IF HONORS STUDENTS WERE PEOPLE

Holistic Honors Education

by Samuel Schuman

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

A CLASSROOM

The first day of classes is always an exciting time at any college or university. Picture such a day: an energetic Assistant Professor strides into an honors seminar room and takes her place at the head of the table. Facing her are ten honors students, eager to begin their first-year honors seminar. The young women and men are bright, eager, and ready to go. Their pens are new, their notebooks are crisp, and their tablet computers are fully charged. They are ready to learn. The instructor clears her throat, takes a deep breath, and prepares to launch into the introduction to the seminar.

It is worth pausing for a few moments to ask what is known about these students beyond the fact that they are eager to learn. After all, the more teachers know about their students, the more effectively they can communicate with them, the more efficient their instruction will be. It turns out that much information about these students exists.

According to Alexander W. Astin, Helen S. Astin, and Jennifer A. Lindholm, one fact is known: regardless of the type of college,

public or private, large or small, where this hypothetical class is meeting, most students consider themselves to be religious and spiritual persons (*Cultivating, passim*).[1] Eight of these ten students believe that finding life's purpose is an important reason to go to college, eight attended religious services in the year before they came to college, and about the same number say they believe in God and pray. Of the ten students, one or two regularly meditate. Six of the students will discover that, in spite of their interest in exploring life's big questions during their college years, their professors will never raise or discuss those issues in their work together.

Seven or eight of these students describe themselves as searching for meaning and purpose in life.[2] That search for spiritual understanding and sustenance, in many cases, has not necessarily left them more at peace and contented. Sometimes it has left their spirits troubled. Three of the ten report that they have been diagnosed with at least one mental health condition during their young lifetimes, and about half of those or 13%, according to a 2010 survey of some 35,000 students at seventeen institutions by the Boynton Health Service at the University of Minnesota, have had such a diagnosis in the past year (7–12). At least one of them has been diagnosed with anxiety and two of the seats around the table (19.5%) could be filled with students who have been diagnosed with depression. More than three of the students report that they have engaged in high-risk or binge drinking. Two self-report that they have performed poorly on a test or important project because of their use of alcohol or drugs, and two of them have missed at least one class for that reason (Boynton 7–12).

Although on this first day of class these students look suitably scrubbed and energetic, in fact they are not in good shape physically. Three of them are overweight; one is clinically obese.[3] These students are at risk for metabolic syndrome, a group of five risk factors that are predictive of future medical problems such as diabetes and heart disease. How did this happen? In addition to poor eating habits, these young women and men, Cynthia M. Ferrara argues, are physically inactive. Only four of the ten students exercise regularly, and although this hypothetical college, like most, has a fitness

center, three of them never exercise at all. Half the class does not meet the minimum goal suggested by the Centers for Disease Control of 150 minutes of moderate physical activity every week.[4] Yet in the last decade, scientific research has demonstrated conclusively that regular exercise stimulates brain activity. That means that about half of the students in the introductory honors seminar are making choices that weaken their collegiate learning experiences.

Although these honors students are highly motivated and intellectually promising, they are not empty cognitive vessels ready to be filled with professorial knowledge. They are, instead, complex, multifaceted young people, sometimes troubled, often delighted and delightful. While at college they are learning how to live their lives not just as intellectual creatures, but as whole, integrated human beings, with minds, spirits, and bodies.

Unfortunately, college and university teachers, administrators, and staff in today's institutions and in honors programs and honors colleges may be less likely than in the past to view students as complex, many-sided individuals. Because many professors may find that compartmentalizing their function in the institution is inviting, they interact with students not as whole people but as disembodied intellects. A century ago virtually every college and university in America had a physical education requirement, and most, even the public institutions, also required chapel. By the middle of the twentieth century, required gym and chapel (sometimes called convocation) were increasingly obsolete, and they became objects of student and faculty dissatisfaction in the 1960s. With a few exceptions, mostly at specialized institutions such as faith-based private colleges and military institutions, these requirements have been eliminated, going the way of the freshman beanie and the housemother. This evolution in postsecondary education seems natural and proper; few lament their passing and most applaud it. Attention to the bodies and spirits of students has moved to the optional periphery of colleges and universities. Emulating the Germanic model of the research university, American colleges redefined their role away from the earlier cultivation of the whole individual in favor of an entirely intellectual core mission. Honors programs

have often embraced this mission with even more zeal than the rest of the institutions of which they are a part. But when universities did away with required gym and chapel, by and large they forgot to ask what genuine human needs those mostly outdated elements of collegiate culture had been serving and what, if anything, should take their place. The pages that follow seek to demonstrate why and how contemporary American postsecondary honors education might restore some balance in the cultivation of minds, bodies, and spirits.[5]

Because of the austerity plaguing American postsecondary institutions during the early decades of the twenty-first century, they cannot easily afford the time, personnel, energy, and money to attend to their students' spirits and bodies as well as their minds. In a period when educators struggle to find the resources to perform their primary functions of teaching and learning, why should they assume more responsibilities for students' lives? In the chapters below, some answers to this question emerge:

- College-age women and men, including those in honors, are at a crucial time in their development, and for some four years of that important period, they are living their lives at schools. This observation is especially, but not exclusively, true at residential colleges. Students do not cease to exist after class; they do not think that their college experience is limited to cognitive cultivation. They are actively seeking answers to core questions about the meaning of their lives and their pathways for their futures. They are developing the physical habits, good and bad, that will determine their health and wellness for the remainder of their days. If educators are to serve as responsible guides and mentors, they have a responsibility to attend to the development of their students as whole persons.
- A somewhat more crass reason colleges and universities need to attend to these issues is that they will boost student recruitment. Prospective honors students and their parents often look for and at campus fitness centers. It is a rare college viewbook that does not affirm attention to the whole person.

- Most importantly by far, treating students as complete, complex persons strengthens powerfully the first and primary honors job of cultivating their intellects. Because physical activity has a demonstrable positive effect on learning and memory, honors programs can help students become better learners by stimulating them to develop regular patterns of exercise. In addition, because spiritual issues are central to students' understanding their own and other cultures, especially in grappling with the great works and the biggest questions that are usually the focus of honors curricula, professors will do a better job of teaching if they include those issues in their courses, or at least if they do not exclude them entirely from their syllabi.

A more integrative approach to college learning often involves doing some things differently, not just adding more things or making radical changes. Thus, I suggest below that one way to stimulate increased physical activity for students might be to modify the daily/weekly class schedule so as to create some periods each week that invite students, faculty, and staff to exercise by not scheduling other activities. This costs nothing (except, perhaps, a mild headache for the Registrar's office).

Today, most colleges and universities, from public two-year schools to Research I universities, from the wealthiest private institutions to the least affluent, offer students some options to improve wellness and probe spiritual matters. At wealthier institutions and at larger universities, the range of opportunities for students to improve wellness and probe spiritual issues is inevitably greater. Almost always these institutions house a fitness facility as well as some faith-based clubs or organizations. Those extracurricular options, however, are too often like the healthy food choices available at restaurants: rarely is any effort made to educate students about why they might want to take advantage of these possibilities. Indeed, in an honors culture that measures success and failure largely by classroom performance, students who work to develop themselves as whole persons risk being penalized. An hour at the fitness center is an hour away from the library; an evening's

discussion of one of life's big questions is an evening not spent studying chemistry. Colleges and universities need to find a middle ground between the *in loco parentis* requirements of a century ago and the peripheral options of today. This monograph suggests both *why* that balance is important to create and *how* to create it.

I will be focusing primarily upon spiritual and physical growth because I believe that cultivation of the intellect is what most contemporary American honors programs and colleges are already doing and doing well.[6] That focus does not mean that I advocate, in any way, the lessening of emphasis and weight upon intellectual development in honors work. Indeed, I would argue vigorously that of the triad of mind, body, and spirit, honors programs at colleges and universities must heed the first of these human attributes more than any other. This discussion does not seek to substitute spiritual growth and physical wellness for cerebration; however, it does suggest that the brain is best served by simultaneously cultivating the body and the spirit. The cultivation of physical vigor and spiritual depth enriches intellectual development.

PREVIEW

The next chapter of this book scans the history of American higher education, focusing on the integrative and holistic aspects of colleges and universities and how these have been defined and developed over nearly four centuries. I give some attention to developments over the past fifty years that have deflected many institutions away from their traditional holistic orientation. The remainder of *If Honors Students Were People* is divided into two sections, the first focusing upon theory, the second on practice.

First, I examine the area of physical fitness and wellness, athletics, and sports: the cultivation of the body. I discuss some of the most recent discoveries of neuroscience regarding the link between vigorous physical activity and cognitive development. I also look at intercollegiate sports from both the positive and negative perspectives. I briefly survey a few of the ways the bodily activities, sometimes called integrative disciplines, like yoga and tai chi, have found a place in today's colleges and universities. Finally, I turn

to the subject of physical work, first looking at some psychosocial rethinking of physical work and then at an illustrative example of a particular institution in the work college category.

A second theoretical chapter examines the broad area of spirituality at college. The groundbreaking studies done at UCLA through the Higher Education Research Institute project on "Spirituality in Higher Education" reveal the spiritual lives of contemporary college students and, to a lesser extent, their teachers. I then look at contemplative practices such as meditation and mindfulness. Two profiles focus on national programs, both originating at Wellesley College but now widely disseminated throughout the nation's schools. Finally, I examine in some depth the issue of moral education and the interesting debate surrounding it.

Part Two looks in depth at some practices that specific colleges and universities have instituted to integrate the physical and spiritual cultivation of students into their undergraduate programs. This section includes material about honors and also features some information about several institutions that have tried intriguing holistic programs unconnected to honors. Although this survey is by no means comprehensive, it exemplifies some of the newer or more interesting ways that a broad range of institutions and programs have addressed students' physical and spiritual needs by integrating physical and spiritual enrichment into their current institutional profile. These institutions and their programs are described, not as ideal models to be imitated but as cases that merit thoughtful study: they are stimulating examples of what has and has not succeeded for real colleges and universities.

This second section of the book reflects a concern that contemporary American higher education has a lamentable tendency to grow somewhat insular in a way that is unnecessary and counterproductive. Within institutions, offices and individuals in one area may not be aware of what is happening across campus; thus they lose opportunities for effective positive reinforcement of each other's activities. Too often, for example, little communication transpires between the honors program and the fitness center, not to mention the intercollegiate athletics program. Those working in

student affairs may not be aware of recent developments in the curriculum. Even more dysfunctionally, the various institutional segments of the postsecondary community often ignore each other or view each other with hostility or through the lens of institutional competition. Honors programs at public secular institutions could learn much from the largely ignored but generally thriving honors constituency at religious colleges. Private liberal arts colleges might benefit from paying heed to what is happening in honors at public liberal arts colleges. Large research universities and small liberal arts colleges might well learn something about the possibilities for holistic higher education by looking at each other with appreciation and open-mindedness. If all students should be educated as whole persons, asking what a range of universities and colleges are doing to achieve a rounded and integrated undergraduate experience is worthwhile.

Throughout *If Honors Students Were People*, interviews with a variety of individuals provide a personal perspective to the larger issues being described. These conversations appear between and within chapters and include honors students, a faculty member holding a named professorship in honors, a campus chaplain, and a national higher education leader. Because honors students are people, they have voices, and interspersed among the pages that follow, some of their voices and the voices of those who work with them each collegiate day are heard. In particular, I have encouraged the students to develop their ideas fully and have frequently incorporated their thoughts and words. They speak and write in the style of fine college students having a thoughtful conversation, not, mercifully, as scholars or academic writers. For me, and I know for most people in this vocation, attending to the words of imaginative, reflective, bright, and growing women and men is a constant delight. Transmitting the meditations of these outstanding young adults is an honor.

HONORS, PHYSICAL WELLNESS, AND SPIRITUAL CULTIVATION: A RATIONALE

Why should honors programs and colleges (that is to say, honors directors, deans, faculty, and students and those who supervise honors programs such as provosts or academic vice presidents) be particularly concerned about this constellation of seemingly non-intellectual issues?

1. An impressive range of contemporary scientific studies has confirmed the anecdotal and intuitive belief that a fit body enhances a keen mind. (See Chapter 3.) The adage asserting the relationship of a sound mind in a sound body is not simply an abstract humane ideal but a functional prescription for intellectual development.
2. Honors students are, after all, students, and substantial and incontrovertible evidence suggests that spiritual matters are important to a wide range of college students across the spectrum of American higher education. Honors students are, like all humans, physical, fleshly beings. Bodily fitness and wellness are universally understood to promote longevity, personal effectiveness, and a sense of individual well-being.
3. Honors programs and colleges include in their curricula works of substance and challenge, often classics. Those works often embrace a spiritual dimension at their cores.
4. Honors programs and colleges offer an outstanding undergraduate learning experience to their participants; substantial evidence suggests that practices that cultivate students' spirits also enrich their intellectual development. (See Chapter 4.)

Fitness and Learning

"When I get some exercise, I can think better." This truism is often uttered and heard. Chapter 3 will discuss significant research

in the field of brain science that has established physiological justification for this linkage. In the past few years, scientists have come to an increased understanding of the biological and chemical processes that link bodily exercise with heightened intellectual capacities. Laboratory experiments have demonstrated that physical activity stimulates neurogenesis, the creation of new brain cells. Out of the lab and in the classroom, programs such as the one at the Naperville, IL, high school, which is described in Chapter 3, have demonstrated concrete, practical boosts in learning activity directly attributable to fitness activities.

Given the increasing evidence for this link between exercise and learning, educators dedicated to undergraduate honors learning should pay serious attention to physical as well as intellectual cultivation. If they know that certain activities promote learning, memory, and thinking, they must not fail to promote those activities for themselves and their honors students. This need is particularly acute because of the image that honors students all too often have, both across campus and to themselves: they are frequently seen, and sometimes see themselves, as one-sided bookworms, pale from spending all their days in the library or lab, focused solely on their studies.[7]

The Spiritual Quest of College Students

For a long time, the higher education community made a set of assumptions about the spiritual condition and development of college students that were largely untested in any sort of rigorous way. Until about a century ago, most college students were white, male, and Protestant. In the first half of the twentieth century, the academy became less white, less male, and less Christian. After the turmoil in collegiate culture in the 1960s, however, an opposite assumption increasingly dominated public consciousness and often academics' own sense of self. American media and popular public opinion often focused on countercultural aspects of college life. One common perception became that colleges, especially public ones but also private, non-sectarian schools, were places where students were weaned from faith, religion, and spirituality by

largely secular, indeed atheistic and anti-religion professors. Naomi Schaefer Riley maintains in *God on the Quad*, a popular 2005 book, that students who bring a faith, particularly a Christian faith, to most colleges and universities in America today are "a beleaguered minority, both in the classroom where their beliefs are derided and in their extracurricular lives" (1).[8] She asserts that most colleges and universities are characterized by the "intellectual relativism of professors and the moral relativism" of students (5). Other writers, such as James Tunstead Burtchaell, George Marsden, and Julie Reuben, share this view that mainstream American post-secondary education is peopled with the enemies of religious faith. They make these claims without supporting evidence, and, it turns out, their assertions are not true.

Ironically, within mainstream American post-secondary education, a similarly slanted and unproven set of assumptions exist about faith-based schools: religious colleges exist to promulgate unexamined religious doctrine; they discourage critical thinking, especially about matters of faith; they eschew modern science; and their goal is to turn out robotically faithful, politically reactionary, humorless, uptight drones. These claims too lack supporting evidence and are also not true. Happily, Alexander Astin, one of the nation's most respected scholars of higher education, turned his attention and focused his considerable resources on the first misconception and the actual overall spiritual condition of today's American college students and professors, including, of course, honors students.[9] Astin and his colleagues at UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), including his wife Helen Astin, launched in 2003 the Spirituality in Higher Education project. They surveyed 112,000 first-year undergraduates in 2004, and a subset of 15,000 completed a follow-up study at the end of their junior year in 2007 (Astin, Astin, and Lindholm, *Cultivating*).[10] These students attended 136 colleges, of every size and sort, selected to be proportionally representative of the range of contemporary collegiate cultures. The project also surveyed 65,000 faculty members to ascertain the levels of their self-described spirituality and their related pedagogical principles and practices. The project defined

"spirituality" as the "inner" aspect of students' lives and identified the big questions: "*Who am I? What are my most deeply felt values? Do I have a mission or purpose in life? Why am I in college? What kind of person do I want to become?*" (1). I discuss the HERI study in some detail in Chapter 4, but here is a preview of just a few of the most important findings.

Students come to college with significant expectations in matters of the spirit. Over 80% report that "to find purpose in life" is an important reason for attending college (3). On a whole range of questions, an overwhelming majority of the entire range of first-year students described themselves as spiritual seekers, looking for their reasons for existing, seeking meaning and purpose in life. Students' self-reported spirituality increases between the start of the first year and the end of the third. On the other hand, modest but real declines over the same period occurred in college students' participation in institutionalized religious practices. Measures of what the research team sees as religious conservatism also decline. In sum, college students, including honors students, come to the whole spectrum of American higher education with a strong spiritual self-definition and seeking growth in their understanding of the meaning and purpose in life.[11]

Spirituality and the Honors Curriculum

Honors programs and colleges teach great works and important questions; the curricula feature courses with titles like "Masterpieces of the European Renaissance" or "Nature and Human Nature." One of the defining characteristics of honors is that faculty and students work with the biggest of issues and the biggest of books. An example is the case of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, often a key part of a British or world literature course. Studying the play, instructors and students can talk about the imagery and metrics of its brilliant language or its links to the political history of late Elizabethan and early Jacobean Britain. While these topics are interesting and important subjects for classroom consideration, readers distort the play and diminish Shakespeare if they fail to see this work as having at its core questions of the human spirit. Pondering

these big questions and examining great works must include focusing on matters of the spirit. After all, what Hamlet discovers in the course of the play is that "there's a divinity that shapes our ends, / Rough-hew them how we will" (5.2.10–11). As Hamlet goes to his death, he alludes to scripture (Matt. 10:29): "There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all" (5.2.221–24). What happens in *Hamlet*, what frees the melancholy Dane from his paralysis, is that he finds God. Or perhaps, on the boat trip to England, God finds him.

For most of the other giants in the literary canon, making a similar case is easy; indeed, what is difficult is eluding making a similar case. The central image of Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* is that of the pilgrimage from tavern to shrine, from the secular to the sacred, from the Knight's sweet paganism and the Miller's lustful physicality to the Parson's sermon and Chaucer's holy retraction. John Milton and Edmund Spenser write, respectively, of Paradise lost and the Knight of the Red Cross. T. S. Eliot depicts the pointless horror of a spiritual wasteland. Leland de la Durantaye writes: "A point on which all readers can agree is that great literature . . . urges us to see our own fates as connected to those of others and to link the starry sky we see above us with whatever moral laws we might sense within" (6).

Certainly, the teaching and reading of great literature engage people deeply in matters of the spirit. Obviously, the teaching of philosophy or political science or sociology does as well. Many teachers of physics and mathematics make the same cases for their disciplines. They speak of sharing with students the wonder of discovering and exploring a world of pattern and design. A key goal of honors curricula and pedagogy is to go far beyond the transfer of techniques and superficial knowledge to the cultivation of understanding and the seeking of wisdom. That means grappling with life's biggest issues, including the nature of learning and spirituality.

Spirituality and Learning

One of the findings of the HERI Spirituality in Higher Education project that is particularly interesting to those working in honors is its examination of the factors that strengthened students' perceptions of themselves as spiritual persons. Among the key collegiate programs that enhanced student spiritual development are interdisciplinary courses, service learning, and study abroad. Those spiritually enriching endeavors, the HERI projects' findings argue, simultaneously produce positive academic results: "educational experiences and practices that promote spiritual development—especially service learning, interdisciplinary courses, study abroad, self-reflection, and meditation—have uniformly positive effects on traditional college outcomes" (Higher Education).

Similarly, the National Survey of Student Engagement also found that "students who frequently engage in spirituality-enhancing practices also participate more in a broad cross-section of collegiate activities," and such broad participation, in turn, correlates highly with student success measures, such as persistence to graduation and GPA (Kuh and Gonyea).[12] These experiences and practices that promote spiritual development and enhance academic achievement are common, often defining, features of honors programs and colleges.

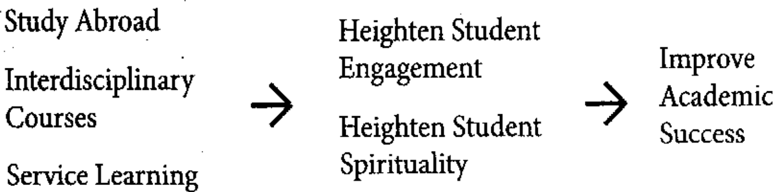
Honors is at the forefront of promoting interdisciplinary work. While not all honors programs and colleges feature interdisciplinary seminars or classes, this characteristic is probably the most common distinction that sets honors apart from other offerings at universities and colleges. Often, honors is the primary, and not infrequently the only, venue in which interdisciplinary course work is a feature, especially in fiscally challenged times. It is often the primary or only venue in which such interdisciplinary work is regularly taught by a team of teachers rather than an individual. So, for example, the honors program at the College of New Rochelle in New York, a small, Roman Catholic women's institution, offers a series of interdisciplinary seminars each year. Enrollment is limited to a maximum of ten students. The courses are interdisciplinary in content and methodology. They include offerings such as Discourses of Slavery in America and Women and the Law.

Over the past decade, service learning and international education have increasingly become core aspects of the honors endeavors of many honors programs and colleges. It is a rare honors program today that does not offer opportunities for service learning, and many now require it. The Irvin R. Reid Honors College of Wayne State University in Detroit, for example, has three specific requirements for students seeking to graduate with University Honors: an introductory seminar, a culminating thesis, and a service-learning opportunity within the honors college.

Increasingly, honors programs and colleges are stressing the values of international education.[13] A few illustrative examples: the Sally McDonnell Barkley Honors College at the University of Mississippi affirms that "studying abroad is an important emphasis of the program" (University of Mississippi). It supports that emphasis by offering fellowships for a semester or year abroad for honors students. The honors program at Keene State University has a two-week May term study abroad program for honors students at the end of their second year.[14]

What many honors programs practice curricularly and pedagogically is consistent with the findings of research on student success by Kuh and Gonyea; Kuh, Kenzie, Buckley, Bridges, and Hayek; and Astin in *Cultivating*. That research has demonstrated empirically a set of practices that strengthen students' sense of themselves as spiritual persons. These practices, which are common in honors programs and colleges, strengthen their academic achievements. In other words, the educational practices that strengthen student spirituality simultaneously strengthen student academic performance. In chart form:

Honors Practices



Honors administrators, students, and teachers will want to heed the issues of spiritual and physical cultivation highlighted in the following chapters. Having these concepts pervade all of America's colleges and universities would be ideal. Honors and non-honors students alike come to college with spiritual needs and aspirations, and all would benefit from physical exercise. But, given the current constraints, mostly budgetary, under which so many institutions of higher learning are operating today, that universality is impossible. Honors has often been in the past, and continues to be today, an important venue for experimenting with new and different pedagogies and curricula, serving as a stalking horse for the larger collegiate world. Honors educators were pioneers in areas such as experiential learning, baccalaureate-level research, and interdisciplinary undergraduate seminars. If honors educators can rethink their attentiveness to the spiritual and physical development of their honors cohort, perhaps they can again be leaders at colleges and universities in reinvigorating a holistic vision of postsecondary education.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

This study makes use of words and concepts that have been used for centuries by philosophers, theologians, educators, biologists, authors, and countless others. Different individuals and fields have evolved slightly differing understandings of what these words mean. Defining, albeit somewhat loosely, what I mean by these terms, is necessary and useful.

Spiritual/Spirituality

In his work at the "Spirituality in Higher Education" project, Alexander Astin defines "spirituality" in terms of seeking "the meaning and purpose of life" ("Why Spirituality, 34). Half a world away, the Dalai Lama has written:

> Spirituality I take to be concerned with those qualities of the human spirit—such as love and compassion, patience,

> tolerance, forgiveness, contentment, a sense of responsibility, a sense of harmony—which bring happiness to both self and others. . . . I sometimes say that religion is something we can perhaps do without. What we cannot do without are these basic spiritual qualities. (22)

Stephen Keeva defines "spirituality" as "that inner part of us where we are sensitive to the deepest, most nuanced levels of meaning in our own lives" (175).

For me, spiritual development means *a quest to find the meaning behind the external facts of the world and the internal life of the individual.* Perhaps primary among such questions are those of one's own existence: Why am I here? What is the purpose of my life? Imagining a mature contemporary human being who has not wrestled in some form or another with these core existential questions is difficult. Study after study has indicated that contemporary college students come to higher education seeking to clarify these issues for themselves.[15]

Religion is an important component of the spiritual for some people, but many young women and men perceive themselves to be spiritual beings, deeply interested in spiritual development and spiritual issues, but not in a conventional, sectarian sense, religious people. Speaking of this "spiritual but not religious" self-identification, Diana Chapman Walsh finds that college students are "contrasting the formality, bureaucracy, and behavioral restrictions of organized religion with the emotionality, individuality, and personal freedom of the spiritual quest" ("Search" 117). She defines that spiritual quest as the search for meaningfulness. Some educators, especially but not exclusively in religious colleges and universities, are irritated by these students who proclaim themselves spiritual but not religious. But many young college men and women, in fact, take this stance.[16] The bifurcation of the concepts of religion and spirituality is largely a quite recent development: prior to the middle of the twentieth century, different language that reflected a somewhat different understanding, such as "public religion" and "private religion," would more likely have been used both by college students and in the culture at large.

Not just college students declare themselves interested in life's spiritual dimension but eschew formal religion. A 2011 study by Mark Chaves of Duke University finds that many fewer Americans today affiliate with a religious organization than at an earlier time. Now, about 20% remain unaffiliated, but 92% still profess their belief in God. Thus, more than one in ten contemporary Americans believes in God but is without a religious affiliation. Chaves also notes that religious *affiliation* was increasingly linked to political conservatism, but religious *belief* was not so linked (81–93).

Ethics, values, and morals are also included in the area of spiritual development. Of course, discussing ethics and morality without recourse to matters of the spirit is possible. The Ethical Culture movement, for example, affirms that morality is independent of theology.

Contemporary honors programs, within the curriculum and the extra-curriculum, are increasingly devoting attention to ethical issues such as ecological sustainability. (For example, an honors course at Ohio State University is entitled "Global Climate and Environmental Change.") This is just one example of the many topics that have an intellectual, physical, and spiritual dimension.[17] The intellectual aspect of ecological studies might be studying the scientific research that describes climate change. The physical aspect involves making choices of what to eat or how to transport oneself from place to place, or physically working on some effort such as the collection of recyclables. For example, one honors course at the University of Vermont, "An Ecological Approach to Living Well in Place," includes a service-learning component. But the spiritual side of sustainability addresses the moral questions: Is it ethically better to use electricity generated by renewable sources such as wind or water power? Why? At what point does America's dependence upon the automobile become globally irresponsible? What should colleges and universities do to lessen their impact upon the environment, and what trade-offs are justifiable in doing so? (University of Vermont). In Chapter 4, I discuss briefly the debate surrounding the possibilities and desirability of moral education within the missions of today's post-secondary schools.

As part of their intellectual growth, students can, do, and should study the economics and biological mechanics of food production in the developing world, but asking if they have a personal duty to do something when they learn of a devastating famine on the other side of the world falls within the realm of the spiritual. Astin describes the intellectual cultivation of college students as an external process and the cultivation of the spiritual as an internal process (Astin, *Cultivating, passim)*. I understand this to mean that in an external intellectual exercise students might learn the comparative production of nutritional products per acre in, say, Haiti and Italy. The spiritual, internal focus might be "What is my own responsibility to starving Haitians?"

Physical

Physical development refers to *activities that promote the soundness of the body, including sports, the avoidance of behaviors that have a negative effect on bodily health, and a variety of corporeal disciplines that promote the bodily well-being of the individual.* As with the category of spiritual development of college students, the concept of physical education is actually quite broad. Most obviously, this concept subsumes what is now commonly called wellness: activities and choices that encourage good bodily health, and, conversely, the avoidance of activities that corrode good bodily health. The avoidance of smoking or binge drinking is a wellness decision or action. Eating a diet that does not lead to obesity and does provide balanced nutrition is wellness. Jogging, biking, playing basketball, and going to the fitness center certainly are wellness activities. From their beginnings in the colonial era, American institutions of higher education have, in one form or another, encouraged physical activities for their students.[18]

In addition to physical fitness, good health habits, and the avoidance of activities damaging to the body, collegiate competitive sports fall into this category. Obviously, huge differences characterize personal wellness activities and intramural competitive sports from intercollegiate competitions. Indeed, a considerable gap exists even in the latter category between an NCAA Division III women's

cross country meet and a superpower Division I football championship such as the Rose Bowl. To many observers, competitive intercollegiate athletics at the highest level are not wellness activities at all: the risk of serious injury, for example, to a starting varsity football player might outweigh the muscular or cardiovascular fitness that player develops in order to participate competitively. Sports have long been an important part—indeed, for some, the definitive and most important part—of American colleges. Student athletes, of course, have been important participants in many honors programs. In Chapter 3, I will look at the role competitive athletics, both relatively informal intramural sports and higher-profile intercollegiate games, play in the development of college students.

Finally, some disciplines, such as yoga or tai chi, while primarily physical exercises, explicitly include a spiritual dimension. A significant minority of college students are attracted to these practices.

Intellectual

Cognitive understanding is certainly the primary goal of honors work within a college or university education. In college, students learn the facts of things: what they are, how they got that way, how they relate to other things. They learn the bones of the human body; the plot, character, and structure of *Hamlet*; Vermeer's use of perspective; modern psychology's theories of human personality. Perhaps more importantly in honors studies, they learn how to reason, to move towards mastery of those skills collected under the rubric of critical thinking: learning how to define a problem, envision a range of solutions, test and weigh them, and determine which seems best. Honors learning should impart a sense of which methodologies from the scientific method to textual analysis work best in various subject matter areas.

Intellectual development in college consists of cognitive experiences that broaden knowledge and deepen understanding. Such growth and development can take place in one or more of four venues: curricular, co-curricular, extracurricular, and a-curricular.

The curriculum at most contemporary colleges and universities is supplemented by co-curricular activities: non-credit-bearing

offerings that directly and clearly relate to curricular offerings. Thus, the drama major may act in theater productions, the science student may join the biology club, and the pre-med major may serve in a college-sponsored volunteer internship in the local hospital. Often, honors programs host or offer travel to co-curricular events such as artistic performances, exhibits, or lectures. Extracurricular activities, for example when the chemistry major at a small liberal arts college plays in a campus string quartet, are those with a less clear connection to in-class activities. Some extracurricular activities, such as a Halloween party or prom, are not intellectual, but many are, and most have at least some cognitive component.

Finally, college is a place where an enormous amount of intellectual activity often takes place totally unconnected to any official offering of the institution. This is what happens when a group of students sit on a bench at 1:00 a.m. on a late spring evening, discussing anything and everything under the sun (or, in this case, moon). It happens when a pair of students is studying for an exam together, he in sociology, she in philosophy, and they fall to talking and realize that there are connections between what they are each trying to learn and spend the next two hours exploring those connections rather than preparing for the test. It is what often goes on at all hours in an honors lounge. College-age people are at a time of life when they are curious, receptive, and social, and they learn much about themselves and the world around them from each other. Sometimes, all the university has to do is provide the venue or opportunity that will bring them together.

Holistic

Not infrequently in these pages I use the word *holistic*. By this, I mean a perspective that takes into account persons as unified and whole entities. Unfortunately, this term has sometimes come to refer to practices of a mystical or unscientific nature. While I am not necessarily discomfited by such practices, they are not the subject of this study. I have tried to avoid mysticism, exoticism, and unproven hypotheses or those that are impossible to prove.

WHOLENESS

This chapter has addressed the odd question, "What If Honors Students Were People?" I know, of course, that indeed they are. Honors students, like all other students and like all people, are multidimensional, complex, unique, and infinitely varied. In countless different ways, they are a blend, as are all human beings, of mind, body, and spirit. If the ultimate goal in contemporary honors programs and colleges is to help students learn to be, in every way, the best people they are capable of being, remembering that they are not disembodied intellects is necessary. They think, they feel, they search for meaning, they sweat, they love, they read; they are, in short, whole people, and they are best served if educators never forget their wholeness.

My hope is that the pages that follow will be helpful and of interest to all who work in honors and to a more general higher education audience as well: to college and university professors; to administrators; to collegiate professionals in health, wellness, and fitness; to those who work in student counseling or in religious and spiritual roles; to students of higher education; and, perhaps, even to honors students themselves who, after all, finally have the greatest stake in holistic undergraduate education. A half-century after the abolition of compulsory chapel and gym at most schools, contemporary American colleges and universities need to find new ways to enhance cognitive learning by attending to the spiritual and physical needs of college students.

At the very dawn of the sixteenth century, Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni liberated from a large chunk of discarded marble the most famous statue in the history of Western art. After a few centuries standing outside the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, today his *David* resides in the Galleria dell' Accademia, where he contemplates his victory over Goliath, and hundreds of tourists and art lovers contemplate him daily. *David* stands as an emblem of the pinnacle of human aspirations in the Renaissance as well as a symbol of the most lofty vision for honors. Michelangelo's figure is a model of reason, piety, and athleticism. I have become convinced that honors education in particular and American higher

education in general, in their eagerness to cultivate the first of these three admirable virtues, thoughtful rationality, have ignored spiritual depth and physical vigor, to the detriment of the institutions themselves, society at large, and certainly students.