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UCF Faculty as Public Intellectuals Daniel Murphree



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“The Decline of the Public Intellectual has been a trope of academic discourse for at least as long as academics have known that the general public doesn’t respond very well to sentences that include ‘trope’ and ‘discourse.’”¹

Long, long ago (in the 20th century), faculty at U.S. colleges and universities played key roles in public debates on a variety of issues. Before Bill O’Reilly and Jon Stewart routinely opined on scandal, propriety, and other topics from their cable “news” pulpits, Americans (and non-Americans for that matter) looked to Ph.D.s for guidance on a multitude of questions affecting their societies and civic priorities. Historian Richard Hofstadter, theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, political theorist Hannah Arendt, and astronomer Carl Sagan, to name a few, spent their careers working at institutions of higher education while routinely and publicly writing and speaking on subjects both within and outside of their disciplinary expertise. Viewpoints they disseminated influenced standards of behavior, political movements, social transformations, cultural trends, spiritual perspectives, and a host of foundational and esoteric aspects of Americana. To be clear, Americans have never endorsed faculty opinions and assessments uniformly or uncritically; as long as academicians have offered their viewpoints, many in the public have disagreed and lampooned them for it. But for at least 100 years prior to instant-access social media commentary, finely crafted YouTube polemics, and pandemic-like punditry-writing explosions across newspapers, television, and the Internet, many Americans believed that the best and brightest professors at institutions of higher learning should have insight on issues facing the nation and expected those in the ivory tower to provide them as part of their mission of promoting “civilization.” In short, for whatever reason, faculty at U.S. colleges and universities served their communities as public intellectuals.

1 James Grossman and Jason Steinhauer, “Historians and Public Culture: Widening the Circle of Advocacy,” *Perspectives on History* (November 2014): 7-9.

In the 21st century, are faculty at U.S. colleges and universities still considered by Americans to be public intellectuals? Should all, some, or any faculty embrace the role? What does the term mean in the 2000s? How does a faculty member know if they are a public intellectual? What are the rules, expectations, limitations, and consequences? If a faculty member is a public intellectual, is that a good thing? Is being a public intellectual rewarding or punishing? Is the notion of a public intellectual antiquated in an information-flooded 21st-century world?

And what if we localize these questions? What does the term public intellectual mean at the University of Central Florida? What does it mean in Orlando and in the state as a whole? Are faculty at public universities like UCF required to be public intellectuals or prohibited from doing so based on the nature of the higher education institution at which they teach? What are the expectations of UCF administrators and students? Does “public intellectual” mean different things to biologists, artists, engineers, and philosophers? Do UCF full professors interpret the term the same way as assistant professors, lecturers, instructors, and contingent faculty? What are the differences between a UCF faculty public intellectual and

a UCF faculty member who specializes in community engagement? Do UCF faculty care about these questions at all?

The essays that follow provide some answers. Fifteen UCF faculty members representing various backgrounds and disciplines agreed to publish their ideas on public intellectuals in this Special Issue of the *Faculty Focus*. As will become clear to readers, no two of the contributors approached the topic or interpreted the term “public intellectual” in exactly the same way. Each developed viewpoints based on their unique academic and nonacademic experiences and their specific ideas on the roles of UCF faculty members in the broader community. While the contributors wrote their essays independently and did not see the other authors’ pieces until the complete collection was published, commonalities in opinion and emphasis appear frequently. At the same time, divergences in ideas also appear throughout the essays, and some contributors reach starkly contrary conclusions on the same point. Rather than signify confusion or paradox, these inconsistencies aptly represent the diversity and complexity of the modern university. They also demonstrate the multiple viewpoints on public intellectuals that characterize American society overall.

The purpose of this special issue is to initiate a public conversation on “UCF Faculty as public intellectuals” open to all on campus and elsewhere. I hope you share the arguments you read in these pages with others and debate them widely. These essays are not meant to be the final word on the topic; they are an introduction to additional conversations and contemplation of new perspectives not included here. And while the topic may not seem of great importance to some, it should not be completely ignored by anyone. As much as a selection of the roles UCF faculty play in societal discourse, these essays speak to broader connections between UCF and the community it serves now and well into the future.

Should Faculty Focus on Being Public Intellectuals, or Creating Them?

Stephen M. Kuebler



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When I was asked to contribute to this issue about public intellectuals, my first instinct was to discuss the theme with my student lunch group. I have lunch daily with a colleague in the Chemistry Department and the students from both our research groups. During lunch we talk a bit about research. But most of our discussion centers on the news, how things are being reported, and sometimes a related movie or book. We are an internationally diverse group, so we often end up comparing and contrasting our cultures (and foods!) and how a given situation might affect or be perceived by different peoples. I asked the students, “What is a public intellectual? Who comes to mind when you think of a public intellectual?” This was followed by a long silence. I spoke with others about this theme as well and have concluded that the idea of a public intellectual is not really part of most young people’s cultural awareness. This is a bit disturbing, but not entirely surprising, and it presents an opportunity for us as faculty members, particularly here at UCF.

There are doubtless many definitions and opinions of what a public intellectual is and who can be counted among them. The term itself is a bit lofty. But I believe we can interpret it broadly and assert that *a public intellectual is anyone who has knowledge and practical experience with an issue and who by vocation or informal engagement leads others to reflect and act thoughtfully on that issue, to the benefit of the broader community.*

In my definition I emphasize “thoughtfully” because our society has no shortage of outspoken individuals and groups who influence public opinion but do not necessarily encourage *thoughtful* engagement with problems and other stakeholders. Extreme cases can be found across the AM dial, where politically polarizing shock jocks spew emotive one-liners that foment anger and mistrust. On a daily basis we will all encounter less extreme but no less significant examples—an acerbic Facebook post, a quick comment in a blog, or a pundit’s remark during a media interview—which are quickly rattled off to make a point, but with little substance or focus on achiev-

ing a productive outcome. Contemporary communication, and possibly education, seems overly focused on persuading others to “think likewise” rather than to “likewise think,” discuss, and potentially move society in a positive direction. And although our rate of information exchange is steadily increasing, our communication seems to be decreasing (This essay has already exceeded 18 Tweets and counting...).

So is there even a place anymore for the public intellectual?

More than ever we need citizens who are well educated, thoughtful, and open to frank and productive discussion. Our society and the generations who will lead it are faced with hefty challenges, many of which are inextricably linked. Think for a moment about some key challenges we face in our community, at all levels: radicalism, capital punishment, human rights, health care, reproductive rights, evolution, energy, climate change, sustainability, species extinction, water rights, governmental regulation, generational issues, and overpopulation. The complexity and significance of issues we need to address to advance or even sustain society is increasing. But meanwhile, the number of people who can thoughtfully engage on these issues—the public intellectuals—are decreasing, or they are at least decreasing in influence.

I acknowledge that UCF faculty can be public intellectuals—by studying key issues, publishing scholarship, engaging the community, and trying to develop solutions to problems. But I assert that our most important function is to help create public intellectuals, by educating our students at all levels to be thinkers.

Through its sheer size alone, our institution has tremendous potential to improve society by fostering the intellectual growth of our students and helping them to become public intellectuals. We can achieve this goal by staying our course to create a learning community that stands for opportunity and is enriched with the best qualities of the traditional liberal arts educational experience. Our new round of hires will help bring the student-to-faculty ratio down, enabling students to benefit from more interaction with faculty and richer class-time interaction with peers.

There is concern nationwide that higher education suffers from “adjunctification.”¹ UCF benefits from having outstanding faculty who are leaders in their fields, across all titles. And our students will greatly benefit if they have access to all faculty on a full time basis. Economic constraints have brought many institutions into a situation where faculty are polarized into being either “teachers” or “researchers.” Students benefit when they are instructed by faculty who are both researchers at the forefront of their discipline and passionate teachers, who bring their research into the classroom to catalyze think-

ing, discussion, and deep learning. We need to lead the U.S. in the return to the teacher-scholar model, in which faculty have the resources and encouragement to be both great teachers and research leaders.

We must also be wary of fashionable trends in education and overreliance on expedient approaches that subordinate academic goals to financial needs. As an undergraduate, I was awed by the knowledge of my teachers, their achievements in research, their gift for communication, and their genuine interest in helping me learn, create, and grow intellectually. Yet none of them were educated online. Online education can serve many needs, and I use it in all my courses. It gives instructors a multi-media platform for delivering content. It can make education more accessible. But it has not developed to the point that it can replace the dynamic of face-to-face instruction. Humans communicate on multiple levels—the spoken word, facial expressions, body language—even a sigh of exasperation has communicative value. The instructor and students respond to these in the intimate environment of a (reasonably sized) classroom, consciously or unconsciously, as we go through the dynamic process of teaching and learning. Education delivered exclusively online limits our means for communication. There is no substitute for an energizing classroom in which an enthusiastic teacher exudes contagious excitement for a subject, and students exchange ideas face to face, in real time.

As a chemist, I staunchly support science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), but not to the exclusion of the humanities. Nationwide, STEM has been championed as the panacea for our country’s economic woes. But we have lost our way if we embrace STEM at the expense of the humanities. My colleagues in STEM frequently express concern over students’ challenges in writing, self-expression, and critical thinking. And employers are calling for equal emphasis on the liberal arts because coursework in these disciplines helps students develop communication skills, teamwork, and a high level of analysis and critical thinking that actually complements STEM skills.^{2, 3} Programs at UCF that emphasize important non-STEM skills, like Writing Across the Curriculum, have much potential to enrich our students’ experience and skills cache. UCF can lead the way by showing how a prominent metropolitan research university can offer students programs with strong emphasis on STEM that are well balanced with instruction in the humanities.

The prominence of UCF, the demand for our graduates, the value of their degrees, the devotion of our alumni, and our positive impact on the community will all continue to grow if we remain focused on the quality of education we deliver to our students. And that quality will steadily increase as we enable teacher-scholars to foster an environment where learn-

ing, research, and teaching are complementary activities that enable pupils to develop into public intellectuals.

Some of my thoughts on this subject will be contentious, and I do not expect everyone to share my views. Sometimes a person has to be willing to say (and hear!) things that are contentious, if they want to contribute like a true public intellectual. So I will feel successful if this contribution inspires individual thought, and maybe even some discussion, on how we educate and just how much that can impact our students. We are doing more than just teaching. We are creating thinkers who can change our world.

1. R. Jenkins, "Straight talk about 'adjunctification,'" *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (15 Dec. 2014).
2. C. Masters, "Liberal arts degrees: An asset at some companies," National Public Radio (16 Jan. 2012, <http://www.npr.org>).
3. A. Scott, "What do employers really want from college grads?" Marketplace (1 Mar. 2013, <http://www.marketplace.org>).

The Artist as a Public Intellectual

Stella Sung



Stella Sung is Pegasus Professor in the School of Visual Arts and Design (SVAD) and Director of UCF's Center for Research and Education in Arts, Technology, and Entertainment (CREATE). She is also Composer-in-Residence for the Dayton, Ohio Performing Arts Alliance.

As a composer of contemporary "classical" music, I would like to comment upon what I believe is the role of the artist as a "public intellectual." When asked to reflect on the topic of "the role of the public intellectual," I had to first find a definition of the "public intellectual" as I was unfamiliar with the term. If taken separately, the two words (*public* and *intellectual*) can have a variety of meanings, but used together as one term, it seems that it generally means the intellectual person who reaches into—and out to—the public using his or her own areas of knowledge and expertise. So for the artist, this translates as a need and a desire to share, explore, or somehow make known the artistic "product" that is produced, which is then given over to the public for further commentary and response.

Art has a powerful effect that, through the ages, has been revered but also feared. Artists often see and experience the world in unconventional ways, and because most artists seek an audience of some kind, there is always an element of trying to reach "the public." We are always taking the chance that, when we publish, perform, disseminate, or otherwise put our work on display, the public will not approve, understand, or accept what our artwork is seeking to express. Sometimes, the public will be overwhelmingly interested in what we have to say, and sometimes the work is ignored or destroyed by critical analysis or commentary—or, as in the case of banned artwork, music, and literature, by governments. Art can become a threat to the status quo or find immense popularity. It can be used as a form of propaganda and as a powerful weapon either for or against the public. Thus, the arts are in many ways the most "public" of forums for human expression. Art may or may not even use words or speech—a visual piece of art can be a powerful tool, whether traditional studio art or urban street art. But in almost all cases, art forces us to look within ourselves and at our society in ways that can be disturbing or totally and incomprehensibly beautiful.

Seen through the lens of the artist, the thought, the process of creating the art, can be an intellectual process whereby the artist thinks and ponders deeply about what he or she wants to "say" in the art. I often ask my students (and myself), "What do you want to say in the composition?" Meaning, what is at the core of the expression? In this way, the artist questions and searches for the essence of the expression. So in music, for example, I search for the melodic line or the harmony that seems to me to best fulfill the expression, action, or emotion. Other times, through purely abstract art, it could be that the expression comes as an impulse without great thought but still with skill. But the final result for many artists is that we want the public to experience and be a part of our creations; we want the public to see the film, see the play, hear the music, read the book or poetry, watch the dance, or look at the painting. We seek engagement or some form of response from the audience, otherwise known as "the public."

Thus, one role of the artist as a public intellectual is one of trying to stimulate response and reaction—to take on a responsibility of eliciting thought, intellectualized or not, to a work of art. The fact is almost everyone has an opinion when they experience a work of art—that is, everyone becomes a critic in a way. So in this sense, we are asking people to *think* about what they *feel* as a response to something artistic. In many ways, this is, I believe, the real essence of art: to force the public to ask inner questions of themselves: "What did this piece of art mean to me?" "What did I like or not like about this work?" "Did this work move me in any way, either emotionally or intellectually?" These are the questions that we, as artists, would really like the public to ask of themselves.

Another role of the artist as a public intellectual is to actually talk about or discuss their work in public (as in a lecture, demonstration, panel, publication, etc.) in order to help others better understand what the meaning of the artwork might be, what the process of the creation might be, and so on. In this respect, the more traditional application of the word *intellectual* can be applied. But not all artists can—or wish to—articulate their thoughts about their art or about their process of creating art. For those who do enjoy commenting, it usually comes through writing program notes, essays, or some kind of commentary whereby the general public can gain insight and understanding of the art and the artist. In my case, I am often called on to write my own program notes to my compositions and to make presentations, speak on the radio or television about my work, and do pre-concert lectures when a work of mine has been programmed. Sometimes, the audience is small, and sometimes it can be quite large. Additionally, because I have been the Composer-in-Residence for the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra and am currently the Composer-in-Residence for the Dayton Performing Arts Alliance, much of my expected activities are to engage the public and to be a spokesperson for contemporary music and for the art of music.

In many ways, I view the role of the artist-as-public-intellectual as one of duality: one part is to present the artwork that more often than not comes from a place of nonintellectuality as its wellspring; the other part is to force the public to respond and react to the art once the art has been presented to them. All artists are in some way public intellectuals because just about everything that we do requires a response from the public. We are constantly advocating for the importance of the arts, constantly “doing our art” with or without funding only because we carry a love for the art that cannot be suppressed, and we give the art as offerings toward the continual search for the truth of humankind. We carry a responsibility to respond to the world and to our culture as we see it and know it. It has been the role of the artist to record human cultures and history through the ages. Without art, without the public sharing of art, what would any of the passages of human civilization of the ages be known for? It’s a question for the public intellectual.

Public Intellectual Reflection

Terri Susan Fine



Terri Susan Fine is Professor of Political Science and Associate Director of the Lou Frey Institute. Her research and teaching interests focus on minorities and political participation, broadly defined. Through the Lou Frey Institute, she is active in supporting the implementation of the Sandra Day O'Connor Civics Education Act.

On Friday afternoon, January 9, just three days before the start of Spring 2015 classes, I found myself on the second floor of the Sanford Public History Center. The Center is a unique partnership between UCF and Seminole County Public Schools. It houses the College of Arts and Humanities' Public History Program, which is run by faculty and staff from UCF's History Department.

I was at the Center to attend a meeting of the “Created Equal” program committee, of which I am a member. UCF's Public History Program secured grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History to bring “Created Equal” to Central Florida. The grant supports four public events focusing on important civil rights issues. Each program involves showing a film, a panel comprised of UCF faculty, and engaged discussion from a community audience. The topics cover a breadth of civil rights issues including interracial marriage, abolitionists, slavery, and freedom riders. These topics are brought to present day through faculty commentary and additional video. For example, the February 2014 program included a showing of UCF film professor Lisa Mills's *The Committee*, an Emmy Award-winning documentary about the Florida Legislative Investigation Committee, or the “Johns Committee,” which existed from 1956 to 1965 and was chaired by State Senator Charley Johns, who later became governor. The Committee was charged with ferreting out homosexuals employed by Florida's colleges and universities, among other populations. The program took place on a Friday night in Sanford. The Celery Soup theater was packed, and the program ended long before the panel or the audience was ready. Conversation continued as small groups chatted about the program's themes and moved from the warm indoors into the evening chill.

In reflecting on the “Created Equal” experience, I realize that the UCF Public History Center, its programming, and its community and school involvement represent Ralph Waldo Emerson's “public intellectual.”

In his 1837 “American Scholar” address to the Phi Beta Kappa Society, Emerson, who led the Transcendentalist move-

ment of the mid-19th century, outlined his notion of the public intellectual. For Emerson's "One Man" "the past instructs . . . the future invites." Emerson suggests that books provide scholars access to the past. Scholars then engage with the outside world through action, and it is through this action, Emerson argues, that scholars generate new ideas.

Emerson's approach works for me because it outlines the potential for public intellectuals in contemporary society. As members of the university community, broadly defined, we are all intellectuals. Through Emerson's lens we are intellectuals because we live in the past through the books that we consume. It is the "public" part that challenges us—the challenge to engage with the outside world through new ideas that create and shape the future.

There are both institutional and personal reasons that we are so challenged by the "public" piece of being a public intellectual. Universities value "the book"—those who read, share, and create books. Freshly-minted Ph.D.s who secure positions with research universities expect higher salaries and less contact with students, understood as fewer course preparations and class sections, smaller classes, and grading support for their larger classes, compared with their graduate school colleagues hired by teaching colleges. Motivated to support their families and themselves, persons with the skill and aptitude may choose the better-paying opportunity given the option. So too should institutions support individuals in their efforts.

At the same time, the "intellectual" part is safe. As students we read books assigned by professors whom we admire. We seek out competitive graduate programs so that we can eventually emulate those professors and join the academy as our professional home. If we are lucky, we are awarded tenure and spend most of our lives in those hallowed halls.

Yet the challenging part, Emerson's concept of "public," scares us. "Going public" means subjecting ourselves to questions and criticism from those whose interests and expertise fall outside ours. The phrase is attributed to political scientist Richard Neustadt, who explains that presidents seeking to put pressure on Congress "go public" by hitting the road so that "we the people" will support the president's initiatives and pressure Congress to take appropriate action—in essence, making Congress uncomfortable. In "going public" we may volunteer on nonprofit boards of directors, serve as guest speakers for Orange County Public School's annual teach-in, accept an invitation to teach an adult education class on a Sunday morning at a local church, serve as a panelist for an activist organization's statewide conference, appear on live television sharing our insights about current events, or volunteer to serve a community need.

Why are we so comfortable with the "intellectual" yet fear the "public"? It is because, unlike Emerson, who suggested that connecting the two concepts makes us "One Man," we prefer to live in the past and are rewarded for it. Outside the academy we find ourselves engaging with others who have not read the canon of our discipline that we find so important, and they would rather not.

But taking Emerson's view to heart, it would behoove us to move from the comfortable and safe to the uncomfortable and public. While public service does not earn the same professional rewards, in amount or type, as do teaching and research, it brings us a psychic satisfaction and allows us to bring the past into the present—making us whole.

And so it has been for me to take part in "Created Equal." It is time consuming to go to Sanford on a day that so many colleagues may be preparing for upcoming classes, finishing up home-improvement projects, putting final touches on articles intended for publication, or savoring that last day before classes begin in order to help plan a public program that will be presented in one two-hour span and will not likely be repeated. Yet it is worthwhile because it brings the past into the future through engagement with the outside world.

Academia in Support of the Public Intellectual: Advancing Human Freedom and Knowledge Vanessa Littleton



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Socrates is one of the world's most notable public intellectuals. His notoriety transcends his contributions to academia and is closely linked to his teachings on moral philosophy and his pedagogical approach to illuminating ideas. In the pre-Socratic period, philosophical thinkers focused on the nature of the universe, defining problems and paradoxes. In contrast, Socrates—one of the founders of Western political philosophy—examined the essence of things affecting people and their lives.

Although most would agree Socrates was a public intellectual, there is little consensus on the actual definition of a public

intellectual or who meets the criteria. Defining the term *public intellectual* is not as simple as one might think. If you merely define and combine each word, a public intellectual would be someone who has been trained in a particular discipline and shares their knowledge with general audiences. However, this basic definition is inadequate.

The term *public intellectual*, according to C. Wright Mills in 1958, is a product of the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods but became popular following Richard Posner's 1987 publication of *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe*. One generally accepted definition of a public intellectual is an erudite person who is well known for reaching broad audiences on matters of current affairs. Although specialists in a particular field, they are known outside of their disciplines for contributing to political and cultural discourse. Some would argue public intellectuals must be affiliated with academia. Here, we reject that notion. Some of the world's greatest thinkers were not affiliated with academia, including Socrates, who had only a basic Greek education. For some, the term connotes individuals with overly inflated egos or those who have been trained as specialists who arrogantly assume they can become generalists on a wide range of topics. But in contemporary society, public intellectuals serve a valuable role in advancing human freedom and knowledge.

Throughout history, public intellectuals have played a pivotal role in fueling public discourse and advancing political thought. W. E. B. Dubois, an American sociologist, was well known for his pursuit of social justice and his positions on economic and political issues. Edward Said, a literary theorist, was an outspoken critic of contemporary politics and is credited with having transformed perceptions of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Noam Chomsky, a philosopher and anarcho-syndicalist, was known for public activism and antiwar rhetoric. Cornell West, a philosopher and activist, remains a conscientious voice on issues of race, gender, and class.

Historically, public intellectuals were challenged to affect broad audiences. Over time, however, their ability to reach different audiences has changed. During the premodern era, intellectuals had the ability to control and restrict their audiences. They could posit their claims to closed groups in controlled environments. Socrates himself lectured only to a select few. In the 16th century, with the advent of the printing press, there was a surge in nonacademic public intellectuals, but even they targeted their messages to like-minded groups they sought to influence. In the 20th century, the role of the public intellectual shifted with the introduction of the television, radio, and other print media. Public intellectuals were able to compete on global stages and on domestic and international issues.

In contemporary society, public intellectuals must navigate and master various forms of public communication. They must address societal issues on a vast network of media platforms, including television, radio, blogs, and social media, as well as in person. As a result, intellectuals in academic institutions are uniquely poised to benefit from these varied platforms. As academics, they have access to a steady stream of learners, access to technology, credibility by virtue of their profession, and ideas as products of their minds.

As Emerson suggests, ideas should not be the building blocks to careers, but careers should provide the foundation that allows public intellectuals to pursue their ideas. But disentangling a commitment to public discourse from advancement in academia can be challenging, especially when one's livelihood depends on quantifiable evidence of success in the field. Although academic affiliation provides legitimacy and protection for intellectual freedom, many academics are often isolated in their fields due to esoteric research, technical jargon and theorizing. While important for their disciplines, they do not translate well to the general public.

Academic institutions play a vital role in the development of public intellectuals through legitimacy and support. Public intellectuals who are affiliated with an academic institution are recognized not only in their own achievements but also by the accomplishments of the entire university. Thus, legitimacy is provided through institutional credibility and credibility established by holding true to the institution's mission and values. In essence, academic institutions are responsible for creating platforms where intellectuals can serve as thought leaders on critical societal issues. To that end, academic institutions should consider the value of societal, political, and cultural impact as a part of the evaluation process.

As an anchor institution, the University of Central Florida is heralded as America's Partnership University. The mission statement compels the university to address pressing local, state, national, and international issues in support of the global community and to utilize the university's vast resources and networks to address economic, cultural, intellectual, environmental, and societal issues. To accomplish these broad goals, the university must embrace the cultural, socioeconomic and physical setting of the university and maintain a student-centered focus. First, intellectuals must be directly engaged with the community. Intellectuals must be willing to take risks to be greater forces to drive social innovation. They must be willing to address controversial issues and create discourse around pressing societal matters. The university should support intellectuals not by penalizing them for their discourse but by rewarding them for challenging the status quo. Second, intellectuals must hone their craft so that they are able to inspire their students to become master thinkers, capable

of understanding concepts and applying skills to solve future societal issues.

In his essay “The American Scholar,” Emerson noted that a public intellectual is one who is enriched by the past yet not bound by books. Thus, they are scholars who seek to enlighten and advance society by sharing their knowledge with others. According to Emerson, scholars who fail to share their knowledge outside of academia are cowards and unworthy of being called an intellectual. Emerson believed intellectuals had a personal obligation to bring enlightenment and awareness to the public.

The future of this nation requires that we continue to advance political and cultural thinking on critical issues. As a society, we need public intellectuals to challenge the status quo and disrupt powerful interests that interfere with our democratic way of life. Contemporary intellectuals have the opportunity to engage the public on issues ranging from Middle East policies, health disparities, social injustice, institutionalized racism, income inequality, and more. Recognizing the vast importance of these and other societal issues, academic institutions have a responsibility for ensuring that voices of intellectuals are not stifled amongst the intelligentsia but are heralded as beacons that advance human freedom and knowledge.

Social Media: The New Agora for Public Intellectuals

Rick Brunson



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Social media has cracked open the Areopagus.

The famous first-century Athenian hill where the learned hung out has now been replaced in the 21st century by the Google Hangout. The new era belongs to the intellectual who can tweet complexity in 140 characters. Today’s challenge is crafting a concise, sharply written caption to post with an eye-catching photo for an Instagram generation that fled Facebook because they don’t like to read.

Get the picture?

For people who have earned their living, their reputations and their respect through intense research and exposition in prestigious peer-reviewed journals, the temptation may be to dismiss social media as the churlish wasteland of unwashed ignoramuses. Or ignoranuses. Or both.

But that’s exactly why we as public intellectuals of UCF need to be there—in full force. Social media is the new agora, and we have to overcome our agoraphobia.

One of my intellectual heroes is the late historian and educator Jacques Barzun, whose magnum opus, *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life, 1500 to the Present*, was a brilliant laser-light show of a 93-year-old mind. In a speech at Columbia University not too many years before he died, Barzun opened with a forceful, succinct statement that would have made an outstanding tweet: “The purpose of education is to stamp out ignorance.”

Take a tour of your Facebook News Feed lately? Ignorance abounds, even among people who should know better. Foolish assertions are posited as facts. Facts are dismissed as opinions. Sure, you could simply unfriend all the knuckleheads—and sometimes that’s the only recourse to preserve your sanity.

But I’d like to offer an alternative view: Look at the whole whirring, littered superhighway of social media as a challenge and opportunity. Instead of taking the exit ramp, accelerate to speed and merge with traffic. Engage. Argue. Persuade. Debunk. Poke. Prod. Inspire. Use all of the forces of your intellect, but manage them to the medium where speed and concision are the coin of the realm. A good place to start is to pick up a copy of Roy Peter Clark’s excellent little book *How to Write Short: Word Craft for Fast Times* (Little, Brown and Company, 2013).

Clark lays out an excellent case: “We’re high on technology, but adrift in a jet stream of information. All the more reason to write short—and well. I remain open to the idea that some words may be worth a thousand pictures. Consider these historical documents: The Hippocratic Oath, The Twenty-Third Psalm, The Lord’s Prayer, Shakespeare’s Sonnet 18, The Preamble to the Constitution, The Gettysburg Address, the last paragraph of Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. I once exchanged messages with NPR’s Scott Simon, who shared this important idea, which he learned from his stepfather: If you add up the words in these documents, the sum will be fewer than a thousand, 996 by my count. Show me any number of pictures as powerful as those seven documents.”

Social media is more than mobocracy on wifi. It’s where *people* are. Behind all those selfies, status updates, and cat videos are people who are worth engaging. Your followers, friends,

and connections represent a giant—yet more intimate—lecture hall that gives you the opportunity to expand your influence beyond your classroom, office, and campus, and touch lives in ways you can only imagine.

Click “Like” if you agree.

The Public Intellectual vs. the Complicity of the University

Barry Mauer



Barry Mauer teaches in the Texts and Technology Ph.D. Program and is Associate Professor in the English Department, where he has served since 1999. His published work focuses on developing new research practices in the arts and humanities.

Public intellectuals are indispensable to a healthy and thriving society, and intellectuals employed by public universities have a greater responsibility to the public. To be a public intellectual is to assume a responsibility to the truth. As Noam Chomsky, public intellectual for over a half-century, stated, “It is the responsibility of intellectuals to speak the truth and to expose lies.” Unfortunately, many disciplines serve the powerful few at the expense of the many, distorting and corrupting the integrity of intellectual work in the process. Telling the truth, and exposing the lies, about our disciplines is the way to assume this responsibility.

Take for example the Chicago school of economics and its Shock Doctrine of tax cuts for the rich, privatization, deregulation, environmental destruction, reckless speculation, state-insured moral hazards, outsourcing, slashing of essential services, austerity, union busting, and violence, which Naomi Klein describes so well in her book of that title. The Chicago school “free-market” economists have for decades dominated economics departments, think tanks, and government offices, usurping the prominence once held by Keynesian economists. But to what ends? The massive plunder of wealth around the world, economic collapse at home, and outright fraud in academic research. As Paul Krugman has pointed out repeatedly, no amount of evidence convinces Chicago school economists that their ideas, when enacted, are catastrophic for most countries and for most people. But as long as the super wealthy benefit from their work, economists continue to produce more of the same.

Take another example: communications. Since the deregulation of the telecom industry, the rise of cable, and the end of the Fairness Doctrine, we have seen right-wing talk radio and Fox “News” pull the rest of the media into either irrelevance or right-wing delusion over the past three decades. What is the result? We have a news industry that fails in its core mission as fourth-estate watchdog and functions almost entirely as propaganda for the rich and powerful. As Stephen Colbert put it at a 2006 White House Correspondents’ Dinner:

Let’s review the rules. Here’s how it works: the president makes decisions. He’s the Decider. The press secretary announces those decisions, and you people of the press type those decisions down. Make, announce, type. Just put them through a spell check and go home.

In service to power, the mass media misleads the public on nearly every major story. We have seen George W. Bush steal a presidential election and get away with it, fail to protect the country against al Qaeda’s 9/11 attacks yet become a hero, and launch an illegal and disastrous war against Iraq based on outright fabrications and win a second term in office. Whenever the Republican Party perpetrates another outrage (which is daily), the media either ignore or justify it, or draw a false equivalence and argue that both sides do it. Meanwhile, most sectors of the media continue to justify torture, extrajudicial killings, police violence, Wall Street predation, and spying against every American, with virtually no calls for accountability.

Not only are the mainstream news media complicit in nearly every major crime committed by the rich and powerful against the public, but they have also failed at even the most basic task of informing Americans about reality. Huge numbers of Americans are grossly misinformed about climate change, health care, evolution, and economic inequality. Delusional beliefs abound in the media and are treated as though they are serious. For example: Obama is not a U.S. citizen but is a socialist and a Muslim; climate change is a hoax; creationism is science; taxing the rich hurts the economy; Obamacare = death panels; liberals are at war with Christmas; ISIS is using Mexican migrants to smuggle Ebola into the U.S.; America was founded as a Christian nation; poor people caused the 2008 financial collapse; black people commit widespread voting fraud (but racism is dead); torture works (but we don’t torture); and Sarah Palin is a serious political figure. By any measure, the U.S. news media are a dismal failure. But the media’s failure is actually a public relations triumph, right? If the goal of public relations is to manufacture consent for even the most destructive policies, then undoubtedly we can count the media’s failure as a success for public relations. What has the communications discipline done about the appalling state of its field? Precious little. For this discipline, it is business

as usual. They teach people to get jobs within a corrupted industry; rarely do they ask what has happened to journalism in this country.

One more? Medicine. Medical schools adopted business models over public service and academic models, leading to knowledge manipulation and censorship rather than to knowledge integrity. Reviews of published medical research over the past 20 years have revealed a pattern of manipulation by drug companies. For instance, in 98 percent of industry-funded published reviews, new drugs were declared equal to or better than comparison drugs (compare with the 76 percent approval ratings for new drugs from independently funded research). External reviews of trial data in favorable industry-funded research showed that many of these conclusions were unwarranted. Additionally, the vast majority of industry-funded research published in journals such as the *New England Journal of Medicine* did not reveal the authors' connection to corporations (Rampton and Stauber, 2001, 212-9). Marcia Angell, in "Drug Companies & Doctors: A Story of Corruption" (New York Review of Books, January 15, 2009), writes, "It is simply no longer possible to believe much of the clinical research that is published, or to rely on the judgment of trusted physicians or authoritative medical guidelines. I take no pleasure in this conclusion, which I reached slowly and reluctantly over my two decades as an editor of *The New England Journal of Medicine*." Corporate money has distorted and corrupted research in the medical field. The results? Dead and injured patients, drug recalls, and a broken health care system.

The U.S. medical industry makes money from treatment, not from prevention. And it focuses more on individuals rather than on the society as a whole. The result is the most expensive, least effective health-care system in the industrialized world. Millions of people still have no access to health services except through emergency rooms. The U.S. population has among the worst health measures of industrialized countries in terms of infant mortality, asthma, and deaths from firearms. Meanwhile, the agricultural industry, backed by USDA policies, creates unhealthy and addictive "food" that kills people through diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. The medical field says little about it or about the air pollution from fossil fuels that kills thousands of people a year, mostly children. With few exceptions, the medical field says hardly anything at all about the environmental conditions and policy decisions that have compromised Americans' health. Meanwhile, the drug industry, abetted by doctors, has created an epidemic of prescription drug addiction that ranks with addiction to illegal drugs as a major public health crisis. It is little surprise that medical schools accept the status quo of a broken system that enriches doctors at the expense of public health.

Thankfully, things are not all horrible in academia. In psychology, a field that once promoted electroshock therapy and lobotomies for rebellious teenagers, girls who didn't wear cosmetics, and other nonconformists, members of the discipline now cry out against bogus "conversion therapies" that abuse queer people and against the involvement of psychologists in torture. My own discipline, the study of English literature, created in the late 19th century to justify and maintain British imperialism, has turned against racism and other forms of domination by adopting postcolonial, multicultural, feminist, and Marxist perspectives.

Most universities and disciplines are moving in the wrong direction, however, and university administrators are largely to blame. They are complicit in numerous wrongs, such as the dismantling of the middle class (note the poverty wages they pay adjuncts and the monumental increase in student debt over the past decade), rampant sexism in faculty promotion, the marginalizing of the humanities and the near-abandonment of universities' civic functions, the exploitation of student athletes, the investments of university endowments in oil and coal companies, and the sale of intellectual property to corporate and military interests. Indeed, the list of administrators' shameful acts could extend for pages. Meanwhile, the anti-intellectualism gripping the country has gotten worse as administrators focus on their school ranking and bottom lines at the expense of civic duties.

We have seen a few public intellectuals come discuss the degraded states of their disciplines, including economists Elizabeth Warren and Paul Krugman, communications professor Robert McChesney, and, in medicine, Marcia Angell. We have also seen a few, like Chomsky, discuss the impoverished state of academia as a whole. So, where are the other public intellectuals? Why isn't there a massive outcry among faculty against the epidemic of corruption? Who will call for integrity and accountability? Who will risk the consequences to stand against complicity? If faculty spoke with one voice, we could change the world for the better.



The Joys and Woes of the Public Intellectual

Luis Martinez Fernandez



Luis Martinez-Fernandez is Professor of History and author of *Revolutionary Cuba: A History*. He serves on the Board of Trustees of the College Board and the Board of Directors of the Historical Society of Central Florida.

One of the perverse mottos of Orwell's *1984* goes, "Ignorance is strength." Strength, in that case, is not for common people and society in general but for those individuals, organizations, and institutions that seek to limit knowledge and the ability of people to think critically and make informed, independent decisions. In a pre-Orwellian world, knowledge is, of course, strength; and it also means power, even for those who feel powerless. Knowledge is power, because at the very least, they know that you know.

For centuries, universities have been centers for the creation, preservation, and diffusion of knowledge. Throughout the Western world, they remain among the last bastions of intellectual discovery, free thinking, and open discussion. But alas, the barbarians are at the gates and are bent on hijacking the venerable missions of the university by subjecting it to the whims of the not-quite-invisible hand and the electoral rhythms of corrupted democracies. As old-fashioned as this may sound, the mission of the university is to serve the common good through the creation and diffusion of knowledge, not the limitation of knowledge to gross utilitarianism and the reduction of its mission to training cadres of specialized workers for particular economic activities.

Precisely because of the insidious agendas of such economic and political forces, modern universities need to open their own gates, tear down their walls, and counterattack the spread of ignorance by reaching the wider public. Scholars and intellectuals—whose toil, by the way, is supported by taxpayers and the public—must get down from the proverbial ivory tower.

Enough philosophizing! How do we carry out those responsibilities? The opportunities are endless. In my field, History, scholars can reach the public in numerous ways. Among the most obvious ones, writing not just for a tiny specialized readership but also for the broader educated public. Even the most complex of ideas and explanations can be articulated in jargon-free, readable language through trade publications, textbooks, magazine articles, opinion columns, and the like. In my own career, I have written several scholarly books whose runs have not gone beyond a few hundred copies as well as more popu-

lar books and encyclopedias with much larger circulation. The most far-reaching of my writings have been opinion columns, which have appeared in newspapers such as the *Miami Herald*, *Orlando Sentinel*, and *Christian Science Monitor*. While not scholarly per se, such pieces are informed by my scholarly perspective and backed by decades of research and study. A word of caution on op-ed writing: authors receive much feedback; it is mostly positive but every now and then one gets a piece of hate mail. An Argentinian blogger disliked a critical piece I wrote on Raúl Castro's reforms and demanded that I be fired from UCF—an odd act of censorship that one would not expect from a journalist.

Scholarly perspectives and voices also reach the public through a variety of other media. Over the years, my ideas and interpretations have reached local, national, and international media markets through radio, TV, and documentaries on a wide variety of subjects, ranging from electoral politics in Puerto Rico to cultural practices such as the *quinceañero* (Latin sweet 16), and from 19th-century burial practices to the background, implementation, and consequences of the recent shift in the Cuba policy of the United States. At election time, my phone does not stop ringing given the worldwide interest—yes, worldwide—in Latino voting patterns in Central Florida. Over the years, I have been interviewed on that particular subject by media as diverse as local NPR stations, BBC radio, Agence France-Presse, and national PBS shows, among others. I have also enjoyed participating as an expert and consultant in numerous documentaries, among them *Lejos de La Isla* (on the Cuban exile experience), *Válvula de Escape* (on the Puerto Rican Diaspora) and a forthcoming documentary on the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base.

Public speaking is yet another way in which scholars reach a broader audience. Historians are expected to disseminate their research by presenting papers at professional conferences such as those of the American Historical Association, Latin American Studies Association, and the Conference on Latin American History. We also receive invitations to speak at college campuses and other scholarly venues. I have given my fair share of such presentations, but I have derived much pleasure and satisfaction by speaking to other audiences. These are just a few instances from the last couple of years: "The Longest Ninety Miles: Cuban Migration to South Florida since 1959" at the Orange County Regional History Center; "Why Study the Past?: A Historian Reflects" during the College Board's Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration; and "The Invention and Mapping of the New World" for the Ormond Beach Historical Society. These presentations, while based on my professional research and publications, were repackaged for lay audiences, which, by the way, can be far more appreciative than colleagues in my field.

Public intellectuals can—actually, should—extend the reach of their teaching far beyond their college walls. As a classroom teacher, one is limited to reaching a few thousand students during one’s career. I have been fortunate, however, to reach tens of thousands of other students through my public engagement in education at the local, national, and international levels, mostly through my active participation in the College Board. I had the opportunity to help shape the course of high school history education by being a member of the National College Board committees that established the frameworks for the redesigned Advanced Placement U.S. History course and the new AP Capstone course. By the way, another “journalist” called for my firing unless I disavowed my support for the new AP course. Indeed, as Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. has noted, “Being a historian has almost become a dangerous occupation.” Thank goodness for tenure! The more Orwellian our world becomes, the more vital the protection of academic freedom also becomes.

But freedoms come with responsibilities, and these include the obligation to serve the common good, to disseminate the fruit of our research to wider audiences, to fight against ignorance, and to teach beyond our assigned classrooms. There is great pleasure in knowing that someone changed his view on the importance of art education after reading one of my editorials, that a viewer was inspired by a comment I made during a PBS program, or that a student found my published lesson plan helpful and illuminating. The publicly engaged historian derives enormous satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment, and at the same time she or he also benefits from the fresh air beyond the ivory tower and from learning from non-scholars.

Knowledge is strength; shared knowledge is even greater strength.

Public Intellectual as Public Citizen

M. C. Santana



M. C. Santana is a former photojournalist and current media expert on issues of body image, gender identity, and women’s history. She is the Director of the Women’s Studies program in the College of Arts and Humanities.

Thinking and writing are necessary for the intellectual health of a society. A public message takes with it a certain responsibility of engagement that merely writing does not have. As a communication expert, I understand the power of

a mass message and how both the receiver and sender are interconnected by it. Words don’t just live separated from their authors. Part of my enthusiasm for current times is the ability to learn about so many more people than in the past—our easy access to information promotes an exchange of ideas like never before. A public intellectual should open a discussion relevant to their society and time. Each voice is unique; thus, having a different age, sexuality, race, social class, and ability allows us as readers an intimate insight into someone else’s thoughts.

For me, public intellectuals should engage in public life, invigorating their comments with facts and experiences and communicating with all types of stakeholders. It’s through this constant communication and living that ideas are able to flow. This commitment to society comes in the form of expressing your ideas in a fashion accessible to nonacademic readers. To me, this is the essence of being a public intellectual—the access to ideas and conversations limited before by privilege or status (compare Noam Chomsky’s idea of the public intellectual as supporter of power systems). Needless to say, public intellectuals of my time like Susan Sontag and Umberto Eco were not accessible to the average citizen. I was able to enjoy them only after my professors inspired me to seek their message and their unique perspectives. This lack of connection between receiver and message is a concern. The intellectual integrity of a message is not limited to writing style but to ideas. Ideas are the center of the discussion, and the intention of the public intellectual is to share a point of view. Teaching allows me to become a better student, to open my mind to other ways of seeing things and understanding different positions. I invite my students to read opposing views to better understand the issues that we debate. As activists, they learn quickly that their point of view is not universal and that many others have opinions, too. Learning is not always a comfortable thing.

You might ask, what is the job of the public intellectual? I see their job as a clear proposition—give access to great minds in a way that all can benefit and allow many voices to represent different points of view. Who is the most engaging public intellectual? In the past, when we only read newspapers and books, intellectuals spoke from a pedestal of understanding. Their words were valued as concrete learning lessons and authorities. Today, I understand the best public intellectual to be the best public citizen—to carry the heartbeat of a generation and of a culture. Their voices should come in all languages and nationalities, and we should read their translations carried by any platform and shape. The fact that intellectuals are citizens of a culture and time should not come as a surprise nor should it be a hidden treasure; instead, it should be celebrated. No impostors allowed here. Public intellectuals engaging life and discussing current ideas are to me the most real and con-

structive of all. Thoughts are produced by minds that feel and live. As readers, we might not always agree with the message, but opening our minds to other possibilities is worth the effort. That is the real communication process.

The Role of a Forensic Anthropologist as a Public Intellectual in the Central Florida Community

John J. Schultz



John Schultz is Associate Professor of Anthropology with a forensic anthropology specialization. His research focuses on applied topics in forensic anthropology and archaeology, and his primary partnership in the central Florida community is with the District Nine Medical Examiner to provide skeletal analyses.

As a university professor, I enjoy various roles including teaching graduate and undergraduate classes, mentoring undergraduate and graduate students, advising students, conducting applied research, and undertaking administrative responsibilities. In addition, the combination of my life as a UCF professor and my partnerships in the Central Florida community provide me with important work balance as a public intellectual. Through my own experiences, my interpretation of a public intellectual in higher education includes engaging the community through applied research, service, and training in many disciplines. This can include work with various government agencies, nonprofit agencies, and community organizations, and participation in local, regional, national, and global communities. Public intellectuals utilize their specific expertise to benefit society by undertaking applied research that is focused on solving practical problems; they can provide service consultations to agencies where they lend their expertise occasionally; and they often provide valuable and relevant practical training to personnel at these agencies.

As a biological anthropologist who specializes in forensic anthropology, I can also be considered a public intellectual because of my service in the Central Florida community. Forensic anthropologists specialize in the analysis and recovery of human skeletons for medicolegal applications and commonly work with medical examiners, coroners, law enforcement personnel, crime scene investigators, and attorneys. For example, we can utilize our archaeological field experience in forensic contexts by working with law enforcement to locate and recover clandestine graves and scattered human skeletons. We can then work with medical examiners and coroners by

analyzing skeletons for identification purposes and identifying evidence of trauma that may have occurred at, or near, the time of death. At times, this forensic work can also result in providing court testimony. My work as a forensic anthropologist primarily includes consulting for the District Nine Medical Examiner's Office (Orange and Osceola Counties) for their skeletal cases. Also, I occasionally receive requests to provide real-world forensic training to various practitioners such as homicide detectives, crime scene investigators, and search and rescue personnel in the Central Florida area. Finally, my research has also included an applied focus by working with a local law enforcement agency on a number of projects designed to improve search guidelines for locating buried weapons and submerged bodies.

I feel that there are numerous benefits for academics who engage the community as public intellectuals. First, our work can have a positive impact on society. Second, agencies may be able to provide resources for research that we do not have access to otherwise. In addition, community partnerships can be mutually beneficial by providing employment opportunities for our students. Finally, in the classroom we can discuss our applied work to supplement the course material with real-world examples that apply concepts learned in class.

Working at a metropolitan university such as UCF provides many opportunities for faculty to partner with agencies in the local community and have a positive impact. I do not feel that all university faculty are obligated to engage the local community as public intellectuals, but they do have an obligation to give back somehow. For some faculty this means advancing their discipline with cutting-edge research. For others, sharing their expertise with a local agency so the agency can move forward is their method of meeting this obligation. Both roles are important and necessary in order to move forward as a society. Overall, I am fortunate that I can be considered a public intellectual at UCF as a result of my continued forensic service and applied research in the Central Florida community.

Academics as Public Intellectuals

Naim Kapucu



Naim Kapucu is Professor of Public Policy and Administration and Director of Master of Public Administration in the School of Public Administration at UCF. His primary research interests are emergency and crisis management, decision making in complex environments, collaborative governance, and social inquiry and public policy. He teaches network governance, public and nonprofit management, emergency and crisis management, research methods, and analytic techniques for public administration courses. He can be reached at kapucu@ucf.edu.

Public intellectuals deal with public and community affairs and produce public effects. When an academic decides to write and speak to a broader audience than his or her scholarly community and professional colleagues, he or she becomes a public intellectual or engaged intellectual. Intellectuals, according to John Dewey, are actual public figures. The public intellectual, as a part of society, should address his or her concerns to as wide a public as possible. One of the main goals of an engaged intellectual is to create usable knowledge in solving societal problems. This very important element of action-oriented academic public intellectuals was addressed in one of my recent publications titled “Community-Based Research in Generating Usable Knowledge for Public Policy and Administration,” published in *Administration & Society* in December 2014.

The *New York Times* included an editorial piece on February 16, 2014, by Nicholas Kristof, titled, “Professors, We Need You!” Here Kristof claimed not enough faculty members are connecting with the public, the media, practitioners, and policy makers. Thus, they do not convey the importance of their work beyond similar-minded academic circles. Kristof harshly criticized academics by stating “there are fewer public intellectuals on American university campuses today than a generation ago.” U.S. academics are also less engaged with the public as a product of a “culture of exclusivity,” compared with universities in Europe and elsewhere. On one hand, we observed rapid growth of the media through recent highly visible forums for discussion and dialogue, and, on the other hand, academic specialization has yielded a significant number of narrowly trained scholars. How these two trends intersect and whether academics commenting on topics outside their expertise are actually well suited to public discourse are also concerns.

Faculty communicate with peers in their disciplines by publishing in academic journals and presenting at conferences.

With interdisciplinary research, faculty can communicate and share ideas with colleagues in other disciplines. They engage with the general public, professional practitioners, and policy makers. They address contemporary social, civic, economic, and moral challenges. Academics as public intellectuals can make their research much more accessible and usable for the needs of their communities. Nicholas Behm, Sherry Rankins-Robertson, and Duane Roen assume professors can play a significant role “as agents of democracy and perform service that promotes the public good.” (See details of the case for academics as public intellectuals at http://www.aaup.org/article/case-academics-public-intellectuals#.VM1_v2R4rzH.)

Faculty at academic institutions are evaluated on their performance of research (scholarship and creative activities), teaching, and service, including professional and community service. Academic institutions in the U.S. feature a more formalized orientation in graduate programs and an academic incentive system where scholarly publication is favored, and public discourse is relatively undervalued. The service portion of performance evaluation has lower importance and accounts for only 5 to 10 percent of the overall annual evaluation.

I argue from Habermas’ perspective, as addressed in his book titled *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1968), that our focus on research and scholarship does not prevent scholars from being involved in the conduct of social life. Human interests are intricately intertwined with the acquisition of knowledge and scholarship. The sciences can maintain objectivity and rigor in scholarship while also encompassing reflexivity. Pure knowledge or scholarship does not need to be devoid of human interests, community issues, motivations, or emotions. This might vary from discipline to discipline.

Professional fields, such as public policy, public affairs, and administration, draw on a diverse collection of philosophical and social science theories to frame and organize their scholarship and practice. Scholars in these application-oriented disciplines must be conversant in the theoretical discourses forming the foundation for research, practice, and action. Several fundamental questions can be addressed in understanding the public policy and administration scholars and the community at large: What constitutes valid knowledge? On what terms can theory and knowledge be used to inform practice and action? What is the proper relationship between researcher, practitioner, community, and subject? Can we use our knowledge of the effects of social, political, economic, and psychological factors on science to improve the practice of research in public policy? I assume the development of knowledge occurs within paradigmatic frameworks and the social and political conditions surrounding the arena within which knowledge is generated. That is, intellectual and academic labor is dynamically and reflexively engaged in strug-

gles with ideas, positions, and actors both within and outside the academic field.

Faculty members in academic institutions, which value partnerships and community engagement in the form of “scholarship of engagement,” can find ways to engage with public intellectuals. Here are some recommendations: Social media (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, or blogging) and online teaching opportunities, such as webinars, can be very effective tools in creating connections with other academics and the public at large. UCF communications (through colleges’ contact people) can maintain a list of experts on certain topics. Faculty can volunteer to be part of the list and can also access journalists using their contacts, or social media, to express their opinions on current issues. For instance, I have been contacted several times to discuss disasters and the role of government in response to recovery. Professional associations can also provide a platform to connect with the public.

Several funding agencies and foundations, such as the National Science Foundation, require a statement of broader impact in addition to intellectual merit of grant proposals. I interpret the broader impact as creating usable knowledge for the betterment of society. With this expectation, any faculty member conducting research can easily connect a major research project to social problems or policy issues. Using service-learning and engaging professional practitioners in teaching are other ways to connect with the community. Of course, there is always the option of service for faculty to connect with public and civil society organizations.

Academics as public intellectuals can utilize their service, teaching, research, and creative activities for the benefits of academic institutions and communities beyond the campus. The knowledge created with students, professional practitioners, and engaged citizens can provide policy and political implications beyond the university community. The scholarly activities of public intellectuals, with the credibility of academic institutions, can have legitimacy and visible impact. Public intellectuals engaging in public life can build trust via long-lasting relationships with the community. They can also serve the community by helping to address its needs. Engaged intellectuals can educate the public and teach them how to become better citizens. This conscious engagement helps build communities of practice around pressing social issues and problems.

Public Intellectuals

Lisa Barkley



Lisa Barkley is Assistant Dean for Diversity and Inclusion at the UCF College of Medicine. She is Assistant Professor of Family Medicine and is board certified in family, adolescent, and sports medicine.

I’m intrigued by the notion of a public intellectual in the 21st century and that I have been asked to comment on the topic as one. There are many definitions of an intellectual. Dictionaries provide several, including “a person who uses or works with his intellect, a person professionally engaged in mental labor and a person who values or pursues intellectual interests.” As I reflect on my definition, it seems that contemporary intellectuals are different from those who lived in the past. Knowledge is so readily available that access to professional-level expertise in an area goes beyond the realm of those involved in academia, with traditional degrees. Also, the ability to solve the global problems of the 21st century involves the blurring of traditional singular disciplines. With the advent of social media, someone with the ability to bring knowledge to the mass population can be from any walk of life and educational level. It seems that, in this century, those of us with professional degrees have more of an obligation to share our expertise broadly and to consider our market the global society. As UCF faculty members, we are all public intellectuals and have considerable transformative power.

Despite the newly evolving access to information, those of us with traditional educational backgrounds are in a position of leadership by the nature of our professional status. As a physician-scientist, I have seen that level of authority played out in my life as soon as I received my M.D. degree. When a lay person in a nonprofessional setting finds out I am a physician, the expectations often change and I am no longer considered just part of the crowd, whether I like it or not. I’m expected to know more, or my opinion or actions mean more, even when I just want to do what everyone else is doing. Yet, with great gifts come great responsibility, and I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to be a physician. Public intellectuals must embrace the opportunity to use our professional status to impact those affected by our content-area knowledge.

Professionally, I have really liked that role. I have been in a position on many occasions to be the only health professional in a setting and have developed the ability to translate medical knowledge to a variety of situations. This has given me a very inclusive view of medicine in that health involves everything and applies to all topics. This is especially true in

the policy arena as political decisions that affect the health of populations are often made without significant input from health professionals. I have been grateful to be at the table for some policy decisions at the local, state, national, and international levels as this gives me the opportunity to advocate for those who would otherwise not have a voice. I take the advocacy role very seriously as a physician. One of my specialties in adolescent medicine has made that clear for me. I am passionate about adolescent health, and, early in my career, I spent most of my time providing clinical services to teens. After several years in that role, I realized that I could impact only a limited number of teens in my medical practice, but, if I could represent them on an educational, administrative, or policy level, I could have a broader impact on the health of the entire population. My roles in academic administration are in alignment with my youth-focused mission and allow me to integrate evidenced-based practices of positive youth development into educational policy and practice. Thus, my professional content knowledge has been applied to my professional duties and allows for a unique influence on my intellectual interests.

My role as a dean for diversity and inclusion exemplifies my role as a public intellectual in another way. Diversity and inclusion are concepts that are underpinned by social justice, mean different things to different people, and can be uncomfortable. Thus, ensuring that diversity and inclusion are infused throughout our College of Medicine involves influencing all aspects of the organization. It has been a transformative learning process for me to influence the culture of our organization with initiatives, policies, and practices that have been created in a collaborative and inclusive fashion. In this role, when others feel they can express differing viewpoints, open a dialogue, and feel respected, I feel the most successful. Being a public intellectual is not primarily about by opinion, but about how I can use my intellectual knowledge to support an environment where all opinions are valued and welcome.

As UCF faculty members, we all have stories such as mine about how our intellectual pursuits have influenced others. I think the opportunity lies in embracing the public intellectual role to use that transformative power outside the classroom. It is at times uncomfortable to be in nonacademic settings, but the potential benefits are many. I have often felt that I have to be like gum on a person's shoe to keep advocating for my point of view even when it is not heard. But perseverance can lead to influence, and that is how UCF public intellectuals can engage the local, national, and global communities. As St. Francis of Assisi says, "First do what is necessary, then do what is possible, and soon you will be doing the impossible." How far can your intellectual passions spread?

Diversifying the Public Intellectual

Gabriela Ríos



Gabriela Raquel Ríos is Assistant Professor in the Writing and Rhetoric Department. She is a McNair Scholar, descends from Indigenous migrant workers, and her research and teaching focus on Chican@/Indigenous rhetorics. She has been an instructor for the Ford Foundation's Difficult Dialogues initiative at Texas A&M University, College Station, and she is actively involved in the local farm worker and immigrant communities of Florida.

"This is my testimony. I didn't learn it from a book, and I didn't learn it alone. I'd like to stress that it's not only my life, it's also the testimony of my people . . . what has happened to me has happened to many other people too: My story is the story of all poor Guatemalans. My personal experience is the reality of a whole people."

—Rigoberta Menchu

"There is not a university in this country that is not built on what was once native land."

—Janice Gould

When I was a little girl, my father used to drive my siblings and me up to the Texas A&M University-Kingsville (TAMUK) campus. Kingsville is a small town located near the Gulf of Mexico. According to the 2010 census, 27.7 percent of folks in Kingsville live below the poverty line. I have heard it referred to as "one big ghetto with just a few ranchers holding it together." This is my hometown.

I remember my father driving past all the caliche roads that made up the driveways in my neighborhood, past three welfare housing projects, two of which were located across the street from the back of the TAMUK campus, right before the turn leading to University Boulevard, where the streets are paved and the area is seemingly always under construction. Social progress and upward mobility, I was always told, stems from universities like these. For this reason, my father would drive us all the way into the university, showing us the various buildings, encouraging us one day to graduate from this university that he only briefly attended.

Eventually, I did graduate from that university, first with a bachelor's degree and eventually with a master's degree. I then went on to College Station to earn my Ph.D. I am the first (and, so far, the only) person in my immediate family to graduate from TAMUK or any university. To continue on and earn my Ph.D. has meant more for my family—particularly for my father—than you can imagine.

I opened this essay with two well-known quotes from two Indigenous women whom I consider public intellectuals, and who have shaped much of my own understanding of what it means to be a public intellectual. But my father has also played a large role in how I have come to conceptualize and problematize what it means to be a public intellectual.

As a scholar of rhetoric and composition, these two terms constitute the core of what I research. Scholars of rhetoric and composition are generally concerned with the “public” and with how folks use language and other aspects of communication to effect change or make meaning. In my experience, only a privileged group of folks ever have access to “public” spheres, but even when they do not have access to public spaces, these folks effect change in ways that alter public policy or public opinion or social reality. In my mind, public intellectuals are folks who work to make public change. But, they are also folks who work to unsettle the structures that enable inequality and injustice. As someone who is now seen as a kind of public intellectual, given the nature of my position and my research interests, I grapple with the responsibility of challenging the structures that privilege my agency, my voice, and my position as the ultimate authority on matters of public intellect.

As universities have increased attention to public works, and with the rise of methodologies like community-based participatory action research (CPAR), researchers are taking up the challenge to respect other community workers as public intellectuals with whom we can collaborate to make research have a more public effect. In my own work in this area, I have found that this creates a challenge: Rather than assuming our disciplinary standards constitute our commitment to “public” communities, we might consider how our commitment to these communities challenges our disciplinary norms.

In my case, this challenge is twofold: I cannot assume that communities are ideologically aligned with my goals as researcher of rhetoric and composition, and I cannot assume that they will necessarily benefit from projects that benefit my students and me. In my discipline we can often assume literacy to have only a liberatory potential when we do community-based work, and we also often assume that the nature of our academic work is desirable and valuable to communities. But, in my experience, farm worker *labor* organizers often critique literacy campaigns because these campaigns are ideologically opposed to their identities as workers. In fact, Gerardo Reyes, of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), once told me very plainly, “Literacy does not change reality.”

He went on to say that literacy “is the last thing on the list” of important needs for farm workers. What I was able to take away from our conversation is that ideologies of literacy often

work against farm worker labor when we believe the labor is not valuable because it is “illiterate” or “unskilled” labor. What he desired from me was access to resources and students. Of course, not all of the folks I work with share Gerardo’s desires—some folks want literacy training. They all do tend to share his ideological stance on literacy, however.

Gerardo’s comments are certainly valuable to me as a *researcher*, but that value is mostly one-sided. Ultimately, I think public (university) intellectuals at UCF have to balance diverse needs that may be, and often are, at odds with the needs of the communities we desire to work with. However, if we come into communities, we might do well to listen to those moments when conflict manifests rather than trying to resist or work around them. For my own personal politic, doing so makes all the difference for unsettling the structures that enable my privilege as part of a larger collective of academics. But, aside from that, they also offer moments of productive tension that enable us to truly respect community members as public intellectuals we can collaborate with.

Removing the Middle Man: Academics as Public Intellectuals

Hakan Özoğlu



Hakan Özoğlu is Professor of History and Director of Middle Eastern Studies. His research interests include the power struggle in the modern Turkish Republic and U.S. involvement in the Middle East through Turkey after World War I. His interviews and essays have appeared in many international media outlets including the *New York Times*, *Orlando Sentinel*, *Chicago Tribune*, and WTTW PBS Chicago.

Faculty members in higher education routinely communicate their expertise and ideas with other colleagues in the form of published articles, books, and conference papers. Their research generally trickles down to the general public as references in the media, be it a newspaper article, an interview or a blog. In other words, there is, more often than not, a “middle man” who sells the ideas or research of an academic to the public with a spin, if not outright manipulation. This is particularly true if the research has political connotations. How important is it to remove the “middle man” and share one’s own expertise directly with the public?

I believe that an academic should do all he or she can to reach the public as directly as possible by means of public lectures, interviews, op-ed pieces in the popular press, and so on. Oth-

erwise, layers of interpretations of an academic work by third parties, intentionally or not, may distort the original message. The academic should not shy away from assuming the role of a public intellectual in order to inform the public directly. Such a way of disseminating knowledge is significant for the good of the entire society, as policy makers are forced to respond to the public demand. The production of knowledge should directly benefit everybody, not just an exclusive group of intellectuals. Clearly, I belong to the camp of “art is for the public’s sake.”

Accomplishing this, however, is more complicated than it appears. There are many obstacles that prevent an academic from assuming the role of a public intellectual. The first one is the most obvious: the public interest. Many academics focus on a very advanced level of research that may not interest the public in its original form. Nevertheless, creative ways can be found to interpret this knowledge for the public. Academics sometimes fail to translate their research into language that is accessible to audiences outside their discipline. Unless this obstacle is bridged, the intended effect will never be realized. For some academics, relating very focused research to a large audience can be as challenging as learning a new language. However, this language must be learned in order for the knowledge to flow uninterrupted to the general public.

The other obstacle is the general assumption that an academic study will be unintelligible, mostly irrelevant, and far removed from the necessities of daily life. This way of thinking is most apparent in the common semi-insult: “It is all academic.” Thanks to anti-intellectualism rampant in some segments of society, the image of academics in the public platform also suffers.

Another challenge is the assumed “scarlet letter” that a public intellectual has to endure within his or her own group of scholars. Some scholars give suspicious vibes to their colleagues who appear in the popular press. The concern is a valid one: Tabloid scholarship often has no content but popular appeal. However, phony scholarship should not be confused with plainly explained solid research. Scholars should be able to explain complicated ideas with simple and relevant language.

Let me conclude by raising a question to which I do not have an answer. Should the academic take an “overt” political position and appear as a political activist? Political activism surely feeds the appetite of rival positions and opens the scholar to direct political attacks. The problem is that the public intellectual may have to divert his or her effort from informing the public to responding to political attacks. Therefore, in some cases, allowing and encouraging the public to draw its own conclusions is a more effective way of appearing above political rivalry. It also enables the academic to avoid being called

“a party” to a political position. This gives more strength and reliability to the research. However, a scholar should not be blamed for being a political activist if political leadership is lacking. I believe that a good public intellectual is one who can find a balance between being a political activist and being simply an information provider. I believe that removing the “middle man” for the public consumption of knowledge is beneficial for all parties involved, except for the manipulators.

Nicholas Behm, Sherry Rankins-Robertson, and Duane Roen. “The Case for Academics as Public Intellectuals” in <http://www.aaup.org/article/case-academics-public-intellectuals>, accessed on January 3, 2015.

Journey of Public Intellectuals: My View

Lisa Dieker



Lisa Dieker is Pegasus Professor and Lockheed Martin Eminent Scholar Chair in the College of Education and Human Performance. She coordinates the Ph.D. Program in Exceptional Education. Her research focuses on the inclusion of students in secondary urban environments and the use of virtual environments to prepare teachers.

For this issue I wish to give my personal interpretation of being a “public intellectual,” the potential benefits and barriers of this role at UCF, and how this role should or should not be tied to faculty at UCF to impact local, regional, national, and global society.

The position of public intellectual occurs at three levels. I think one can reach all three levels only if one leaves the comfort of their discipline and works not only outside of their discipline, but *way* outside their discipline. What do I mean? Often we see people work across lines of their disciplines, such as a chemical engineer working with an environmental engineer, or a computer scientist working with a graphic designer. However, leaving colleges, disciplines, or even leaving what you know at its purest form is when, in my opinion, new ideas and public intellectuals emerge. Alan Lightman describes three levels of a public intellectual that are interesting to consider. He defines each level as follows:

- Level I: Speaking and writing for the public exclusively about your discipline.
- Level II: Speaking and writing about your discipline and how it relates to the social, cultural, and political world around it.

- Level III: By invitation only. The intellectual has become elevated to a symbol, a person that stands for something far larger than the discipline from which he or she originated.

<<http://web.mit.edu/comm-forum/papers/lightman.html>>

I examine the term *public intellectual* through the lens of my own personal journey in education, focusing on the need or process that has to occur in order for one to evolve through these levels as a public intellectual. I believe blending public intellectual with the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) requires that what we know and have had the privilege to learn in our roles in academia be scrutinized by our peers and be publicly disseminated to have true meaning.

Early in my career, I had the chance to be a SoTL scholar at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee to look into streaming video. That experience allowed me to leave education and talk with instructional designers and technology experts across that campus. Being an early adopter of what, at the time, was cutting-edge technology, not only in my field but also on my campus in general, allowed me to start to move to Level II of being a public intellectual after receiving tenure. My reflections during that journey into learning got me thinking about how visual images of teaching practice, and specifically, best practices (if available) could impact the field of teacher education. I also had the privilege in my teaching at UW-Milwaukee to coteach my college courses with faculty in mathematics and science education, allowing me to continue to grow and challenge my own intellect, which is a part of evolving within a discipline. I think I was further stretched as a public intellectual by taking advantage of two sabbaticals to blend my love for math, science, and technology with my specific area of expertise of special education. During both sabbaticals I spent time evolving my knowledge base from classroom ideas, to school ideas, to district ideas, to changing schools and districts, specifically schools in urban settings, to better meet the needs of all students at the secondary level, and to always look back at the juxtaposition of what occurs when students—all students—had a great teacher.

I began to move into the third level when I came to UCF, and I feel I am still just at the cusp of that level. In the spring of my first year here, I had the chance to be a Provost Fellow and spend time with colleagues in four other colleges. I quickly became enamored with the potential of simulation to impact teacher practice. From working for more than a decade with my colleagues Charlie Hughes in Computer Science and Mike Hynes in Mathematics Education, I am pretty certain I know not as much but closer to what they know, and we publicly can talk across our discipline. That is what occurs with a public intellectual. I am pretty certain Charlie knows as much about

teacher education literature if not more than most in the field. I also know enough about simulation to hang around with smart people in that field and hold meaningful conversations. Others in my field are surprised by my knowledge, which I come to think of as ordinary, due not just to interdisciplinary collaboration but to true transdisciplinary connections in targeted fields. So what happens when a public intellectual moves from Level I and Level II, in my opinion, is that they no longer realize what they know is unique; it is part of the fabric of their thinking that is now interwoven not only into their daily work but also into their discipline. People in the public start to see the blurring of lines, but the danger is that the public intellectual has to continuously stay grounded in their original discipline to move to Level III. Currently, the work of the team at UCF in simulation with the tool TeachLivE, which I have the privilege of being a spokesperson for regularly, is being utilized by 55 other universities and school districts across the United States and in the United Arab Emirates. In addition, I have been asked to blend my expertise in inclusion and technology in international events in Hong Kong and two keynotes in the UAE.

Personally, I think that as people move through the ranks in the tenure process, it is imperative that they become public intellectuals. In my opinion, being in higher education means just the opposite of what it sounds like. We are not here to just be higher in our education, but we are to be at the highest level of public servants of knowledge, and must impart that knowledge with the ethics and servitude that are required not only to represent our disciplines, but to stretch, expand, and even challenge the current boundaries of those disciplines. An example in my own journey is my new fascination with the concept of microcredentialing and competency-based teacher education. These new concepts, in my opinion, are reshaping my field by challenging what we currently know about course structures and preparing professionals in the field to think at the most microscopic level about how best to prepare teachers. I am intrigued by this idea in that it will further allow me to blend my passion of inclusion, teacher education, and technology. This next stage of my journey will probably take me beyond my lifetime. I continue to see that one of the dangers of being in education is that “everyone” believes that they are an expert in my discipline, no matter their background, because they, at a minimum, got a K-12 education and have had experiences with good and not-so-good teachers alike. Yet, the art and science of being a teacher is one of the most complex jobs in our society. For example, a typical teacher makes more than 1,350 decisions a day. How best to help both novice and practicing teachers at a microscopic level be the best they possibly can be for each child that walks in the door of their classroom is a question that may not be answered easily or quickly, but is critical to continue to pursue.

The benefit of being a public intellectual is that people will listen, but the barrier is that many people may want your time and will listen to you at a level that could be dangerous. True public intellectuals think carefully about what they say, while simultaneously challenging how they believe they can best influence their disciplines. The solutions to the challenges within any discipline do not emerge from talking with each other about what we know, but by going beyond our discipline to others who do not know our disciplines to determine how to use the work and expertise of other disciplines to solve current and emerging problems we may not even know yet exist.

To me, as faculty move from assistant to associate professor, they must become public intellectuals that move from Level I to Level II. Having the privilege of the title of a Pegasus Professor, I believe that this level of scholarship is for someone who I would see moving into Level III, but the truly public intellectual never stops to count their accomplishments, nor do they feel that others should listen to them, but is humbled and amazed when others see their work as worthy beyond their own discipline. To me that is how public intellectuals emerge.

The Public Intellectual in a Networked World

Chuck Dziuban and Marcella Bush



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Marcella Bush is an editor and research associate for the Research Initiative for Teaching Effectiveness and UCF's liaison with the Tangelo Park Program for the past 17 years.

From the late 19th century, defining the public intellectual has broadened from the white male, usually a university professor or professional writer who addressed a well-educated audience about social improvement, to a broadened definition that almost any intelligent person can become an intellectual. And although some lament the decline of the public

intellectual, with the continuing proliferation of social media, its definition is once again in the conversation.

New conceptual tools, changes in the public sphere, and modern ideological responsibilities require today's public intellectual to function critically in contemporary approaches to society. The ability of the public to acquire and disseminate information also affects the concept of the public intellectual.

The Contemporary Public Intellectual

The literature offers multiple conceptualizations of the intellectual. For every attempt at a definition, a contradiction rises. Tension lies in two decisive areas: the public intellectual's participation in society with simultaneous aloofness and the public's experience of the intellectual as generalist or specialist. Critical to the definition, however, is the ability to communicate the results or the processes of intellectual activity.

The modern public intellectual addresses a larger audience today than academia; however, the defining word *public* denotes communication with a more general audience, readily available in all forms of technology and social media. This person must manage the tensions to reach his or her audience without oversimplification with the added pressure of coming across well.

English professor and author Edward Said (1994) addresses the tension in the literature's definition by stating that the public intellectual performs his or her mission on the margins of society, in self-imposed exclusion. Henry Giroux (2013) agrees, describing public intellectuals as "people who work with ideas, but are out of place in a society that only values ideas that serve the interests of the market and the powerful and rich" (p. 1). Yet, J. M. Coetzee, the South African writer who has resisted the public/political arena, became a celebrity when he won a Nobel Prize.

A second paradox in defining the public intellectual is that of the intellectual as generalist. His or her knowledge crosses disciplines and appreciates history but addresses contemporary issues, aware of all who have thought and struggled before him or her. The public intellectual is a dissenter, radical in a scholarly approach despite possible risk to his or her reputation or safety. Susan Sontag saw the intellectual as "unrestricted by disciplinary or professional allegiances" (Pinar, 1998, Introduction).

These competing, and at times complementary, approaches with the public's changing view give rise to a contemporary definition. The modern public intellectual must be an enlightened agent of progress who balances ideas and action, the public forum, and the private domain—a lover and explorer of ideas. Today, academics have a deeper connection to the ef-

fective use of information technology than in any other generation and, therefore, still have important work to accomplish in the public sphere.

Impacts on Contemporary Public Intellectualism

While fewer challenges in disseminating research and information exist today, decreasing public support for higher education, rising costs, and changing demands provide challenges unique to the current culture. Four of those issues relate to reframing higher education, shifting baselines, instantaneous information, and uncertainty.

Creative Destruction

The June 28th, 2014, issue of the *Economist* was titled “Creative Destruction: Reinventing the University.” That issue featured three articles that foreshadowed developments facing higher education: rising cost, changing demand, and disruptive technology. The editors argued that American higher education constitutes one of the great success stories of the welfare state by shifting educational opportunities from a privileged few to the middle-class masses largely because of governmental support. Nevertheless, they provided evidence of decreasing public support for education, with colleges and universities passing the financial responsibility onto customers, once again reducing access.

Changing Baselines and the Long View

These trends coincide with Callum Roberts’ (2007) view of constantly changing baselines. He argues that a collective amnesia surrounds changes that happened over a more distant time frame. We tend to trust what we have seen ourselves and dismiss events that occurred in the more distant past. He stresses that incremental changes inch up on us (e.g., noise pollution, diminishing green space, and longer commutes to work), and we fail to notice them.

Increasing Speed

An additional factor impacting the next generation public intellectual is the viral nature of digital information, which Charles Seife (2014) characterizes as a disconnect from all that we have known before. Information moves around the world instantaneously and can be stored with perfect reliability. In an epidemiological sense, he compares digital information to a super virus that invades all aspects of society and education, changing the way we understand. William Powers (2010) describes this digital environment:

clouds; the usernames, passcodes, and access keys; pop-ups and banners; ringtones and vibrations. That’s just a small sample of what we navigate each day in the room. By the time you read this there will be completely new modes of connecting that are all the rage. Our tools are fertile, constantly multiplying” (p. 2).

Uncertain Mediation and Ambiguity

Janos Setényi (1995), when discussing the evolution of Hungary from communism to democracy after the fall of the Soviet Union, coined the term “uncertain mediation,” meaning there is never enough information to allow individuals, organizations, or governments to make clear-cut decisions. Actions must be taken, legislation passed, policies developed, and curriculum designed against incomplete evidence. This theory relates closely to the notion of open systems that have continual input from external sources, as opposed to closed systems where inputs are finite (Magee, 2009).

Compounding uncertain mediation difficulties for the public intellectual is the concept of ambiguity, a cognitive phenomenon characterized by a confusion of ideas or facts. Donald Levine (1985) and Andrew Wiegert (1991) contend that a flight from ambiguity characterizes modern society and education, both of which are committed to the need for clarity.

As the role of the faculty public intellectual continues to evolve, agility will be a vital skill when resolving contemporary issues in an increasingly networked world, where one has to mediate virtual continuous input, serve as a filter for erroneous information, aggregate that information into higher conceptual levels, lead the public discourse, and be responsive to societal needs. In the networked world, the public intellectual is more important than ever because he or she becomes the bridge between democratized and authenticated information. Historically, ideas were vetted and shared in the public sector. In today’s world, the process is reversed. Ideas are shared and then vetted. The fact that we identified the AIDS protein by worldwide crowdsourcing the problem to gamers is an enormous change from sequestering information on university campuses or in clean laboratories. In a networked world, the public intellectual is much more of an everyperson, where staying separate and aloof is no longer a viable option. More than ever the faculty role becomes a process rather than a set of defined expectations. And more than ever we need the public intellectual to serve as our societal compass.

“We’re all busier. Much, much busier. It’s a lot of work managing all that connectedness. The e-mail, texts, and voicemails; the pokes, prods, and tweets; the alerts, and comments; the links, tags, and posts; the photos and videos; the blogs and vlogs; the searches; downloads, uploads, files and folders; feeds and filters; walls and widgets; tags and

From Workshop to Reality: Undergraduate Research Coaches

Amanda Anthony, Martha Garcia, Carlos Gual, Michael Rovito, Mary Tripp, and Linda Walters



Michael Rovito, Mary Tripp, Martha Garcia, Linda Walters, Carlos Gual, and Amanda Anthony (not pictured)

Background

This is the story of a faculty collaboration that started with a problem, a workshop, a proposal, the reality of a pilot, and the possibility of institutional support. It all started in Lakeland at the Council of Undergraduate Research (CUR) Workshop in March 2014. Five faculty members answered Kim Schneider's call for applications to learn more about using undergraduate research in our classes.

We all knew the value of undergraduate research, proven by our own teaching values and practices. We also, however, all faced challenges implementing undergraduate research on a larger scale. Considering the national trend and research that supports scaffolding research experiences into undergraduate curricula, we saw the CUR workshop as an opportunity to formalize and implement these research experiences to improve student learning in each of our classes.

The strength of our group lay in its diversity and willingness to participate in interdisciplinary collaboration. Our group consisted of faculty of all ranks (Instructor, Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor) from Biology, Modern Languages and Literatures, Health Professions/Public Health, and Writing and Rhetoric. We each brought unique perspectives on how research works in our fields and in our classrooms. Coming into the conference, we already knew that many UCF researchers are engaged in one-on-one mentorship with advanced undergraduate students, and that many faculty are at capacity for this type of interaction. We also knew that a considerable number of UCF students interested in undergraduate research were not able to participate due to limitations on faculty time and resources. Additionally, we knew that a few UCF courses currently embed research into their curricula. However, considering our larger class sizes and, in some cases, lack of teaching assistants, undergraduate research experiences are difficult to execute in many of our classrooms.

Initiative

At the CUR workshop, we collectively decided that modifying a model developed at the University of North Carolina, which focused on embedding student research consultants into courses, would work best in our particular situations at UCF. By the end of the conference, we had a concrete plan that would address our needs and perhaps the needs of other faculty members across campus. Our plan had three main goals: (1) identify models that will allow us to embed authentic research experiences into more of our larger courses and courses without graduate or undergraduate teaching assistants; (2) develop a comprehensive program aiming to scaffold research pedagogies into UCF undergraduate curricula; and (3) obtain funding to collect pilot data on using student research coaches that will fill the need for embedding research into the curriculum, particularly in large classes. To test our ideas, we submitted a proposal for a pilot study to the Office of Undergraduate Research.

Michael Rovito has been the first to field-test this program with two research coaches and two writing coaches embedded in his senior-level research methods course, Applied Health Research Methods (HSC 4730). The experience of discussing research projects with a more knowledgeable peer has been positive for both his students and his research coaches (following Vygotsky's concept of learning from a more knowledgeable other). The coaches are current students at UCF who successfully completed the research methods course in a prior semester. Consulting with a peer, says one of his coaches, "seemed to present students with a comfortable environment to ask questions and voice their concerns without hesitation."

Given the positive results of this pilot experience in one course, our group has expanded the pilot and the assessment procedures for the next phase of the project. In the spring semester of 2015, research coaches are being used in Linda Walters' Marine Biology, Martha Garcia's Spanish Literature, and Mary Tripp's Composition II courses. In order to make these pilots more compel-

ling, we brought a social scientist, Amanda Anthony, on board to help us review and assess student attitudes and learning in our respective pilot sections. The success and interest in this project led us to collaborate on a QEP proposal which was moved forward for consideration as a campus-wide initiative, offering the possibility of expanding this project across many disciplines, as well as providing creative scholarship experiences.

Conclusions

This faculty collaboration has extended beyond a two-day workshop in Lakeland. Partly, this success is a function of similar philosophies and our collective interest in teaching and learning through research. The benefits of undergraduate research on student learning have kept this group of faculty moving forward in seeking viable solutions for our campus community. In our teaching, we have taken the stance of inquisitive researchers who want to understand more about teaching and learning. The aim of this project was to help our students learn, but in the process of researching successful models, writing proposals, designing classroom research projects, and assessing our results, we developed a rewarding and effective faculty and research collaboration. Some say the secret to success is to find a need and fill it, and by that definition, this collaboration has been a success.



The University of Central Florida Libraries and Gale Cengage Learning are pleased to announce a new service available to faculty. Gale's new Curriculum Alignment Service allows libraries to draw a clear path from the classroom straight into their library. Through a consultation with faculty and librarians, Gale will provide deep linking to search results or individual titles or articles that align directly with syllabi, course page, or research guide topics. This will allow students to link directly to existing Gale library resources when they are doing readings or research projects. Gale will create custom links based on feedback from the professor and/or librarian, to link to content that will support teaching and students' needs. The best part about this service is that students are directed to content already owned by UCF that is available 24/7, anytime, anywhere. Questions about this service should be directed to Michael Arthur at michael.arthur@ucf.edu

Submissions

The *Faculty Focus* is a publication for all instructors at the University of Central Florida. This includes full-time and part-time faculty and teaching assistants at all UCF campuses. Its purpose is to provide an exchange of ideas on teaching and learning for the university's community of teachers and scholars. It is envisioned that this publication will inspire more dialogue among faculty whether in hallway discussions, departmental meetings, or in written articles. This represents an opportunity for faculty members to reach their peers throughout the growing UCF community. The *Faculty Focus* invites you to contribute your ideas on teaching and learning in a short essay. See the guidelines for submission online at <<http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/Publications/FacultyFocus/submission.php>>. Please send your submissions to fctl@ucf.edu.

The ideas and opinions expressed in the articles featured in the *Faculty Focus* belong to the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Faculty Center or of UCF.



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