

Chapter 3

Why the World Needs More Philosophers: Liberal Education and Public Intellectuals

Kathryn Shailer
Independent Scholar

Introduction

Public perception of universities has been taking a beating in the media and in the rhetoric of politicians for more than a little while. Whether described as declining trust in the moral authority of universities, loss of confidence in the value of a college education, or straight out condemnation of academic activities as irrelevant to the future prosperity of the nation, universities are experiencing a value and identity crisis like never before.

This paper approaches the question of declining trust and confidence in the relevance of universities by arguing that we need to rethink such fundamentals as what and how we teach and what and how we research. At the heart of this rethinking is the role of a liberal education and interdisciplinary training in relation to disciplinary and professional education and, significantly, in the cultivation of missing-in-action public intellectuals.

The Role of the University in Society

The founding and expansion of North American universities¹ can be viewed as a series of waves, influenced largely by settlement/population growth and political events. During the initial phase, from the mid-17th through around 1812, the primary role was to prepare the nation's youth to assume leadership roles in society, while influencing the national culture, and reinforcing national identity -- what the early charters referred to as training for men who would become "ornaments of the State as well as the Church"² through an education designed to "enlarge the Mind, improve the Understanding, polish the whole Man, and qualify them to support the brightest Characters in all the elevated stations in life."³ The mainstay of such an education was readings in the liberal arts and sciences, a name derived from the Latin: *liber* or free, to describe the cultivation of a free human being.

¹ The term "university" is used interchangeably with "college" in this article.

² "History," Princeton University, accessed 23 April 2017, <http://www.princeton.edu/main/about/history/american-revolution/>. Princeton was chartered in 1746 "by the governor of the province in the name of King George II 'for the Education of Youth in the Learned Languages and in the Liberal Arts and Sciences.'"

³ "History, King's College Era 1754-1776," Columbia University, accessed 3 September 2017, <http://www.columbia.edu/content/history.html>. King's College, also chartered by King George II, spawned two universities: Columbia University in New York and University of King's College in Nova Scotia.

The rapid expansion of institutions of higher learning across North America over the ensuing century and a half drew chiefly on two models: Wilhelm Humboldt's ideal of a community of scholars and students, founded on the union of research and teaching with the dual functions of knowledge transmission and knowledge creation,⁴ and Cardinal John Henry Newman's "Idea of a University" that envisaged a broad liberal education that would teach students "to think and to reason and to compare and to discriminate and to analyse" in the service of making good judgments. He was convinced that narrow minds were born of narrow specialization and was a passionate proponent of a curriculum that provided a solid grounding in all areas of study.⁵

Although one can find the roots of today's research universities in the Humboldtian model and trace the heritage of small liberal arts colleges -- particularly in the US -- to Newman's idea, both remained of influence in the development of the professoriate, the disciplines, the relationship of teaching and research, and the curriculum, as well as in the broad, holistic concept of campus life at all institutions from the mid-19th through most of the 20th century.

Throughout this expansion, the role of the university in society as reflected in mission statements changed most fundamentally in the shift from sectarian to secular administration and through an expanded offering of academic disciplines. But as in the early charters, the responsibility to guide youth through the critical years of maturation while preparing them for leadership roles in industry and society and also instilling a strong sense of civic responsibility remained a strong expectation.

George Fallis, in his book *Multiversities, Ideas and Democracy*, invokes the concept of the social contract, borrowed from political theory, as the most apt descriptor of the relationship between a university and society. In exchange for meeting the expectations cited above, an institution could expect from government and other stakeholders needed financial support, the granting of institutional autonomy, and freedom in fulfilling these responsibilities.⁶

But by the late 1980s a seismic shift in mutual expectations between universities and governments as well as other stakeholders was beginning to make itself felt. Underlying this momentous shift was, and remains, the tension between the extent to which governments (and the public) can regulate or mandate a university's responsibilities and the principles of autonomy and academic freedom treasured by universities and their faculty. What precipitated this change? Perhaps no one thing, although most higher education researchers would agree that massive expansion in student access to a system that no longer has the resources to be scalable, combined with a more utilitarian view of the relationship between the economy, higher education,

4 Robert Anderson, "The 'Idea of a University' today," History and Policy Newsletter, Policy Papers, 01 March 2010, <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/index.php/policy-papers>.

5 Sophia Deboick, "Newman suggests a university's 'soul' lies in the mark it leaves on students," The Guardian, 20 October 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/oct/20/john-henry-newman-idea-university-soul>.

6 George Fallis, *Multiversities, Ideas and Democracy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 112-113.

and jobs have together undermined whatever good will supported a social contract in the past.

Now, at this writing, universities across North America are feeling under siege: their authority as creators, defenders, and repositories of knowledge is being eroded by accusations of elitism and irrelevance by external forces, and cries of neo-liberalism and corporatization from within. While the arts and humanities have been disparaged for at least two decades as impractical fluff and a sure path to unemployment by opportunistic politicians looking for a scapegoat for economic woes, today the value of higher education generally is being questioned.⁷ As recently as summer 2017, Gallup conducted a telephone survey of 1,017 US adults around the question of confidence in colleges and universities, with fewer than half indicating they had a "great deal or quite a lot."⁸ The primary reason for this low confidence, at least among Republican participants, was that they felt higher education was *too liberal*. So one of the authors of the Gallup poll advised higher education institutions to drop the term "liberal arts": "Putting the words *liberal* and *arts* together is a branding disaster, and the most effective way to save or defend the liberal arts may be to change what we call them."⁹

The emphasis on job skills versus a well-rounded education gained momentum in the wake of the 2008 recession with its persistently high unemployment rates. All levels of government, starting with the federal government under Stephen Harper in 2013, as well as the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, who commissioned the Coates report as part of their skills initiative,¹⁰ and the Conference Board of Canada whose Skills and Post-Secondary Education Initiative and Summits¹¹ propagated the notion of a critical skills shortage in Canada and blamed universities for pouring "unskilled" graduates with humanities degrees into the ranks of the unemployed. It was a reprise of the more limited vendettas against liberal education waged by William Harris (former Ontario premier) and Ralph Klein (former Alberta premier) in the late 1990s.

The political rhetoric of the past decade has resonated with enough parents and students that, despite employment data to the contrary,¹² students are gravitating in large numbers away from the liberal arts—especially English and history—and opting in far greater numbers for majors in business, health sciences, and other professions (cf. Figs. 3.1 and 3.2). There is a lot of information available on this, but the best and most recent data can be found in an article from June 2017 by Scott Jaschik in *Inside Higher Ed* that makes use of data analysis from the Humanities Indicators project of the American

7 See for example: Andrew Hacker and Claudia Dreifus, *Higher Education? How Colleges Are Wasting Our Money and Failing Our Kids---and What We Can Do About It* (St. Martin's Griffin: 2011); Kyle Prevost, "Is University or College worth the investment?" *Financial Post*, February 25, 2015; and Ken Coates, "Career Ready: Towards a national strategy for the mobilization of Canadian potential," Canadian Council of Chief Executives, 2015.

8 Frank Newport and Brandon Busteed, Gallup, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/21678/why-republicans-down-higher.aspx>, release date August 16, 2017.

9 Brandon Busteed, Gallup, <http://www.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/216275/higher-education-drop-term-liberal-arts.aspx>, release date August 16, 2017. So little is the understanding of the origin of the term, even among pollsters!

10 Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE), *Taking Action for Canada: Jobs and Skills for the 21st Century*, see www.ceocouncil.ca/skills.

11 Conference Board of Canada, Centre for Skills and Post-Secondary Education (SPSE), see <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/spse/default.aspx>.

12 Yuri Ostrovsky and Marc Frenette, *The Cumulative Earnings of Postsecondary Graduates Over 20 Years: Results by Field of Study*, Statistics Canada, *Economic Insights*, No. 40, published October 2014, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-626-x/11-626-x2014040-eng.htm>.

Fig. 3.1 - Bachelor's Degrees by Field of Study - U.S.A.¹³

Field	1970/71	1995/96	2006/07	2014/15
TOTAL	839,730	1,164,792	1,524,092	1,894,934
Humanities: English + foreign lang / lit, liberal arts + sciences, religious st., philosophy, gen.ed.	12.4%	9.6%	9.2%	6.8%
Biological + physical sciences	6.75%	6.94%	6.44%	7.4%
Math, computer + information sciences	3.2%	3.2%	3.7%	4.3%
Social sciences, history, psychology, law / security, gender, communication, journalism	26.2%	25.3%	26.3%	25.0%
Business, public administration	14.4%	21.2%	23.0%	21.0%
Education	21.0%	9.0%	6.9%	4.8%
Engineering / architecture	6.6%	7.4%	6.0%	6.6%
Health professions, recreation	3.2%	8.5%	8.5%	14.0%
Visual + performing arts	3.6%	4.2%	5.6%	5.1%
Multi / interdisciplinary studies	0.75%	2.3%	2.1%	2.5%

Arts & Science combined: 1970 = 48.6%, 1995 = 45.0%, 2006 = 45.6%, 2014 = 43.5%

Academy of Arts & Sciences.¹⁴ While the enrolment trends in the Humanities are disconcerting and cannot be discounted, it's important to keep in mind the absolute numbers of university students studying the arts and sciences. The two tables draw data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and Statistics Canada to provide a comparative snapshot of the total number of degrees conferred by field of specialization in both the U.S. and Canada over a period of 35 years.

¹³ NCES National Center for Education Statistics, https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_322.10.asp

¹⁴ Scott Jaschik, "Humanities Majors Drop: Declines in bachelor's degrees awarded are particularly notable for English and history, but trends at community colleges may cheer advocates for the liberal arts," Inside Higher Ed, June 5, 2017, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/06/05/analysis-finds-significant-drop-humanities-majors-gains-liberal-arts-degrees>. See also: Colleen Flaherty, "Major Exodus: How do post-recession English departments attract students to a field losing popularity?" Inside Higher Ed, Jan. 30, 2015, http://www.slate.com/articles/life/inside_higher_ed/2015/01/english_majors_are_declining_in_popularity_how_can_humanities_departments.html; and Julia Brookins, "The Decline in History Majors: What Is to Be Done?" May 2016, Perspectives on History, American Historical Association, <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/may-2016/the-decline-in-history-majors>.

Fig. 3.2 - University Graduates by Field of Study - Canada¹⁵

Field	1970 ¹⁶	1997	2007	2014
TOTAL	78,363	173,934	241,551	301,584
Humanities	Arts&Sci ence 60.9%	12.1%	11.3%	7.8%
Physical + life sciences		8.7%	7.8%	7.4%
Math, computer + info sciences		3.9%	3.5%	2.9%
Social + behavioural sciences + law + communication		21.8%	20.9%	19.3%
Business, mgmt., public admin	6.1%	17.2%	20.2%	22.1%
Education	13.9%	13.7%	11.4%	9.6%
Engineering / architecture	9.3%	7.4%	8.0%	9.4%
Health + related	7.2%	9.6%	10.9%	12.8%
Visual + performing arts	2.0%	3.0%	3.6%	3.7%
Other: multi/ interdisciplinary studies	0.26%	0.67%	0.67%	2.0%

Arts & Science combined: 1970 = 60.9%, 1997 = 46.5%, 2007 = 43.5%, 2014 = 37.4%

The comparison is not perfect, but there are some instructive bits of information. For instance, the humanities in Canada (including history) are faring somewhat better than in the U.S.. It is also noteworthy that in 1970, the overall percentage of Arts & Sciences degrees (which included the social sciences) conferred in Canada was much higher than in the U.S. (60.9% vs. 48.6%), while the percentage of business and public administration degrees awarded that same year in the U.S. was more than double what Canadian institutions awarded. On the other hand, business degrees in Canada have grown more dramatically over the intervening period and are now keeping pace with the U.S. When we view these statistics, we are looking at the profile of how thought leaders (and a significant portion of the informed electorate) in each country were educated, with a thirty to fifty-year horizon of impact.

Speaking Truth to Power: Who are the Public Intellectuals?

Who are the big thinkers who can speak on issues of broad import to the general

¹⁵ This table includes all university credentials. Statistics Canada and Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. October 2009. Education Indicators in Canada: Report of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program. Catalogue no. 81-582-X. Ottawa. Tables D.2.7.2 and D.2.8.2. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/81-599-x/81-599-x2009003-eng.htm>; and Statistics Canada. Table 477-0030 - Postsecondary graduates, by program type, credential type, Classification of Instructional Programs, Primary Grouping (CIP_PG) and sex, annual (2007-2014), CANSIM (database). Date modified: 2016-11-23, <http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a26?lang=eng&retrLang=eng&id=4770030&&pattern=&stByVal=1&p1=1&p2=31&tabMode>.

¹⁶ Figures for 1970 are extrapolated from two tables: "Series W504-512 Degrees awarded by Canadian universities and colleges 1970-75" and "Full-time university enrolment by field of specialization and sex 1861-1975," <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-516-x/sectionw/4147445-eng.htm>.

public? Is every prominent politician, journalist, activist, writer, or academic *de facto* a public intellectual?¹⁷ Not likely. But we need a workable definition to help us out. While the number of articles and books on this topic is large, there are four or five that I think together provide the full scope and richness of the larger discussion. Richard A. Posner states at the outset of his 2001 book, *Public Intellectuals: A Study of Decline* that defining the term "involves demarcating an area of social life" that is hard to get right. He begins with the non-contentious definition that an intellectual is "generally understood as someone seriously and competently interested in the things of the mind."¹⁸ Acknowledging that this definition requires further differentiation, he adopts the stance that every "intellectual" is a *public* intellectual: "Not only is 'public' of the essence of the most common understanding of what an 'intellectual' is ... but part of that understanding is that the intellectual writes for a broader public than the scholar, the consultant, or the professional does"¹⁹

At the heart of the differentiation Posner is making is Michel Foucault's distinction between the "universal" and the "specific" intellectual: the universal intellectual is "the man of justice, the man of law, who counterposes to power, despotism and the abuses and arrogance of wealth the universality of justice and the equity of an ideal law," while "the 'specific' intellectual derives from quite another figure, not the jurist or notable, but the savant or expert."²⁰ The emergence of the specific intellectual is described as occurring just after the Second World War and as a product of the development of the natural sciences.

Posner for his part further demarcates the public intellectual from the specific intellectual work of the "scientist who writes for the general public merely to explain science."²¹ Pointing to what he calls the common thread among "the great intellectuals of the twentieth century, such as John Dewey, Bertrand Russell, Max Weber, Arthur Koestler, Edmund Wilson, and George Orwell," he limits his definition to those who address political or ideological questions directly or who lend their field (e.g., literary criticism) a broadly political or ideological or religious perspective.²² Only those scientists "who write for a general audience about the ethical and political dimensions of science" (e.g., Paul Ehrlich, Stephen Jay Gould, Richard Lewontin, and Edward Wilson) are public intellectuals.²³

Posner does worry that his definition excludes "original, and sometimes very important, intellectual writing that *just happens to be accessible* to the educated public

17 There are in fact various lists of living public intellectuals: Richard Posner provides a comprehensive list (originally 546 names) with subsets in his book *Public Intellectuals: A Study in Decline* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 2001), 167-220, and updates on his website: <http://home.uchicago.edu/~rposner/publicintellect.htm>; Raphael Sassower analyzes Posner's lists, as well as those provided annually by *Foreign Policy* and *Prospect Magazine* in *The Price of Public Intellectuals* (London, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 98-105 and provides the 2012 and 2013 lists respectively from the latter two sources in the book's Appendix 123-127.

18 Posner, *Public Intellectuals*, 17.

19 Posner, *Public Intellectuals*, 22.

20 Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 128; quoted from Raphael Sassower, *The Price of Public Intellectuals* (London, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 40.

21 Posner, *Public Intellectuals*, 21.

22 Posner, *Public Intellectuals*, 19-20.

23 Posner, *Public Intellectuals*, 21.

because the style in which it is written is plain, and free of jargon." Indeed he claims this "accessible scholarship" is in decline for "reasons similar to those that lie behind the displacement ... of independent by academic public intellectuals. *The disappearance of a common culture that embraces both intellectual specialists and the educated public* is an important development and one that bears on the political and ideological role of intellectuals."²⁴ His deeply pessimistic contention that the growing specialization of the university has crowded out the independent (non-university affiliated) public intellectual and displaced the plain-talking, jargon-free generalist academic, while also resulting in a slippery slope of declining quality among a growing cadre of academics who moonlight as public intellectuals in a marketplace that is high paying but indiscriminating is the main thrust of his book and one at least partially shared by other writers on the subject. He admits he does not offer conclusive proof but rather extensive anecdotal evidence to support this contention and warns that "the public protects itself against the high variance and low average quality of public-intellectual work mostly by not taking it very seriously."²⁵

While George Fallis shares Posner's definition of an intellectual for the most part, his usage is more inclusive and he believes the leap into becoming a public intellectual is intentional on the part of the faculty member: "An intellectual becomes a 'public' intellectual when her or his writing or speaking is intended for the curious, educated general public."²⁶ But more than a simple choice, it carries a heavy responsibility. Central to his argument for a new social contract is the conviction that "multiversities -- and therefore their professors -- must accept the roles of public intellectual, critic, and conscience."²⁷ Citing the example of a public intellectual who contributes to discussions about public affairs, he agrees with Jeffrey C. Goldfarb's assertion that "[i]ntellectuals help societies to talk about their problems. They contribute to democratic life when they civilize political contestation and when they subvert complacent consensus"; indeed "the diminution of intellectual activity presents a threat to democracy in our times."²⁸

In his closing remarks at a 1999 colloquium on "Public Intellectuals and the Academy," Alan Lightman offered a hierarchy that is helpful in framing how we might think of specialists vs. broad thinkers. Like Fallis, he describes a public intellectual generally as a university faculty member trained in a particular discipline who at some point "decides to write and speak to a larger audience than their professional colleagues."²⁹

According to Lightman, a Level I public intellectual speaks and writes for the general public exclusively about their discipline. These are the scientists explaining science that Posner couldn't fit comfortably into his definition. Steven Hawking's *A*

24 Posner, *Public Intellectuals*, 21. My emphasis.

25 Posner, *Public Intellectuals*, 388-89. See also Russell Jacoby, "Intellectuals and their Discontents," *The Hedgehog Review: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Culture* 2, no. 3 (2000): 36-52; and Cathy Davidson, *The New Education: How to Revolutionize the University and to Prepare Students for a World in Flux* (New York: Basic Books, 2017).

26 Fallis, *Multiversities*, 139.

27 Fallis, *Multiversities*, 371.

28 Jeffrey C. Goldfarb, *Civility and Subversion: The Intellectual in Democratic Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1, quoted in Fallis, *Multiversities*, 139.

29 Alan Lightman, "The Role of the Public Intellectual," <http://web.mit.edu/m-i-t/articles/lightman.html>, posted January 5, 2000; also included in the epilogue to the published proceedings of the colloquium "Public Intellectuals and the Academy" with remarks by Stephen Pinker, www.mit.edu/~saleem/ivory/epil.htm.

Brief History of Time would fall into this category. A Level II public intellectual expands the range to talking about how their discipline relates to the social, cultural, and political world around it. Lightman cites James Watson's *The Double Helix* as a good example of this level. Posner's list of scientists who write about the ethical and political dimensions of science (see p. 9) falls into this category.

But the Level III public intellectual evokes Edward Said's idea of a disruptor, an intellectual "whose mission in life is to advance human freedom and knowledge."³⁰ In Lightman's words, "A Level III intellectual is asked to write and speak about a large range of public issues, not necessarily directly connected to their original field of expertise at all."³¹ He lists a number of examples: Albert Einstein, Gloria Steinem, Noam Chomsky, Carl Sagan, Henry Louis Gates.

The responsibilities of the role increase with each level and for the Level III intellectual, Lightman sounds a cautionary note: "Such a person must be ... aware of the limitations of his knowledge, he must acknowledge his personal prejudices because he is being asked to speak for a whole realm of thought He has enormous power to influence change and he must wield that power with respect." ³²

This statement raises a number of issues: What happens to the views of the private individual in the public arena? Is the role of the public intellectual to facilitate debate or take a position? Is it to implore restraint in the evolving political stance of a powerful nation vis-à-vis a smaller one? These are among the questions explored in a recent anthology edited by Michael C. Desch.³³ While pointing to the polarized, absolutist intellectual climate of the Cold War era, which Desch says "foreclosed alternatives and impoverished debate," the book cautions would-be public intellectuals to practice humility and ethical skepticism with regard to public policy. Overall, the contributions sound repeated warnings for professors and their institutions around the globe that are reminiscent of Posner.

Was there ever a golden age of public intellectuals? One we can point to as a model to emulate in some fashion? Both Posner and Desch reference the American university in the 1950s and early 1960s as the heyday of public intellectualism. But even more,, I think there are two significant lessons to be gleaned from German intellectual history at the time when Wilhelm von Humboldt founded the Berlin University, and from American intellectual life around the founding of the new Republic, that is, at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries. First, many of the central figures had backgrounds of study and experience that encompassed philology, history, law, theology, aesthetics, physics, commerce, and government service -- and most are described, among other things, as philosophers: the Humboldt brothers, Goethe, Schiller, Fichte, Hegel, Schleiermacher in Germany, and Madison, Jay, Hamilton, Emerson in the U.S. Second, they all spoke, wrote, and commented on issues of broad public import from an ideological or political perspective, two stellar examples being

30 Edward W. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures* 11 (1994). Quoted in Posner, 31.

31 Lightman, "The Role of the Public Intellectual."

32 Lightman, "The Role of the Public Intellectual."

33 Michael C. Desch, *Public Intellectuals in the Global Arena: Professors or Pundits?* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2016).

Schiller's *Aesthetic Education of Man* and the *Federalist Papers* by Hamilton, Madison and Jay.

At the time these men were educated, universities did not separate the arts and sciences. Only well into the 19th century were the natural sciences taught as discrete subjects and the social sciences did not emerge until the late 19th and early 20th century. The mother body of knowledge from the time of the ancient Greeks was philosophy, which spawned the original seven liberal arts of rhetoric, grammar, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. The natural sciences evolved from natural philosophy and the social sciences from social philosophy. In the 20th century, as disciplinary specialization gathered momentum, public intellectuals narrowed the focus of their contributions.

Over the past 15-20 years, disciplinary specialization and sub-specialization has accelerated to the point where many recent PhDs don't feel comfortable teaching first- and second-year survey courses in their own disciplines, let alone anything cross- or interdisciplinary. They simply haven't had the experience. Indeed their academic identity is tied to one small corner of their discipline, all their efforts focused on demonstrating competence in the classroom and publishing in the top-tier scholarly journals in their field, which invariably also means speaking only to a very narrow audience.

What brought us to this point and what can we do about it? Each discipline has, through its national and international professional associations and their journals, been granted the authority by its members to self-regulate its specializations. Sure, an academic has the freedom to write about whatever they wish, but if they want to get the work published, they need to be on side with the direction of the discipline -- at least until they earn tenure. But by then, after some ten years of highly specialized study and writing, it's no easy thing and certainly risky to begin exploring breadth or interdisciplinary work.

Restoring the Balance

I'd like to return to George Fallis's assertion that the relationship between the university and society is a social contract that needs to be renewed. The features of that renewed social contract should include, he suggests, recognition of the multiversity as an institution of democracy, a rededication to undergraduate education, commitment to liberal education, and an obligation on the part of faculty to engage with the community as public intellectuals. An article by Nicholas Behm, Sherry Rankins-Robertson, and Duane Roen in *Academe*³⁴ in 2014, similarly argues for a revision of how universities define and reward the hallowed research component of faculty workload: they favour a civic engagement model of knowledge generation over the expert/specialist model.

34 Nicholas Behm, Sherry Rankins-Robertson, and Duane Roen, "The Case for Academics as Public Intellectuals," *Academe*, January-February 2014 (AAUP) [<http://www.aaup.org/reports-and-publications/academe>].

There are a few simple things a university can do to better support faculty who have a strong interest in engaging with the community rather than only with members of their disciplines. The first thing would be to ease the way toward recognizing community engagement knowledge generation, such as collaborative research activities with community organizations, as equivalent to discipline-specific academic publications in annual evaluations and tenure & promotion decisions; by easing the way, I mean committing to this equivalency in Strategic Plans and tenure/promotion procedures and guidelines. The second thing would be to convene discussions within each academic department (and more broadly within each national professional association or learned society) to generate examples of community engagement knowledge generation that are equivalent to peer-reviewed academic publications.³⁵ The defining criteria, as for any academic work, should be authenticity and innovation, verified through an equivalent process to peer review, and evaluation of impact: the scope and depth of impact on a defined community or on specific policy development.

Similar measures must be put in place to support faculty engaged (or wishing to be) in interdisciplinary projects. These enterprises -- community engagement knowledge creation and interdisciplinarity -- are not identical, but they do have significant overlaps.

In addition to supports for faculty, how we educate our students lies at the core of solving the over-specialization problem, and here the solution must begin in the first years of post-secondary education by exposing our undergraduates far earlier to interdisciplinary thinking and the benefits of addressing the major issues of our times from a plurality of perspectives. This does not mean abandoning disciplinary depth. But it does mean asking hard questions about what is essential to achieve sufficient undergraduate-level depth while leaving room for the breadth of a good liberal studies component, regardless what major -- humanities, social sciences, STEM or professional -- a student chooses. At the graduate level we must encourage and support interdisciplinary research and ensure places for these academics in interdisciplinary programs.

This would be a major cultural shift -- in a sense reaching back a couple of hundred years to the founding era of public intellectualism, before the long, slow narrowing of knowledge creation to the specialized disciplines we know today. We need to break down the silos of specialization; we need more vibrant philosophy programs that can reunite -- or at the very least re-open channels of communication and collaboration among -- the disparate fields and perspectives now segregated into dozens of disciplines and sub-disciplines. We need to encourage our students to think of themselves as philosophers, in the broadest interdisciplinary sense, while still enabling them to acquire a depth of knowledge that gives them substance.

³⁵ A good model for this may be found in Julie Elison and Timothy K. Eatman, *Scholarship in Public: Knowledge Creation and Tenure Policy in the Engaged University* (Syracuse, NY: Imagining America, 2008). This "Tenure Team Initiative" involved administrators and consulting scholars from a cross section of some twenty U.S. universities, resulting in a "Resource on Promotion and Tenure in the Arts, Humanities, and Design" for recognizing public scholarship.

In an era when there is so much public skepticism of society's so-called elite institutions, we must not allow self-fulfilling prophecies to erode the institutions of democracy; we need to regain the public's trust. In a time when the legitimacy of the press is under attack as purveyors of "fake news," we need to double-down on our support for and collaboration with the media. In a time when the authority of universities and their faculty is regularly questioned, we need to reach out and engage the community in new forms of knowledge creation.³⁶ We need our universities to cultivate and embrace both academic and non-academic public intellectuals and serve as the natural forum for public dialogue. And we need to do all of this utilizing the best of 21st century interactive technology to promote the broadest possible dialogue.

If we are to recast the foundation of the "edifice of public intellectualism," to use Michael C. Desch's term, before it returns to sand,³⁷ we must acknowledge that loss of public confidence and the decline of public intellectualism are due largely to conditions of our own making. Until we take concrete steps toward adopting something like Fallis's four features of a renewed social contract, these conditions likely will not change. The striking thing about Fallis's renewed social contract is that the individual features support one another: progress in one area will lead to progress in the others. It's a matter of will to get the ball rolling.

This is not a time for complacency. Indeed, it is time for academic intellectuals to rise to the challenge. Not only will our universities benefit from this. The future of our democracy depends on it.

³⁶ There are ample examples of this, e.g., Elison and Eatman, *Scholarship in Public*, 2008; Lorilee R. Sandmann, Courtney H. Thornton, and Audrey J. Jaeger, eds., *Institutionalizing Community Engagement in Higher Education: The First Wave of Carnegie Classified Institutions* (New York: Wiley, 2009); Ariane Hoy and Mathew Johnson, eds., *Deepening Community Engagement in Higher Education: Forging New Pathways* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

³⁷ Eric Miller, "The Unnamed Behemoth," (*Commonweal*, May 8, 2017) accessed at <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/unnamed-behemoth>; review of Desch, *Public Intellectuals in the Global Arena*.

Bibliography

Anderson, Robert. "The 'Idea of a University' today," *History and Policy Newsletter, Policy Papers*, 01 March 2010. <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/index.php/policy-papers>.

Behm, Nicholas, Sherry Rankins-Robertson, and Duane Roen. "The Case for Academics as Public Intellectuals." *Academe*, January-February 2014 (AAUP). <http://www.aaup.org/reports-and-publications/academe>.

Brookins, Julia. "The Decline in History Majors: What Is to Be Done?" *Perspectives on History*, May 2016. American Historical Association. <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/may-2016/the-decline-in-history-majors>.

Brandon Busted, "Higher Education: Drop the Term 'Liberal Arts.'" Gallup. Release date August 16, 2017. <http://www.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/216275/higher-education-drop-term-liberal-arts.aspx>.

Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE). "Taking Action for Canada: Jobs and Skills for the 21st Century." <http://thebusinesscouncil.ca/initiatives/taking-action-for-canada/>

Coates, Ken. *Career Ready: Towards a national strategy for the mobilization of Canadian potential*. Canadian Council of Chief Executives, March 30, 2015. <http://thebusinesscouncil.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Career-Ready-Ken-Coates-final-March-251.pdf>

Columbia University. "History, King's College Era 1754-1776." Accessed 3 September 2017, <http://www.columbia.edu/content/history.html>.

Conference Board of Canada, Centre for Skills and Post-Secondary Education (SPSE), see <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/spse/default.aspx>.

Davidson, Cathy. *The New Education: How to Revolutionize the University and to Prepare Students for a World in Flux*. New York: Basic Books, 2017.

Deboick, Sophia. "Newman suggests a university's 'soul' lies in the mark it leaves on students." *The Guardian*, 20 October 2010. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/oct/20/john-henry-newman-idea-university-soul>.

Desch, Michael C. *Public Intellectuals in the Global Arena: Professors or Pundits?* Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2016.

Elison, Julie and Timothy K. Eatman, *Scholarship in Public: Knowledge Creation and Tenure Policy in the Engaged University*. Syracuse, NY: Imagining America, 2008.

Fallis, George. *Multiversities, Ideas and Democracy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007.

Flaherty, Colleen. "Major Exodus: How do post-recession English departments attract students to a field losing popularity?" *Inside Higher Ed*, January 30, 2015. http://www.slate.com/articles/life/inside_higher_ed/2015/01/english_majors_are_declining_in_popularity_how_can_humanities_departments.html.

Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, edited by Colin Gordon. Translated by Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980.

Goldfarb, Jeffrey C. *Civility and Subversion: The Intellectual in Democratic Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Hacker, Andrew and Claudia Dreifus. *Higher Education? How Colleges Are Wasting Our Money and Failing Our Kids---and What We Can do About It*. St.Martin's Griffin: 2011.

Hoy, Ariane and Mathew Johnson, eds. *Deepening Community Engagement in Higher Education: Forging New Pathways*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Jacoby, Russell. "Intellectuals and their Discontents" *The Hedgehog Review: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Culture* 2, no. 3 (2000): 36-52.

Jaschik, Scott. "Humanities Majors Drop: Declines in bachelor's degrees awarded are particularly notable for English and history, but trends at community colleges may cheer advocates for the liberal arts." *Inside Higher Ed*, June 5, 2017. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/06/05/analysis-fids-significant-drop-humanities-majors-gains-liberal-arts-degrees>.

Lightman, Alan. "The Role of the Public Intellectual." <http://web.mit.edu/mit/articles/lightman.html>, posted January 5, 2000.

Miller, Eric. "The Unnamed Behemoth." Review of *Public Intellectuals in the Global Arena*, edited by Michael Desch. *Commonweal*, May 8, 2017. <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/unnamed-behemoth>.

Newport, Frank and Brandon Busteed, "Why Are Republicans Down on Higher Ed?" Gallup. Release date August 16, 2017. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/21678/why-republicans-down-higher.aspx>.

Ostrovsky, Yuri and Marc Frenette. "The Cumulative Earnings of Postsecondary Graduates Over 20 Years: Results by Field of Study." Statistics Canada, *Economic Insights*, No. 40, October 2014. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-626-x/11-626-x2014040-eng.htm>.

Posner, Richard. *Public Intellectuals: A Study in Decline*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001. <http://home.uchicago.edu/~rposner/publicintellect.htm>.

Prevost, Kyle. "Is University or College worth the investment? Be careful who you listen to." *Financial Post*, February 24, 2015. <http://business.financialpost.com/personal-finance/young-money/is-university-or-college-worth-the-investment-be-careful-who-you-listen-to>.

Princeton University. "History." Accessed April 23, 2017. <http://www.princeton.edu/main/about/history/american-revolution>.

Said, Edward W. *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures*. New York: Vintage, 1996.

Sandmann, Lorilee R., Courtney H. Thornton, and Audrey J. Jaeger, eds. *Institutionalizing Community Engagement in Higher Education: The First Wave of Carnegie Classified Institutions*. New York: Wiley, 2009.

Sassower, Raphael. *The Price of Public Intellectuals*. London, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014.

Statistics Canada. Series W504-512 "Degrees awarded by Canadian universities and colleges 1970-75" and "Full-time university enrolment by field of specialization and sex 1861-1975." <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-516-x/sectionw/4147445-eng.htm>.

Statistics Canada. Table 477-0030. "Postsecondary graduates, by program type, credential type, Classification of Instructional Programs, Primary Grouping (CIP_PG) and sex." Annual 2007-2014. CANSIM (database). Date modified: 2016-11-23. <http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a26?lang.eng&retrLang=eng&id=4770030&&patter n=&stByVal=1&p1=1&p2=31&tabMode>.

Statistics Canada and Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. *Education Indicators in Canada: Report of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program*. October 2009. Catalogue no. 81-582-X. Ottawa. Tables [D.2.7.2](#) and [D.2.8.2](#). <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/81-599-x/81-599-x2009003-eng.htm>.

U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Table 322-10 "Bachelor's degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions, by field of study: selected years, 1970-71 through 2014-15." https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_322.10.asp.