

JCC Connexions

Quarterly Newsletter About the *Journal of College and Character*

Vol. 3, No. 4 November 2017

Journal of College & Character

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Barbara Jacoby Shares Questions for Educators Relating to Student Activism

In “The New Student Activism: Supporting Students as Agents of Social Change,” published [February 2017](#) in the *Journal of College and Character*, **Barbara Jacoby** shares a set of questions for educators to ponder as they explore the complex nature of contemporary student activities.

Among those questions are “How Do We Help Students See Themselves as Problem Solvers Not Just Problem Identifiers?” “How Do We Help Students Select the Most Effective Strategy to Accomplish Their Goals?” “How Do We Create Brave Spaces on Campus for Expression and Discussion of Conflicting Views?” She argues that educators should welcome and promote student activism as an important means for developing students’ civic agency and encouraging their democratic engagement throughout their lives.

Barbara is the *JCC Connexions* Focus Author for this quarter, and we highlight her work and scholarship in this *Connexions* newsletter issue.

In her *JCC Connexions* [blog](#) she provides some background information about her journal article on student activism. For example, regarding student protests, she emphasizes that educators must support students’ right to disagree while helping them to find ways to

avoid polarizing others. Educators should also see students’ exercise of free speech as one way to sharpen their thinking. It is essential that students learn to confront controversy with an open mind, deeply thoughtful engagement, and an understanding of the issues.



Barbara’s extensive research focuses primarily on service-learning and community engagement in higher education. Her current scholarship explores the relationship of service-learning and community engagement to student activism and social innovation.

She is the author of *Service-Learning Essentials: Questions, Answers, and Lessons Learned* (Jossey-Bass, 2015), *Looking In, Reaching Out: A Reflective Guide for Community Service-Learning Professionals* (with Pamela Mutascio, Campus Compact, 2010), *Civic Engagement in Higher Education: Concepts and Practices* (Jossey-Bass, 2009),

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Building Partnerships for Service-Learning (Jossey-Bass, 2003), *Involving Commuter Students in Learning* (Jossey-Bass, 2000), *Service-Learning in Higher Education: Concepts and Practices* (Jossey-Bass, 1996), and *The Student as Commuter: Developing a Comprehensive Institutional Response* (ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Reports, 1989).

As a senior consultant of Do Good Campus, at the University of Maryland's Do Good Institute in the School of Public Policy, Barbara assists faculty in developing courses that integrate social innovation, civic engagement, service-learning, and philanthropy; and she pro-

vides consultation to the overall strategic development of the Do Good Campus. She served as faculty associate for leadership and community service-learning from 2011 to 2016, facilitating initiatives involving academic partnerships, service-learning, and community engagement. In 1992, she launched community service-learning at the university.

In addition to writing and consulting, she makes speeches and presentations around the world. Readers may post replies to her [blog post](#). Her [JCC article](#) is available through online open access for a limited time.

JCC Welcomes Ben Kirshner as Civic Engagement on Campus Section Editor



The JCC welcomes **Ben Kirshner**, professor of education at the University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder), as contributing editor of the Civic Engagement on Campus section.

Ben brings an enthusiasm for—and an extensive background in—community and civic engagement. His experiences working with young people at a community center in San Francisco's Mission District motivated him to study educational equity and design social justice learning environments. As faculty director of [CU Engage](#): Center for Community-Based Learning and Research, he works to develop and sustain university-community research partnerships that address persistent public challenges and promote education justice.

Launched in July 2014, CU Engage, is based in the College of Education. Among its many outcomes are students learning alongside community members, and faculty and students receiving support in their ethical and rigorous engaged research.

At CU Engage, Ben develops and sustains university-community research partnerships that address persistent public challenges and promote education justice. He advances the work of CU Engage in teaching courses such as a graduate seminar in community-based participatory research and an undergraduate capstone for the leadership studies minor.

As a researcher, he collaboratively designs and studies learning environments that support youth voice

and democratic engagement. Projects include design-based research in action civics classrooms, intergenerational participatory action research, and ethnographies of community-based youth organizing groups.

In addition to his work at the CU Boulder campus, where he seeks to develop and sustain high quality, critical, and justice-centered forms of community engagement, Ben participates in national community engagement groups such as the Urban Research Based Action Network and the Grassroots Community and Youth Organizing special interest group for AERA.

For his first Civic Engagement on Campus column article, Ben invited authors, **Enrique Lopez**, University of Colorado Boulder and **Jason Romero**, STRIVE Prep-SMART Academy, to [write on the topic](#), "Integrating Civic Engagement and Ethnic Studies in Campus Outreach: The Case of *Aquetza*." The two authors describe a multigenerational summer enrichment program for Mexican@ and Chican@ high school youth in Colorado as one example of integrating civic engagement work with theories and practices drawn from ethnic studies. They present implications of this integration for supporting stronger partnerships and more just and inclusive campus outreach.

Enrique is an assistant professor of education at the University of Colorado Boulder. His research examines youths' civic engagement and empowerment through science. He is the faculty advisor for *Aquetza*. Jason is a high school teacher in Southwest Denver. He is a founder and co-director of the *Aquetza* summer program and is involved in various community and political organizations in Denver and throughout Colorado.

JCC Author Speaks on “The Other Side of Hope”

Alan Acosta is associate dean of students at Florida State University, managing student crises and helping create a welcoming campus community. He believes in the importance of helping college students to become ethical global leaders. His [essay](#), “We’ve Got High Hopes: Using Hope to Improve Higher Education,” published in the November 2017 issue of the *Journal of College and Character* in the *Opinions and Perspectives* section, addresses the need to re-conceptualize and redefine the concept of hope and incorporate hope into practice. His article focuses on how institutions can draw on a re-conceptualized definition of hope to improve higher education and increase student learning, not merely student performance. Below he presents his own story of how he learned the importance of hope as a student affairs professional.



For most of my life I have considered myself a fairly hopeful person. After all, what’s not to like about *hope*—from everything I knew, it was a way to look at the bright side, think about the possibilities for the future, and, ultimately, dream big dreams. This warm, sunny, feeling-like definition of hope was the way I thought about it until February 2015.

I was first introduced to a new way of thinking about hope during a presentation at the Association of Student Conduct Administration annual conference. I was not planning to attend the session because it was scheduled in the last educational session slot. But in wanting to maximize my conference experience, I sneaked in the back and sat down. Two colleagues then shared with me about **Shane Lopez’s** 2013 book *Making Hope*

Happen, and they explained how he argued in his book that a re-envisioned definition of hope could be incorporated into student conduct practice. I was hooked. The way student conduct and hope as I now understood it fused together; I felt like this was an approach to professional practice I could embrace.

I decided to read the book. The way Lopez (2013) described his definition of hope, the Hope Cycle, and how to use positive psychology to accomplish tangible goals and improve student learning resonated with me deeply. Lopez based his book about hope on the work of scholar **Rick Snyder** (e.g., 2000), who published numerous articles throughout his career on hope. Both authors described hope as a process that calls on all of our emotions to accomplish our goals. We see who we want to be or what we want to accomplish in the future; we figure out the multiple pathways we can use to get there and rely on our internal agency and motivation to put in the effort needed to accomplish that goal.

Not long after reading it I realized I needed more hope in my professional life. The concept of hope as a more meaningful goal setting process allowed me to reflect on how I approached the work I did and how I could influence students’ lives. I work with a lot of students who are often grappling with difficult circumstances, such as mental health concerns, incidents of bias

or discrimination, or alleged violations of the Academic Honor Policy. I realized embedding hope into my practice would be a way to make me a better higher education professional.

In my role as an associate dean of students, I meet with students who have been transported to the hospital for excessive alcohol or other drug consumption. Many of these students are new to the university and are figuring out who they are, what they want to be, and what they want to do. In addition to asking them about the situation that brought them to my office, I ask students more about what they are interested in, what they care about, and what they envision for their time on campus and beyond. The responses run the gamut, with some having their major, future

career path, and institutional involvement all mapped out. Others have no idea what they want to major in, what future employment opportunities they are interested in or where on campus they wish to connect. No matter what situation my students find themselves in, I do my best to get them thinking about what campus resources they can utilize to identify what their goals are, refine them once they have them, and ultimately how to accomplish them. Many of the departments within student affairs end up being helpful suggestions in my student meetings: career center, student activities center, student government association, university housing, fraternity and sorority life, and new student and family programs are usual suggestions.

I also have begun incorporating hope into the first year experience class I teach. Early on in the course I have students identify what their goals are in a number of timeframes: their goals for our class, goals for FSU, and goals for 5-10 years from now. I have students identify what action steps and resources on campus to assist them in accomplishing those goals. For example, if students identify a goal of achieving an “A” in one of their tough science courses, they will share that they will start studying for each exam about a week in advance, outline when and how often they will attend study groups or TA-led study sessions, and if and how often they will attend the tutoring stu-



dio. They then can see where they can go, who they can visit, and how much time will need to be invested for realizing their goal. I can also provide suggestions if I feel like there are other resources that can support their goal attainment.

Using hope was also helpful in my work as a doctoral student. I used the goal setting Lopez (2013) described to work towards finishing my dissertation. I used hope as a way to define each part of the process. And just like Lopez discussed, I used my motivation, agency, and pathways to progress towards my goal. By setting self-imposed deadlines, blocking off writing time, being diligent during my interviews, and identifying which parts of my dissertation to focus on in my writing, I accomplished each small goal until I successfully defended my dissertation in September 2017.

I have witnessed firsthand the benefits of using the re-

conceptualized definition of hope. Hope is an action-oriented process for higher education professionals to accomplish our professional goals, educate students, and transform higher education. While most associate hope with big, grandiose, amorphous ideas, hope is actually more tangible, structured, and specific. And it is hard work. But just like with me, using agency and pathways to success will enable higher education professionals, students, faculty, and staff to achieve in ways not thought possible.

References

- Lopez, S. J. (2013). *Making hope happen*. New York, NY: Atria Paperback.
- Snyder, C. R. (Ed.). (2000). *Handbook of hope: Theory, measures, and applications*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press

Journal of College & Character

Volume 18, Number 4, November 2017

PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

A Multi-Level Examination of the Relationship Between Student-Centered Faculty Teaching Culture and Spiritual Development in College

Sean Gehrke and Darnell Cole

Exceeding Statements: How Students and Faculty Experience Institutional Missions

Polly Anne Graham, Amy Ribera, Allison BrckaLorenz and Cynthia Broderick

A Typology of Moral Positionality for Educational Administrators

Jonathan J. O'Brien

"It Could Affect You as a Person, Character-Wise": Promoting Character Development and Preventing Sexual Violence at West Point

Miriam R. Arbeit

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ON CAMPUS

Integrating Civic Engagement and Ethnic Studies in Campus Outreach: The Case of Aquetza

Enrique Lopez and Jason Romero

OPINIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

We've Got High Hopes: Using Hope to Improve Higher Education

Alan Acosta

WHAT THEY'RE READING

Academic and Student Affairs in Collaboration: Creating a Culture of Student Success

Reviewed by David Eberhardt

“Where Are You Really From?": A Complex Conversation About a Simple Question

When I first arrived in the US, most of my conversations when meeting people started either with their asking me where I was from or my introducing myself as being from Taiwan. If they happened to have heard about Taiwan, we might have then talked about food, customs, culture, tourism attractions, and so on. Even if they had not heard about Taiwan, however, the initial query served as a conversation starter.

With increased ethnic and cultural diversity through marriage, adoption, migration, and immigration, many Americans have complex cultural and ethnic backgrounds. As a result, the common question “Where are you from?” has become somewhat more complex, especially for those who are second-generation immigrants. Because they were born and grew up in the US, they may answer with naming the state where they grew up. This answer, however, may prompt the follow-up question, “Where are you *really* from?”

There have been extensive debates online over whether this question is stigmatizing, offensive, racist, or is a microaggression—or, conversely, whether those whom it makes uncomfortable are hypersensitive, overly-reactive “snowflakes.” People may feel uncomfortable because the question “Where are you *really* from?” is about so much more than the question itself.

This question, and particularly the word *really*, can cast doubt on the possibility that the person asked was born and raised in the US and is an American citizen. If you are its recipient, it may imply that you look different from “traditional” European Americans, hence, conveying expectations about what typical Americans should look like. It can make people feel inadequate, as if they’re not American enough for their answer to be satisfactory—perhaps even implying that they do not belong here. It is a question, in other words, that can give rise to unease and complicated feelings surrounding ethnic, cultural, and national identity. If some people are annoyed at being asked this question, it may be because they have been asked it constantly.

Yet there are also many people who do not perceive such questions as offensive. People in this group may even reproach those who take offense with overreacting and being too sensitive. In their view, people pose these questions not because of ulterior motives or prejudices, but because they are genuinely interested in others’ cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Rather than being hostile, they are trying to be friendly and make a connection.

Both perspectives are valid and worth deeper discussion. One thing that is important to recognize, however, is that while the intention of the person asking the question may be good for those on the receiving end, it can be a different experience and raise complicated emotions. Reflecting on this possibility

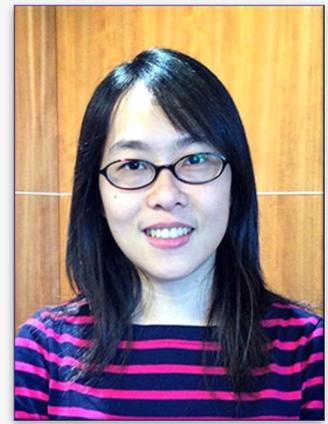
prompts me to reflect as well on how many times I may have unintentionally and unconsciously out of curiosity or caring asked others questions that may have caused unpleasant or awkward feelings. I may have done so because I was not sensitive, considerate, or thoughtful enough, or because I was encountering something different from my preconceived ideas or expectations.

Once, I interviewed a Chinese-American woman who was adopted from China as an infant and raised in the United States by Euro-American parents. Before meeting her, I had preconceived ideas based on other adoption experiences I had read and heard about; I imagined her as having typical Chinese physical traits. And so, when she came into the room, I was a little surprised and shocked because she had Euro-American physical traits.

Worried that there had been some miscommunication or that I had perhaps made a mistake, I introduced my research and asked her in an indirect way if she knew the details of my study to make sure she was qualified for it. Our conversation covered the topic of her background, which included her adoption—topics that were very complex and sensitive. She explained her non-typical Chinese physical features by recounting that her biological mother in China had a complicated sexual history. As a result, she does not know anything about her biological father, including his ethnicity.

Needless to say, I approached these matters cautiously. And yet, to be honest, my first reaction upon meeting her—which I spoke in my head—was, “Is she *really* Chinese?” Remembering this experience and that word *really* reminds me of my own unconscious presumptions about what it means to be Chinese and/or “Chinese-American.” Although we went on to have a great conversation, this experience vividly showed me how important it is to be sensitive to complex cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds and to understand that what I learn and know may only be one facet of the story. I need to be aware of my presumptions while being open-minded so as to learn about different experiences.

At one time or another, most of us have probably said or done something that made someone different from us feel uncomfortable. This typically results from unfamiliarity or unawareness of what might trigger these feelings in others. Accordingly, when campuses emphasize the importance of diversity and integration, the questions arise: How we can engage people in dialogue about diversity? How can we increase their comfort level in discussing difficult topics? We need to have more empathy and compassion for the feelings of others. Everyone’s experi-



Inside, Outside, & In Between

By Hsin-Yu Chen

ence is different, even when the same question—“Where are you from?”—is asked. Whether you find that question uncomfortable or welcoming, you still need to recognize others’ experiences and feelings. We should not discredit anyone else’s experiences simply because they are different from ours. Not everyone’s reaction will be the same.

Human interactions and daily conversation can be complicated. There can be a variety of intentions behind a simple question. People’s attitudes, facial expressions, tone of voice, body language, and gestures can make asking the same question differ greatly in different contexts. Therefore, in order to minimize these unintentional hurtful acts, we need to be aware of our intentions and carefully imagine the impact

that our words, reactions, or expressions can have on someone with a different background. At the same time, we may also need to be more tolerant in accepting others’ perspectives and responses that are different from ours. We need to recognize that other people may not understand our situation; yet this might also be an opportunity to share our feelings and make others aware of the issues. Only through effective communication can we help others understand.

Hsin-Yu Chen is a doctoral candidate in recreation, park, and tourism management at The Pennsylvania State University.

JCC Ambassadors Welcome New Team Member Clarissa Valencia

While majoring in religion at UCLA, **Clarissa Valencia** discovered a love for student affairs and spirituality. She attended California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo, where she researched the Muslim student experience and completed a master’s degree in counselling and guidance for higher education. She also interned at University of Southern California’s Office of Religious Life, where she focused her efforts on implementing workshops for discovering meaning and purpose in careers.



Currently at California State University Los Angeles she serves as an admissions evaluator. Her research interests focus on bridging the gap between the inner lives of college students who identify as “spiritual but not religious” and their outer lives at universities. Her goal is to help all Lightworkers, metaphysical believers, Star Seeds, crystal experts, energy healers, law of attraction creators, and unchurched spiritual followers in college strengthen their spiritual voice.

Clarissa joins the JCC Ambassador Team and will work with fellow ambassadors, **Kevin Wright**, **Sable Manson**, and **Nestor Melendez**, led by **Janett I. Cordovés**.

Join the JCC Ambassador Team

A phenomenal, energetic team who loves reading, researching, and writing about all things connected and interconnected to character and values!

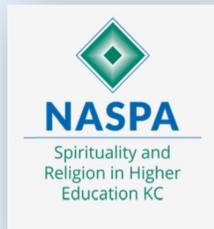
Some basic responsibilities include

- Responding to each blog post published on the *Connexions* (about four annually) after researching the topics and JCC articles relating to the post
- Actively engaging and encouraging engagement in discussion within the JCC site
- Promoting JCC issues on social media articles, blog posts, journal events, and newsletters
- Engaging in other initiatives as determined by the social media team

For more information and/or to apply, please contact **Janett I. Cordovés**, associate editor for social media/JCC Ambassador, at janetticordoves@gmail.com

NASPA's SRHE Knowledge Community Invites Award Nominations

By Keon McGuire



NASPA's Spirituality and Religion in Higher Education Knowledge Community (SRHE KC) is currently accepting nominations for the *Outstanding Spiritual Initiative*

Award and *Outstanding Professional Award* (details below). The deadline for nominations is **November 17, 2017**. If you have any questions, please email our awards coordinator, Kenzalia Bryant-Scott (kenzalia.bryant-scott@asu.edu). Please consider nominating a colleague!

The *Outstanding Spiritual Initiative Award* is given annually to recognize a program that promotes spiritual and religious growth on a college campus. The program or initiative chosen should

demonstrate a significant impact on a college campus by promoting spiritual and religious engagement among the student body. Special consideration will be given to creative programs that reach an inter-faith or multifaith campus audience. Learn more about the [award here](#).

The *Outstanding Professional Award* is given annually to a NASPA member who has made great professional contributions to the promotion of spirituality and religion on that person's campus. The individual has devoted time, energy, and passion to the growth of colleagues' and students' spiritual or faith identity and has had a transformative impact on the individual's campus. Learn more about [the award here](#).

Convergence Supports Changes and Enhancements on Campus

By Cody Nielsen

Through media born out of discussions and ideas that span several years, Convergence on Campus, to be known as "Convergence," launched October 2017 with specific focus on efforts to support changes and enhancements to campus climates that support religious, secular, and spiritual identities through policy and practice.

Convergence aims to add to the current efforts of other organizations, but largely works with professionals in higher education and religious and nonreligious individuals who are assigned at those institutions. Additionally, Convergence's aim is around institutional conditions that create safe environments for those individuals.

Over the coming months, Convergence will roll out several areas of content, including a webinar based series, a magazine highlighting the stories of success of individuals and universities which are supporting religious, secular, and spiritual identities, and trainings for professionals. We will also be present at several conference this year as we build awareness. You will be able to find out more about Con-

CONVERGENCE



vergence at the [Dalton Institute](#), [Creating Change](#), and many other places over the coming months.

For more information, please contact Cody at j.cody.nielsen@convergenceoncampus.org or at 319 759 9688 and visit the website www.convergenceoncampus.org.



JCC Connexions



Journal of College & Character

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Hsin-Yu Chen, Cross Currents on Campus, The Pennsylvania State University
Rebecca Crandall, Students' Spiritual and Secular Worldviews on Campus, The Ohio State University
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David M. Eberhardt, What They're Reading, Birmingham-Southern College
Cassie Meyer, Interfaith Cooperation, The Interfaith Youth Core
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For more information about these publications, email Pam Crosby, co-editor, at jcc@naspa.org
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Journal of College and Character

Coming in February 2018

Volume 19, Number 1

Articles Based on Papers From the 2017 NASPA Religious, Secular, and Spiritual Identities Convergence

SPECIAL ISSUE: FROM THE EDITORS

Religious, Secular, and Spiritual Identities Convergence: Introduction to the Special Issue

Jenny L. Small and Nicholas A. Bowman

SPECIAL ISSUE: RESEARCH AND THEORY

Navigating Identity and Privilege in Multifaith Engagement on a College Campus

Joel Harter, maggie castor, Carolina P. Seigler, Diana Abrahams

The Role of Religion and Institution Type in Seniors' Perceptions of the Religious and Spiritual Campus Climate

Kevin Fosnacht and Cynthia Broderick

Non-Traditional Belief Groups: Accommodation and Outreach

Meagan Arnold and Pietro Sasso

Atheism in Higher Education: A Phenomenological Study of Identity in the Workplace

Carrie Reisner

What Should I be When I Grow Up? Vocational Discernment and Spiritual Well-Being

Garland T. Dunlap

SPECIAL ISSUE: OPINIONS & PERSPECTIVES

Aligning Demographics and Resources: A Call to Support Spiritual-but-not-Religious College Students

Juan Cruz Mendizabal

SPECIAL ISSUE: BEST PRACTICES

#DigitalFaith: Using Social Media for Personal and Professional Development

Sable Manson and Janett I. Cordovés

This upcoming issue of the *Journal of College and Character* will include research-based, theoretical, best practices, and opinion pieces presented by scholars and practitioners who attended the 2017 NASPA Religious, Secular, and Spiritual Identities Convergence conference and by those who were inspired by it.

Readers will have access to articles related to such topics as student identity, beliefs, and well-being; diverse institutional types and climates; and professional

development and resource allotment.

Jenny L. Small (Boston College) and **Nicholas A. Bowman** (University of Iowa), both accomplished scholars in the area of college student religion and spirituality, serve as guest editors of this issue.

All articles in the special issue will be open access for a period of time beginning in February on the journal website at <http://tandfonline.com/toc/ujcc20/current>.

Editor's Choice Articles in the *Journal of College & Character*

For a Limited Time, Free Access [Here](#)

Building Inclusive Community by Bridging Worldview Differences: A Call to Action from the Interfaith Diversity Experiences and Attitudes Longitudinal Survey (IDEALS)

Alyssa N. Rockenbach

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The New Student Activism: Supporting Students as Agents of Social Change

Barbara Jacoby

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Hyper-Achievement, Perfection, and College Student Resilience

Gregory T. Eells

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The Ethics of the Collegiate Locker Room

Larry D. Roper

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Spirituality and Contemporary Higher Education

Michael D. Waggoner

Volume 17, Number 1, 2016



JCC Connexions



2018 Dalton Institute Explores “Who Is My Neighbor?”

The Dalton Institute planning team is making waves for the 28th annual conference set for **February 1-3, 2018**. The 28th annual Jon C. Dalton Institute on College Student Values will explore the ever relevant theme of “Who Is My Neighbor?: The Power of Compassion and the Rhetoric of ‘Us vs. Them.’”

The current political climate has gone beyond highlighting social, demographic, and ideological differences in visible and often uncomfortable ways; it has pushed them to the forefront of the stage within our communities.

These differences have always been recognized and felt in minoritized communities, while some of the majoritized populations are now able to distinguish them. As such, our college campuses have become even more prominent focal points in the battle of ideas about who we are as a nation, where we are headed, and how people of diverse backgrounds and knowledge bases are (or are not) granted a claim to the “American” identity.

The 2018 Dalton Institute will explore identity as a power structure and higher education’s role in balancing the values of individual liberty and universal inclusion. For more information, follow the Institute on Twitter [@Dalton Institute](#) and Facebook ([Dalton Institute](#)) and go to studentvalues.fsu.edu/

