

STRATEGY MATTERS™

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Planning in a New Age

Anthony Knerr & Viktor Böhm

Is Beauty Useful?

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Latin America:

The Global Context for Higher Education

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Tarnishing the Halo:

NGOs' Strategic Efforts and Foreign Regulation

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Iván Fischer & Nancy Zimpher

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We welcome comments and reactions to this new edition of *Strategy Matters* and inquiries about any aspect of our qualifications, experiences and approach.

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Strategic Planning in a New Age

Anthony Knerr & Viktor Böhm

The nonprofit landscape is in an unprecedented state of flux. Because nonprofit organizations may find themselves in radically different institutional or economic contexts in just two or three years, the standard five-to ten-year planning period is often obsolete for some institutions. Others will continue to benefit from it until they have built a sound internal strategic perspective that is widely, if informally, understood.

The Changing Landscape of Nonprofit Organizations

Unsurprisingly, the Internet is partly to blame for exceptionally dynamic sectoral changes. The costless and instant flow of information has redefined the way socioeconomic priorities emerge. While nonprofits may successfully build upon the ap-

parent immediacy of the issues they embrace, they need to be prepared for the quickly shifting attention of their Boards, staff, supporters and external observers as well as of the public, and the sometimes volatile and unpredictable impact of such changes.

Another substantial factor is the shifting boundary of the local and universal. The relevant geographic context for nonprofit organizations is greatly expanding. To some extent this has always been important for advocacy groups with global stakeholders as well as for the top tier organizations in education, science and the arts. But today, more and more nonprofit and academic institutions operate in a global context peppered with swift and mostly unpredictable changes in almost every corner.

Over and beyond the changing pace of nonprofit organizations on the ground, philanthropic attitudes and donor agendas are much more in flux, creating a less predictable and more competitive environment for funding for many nonprofit organizations. With the emergence of social entrepreneurship, corporate social responsibility and impact-oriented funding policies, sleepy nonprofits are at risk of losing their appeal, diminishing their impact and thereby under-achieving their mission.

In addition, the 2008 fiscal crisis and subsequent uncertainty in global capital markets have taken their toll on the nonprofit sector. Public funding of virtually all nonprofits has decreased, drastically so in some sectors, and reductions are likely to continue for at least the next several years, if not longer, in view of the continued unsettledness of both the U.S. and global economies. Since the pressures on federal, state and local government budgets overall are unlikely to be reversed in the near future, the business models of many nonprofits will need to be reconceived—in some cases drastically—in order to ensure continued financial stability and organizational relevance.

Many of these changes in the overall nonprofit landscape have been increasingly evident over the past several years. What is new—and significant—is their acceleration and the consequent increase in attention to the role, value and impact of the nonprofit sector by the media and the general public.

New Risks at Colleges and Universities

Given their size, institutional landscape and long-term missions, academic institutions

Every nonprofit organization has its own history, culture, situation and personality.

traditionally change less rapidly than other nonprofits. However, with the digital revolution now at the very gates of academe, significant change can be expected in the very near future. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), courses taught by faculty in different countries, and the rapid increase in prestigious research universities and liberal arts colleges joining organizations that provide on-line courses are all examples of how new platforms are crossing over traditional geographic, disciplinary and institutional boundaries. Access is expanding rapidly, with student enrollment numbers to on-line courses in the millions. The existing institutional structure is already struggling to accommodate these substantial changes, and these are obviously only the first waves of disruptive change in the sector.

Just as important, in many respects, higher education has a failed financial architecture that is unsustainable going forward. Institutions face unrelenting budgetary pressures from the combination of recent rapid tuition rate increases substantially above the general rate of inflation; the growing debt burden of students and families; reductions in government funding of research and financial aid; continuing cuts in state appropriations for public institutions; high levels of institutional debt; and stagnant capital markets. At the same time there is increasing competition for the best students, knowledge is exploding in a variety of fields and many graduates are having difficulty in finding jobs.

While there is recognition of the significant value of both undergraduate and graduate education in the evolving knowledge economy of the United States, there is also a growing public questioning of the value of higher education and concern as to whether college is worth the cost.

As these challenges and pressures increase, institutional governance will become even more complex and demanding, requiring gifted leadership, thoughtful attention to communications and clear-headed,

meaningful engagement with the full range of institutional constituencies.

Perhaps the most significant challenge to higher education institutions is the unrelenting acceleration of change, with new issues, problems and challenges often arising suddenly both on campus and around the world. While this in many ways is simply a defining characteristic of the contemporary world and its instantaneous inter-connectedness, it places institutions in positions of potential serious vulnerability.

Higher education has a failed financial architecture that is unsustainable going forward.

How Can Strategic Planning Effectively Meet Such Vast Challenges?

In the past two decades, nonprofit strategy consulting has largely been defined by commodity approaches that pay less attention to the individuality and specificity of organizations and simply apply a highly standardized approach. Far too often, strategy consulting has been built on reheating the standard “five-year strategic plan,” going through the motions of reviewing the mission and deciding upon four or five major strategic objectives. As a result, too often many strategic plans have ended up on the proverbial shelf. In many quarters, strategic planning has a bad name; the prospect of engaging in strategic planning is seen, by some participants in the planning process, to be somewhere between eating one’s vegetables and going to the dentist.

We believe that every nonprofit organization has its own history, culture, situation and personality. A strong understanding and appreciation of such particularities are key to framing clear strategic directions that will be useful in setting institutional directions. Close attention and thoughtful understanding of these specifics will better ground the planning process and, most importantly engage the participants.

A commoditized model of strategy consulting cannot accommodate the time and skills to actually understand the mission and values of the organization it is advising or the specific challenges the client faces. Further, a commoditized model typically is not informed or coordinated by skillful professionals who are knowledgeable about best practices of other institutions, are aware of larger secular and systemic trends and challenges, and who can help institutions chart bold but thoughtful strategic courses.

Thinking and acting strategically are critical in a world defined by rapid change, unpredictable events and new forms and means of communications. The institutional ship may be sea-worthy, with a superbly skillful skipper at the helm, able and willing crew and adequate supplies. Without a clear chart and an agreed-upon destination, however, it will be subject to the vicissitudes of changing winds and currents, and runs the risk of floundering in the water or unexpectedly arriving at an unexpected—and possibly undesired—location.

The Continued Role of Traditional Strategic Planning

For many institutions, “traditional” strategic planning is still critical in clarifying mission, building consensus around identity, considering the impact of significant external systemic changes and laying out a bold vision for the future—thereby grappling with the fundamentals of institutional positioning and aspirations.

This foundational work is essential for organizations that do not have a tradition or history of strategic planning or strategic thinking, may not have strong healthy cultures, or are confused about who they are and what they’re doing. For these institutions, strategic planning is often a kind of “Trojan horse” that facilitates exploration and examination of complex and sensitive issues in ways not otherwise easily available. It also allows institutions to (re)focus their

perspectives, strengthen their organizational cultures, collegially establish priorities, clarify identity, and marshal institutional energies.

In such institutions, widespread engagement of constituencies throughout the planning process is particularly important, so as to ensure effective understanding, real ownership and active support of the agreed-upon strategic directions. Such engagement inevitably generates much more interest in both the process and the plan; often leads to far better ideas; and makes the process a shared endeavor.

Traditional strategic planning, when done thoughtfully, allows organizations to better understand the context in which they operate, as well as the risks and opportunities of that context, while ensuring a continued focus on key strategic considerations. But these organizations need to use their strategic planning as a platform to remain nimble, become more analytically sophisticated and promote innovation.

Several specifics:

- Including explicit criteria by which to evaluate new opportunities, guide resource allocation and consider alliances with other institutions. Doing so will permit flexibility of action while maintaining clarity of overall institutional focus.
- Creating mechanisms that will allow the organization to be highly supple in anticipating or responding to rapid change. Such mechanisms might include explicit commitment to supporting experimentation within the organization or building an internal laboratory to test out innovative ideas. In effect, these mechanisms build ongoing internal strategic planning and experimentation into the heart of the organization.
- Ensuring ongoing monitoring of progress towards strategic goals through annual report cards or dash-boards, creating a

standing committee charged with reviewing key metrics regularly, and periodically reviewing the continuing relevance of the plan itself.

- Making institutional risk assessment an ongoing focus at both the Board and executive level in order to (1) better understand high-level strategic and systemic risks arising from the external environment and (2) place on-going operational and financial risk assessment in a larger context.

Moving Beyond Traditional Strategic Planning

Other institutions may be strategically better positioned by geography, distinctiveness, competitive strength and financial stability. They also may have clarity of core values, cognizance of institutional history, openness to current and prospective possibilities and decision-making supported by analytic rigor.

These organizations may not need to regularly undertake traditional strategic planning because they already have a clear internal strategic design that encourages innovation and entrepreneurial experimentation. They largely understand their context, have a capacious enough strategic framework to quickly adapt to changing circumstances, and have the appetite and confidence to consider bold strategic moves that (re)define their institutions. They are also analytically sophisticated, fully understand their internal cost structure, and have rolling longer-term financial plans. They are expert at strengthening and extending their brands and understand the role that new media can play in these efforts. And sophisticated fundraising is an integral part of their DNA.

These organizations are more likely to focus on more powerful strategic initiatives, in no small measure because they can do so from firm strategic foundations. Thus, they may be intent on developing significant institutional

alliances with other, strong, strategic partners that can leverage their program capabilities, geographical positioning or service delivery. They may be undertaking extensive physical expansion, both in their immediate vicinity or far beyond their neighborhood. They are likely to be exploring the possibilities of technology to reach new audiences, extend their virtual reach and augment their central business model. And they recognize and embrace the power of sophisticated marketing, outreach and visibility to strengthen and deepen their brand, influence and impact.

These organizations are defined by continued strategic thoughtfulness, ongoing alertness about changing circumstances and comprehensive, sophisticated institutional risk assessment. They view the world through a strategic lens which gives them greater insight into the possibilities and challenges and they are always alert to the need to adjust their strategic lens as conditions change.

The Continuing Importance of Thoughtful Strategy Formulation

We remain convinced that strategy formulation is more important than ever. Every organization should have a well conceived internal strategic perspective that is understood by both the Board and executive leadership. A deep understanding of the overall institutional context and social environment as well as a clear strategic perspective are key to successful strategy formation. Individually tailored project teams, interdisciplinary expertise and flexible arrangements are ever more important. Leadership experience, seasoned consultants and a vigilant outlook on socio-economic processes will prove to be the central ingredients of high-impact, large-return strategy planning.

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Strategy
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Is Beauty Useful?

Ernő Rubik

Competition for the consumers' attention and satisfaction has quickly shifted towards a richer experience where beauty is key.

My father was a mechanical engineer in Hungary. He had several patents to his name, created more than 30 airplane and glider models, and also designed a highly popular mini-car made of aluminum, a project that eventually fell victim to a Communist-planned economy. His airplanes had wings so they flew. His cars had wheels so they rolled. In the grim 1950's behind the Iron Curtain, what did it matter if they were also beautiful?

Not so much later, in the early 1970's, I came up with the prototype of a three-dimensional puzzle, my magic Cube. It was still a planned economy in Hungary and it was still only quantity and mass production that mattered. A cube that you could twist and turn without it falling apart was surprising, probably even fascinating. But it became the most popular toy ever and, according to some analysts, one of the best-selling products in the world.

Since then, it has inspired artists, scientists, advertisers, designers, film-makers and quite a few others over and beyond its primary category of toy.

I cannot claim that I fully understand why, but I do have a few hunches.

Any new product, physical or virtual, is also necessarily a new design. However, it is far from self-evident that the resulting "phenotype" is the most perfect match of the "genotype," i.e. the functional product-construct itself. Such evolution takes several phases of improvement, trial and

error, and the feedback of disenchanting users. In the rare cases when the harmony of function and design miraculously come together, beauty is achieved.

This beauty is cathartic because the inherent contradiction of function and experience is resolved. This is what the late Steve Jobs so perfectly understood. But then why did it take Apple so many years to vindicate this (expensive) quest for beauty? Why is design becoming increasingly important for mass-produced products that are meant for many more consumers than those with elaborate tastes (and thicker wallets)? And why is it only in this new millennium that the importance of design is realized both in business and education?

I think these questions are partly explained by the decreasing marginal utility of sheer performance. Our computers, as well as our cars or television sets, have become so powerful that adding more gigabytes, larger Winchester, more horsepower or more pixels is less and less significant for everyday users. The competition for the consumers' attention and satisfaction has quickly shifted towards a richer experience where beauty is key.

Another reason is that the information flow in our interconnected world makes this competition fiercer and nearly constant. The web, furthermore, gives more weight to the acquired taste in any given category; regardless of the price tag, an object of beauty quickly becomes an object of popular desire.

At least in principle, functionality can

always be improved—it is at the harmony of function and form where design can come close to perfection. A product or even an object of art is only perfect when there is nothing more to add and there is nothing to take away. This is the catharsis of an object becoming itself.

The Cube became iconic because of its counter-factual functionality: it made something possible that was seemingly impossible by cracking the inner immobility of a static solid. Just as important, however, it created a harmony of the mind, the heart and the hands in a size fit for manipulation, a task provoking cognition and colors evoking immediate emotions. It is also an object in and of itself because it sets its own challenge: a puzzle that needs no instruction manuals or elaborate rules. Anybody blessed with the basic human senses anywhere can instantly “get it.”

So far, so good. But once the relevance of design is established, what is to be done about it? First of all, the phrase “design” is already problematic. It is painfully over-used, which blurs its meaning. For “professionals,” it refers to creative challenge, user experience, functionality and appearance. For them it’s something to work on, a present-tense verb.

Design has a rather different meaning for “laymen”: rather than an action or an activity, it’s used to describe something being cool, trendy, appealing or nice. For them it’s a finished noun or an adjective.

The task is to close the gap between these two different meanings. In order to accomplish that, we need to realize the interdisciplinary character of design and design education. In this sense, design (as a creative activity) differs somewhat from other fields, where discipline implies a certain depth of understanding in a specific context. For example, listening to a symphony is a different experience for the ordinary concert goer and the music scholar or professional.

Design, in contrast, is interdisciplinary by nature. The end goal of the design project is not merely the object, but the object in use, and quality can only be measured by the interaction of the object and its user. This quality may only be achieved by the joint understanding of the human content (psychology, perception, sometimes anatomy and even economics) and the character of the object (materials, IT, mechanics, engineering, etc).

Therefore the unity of human content, technology, science, art and creativity is at the very core of design philosophy and should also be at the center of design education. Because of the overwhelming span of creative design perspectives, design education must start from the basics: hands-on exercise with real materials; understanding dimensions of space, the workings of 3D and much more. Ideally, design education should begin as early as elementary school so that the human experience itself informs design professionals and makes them open and available to creative challenges in interdisciplinary contexts.

At its core, design is the link to nature for artificial objects. Nature does not know strict borders or barriers, it only knows transition. An understanding of the various contexts and connections and opportunities of transition is the very heart of inspiration and creativity. In order to vindicate its meaning and relevance, design must rise to this challenge.

Ernő Rubik, the Budapest-based architect and designer, is known world-wide as the creator of Rubik's Cube.

The end goal of the design project is not merely the object, but the object in use, and quality can only be measured by the interaction of the object and its user.

Latin America: The Global Context for Higher Education

Gerardo della Paolera

The last decade has witnessed the emergence of two distinct dynamic continents, as measured by their impressive economic growth: Asia and Latin America. However, it seems that the rate of modernization and global insertion of Latin American (LATAM) universities have lagged with respect to their Asian counterparts in spite of the definitive potential. The 2012 QS Worldwide Rankings, an annual global ranking of universities, provide a crude but interesting picture.¹

A Dynamic Continent but a Lagging Higher Education Performance?

While very well-represented in terms of their relative populations (16 LATAM institutions are ranked amongst the top 500, compared to 97 Asian; the ratio is 6.5 to 1 in population terms in favor of the Asian continent), only

2 LATAM universities are ranked among the top 250. And the best positioned LATAM private higher education institution stands at number 251.

A quick intra-regional analysis shows that Brazil comes in strong dominance with 65 universities ranked among the top 250 in the region. But considering only the top ten, Chile stands with 4, Brazil with 3, Mexico 2 and Colombia 1. Brazil's case is particularly interesting, considering that university enrollment in the country has tripled over the last decade. Brazil excels in two indicators: (1) research papers per faculty member (where it secured 9 out of the 10 top slots), and (2) percentage

of faculty holding a PhD. Another key player is Mexico. In terms of overall regional academic reputation and employability, Mexico ranks in the first place. Argentina, Ecuador, and Venezuela are struggling with high student/faculty ratios and academic reputation indicators that are not comparable with the countries represented among the top ten.

The LATAM system is heterogeneous and complex, due to very differing population sizes and demographics, varying land areas, different institutional histories (for example, Brazil did not have universities until the 1930's, while most Hispanic countries did), the issues they had to address, levels of enrollment, scale, specific political contexts, and subsystems in which they operate (public vs. private).

In spite of this intra-regional heterogeneous performance, all LATAM higher education institutions face a similar challenge: how to develop a critical mass of highly skilled human capital.

The task of excellence in this market should not be a pending assignment; Latin America's modernization and integration into the global knowledge economy depends on it. Public funding for universities, which has been historically low and was reduced even further with the global economic downturn,² will not suffice to generate a competitive and inclusive higher education landscape. Intellectual commitment, technocratic know-how and funding will become a major civil society task to assure a sustainable evolution of LATAM higher education institutions. Why this is so?

The LATAM system is heterogeneous and complex.

¹ Available at <http://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings>.

² <http://www.coha.org/higher-education-in-latin-america-2011the-burden-of-the-youth/>

Some Characteristics of the LATAM Higher Education Landscape

Two interrelated structural factors call for an urgent civil society involvement: demographics and competing fiscal needs. Urgency is not only related to competitiveness but also to the demographic pressures of a very young population structure (higher education enrollment in Brazil grew from 7.8% in 1997 to 24.7% in 2009). Most governments provide sufficient funding to primary and secondary schools, on balance, in inclusive democratic societies. A growing population exerts fiscal pressures both at the downstream and upstream of the overall integrated education system.

Equity and social mobility puts a first priority to adequately fund basic education; at the same time the LATAM region needs a dynamic upper education echelon that can absorb the unabated growing enrollment while not diluting the quality of the existing institutions. Today, in Chile and Colombia, nearly 50 percent of higher education enrollment is at private institutions. And it is estimated that three-fourths of the enrollment growth in the last 25 years has been absorbed by private initiatives.

Since mass higher education is a worldwide reality, what are the drivers to insure a critical mass of competitive LATAM institutions?

The Strategic Possibilities of International Networking

The reality here is that the experiences of international networking of LATAM universities are rich at the individual institutional level but there are many more strategic opportunities to be explored and developed at the systemic level.

The principal scheme to interact on a bilateral basis has been based on the exchange of students and, less frequently, exchange

of faculty, dialogue among administrators or joint venture academic programs. But there is no intra-regional network system of exchanges like the Erasmus Programme (the European Union student exchange program for intra-European exchange³), though some LATAM institutions participate in the Erasmus Mundus program.

The drivers to sign international agreements are varied. In the case of LATAM-Europe, the motivation is demographic: European institutions need to attract students to compensate for static or declining population growth. Another QS Intelligence Unit survey demonstrates that, as a region, Europe counts in first place in terms of agreements with LATAM universities, followed by North America.⁴ On an individual country level, the United States is at the top. Not surprisingly, given the common language, Spain comes in second, followed by Germany and France. In terms of scope and focus the figures are quite heterogeneous: some agreements privilege regional scale but others are built on regional diversity. In short, the presence of foreign students in LATAM institutions is very low: the majority are from within the region itself. This compares to 19 percent visiting East Asia and the Pacific.

Again, with the United States and Canada, the main drivers are academic knowledge and reputation and to secure a niche for top students to pursue Ph.D. studies (65 percent of LATAM candidates choose North America). Here, the main target was the internationalization of academic curricula. In addition, institutions need to overcome the low level of proficiency in foreign languages and offer courses in English.

While institutional agreements between LATAM and Asia and Africa are essentially nonexistent at present, there are opportunities for Latin American institutions

³ In the two decades since the establishment of the Erasmus Programme, more than 2 million students have participated in exchanges. See <http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/studies.pdf>.

⁴ QS University Rankings: Latin America 2011/2012. Available at: http://content.qs.com/supplement2011/Latin_American_supplement.pdf

to pioneer the domain of relations with these other continents, which also provide impressive opportunities for trade and investment relationships.

Another weak link in the performance of LATAM has been the lack of a fluid cooperation between business and academia, which is in part a reflection of a rigid philosophical concept of the university as one that should be properly insulated from the pecuniary characteristics of the corporate world.

To position themselves into the global economy, LATAM institutions should be campus-based, but need to become much more internationally oriented. In particular, top-notch elite institutions should become international and cosmopolitan in terms of their student and faculty bodies. Networks

will have to move beyond the traditional Memorandum of Understanding model to become scholarly consortia and institutional joint ventures.

The Harvard Business School has opened small branches in such disparate cities as Singapore, Buenos Aires and Delhi to conduct their business case studies and occasionally impart high-level executive business courses for the local community.

What is the lesson for LATAM institutions of this strategic thinking? The scarcity in the region is not a restriction on the quantity of land or number of students; rather, it

is governance, funding and relevant knowledge. To overcome this, institutions need to engineer joint ventures at the extra- and intra-regional dimensions. Such agreements are more complex than the usual simple bilateral and one-dimensional agreements. As a result, a vision—supported by a modern, flexible and cosmopolitan governance and funding base—is required.

International Funding, Governance and Sponsorship

In these domains, international networking has been—with some honorable exceptions—very weak. Until recently, higher education governance in state-funded LATAM institutions was extremely bureaucratic and politicized. This trend is happily changing, giving institutions more autonomy in their governance, but problems of agency still appear insurmountable in the mega state institutions. Tripartite governance that represents the interests of faculty, students and staff has proven slow to react to the speed of change of the globalized world.

More recently, the role of the state, the importance of internal and external markets, and the social forces and ideologies of autonomy have allowed the political predominance of a core of faculty that clearly is conveying the idea of the university as a conveyor of academic excellence above other competing goals, such as the desire to expand education opportunities to the highest number of students.

Universities in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico have been active in creating independent technology transfer offices for industry-university synergies, but their performance and gravitas are far below the marvels experienced by this approach in the United States, Europe and Asia. Yet the primary external driver of internationalization in the region is demand by industry and business, not by government public policy interventions. This contrasts with other experiences, in particular in Asia.

How realistic is the internationalization in the strategic and finance dimensions of LATAM institutions? The answer is that the potential is immense for an a priori paradoxical reason: The intellectual, scholarship and entrepreneurial diaspora of Latin Americans worldwide is of high caliber.

LATAM institutions need to add the brain,

LATAM institutions should be campus-based, but need to become much more internationally oriented.

⁵ <http://www.nyu.edu/global/global-academic-centers/buenos-aires.html>

human power and finance capabilities of these cosmopolitan citizens to engage in a systemic change. For example, at the level of board of trustees and fundraising mechanisms, most institutions are mainly domestically oriented. International members should serve as trustees in private universities.

In terms of funding, the history of LATAM research centers becoming research universities is worth mentioning. It has been such American foundations as Ford, MacArthur and Hewlett, and such bilateral and multilateral agencies as USAID, the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank, that have been at the center of providing seed money to foster institutional change. But in recent years, this funding has primarily been dedicated to specific activities rather than serving as core funding to launch new, fresh initiatives.

Indigenous philanthropic efforts have been uneven: Confessional undertakings have had more quantitative success than non-denominational private higher education institutions.⁶ There is a passive attitude in the majority of potential donors, due to the traditional belief that the model of tuition-free state universities will deliver the required level of education, outreach and socially inclusive mechanisms that the society needs.

In the past, despite a chronic lack of funding by private initiatives, the challenge was surmountable. Although private funding has increased, it must expand further to keep pace with demographic pressures and a growing demand for higher education.

The LATAM region needs a major scale effort to design good governance models coupled with cosmopolitan boards and outreach to the bright Latin American individuals living outside the region to engage them in the governance and funding of universities.

Academic partnerships should also become intra-regional; while data about these is scanty the evidence suggests that they are still relatively insignificant. This is an indicator of a lack of an intra-regional network capability and an underestimation of how intra-regional linkages could consolidate reputation and capabilities at the individual institutional level.

Systematic planning for international matching funds schemes and sponsorship with professional counseling to institutions or agencies has not been undertaken by most administrators and leaders because the perception is that it diverts resources and time with an uncertain or long-run eventual pay-off.

Finally, long-range strategic planning to foster institutional building is not embedded in the culture of the region. The effort to secure a global citizen that can understand and act in a globalized environment is a long-term enterprise. This is a particularly daunting challenge in societies which tend to seek immediate returns.

But the choice is clear: If civil society in LATAM countries does not enter the game decisively, universities will not be able to maintain the pace of change required to sustain the promising rates of economic growth that have lately characterized the region, nor will they be able to accomplish the international and regional integration that opens minds, wills and markets.

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Long-range strategic planning to foster institutional building is not embedded in the culture of the region, a daunting challenge in societies which tend to seek immediate returns.

⁴Confessional universities have been important in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela.

Tarnishing the Halo: NGOs' Strategic Efforts and Foreign Regulation

Monroe Price

Increasingly, and for good reason relating to their effectiveness, large-scale global advocacy organizations—Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and many others—are in the crosshairs of governments seeking to keep control over political activity within their borders. Egypt, Russia, Bahrain, Venezuela, Israel and other countries are creating what might be called a jurisprudence of regulation of nonprofit organizations. This occurs as great and ambitious projects, often based in the United States and elsewhere in the West, promote a myriad of social and political issues abroad. This is especially true as repressive regimes link charitable activities to the “meddling” interventions of foreign governments in the United States and elsewhere.

These entities, known as NGOs or non-governmental organizations¹, see themselves as forces for good in their efforts to champion a particular cause—protecting the environment, promoting democracy, supporting religious freedom. Many have become large-scale operations, bold and consequential. They operate within a complex formula of international, political, and civil rights, and have become vital innovators in the process of reshaping public opinion and affecting policy.

Neutral Actors or Strategic Players?

NGOs promote themselves as standing

for neutral, almost universally acceptable values—often justifiably, elegantly and passionately. The label of “NGO” has, itself, become a status to utilize in arguing for a privileged entry and capacity to function in local and global debates. The category bestows a halo of respect. Yet the perception of these entities is changing.

The great, dramatic NGOs, like Human Rights Watch, seek to gain traction for their causes and build support not only in the societies that gave birth to them, but in the external societies whose texture must be affected if the solutions they put forward are to be globally meaningful. They have become actors affecting political arrangements and the structure of societies.

In short, they are increasingly acting as, and seeking to become, strategic players—and are recognized as such. The environments in which they compete and operate are becoming far more challenging. More nations, particularly repressive and fragile regimes, are seeking to limit their range of actions—to exclude their agents from entering a territory, to threaten them for arrest, to harass them for violations of ordinary laws, including tax laws and currency regulations.

And despite their name and their striving for independence, their very status of “non-governmental” is being questioned. Many NGOs receive substantial funding from the

¹ NGOs are generally understood to be, by definition, nonprofit organizations: according to the World Bank, NGOs “comprise a wide variety of associations, societies, foundations, and charitable entities that are (i) entirely or largely independent of government; (ii) not operated for profit; and (iii) exist to serve humanitarian, social or cultural interests, either of their memberships or of society as a whole” (see <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/EXTPCENG/0,,contentMDK:20507529-menuPK:1278313-pagePK:148956-piPK:216618-theSitePK:410306-isCURL:Y,00.html>). Other definitions are less precise; for example, the World Trade Organization includes in the category business and industry lobbying groups. These groups make up only a small percentage of the total, and on the whole, the term NGO implies a non-profit-making status. The “NGO” label serves to highlight the organizations’ independence from government influence, which has provided them more latitude in their operations, at least until now.

government in their home country; that becomes an excuse for seeing them as surrogates, not independent actors. Their very foreignness also is increasingly a basis for exclusion or discrimination.

Caught in the Crosshairs: NGO Activity and Governmental Restrictions

Many current examples could be provided. In September, Russia announced that it would shut down all USAID activities in the country by October 1, citing the agency's "attempts to exert influence, via the distribution of grants, upon political processes, including elections of various levels and institutions of civil society."² This decision was preceded by Vladimir Putin's efforts, during an election period marked with a much more robust set of protests than anticipated and an invigorated opposition, to criticize foreign governments for "meddling" and involvement in Russian political processes.

Putin argued that the U.S. Ambassador, Michael McFaul, had been chosen specifically because of his prior work with civil society and was deploying his expertise through an improper involvement in the Russian election cycle. Russia also has provided examples of state efforts to force NGOs to comply with what are supposedly general laws—for example, particular NGOs have been prosecuted for minor currency offenses or tax breaches.

The Arab Spring also has underlined the complexity of government-NGO relationships. Though it has been common to emphasize the role that "the street" and civil society played in building the effectiveness of the protests in the Middle East and North Africa, international NGOs took some degree of credit as well. According to an account by *The New York Times*, "The United States' democracy-building campaigns played a bigger role in fomenting protests than was previously known, with key leaders

of the movements having been trained by the Americans in campaigning, organizing through new media tools and monitoring elections."³

The *Times* report, which drew on interviews and information revealed in the American diplomatic cables released through WikiLeaks, highlighted the growing strains between such organizations and the countries in which they operate. Groups and individuals directly involved in the revolts and reforms—such as the April 6 Youth Movement in Egypt, the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, and grassroots activists—received training and financing from various groups. These included the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute (neither of which are technically NGOs, though similar in form and activities), as well as Freedom House, an organization well-known for its ranking of countries in terms of their implementation of free press principles and the assistance it provides in achieving such goals.

These organizations were doing exactly what their funders and donors expected them to accomplish—furthering democratic societies—and it was this, precisely, that was considered a threat.

The WikiLeaks disclosures meant that NGOs and similar organizations found themselves treading a fine line. Any attempts to claim partial credit for the fall of Mubarak would confirm the fears and apprehensions of other governments about the patterns of persuasion in the region and the effectiveness of the NGO strategy of systematic, long-term work with populations to develop leadership, contacts, timing and approaches to political transitions.

The relationship of these entities to political change and to the governments in their home countries flared into significance in late 2011 and early 2012, when Egyptian government

² Miriam Elder, "USAid covertly influencing political processes, says Russia," *The Guardian*, September 19, 2012.

³ Ron Nixon, "U.S. Groups Helped Nurture Arab Uprisings," *The New York Times*, April 14, 2011.

officials of the post-Tahrir Square Egyptian military government raided the offices of 17 local and international organizations, including Freedom House, the National Democratic Institute, and the International Republican Institute. Prosecutors charged these entities with violating Egyptian law concerning registration and payment of taxes; in the background were charges, often unsubstantiated, that the organizations were doing more than just providing technical assistance on how to conduct or monitor elections.

Implicit was the argument that the organizations were taking sides—during the key transitional elections, assisting candidates, organizations or groups whose agenda was more compatible with a Western-desired outcome.⁴ The context was so palpably combustible that employees of the indicted organizations sought asylum in the American Embassy, and representatives of the U.S. Congress threatened to withhold more than a billion dollars in U.S. aid to the Egyptian military. While the Egyptian instances were largely (though not wholly) resolved, they are more importantly seen as a trend, evident also in Russia, Israel and elsewhere, to redefine NGOs in a hostile way.

NGOs and the “Market for Loyalties”

Thomas Carothers, a consistent and perceptive chronicler of the process of NGO assistance for democratic transitions, has written extensively about different moments in the history of this effort, and poses a provocative argument concerning the presence of NGOs in foreign countries and the strategic dimensions that influence their behavior:

There are relatively coherent international norms about democratic political practice, embodied in a raft of multilateral and regional agreements. But there is no

well-settled body of norms about acceptable forms of involvement in democratization across borders. In fact, the line between reasonable and unreasonable restrictions on outside political aid is not at all clear. Simply pushing other governments to follow U.S. or Western standards in this area will not help much. To the extent there are generalized standards, they generally allow less space for outside influence than Western democracy promoters usually seek. Would Washington countenance the presence, during elections, of foreign organizations—especially ones funded by a powerful, possibly hostile government—that underwrite and help carry out voter-education campaigns, the training of and provision of material aid to political parties, parallel vote counts, and citizen-mobilization efforts?⁵

This perspective offered by Carothers provides one framework for exploring the role that NGOs (particularly those concerned with civil society building and democracy promotion) play. The issue of managing the timing, intensity and effectiveness of domestic political change has nominally been within the remit of national governments; this is the essence of the functioning of what I describe as the governing cartel in the “market for loyalties”—a market where large-scale competitors for power use the regulation of communications to organize imagery and identity among themselves.⁶ As global NGOs challenge the status quo—claiming new civil and political rights—states react vigorously to assert control and defend against what they perceive to be destabilization.

How this takes place, and the relationship to “rights discourse,” can be seen in the recent examples of particular national reactions, in Russia and Egypt as well as elsewhere. For example, Iran banned contact with more than 100 international civil society organizations

⁴Not all the organizations were, strictly speaking, NGOs—for instance, the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute are primarily funded by U.S. government agencies and the U.S. Congress, through the National Endowment for Democracy.

⁵Thomas Carothers, “The Backlash Against Democracy Promotion,” *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2006.

⁶Monroe E. Price, *Media and Sovereignty: The Global Information Revolution and Its Challenge to State Power*, MIT Press, 2002. I explored these issues also in *Television, the Public Sphere, and National Identity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

and sought to discredit major international human rights organizations.⁷ And Venezuela, in 2010, passed a law that imposes severe restrictions on Venezuelan NGOs, prompted by President Hugo Chavez’s call against NGOs and political organizations that are financed by the “Yankee Empire.”

Different Roles for Campaigning and Service NGOs—At Least Until Now

There is a distinction to be made between campaigning NGOs and those that can be called “service” NGOs. Medical and children’s charities are archetypal in this latter category. If these service entities have a communications strategy—and many do—it may include efforts to differentiate perceptions in the society where they work from perceptions in societies where they gain financial support and where knowledge of their work in general is essential for their long-time survival.

Campaigning and service NGOs face very different struggles when they enter complex markets for loyalties and attempt to achieve their strategic goals. Service NGOs sometimes have it slightly easier, from a persuasion perspective, as they may be seen not as countering existing political arrangements (even if what they seek to accomplish may underscore regime deficiencies) but rather as solving a problem. For instance, aside from simple service provision, their objective might be to engender large-scale behavior change in fields such as health, where their agenda may be supported by the target country’s government as well.

Yet even this line is blurring, as Oxfam, Save the Children, and Amnesty International are increasingly influential and visible in the public realm, becoming key actors in international debates, rivaling external governments in terms of influence. As they push to become more successful players, these groups rely on the general adoption

of a model of access—acceptance of certain international norms—that gives them greater opportunity to function in local and global markets.

They seek the support of their sponsors and donors, including state sponsors, to eliminate restrictions on their capacity to persuade. State sponsors provide this encouragement (as well as financial incentives) so long as the agenda of these representatives of international civil society meshes with the state’s own sense of international goals. And even those NGOs that are studiously apolitical can be rendered involuntarily political by the mere act of being involved in a contentious situation (Sudan and Somalia have presented examples).⁸

NGOs are thrillingly ambitious, as they should be. They have achieved amazing successes—both on their own and as supporters of local, grassroots change. They have mobilized. They have set new standards. They have shifted attitudes on issues of great moment. It is no surprise that these accomplishments have attracted the nervous and sometimes nasty oversight of officials, especially those hostile to change.

As strategic players, NGOs are now facing these issues far more frequently and with extraordinary consequences as to their future. How to respond, how to thrive, how to maintain momentum will require more and more attention, more careful understanding of the competing political forces, more creativity and innovation and greater respect for international human rights norms.

Monroe Price is Director of the Center for Global Communication Studies at the Annenberg School of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania and the Joseph and Sadie Danciger Professor of Law and Media and Society at the Cardozo School of Law. This article is an excerpt from a book in progress, with the working title of Seeking Resilience, Confronting Anxiety: Strategic Communicators in Global Markets

⁷ <http://www.presstv.ir/usdetail/257560.html>

⁸ For example, see “Al-Shabaab bans aid agencies in Somalia and raids offices,” *The Guardian*, November 28, 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/nov/28/al-shabaab-bans-aid-agencies-somalia>.

INTERVIEWS

We are delighted to have interviewed two remarkable nonprofit leaders—Iván Fischer, Founder and Music Director of the Budapest Festival Orchestra, and Nancy Zimpher, Chancellor of the State University of New York—about their perspectives on the future of their organizations and the role that planning has played in shaping their institutional aspirations.



Iván Fischer

FOUNDER AND CONDUCTOR, BUDAPEST FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

Budapest-born Iván Fischer founded the Budapest Festival Orchestra (BFO) in 1983 and is internationally acclaimed as a conductor and composer. Now widely considered to be one of the leading orchestras in the world, the BFO performs about 30 weeks a year in Budapest, New York and elsewhere around the world and records commercially on Philips Classics. With the BFO, Maestro Fischer has incorporated such unorthodox ideas into practice as allowing individual orchestra members to contribute to concert programming, holding surprise concerts where the program is not announced and offering renowned concert opera performances.

In August 2012, Maestro Fischer became Music Director of the Konzerthaus Berlin and Principal Conductor of the Konzerthausorchester Berlin. He has been guest conductor of some of the finest symphony orchestras of the world, including the BBC Symphony, Berlin Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (Amsterdam), London Symphony

Orchestra and the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra. He was earlier Music Director of the Kent Opera and Lyon Opera and Principal Conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, DC.

AKA has assisted the BFO to strengthen its international governance and global fundraising.

Strategy Matters: What are the greatest opportunities/possibilities facing the performing arts in Europe, the United States and globally today? What are the key steps to address them?

Iván Fischer: We need to distinguish between the relevant traditions in Europe and those in the United States. In Europe, performing arts initially had been the “toy” of the aristocracy and later “inherited” by the bourgeoisie/citizens. European performing arts organizations have primarily been maintained by states and cities. This means, in practical terms, taxpayers’ money. In the United States, the performing arts have always been financed by enthusiastic individuals—often of European origin who immigrated to the U.S. and felt a strong civic pride.

Let’s first consider the problems of the European model. The danger for performing arts organizations is the squeeze on state and municipal budgets, because in difficult times culture is always an easy target of spending cuts. At the same time, there are no traditions of fundraising or philanthropy that might reasonably replace shrinking subsidies. Therefore the main challenge for Europe is to learn these techniques and methodologies from the United States.

Let's now look at the difficulties in the U.S.: The giving potential of philanthropy that maintains the art at the moment is highly vulnerable to the waves of the market. When stock markets go down, there is less giving. In times of recession or downturn of the economy, the giving potential decreases. So there are waves or cycles and these would need to be equalized in order to ensure continuous artistic activities.

As their primary defense mechanism against negative cycles, American art organizations have built up large endowments. However, these endowments themselves are also in danger in case of stock market crashes. The value of the endowment, and possibly even more importantly, the annual income drawn from the endowment, also go down. So, on the one hand, the endowment can be seen as insurance—but on the other it can also be seen as dead money, which one doesn't use but is as much in danger of economic decline as the giving potential of the people in the first place.

SM: What will be the situation/ characteristics of the performing arts in Europe, the United States and globally in ten years?

IF: When considering the future of performing art organizations in the United States, there is an additional difficulty that needs to be mentioned over and above financial vulnerability. This is the almost extreme influence of trade unions within the art world. Practically, philanthropy is not only expected to finance a symphony orchestra that the audience hears playing, but also its retired musicians! There are huge pension funds linked to these art organizations, and with time these have become an extremely expensive feature to feed. Overall I think that in ten years time, probably there will be fewer symphony orchestras in the United States. Many will have growing difficulties maintaining the same level of philanthropy that they still enjoy today.

In Europe, governments will probably

merge a few of their local orchestras, opera companies, or theatres. There is already a clear political desire to spend less on cultural organizations. At the same time, I don't expect that a lot of philanthropy will emerge in Europe because people perceive the role of the state as the central vehicle to fund art. So my prediction is that there will be fewer arts organizations on both continents. This is not necessarily a problem, because it will create more competition, higher quality and a "natural selection" process.

SM: You have recently developed a strategic plan for the Budapest Festival Orchestra. What was the motivation for doing so? How will you measure the success of the plan?

IF: In Hungary, we are in a particular situation: Hungary is neither West Europe nor the United States, which means no philanthropy to the extent expected in the U.S. and no public funding at the level of Western European orchestras. So we have to have a very specific strategic plan, where we address our particular geographic and political situation, because we are forced to think ahead. We need to consider also how we could finance the orchestra in case the very vulnerable Hungarian state support might shrink in the future. The level of our public funding has nothing to do with quality: the Budapest Festival Orchestra is highly competitive, but Hungary is highly economically vulnerable at the moment. In order to ensure long-term sustainability, we were looking for solutions that could take advantage of the extraordinary international success the orchestra enjoys—and turn this success into financial sustainability.

My prediction is that there will be fewer arts organizations in both the United States and Europe. This is not necessarily a problem, because it will create more competition, higher quality and a "natural selection" process.

SM: Budapest Festival Orchestra's support structure is exceptional in relying heavily on international friends organizations. How does this structure inform your strategy and organizational settings, including human resources?

IF: This question has to do with long-term thinking. If we were to think only for one year ahead, we would not say that we rely on international friends because at the moment, our largest income is from Hungarian state subsidies and only a marginal income comes from international friends organizations. However, if we think long term, then we envision a decline of Hungary's capability to fund the arts and we see an increasing impact of our international friends and their potential to help. Consequently, we are strongly developing the growth and outreach of our friends groups in several important cities of the world and enhancing our organizational capacity for international networking in order to ensure the orchestra's future. This process does require some sacrifices and we want to make sure that our staff and our board can provide the skills, human and financial resources required for this ambitious international development program.

SM: How can the flexibility of operations be maintained while programming is uniquely long-term (concerts often booked five years ahead)?

IF: Five years is probably too much, but we certainly plan several years ahead. Indeed, no orchestra in the world could do that if their finances were not secured for at least the same period of two or three years. We are in a vulnerable position because our municipal and state subsidies are usually granted for the forthcoming financial year only. Thus, we have to take certain precautions to manage the gap between artistic and budget planning. We have developed some financial reserves, although it is not even comparable to the significant endowments of U.S. arts organizations. Still, our reserves in the bank do provide for a little flexibility by helping to overcome

short-term cash-flow difficulties, which regularly occur.

SM: Where would you like to see Budapest Festival Orchestra in five years?

IF: Founded almost exactly 30 years ago, the young Budapest Festival Orchestra has become one of the world's foremost symphonic ensembles. In the next few years I would like to see this outstanding success bringing along a much stronger embeddedness of it in the international business community as well as a raised "brand-awareness" in the general public. I would like the Budapest Festival Orchestra to be seen as the international artistic treasure it in fact has become by now. The widespread acknowledgement of this treasure, along with the commitment to sustain and protect it, will ensure the orchestra's undisturbed future existence. In other words, I would like to see the orchestra to continue its present artistic achievements and consistently raise awareness and support around the globe.

SM: What are the most important lessons you've learned over the past several years as the BFO has developed a strategic plan and begun to build a strong international organization?

IF: In our case, to implement a strategic plan is even more difficult than to compose it. The implementation is especially difficult because in Hungary we don't have the tradition of various professional departments. It is relatively easy to implement a strategic plan in the United States where you have professionals in the marketing, development, PR or other organizational departments who would all understand the concept and the specific tasks implied by the strategic plan. Unfortunately, most of these professions have very little presence in Hungary—especially with the strong international experience that our orchestra's operation clearly requires. Thus, our staff often first needs to acquire the knowledge, methodology and the mentality of these professions to enable the organization to implement our strategy.



Nancy Zimpher

CHANCELLOR, STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Nancy Zimpher is Chancellor of the State University of New York (SUNY), the largest system of public higher education in the country, with 64 institutions, more than 465,000 students, 88,000 faculty and staff and almost 2.5 million alumni worldwide.

A former chair of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, Dr. Zimpher is now the immediate past chair of the national Coalition of Urban Serving Universities and co-chairs a national blue-ribbon panel on transforming teacher preparation. She is Chair of the Board of CEOs for Cities, Chair of the Board of Governors of the New York Academy of Sciences, chairs the National Strive Network and board, and is a member of the Business-Higher Education Forum.

Dr. Zimpher earlier served as President of the University of Cincinnati, Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Executive Dean of the Professional Colleges and Dean of the College of Education at Ohio State University. She has authored or co-authored numerous books, monographs and academic journal articles on teacher education, urban education, academic leadership and school/university partnerships.

She received her B.A. in English education and speech, her M.A. in English literature and her Ph.D. in teacher education and higher education administration from Ohio State University.

Strategy Matters: What are the most important challenges facing higher education in the U.S. today?

Nancy Zimpher: I'm so tired of the typical response being financial. Everybody knows that the country is still in recession and understands that public universities across the country are suffering unavoidable retrenchments because of decreases in state support. What's far more important is for us to think broadly about the unique contributions that universities—both public and private—make to society.

I believe that the most important challenge to higher education today is to remain true to our historic mission of teaching, research and service and to demonstrate what we are doing for, and on behalf of, the social good. This requires us to be very strategic about such issues as economic revitalization, expanding and extending the quality of life of our citizenry and our faith in this country, and to be highly specific about our value added, the impact of our work.

If American universities are as good as they say they are, then why are we still facing so many social challenges in this country and abroad? And the response must be that our universities should be far more strategic about their civic engagement.

SM: What does that suggest are the greatest opportunities and possibilities for higher education going forward?

NZ: I think it would be helpful if our global impression were more precisely defined in local terms. I know that a research university has a global imprint and focus. But I believe we have a local obligation to work where we are planted, if you will, and be a real player in addressing issues that encompass our particular environment. We should think global but act local.

If energy, health care, and education continue to be some of the big issues of our time, what specifically are the wonderful,

powerful higher education enterprises of the nation doing to attack these problems on the ground?

If American universities are good as they say they are, then why are we still facing so many social challenges in this country and abroad? Our universities should be far more strategic about their civic engagement.

It's crucial that higher education play a leadership role in determining how the issues of the day can best be addressed. Following this line of thinking, we must think through and help close the achievement gap among our citizens and ensure that everyone has opportunities to realize their best potential.

The greatest opportunity for higher education today is to be highly specific and targeted about meeting the larger challenges of the day and to make our impact in meeting those challenges transparently evident.

SM: If we were talking ten years from now about the then state of higher education in the U.S., what would you wish us to be speaking about?

NZ: I have become a big fan of collective impact, of finding instrumental ways to work with government, the nonprofit sector and the corporate sector together to address important societal issues. We need collectively to put our shoulders to the wheel and address such questions as increasing college completion rates, extending health care to underserved populations, solving the transportation problems of our country, creating a more just and peaceful planet.

I hope in ten years we will have achieved ways of enhanced connectivity between and among the various sectors of our society, working on common goals, using

evidence of our impacts and really seeing ourselves as societal innovators because we've actually solved some of our problems together.

SM: One of your first initiatives upon assuming the Chancellorship of SUNY was to develop a system-wide strategic plan. What was your motivation for doing so?

NZ: I can't imagine trying to move forward an organization without a game plan. I was recruited to SUNY with the primary goal of making the university system far more strategic in intent, thinking, and action and to collectively identify a set of powerful goals for the next decade.

As you know, I began my work at SUNY with a statewide tour of SUNY's 64 campuses, which became the first phase of our system-wide strategic planning process. This plan, called *The Power of SUNY*, was launched in April 2010, with the central goal of harnessing SUNY's potential to drive economic revitalization and create a better future for every community across New York.

With AKA's great assistance, we put to our constituents a very big question: What is the highest and best big goal for this comprehensive public university system, the largest of its kind in the country? The answer was quite forthcoming: as the state university of New York, we have a social responsibility to our state.

But that is such a huge opportunity and audacious goal that we needed to break down our aspirations into a set of specific realizable strategies. That's the kind of work that expert external assistance really contributes to and that's why we clearly needed outside eyes, an organizer and moderator to help us explore these issues, someone to hold us to task by asking us what exactly we intended to do with

¹ http://www.suny.edu/powerOfSunny/plan_powerofsunny.cfm

respect to achieving this goal. Happily, the result was our strategic plan—*The Power of SUNY*¹

SM: How are you measuring the impact of the SUNY strategic plan?

NZ: The danger of any strategic plan is that it goes directly to the shelf...the proverbial shelf. We have several measures that indicate the impact of our strategic plan.

First and foremost, our 64 campus presidents are asked each year to assess their response to the plan and indicate the ways in which they contribute to realization of the plan at their institutions. Secondly, we've prepared and distributed annual reports to our stakeholders and constituents with specific metrics that we think help measure our progress.

And third, we are trying very hard to lift up impact in local story-like fashion, where good is coming from our strategic initiatives—more qualitative periodic reports on what's happening on the ground. Thus, we are relying on the presidential leadership of our campuses through comprehensive annual report cards and in a softer way, simply telling the story on how we're doing.

As *The Power of SUNY* is put into action, we are leading a diverse set of new initiatives at SUNY in several key areas, including research and innovation, energy, health care, global affairs and the education pipeline.

I have also been a vocal advocate for groundbreaking legislative reforms that ensure SUNY can continue to provide broad access to higher education in an environment of declining state support, while maximizing its impact as an engine of economic development.

SM: What are the most important lessons you have learned in the past few years as the SUNY Chancellor?

NZ: I have reflected over the course of my time at SUNY about what I think contributes to effective leadership. I've articulated for myself and for other audiences a series of actions around leadership, a set of five components to which I try to adhere:

- First, vision trumps everything, and it is absolutely crucial to articulate a vision that is derived at the hands of many. A successful leader does not solely dictate the institution's vision and then put people to work on making it happen. Rather, she works with all constituencies to identify what the future should hold for that institution; and then
- The leader then builds the convening table, where all parties commit to the vision and decide how it will be achieved;
- Next, the group authenticates the vision into action and ensures accountability by making public promises and mapping their progress;
- We focus on the pocket-book, demonstrating a return on investment as our vision is carried out and showing that investing in the vision is more affordable than the alternatives and;
- Finally, we tell our story. Leadership is a lot about messaging and backing up the message with all constituents.

We have a local obligation to work where we are planted... and be a real player in addressing issues that encompass our particular environment. We should think global but act local.

Rounding out my theory of leadership is this final point. As the head of the institution, a leader must be a persistent, consistent and tireless advocate for the vision, willing to speak publicly and with stakeholder groups and potential investors at every opportunity in support of the vision.

NOTABLE BOOKS

In each issue, we identify and briefly describe a small number of books that are insightful about consequential matters and offer new ways of thinking strategically about the nonprofit world.

College: What It Was, Is and Should Be

Andrew Delbanco

Princeton University Press, 2012, 240 pp., \$24.95.

Reviewed by Ben Wildavsky

At the outset of his deeply informed defense of the value of liberal arts education, Andrew Delbanco, a noted Melville scholar, illustrates one of his central points with a quotation from Moby Dick. When the novel's narrator famously declares that "a whale ship was my Yale College and my Harvard," Delbanco observes, "he used the word 'college' as the name of the place where (to use our modern formulation) he 'found himself.'"

Learning "How to Think and How to Choose"

Yet if college is in part a voyage of self-discovery, it ought not to be simply a nar-

cissistic extension of adolescence, contends Delbanco, a professor of American Studies and Humanities at Columbia University. At its heart, college is—or should be—about truth-seeking. Quoting an 1850 diary by a student at a Methodist college in Virginia, Delbanco declares that showing students

"how to think and how to choose" ought to be the goal of every college. He ticks off a list of the habits of mind that a college should nurture in its students, from a "skeptical discontent with the present, informed by a sense of the past," to knowledge of science and the arts, to the capacity "to make connections among seemingly disparate phenomena."

Unfortunately, far too many colleges simply don't give students anything approaching this kind of education. In *College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be*, Delbanco traces U.S. higher education from the establishment of religious colleges in Colonial days to the advent of research universities in the nineteenth century to the birth, more recently, of mass-access community colleges. He thoughtfully details, among other things, how the goals of college have evolved, what meritocracy in admissions does and doesn't mean, and how, although access to college has expanded massively, numerous shortcomings remain in the nation's efforts to make higher education available to more Americans. Along the way, he writes, the meaning of a college education has changed radically.

Developing Marketable Skills, but Not the Whole Person

Today, only a modest number of students have the leisure to pursue the life of the mind under the tutelage of wise professors. For the majority, laments Delbanco, "college means the anxious pursuit of marketable skills in overcrowded, under resourced institutions, where little attention is paid to that elusive entity sometimes called the 'whole person.'" Even at colleges that ostensibly aim to provide a broad education to their charges, the triumph of the nineteenth century German university model, which placed scientific research rather than undergraduate education at its core, has often left humanistic inquiry out in the cold. "Literature, history, philosophy, and the arts are becoming the stepchildren of our colleges," Delbanco writes.

Delbanco is certainly correct that much of

At its heart,
college is—or
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truth-seeking.

academe has stepped away from its responsibility to tell students "what's worth thinking about." As anybody who has taken a child on a college tour lately knows, with rare exceptions—the celebrated core curriculum at Delbanco's university among them—it is hard to find a college that asks students to take a required set of classes that will bring some common intellectual coherence to their undergraduate studies. Instead, as he notes, most colleges offer "a grab bag of unrelated subjects," sometimes accompanied by a set of perfunctory discipline-based distribution requirements. Little wonder that while students "have always been searching for purpose," he writes, most "have no clear conception of why or to what end they are in college."

the mind. He doesn't provide much by way of example except a couple of programs that bring philosophy, literature, and mathemat-



"We're from Student Loans—we came to repo your B.A."

The Transformation of the College Experience

To Delbanco's credit, he inserts plenty of caveats as he tells this important story. Among them: few of today's complaints about colleges are without historical precedent (Abigail Adams wrote to her husband in 1776 that education "has never been in a worse state"), and colleges vary so much that generalizations are often inadequate. Delbanco also acknowledges repeatedly that the traditional four-year college experience is a thing of the past for most students. A large and growing number are practically-minded adults who are already working, commute to classes, have children, and take longer to graduate than their younger counterparts.

Yet while Delbanco makes a strong case that all students at the rich variety of institutions that make up U.S. higher education ought to have "the precious chance to think and reflect before life engulfs them," he never quite succeeds in showing how nontraditional students can best be exposed to the life of

ics classes to prison inmates and recovering drug addicts. Nor does he squarely address the fact that, while it is indeed patronizing to assume that nontraditional students can't benefit from liberal arts education, they may not want it. Most have very practical goals when they take on college classes along with their other demanding real-world commitments. Delbanco dismisses "narrow training in vocational subjects such as accounting or information technology." But would he have 35-year-old working mothers and fathers forced to debate Hegel around a seminar table?

It is quite true, of course, that an instrumental view of higher education can coexist with an effort to touch students' souls. "The two types do not stand opposed," wrote German sociologist Max Weber, whom Delbanco cites on this point. This is particularly true in a traditional college or university setting. There is no reason that Animal Science majors at Iowa State University should not also be required to study Shakespeare or, well, Weber. Often, alas, they aren't.

The traditional four-year college experience is a thing of the past for many students.

Against this backdrop, it's a shame that Delbanco doesn't specify exactly which books and authors he himself believes all students should study. Nor, unaccountably, does he discuss the rise of race-, sex-, and class-based identity politics on campus in recent decades, which surely has much to do

with the demise of the Western canon and its much-disparaged dead white male creators. He does, however, fault late twentieth century postmodernism for dealing a terribly damaging blow to the humanities. Postmodernists, he writes, "denied the very idea of truth by asserting, with varying degrees of 'postmodern' irony, that all putative truths are contingent and all values relative." The de-

pressing upshot, although Delbanco doesn't put it this way: it doesn't much matter what books students read if their professors don't see truth-seeking as a worthwhile mission in the first place.

Can College be "Fixed"?

As he wraps up his account, Delbanco proffers a long list of measures for fixing what ails American higher education. All seem commendable in principle: more attention to helping low-income students not only get into college but finish; better programs to train graduate students to become effective teachers; a renewed push to convey the value of a liberal arts education, and so forth. Still, it's unclear how much any of these will do to restore the search for meaning that he correctly believes should lie at the core of a traditional college education.

Moreover, when it comes to the important goal of improving access to college, Delbanco seems to hold a somewhat crimped, suspicious view of the possibilities of market-driven changes, both within and outside the conventional collegiate world. He laments the severe underfunding of community colleges, which despite many imperfections have been such a crucial tool

in bringing mass access to American higher education. Yet he apparently fails to see how new initiatives to deliver more instructional bang for the buck—often using technology-driven pedagogy—have the potential to reach precisely the marginalized, underserved students about whom he expresses understandable concern.

Similarly, the much-discussed MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), including Coursera, Udacity, and MITx, promise to make top instructors available at low or no cost to a broad range of students who may have few other appealing and convenient alternatives. These initiatives are young and relatively untested, to be sure. But they are only the beginning of far-ranging changes in higher education. Anybody who cares about the democratization of college opportunity, as Delbanco clearly does, ought to take this evolving new world more seriously.

Still, *College* offers much valuable analysis, as when Delbanco lays out three common understandings of the purposes of college today: economic advancement, both for individuals and for the nation; preparation for citizenship (including the development of "a well-functioning bullshit meter"); and contemplative liberal education. Each is a worthwhile goal, but of course the third is the closest to the author's heart. If Delbanco does not provide a fully satisfying plan for reaching that objective, this may simply be because such a change would require massive cultural and political changes, inside and outside academe. Flaws notwithstanding, his fine-grained, literate argument for why teaching students "how to think and how to choose" ought to be at the heart of a college education deserves careful thought and consideration, on and off campus.

Ben Wildavsky is a senior scholar at the Kauffman Foundation, a guest scholar at the Brookings Institution and a member of Education Sector's K20 Task Force. He is the author of The Great Brain Race: How Global Universities are Reshaping the World (Princeton University Press, 2010) and co-editor of Reinventing Higher Education: The Promise of Innovation (Harvard Education Press, 2011).

The Coming Prosperity: How Entrepreneurs Are Transforming the Global Economy

Philip Auerswald & Timothy Ogden
Oxford University Press, 2012, 272 pp.,
\$29.95.

Reviewed by Lise Stone

Don't tell Philip E. Auerswald the sky is falling.

His account of economic, political, and social opportunity, *The Coming Prosperity: How Entrepreneurs are Transforming the Global Economy*, takes a strong shot against purveyors of doom and gloom. He argues cogently that economics need not continue as a "dismal science," a term coined in response to the writings of the original worrywart, Rev. Thomas Robert Malthus, who warned in the eighteenth century that human overpopulation would lead to mass starvation. Auerswald points to the global convergence of human capacity for innovation and technology that lowers entry barriers and multiplies opportunities for new products and solutions worldwide. "Bliss? Maybe not," he writes. "But, on a global scale, we would be foolish to trade the economic possibilities within our reach in the twenty-first century for those of our grandparents."

Auerswald paints his own sky broadly, in a slender volume whose tone is encouraging and educational, with anecdotes that belie an interest in social prosperity beyond that in the you-can-get-rich-now literature. For Auerswald, prosperity "is a team sport." He covers energy, history, politics, terrorism, home gardening, and parenting. He sees business opportunities as the world's population starts to rub shoulders more frequently and dismisses arguments from those who

would try to clamp down borders and halt migration. "Indeed, if anything will keep... Americans from realizing our potential in the twenty-first century, it will be misguided measures taken in the name of protecting our borders that will serve only to attenuate our connection to the coming prosperity."

Entrepreneurs in the Global Economy

Auerswald, who serves as associate professor of Public Policy at George Mason University and senior fellow at the Kauffman Foundation, presents stories of successful entrepreneurs who have made cell phone businesses in Afghanistan, started a not-for-profit pharmaceutical



"I'll see you the day after tomorrow. Tomorrow is supposed to be cloudless."

firm, built an organic farming business in Egypt, and cured two million people of their blindness. Many of these stories came to Auerswald in his capacity as coeditor of *Innovations*, a journal about entrepreneurial solutions to global challenges, or during talks he has given. The stories convey a sense that these entrepreneurs hope to profit by helping others to improve their lives, especially in parts of the world where development has been slow to reach.

Auerswald is less interested in prescribing successful models than enabling others to devise them. How each entrepreneur succeeds is a matter for that creative individual, playing according to the rules and prices in each market, using available resources and partners. In a place like Afghanistan or Pakistan, he says, that comes not from merely building schools or prosecuting criminals but from creating "an environment in which the most capable people in the society prefer to create rather than destroy."

Opportunities for Innovation Amidst Disruption

In the United States and the developed world, Auerswald sees a different challenge, with wage stagnation, persistent unemployment, vast inequality, and entire cities unable to recover.

The reason is fundamental: Industries and interests of all types are headed for massive change because of globalization. In the new order, Auerswald says, "if the United States is to grow sustainably, it must do so from its entrepreneurial core rather than its exploitative edge." "There is not a single institution more than a decade old," he writes, "that is not ready to be repurposed."

Detroit had its comeuppance in 2008, journalism is on the rack, and Auerswald thinks his own field, academia, is overdue for seismic change. "This disruption can be a disaster for existing colleges and universities or an opportunity for genuine reinvention." Health care, he says, may be another sphere facing such a challenge.

According to Auerswald, technology will not, of its own accord, save economies, but using it to help solve specific problems should help, in the United States

and elsewhere. One specific example may be in energy research. He observes that climate change is the "cursed stepchild of the marriage between technology and innovation that also produced the Industrial Revolution and the substantial improvements in human well-being it ultimately engendered."

Auerswald not only blames governments for subsidizing coal and oil but also notes that the sheer abundance of the fuels reduces understanding of the real threat of climate change. He views the sharp commodity price rises over the last decade as a positive sign because they will spur incentives to use energy efficiently and develop new sources. The argument requires a strong faith in economics, which Auerswald, a self-proclaimed policy wonk, clearly has.

What the future holds for the global economy, and who the winners or losers may be, Auerswald does not forecast, though he warns against opting out. He believes the focus must shift from short-term gains to a longer view, one based less on profit and more on meaning. He does not shy from arguing that humanistic principles of freedom and democracy have been unleashed around the world during revolutions and uprisings, some using cell phone technology.

Why should the United States take an interest? "[W]hatever our manifest shortcomings, uncorrected errors, and irredeemable sins, we Americans have a very strong—though I'll refrain from saying exceptional—record of creating shared value and authentic prosperity... For this reason, for all the importance of America's democratic legacy, our nation's greatest distinction ultimately may lie in our history of creating shared economic, rather than political, value."

Lise Stone is a New York-based writer. She holds an MPA from the Harvard Kennedy School.

There is not a single institution more than a decade old that is not ready to be repurposed.

The Power of Pull: How Small Moves, Smartly Made, Can Set Big Things in Motion

By John Hagel III, John Seely Brown & Lang Davison

Basic Books, 2010, 288 pp, \$27.50.

Reviewed by Jonathan Fanton

The Power of Pull helps us understand the implications of rapid change for ourselves, institutions and the larger society. It poses deep questions for each of us about our personal development but also challenges us to help institutions we care about to adapt. *The Power of Pull* will be especially interesting to those in leadership positions in universities and not-for-profit organizations as well as business and government.

The authors have a wealth of experience to help us navigate the perils and prospects of this new world. John Hagel is a business consultant who has worked at Atari, McKinsey and 12 Entrepreneurship. John Seely Brown was Chief Scientist of Xerox and Director of its Palo Alto Research Center. He is also the co-founder of the Institute for Research on Learning. Lang Davison was Editor-in-Chief of the *McKinsey Quarterly* and Executive Director of the Deloitte Center for the Edge. All have worked at the intersection of technology and business strategy.

A Changing Paradigm: From "Push" to "Pull"

The authors acknowledge that we live in a time where the pace of change causes anxiety and frustration. The digital revolution, public policy shifts to encourage economic liberalization, reduced barriers to entry and movement all lead to more intense competition. And while the rapid increase of knowledge flows makes it easier to access new ideas, it also threatens to overwhelm us. We need the help of institutions to harness these knowledge flows "to create and capture more value." But institutions need to change to attract and accommodate a new generation that is growing up in an interconnected world that requires new skills and where

much of the action and interaction is online.

A core concept of this lively book is what the authors call the "Big Shift," a world where "Pull" replaces "Push" as the critical paradigm. Push is the well-ordered, top-down world we all grew up in, a world where education occurred at a defined time with a structured curriculum. The new world of Pull honors individual initiative, celebrates collaboration, respects serendipity, sees learning as a continual process and understands that the "needs of participants can not be well anticipated in advance."

While the authors believe that institutions remain important, they describe a new institutional model that is emerging: "Rather than molding individuals to fit the needs of the institution, institutions will be shaped to provide platforms to help individuals achieve their full potential...the success of institutions will depend on their ability to amplify the efforts of individuals so that small moves, smartly made, can become catalysts for broad impacts." Learning will move from a process of passive consumption to one of active creation, as students no longer simply experience content but use content to establish a context for making sense of the uncertainty that results from increased knowledge flows. And universities will be a source of networks of trust so important in a world where progress depends on an ever-expanding set of relationships.

Lessons for Individuals and Institutions

The Power of Pull gives us good advice as individuals—for example, the importance of connecting our passions to our professional life, finding a geographic location that broadens our network, increasing the

Pull provides us with the opportunity to achieve our own individual potential while at the same time pursuing the enormous potential embedded in whatever institutional environment surrounds us.



"Quick! I need some more charitable donations!"

chances for serendipitous encounters, having a shaping view of our goals that provides context for managing information overload. The authors offer inspirational examples of individuals who embody *The Power of Pull*, including entrepreneur Joi Ito, Director of the MIT Media Lab. Each chapter closes with useful questions directed to us, such as: "How actively have you sought to develop your social network by deepening relationships with those who share your passion or who could help you pursue your passion?" And: "Who are the five people you can identify who would have the best visibility into the knowledge flows most relevant to your passion? Are you connected to them yet?" The process of thinking about—if not answering—the chapter ending questions might well change the course of one's life.

A rising generation will have different expectations of the places where they are educated and work. Institutions that adapt to the new world of Pull will be more successful in attracting and retaining the best talent. Change will not be easy for institutions and their leaders, nor do the authors imagine it will come overnight. Institutions that will prosper in the Pull environment will serve as platforms to enable students and staff to collaborate, reach across disciplinary boundaries, connect to resources at other

institutions. Large institutions can start the process of change by hosting creative spaces, places that make collaboration easy, encourage teamwork, give constant feedback, bring people thinking on the edge to the core.

The Power of Pull is at once realistic about the dangers of clinging to the Push model and profoundly optimistic about the potential of a world that embraces Pull. "For the first time ever we have the real opportunity to become who we are, and more importantly who we were meant to be. Pull provides us with the opportunity to achieve our own individual po-

tential while at the same time pursuing the enormous potential embedded in whatever institutional environment surrounds us. We now have the ability to shape a world that encourages our efforts to become who we were meant to be."

After reading *The Power of Pull* I am thinking in a different way about institutions I have led. I believe the New School should resist the temptation to develop into a traditional university but rather honor its history of innovation in response to student needs. I now see more clearly that some of MacArthur's best work was supporting people working on the edge, for example, pioneers in the field of digital media and learning. And Roosevelt House at Hunter College is one of those creative spaces in a larger institution which is a platform that enables faculty and students to collaborate in exploring new ideas. I now see more clearly the way forward in a time of rapid change. And thus I feel more confident about the future of institutions I care about, at least those which recognize "The Big Shift" and adapt.

Jonathan Fanton, a Senior Consultant at AKA|Strategy, was previously President of the John T. and Catherine M. MacArthur Foundation and President of The New School. He is currently Interim Director of the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute at Hunter College.

What Technology Wants

Kevin Kelly

Penguin Books, 2010, 416 pp., \$27.95.

Reviewed by Rajiv Joshi

Inefficiency, limited creativity and untapped potential are criticisms that have been left at the door of nonprofit organizations the world over. As we search for solutions and drive for greater impact, we tend to focus our efforts on developing staff, hiring new talent and engineering more efficient processes. Meanwhile, an ever-expanding web of information continues to create new possibilities for producing products and services in all sectors of the economy. Do the answers to our problems lie less in people and process changes, and more in a deeper consideration of technology as the primary route to a high-performing social sector?

Overpowering Chaos and Evolving with the Technium

Kevin Kelly's contentious new book, *What Technology Wants*, presents a bold proposition: that we "co-evolve" with technology, which serves as an "organism of ideas" within an interconnected system that has been a "cosmic force" since the beginning of time. Kelly defines this force as the "technium," which for him also includes "culture, art, societal institutions, intellectual creations, ideas, laws and science," everything from "fire, to the Magna Carta to calculus." The technium is an "evolutionary form of life" a so-called "7th Kingdom," where species, such as electronic networks, exhibit "near-biological behavior." The central proposition is that technology, like evolution, is an inevitable force and understanding its tendencies can help us better reap the gains it can bring.

The title of the book is the central question driving Kelly's search for meaning, as he looks through the eyes of technology in order to determine its main trends and anticipate its future trajectory. Kelly discovers a predictability about technology: if humanity were to evolve on another planet it would

likely end up inventing the same things in the same sequence.

Kelly expands on the broader impacts of the technium on how we learn and interact in society. "Social dynamics have shifted dramatically...we want to be plugged in globally, we expect to do most of our talking over the internet...we construct online identities and use technology—from instructional knitting videos to scientific forums—to explore our interests. What technology brings to us individually is the possibility of finding out who we are and, more importantly, who we might be." For Kelly, the technium offers people a chance to "excel at the unique mixture of talents he or she was born with." It enlarges the scope of people's creativity "by developing more technology and more convivial expressions of it."

Kelly creates the word "extropy," with the opposite meaning to entropy (the scientific name for chaos and disorder), to describe the nature of the technium as a force that overpowers chaos—a "creative force that flings forward an unbroken sequence of unlikely existences." The ability of technology to bring organization to processes and create the conditions for the impossible to become reality is a key consideration for strategists undertaking long-term planning.

Kelly further describes why technology develops in a sequential way, where intermediate technologies must be in place before higher-order ones are able to thrive. He provides the example of widespread cell phone adoption in developing countries leading perversely to increased demand for copper phone lines. Instead of skipping the so-called "dirty industrial stage" as might seem natural, cell phones increase demand for higher-bandwidth internet connections, which then follow in copper wires. These lessons apply also on an organizational

If humanity were to evolve on another planet it would likely end up inventing the same things in the same sequence.

level: For a strategist planning to invest in new technology solutions to solve organizational challenges, it is critical to understand the importance of sequential development and the challenges of attempting to leapfrog stages of technical development.

The Dynamic Relationship between Choice and Progress

As technological evolution continues, it creates more choice. And choice creates progress. There is a positive feedback loop as more choices create more knowledge and more tools to create more choices—for Kelly, the world needs to stockpile modest gains generation after generation, banking that thin margin. If we create 1-2 percent more positive stuff than we destroy, then we have major progress.

As technological evolution continues, it creates more choice. And choice creates progress.

Kelly also discovers patterns in the technium to support his claims that technology has clear "wants" and tendencies. One example cited by Kelly is Moore's Law, which predicted in 1965 that computing chips would shrink by half in size and cost every 18 to 24 months. For the past 50 years it has been astoundingly correct, and Kelly asserts that technology will continue to make things better, faster and cheaper.

He disagrees, however, that Moore's Law is unique to computer technology, claiming to have found similar patterns across the technology spectrum including in transistor production, DNA sequencing, bandwidth and fiber-optic throughput. Rather, Kelly says, these trends result from something "baked deep in the fabric of the technium." He further explains that technology is inevitable, demonstrating parallel inventions in different parts of the world such as the light bulb, which was invented simultaneously by dozens of people.

Lessons for Organizations

For Kelly, preparing for the inevitable and ensuring we maximize the positive aspects of technology involves a five-step strategy that is of relevance to organizations seeking to make greater technological investments:

1. **Anticipation** – It is important to weigh technologies using techniques such as scenarios, forecasts, models, simulations and controlled experiments, and identify all best and worst case outcomes.
2. **Continual Assessment** – Constantly quantifying what technologies are being used, building an experimental culture that draws on communications, tracking tools and other methodologies used in processes such as genetic testing, to test innovations in different user modes, subcultures, gene pools and demographic groups.
3. **Prioritization of Risks** – Identifying critical risks including threats to people and the environment; those which are known and proven can be mitigated.
4. **Rapid Correction of Harm** – When things don't go to plan, remedy negative consequences quickly, compensate appropriately and treat unintended consequences as "software bugs" to be fixed. Do not punish the inventor.
5. **Redirection, Not Prohibition** – If technologies do not perform as expected or they are miscast, find new jobs for them.

Kelly believes that cities are incubators of technology, and treats them as "inventions that concentrate the flow of energy and minds into computer-chip-like density... that generates a maximum of ideas and inventions." Cities provide human beings with additional benefits and knowledge, which accelerate technological progress. For nonprofit organizations choosing where to place infrastructure and employees, Kelly's insights suggest that cities will provide the maximum benefit.

Beyond the Technium

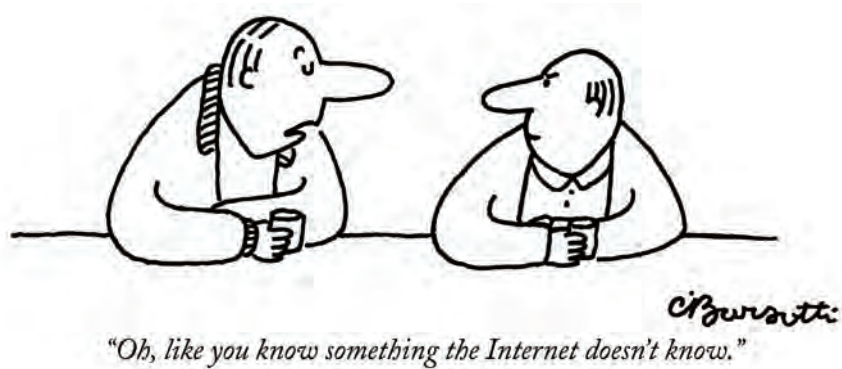
Towards the end of the book Kelly makes some fairly bold statements, claiming, "If there is a God...the arc of the technium is aimed right at him...we can see more of God in a cell phone than in a tree frog." And while some of these suggestions feel somewhat removed from reality, Kelly's overall analysis of technology as a force of change and a driver of progress in society is cogent.

However, while Kelly explains that technology is self-perpetuating and that it creates an "infinite game" of spiraling expansions in opportunity, he fails to consider some of the more direct drivers of technology, including economics, advertising, fashion and other imperatives.

He also fails to consider some of the most critical implications of technology for society, in sectors such as education and healthcare. His broad consideration of technology leaves little space for a more detailed analysis of the forces currently shaping our lives, including highly advanced forms of interactive software, the

worldwide web, tablet devices and mobile telephony—all of which present infinite possibilities for organizations to grow, expand reach, improve service quality, increase efficiency, communicate more effectively and greatly expand their impact.

Although Kelly provides a picture of what technology might want, he fails to combine it with a deeper understanding of what



humanity wants from technology, and how it can help fulfill our most pressing needs.

Rajiv Joshi is Director of Programs at Global Call to Action against Poverty and serves on the boards of Civicus, Oxfam and the Centre for Scottish Public Policy.

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