what we say we are trying to do in the classroom. I'm struck by the incongruity of the ways in which we don't practice democracy, critical thinking, and some of those very kinds of things. And, again, there are a lot of people who do, but I'm

just struck by that. I think it's a marvelous point about our history – we are moving towards engagement for our students and we are running away from it ourselves or something – I'm not real clear right now, but I'm just struggling with that.

Kent Redfield – Let me just say one thing just to clarify it. There are really two issues out here and what Pat's talking about is leading by example in terms of how we conduct ourselves as being members of the university community. There is another issue there about whether or not the logical conclusion of all of this is that every faculty member needs to be doing something that is relevant to the Illinois General Assembly. That's wrong, and we need to make sure that we are not talking about that - that we are a big tent in terms of the way that we express ourselves externally and that's different. We also have to make sure people understand that and buy into it in terms of their professional development and how they view the personnel process, but that's a different issue from how we conduct ourselves as members of the university community. So, there are two things rolling around there and we need to make sure that we don't set up a false set of expectations about how each faculty member narrowly should somehow do public affairs because that's wrong and that's not productive.

Harry Berman – I think that point complements what Kent was talking about before in relation to public intellectuals. Again, the missing question is what are faculty at leading public liberal arts universities like? They are engaged internally and that could result in disagreements and also they are engaged with the larger world as public intellectuals.

Pat Langley – But, I guess I think it is sort of like high school and I'm wondering what all the negative social ramifications for us are that are keeping us from doing this.

Sandy Mills – Well, I don't know how to bridge these two things because my comment related more to the language of liberal and liberal arts but there may be some juxtaposition here. I was just going to comment that I think you were struggling, Harry, with the difference in terms and the language is confusing. Because we are so used to hearing the words "liberal arts" and we think of it as educational, we overlook that the word "liberal" has a very different meaning to most Americans these days, especially in the context of the, hopefully, old administration. A lot of the discomfort we are feeling in public education right now has to do with the fact that we are seen as liberal, and as we bring ourselves into saying more publicly here that we're a liberal arts university it will create difficulties for us. Pat is talking about people internally being afraid to say things because there may be repercussions from administrators in the tenure process, but I think we are becoming more afraid to say things because of the external environment that we've been under for the last eight or ten years. I think you have to keep in mind that we in academe struggle with what liberal means. So you can imagine what the public does even if the public is a product of a liberal arts education. That isn't the meaning anymore.

Harry Berman – Absolutely. I have to tell you a funny story about that. That meeting that I was describing of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges was held at Georgia State College and University in Milledgeville, Georgia, which is about two and a half hours south of Atlanta. So we are into the rural area, and they are designated as

Georgia's public liberal arts university. The people there were saying exactly what you were saying. The students that they are drawing on have families who are *very* concerned about what's going to happen to their children if they go to one of these public liberal arts universities.

Eric Thibodeaux-Thompson – Just to piggyback on that, I think this dovetails with further defining ourselves such that – I remember my mother always telling me that when you go to college it's going to be dangerous and she meant that in the most positive sense – you are going to be changed for the rest of your life, you're on a trajectory of growth, that is not a finite journey – one's whole life long. I think I want that to be part of how we shake them coming out of high school because I like that image of shaking them a bit. We shape them and we expose them to a kind of new paradigm - I guess is what I'm talking about - that words, whether it is liberal or something else, you can take ownership about your use of words and I think if the meaning of liberal has been steered too much into a different area, who's to say we can't steer it back to where we want it. I want students to feel empowered about that, and I think that needs to be part of our definition.

Bill Carpenter – You know I come at this as a rhetorician, rhetoric being part of the classic trivium -- grammar, logic, and rhetoric -- so I've got a nice history behind me. But, you know when I think about liberal arts I think about it also from the perspective of the humanities and what the humanities are or are supposed to add to the liberal arts. And one of my peeves the last few years in things I've been writing and reading about is that the humanities of late have turned inward too much. You know we are a backwards looking discipline. We look at text from the past, we study things like this, and we also have a very sensualist idea – not always, of course, but humanities have a very sensualist idea for literature and the beauty of it. We don't really think about what it means for our students to do things with what it is we teach them. And, the thing about rhetoric is that rhetoric always had a component of production. It wasn't just a consumption of text; it was the production of text and the production of text within context. You know, Aristotle, "The best means of persuasion given your context." I think that for the humanities in a liberal arts college, we need to be sure that what we teach our students isn't just cultural gate-keeping like it is in some private hoity-toity liberal arts colleges, but that it is the idea of what you do with this stuff from the past and what this stuff from the past means for present conditions. We should be thinking about how what we teach them perturbs them, how it bothers them because only once it bothers them do they do something with it. So, the things that they should be presented with should be the things that irk them. You know, there is a great line on a U2 album where Bono is just about to sing "Sunday, Bloody Sunday," and he's talking about Martin Luther King. He says "Am I bugging you, I don't mean to bug ya," – you know in that Scottish sense – but that's exactly like the core of my teaching philosophy - I need to bug you. The humanities are supposed to bug you, and I think that we need to bring that back so that we aren't just looking at past text saying isn't it great we can quote Shakespeare but that we understand what reading and communicating to each other can do in a public sphere. That's what the public liberal arts university really has going for it -- the access to students who wouldn't normally have those chances and a wider audience for them than to talk to.

Pat Langley – I want to tell you a story. I took four students to a conference last Wednesday through Sunday. We drove over to Kansas City and drove back, and so I got to listen in on some of their conversations. They were talking about what it's like when you go off to college. One is from Mt. Olive, two are from the Quad Cities, and one is from Chicago. They are all CAP Scholars Honors and they are sophomores to senior. They talked about what it was like because this has turned their world upside down, and actually it was really incredible. It was wonderful for me to listen in on these conversations. We had conversations from Wednesday through Sunday, but that was one specific one and I thought you know we actually are doing this, at least here and there. Now these are four, I would argue, some of the best and brightest, but it was very clear and they were talking about how they go back and talk to their families, who are not necessarily with them on this journey. These are also all gay and lesbian students who have come out – so, they are all out, you know – and that is actually a real issue for them in terms of how they get their funding. But, it was just really interesting to listen to them because I thought we are doing something right here. They were talking about the ways in which they just think things that they never thought before. So, we are bugging them, and we are challenging them. Now, they also talked about the fact that they thought most of their classmates talked about trivial stuff and didn't engage in these discussions and didn't take advantage of the opportunities that we presented, but they did think they were presented. They took advantage of them but they also thought that most of their classmates did not. I was also thinking about my college and I thought exactly the same thing as well. I don't know if that's the case.

Harry Berman – We are going to take Paula, Karen and then Professor Li. Somewhere along the line I am hoping to get some thoughts, again, about how these kinds of things we have been discussing link up with education and professions and graduate education. Do they?

Paula Garrott – I just wanted to share an experience I had this week - when we think we aren't accomplishing things. Earlier this week I had a student come to me very upset, ready to hang a professor saying "You know this person is not teaching me, I'm not getting the grades I'm supposed to get," etc., and she brought some colleagues with her. The same young woman came into my office today and sat down and said "I feel like I have grown ten feet today." She had spent about an hour with the faculty member she was so upset with, who by the way is a new faculty member, and in their discussions this faculty member was able to help this student see and to take ownership in her learning by asking questions in class - that that was an all right thing to do - and expressing her views. Now, this is a young woman who is in her 30's and yet she still, what Marya was saying, had this image of what was allowable in the class. This woman will probably not get the grade that she had hoped to get in this course even after this experience, but she feels like she has grown as an individual in a way that will impact the rest of her life. That was from one interaction between a faculty member and a student. So I think we are, you know, doing these things. I have to also say having come from a professional program and having been here for 26 years and answering this question over and over again how these two things meet. I came from a liberal arts education, so maybe I have a

different perspective on it, but professionals cannot practice competently without that. We can't analyze, we can't think, we can't apply, and we can't communicate if we don't have those things and that's why it is integral. It's a challenge for a professional program because the demands of the profession are great, to find ways in which you get that all done, but I know of very few professional educators that don't value that liberal arts experience because that's where it's learned and then it is applied in the profession.

Karen Moranski – My comments in some ways are related to Bill's and Pat's. I came to UIS at a moment of change, and it has been nothing but change since. But I came, Allan and I actually came together, at a moment of change. We were the first class of UIS faculty. We were both hired under SSU and we came and the fairy waved its magic wand.

Allan Cook – We are the two surviving members of that class.

Karen Moranski – I don't know what that says. When I came for my interview I was told that we were changing to UIS, that we were going to become part of the U of I. I was also told that we were a public affairs university, back when we were that, and I said I'm fresh out of graduate school, I'm in humanities, I'm an English faculty member, or hoping to be. What does public affairs mean to me? What does it mean for me? No one could answer that question. I didn't get a good answer to that question when I came. What has happened since I've been here is sort of what Kathryn was talking about which is that I've gotten an education, but in some ways it's been through the curricula of engagement that I've gotten that education. It's been through Capital Scholars, it's been through the process, which like Kent I'm not in hurry to repeat, of coming up with a new general education curriculum and focusing on the issues of what we want our students to be, to do, to say, how we want them to act, and what we want them to do in the world that I've come to an understanding, that is very similar to Bill's. We need to act, it's not enough to consume, and not enough to be inward focused but we need to be outward focused. I learned that and I guess this is the point that I was heading towards. I learned that collaboration, which we talk about as a goal for our students, is also a goal for us. Six years of teaching with Pinky has taught me a great deal about what I do. I'm a Medievalist for crying out loud – you want to talk about insular and you want to talk about narrowly focused. I've learned how to turn outwards, and I think that part of what we mean by liberal education and part of what we should do as faculty is to continue modeling that kind of collaboration. It doesn't mean agreement, it doesn't mean submission, and it doesn't mean passivity. It means interaction, it means bugging, it means difficult and it means all of those things. That interdisciplinarity that Tih-Fen was talking about is crucial, I think, to what we mean by liberal education. Yes, I'm Miss Interdisciplinarity and the flag waver, but I deeply believe that that's one of the ways in which we teach students, in which we shape students, in which we help them confront the issues they need to confront in order to be out there and not just passive consumers of education.

Xiaoqing Li – Just one point. When we teach school skills, we are also teaching about American society. I think the most important thing in this world is that we need to teach students about people and societies from around the world. Many of our students are local, right? But as they continue their careers, they will need to work with people from around the world. So, I think this idea of global awareness is not only in the AAC & U statement on liberal education but is also part of the AACSB standards for accreditation of schools of business.

Harry Berman – It is in there and it's also a part of our statements, too, but it is good to highlight that certainly in the 21st Century a liberal education would encompass global learners. We are working to make that happen, both in courses and in experiences with study abroad and joint classes across countries.

We were theoretically scheduled to go until 2 o'clock, but I think we have had a wonderful discussion and we will wrap it up now. I just want to say that it's in the nature of dialogue that the conversation unfolds in ways that couldn't be predicted, and I think we have had some examples of that today. Dialogue is not debate, and I guess a further thought about dialogue is that it is exactly the sort of thing that should happen among the faculty at a small leading public liberal arts university. I really appreciate your coming out today, and I really appreciate the thoughtful comments of the people that I strong-armed to be up here. I do think we have some forward direction for what we want to do with respect to students – we are going to shake them, perturb them, bug them, and turn their worlds upside down. Thank you all very much.