The Concept and Practice of Education, Research, and Public Service in University Psychology Departments

Robert B. McCall
University of Pittsburgh

The federal allocation of funds for basic behavioral research over the last five decades has deflected departments of psychology from the traditional social purpose of education and research toward a narrow value for grant-supported laboratory basic research, despite the fact that psychologists have contributed disproportionately to the research literature in applied disciplines. Although basic research and liberal arts education should be preserved and vigorously defended against current attacks, psychology departments should embrace to a greater extent quality applied scholarship, broaden the audience for their research and educational activities, and partner with colleagues from other disciplines and the community. If the purpose of education and scholarship—to improve life—were pursued and valued more directly, a separate goal of public service might not be needed.

The existing, narrowly defined mold into which almost all universities have tried to cast themselves is not adequate to the expanding needs of our contemporary, knowledge-based society. A large number of institutions are failing to realize their full potential because their internal system of values, priorities, and aspirations primarily emphasizes and rewards traditional modes of teaching for which the clientele is shrinking and basic research for which most of these institutions cannot receive adequate support. This has resulted in a crisis of purpose, and deprives society of the substantial intellectual services that these universities could provide. (Lynott & Elman, 1987, pp. 12–13)

Academic psychology, I believe, has been molded during the last 50 years by a historically unusual set of circumstances. Now those circumstances are changing, and we must change with them (Altman, 1995).

More specifically, over the last five decades, the federal allocation of substantial funds for behavioral research, especially basic research, has led to a narrow value system in academic departments of psychology that emphasizes theory-driven, basic research and education, and, in the extreme, a disdainful attitude toward application, other disciplines, and nonacademics. Now, government is modifying its funding priorities and society is demanding more relevant education (Hathaway, Mulholland, & White, 1995; Lynott, 1995). Academic psychology risks becoming somewhat anachronistic unless it accommodates to these modifications.

I argue that psychology needs to rediscover the broader purpose of education and research; expand the audience for both; and reconceptualize public service to be more integrated, if not part and parcel, with education and research (e.g., D. M. Johnson & Bell, 1995; Lynott, 1995; Lynott & Elman, 1987). I propose evolution, not revolution. I do not urge abandoning or replacing basic research and education; I do advocate that the academic discipline of psychology recognize, value, and reward on an equal basis quality educational and scholastic contributions of a more applied and practical sort (e.g., Boyer, 1990; Lynott, 1995; Lynott & Elman, 1987). I am not urging psychologists as a group to conduct more applied work because they are contributing mightily to these literatures; I am encouraging psychology departments to embrace and value such scholarship—in short, I seek greater academic diversity and respect for the entire range of quality basic and applied scholarship.

Ironically, although faculty are society’s paid revisionists, they rarely apply that revisionism to themselves (Boyer & Hechinger, 1981; Corson, 1968). The shoe today is on the other foot. Society is telling the professional revisionists to revise. However, “when it comes to running colleges, universities, and academic programs, we are most conservative in our attitudes, unbelievably rigid in our ideas, and unbecomingly smug about our knowledge of the truth” (Chase, 1968, p. 101). So, some of my colleagues who read these urgings will find them out of touch, tardy, and not at all characteristic of their department or university—I wish there were more of you. To others, however, these thoughts may be provocative, even heretical. If the revisionist’s shoe fits, put it on.

My argument is based on a few broad definitions and premises. Scholarship, to me, is the process of disciplined inquiry and thinking for the purpose of understanding and improving life. Traditional psychologists

Editor’s note. Articles based on APA award addresses are given special consideration in the American Psychologist’s editorial selection process.

A version of this article was originally presented as part of an Award for Distinguished Professional Contributions to Public Service address at the 103rd Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, New York, NY, August 1995.

Author’s note. I thank Jerome Kagan, Mark Strauss, and Morton Weir for their constructive comments and criticisms on a draft of this article and Angela Ingram for helping research these issues. However, the opinions expressed here are those of the author.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Robert B. McCall, Office of Child Development, University of Pittsburgh, 121 University Place, 6th Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15260.
emphasize understanding, but unless understanding is in the service of improvement, it is idle knowledge—that is, it is "academic." Ultimately, then, improving life is scholarship's major long-term purpose (Hathaway et al., 1995). Disciplined inquiry and thinking is defined as logical, reasoned, comprehensive, and fact-based, and if the facts are derived from empiricism, we call it science. Life can refer to human existence and welfare as well as the living and nonliving environment in which human beings exist.

Crucial to my view is the proposition that scholarship is a process and, as such, it can be applied to any topic. Its quality should be assessed on how well that process addresses the questions under the prevailing circumstances, which can be severely limiting in applied work. Furthermore, it has a purpose—to understand and ultimately improve life. Agreed, some scholarly activities address this purpose more directly and immediately than others, but I believe psychology has neglected its scholar role for process, whereas contemporary society is demanding that we not lose sight of the purpose of scholarship (e.g., Altman, 1995; Keller, 1983).

**Tradition and Traditionalism in the Academic Trilogy**

Nearly every academic institution has three purposes—education, research, and public service, or some variant of these. Few, if any, universities (Lynton, 1995) or departments of psychology value these three components equally. Some colleges and universities stress research to create new knowledge, while others stress education and teaching, but essentially no college or university emphasizes service above the others. Why are these components often stated as apparently equal purposes of universities and presumably of departments in universities, but rarely actually emphasized and valued equally, especially in traditional departments of psychology?

Part of the reason, I submit, pertains both to the definitions of these three components and to how some of these traditions have been modified by historical circumstances. Someone once observed that ""tradiation is the living ideas of the dead, but tradition is the dead ideas of the living."" The task in this article is to distinguish what practices are tradition and what are traditionalism and then to suggest minimizing traditionalism and adjusting traditions to match the needs of contemporary society.

**Education**

The traditional purposes of higher education, I suggest, are to prepare students for specialized professions, to educate citizens to participate in a democratic society, and to help individuals lead intellectually fulfilling lives. Note that these purposes focus around assisting individual students and society to attain their goals (Altman, 1995), not to help faculty attain their goals.

The first universities in the 12th and 13th centuries primarily prepared students for professional careers in law, theology, and medicine (Hathaway et al., 1995). Liberal arts education in the United States was a departure from such an emphasis on training students for specific careers. It was designed to give students the benefit of the most prominent human thinking as fundamental preparation for any career, functioning in a democratic society, and leading intellectually fulfilling lives. The rationale was and is to teach students scholarship—the process and fundamental concepts of disciplined inquiry—that could be applied to any topic. Liberal arts became the first step, followed by graduate or professional school, in a two-step preparation for numerous professions. By many accounts, this two-step process is beneficial: Professionals with liberal arts backgrounds do better in a wide range of careers and are able to adjust better to the changes that occur so rapidly in many professions.

Psychology is typically a major part of liberal arts education. Could the contribution of psychology to such a curriculum be better? In many cases, I think so. If the purpose of liberal arts is to teach the fundamental processes and concepts of scholarship in a variety of domains, it is tempting for each discipline to teach what academics in that discipline do and know without much regard for what the students in the class may need to know and do when they graduate (e.g., see Ziegler, 1995). Indeed, the terms ivory tower and academic have come to mean "knowledge for knowledge's sake" and "irrelevant knowledge."

For example, in many colleges and universities, undergraduate courses in psychology are taught as if all students will go to graduate school in psychology and conduct traditional basic research. Although psychology is often the largest arts and science major, only a fraction of those majors apply to graduate school in psychology. Moreover, some courses, such as developmental psychology, especially appeal to nonmajors because they are presumably relevant to the future careers of such students (e.g., education, social work) or to their postgraduate lives (e.g., their future role as a parent). The actual courses, however, are often taught from the perspective of basic research and have little obvious significance for the purposes for which these students take such courses.

In short, we have strayed somewhat from the traditional purposes of education. We psychologists have become a bit too inner directed; we do our own thing in the classroom more often than doing what would benefit the student and society most (Altman, 1995). This, I submit, is traditionalism, not tradition.

**Research**

The tradition is that academics should engage in scholarship to generate new knowledge that improves life. The "doctrine of useful knowledge" guided science policy (Byerly & Piekle, 1995, p. 1531), for example, which meant that science was supported if it contributed to accomplishing a societal goal (Byerly & Piekle, 1995; Smith, 1990). After World War II, the United States government invested heavily in empirical research, including behav-
ioral research, and especially in basic research (Lynton, 1995). Science policy was then guided by Vannevar Bush's social contract, which presumed that essentially all scientific knowledge was intrinsically useful, thus excusing science from the need to be socially practical (Bush, 1945; Byerly & Pielke, 1995; England, 1982; Smith, 1990).

Consequently, in disciplines that were the beneficiaries of such funding, research productivity became king (Altman, 1995; Lynton, 1995; Whiting, 1968): Basic, empirical, grant-supported research became the primary and, in some cases nearly exclusive, criterion for those academics. Among behavioral disciplines, psychology, more than the others, seized the research opportunity. As a result, psychology has much of which it can be proud—it is the dominant behavioral research discipline, and psychologists have contributed substantially to the research literatures of numerous other academic disciplines and subdisciplines.

However, the effect of these circumstances has been to produce a value system of chokingly narrow dimensions. In the 1960s, psychology wanted to be a scientific discipline "like physics"—tight control, lab-based, theoretically guided, intensely empirical. The unwritten purpose was to demonstrate that we could conduct research of excellent scientific character. In the good old days of the 1960s and 1970s, the criterion for getting a grant was primarily whether the proposed research was methodologically and theoretically sound, not whether society wanted to know the information that would be produced. It was the disciplinary equivalent of the adolescent's question, "Who am I? What skills and characteristics do I possess?" Again, it was scholastic process over purpose.

To help define our scientific identity, psychologists disparaged any research—even whole disciplines—that addressed problems that could not be studied with the tight experimental control and methodological precision of the scientific ideal to which we aspired. Pure science was valued over applied science generally (Byerly & Pielke, 1995) and in psychology, where we denigrated most applied research and relegated it to other disciplines. Even in psychology, the experimental manipulation of the independent variable was valued substantially above naturalistic observation, and research methods pertinent to lab-based experimental research still dominate methodological training in graduate schools relative to modern techniques needed by those who study more complex, naturalistic, community-based, and ecologically valid phenomena and interventions (Aiken, West, Sechrest, & Reno, 1990).

Not surprisingly, the tenure system in psychology departments became thoroughly dominated by the value for grant-supported (preferably an R01 grant) basic research published in a few traditional, empirical, refereed journals (Lynton, 1995; Ziegler, 1995). In the extreme, for example, studies of applied issues appearing in applied journals do not count as much toward tenure. Even literature reviews may not weigh as heavily in a tenure decision as empirical reports. Coauthored articles obscure the purity of the candidate's contribution, and discipli

ary and methodological chauvinism all but obviate any importance being ascribed to interdisciplinary research and certainly to interdisciplinary applied research. In many cases, research productivity so thoroughly dominates teaching as a tenure criterion that teaching skill may be considered only if the candidate's research productivity is borderline; public service may never be discussed, and such nonresearch activities may even be viewed as interfering with research (Fairweather, 1992; Ziegler, 1995).

The criteria for funding and publishing became, and still are, dominated by similar emphases. Papers and grants must be justified in terms of theory, not applied concerns. In the extreme, an evaluation of the effectiveness of Head Start, a program that costs the nation billions of dollars and potentially affects the lives of millions of children, may not be worthy of publication without a theory of effectiveness. Knowing whether underachievers, who constitute 15% of the school population and cost society millions of dollars, "recover" after high school also may not be publishable in such journals without a theory to be tested. And would surveys of needs for early childhood services or ethnographic studies of low-income families in family support service programs be methodologically rigorous enough to merit publication in traditional research journals, even ones specializing in interdisciplinary scholarship on children and families?

This narrow focus on basic research seems odd for a discipline like psychology that has kept such a large contingent of applied professionals—clinical psychologists—under one departmental and disciplinary roof. But has it? Psychology's academic family life is harmonious, I submit, primarily to the extent that family members practice the same basic research value system. Clinical programs in major research departments are often no different in their emphasis on theory-driven, basic research than the rest of the department. Most of the many psychologists that psychology departments train who study applied issues must do so in the context of other disciplines (e.g., education, psychiatry, human development, family life, etc.).

Academic psychology, in short, is an Orwellian system in which not all quality scholarship is equal—some is more equal than others. And the tenure system keeps such a set of values in place, because it is predominately those who have attained tenure through basic research who decide the fate of young candidates. Again, is scholastic process—research or knowledge for its own sake—over purpose that prevails, and we sometimes justify this attitude with the philosophy that "someone else will apply this knowledge somehow, someday," perhaps accompanied by an implicit philosophy that "it is not my responsibility or concern."

That philosophy, I suggest, can no longer survive in this iconoclastic form—it is traditionalism. Economics, it seems, drives most social movements, and the same federal government that funded basic research for five decades is revising its policy. Not only have the federally funded training programs of the past created more sci-
Scientific mouths than research funding can feed, but Congress (e.g., Rep. George Brown [D-CA]; Gladue, 1994) is increasingly demanding that research serves directly and immediately—not "someone, somehow, someday"—the national technological goals and society's interest. Congress is asking basic scientists, "What have you [basic science] done for us [society, the nation] lately" (Gladue, 1994, p. 8), and, without waiting for an answer, it has ordered both the National Science Foundation (NSF) to spend 60% of its funds on attaining the national technological goals and the National Institute of Mental Health to spend 15% of its funds to study mental health services. The government, if not psychology departments, is returning to the traditional purpose of research.

**Public Service**

Is public service the applied complement to our narrow value for basic research and education? In the words of an auto rental ad campaign, "Not exactly."

In my idealistic view, there does not need to be a separate tradition for public service. Education and scholarship have, among their purposes, the improvement of life, which I suggest should encompass most of what we now call public service.

Historically, professional schools have long required students to take applied experiences—internships of different sorts—and they have often created some forum for providing technical assistance and professional service to their profession as it operates in society. However, the growth of liberal arts as generic preparation left application out of the undergraduate curriculum and out of many academic minds. Legislators, however, have periodically attempted to bring scholarship back to society. For example, the Morrill Act of 1862, the Hatch Act of 1887, and the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 created land-grant universities that, in addition to other purposes, were to teach the practical aspects of agriculture and mechanical arts and create an "extension" of the university to disseminate such knowledge to the citizens. Today, these universities have a "land-grant mentality," in which serving the citizens of the state directly is more of a priority.

But the land-grant mentality is often unevenly distributed through a university. The original extension programs focused on agriculture, improving crop production, and supporting the domestic and family needs of farmers, because a substantial proportion of the American population was engaged in agriculture at the time the extension program was created. Now that the vast majority of the American population lives in large cities, Andrew Young (1984), as mayor of Atlanta, called on extension programs to do for urban areas what they had done for rural America and contemporary extension programs now devote substantial portions of their resources and energies to urban issues.

Another reason for the uneven distribution of extension activities in universities is variation in the natural relevance of some disciplines to applied concerns. Most obvious, professional schools that directly train students for nonacademic careers (e.g., law, medicine, education, urban & regional planning, etc.) tend to have significant programs of public service, especially in land-grant colleges. In contrast, disciplines that are less obviously relevant to practical applications and train many students for academic careers (e.g., literature, languages, & many other components of the liberal arts), plus those that have benefited from intense federal funding for basic research, most particularly psychology, often have minimum public service activities even at land-grant universities. Outside of a clinic that may serve a training function for students and provides mental health services at minimum charge, the public service contributions of psychology departments tend to be minor compared with those of many other schools and departments in the university.

The functional irrelevance of public service for many regular faculty members also derives in part from its definition at most universities. The definition of public service is not always clear or consistent across universities (Rockhill, 1983), and its assessment or measurement is even less well delineated. Nevertheless, it usually includes activities that (a) are typically carried out off campus, (b) benefit the public, (c) are related to the faculty member's disciplinary expertise, and (d) are not remunerated, or, at least, remuneration is not their primary purpose.

Each of these characteristics can be justified, but there exists the implication, intended or not, that public service is extracurricular academic activity that is not integrated in the other purposes of the university.

Take, for example, the fact that public service activities must be related to teaching and scholarship. That is reasonable, otherwise, these activities might have little to do with academia or the purpose of the university. However, if education and research have the purpose of contributing to life and society, why does one need a separate goal of public service? Indeed, that public service is a separate goal constitutes backhanded recognition that education and scholarship often are not in the public service or even the public interest.

Consider also that public service should not be conducted primarily for money. This is also reasonable, because it eliminates activities, such as lucrative consulting, that primarily benefit the faculty member, not the public and, more important, that may threaten the independence and objectivity of the faculty member—characteristics so highly valued among academics and universities. On the other hand, this characteristic seems to limit public service to "academic charity to society," further separating public service from the education and research activities of most academics. Ironically, extension faculty, but not nonextension faculty, are paid to perform public service. But in universities that do not have extension programs, the message communicated to the public is that, although universities pay faculty to teach and do research, apparently universities do not value public service enough to pay a faculty member to do it. Again, the implication is that public service must be tangential to the primary academic missions of education and research.

Finally, the definition suggests that the benefit of public service is unidirectional: academic charity that
benefits the community or society but, at least by omission, does not necessarily benefit the faculty member or the university (Lynton, 1995). Not only is such an implication short-sighted and potentially inaccurate (e.g., Chase, 1968; Lehecka, 1968; Lynton, 1995; Ziegler, 1995), it is arrogant in its suggestion that academics have nothing to learn from society. It helps to preserve the images of the university as an ivory tower and faculty as pompous and irrelevant.

I have no objection to academic charity. Indeed, we academics are one of the most self-serving of all the professions, and a little charity would do us and others good. However, I consider this concept and practice of public service to be traditionalism, a reflection of an education and research system that needs to balance its scholastic process with its purpose.

Modernizing Our Traditions

My thesis is that we need to take the current fiscal and political crisis as an opportunity to make serious revisions in the practice of education and scholarship, especially in psychology departments. We need to recall the purpose of education and scholarship and bring academics in closer alignment with the needs of society (Altman, 1995; Lynton, 1995). At the same time, we must defend the liberal arts philosophy of education and basic research in the face of current attacks, while striving for better balance among these several themes.

More specifically and cutting across the academic trilogy, I suggest (a) directly improving life through more applied education and scholarship, (b) balancing and broadening the academic value system, (c) breaking down disciplinary barriers and prejudices and encouraging more interdisciplinary education and scholarship to match the interdisciplinary nature of contemporary social issues, (d) broadening the audience for education beyond regular students and for research beyond our academic colleagues, and (e) partnering in mutually beneficial collaborations with society in the conduct of education and scholarship (e.g., Altman, 1995; D. M. Johnson & Bell, 1995; Lynton & Elman, 1987).

Education

Maintain liberal arts. Our first priority should be to defend venerable traditions in education before revising them. Consequently, we should vigorously maintain the liberal arts philosophy that undergraduate psychology courses should teach the fundamental methods of psychological scholarship and the basic concepts that we have discovered. These are the most generalizable academic commodities that we can provide students who go into a great diversity of professions and environments, which are likely to change numerous times during their lives. Democracy and society require that universities graduate people who are more than just psychologists, accountants, sales representatives, engineers, or social workers. They need to think creatively and rationally, they need the accumulated wisdom of the centuries, and they need perspective. It may be more useful to train students for their last job than their first, and teaching general processes and concepts may be the best curriculum we have for this task (Morton Wein, personal communication, 1995).

Broaden our courses. However, should all of a course or all psychology courses in the undergraduate curriculum be taught in this way? I think we could be more creative in achieving a better balance (see Altman, 1995).

For example, rather than primarily selling traditional academic psychology to all undergraduate students in all our classes, we should market psychology a bit more to the needs of most of our contemporary students. Why are they taking our courses, and what do psychologists know that could be of particular use to them personally and professionally? Surveys show that they want practical, applied information (McGovern & Hawks, 1986). Of course, students need the basic concepts, vocabulary, principles, and methods of psychology, but these could be taught, illustrated, and applied directly to real-world events, problems, and needs that are related to the future careers and personal lives of the diverse student body. For example, how many child development courses in psychology teach child rearing and discipline, which could be considered applications of fundamental principles of learning? We could also teach how to select a child-care center or preschool, how to promote mental development and academic achievement, how to minimize the problem of teenage pregnancy, and how to improve Head Start. We have more knowledge than people can or need to know, so we must be more selective about what is taught to maximize progress toward our educational purpose in society.

Perhaps we need to consider having different courses for majors and nonmajors and different tracks within the major for those heading toward graduate school in psychology versus other careers. Maybe universities should think of having interdisciplinary introductory seminars, for example, in children, youth, and families, so that students in all areas get a broad interdisciplinary grounding and have some basis for choosing which of the numerous majors they want to pursue in this general domain. Perhaps service learning should be brought to psychology courses to a greater extent than it is now (Altman, 1995), and maybe community professionals, especially service professionals who apply research that academic psychologists generate, should supplement the academic material at the undergraduate and graduate levels by telling students (and academic faculty; Chase, 1968) how our principles play out in the real world. In short, we should follow Altman's (1995) suggestion to emphasize equally foundational knowledge (basic concepts, processes, methods), professional knowledge (applied content), and socially responsive knowledge (societal issues, solutions).

Broaden our audience. We also need to broaden the audience for our educational offerings (Ziegler, 1995). Urban universities were established and flourished in part to serve students who could not go away full-time to school at land-grant universities, which are typically lo-
above, we probably would not need a separate goal of public service for colleges and universities; such activities would be embraced, valued, and rewarded as part of education and scholarship. Until they are, however, a separate purpose will help keep our eye on this theme and perhaps give it identity and importance.

However, I would prefer to abandon the term public service. It refers to activities that are worthy and should be encouraged and rewarded, but it has come to have implications and connotations that I do not want to emphasize. Instead, I would prefer the terms public involvement or public partnerships to communicate that these activities are not unidirectional, extracurricular, or simple academic charity, but rather that they represent a partnership with society to achieve mutually beneficial ends that neither academics nor the community partners alone can achieve as well, if at all (Lynton, 1995).

Of course, I am not the first to argue for such themes—this tradition is long and venerable (see Ziegler, 1995). Emerson, in his 1837 speech titled "The American Scholar," argued that the scholar should be fully engaged with the realities of a vibrant, developing democracy. Charles Van Hise, President of the University of Wisconsin in 1906, declared that the "boundaries of the campus should be co-terminus with the boundaries of the state" (Ziegler, 1995, p. 219), and Clark Kerr, in the Godkin lectures at Harvard in 1963, offered the concept of the mutdiversity that was to do all of these things in society (Rice, 1995; Ziegler, 1995). And the new concept of metropolitan universities (D. M. Johnson & Bell, 1995), a philosophy that emphasizes most of the points made above, has been subscribed to by 150 to 200 such institutions in the United States enrolling well over two million students (Lynton, 1995).

Types of public involvement. Different approaches to public involvement (Groberman & Sanders, 1984) are possible, and major universities are likely to have all of these approaches represented. For example, in the academic model, a regular academic unit (i.e., department) defines for itself a major responsibility to conduct outreach, public service, and collaborative projects with community organizations. Departments of urban affairs or public policy, for example, are frequently of this type, as well as professional schools that provide technical assistance and otherwise work with community organizations to improve professional practice in their communities.

The service unit and center models are similar to the academic approach described above except that a specific service unit or center, rather than a school or department, is created and charged with addressing local community needs, conducting applied research, and providing technical assistance and other services to community organizations. Such units or centers may be located on the campus or in the community, but they typically operate outside the usual academic structure. The Commission on Interprofessional Education and Practice, for example, is located at Ohio State University but promotes interdisciplinary education at several universities in Ohio and facilitates the work of the National Consortium on Interprofessional Education and Practice that operates nationwide. Another example is the Bennion Center at the University of Utah, which promotes volunteer service in community projects for 5,000 students, staff, and faculty (Altman, 1995).

A third approach is the extension or continuing education model, the most prominent of which is the agricultural extension system (Koepplin & Wilson, 1985). This is composed of specially designated faculty and field representatives (often located in each county of the state) whose responsibilities are to extend the fruits of academic inquiry to and receive feedback and guidance from the citizens of the state, much of which transpires off campus in shopping centers, banks, public schools, agricultural cooperatives, and so on.

Finally, the brokerage model brings representatives of the community together with those of the university to identify and address problems of mutual concern. Such a unit acts in a facilitative way, creating collaborations, often interdisciplinary in character, of university faculty and community units around a specific need, project, or topic. Its unique feature is to capitalize on the university's independent status and the unit's independence from specific schools or disciplines within the university to manage collaborative groups of faculty from different disciplines together with representatives of different community organizations.

The University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development is an example of such a brokerage model (McCall, Groark, Strauss, & Johnson, 1995). The Office facilitates, funds, conducts, and manages interdisciplinary and university-community collaborations pertaining to education and training, research, human-service demonstration programs, program evaluation, needs assessments, and policy studies. Faculty participants come from numerous disciplines and work in mutually respectful and beneficial partnerships with dozens of agencies, local and state policymakers, and funders.

Criticisms. These themes are frequently challenged by those who ask whether this is the proper role of a university in society (e.g., Whiting, 1968). Corson (1968) argued that it is. Universities, he suggested, have five characteristics that make them especially suitable for helping society to solve its problems. First, universities have the physical resources, climate, and prestige to tackle major social issues. Second, universities have more experience studying such problems than private enterprise, government, religion, and other institutions. Third, faculty have a discipline of objectivity, or, I would qualify, at least most are unbiased, if not totally unbiased. Fourth, universities have a tradition of scholarship that emphasizes the search for new knowledge. And fifth, universities value the intellectual freedom that is necessary for a creative and comprehensive examination of social issues and alternatives. I would add that they are also independent, and, thus, they may be very well suited to be the coordinator of partnerships composed of other organizations.

386 April 1996 • American Psychologist
that in contrast to the university have vested interests in the project.

However, many individuals have suggested that universities, although revisionists in their thinking and function, should not implement revisions in society (Perkins, 1966). I agree. We have business, government, religion, foundations, and other institutions whose purposes are to manage society, produce and distribute new products and services, and stimulate and implement changes in society. Academics perform education and scholarship best; typically they do not have the skills, resources, or experience to manage or implement changes in society. Furthermore, implementation of change implies a vested interest, and I believe that role would typically compromise the university’s valuable position of unbothered independence.

Instead, academics should partner with other institutions to improve human life. Universities should contribute scholarship (e.g., provide literature reviews on the nature of the problem, its causes, & the effectiveness of potential solutions; conduct a needs assessment; offer alternative & creative approaches; manage & evaluate a demonstration), whereas other institutions should assume responsibility for legislating and funding the permanent solution and implementing and maintaining its operation. A fine line often separates scholarship and implementing societal change. For example, I think universities should propose alternatives to public education and even operate demonstration programs, perhaps encompassing an entire school building or system, but only for a limited period of time; they should not operate a school system on a permanent basis.

Another criticism voiced over the years (e.g., Whiting, 1968), which is especially relevant in this time of fiscal crisis, is that universities cannot afford the charity of public service. What is proposed here is not charity but collaboration in partnerships that fund themselves in self-sufficient ways. The University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development, which is described above, was started nine years ago with three employees, a director’s salary contributed by the University, and $150,000 in external grant support. Now, it employs approximately 85 persons and has a annual budget of more than $8 million, an increase almost totally the result of externally funded collaborative projects (McCall et al., 1995). Moreover, substantial portions of many grants go to the community members of these partnerships, so the total amount of support obtained for collaborative projects to the University and the Pittsburgh area over nine years is more than $73 million. Indeed, one might argue that society is not only demanding that universities move in this direction, but it is putting money behind its admonition. Several grant programs have recently been offered by the federal Department of Education and the Department of Housing and Urban Development that specifically require university–community collaborations.

In addition to its intrinsic value, such an operation produces a type of public relations that cannot be purchased and that demonstrates, rather than simply claims, the value of the university to the community, legislators, and private foundations and individuals who, in turn, potentially fund the university. Therefore, an entity, in this case one devoted to children, youth, and families, that operates to accomplish essentially all of the above goals, can flourish with modest investment by the university and the community.

In short, moving the profession of academics, and psychology in particular, toward partnerships with society can be done, is being done, and some would argue must be done on a larger scale to bring universities and psychology more in line with society’s values. At the same time, we must not abandon liberal arts education or basic research, but value a broader diversity of educational and scholarly activities, especially in psychology. This diversity will be more exciting, richer, vibrant, and rewarding, and society will be better served (Lynton & Elman, 1987), which, after all, is our traditional purpose.

REFERENCES
D. A. Bell (Eds.), *Metropolitan universities: An emerging model in American higher education* (pp. 5-16), Denton: University of North Texas Press.


Morrill Act, 7 U.S.C. §301 at seq. (1862).


Stevenson (1977, October 24). One thing I'll say . . . [Cartoon]. *New Yorker*, p. 36.


