

COMMUNITY TASK FORCE ON NYU DEVELOPMENT

Findings and Recommendations

March 2010



Office of the
Manhattan Borough President
Scott M. Stringer

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|------|---|---------|
| I. | Executive Summary..... | Page 1 |
| II. | Process Committee..... | Page 2 |
| III. | Core and Neighborhood Committee..... | Page 4 |
| IV. | Remote Sites Committee..... | Page 9 |
| V. | Sustainability and Community Amenities Committee..... | Page 11 |

APPENDICES

| | | |
|-------------|---|---------|
| APPENDIX 1: | Planning Principles..... | Page 17 |
| APPENDIX 2: | Development Principles for Manhattan Community Board 2..... | Page 19 |
| APPENDIX 3: | Liz Christy Garden Protection and Improvement Agreement 8/4/05..... | Page 21 |
| APPENDIX 4: | Green Building Guidelines..... | Page 23 |
| APPENDIX 5: | “What Is Education For?” by David Orr..... | Page 24 |
| APPENDIX 6: | Green Living at Dartmouth College..... | Page 29 |

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2006 Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer, elected officials, and community stakeholders joined to create the Community Task Force on NYU Development. The Task Force sought to engage the community in ongoing discussions with NYU around its campus planning and to work with NYU on developing a strategy that addresses the University's needs while also taking into account community concerns. Over subsequent meetings, the group discussed the need for the University to develop a comprehensive campus plan that balances respect for the community with the University's needs.

NYU's recent physical expansion activities have been concentrated in Greenwich Village, NoHo and the East Village – several of the city's oldest and most emblematic neighborhoods. The historic neighborhoods comprise a distinct aggregation of predominantly low density residential development made up of a series of landmarks that impart a distinct ambiance centering around Washington Square Park and its famous Arch. It is this distinctive character supported by neighborhood business, service and cultural establishments that the community finds threatened by the magnitude of NYU's proposed spatial growth.

The responsible expansion of a university can be a boon to the cultural and intellectual capital of a city. However, if that expansion is done without proper consultation with the affected community or appreciation for shared physical and environmental space, there could be a negative impact to the delicate balance that underlies the continued success of the neighborhood.

The Task Force believes that in order to maintain the integrity of the affected neighborhoods, the University's goals for growth and development must be better aligned with those of the community at large. Therefore, in August of 2007, the Task Force drafted a set of Planning Principles to guide the process and discussions. These principles were the product of several months of meetings and conversations among Task Force members, the broader community and the University, and focused on urban design, quality of life, sustainability, community planning, and accountability.

The release of NYU 2031 in April will finally provide the community with a guiding document that articulates the University's long term needs and direction for growth. In keeping with the University's academic aspirations, their growth plans are ambitious. There is concern that the proposed concentration of square footage could overwhelm a historic and diverse community. However, through attentive community consultation and openness to new ideas, NYU's growth could be beneficial to and appropriate for the university, its surrounding community, and the city as a whole.

From December 2009 through February 2010, the Task Force divided into four committees to discuss community priorities in advance of the release of NYU's plan. The following findings and recommendations are intended to encourage the University to continue working to strategically plan for its growth by identifying remote locations for facilities, community amenities, sustainable initiatives and processes to encourage transparent discourse. We hope that these ideas will shape the upcoming dialogue and provide a roadmap for creating responsible development.

The following findings and recommendations are the product of the Task Force members and may not represent the endorsed positions of any individual entity.

II. PROCESS COMMITTEE

A. Introduction

This Committee focused on the process of interacting with NYU, including making recommendations to the University, defining the role of the Task Force, and reviewing its mechanism for considering projects. Given its composition and wide breadth of membership, the Task Force is well-positioned to review NYU's projects across community board district lines, borough boundaries and across New York City.

The Task Force should review projects related to NYU 2031 and provide feedback for the University before a project proceeds to the relevant community board for either public discussion or action. The committee agreed that recommendations would not be binding on any issue brought before a community board. Furthermore, the Task Force should not micromanage or usurp any authority from the community board.

Members expressed concerns regarding the sharing of any confidential information discussed at Task Force meetings and it was agreed to consider such matters on a case-by-case basis. The Task Force should encourage NYU to meet in the preliminary stages of planning to solicit feedback before an action is taken. The Task Force also noted that confidentiality was equally applicable to NYU by speaking to the Task Force before any public announcement is made.

In conjunction with the relevant community board, the Task Force should publicize pertinent government agency hearing dates and venues, as well as a timeline for public comments to be submitted about projects.

If a member of the Task Force represents a larger group, that person should, after consultation with their group, be the voice that speaks for their constituents to avoid conflicting statements to the public.

Only matters that affect the physical relationship of NYU building programs should come under the review of the Task Force. This includes all architecture projects, renovations, new construction, and acquisitions throughout the City (as they relate to NYU 2031). The Task Force also seeks information related to transportation, traffic flow, and overall planning issues such as open spaces, parks, proposed street closings and architectural programming as it pertains to NYU 2031.

B. Recommendations

- NYU should bring matters to the Task Force in the earliest realistic conceptual stage, so that comments and input can be solicited and considered.
- NYU should engage the Task Force as a working partner to achieve the best possible results.
- NYU should bring all matters and projects pertaining to Plan 2031, as of right or not, first to the Task Force for review before it goes to the relevant community board for any necessary approvals.
- As opposed to reacting to issues that NYU brings forward, the Task Force should meet on a regularly scheduled basis and collaboratively set the agenda with NYU.

- NYU should be prepared to come to meetings to answer questions raised about prior agenda items. The Task Force also expects regular updates and status reports on ongoing NYU projects.
- The Task Force expects that NYU will not present issues related to NYU 2031 to any other public forum before coming to the Task Force and will not make any public announcements of projects prior to the Task Force review.
- Information, even in the conceptual stage, should be brought to the larger community and made public after vetting from the Task Force. This includes Community Board forums or standing committees if advisable. Information could also be disseminated through the Task Force website.
- NYU should be held accountable for its commitments, agreements and adherence to the Planning Principles.

C. Continuing the Dialogue

- The Task Force agreed that the Task Force website should be used to share information in a timely manner. The existence of the website should also be well publicized.
- NYU should be prepared to address agenda items regularly as well as outstanding questions. Extensive use of email between NYU and the Task Force should be standard practice.
- The Task Force believes that the only way to hold NYU accountable for its adherence to the Planning Principles is through political pressure from the elected officials, especially the Borough President, and a continued public dialogue through either the press or other media forums. The Task Force hopes that any elected officials who have not formally endorsed the Planning Principles do so.
- The Task Force should be clear and concise with its direct recommendations to NYU and not leave things open to much interpretation.
- After a year of Task Force meetings and conversations with the University, the Task Force would like to revisit the Planning Principles and decide whether they need to be modified.

III. CORE AND NEIGHBORHOOD COMMITTEE

A. Introduction

The Core and Neighborhood Committee conducted its evaluation of NYU 2031 based on the premise that “Greenwich Village is a fragile ecosystem.” First articulated by NYU President John Sexton at a Town Hall meeting in February 2004, the concept received an overwhelmingly positive response from the community. Thus, the importance of Greenwich Village’s “fragile ecosystem” served as a guideline for the Committee’s review of the core and its surrounding neighborhood’s spatial target of 2.8 to 3.5 million square feet. Our focus was to first determine what this fragility meant in terms of demographics and development.

United States Census data for the year 2000 notes slightly more than 93,000 persons in 52,700 households in the area delineated as the 2031 Neighborhood. This Neighborhood comprises the entirety of Community Board 2, in addition to Community Board 3’s western corridor from 1st Avenue to the Bowery and Community Board 6’s southern tier of blocks south of 18th Street. The current population likely totals well over 125,000 residents in close to 70,000 households. A New York City Department of City Planning 2008 survey reveals that residential and mixed use residential-commercial uses comprise 45 percent of land use; commercial/office and industrial uses are 22 percent; institutional uses such as NYU comprise 7 percent; vacant land, recreational and open space and miscellaneous uses are the remainder. Clearly, the core and surrounding neighborhood development profile comprises a predominantly residential community. This profile thus formed the basis from which the Committee undertook reasoned and fact-based judgments posed by the magnitude of NYU 2031’s 2.8 to 3.5 million square feet target range for development.

Putting this space into perspective, the Committee likened it to building the equivalent of between 4 and 5 Jacob Javits Convention Centers in the core and surrounding neighborhoods. From a land utilization standpoint, it represents more than a doubling of institutional space use as measured by City Planning’s 2008 survey. From the standpoint of the “fragile ecosystem,” it represents an overwhelming critical mass of space expansion for a singular institutional population with service needs that distinctly differ from that of the year-round resident population. We are referring to services that are solely devoted to NYU activity that the community overwhelmingly views as conflicting with routine. The Task Force is concerned that the University’s growth will only proliferate these uses. Specific examples include the overcrowding and flow of students on sidewalks at class changing times; NYU’s private bus system whose ten year existence is at odds with its future co-generation carbon footprint reduction; and the neighborhood disruptions on semester move-in and move-out dates when streets are commandeered. Along with the proliferation of drinking establishments clustered around the newer dorms, the neighborhood residential character has undergone negative changes. The impact of an additional 2.8 to 3.5 million square feet to the core and surrounding neighborhood on the “fragile ecosystem” is self-evident.

While the Committee recognizes that normal growth of institutions and human activity are necessary, it has overwhelmingly, if not unanimously concluded that 2031’s expansion goals and desire to maintain Greenwich Village’s “fragile ecosystem” are incompatible. Any increase of space of the magnitude intended is unacceptable if Greenwich Village is to maintain its historic, cultural and diverse lower density character where no single institutional land use dominates the neighborhood. This institutional expansion is fostered by NYU policies that prioritize enrollment goals over protecting the needs of the fully developed residential neighborhood which hosts the school. **We therefore conclude that NYU must look to geographically disperse its space needs outside of the defined core and surrounding neighborhood that it so actively claims**

to value in its student recruitment materials and which the residential population strongly desires to maintain as a “fragile ecosystem.”

B. Committee Recommendations

1. Principles for Neighborhood Growth

- Not all NYU needs can be accommodated in and around the core and its surrounding neighborhood. Acquisition, renovation and better utilization of existing academic buildings are preferable to the construction of new buildings. NYU’s expansion in the oversaturated core and surrounding neighborhood and certain new uses of existing buildings can have undesirable impacts on the community’s character. As a “Community Use,” NYU already has greater flexibility than private development through zoning allowances for greater bulk and the recent setback variances granted by the Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA) for the Center for Spiritual and Academic Life. Based on sheer size, the collection of the Law School building on Sullivan Street, the Kimmel Center, and the new Center for Spiritual and Academic Life overwhelms the historic Judson Church and the Washington Square Arch.
- NYU should recognize the limits of development in the core and neighborhood. The proposal to put 2.8 to 3.5 million square feet in the area, or anything close to that figure, is overwhelming.
- The burden should be on NYU to show why this amount of space needs to be in the core and the surrounding neighborhood as opposed to another remote location. Some uses like faculty and student housing do not need to be in the core, though housing for families would be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. They should, and easily can, be located elsewhere. Most academic uses are acceptable, though there are some exceptions. NYU has noted the need for a new science building. This kind of building is not compatible with the nearby residential uses in the core. The Committee recommends that any such building would be better located outside the core, perhaps in the new Brooklyn campus following the merger with Polytechnic. In all categories, there is over-saturation of proposed space. The Committee seeks a balance of uses between the University and the surrounding community.
- The Committee recommends a better utilization plan of existing NYU spaces to reduce special needs. This includes a longer school week than the present four day undergraduate curriculum to utilize more fully existing classrooms.
- NYU is a “sidewalk” campus and the comparison of space needs with other schools that have a more conventional, self-contained, campus has never been fully presented. The Committee cannot accept that NYU has a deficiency of space per student until we understand how the methodology of comparative measurement is presented. For example, Columbia University has athletic and science facilities (e.g. stadium, Baker Field and gymnasium facilities, Lamont Observatory) that are distinctly different than that of NYU and if counted as space, would greatly inflate the disparity of space.
- Additional Community Use Facility space of between 2.8 and 3.5 million square feet, or anything remotely like that figure, may dramatically shift the demographics of this area of the Village. The community issue is to maintain a balanced mix of demographics and preserve the quality of life.

- NYU development may place undue pressure on the preservation of rent-regulated housing for the community. As part of its property acquisition program, NYU should not purchase and develop existing residential buildings with rent regulated housing. NYU should avoid displacing existing residential tenants and place any tenants that must be relocated nearby within the community.
- Plans for redevelopment or expansion of the Washington Square Village site would be very difficult for the community to accept. New buildings there would have tremendous impacts on existing community housing and green space / parkland. These plans would violate the original design concepts of the “tower in the park.” The center courtyard has an award-winning garden in the middle, a well used children’s playground, and an underground parking garage that are essential amenities. Construction issues at this location would be difficult to mitigate because of the close proximity to existing housing.
- Over the years, NYU negotiated an assortment of amenities through Community Board 2, such as the Mercer-Houston Dog Run and the use of services at the Coles Gym, which need to be preserved or replaced in kind at a convenient location within the immediate vicinity. The Committee also encourages improved access to senior services where these have languished. For example, the Committee notes that the agreement to allow community use of Coles has been hampered by design features that relegate the community to the roof. Access is hampered by the stringent hours that the facility is open for community use. Taken together, it augurs for discouraging such use and results in the position that if community use is sparse thus there is no need for their inclusion in future projects.
- Both of the super blocks provide light and air for the whole community. New construction needs to be sensitive to the open space needs of the larger community. The current proposals to build on open space and to replace low-scale buildings with exponentially larger ones are completely unacceptable.
- Any construction on the southern super block needs to be sensitive to the existing historic structures on the block and to the historic character of Greenwich Village.
- The Committee strongly requests that NYU support and respect the proposed new South Village Historic District. NYU should refrain from demolition, new construction and alterations until the area is designated and is subject to this regulatory process.
- The shortage of parking in the neighborhood has become an issue. The Committee recommends the preservation of the existing parking garages on the super blocks and further recommends that new buildings include at least enough parking to accommodate their added uses and they should include off street loading docks.
- Environmental impact analysis for the new construction sites should be provided well ahead of time to help the community evaluate the proposed construction sites. An environmental plan should be prepared for all construction whether or not it is required. NYU should engage with the community to develop a plan for mitigation of environmental and neighborhood impacts.
- Construction outreach and mitigation are of major concern in the community. Construction protocols developed by Community Board 2 are attached in the Appendix.

2. Broad Assessment of the Land-Use/Regulatory Hurdles Presented by Superblock Proposals

- NYU is responsible for the assessment of the land-use and regulatory hurdles of their proposals. For the proposed new buildings in the core, the Committee requests a complete list of the Zoning and/or Landmarks applications as well as copies of any existing deed restrictions that may apply.

3. Community Reaction to the Addition of Retail to Sites within the Core

- The ground floor environment greatly influences the vitality of the City streets. The current retail uses are too focused on NYU students. They should also be oriented to the existing community.
- The existing supermarket is an essential community service and needs to be maintained in continuous operation and replaced prior to the existing building being demolished.

4. Community Reaction to Greening and Open Space Ideas

- The community has not been able to easily access the rooftop at Coles. Open space should be easily accessible at ground level.
- Preservation, maintenance and upgrading of the existing publicly-owned open spaces are priorities for the community. These open spaces have become an essential part of the fabric of our neighborhood. The Committee views the retention of existing open space as vital to maintaining the fabric of the community and any reduction resulting from demolition or new construction as not consonant with this goal.
- The City-owned community open spaces on LaGuardia Place and Mercer Street – long used for parks, open space and playgrounds – would be better served if ownership were transferred from the Department of Transportation to the Department of Parks and Recreation, as recommended by the Department of City Planning. The Committee strongly urges NYU to support the community in this effort, and also to refrain from acquiring or building on these sites.
- Preservation of existing trees and additional plantings are desirable. Greening of the streetscape is strongly supported by the community.
- “Key parks” should not be considered open space since they are not accessible to everyone.

5. Outstanding Questions for NYU

- The Committee requests a complete zoning analysis and the bulk calculations that were used to determine the proposals for the Morton Williams, Coles and Washington Square Village sites, complete information on any deed restrictions that may exist, and information about any zoning and landmarks applications that may be required to build at these locations.
- NYU has noted the need for a new science building. The Committee asks where this building is likely to be located and what size it would likely be.

- The Committee requests further information on plans for 14 and 15 Washington Place and 25 West 4th Street. The Committee notes long standing complaints from the residents of both buildings whose daily routines and quality of life have been disrupted by long standing and ongoing construction projects behind 14 Washington Place and at the Genome Building on Waverly, including the Cogeneration plant.
- The Committee requests an approximate schedule of construction being sought for the two super blocks.

C. Next Steps for Task Force

- Re-defining the planning principles (long term)

IV. REMOTE SITES COMMITTEE

A. Introduction

The Task Force on NYU Development believes that it is of foremost importance that NYU consider first the widest possible range of options for satellite campuses to accommodate its future development. It is clear that the area around the NYU core and surrounding neighborhood cannot accommodate NYU's planned future growth and that those neighborhoods are already oversaturated with NYU facilities. Due to the wealth of mass transit connections to NYU's core and surrounding neighborhood, there are an abundance of opportunities for NYU to explore locations for new facilities which could be quickly and easily accessible to the University's main campus. The multiplicity of stalled building projects around the City also creates tremendous potential which could serve the University, as well as improve conditions for local communities and the City as a whole. Additionally, satellite locations can catalyze desired growth or bring useful resources to areas of the City in need of them while allowing the University to benefit by being able to plan its long-term growth in a way that it cannot in the congested core and surrounding neighborhoods. Satellite locations have the potential to also benefit the already oversaturated neighborhoods of Greenwich Village, the East Village, NoHo and Union Square by relieving pressure upon, and preventing further homogenization of, these areas.

Location of NYU facilities in additional remote locations must be done in close and careful consultation with local communities and should address their concerns and goals for neighborhood growth and preservation. NYU, the City and the State should work together with these local communities to make the location of these facilities possible and beneficial to all affected parties.

B. Committee Recommendations

- The Committee calls upon NYU to consider additional remote locations, including but not limited to the Financial District and Long Island City. Given the variety of potential locations within short bus or subway rides of the NYU core campus, NYU must present a rationale for not considering these additional sites.
- NYU should look at the Department of Building's list of stalled construction sites and see if any of the locations meet NYU's needs. NYU can potentially purchase these sites to develop.
- NYU should avoid over-saturation of facilities in any neighborhood in which they currently locate or seek to locate. The University should be aware that different neighborhoods have different capacities to absorb an increase in population and construction of buildings. The University should look closely at existing uses and establishments in the neighborhood.
- The City and State should assist NYU in exploring and realizing possibilities for appropriate remote and satellite locations to accommodate its growth and help it plan for its future, particularly those agencies which have already committed to helping colleges and universities in the City find space to expand.
- The Committee recommends that NYU reach out to the relevant and affected Community Boards, elected officials, community groups, block associations and business groups to consult with them on what use is appropriate for each satellite/remote location.

Discussion of appropriate uses should come from meetings with local groups in each of the affected areas.

C. Outstanding Questions for NYU

The Committee notes that it has still not received answers to the following questions from NYU:

- Could the University provide more details on the processes that will determine whether NYU can secure the Governors Island and Hunter College (Medical Corridor) sites?
- Why is the University not looking at the Financial District, Long Island City, Williamsburg and other possible remote locations?
- Is the University looking at the vast pool of empty and stalled building projects as potential remote locations?
- What other potential remote sites were examined and what was the methodology used for determining their feasibility?
- What does the University consider appropriate uses for remote sites?
- How much square footage is the University planning to build in each of the remote locations?

V. SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMUNITY AMENITIES COMMITTEE

A. Introduction

The NYU Task Force Committee on Sustainability and Amenities recommends that the requirements below be met for all future development planning by NYU. In addition to assessing the likelihood that the expansion will create negative conditions, we are interested in maintaining or augmenting amenities that are important to our community. A planning document should specifically quantify any changes to the following conditions that will result from the proposed expansion. Planning documents should include landscape architecture to specify impacts of construction on the natural environment. We have the following amenities in our community that we seek to maintain or improve upon. We ask NYU, “what will you contribute to these goals?”

- Open public space for the general public and outdoor space for use by faculty, staff and students. The Village has a well-documented paucity of public park space;
- Architectural character, including low-rise buildings, light, air and sky; preservation of historic buildings and character;
- Tree coverage and air quality: Plans must include a commitment to preserve and maintain the existing mature tree canopy, respecting the importance of the canopy’s oxygen output and carbon dioxide absorption in preserving air quality;
- Population density, such as increased daily workforce and increased foot traffic;
- Noise;
- Impact on natural light: Plans must include shadow studies;
- Addition of non-natural light, including night light, reflective surfaces;
- Sightlines;
- Necessary amenities such as supermarkets;
- Street level retail – The Committee values existing locally-owned street-level businesses and services and wants to avoid excessive concentrations of students and school-owned businesses;
- Publicly available parking – No new placard parking or reserved parking should be added, nor the elimination of existing street-side parking;
- Underground ecology, such as streams; and
- Access and mobility by the elderly and disabled.

B. Committee Recommendations

- Any proposals that entail degradation of the above-mentioned conditions must specify *how* and *when* these will be addressed or compensated.

- The Committee proposes the creation of a forum to engage NYU and the local community about site-by-site issues concerning preservation. Prior to any planned construction, NYU should negotiate Environmental Mitigation Agreement with community representatives, elected officials, the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Transportation. This agreement would include input from consulting arborists, landscape architects and community shareholders to safeguard the protection and preservation of public open space, landmarks, trees and gardens, plants, pathways, fences and landscape features.
 - The Mitigation Agreement will include a pre-arranged work schedule and timeline and oversight capacity by the signatories. The Committee would like to create a checklist or blueprint for such agreements. We intend to consult various examples, and put forth a recommended series of criteria. For example, the Committee attaches the agreement between the NYC Departments of Parks and Transportation and the Avalon Bay Communities for the preservation of the Liz Christy Gardens, Appendix 3.
- A planning document should identify specifically how NYU will, going forward, address negligence in *existing conditions* for which the community has long sought amelioration:
 - Landscaping and maintenance of plazas and open spaces;
 - Usage of existing ground floors;
 - Cleaning of facades;
 - Traffic, particularly from unnecessary NYU bus service;
 - Ambient noise; and
 - “Dead zones:” We advocate siting utilities inside construction, in interior courtyards and underground, rather than interfering with street-level environment.
- A planning document should identify specifically how its engineering will be environmentally sustainable. It should identify to what extent the following sustainable design practices will be implemented:
 - Use of solar panels and hybrid electricity;
 - Fuel cell system to power back-up generator (not diesel);
 - Bamboo flooring;
 - Green roofs;
 - Enrollment in the United States Environmental Protection Agency Energy Star program;
 - Avoidance of radiant cooling systems, due to energy consumption and risk of condensation and mold growth;

- Maximized use of daylight; installing light shelves on south facing windows;
 - Installation of windows rated by the National Fenestration Rating Council and/or Energy Star for energy-efficiency;
 - Use of Energy Star appliances;
 - Photovoltaic water heating; and
 - Rainwater catchments.
- All buildings should be LEED-ND certified. According to the website of the United States Green Building Council, which formulated the LEED guidelines, “The LEED for Neighborhood Development Rating System (USGBC) integrates the principles of smart growth, urbanism and green building into the first national system for neighborhood design. LEED certification provides independent, third-party verification that a development's location and design meet accepted high levels of environmentally responsible, sustainable development. LEED for Neighborhood Development is a collaboration among USGBC, the Congress for the New Urbanism, and the Natural Resources Defense Council.” This rating system provides a green neighborhood development scorecard that addresses smart location and linkage – the kind of neighborhood ecological study that addresses many levels and areas of development. Neighborhood pattern and design, green infrastructure and building, innovation and design process, as well as regional priority credit are also assessed. LEED-ND provides a powerful structure for fulfillment of our environmental and sustainability goals.
 - We also advocate for a review of the forward-looking sustainable construction guidelines devised by Battery Park City and the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (see Appendix 4) and development of a sustainable construction plan specific to NYU.
 - We specifically question how new construction and renovation will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy use and how ongoing maintenance practices will limit environmental toxicity. We recommend creating a “Green Workers Group” to develop green maintenance practices. Note that buildings are responsible for 39 percent of greenhouse gas emissions and 40 percent of energy use in New York City.
 - A planning document should identify whether the architects have experience in green building design and what plans they have to implement green practices in design and construction.
 - As principles of sustainable growth argue for reusing existing spaces where possible, a planning document will also identify the extent to which existing buildings will be preserved and what the specific ratio will be of new construction to existing facilities.
 - We ask NYU to be a green leader for the health of the community and the global environment, and to demonstrate how, as an institution, it will be forward-looking in setting new standards for ecologically sound institutional planning. The Committee refers University officials to Appendix 5: “What Is Education For? Six myths about the foundations of modern education, and six new principles to replace them,” which summarizes environmental initiatives at a number of colleges and universities.

- A planning document will identify specifically how new or expanded facilities (e.g. gym, library, theater, spiritual life center, public daycare, dog run, tutoring, education, senior care, athletic fields, social services nonprofit organizations and job opportunities) will be made available and known to the public. We call on NYU to examine how its facilities for teachers and medical training, the study of poverty and social change, and amenities for the arts, spiritual life, and physical education could truly open their arms and bring their energy and creativity to bear on our City. For example, a member of our Committee suggested that the School of Nursing could introduce a credit course through which students visit homebound seniors in collaboration with the Visiting Neighbors program on Broadway and Houston.
- A planning document will identify how many faculty and student families the school ultimately expects to house in each location and how expanded facilities will provide services (e.g. day care, public space, playgrounds, retail and service availability) to accommodate this change in the neighborhood's demography.
- A planning document will identify specifically how NYU will address environmental threats stemming from construction, including dust, noise, light, congestion, impact on underground electrical, water and sewer capacity. NYU will negotiate a detailed plan for preserving plant life when construction impacts existing green spaces (see provisions for an Environmental Mitigation Agreement, above).
- A planning document will identify all City-owned spaces and public thoroughfares and walkways within its reach. The City-owned Department of Transportation strips on LaGuardia Place and Mercer Street, used as green space and playgrounds, should be transferred to the NYC Department of Parks and we call on NYU to endorse this transfer promptly.
- Schools
 - Elementary school in the core: New York City faces a crisis of school overcrowding. NYU should address its obligations to the City and the neighborhood by providing a zoned K-5 elementary school space within future core construction for the immediate surrounding neighborhood and local faculty, preferably making use of its own resources as a preeminent institution for teacher training.
 - In the near term, NYU should collaborate with elected officials on making available temporarily empty space for school use, such as the site on Mercer Street proposed for the relief of overcrowding at PS 3 and 41 in the spring of 2009. It should also share sites that emerge from its own local "soft site" analysis that might be suitable for school use. The NYC DOE has proved startlingly ill-equipped to identify available real estate for school use and has previously required the intervention of those private entities that thrive on City infrastructure.
 - Furthermore, NYU's expansion plans outside the core affect other neighborhoods with their own overcrowding problems, such as the Financial District and downtown Brooklyn, and, in collaboration with those neighborhoods, it should investigate development of school capacity as mitigation for expansion there.
 - Finally, NYU expansion plans may encroach on City spaces that might otherwise be available for school development, such as Governor's Island. NYU should explore developing Governor's Island and other sites where it is considering substantial infrastructural improvements with a public school component. The City also faces a

crisis of overcrowding at the middle school and high school levels, a matter of grave concern for our communities and NYU's own faculty. The City's major institutions, which demand an educated workforce and adequate facilities for workers with families, should collaborate with the City on developing educational capacity citywide.

In closing, we remind NYU and the Task Force that our community is made up of parents, the elderly, working people, faculty members, and a number of other constituencies, all with many of their own interests and concerns. In negotiating a project of this scope we remind all parties that any resolutions must account for all of our neighbors. The provision of specific amenities to individual constituencies cannot be allowed to legitimize large-scale environmental change affecting many others.

We call on NYU to take this opportunity to foster a new culture of community engagement and a new vision of institutional urban environmentalism. It is evident to our Committee that the current Environmental Impact Statement process is woefully inadequate to address such a process, and we call on NYU, the Borough President's Office, our elected officials, and our community members to join us in forging a better process for assessing institutional impacts on urban environments.

We also call on NYU and the Task Force not to be captured by the momentum of unbridled institutional growth with no justification in the provision of services. Bigger is not necessarily better, and we take note that this plan calls for only modest expansion of NYU's student body, thus proposing a dramatic enhancement of facilities for those few it serves. We note that in the public comment on NYU's proposed expansion designs, students and faculty themselves called, not for expanded facilities, but for a more coherent learning environment and sustenance of those qualities of the Village that had attracted them to the University. Comments from students and staff featured statements like: "you are big enough," and should not pursue "growth for the sake of growth" and "ruthless development;" respondents asked, "are we a real estate developer or a university?" and remarked that, "the addition of new buildings will radically erode the quality of life" in our community. "NYU's students strongly support the community partnerships and sustainability as guiding principles," one student noted. An alumnus and Board of Directors member remarked, "Has anyone considered the complete disruption of the I.M. Pei concept if any of those designs are put into place? What is now an oasis of beauty will be destroyed," and a faculty member commented, "The quiet of the garden and the wonderful playground are so valuable. Being able to live like this is a part of what attracted me to leave an Ivy League school and move to NYU."

Our Committee is united with members of NYU's own constituencies—its students and its faculty—in holding to these values.

C. Next Steps

- Create a checklist or blueprint for an Environmental Mitigation Agreement, to be developed by community representatives, elected officials, the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Transportation, on a site-by-site basis for all proposed new construction.
- Compare the LEED guidelines, the World Trade Center guidelines and the Battery Park City guidelines and arrive at a protocol for green construction that would best suit our circumstances.

- Compile a timeline of met and unmet commitments related to past NYU construction projects in order to clarify which promised provisions to the community remain outstanding.
- We would like the Task Force as a whole to develop two sets of recommendations:
 1. Blueprint for a “true EIS” that measures real impacts of development on urban environments and communities according to contemporary standards of sustainability, neighborhood needs and construction practices.
 2. A protocol for an open and transparent process to ensure that institutions and developers fulfill their commitments to communities in return for the expansion opportunities they are offered. We encourage the Task Force, with the Borough President’s office, to develop “triggers” in met commitments to the community that will allow construction to go forward.
- Developing an illustrated PowerPoint presentation that presents to the press and the community the priorities that we have arrived at for negotiating future institutional and (potentially) commercial development that affects our community.

APPENDIX 1: A Roadmap to a New York University Campus Plan

Introduction:

In the fall of 2006, a group of community groups, local elected officials and representatives from New York University (NYU), convened the Community Task Force on NYU Development to discuss NYU's growth and its impact on surrounding communities. Over subsequent meetings, the group discussed the need for the University to develop a comprehensive campus plan that balances respect for the community with the University's needs. In August of 2007, the Task Force drafted the following guiding principles for that campus plan.

The principles focus on the areas of urban design, quality of life, sustainability, community planning process and accountability. Each guiding principle is designed to become a chapter in a greater campus plan that the Task Force is committed to developing with the University.

Accompanying the planning principles is a letter of support from NYU President John Sexton. In adopting these principles the University is committing to proactively working with the community in advance of development, and to negotiating with the community through future conflicts, should they arise. The University recognizes that these principles are the first step to realizing a comprehensive campus plan that not only addresses the University's long term needs, but allows for a transparent community based planning process.

Over the coming months, the Task Force will work with NYU on developing each planning principle into a fully realized policy that promotes respect for neighborhood character through an open, community based planning process.

Planning Principles:

- **Establish criteria for development within the existing NYU footprint in the University's campus core and the surrounding neighborhoods that would prioritize**
 - Identifying opportunities to decentralize facilities and actively pursuing these opportunities;
 - Contextual development that is sensitive to building heights, densities and materials;
 - Reuse before new development; and
 - Consider mixed use facilities that complement Manhattan's mixed neighborhoods, particularly in regard to ground floor uses.

- **Identify solutions to maximize utilization of existing assets by consulting with the community on:**
 - The types of facilities that can be decentralized from the Village campus core and surrounding neighborhoods and cultivating locations outside these areas;
 - Preferences for appropriate places for vertical additions
 - Encouraging programmatic and scheduling efficiencies; and
 - Opening new and re-envisioning existing recreational spaces to better serve both the student population as well as the community at large.

- **Make thoughtful urban and architectural design a priority by:**
 - Respecting the limitations of the urban environment, including the impact on New York City's infrastructure;
 - Improving the quality of open spaces; and

- Actively soliciting, utilizing and implementing input from the community in the design process.
- **Support community sustainability by:**
 - Preserving existing diverse social and economic character through the support of community efforts to sustain affordable housing and local retail;
 - Exploring the utilization of ground floors of buildings for community-oriented uses such as local retail, gallery spaces for local artists, non-profit users and other providers of community services; and
 - Generating a tenant relocation policy for legal, residential tenants, in the event that construction or conversion necessitates the relocation of tenants.
- **Respect the community's existing quality of life including but not limited to:**
 - Taking measures to mitigate effects of construction such as: noise, dust, work hours; sound mitigation for mechanical equipment; and construction staging;
 - Reaching out early and often for community consultation related to major construction;
 - Creating a website for ongoing constructions; and
 - Committing to a community-oriented public process for reviewing NYU's proposed projects and developments.

APPENDIX 2:

Development Principles for Manhattan Community Board 2

Environmental Sustainability

Rather than invent a new set of rules, the LEED program should be promoted. It applies to demolition and construction and is well understood by design and construction professionals.

Open Space and Urban Design

In Community Board 2 three of the four sites for access to the new water tunnel will become parks and there will be a contribution to an existing park at the fourth site. At Canal and 6th Ave. the construction of a new office building by Trinity Real Estate involved the transfer of ownership to Trinity of a small remnant of a public street in exchange for the renovation of the adjoining park. For private development some sort of zoning incentive would be necessary to create or enhance public open space similar to what was done in the Hi-Line Rezoning.

Community Communication and Construction Mitigation

Public Notification, Outreach and Community Coordination

There should be Monthly Construction Coordination Meetings and additional meetings as necessary to discuss:

- a) Overall Status and Schedule
- b) Construction issues having area-wide impact
- c) Community Quality of Life and Environmental Issues
- d) Local business related issues

A 24 hour in person or phone number should be provided by the construction manager to respond to emergencies, community comments, and complaints.

Web site & e-mail notification:

The Construction manager should establish and manage a web site and an e-mail list.

Community Boards could help accumulate a list to facilitate timely announcements/communications. Such announcements or notifications would include, but not be limited to: Pile Driving Schedules, Blasting Schedules, Hazardous Waste Removal and Protocols; water and utility interruptions or emergencies; any detected damage from monitoring devices or inspections of surrounding buildings. Appropriate signage should also be posted to notify affected buildings and businesses within 100' of the construction zone.

Pre Construction Survey

Contractors typically conduct pre construction surveys of the surrounding buildings. The Community Board can assist with notification and outreach. The adjoining property owners should be advised to also conduct their own pre construction surveys.

Traffic

Prior to obtaining any DOT permit there should be a meeting that includes the Community Board Traffic Committee to discuss changes in vehicular or pedestrian traffic patterns, roadway and sidewalk closures, the location of construction cranes and elevators, site gates, material storage, parking of private vehicles on or near the construction site and garbage removal. On some larger projects additional traffic control officers should be provided (The Board requested and got additional traffic officers for the West Houston St. reconstruction). The Construction Manager should make every effort to limit unnecessary idling times to 3 minutes.

Landmarks

About 60 percent of the buildings in Community Board 2 are land marked (compared to about 2 percent to 3 percent in the rest of the City). Compliance with The NYC Department of Buildings Technical Policy and Procedure Notice #10/88 *Procedures for the avoidance of damage to historic structures resulting from adjacent construction* (<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dob/html/reference/tppn4.shtml>) is required for most projects in our Board. Given the age of most of the other buildings in our district, the requirement for seismic monitors should be extended to all construction projects.

Foundations

The majority of complaints and serious problems that we have experienced occur during building demolitions, excavation, and construction of new foundations. The significant majority of foundations currently being installed on Manhattan are pile foundations. We would desire that all pile foundations be drilled, not hammered, however, drilled piles are much more expensive. Hammered piles need careful seismic monitoring. Underpinning of the surrounding buildings needs to be carefully monitored.

The City already requires state of the art methods to control dust and hazardous materials during demolition.

Noise

Noise and Vibration control are also major issues. Most sites in our district require dewatering and the pumps must run 24 hours a day for several months. These pumps need noise control and should be surrounded by acoustical materials. Pile Driving Hammers should be enclosed with acoustical shrouds. Seismic monitoring should be required for all foundation and demolition work.

The Board has also received numerous complaints regarding cooling towers and fans for kitchen vent hoods. They should be installed as high up on the roof as possible and as far away from residential uses as possible. The equipment should be mounted using vibration isolators. In a few cases acoustical barriers were needed.

General Environmental Protection Protocols:

All construction machinery on the site is required to follow Local Law 79, which mandates the usage of Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel Fuel and proper retro-fitted emissions devices to lessen the diesel particulates emitted during the construction period.

Rodent Control

During excavation the rats come out. A qualified pest control company should come on site a week before the start of work and bait the site and adjoining catch basins. Regular pest control should continue at least through completion of the foundations.

Extended work hours

Most community residents prefer that there will be no weekend or evening work except in the specific case of emergency, defined only as a dangerous condition and not to include monetary or scheduling considerations. Situations have arisen when weekend work was in the best interest of the community in which case the Community Board should conduct a neighborhood meeting and advise the Department of Buildings on the issuance of a weekend permit.

APPENDIX 3:
Liz Christy Garden Protection and Improvement Agreement 8/4/05

The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and Department of Housing Preservation and Development are pleased to announce an agreement to mitigate the effects of construction of the Chrystie Place II building at Cooper Square on the adjacent Liz Christy garden. The garden is on East Houston Street between the Bowery and Second Avenue on Manhattan's Lower East Side. The City has negotiated a creative deal under which the developer, Avalon Bay Communities, has agreed to reconfigure the building and spend \$159,250 on mitigation for the garden. This will allow housing construction -- including affordable units -- to begin. As the agreement was devised the City listened carefully to the gardeners and responded to major concerns they raised.

Under the agreement -- devised with the input of the Liz Christy gardeners and professional arborists -- Avalon Bay will reconfigure the building to protect specific trees in the garden. However, in order to be able to build to the property line a temporary encroachment into the garden will be necessary to shore up the ground while the foundation is being poured. This will prevent any collapse in the garden. The builders will excavate no more than three feet on to the Garden property for this shoring process, affecting only about 3 percent of the total square footage. During this process Avalon Bay will mitigate the construction in several ways and will provide money for restoration after construction is completed.

Under the details of the carefully negotiated agreement Avalon Bay will:

- Provide \$80,000 for a new steel-picket fence around Liz Christy and the Rock and Rose gardens
- Provide a \$50,000 plant replacement fund for new trees and plantings upon completion of the work that requires the temporary encroachment.
- Provide \$20,000 to remove rock and debris from adjacent Rock and Rose garden at the gardeners' direction.
- Provide \$2,000 to install cobblestone treepits around the street trees surrounding the garden
- Provide \$7,250 for a trellis along the eastern portion of the garden's property line to support vines and for a water and electricity hook-up to the garden
- Pay for a consulting arborist and a consulting landscape architect.
- Redesign the scaffolding to maximize sunlight for the garden.
- Coordinate the schedule of work with gardeners to allow them access to garden after hours.
- Redesign the eastern portion of building to not be at property line in order to preserve a significant tree, the Dawn Redwood.
- Redesign the placement of pilings and retaining wall on the western portion of building to preserve a mature Blue Atlas Cedar.

- Redesign the building so the windows on first floor will not look straight out on garden.

The building being constructed, Chrystie Place II, will contain approximately 206 units of housing of which 20 percent will be affordable units reserved for families earning less than \$37,680 for a family of four. It is part of the four building Cooper Square mixed-income development that will include a total of 712 rental units as well as a recreational and community facility with a swimming pool, gym, activity rooms, and a basketball court. The affordable housing units are a part of Mayor Bloomberg's New Housing Marketplace plan, to fund the creation and preservation of homes and apartments for more than 200,000 New Yorkers through 2008.

APPENDIX 4: Green Building Guidelines

U. S. Green Building Council: LEED 2009 for Neighborhood Development Rating System¹

The LEED for Neighborhood Development rating system passed USGBC's ballot and has received approval from our partner organizations, the Congress for the New Urbanism and the Natural Resources Defense Council. The rating system now represents two-and-a-half years of market and user feedback.

While registration for new projects is not anticipated to open until 2010, the balloted rating system can be downloaded for review by anyone interested, including for-profit and nonprofit developers, owners, others involved in projects that may seek LEED for Neighborhood Development certification, and local governments interested in reviewing the rating system for possible incentives or as an evaluation tool.

Battery Park City Green Guidelines²

Battery Park City Authority leads the way in setting standards for healthy and sustainable environments.

In January 2000, the Battery Park City Authority published the [*Residential Environmental Guidelines*](#), to establish a process for the creation of environmentally responsible residential buildings, appreciably ahead of current standards and practices for development. These guidelines were responsible for the construction of the first "green" residential tower in the United States. This innovative building, The Solaire, was the first in a succession of residential buildings that will become the model for healthier, ecologically responsible environments where occupants collectively enjoy the benefits of living in a "green" community.

Seeking to bring the same leadership to the field of Commercial and Institutional development, the Battery Park City Authority issued the [*Commercial / Institutional Environmental Guidelines*](#) in March 2002. These guidelines respond to increased public awareness of environmental conservation and increased demand for high quality and healthier working environments. They provide both the direction and the metrics for design strategies such that the resultant buildings are outstanding examples of environmental responsibility, thereby educating and influencing the real estate market and construction industry as a whole.

LMDC Green Guidelines [TK]

¹ LEED-ND Compliance: U. S. Green Building Council
<http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=148>
² <http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=148>

APPENDIX 5:

“What Is Education For? Six myths about the foundations of modern education, and six new principles to replace them”³

We are accustomed to thinking of learning as good in and of itself. But as environmental educator David Orr reminds us, our education up till now has in some ways created a monster. This essay is adapted from his commencement address to the graduating class of 1990 at Arkansas College. It prompted many in our office to wonder why such speeches are made at the end, rather than the beginning, of the collegiate experience.

David Orr is the founder of the Meadowcreek Project, an environmental education center in Fox, AR, and is currently on the faculty of Oberlin College in Ohio. Reprinted from Ocean Arks International's excellent quarterly tabloid Annals of Earth, Vol. VIII, No. 2, 1990. Subscriptions \$10/year from 10 Shanks Pond Road, Falmouth, MA 02540.

If today is a typical day on planet Earth, we will lose 116 square miles of rainforest, or about an acre a second. We will lose another 72 square miles to encroaching deserts, as a result of human mismanagement and overpopulation. We will lose 40 to 100 species, and no one knows whether the number is 40 or 100. Today the human population will increase by 250,000. And today we will add 2,700 tons of chlorofluorocarbons to the atmosphere and 15 million tons of carbon. Tonight the Earth will be a little hotter, its waters more acidic, and the fabric of life more threadbare.

The truth is that many things on which your future health and prosperity depend are in dire jeopardy: climate stability, the resilience and productivity of natural systems, the beauty of the natural world, and biological diversity.

It is worth noting that this is not the work of ignorant people. It is, rather, largely the result of work by people with BAs, BSs, LLBs, MBAs, and PhDs. Elie Wiesel made a similar point to the Global Forum in Moscow last winter when he said that the designers and perpetrators of the Holocaust were the heirs of Kant and Goethe. In most respects the Germans were the best educated people on Earth, but their education did not serve as an adequate barrier to barbarity. What was wrong with their education? In Wiesel's words: "It emphasized theories instead of values, concepts rather than human beings, abstraction rather than consciousness, answers instead of questions, ideology and efficiency rather than conscience."

The same could be said of the way our education has prepared us to think about the natural world. It is a matter of no small consequence that the only people who have lived sustainably on the planet for any length of time could not read, or, like the Amish, do not make a fetish of reading. My point is simply that education is no guarantee of decency, prudence, or wisdom. More of the same kind of education will only compound our problems. This is not an argument for ignorance, but rather a statement that the worth of education must now be measured against the standards of decency and human survival - the issues now looming so large before us in the decade of the 1990s and beyond. It is not education that will save us, but education of a certain kind.

SANE MEANS, MAD ENDS

What went wrong with contemporary culture and with education? There is some insight in literature: Christopher Marlowe's Faust, who trades his soul for knowledge and power; Mary

³ Orr, David. "What Is Education For? Six myths about the foundations of modern education, and six new principles to replace them." [The Learning Revolution \(IC#27\)](#) Winter 1991, Page 52.
Community Task Force on NYU Development Findings and Recommendations March 2010

Shelley's Dr. Frankenstein, who refuses to take responsibility for his creation; Herman Melville's Captain Ahab, who says "All my means are sane, my motive and object mad." In these characters we encounter the essence of the modern drive to dominate nature.

Historically, Francis Bacon's proposed union between knowledge and power foreshadows the contemporary alliance between government, business, and knowledge that has wrought so much mischief. Galileo's separation of the intellect foreshadows the dominance of the analytical mind over that part given to creativity, humor, and wholeness. And in Descartes' epistemology, one finds the roots of the radical separation of self and object. Together these three laid the foundations for modern education, foundations now enshrined in myths we have come to accept without question. Let me suggest six.

First, there is the myth that *ignorance is a solvable problem*. Ignorance is *not* a solvable problem, but rather an inescapable part of the human condition. The advance of knowledge always carries with it the advance of some form of ignorance. In 1930, after Thomas Midgely Jr. discovered CFCs, what had previously been a piece of trivial ignorance became a critical, life-threatening gap in the human understanding of the biosphere. No one thought to ask "what does this substance do to what?" until the early 1970s, and by 1990 CFCs had created a general thinning of the ozone layer worldwide. With the discovery of CFCs knowledge increased; but like the circumference of an expanding circle, ignorance grew as well.

A second myth is that *with enough knowledge and technology we can manage planet Earth..* "Managing the planet" has a nice a ring to it. It appeals to our fascination with digital readouts, computers, buttons and dials. But the complexity of Earth and its life systems can never be safely managed. The ecology of the top inch of topsoil is still largely unknown, as is its relationship to the larger systems of the biosphere.

What might be managed is *us*: human desires, economies, politics, and communities. But our attention is caught by those things that avoid the hard choices implied by politics, morality, ethics, and common sense. It makes far better sense to reshape ourselves to fit a finite planet than to attempt to reshape the planet to fit our infinite wants.

A third myth is that *knowledge is increasing and by implication human goodness*. There is an information explosion going on, by which I mean a rapid increase of data, words, and paper. But this explosion should not be taken for an increase in knowledge and wisdom, which cannot so easily be measured. What can be said truthfully is that some knowledge is increasing while other kinds of knowledge are being lost. David Ehrenfeld has pointed out that biology departments no longer hire faculty in such areas as systematics, taxonomy, or ornithology. In other words, important knowledge is being lost because of the recent overemphasis on molecular biology and genetic engineering, which are more lucrative, but not more important, areas of inquiry. We still lack the the science of land health that Aldo Leopold called for half a century ago.

It is not just knowledge in certain areas that we're losing, but vernacular knowledge as well, by which I mean the knowledge that people have of their places. In the words of Barry Lopez:

"[I am] forced to the realization that something strange, if not dangerous, is afoot. Year by year the number of people with firsthand experience in the land dwindles. Rural populations continue to shift to the cities.... In the wake of this loss of personal and local knowledge, the knowledge from which a real geography is derived, the knowledge on which a country must ultimately stand, has come something hard to define but I think sinister and unsettling."

In the confusion of data with knowledge is a deeper mistake that learning will make us better people. But learning, as Loren Eiseley once said, is endless and "In itself it will never make us ethical [people]." Ultimately, it may be the knowledge of the good that is most threatened by all of our other advances. All things considered, it is possible that we are becoming more ignorant of the things we must know to live well and sustainably on the Earth.

A fourth myth of higher education is that *we can adequately restore that which we have dismantled*. In the modern curriculum we have fragmented the world into bits and pieces called disciplines and subdisciplines. As a result, after 12 or 16 or 20 years of education, most students graduate without any broad integrated sense of the unity of things. The consequences for their personhood and for the planet are large. For example, we routinely produce economists who lack the most rudimentary knowledge of ecology. This explains why our national accounting systems do not subtract the costs of biotic impoverishment, soil erosion, poisons in the air or water, and resource depletion from gross national product. We add the price of the sale of a bushel of wheat to GNP while forgetting to subtract the three bushels of topsoil lost in its production. As a result of incomplete education, we've fooled ourselves into thinking that we are much richer than we are.

Fifth, there is a myth that *the purpose of education is that of giving you the means for upward mobility and success*. Thomas Merton once identified this as the "mass production of people literally unfit for anything except to take part in an elaborate and completely artificial charade." When asked to write about his own success, Merton responded by saying that "if it so happened that I had once written a best seller, this was a pure accident, due to inattention and naiveté, and I would take very good care never to do the same again." His advice to students was to "be anything you like, be madmen, drunks, and bastards of every shape and form, but at all costs avoid one thing: success."

The plain fact is that the planet does not need more "successful" people. But it does desperately need more peacemakers, healers, restorers, storytellers, and lovers of every shape and form. It needs people who live well in their places. It needs people of moral courage willing to join the fight to make the world habitable and humane. And these needs have little to do with success as our culture has defined it.

Finally, there is a myth that *our culture represents the pinnacle of human achievement*: we alone are modern, technological, and developed. This, of course, represents cultural arrogance of the worst sort, and a gross misreading of history and anthropology. Recently this view has taken the form that we won the cold war and that the triumph of capitalism over communism is complete. Communism failed because it produced too little at too high a cost. But capitalism has also failed because it produces too much, shares too little, also at too high a cost to our children and grandchildren. Communism failed as an ascetic morality. Capitalism failed because it destroys morality altogether. This is not the happy world that any number of feckless advertisers and politicians describe. We have built a world of sybaritic wealth for a few and Calcuttan poverty for a growing underclass. At its worst it is a world of crack on the streets, insensate violence, anomie, and the most desperate kind of poverty. The fact is that we live in a disintegrating culture. In the words of Ron Miller, editor of *Holistic Review*:

"Our culture does not nourish that which is best or noblest in the human spirit. It does not cultivate vision, imagination, or aesthetic or spiritual sensitivity. It does not encourage gentleness, generosity, caring, or compassion. Increasingly in the late 20th Century, the economic-technocratic-statist worldview has become a monstrous destroyer of what is loving and life-affirming in the human soul."

WHAT EDUCATION MUST BE FOR

Measured against the agenda of human survival, how might we rethink education? Let me suggest six principles.

First, *all education is environmental education*. By what is included or excluded we teach students that they are part of or apart from the natural world. To teach economics, for example, without reference to the laws of thermodynamics or those of ecology is to teach a fundamentally important ecological lesson: that physics and ecology have nothing to do with the economy. That just happens to be dead wrong. The same is true throughout all of the curriculum.

A second principle comes from the Greek concept of *paideia*. *The goal of education is not mastery of subject matter, but of one's person*. Subject matter is simply the tool. Much as one would use a hammer and chisel to carve a block of marble, one uses ideas and knowledge to forge one's own personhood. For the most part we labor under a confusion of ends and means, thinking that the goal of education is to stuff all kinds of facts, techniques, methods, and information into the student's mind, regardless of how and with what effect it will be used. The Greeks knew better.

Third, I would like to propose that *knowledge carries with it the responsibility to see that it is well used in the world*. The results of a great deal of contemporary research bear resemblance to those foreshadowed by Mary Shelley: monsters of technology and its byproducts for which no one takes responsibility or is even expected to take responsibility. Whose responsibility is Love Canal? Chernobyl? Ozone depletion? The Valdez oil spill? Each of these tragedies were possible because of knowledge created for which no one was ultimately responsible. This may finally come to be seen for what I think it is: a problem of scale. Knowledge of how to do vast and risky things has far outrun our ability to use it responsibly. Some of it cannot be used responsibly, which is to say safely and to consistently good purposes.

Fourth, *we cannot say that we know something until we understand the effects of this knowledge on real people and their communities*. I grew up near Youngstown, Ohio, which was largely destroyed by corporate decisions to "disinvest" in the economy of the region. In this case MBAs, educated in the tools of leveraged buyouts, tax breaks, and capital mobility have done what no invading army could do: they destroyed an American city with total impunity on behalf of something called the "bottom line." But the bottom line for society includes other costs, those of unemployment, crime, higher divorce rates, alcoholism, child abuse, lost savings, and wrecked lives. In this instance what was taught in the business schools and economics departments did not include the value of good communities or the human costs of a narrow destructive economic rationality that valued efficiency and economic abstractions above people and community.

My fifth principle follows and is drawn from William Blake. It has to do with *the importance of "minute particulars" and the power of examples over words*. Students hear about global responsibility while being educated in institutions that often invest their financial weight in the most irresponsible things. The lessons being taught are those of hypocrisy and ultimately despair. Students learn, without anyone ever saying it, that they are helpless to overcome the frightening gap between ideals and reality. What is desperately needed are faculty and administrators who provide role models of integrity, care, thoughtfulness, *and* institutions that are capable of embodying ideals wholly and completely in all of their operations.

Finally, I would like to propose that *the way learning occurs is as important as the content of particular courses*. Process is important for learning. Courses taught as lecture courses tend to induce passivity. Indoor classes create the illusion that learning only occurs inside four walls

isolated from what students call without apparent irony the "real world." Dissecting frogs in biology classes teaches lessons about nature that no one would verbally profess. Campus architecture is crystallized pedagogy that often reinforces passivity, monologue, domination, and artificiality. My point is simply that students are being taught in various and subtle ways beyond the content of courses.

AN ASSIGNMENT FOR THE CAMPUS

If education is to be measured against the standard of sustainability, what can be done? I would like to make four proposals. First, I would like to propose that you engage in a campus-wide dialogue about the way you conduct your business as educators. Does four years here make your graduates better planetary citizens or does it make them, in Wendell Berry's words, "itinerant professional vandals"? Does this college contribute to the development of a sustainable regional economy or, in the name of efficiency, to the processes of destruction?

My second suggestion is to examine resource flows on this campus: food, energy, water, materials, and waste. Faculty and students should together study the wells, mines, farms, feedlots, and forests that supply the campus as well as the dumps where you send your waste. Collectively, begin a process of finding ways to shift the buying power of this institution to support better alternatives that do less environmental damage, lower carbon dioxide emissions, reduce use of toxic substances, promote energy efficiency and the use of solar energy, help to build a sustainable regional economy, cut long-term costs, and provide an example to other institutions. The results of these studies should be woven into the curriculum as interdisciplinary courses, seminars, lectures, and research. No student should graduate without understanding how to analyze resource flows and without the opportunity to participate in the creation of real solutions to real problems.

Third, re-examine how your endowment works. Is it invested according to the Valdez principles? Is it invested in companies doing responsible things that the world needs? Can some part of it be invested locally to help leverage energy efficiency and the evolution of a sustainable economy throughout the region?

Finally, I propose that you set a goal of ecological literacy for all of your students. No student should graduate from this or any other educational institution without a basic comprehension of:

- the laws of thermodynamics
- the basic principles of ecology
- carrying capacity
- energetics
- least-cost, end-use analysis
- how to live well in a place
- limits of technology
- appropriate scale
- sustainable agriculture and forestry
- steady-state economics
- environmental ethics

Do graduates of this college, in Aldo Leopold's words, know that "they are only cogs in an ecological mechanism such that, if they will work with that mechanism, their mental wealth and material wealth can expand indefinitely (and) if they refuse to work with it, it will ultimately grind them to dust." Leopold asked: "If education does not teach us these things, then what is education for?"

APPENDIX 6: Green Living at Dartmouth College⁴

We refer the Task Force and NYU to an excellent report prepared by students at Dartmouth in 2005 that summarizes many existing proposals for a more sustainable learning environment and proposes some valuable specific practices.

Among the proposals we endorse:

- a. Incorporate education about environmental consciousness into curriculum;
- b. Spell out a clear university-wide environmental policy;
- c. Incorporate experience with building performance initiatives such LEED requirements into architect selection process;
- d. Create a Carbon Reduction Working Group to monitor university-wide carbon emissions, with the goal of eventually making the university carbon-neutral;
- e. Retrofit heating systems;
- f. Install motion sensors for lights in public areas;
- g. Create and distribute posters for every dorm illustrating energy usage updated each month, quantifying recent electricity and heating use, waste production, and recycling; sponsor energy-saving and recycling contests between dorms;
- h. Circulate list of energy efficient appliances to incoming students; encourage use of Energy Star rated appliances by students and faculty;
- i. Incorporate sustainable practices into student orientation;
- j. Rent a refrigerator program;
- k. Use EZ Save software to power down computers when not in use;
- l. Use Vending Miser, a sensor that turns off the lights and the compressors on a vending machine containing non-perishable items when not in use;
- m. Institute a campus shared-bike program.

We also endorse the seven core principles of the “Brown is Green” program (1990):⁵

1. The University should, within limits of capital availability, invest in any resource conservation project that has an expected return on investment (ROI) greater than the current borrowing rate.
2. For all renovation and new construction projects:

⁴ http://www.dartmouth.edu/~envs/docs/2005_envs_50_summary.pdf.

⁵ http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Brown_Is_Green/

- The choice of architects, engineers, and consultants should be based in part upon their demonstrated expertise in resource conservation design.
 - Architects and engineers shall submit a detailed life cycle cost analysis of resource conservation options for each project, and shall certify that all options that satisfy the ROI policy (#1 above) have been analyzed.
 - Engineering proposals prior to construction and change orders during construction will be reviewed for impact on the efficiency of any plumbing, electrical or HVAC system.
3. Purchasing choices of items with significant resource impact should favor resource-efficiency except when special need is demonstrated.
 4. Decision-makers should be made aware of and consider the economic and environmental costs of their decisions.
 5. Conserving energy in University buildings should be a priority, with the following goals:
 - Whenever possible, heating systems should be upgraded to allow: more uniform system control (i.e. adding more zones) and increased occupant control over room temperature during non-setback hours of operation; lighting systems should provide illumination as efficiently as possible. Unnecessary illumination (e.g. when areas are unoccupied; lit with adequate daylight) should be eliminated wherever feasible.
 6. Improving resource efficiency in University communications should be A priority.
 7. Resource efficiency and environmental considerations should be incorporated in student orientation and employee training



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