The Traditional High School

Historical debates over its nature and function

Heart of a Teacher
Graduation 2009
Annual Report
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Reginald Johnson, Teleos Preparatory Academy
Robert Wagner, Mesa Preparatory Academy
David Williams, Glendale Preparatory Academy
Dear Families and Friends of Great Hearts Academies,

The past year has been an exciting one for Great Hearts. We have opened three new schools since our last magazine publication. Glendale Prep and Scottsdale Prep have flourished this year and are on their way to fulfilling their destiny as superb liberal arts academies, and Teleos Prep is the first classical liberal arts school to serve downtown Phoenix.

Chandler Prep also joins Veritas Prep in graduating seniors this year. Having seniors on a Great Hearts campus is always a critical milestone, if not an academy’s most important one. Senior leadership on the campus - in moral and intellectual maturity - sets the cultural tone for the classes to follow. Glendale Prep, Mesa Prep, and Scottsdale Prep will be the next schools to have seniors with the class of 2012.

To understand what it means to be a Great Hearts senior and graduate, I encourage you to read the valedictory address of Joel Malkin (Veritas Class of 2009). Joel offered this speech this past May and received a standing ovation. “Both in delivery and content, it is the best valedictory address I have ever heard; at 18, Joel is more eloquent than I will ever be.” The speech is titled “Love Up Close.” Joel will attend Dartmouth this fall.

Please also enjoy our cover article, Jeffrey Mirel’s essay on the historical evolution of the American high school. Dr. Mirel explains the origins of the “big box” high school and the deliberate decisions made over the past century to move American culture away from offering a liberal arts education to all students, and towards increasing the quantity of education without real thought about its quality.

As a counterpoint to the story of the devolution of the American high school, you should peruse the eloquent curriculum defense by Reginald Johnson, the headmaster of Teleos Prep, and the related student, alumni, donor and teacher profiles. I was especially delighted to read the teacher profile of Jerilyn Olson from Chandler Prep, whom I had the honor to have as a student in my 10th grade Humane Letters course over a decade ago.

Jerilyn talks about her return to our schools as a teacher as an act of giving back her own reward of discovery. Her calling, and the calling of all of our teachers, speaks to both the origin and purpose of our schools. When people ask why the name Great Hearts (why not Great Minds or even Great Expectations?) I talk about how the heart of our teachers and students is the core of our program. Of course we want students to be smart. Of course we want them to be rational, clear thinkers, and problem-solvers. And, yes, we want them to transition to top-tier colleges and have successful careers.

Other excellent prep schools join us in wishing their graduates such critical formation and success. But even above these important things, we want our graduates to have great hearts.

What does it mean to have a great heart? I agree with Plato, Aristotle, and Augustine that to be great-hearted is for a person to love and seek what is lasting and true and be disgusted by what he or she should avoid. It is to be a fully balanced and integrated human being, to love what is true, good, and beautiful, and to dislike what is false, bad, and ugly. A classical education is, then, ultimately about properly directing our love just as surely as it is about forming our reason. As C.S. Lewis stated in his classic book The Abolition of Man:

In the Republic, the well-nurtured youth is one ‘who would see most clearly whatever was amiss in ill-made works of man or ill-grown works of nature, and with a just distaste would blame and hate the ugly even from his earliest years and would give delighted praise to beauty, receiving it into his soul and being nourished by it, so that he becomes a man of gentle heart. All this before he is of an age to reason; so that when Reason at length comes to him, then, bred as he has been, he will hold out his hands in welcome and recognize her beauty because of the affinity he bears to her.’

So it is we teachers who must mold our students’ affections by showing every day what we love about the enduring objects we study: the best thinkers, ideas, arts, and science of the West. Simply put, we must model heart. As our students enter rational maturity, they then have already made a habit of the vision of greatness.

C.S. Lewis talks about how, in the complete person, it is the heart that must umpire between our rational capacity - our heads - and our fickle appetites - our bellies. The problem with modernity is that our minds and our stomachs run unchecked. The result is a self-serving, technological culture gone astray. As Lewis would say, it is only in our hearts that we are fully human; for in his intellect alone a person is mere spirit, and in his appetite alone a mere animal.

Hence, we have chosen the name Great Hearts as our hope for our students and as our call to our time. For our students to inherit the freedom of the West and the cultural memory of mankind, they cannot rely on reason alone or, even worse, an unrestrained consumerism divorced from the moral or intellectual life. All the more today, our hearts must carry us.

GreatHearts FALL 2009 | 1
Arizona continues to be a national leader in education reform through public charter schools, with 522 individual schools meeting the needs of 98,750 students - 10.03% of all public school students. Great Hearts Academies is proud to be in this number.

2,075 students will attend a Great Hearts academy during the 2009-10 school year. Veritas Prep welcomed 115 students on its opening day in 2003. 240 students had their first day of school at Teleos Prep on its opening day in 2009. At full growth, Great Hearts Academies will educate more than 5,000 students each year. 11 teachers made up the Founding Faculty of Veritas Prep. Great Hearts Academies received more than 1,200 applications for 63 new teaching positions for the 2009-10 school year. 51% of Great Hearts teachers are recruited from out of state. 571 families are currently on the interest list for Anthem Preparatory Academy, scheduled to open in 2010. Great Hearts opened 2 new academies in 2008 - Glendale Prep and Scottsdale Prep. There are 6 Great Hearts Academies valley-wide.. At graduation, a Great Hearts senior will have read 70 unabridged works of literature and philosophy, taken 28 semesters of advanced math and science classes, and defended a Senior Thesis, a 20-page work of original scholarship. In June 2010, Great Hearts will graduate 102 seniors from Veritas Prep and Chandler Prep. By June 2012, 625 seniors will have graduated from a Great Hearts academy. More than 95% of Great Hearts graduates go on to attend a 4-year college or university. Great Hearts students are taught to pursue 3 virtues in their lives: Truth, Beauty, and Goodness.
In total, the Class of 2009 received $1.4 million in four-year college scholarship offers. 81% of the class was offered at least one college scholarship. The graduating class contained two National Merit Finalists (Joel Malkin and Joseph Heile) and two National Hispanic Scholars (David Hurtado and Maria Fugazza).

100% of eligible students in grades 7-10 participated in the statewide MathFax competition and the worldwide National Latin Exam (NLE). Junior Sarah Coughlin earned the unique distinction of a gold summa cum laude medal on the NLE for her fourth consecutive year and won an Oxford Classical Dictionary.

Students, faculty, and parents participated in the “Iliathon”, a semi-annual 24-hour continuous reading of Homer’s Iliad, with music, food, and very little sleep.

Every member of the Junior and Senior classes acted in a Shakespeare play, including Much Ado about Nothing, Twelfth Night, Julius Caesar, and The Taming of the Shrew.

Along with participants from Chandler Prep and Scottsdale Prep, our students took part in the first Great Hearts “Honor Choir” festival, a day-long rehearsal and performance under the direction of faculty from the three schools.
Chandler Prep sent five students to the Arizona Junior High Science Fair. 7th grader Erica Mohr won first place in her category of Physics and 7th graders Shreya Narain and Jena Wingett placed third in their categories of Physics and Animal Sciences respectively.

CPA's Select Choir has been invited to perform at the Kennedy Center in 2010.

Sophomore Joshua Quenneville and Senior David Rosales held two of the top four positions in the state on the Arizona State Math Contest, Division B. Freshman Kelli Rockwell tied for first place in the Contest.

Chandler Prep's 2008-09 Junior Class staged six productions including The Crucible, Hamlet, and Much Ado About Nothing.

CPA's musicians did exceptionally well in the state's solo and ensemble competition. All music ensembles and soloists earned excellent or superior ratings and Seniors Allison Weidemann and Amalie Sielaff earned a place on the state's select choral ensemble.
Mesa Prep earned full accreditation through North Central Association / AdvancED in May 2009.

Mesa Prep became the first school in Arizona and one of only three in the nation to earn the Math Counts Gold Level Award for outstanding performance in The Ultimate Math Challenge.

Sophomore Matthew Ginty received the 2009 Prudential Spirit of the Community Award for collecting and recycling aluminum cans and using the money to buy food for the homeless.

On the National Latin Exam, Mesa Prep students earned one blue certificate of merit for Poetry, four gold summa cum laude, nine silver maxima cum laude, three magna cum laude and six cum laude recognitions.

34 outstanding students were selected and began training as MPA’s first Student Mentors who will serve all new students entering the school in the fall of 2009.
Glendale Prep earned full accreditation through North Central Association / AdvancED in May 2009.

On the National Latin Exam, Glendale Prep students won 10 gold medals, 22 silver medals, 24 magna cum laude recognitions, and 11 cum laude recognitions.

Glendale Prep students took home 15 awards at the Arizona Classical League convention, including 1st place in Latin I Grammar (Sophomore Maria Clark), 1st place in Archery (Sophomore Tanner Hartigan), and 1st place in Chess (Sophomores Brian Shea and Trevor Sullivan).

A group of nearly 50 students in grades 6-9 translated portions of Carmina Burana by Carl Orff and then attended a symphony performance of the musical piece.

Several Freshmen were invited to participate in faculty seminar days. These students had lunch with the Headmaster before observing and participating in faculty seminar discussions of short stories by Flannery O’Connor. The goal of this initiative was to foster shared inquiry and to help students grow as leaders in their Humane Letters classes.
Scottsdale Prep earned full accreditation through North Central Association / AdvancED in May 2009.

Scottsdale Prep’s Junior Classical League was deemed the outstanding National Junior Classical League Chapter of 2008-2009.

7th Grader Cecina Babich Morrow received a perfect score on the National Latin Exam. In total, Scottsdale Prep students earned 8 gold medals, 32 silver medals, 21 magna cum laude recognitions, and 29 cum laude recognitions on the exam.

Scottsdale Prep students took part in the first Great Hearts “Honor Choir” festival, a day-long rehearsal and performance under the direction of faculty from Chandler Prep, Veritas Prep and Scottsdale Prep.

75 Scottsdale Prep students were inducted into the National Latin Honor Society in recognition of their scholarship, leadership, and service.
New Academy profile
Teleos Preparatory Academy

Headmaster: Reginald Johnson
Number of Students during the 2009-2010 School Year: 240 in grades 3-8
Number of Teachers during the 2009-2010 School Year: 21

Teleos Preparatory Academy opened its doors on July 20, 2009 on the beautiful educational campus of Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church. The Academy, starting with grades 3rd through 8th and growing to grades 3rd through 12th, is located so that students in Phoenix who are most underserved by our educational system can receive the best education possible. Students at Teleos Prep will study music or art every day from third grade until they graduate; they will study chess, and have courses in outdoor leadership. For the first time, the children of the downtown and south Phoenix communities will have access to a full, classical curriculum including rigorous courses in History, Literature, Math, and Science. As at other Great Hearts Academies, students will graduate having taken two years of Physics, a year and a half of Calculus, and four years of college-level Socratic engagement in History and Literature.

Teleos Preparatory Academy will give its students an often overlooked group of students the opportunity to achieve goals that they never imagined they could achieve. At Teleos Prep, through the Great Hearts approach to classic liberal arts learning, these students are being invited to dream big dreams. They will raise the level of expectations that they place upon themselves and reach heights once thought reserved for private school students. The education at Teleos Preparatory Academy will deepen the intellect, broaden the imagination, and widen the heart of these students for years to come.

Teleos Preparatory Academy Firsts

• First Great Hearts school in the nation to serve a majority African-American population
• First Great Hearts School to serve elementary grades
• First Great Hearts school to offer a full year of Astronomy as part of the curriculum
• First school in Arizona, and one of very few schools in the nation, to require all students to study competitive chess
• The first Great Hearts school to be a Teach for America partner

Faculty
Bruce Black, Studio Art, M.F.A. Painting
Winston Christie-Blick, Literature/Composition, U.S. History, B.A. Economics - Philosophy
Teresa Clark, 3rd Grade, B.A. Liberal Arts
Sonia Gates, Academic Services Director, B.A. Special Education
Moira Hyde, 3rd Grade, B.A. Liberal Arts
Tara Koleski, Physical Education, B.A. Sociology
Michelle Laven, 4th Grade, B.A. English
Suzanne Nee, Saxon Math, M.B.A. Business
Joseph Prever, Latin, Literature/Composition, B.A. English and Spanish
Forrest Raub, Experiential Science, Life Science, History of Science, B.A. Zoology and Philosophy
Karyn Mercado, Music Theory / Recorder, M.A. Spanish
David Muns, Lab Instructor, B.S. Biblical Studies
Suzanne Nee, Saxon Math, M.B.A. Business
Brittany McBride, Saxon Math, Earth/Physical Science, B.A. Liberal Arts
Katy Sansema, Music Theory / Recorder, B.A. Spanish
Michele O'Callahan, Guide, B.A. Liberal Arts
Carrie Tovar, Introduction to Fine Arts, Latin, M.A. Art History
Esther Wysong, 4th Grade, B.A. Art History

Teleos: Greek (Tel-e-ahs)
1. Purpose
2. Being brought to maturity
3. Man’s highest end
Veritas Prep's Varsity Volleyball team won the 1A State Championship.

Chandler Prep's Varsity Girls Basketball team won the Charter Athletic Association Championship and won the regular season East Division Championship.

Glendale Prep's Varsity Girls Basketball team, without a member older than freshman, came in second in the Charter Athletic Association (CAA) State Tournament.

Veritas Prep's Varsity Cross Country, Boys Basketball, Girls Tennis, Golf, and Track and Field teams qualified to participate in the state championships.

Glendale Prep's High School Baseball team finished 5-5 in CAA high school baseball, while not having a player older than freshman.

Mesa Prep's co-ed freshmen Soccer and Varsity Volleyball teams competed in the Charter Athletic Association for the first time.

Scottsdale Prep was one of the only schools in the Phoenix Metro area to field a competitive high school archery team.
The Great Hearts Middle School League was created to foster a deeper sense of community between the Academies and to extend the values of truth, beauty and goodness to healthy competition between the schools. The members of the Great Hearts Middle School League include all Great Hearts academies and Phoenix Country Day School.

Inaugural Season 2008-09 League Champions

Baseball: Veritas Prep
Girls Basketball: Scottsdale Prep
Boys Basketball: Veritas Prep
Boys Cross Country: Veritas Prep
Girls Cross Country: Scottsdale Prep
Football: Mesa Prep
Softball: Veritas Prep
Girls Soccer: Chandler Prep
Boys Soccer: Veritas Prep
Boys Track: Chandler Prep
Girls Track: Chandler Prep
Volleyball: Veritas Prep

Classical Liberal Arts education at Great Hearts Academies is that education which makes available to students the truly universal through the careful study of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful. In providing such an opportunity, classical education transforms the soul in a most profound way: students develop the intellectual depth, the imaginative breadth, and the emotional and social sensitivity to become who they are meant to be.

A Classical Liberal Arts education is composed of two parts: The first is the classical notion of education as seen in Plato’s Republic. Here, Plato shows that education is intensely interpersonal and relationship based. The philosopher, the teacher, the one who has experienced the upward way - that is, the pursuit of truth - establishes a relationship with a student, who has his own view of reality, and (like most teenagers) believes that he already understands the world and his role in it. In the Republic, the student’s head must be wrenched around so that he can see something other than what he has been accustomed to seeing as reality. That which affects his conversion is conversation. Once the student is moved to look beyond himself, he begins to see the wisdom of the ages.

Seeing, but not fully understanding, the student wants to learn more. The trust he has developed in his teacher allows him to consider carefully, with his teacher, what he now sees: a world that he doesn’t own and a society that doesn’t exist to serve him alone. It is at this moment - the teaching moment - that the teacher must see the powerful means at his disposal to goad the student onward: conversation. The conversation is both literary and philosophical. The imagination and intellect of the student will be broadened and deepened. Immediately, the world and its possibilities are revealed to the student. The notion of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful begin to appear less like ideas and more like real, knowable objects. The student’s teacher remains a model and mentor for the pursuit towards truth. While he may struggle at times, the student is convinced of the nobility of the pursuit of knowledge and truth, and with the help of his teacher, the student engages the wisdom of the ages and begins to make it his own.

This understanding of the intensely interpersonal basis of education is re-emphasized and immortalized by Dante and his great comedy, the Divine Comedy. There, it is clear that mentoring - as Virgil does for Dante - is necessary for the achievement of the ultimate end of education: the recognition and fulfillment of what it means to be human. For an individual, this means becoming what one is meant to be, heeding the call of one’s own vocation in the light of all that is possible.

The second part of a Classical Liberal Education is the content of the conversation, that through which the student and the teacher bond. The conversation in which the teacher engages the student, if it is to move the student beyond his own reality in order to help him come to understand the world around him, himself, and the relationship between the two, must itself be engaging, accessible, and penetrating. The conversation rests on the seven liberal arts, divided into two categories.

The trivium—grammar, logic, and rhetoric—is an aid to the development of man’s understanding of himself, that is, man as man. It consists of those disciplines which offer insights into the nature of humanity such as Literature, History, Philosophy, and Latin.

The quadrivium—Mathematics, Astronomy, Geometry, and Music—is most properly an aid to man’s understanding of the universe, or universals, and the relationship between himself and those universals. It is in their intersection or mutual participation that each of them is most fully realized. The trivium leads the student to an understanding of himself and humanity, and the quadrivium leads the student to an understanding of the intrinsic order of the cosmos. It is at the point of intersection that the student is at a high point of seeing clearly, poetically even, the nature of the universe. In summing up the liberal arts in The Trivium: The Arts of Logic, Grammar, and Rhetoric: Understanding the Nature and Function of Language, Sister Miriam Joseph writes, Liberal arts is the highest of arts in the sense that it imposes forms (ideas and ideals) not on matter, as do other arts (for instance sculpture). These forms are received by the students not passively…

…the highest of arts in the sense that it imposes forms (ideas and ideals) not on matter, as do other arts (for instance carpentry or sculpture) but on mind. These forms are received by the student not passively but through active cooperation. In true liberal education, as Newman explained, the essential activity of the student is to relate the facts learned into a unified, organic whole, to assimilate them as the body assimilates food, as the rose assimilates food from the soil and increases in size, vitality, and beauty.

Reginald Johnson is the Headmaster of Teleos Preparatory Academy.
The End of the Secondary-School Surge (Figure 1)

High school enrollment increased dramatically over most of the 20th century. But after 1970 it leveled off and graduation rates started to decline.

The traditiona
High School

HISTORICAL DEBATES OVER ITS NATURE AND FUNCTION

For more than a century, American educators and education policymakers have chosen sides in a great debate about the nature and function of American high schools. The origins of this long-running argument can be traced to 1893, when the influential Committee of Ten, a blue-ribbon panel of educators, issued a report proposing that all public high-school students receive a strong, liberal arts education. Ever since then we have been fighting about whether our high schools should be college prep for the masses or, as another blue-ribbon panel would put it 90 years later, a “cafeteria-style curriculum in which the appetizers and desserts can easily be mistaken for the main course.”

There have been, of course, winners and losers on both sides throughout this long discussion, as our high schools have grown into multimillion-dollar institutions serving, or ill serving, hundreds of millions of American adolescents.

Committee of Ten v. Cardinal Principles

There is little dispute about the historical importance of the report of the Committee of Ten. Appointed by the National Education Association (NEA), the committee, composed mainly of presidents of leading colleges, was charged with establishing curriculum standardization for public high-school students who intended to go to college. During the previous half century, from roughly 1840 to 1890, the public high school had gradually emerged from the shadow of the private academy.

While enrollments were still small by today’s standards (probably less than 5 percent of American teenagers attended public high school in the post-Civil War era), by the 1870s and 1880s the number of public secondary schools was increasing fast enough to occasion some attention. And the Committee of Ten was convened to bring some order to the varied curricula that were growing with them.

Under the leadership of Charles Eliot, president of Harvard University, the committee undertook a broad and comprehensive exploration of the role of the high school in American life, concluding, significantly, that all public-high-school students should follow a college preparatory curriculum, regardless of their backgrounds, their intention to stay in school through graduation, or their plans to pursue higher education. As Eliot, author of the final report, put it, “every subject which is taught at all in a secondary school should be taught in the same way and to the same extent to every pupil so long as he pursues it, no matter what the probable destination of the pupil may be, or at what point his education is to cease.”

From Eliot’s perspective, high schools fulfilled the promise of equal opportunity for education by insisting that all students take the same types of rigorous academic courses. While the Committee of Ten did suggest different programs of study for (for example, programs specializing in classical languages, science and mathematics, or modern languages) and introduced the concept of electives to American high schools, its guiding principle was that all students should receive the same high-quality liberal arts education.

It is not hard to see where the battle lines would have been drawn, even then, especially as a wave of new immigrants was bringing tens of thousands of foreign adolescents to our shores. G. Stanley Hall, a noted psychologist and president of Clark University, denounced the Committee of Ten’s curriculum recommendations, because, he said, most high-school students were “great army of incapables… who should be in schools for the dullards or subnormal children.” Numerous critics joined Hall in attacking the Committee’s report as an elitist view of reality. But the reality was that soon the number of students aged 14–17 attending high school soared, rising from 399,949, less than 6 percent of the age group, to 4,804,255, almost 51 percent of the age group, between 1880 and 1930 (see Figure 1).

In the In the middle of this demographic revolution, in 1918, another NEA group, this one called the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, issued a manifesto that turned the fundamental belief of the Committee of Ten on its head. It called for expanded and differentiated high-school programs, which it believed would more effectively serve the new and diverse high-school student population.

This commission’s final report, Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education, built its case on two interrelated assumptions that became central to discussions of the American high school for most of the 20th century. First, it assumed that most new high-school students were less intelligent than previous generations of students. Second, it claimed that since these new students lacked the intellectual ability, aspirations, and financial means to attend college, it was counterproductive to demand that they follow a college-preparatory program.

Such a hard-core regimen would force many of the “inferior” students to quit school, exactly the opposite of what the country wanted. Put simply, the
America entered an era of democratic dumbing down: the equal opportunity to choose (or be chosen for) failing programs.

Cardinal Principles proponents believed that requiring all students to follow the same academic course of study would increase educational inequality. The proposed solution to these problems was curricular differentiation, a policy that allowed students to choose programs and take courses suited to their interests, abilities, and needs.

The Faux Equality of Diversity

It’s possible, of course, to see the origins of the fault lines in these early reports as a product of the differences of the perspectives of the people who were on the two committees. While the Committee of Ten membership leaned toward college (in addition to the college presidents, it included two headmasters and a college professor), the Commission for the Reorganization of Secondary Education was dominated by members of the newly emerging profession of education, specifically, professors from schools and colleges of education. Thus focused on high school as an increasingly independent entity, the Cardinal Principles team endorsed a new institution, the “comprehensive high school,” which would offer students a wide array of curriculum choices.

As we know now, the Cardinal Principles team won. And they won because supporters of comprehensive high schools defined equal education as equal access to different and unequal programs. Guided by the new IQ tests (which did as much as any single thing to convince American educators that tracking was not only possible but preferable) and the rise of guidance and counseling programs (which could match young people with the curriculum track best suited to their “scientifically” determined individual profiles), America entered an era of democratic dumbing down: the equal opportunity to choose (or be chosen for) failing programs. Proponents of comprehensive high schools realized that these curriculum options would encourage increasing numbers of students to stay in school and graduate, already a widely touted vocational courses, accounted for less than 8 percent of student course taking.

In essence, high schools in this period balanced important aspects of both the Committee of Ten and Cardinal Principles. These schools maintained strong academic programs, but they also offered enough vocational and elective courses for students to have some curricular choice. In effect, the nation’s urban high schools, which served increasing numbers of young people from proletarian families, were arguably providing the best academic and, for a smaller number of students, vocational education available in the United States at that time.

Unfortunately, this situation changed drastically in the 1930s. The collapse of the national economy, particularly the collapse of the youth labor market, forced high schools to rethink the academic tracks back to school. By 1940, 7,123,009 students between the ages of 14 and 17 were in high school, more than 73 percent of the age group. Amid this unprecedented enrollment surge (an increase of some 2.3 million students over 1930), education leaders once again argued that the intellectual abilities of the new high school entrants were weaker than those of previous groups of students; and these new students needed access to less-demanding courses. L. A. Williams, an education professor from the University of California–Berkeley, wrote in a 1944 book that most American high school students of the era were simply “incapable of learning so-called liberal subjects.”

These education leaders reiterated their belief that a rigorous requirement would force many new students to drop out, a dreadful prospect during the Great Depression.

The economic crisis and the resulting enrollment boom combined to produce a profoundly important shift in the nature and function of high schools. Increasingly, their task was custodial, to keep students out of the adult world (that is, out of the labor market) instead of preparing them for it. As a result, educators channeled increasing numbers of students into undemanding, nonacademic courses, while lowering standards in the academic courses that were required for graduation.

Though justified by claims that these curriculum changes increased equal opportunity of education, in reality they had a grossly unequal impact on white working-class young people and the growing number of black students who entered high schools in the 1930s and 1940s. These students were disproportionately assigned to nonacademic tracks (particularly the general track) and watered down academic courses.

The Hell of Democratic Intentions

As David Angus and I discovered in researching our book on the history of the American high school (The Failed Promise of the American High School, 1890–1995), these curriculum policy changes led to changes in student course taking. Between 1928 and 1934, academic course taking dropped from 67 percent to slightly more than 62 percent. The most telling aspect of that shift: Health and Physical Education (PE) courses increased from 4.9 to 11.5 percent of total course taking nationwide. These courses were entertaining, relevant to young people’s lives outside of school, required little or no homework, and, for PE, were amenable to high student/teacher ratios. Over the next half century health and PE was the fastest-growing segment of course taking. By 1973 it was second only to English in the percent of student course taking nationwide.

As these less-demanding, nonintellectual courses proliferated, a new “movement” was born, the Life Adjustment Movement, a federally sponsored curriculum reform effort that began soon after World War II. According to Charles Proesser, the father of Life Adjustment, only 20 percent of American young people could master academic content; another 20 percent were capable of doing vocational subjects; and the remaining 60 percent needed courses in subjects like health and PE, effective use of leisure time, driver training, and knowledge of such “problems of American democracy” as dating, buying on credit, and renting an apartment.

Stimulated by the Life Adjustment Movement, the dilution of the high school curriculum continued apace. In 1960 nonacademic courses accounted for about 33 percent of the classes taken by U.S. high school students; by 1961 that number had increased to 43 percent. One stunning fact puts into perspective this dramatic growth of the nonacademic segment of the curriculum: in 1910 the share of high-school work devoted to each of the five basic academic subjects (English, foreign language, mathematics, science, and history) enrolled more students than all of the nonacademic courses combined; by 1982, more than 39 percent of all high-school coursework was in non-academic subjects.

Despite the sharp decline in the share of academic course taking, indeed, because of this decline, education leaders in the 1940s and 1950s declared that significant progress was being made toward equal opportunity for education. Pointing to growing high-school enrollments and graduation rates as evidence of the success of their policies, education leaders reiterated that getting diplomas in the hands of more students was far more egalitarian than having all students educated in discipline-based subject matter.

Still, as early as the late 1940s, researchers were discovering high correlations between track placements and social class. And by 1961, a study of the Detroit public schools found that students from the poorest families in the district were eight times more likely to be in the general track than children from upper-income families.
The Great Depression produced a profoundly important shift in the nature and function of high schools. Increasingly, their task was custodial, to keep students out of the market instead of preparing them for it.

As the cold war bore down on the nation, this transformation of the high school from a ladder to success into a vast warehouse for youth should have alarmed many Americans. Indeed, in the 1950s some critics, most notably University of Illinois historian Arthur Bestor, denounced these trends, claiming that they had turned high schools into “educational wastelands.

“Great Hearts”

But educators gave little heed to such criticism instead of preparing them for it. Their task was custodial, to keep students in the nature and function of high schools. Increasingly, the percentages of student course taking in academic subjects continued to fall. Between 1928 and 1970, the number of students in grades 9 through 12 more than doubled, from 6,397,000 to 14,337,000, from 76.1 to 92.2 percent of 14-17-year-olds. Citing these enrollment increases, defenders of the comprehensive high school, primarily school superintendents and professors in schools and colleges of education, declared that the institution was functioning well. As one education leader in Detroit put it, “We are trying to keep the dropout rate down and keep youngsters in school as long as possible by offering interesting, attractive, and constructive courses.” Clearly, they argued, the relevant, less-demanding curriculum was attracting larger numbers of students and keeping them in school longer. They did not consider that the decline of the youth labor market, which had begun in the 1930s, may have been a far more powerful “push” on increasing high-school enrollments than the “pull” of easier courses and watered-down graduation requirements.

The percentages of student course taking in academic subjects continued to fall. Between 1928 and 1973, foreign language course taking across the country plunged from 8.5 percent to 3.8 percent. Mathematics dropped from 12.8 to 9.2 percent. Moreover, during these years, the number and percentage of students choosing low-level math courses such as “refresher mathematics” increased.

Indeed, there were dramatic increases in the percentages of students taking less-demanding courses in all areas. Put simply, by the early 1960s, most students in American high schools were getting, at best, a second-rate education compared with that of the generation before them.

Slouching toward Anti-Intellectualism

Compounding the impact of these trends was the emergence of a new phenomenon related to the dominant presence of high schools in the lives of young Americans, the development of what sociologist James Coleman called “the adolescent society.” In his now-classic 1961 study, The Adolescent Society: The Social Life of the Teenager and Its Impact on Education, Coleman identified a series of problems that resulted from the separate society that high school had created for teenagers.

Most troublesome, he said, was that within the new adolescent society peer groups often superseded adult authority in shaping behavior. Not surprisingly, the young people who set the standards for their peers were those with athletic prowess, great looks, and winsome personalities, not those who devoted the most time and energy to doing well in school. In a sense, the rise of this important peer group dovetailed nicely with the changes that educators had introduced in high schools over the previous 30 years: namely, downplaying the role of academic subjects and promoting the subjects and activities that appealed to teenage interests and lifestyles. The confluence of institutional and cultural anti-intellectualism, which was incessantly reinforced by similar messages in films, television, and music, would befall American high schools for the rest of the century.

This drift toward increasing anti-intellectualism did not go entirely unchallenged. In October 1957, following the launch of Sputnik, criticism of high schools became front-page news, spurring a high-profile debate about problems of secondary education. Even though this debate coincided with the passage of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA), designed to stimulate interest in math, science, and foreign languages, the percentage of students taking foreign language and math courses actually fell slightly between 1961 and 1973.

Throughout these years, educators effectively defended the comprehensive high school, declaring time and again that demanding greater academic courses for all students would lead to a wave of dropouts and, thus, to greater education inequality. In 1959, another Harvard president, this one retired, James Conant, published a widely cited study that seemed to validate these views. Conant concluded that American high schools were sound and that the differentiated high-school curriculum was the key to secondary schools’ fulfilling their democratic mission. The Conant report, “The American High School Today,” effectively ended the debate about the quality of American high schools for the next two decades.

Today it seems surprising that Sputnik and the NDEA had so little impact on education. But equally remarkable is the modest influence of the major social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Despite loud demands for greater education equality, access to first-rate college preparatory programs for large numbers of minority students remains an unrealized goal. Before the 1960s, most young black people, particularly those in the South, had few opportunities for any high-school education. But despite a series of unanimous Supreme Court decisions meant to reverse this trend, in the ensuing years large numbers of black students failed to gain access to the best programs the newly integrated schools offered. Indeed, in many large cities during the 1960s and 1970s, the problems facing minority high-school students actually worsened, as their schools became battlegrounds for such issues as busing and identity politics, issues that overwhelmed more routine efforts to improve the quality of education.

Given these developments, it was not surprising that academic course-taking patterns of high-school students nationwide barely changed between 1961 and 1973, increasing about 2 percentage points. A number of new education policies contributed to this stability in course taking and to the declining quality of high-school education. First, many one semester courses, designed to be highly relevant, differed widely in rigor and content, ranging from potentially substantive courses in areas such as African American literature to trendy offerings like “Rock Poetry.” Second, school leaders began giving academic credit for various aspects of the extracurriculum, such as providing English credit for students working on the school newspaper or yearbook. Such actions further diminished the role that academic courses played in high-school education.

Third, educators began giving credit toward graduation for such courses as Consumer Math, Refresher Math, and Shop Math, watered-down material that had not previously satisfied a graduation requirement. In other words, even when the share of math course taking rose, the increases were coming largely from students taking less-demanding math courses, not algebra, geometry, trigonometry, or calculus.

Finally, but most important, during the 1960s and 1970s educators gradually shifted the onus of course and program selection away from guidance counselors and other education professionals and onto students and their parents. This policy greatly expanded student choice and clearly fit into the counterculture zeitgeist. It also enabled educators to duck accusations that they were responsible for reproducing inequality, since course and program selection now rested with students and their parents rather than with educators.
Back to the Future
By making choice the driving force behind high-school programs, as Arthur Powell, Eleanor Farrar, and David Cohen noted in The Shopping Mall High School (1985), the schools came to resemble education shopping malls, with students searching for bargains (that is, courses that were easy, relevant, and satisfied graduation requirements). In some ways, the 1970s mark the low point of high-school development in the United States. A small percentage of students got a reasonably good education, but most adolescents drifted through their high-school years unchallenged and uninspired.

People who advocate more vocational education in our high schools miss the most fundamental fact of the new world we are living in: today, the best vocational education is academic education.

The Reagan administration’s 1983 manifesto, A Nation at Risk, gave voice to those who questioned this education paradigm. It reintroducted several key ideas from the report of the Committee of Ten, which assumed that academic courses had greater education value than other courses. A Nation at Risk decried the “cafeteria style curriculum” of American high schools, rejecting curricular differentiation, the animating idea of Cardinal Principles. By 1986, 45 states and the District of Columbia had raised high school graduation requirements, 42 had increased math requirements, and 34 had boosted science requirements. These changes reduced the choices that students could make in their course selections and thus marked a dramatic shift away from the policies of the previous half-century.

They also produced the most substantial changes in student course taking since the 1930s. In 1982, for example, only 31.5 percent of all high-school graduates took four years of English, three years of social studies, and two years each of math and science. By 1994, however, the number of graduates who followed that regimen of courses had shot up to 74.6 percent. Even more impressive was the fact that the percentages for African American (76.7) and Latino (77.5) graduates were greater than for whites (75.5). These changes were positive steps away from curricular differentiation and toward greater curricular equality.

Unfortunately, despite these changes in high-school course taking over the past two decades, student achievement in core liberal-arts courses has not shown dramatic improvement, and American students have repeatedly fallen short on international comparisons of achievement, particularly in math and science. The most recent findings from the Long-Term Trend Reading and Mathematics Assessment of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) illuminate this situation clearly. Despite substantially more high school students taking more difficult mathematics courses between 1978 and 2004, the overall mathematics scores for 17-year-olds in that period remained unchanged. Similarly, the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) recently released data comparing mathematical literacy and problem-solving skills for 15-year-olds in 39 developed countries: American students ranked 27th. As one commentator on the NAEP findings put it, we are facing “a deepening crisis in the nation’s high schools.”

The broad outlines of this crisis have been apparent for many years. High schools have been “selling students short” for decades, offering too many options and too many watered down courses. They have sustained a culture of low expectations on both sides of the teacher’s desk.

Reforming our high schools should begin by going back to the future. The vision for American high schools articulated by the Committee of Ten in 1893 must inspire the reforms for our high schools in the 21st century. Clearly, returning to a curriculum model akin to that of the Committee of Ten is necessary but not sufficient to improve the quality of high-school education. What else is needed?

What We Can Do
First, we must effectively address the education problems of schools from preschool through 8th grade. High schools rest on the foundation set in the early grades. If 8th graders enter high school reading at a 6th-grade level, their prospects for success in a challenging high school would be precarious at best. With its emphasis on improving reading and mathematics skills, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) can have a powerful positive influence on preparing young people for high-quality secondary education.

We must also ensure that students entering secondary schools know more than just reading and math. In a troubling example of unintended consequences, because of NCLB elementary teachers may be tempted to set aside units on history, science, or literature in order to create more time for reading and math instruction. The result of such actions will be disastrous for high schools, as students enter with little or none of the crucial background they need to master the subjects they will be required to take on the secondary level. Again, the elementary grades must provide the disciplinary foundations for future learning in core subject areas. Teachers at all levels need additional preparation in the subjects that they teach and how to teach them. Beyond the fact that large numbers of high school teachers are teaching subjects in which they have neither a major nor a minor, even teachers who do have the secondary academic credentials are often clueless about how to teach their subjects to students from diverse backgrounds and abilities. Historically, as we have seen, school leaders “solved” this problem by assigning supposedly less able students to the general or vocational tracks and watering down the courses they took. This process eliminated the need for teachers to do the hard work of developing methods that would make challenging content accessible to all students.

Schools of education are equally culpable in this process, having shirked their obligation to do the kind of research that would aid administrators and teachers in implementing intellectually rich programs for all students. Programs to prepare new teachers and professional development programs for practicing teachers must address these problems if American education is to improve and thrive.

Finally, we must avoid reform efforts that hide curricular differentiation under an assumed name. This may be the legacy of the most popular high school reform of the day: subdividing large high schools into small units serving about 500 students. There is certainly much to commend this idea, especially its effort to reduce the anonymity and alienation many students experience in high schools with enrollments of 2,000 or more. But recent research by sociologists Douglas Ready and Valerie Lee (of the University of Oregon and University of Michigan, respectively) found that this new arrangements simply re-created the differentiated curricula of the old system. Students now attended small schools within schools, each with a new name and mission, but the course and education expectations were essentially the same as those of the tracking regime in the old, larger high school. Curricular differentiation has proved to be a pro tanto beast. The first step toward its defeat must be, as the Committee of Ten recognized more than 110 years ago, having all high-school students follow an intellectually rich liberal arts course of study. Given the social, political, and economic complexities of the modern world, high-school students need a broad, deep, liberal arts education that will enable them to meet the challenges of the future as informed, thoughtful adults. This means that American young people must graduate with first-rate knowledge, understanding, and skills in foreign languages, mathematics, the sciences, American history and civics, world history and cultures, and great literature from every part of the globe. People who advocate more vocational education in our high schools miss the most fundamental fact of the new world we are living in: today, the best vocational education is academic education.

Dr. Jeffrey Mirer is professor of educational studies and history, the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He is the author of The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System: Detroit, 1907–81, and, with David Angus, The Failed Promise of the American High School, 1890–1995.
“I like things that make sense to me.”

When I first arrived at Tempe Prep as a freshman home-schooled student, I most feared that none of what the teachers said would make sense and that I would not be able to adapt to this new type of environment. Fortunately, it did make sense. Inside those daunting classrooms I discovered an educational path that my parents had pointed me toward from childhood. I had grown up participating in conversations with my parents, trying to understand new concepts and apply them to solve new problems. Tempe Prep asked me to take that approach to a new level - to see the potential I had within myself and overcome challenging tasks using critical thinking skills. Ultimately, I have come to appreciate the Great Hearts educational approach not only for its educational experience, but also for how it prepares students for the rest of their lives.

With a newfound confidence and a deep love for the liberal arts, I tackled my college studies at Claremont McKenna with vigor. I double-majored in literature and government, took a variety of upper level Spanish, calculus, and drama classes, and spent my junior year working at the White House and study abroad at Cambridge University in England. My love of learning expanded both in breadth and depth. However, after all my explorations of traveling the world, throwing myself into the lions’ den of politics, and studying with great intellectuals, I wanted to come home. The same critics who asked me what I was supposed to do with a literature degree also questioned my decision to go back home after all these other possibilities of exploration had been opened. Yet, I returned to a line of text very dear to me from T.S. Eliot’s Four Quartets: “We shall not cease from exploration / And the end of all our exploring / Will be to arrive where we started / And know the place for the first time.” My return to the Great Hearts network was not a step back for me – it was an act of giving back. I believe there is a philosopher inside all of us. Some have questioned the relevance of a liberal arts education in today’s specialized world. Yet what is more relevant to mankind than gaining an understanding of human nature? The art of problem solving is timeless, and there is no greater asset to society than one who perpetuates understanding. What I love about great works is that they speak to such a deep truth that resonates timelessly and helps keep us grounded in our journey toward the future. This is a life that makes sense to me.

Jerilyn Olson teaches Humane Letters and Literature and Composition at Chandler Preparatory Academy. She also coaches the Girls Volleyball and Basketball teams.

The Excitement of Discovery

“The Excitement of Discovery” teacher profile by Jerilyn Olson

“Now as a teacher, it is my privilege to experience this excitement consistently. Whether it is teaching in the classroom or coaching on the hardwood, I love sharing the success of others.”

— Jerilyn Olson
The decision for me and my younger brother and sister to attend Mesa Prep was made by my parents. We were each attending public schools. While the workload was consistently easier, it did not help us very much. We were not challenged and our parents saw that.

Now when we come to school we know that we are going to learn in an extraordinary way and, always, for our benefit. We learn something new each day that moves us farther along on our search for “Truth, Beauty, and Goodness,” not only in the classroom but in our everyday lives.

A big advantage of attending Mesa Prep is that we are learning how to learn. Our teachers enable us to look at our education in a more thoughtful and complete way because they guide us to discover a deeper meaning in learning. We are taught to look beyond the simple and into the truth.

The teachers here are special. They are not the type to write a poem on the board, ask the class to memorize the words and then move on to the next topic. Our teachers give us the tools to learn, not to memorize.

For instance, last year I had my first Humane Letters class and had no idea how to engage in those discussions. Throughout the year my teacher led me and my classmates to understand how to think clearly for ourselves and communicate in a way that is respectful and direct. My brother and sister have similar stories of teachers leading the way, allowing them to gain confidence in their learning and abilities.

That said, the transition from our old schools to Mesa Prep was a bit bumpy. For me there were many times, typically when I found myself stuck on a particularly difficult problem, that I asked myself “What am I doing here?” But that feeling of inadequacy passed as soon as the problem was solved and would be replaced by a feeling of genuine satisfaction.

Sometimes the amount of work we are given can seem overwhelming, especially for a new student. Luckily my siblings and I are able to share this common experience of Mesa Prep. I’ve taken classes my sister is now taking. My sister has taken classes my brother is taking. We understand the life of a Mesa Prep student. My brother and sister and I support each other the best we can by using the Socratic Method at home when discussing homework problems or encouraging each other to take a ten-minute break to organize our thoughts and tasks. This usually helps us feel a bit more in control of the task at hand. It also helps knowing that the work we do now will only make our transition to college that much easier.

Some of our friends were worried about the workload of Mesa Prep, but we tell them that it doesn’t have to take up your entire life. There are definitely ways to deal with it. You have to be organized. Even keeping our lockers clean helps us! Also, you cannot procrastinate. If I don’t do my homework one night that means that I will have double homework the next night. That can really start to add up. We’ve learned that procrastination will not only put off the assignment we are not looking forward to working on but will also put off our time to have fun. That’s why we are certain to finish our homework as soon as we get home.

We have learned to not slack off when it comes to our education. At my old school I was able get ‘A’s and ‘B’s without trying. My grades have changed at Mesa Prep, but that’s not necessarily a bad thing. I am finally being challenged and gaining so much more than an easy ‘A’.

Dan (8th Grade), Linda (9th Grade) and Sam (10th Grade) Stugan attend Mesa Preparatory Academy.
Andrew Ellison, my former headmaster and my junior year Humane Letters teacher, once told me that the liberal arts education is not concerned with gaining knowledge or reciting facts, but that it is the process of learning how to learn and critically analyze ideas. The challenging and often overwhelming curriculum at Veritas created an educational “baptism by fire” that had no tolerance for doing things halfway. Before going to Veritas, I simply read and understood books, a meaningless practice as I no longer remember the content of the books which I read, and in many cases, I do not even remember their titles. At Veritas, the intensity and rigor of the conversations that I participated in during my Humane Letters class forced me to read with an internal dialogue inside my head, pondering the philosophical and moral issues portrayed in the book. While I most certainly do not remember every stanza from Dante’s Divine Comedy, nor do I recall every chapter from Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics, I did strengthen my ability to logically dissect ideas I encountered while I read them by analyzing the ideas presented within the works and juxtaposing them against my own beliefs. It is this ability to think critically which has stayed with me after my education at Veritas.

Now I continue the tradition of the Renaissance man at Claremont McKenna College (CMC), by broadening the scope of my studies. I am double majoring in Economics and Computer Science. CMC is part of a five college consortium in which each of the five colleges has its respective specialties; however students from any college may take classes or even major at any other college. Veritas’ emphasis on creating well-rounded individuals allows me to take full advantage of the consortium system’s wide range of options.

I am receiving my economics major from CMC, and while the topic of economics is not normally associated with a classical education, I believe economics embodies the liberal arts education better than any other discipline does. It involves mathematics, the sciences, law, ethics, and the study of human behavior, all of which are important aspects of a Great Hearts education. I have many times found myself discussing economical thought experiments with my professors after class. Considering most professors have written books on their respective fields, the task of discussing those topics in detail may seem quite daunting, but the Socratic Method employed at Veritas has allowed me to engage in these exchanges with ease and enjoyment. For my computer science major, I am taking classes at Harvey Mudd College, one of the few liberal arts engineering schools. Even though Mudd’s curriculum focuses on the sciences, it also encourages discussion in a Socratic-like fashion.

No matter what field one goes into after leaving high school, I highly recommend a Great Books liberal arts education; it has been invaluable to me in so many ways. The liberal arts education creates leaders in thought: people who view ideas, flip them upside down and inside out, and ultimately master them, whether or not they agree with them. It is this kind of thinker that influences others in their search for truth instead of becoming a slave to popular ideas, for “the Truth will set you free.”

Elliot Godzich is a 2008 graduate from Veritas Preparatory Academy. He currently attends Claremont McKenna College in Claremont, California.

“The liberal arts education creates leaders in thought: people who view ideas, flip them upside down and inside out, and ultimately master them, whether or not they agree with them.”

Elliot Godzich
Love Up Close

Fellow-students of the Class of 2009, we have at last finished our Veritas career. The six-year-long road is tonight. For those of you who were here on that first day six years ago, tonight must truly be special. When you compare that day with this night, that mob of seventh graders with this greatly matured group, how incredible it must be, how inspiring, and how breathtaking.

I cannot know what you now feel: I came three years late, midway, when the party was already in full swing. But shall we, say, ‘on time’? Surely, for me it was a peculiar, and perhaps my곽나리, do not know what the spirit of those early years was like. I cannot portray the true magnitude of your accomplishments, cannot make the incredible comparison between that first, bright, shining, moment and this final, fading. But I do know that in these last three years, which I observed firsthand, the pace of our intellectual and social development has only quickened, the contrast of each present year to each former year has grown exponentially, and the performance of the school has become more and more effective. And this is the attainment of its goal. If all of this happened in three short years, I can only wonder at how great that change was which took place over six.

At Veritas, cleverness does not take precedence over wisdom; skills do not replace ethics; efficiency does not trump integrity. If we wanted to say it in a different fashion, we could say that above all, this school teaches us how to love others as we love ourselves. It is a joy and a desire that, sometimes to our horror, nevertheless brings us back to that Veritas frame of mind, to the unending search for truth, to the Great Conversation.

Make no mistake: we all have had those moments when we supposedly “loathe” Veritas. At least I have, and coincidentally it most often occurred the night before an essay was due. But it is true that those Veritas years have always had fond feelings for our school. And yet, though sometimes we find the workload unappealing or inconvenient, we still cherish this school and hold it in high regard. I think it is because deep down, we do know what a great debt we owe it. Over these past few years, we have come to understand the school at a deeper level, and from that understanding springs our affection. We knew from the first year how Veritas is different. That is not hard to see. But now we start to comprehend the reason for the eccentricities. At last, we have begun to see why Veritas is different and what it has given us that other schools lack. We see the real reason our school is unique, and we love it for that.

Of course, we are not completely alone. There are now four other Great Hearts Academies with the same philosophy. And there are, I have heard, other high schools around the country that are similar to us. But this still makes for a sad minority, a remarkable few that stand out from the rest. Try as we might to “just be normal,” I am afraid, dear friends, once we came to this school, there was no chance of that.

And yet I wish that Veritas were a “normal school.” I wish it were one among thousands. Yes, the spirit of our school is unique. But in an ideal world, our uniqueness would not be unusual. For our uniqueness is not so much a testament to our accomplishment as it is a condemnation of the failure of our society’s educational institutions. We stand out only because every else has sat down.

And what is Veritas’ uniqueness? Simply put, it is embodied in the Socratic creed: “The unexamined life is not worth living.” On the surface, it is the liberal arts education, aiming to produce within the student a commitment to free inquiry, a passion for ideas, and a love of learning. I think Veritas has become increasingly efficient at attaining this goal. But I also think, and I have heard from good authority, that there is something more profound to this educational model, namely, that this school is not here, these teachers are not here, to simply make us score well on the AIMS or the SAT or the ACT or the CLEP tests. Fundamentally, this school and these teachers are here with a very different goal in mind. They are here to make us moral people, to make us ethical citizens. Every school claims to make its students “better, more successful” people. But in what sense, I wonder. Have the students only become that is, adept at taking tests, at memorizing facts, at speaking persuasively? All of those skills are important, and all of them are taught at Veritas. But when the acquisition of a set of skills becomes the ultimate goal, the school has horribly mistaken its purpose.

This is, I think, what makes up the essential difference. At Veritas, cleverness does not take precedence over wisdom; skills do not replace ethics; efficiency does not trump integrity. If we wanted to say it in a different fashion, we could say that above all, this school teaches us how to treat others, how to respect them. Striving to prepare us for our future lives in society, Veritas endeavors to produce in us the individual character without which society cannot survive. This school, these teachers – and our teachers are not just those who sit behind me; among their ranks are also Plato and Aristotle, Aquinas and Augustine, Dante, Dostoevsky, St. John and St. Paul the Apostles – they, repeat, do not make their highest priority teaching us a set of skills. No, all such skills are irrelevant and of little use, were not our teachers so utterly resolved on demonstrating to us the importance of social affection, the value of friendship, and the near-sacred duty of loving others as we love ourselves.

Fyodor Dostoevsky devotes much energy to this idea in his novel The Brothers Karamazov, which is, coincidentally, the last book that we read at Veritas. In it, the inwardly tormented Ivan Karamazov admits, “I never could understand how it’s possible to love one’s neighbors. In my opinion, it is precisely one’s neighbors that one cannot possibly love... If we’re to come to love a man, the man himself should stay hidden, because as soon as he shows his face, love vanishes.” For Ivan, it is a part of man’s nature to show indifference to the suffering of others. It is quite easy to justify apathy, and man finds no lack of excuses. Faultfinding, even in the most saintly figure, seems to be one of our fondest pastimes. Ivan concludes with bitter sarcasm, that “it’s still possible to love one’s neighbors abstractly, and even occasionally from a distance, but hardly ever up close.”

There is, I think, a moment in which the philosophers of Karamazov’s word, though he uttered them from the depths of inward despair. For developing a life characterized by this genuine respect and active love is truly difficult. It is a joy and a desire that, sometimes to the Great Conversation.

...
Great Hearts Academies is dedicated to providing a top-tier, liberal arts education to each of our students, without the $8,000 - $24,000 price tag of a private education. Every year, 100% of contributions from our families are invested in our schools to help make this a reality. The graphs below show how our schools work, and how parent contributions to our Community Investment campaign and Tax Credit drive make the critical difference in the education of our children.

One way to gain a sense of the health and direction of a community, or a society, is to consider what we might call its "institutional velocity." If you're evaluating a human being, you consider his or her constitution; if you want to look under the hood of a place and find out whether it's going to be running strong into the future or languishing with history's countless also-rans, you consider its institutions. There are several obvious questions (with perhaps less obvious answers): Are the critical, longstanding institutions well led and forward-looking, and do they perform with a strategic force and operational competence that merit and sustain confidence? Are there also newer, emerging institutions, responsive to persistent threats and shortcomings in the community, which can unlock creative solutions or challenge the existing order in constructive ways?

Institutional velocity, as measured by those and related questions, determines lift. By reference to these things we can see clearly whether a place is headed up or down.

Created only a few years ago, Great Hearts Academies is certainly not a longstanding institution in Arizona. But in that brief time, and with the help of a lot of great-hearted people, we have emerged to generate a good bit of lift. We have now grown to six campuses in less than seven years. In Fall 2008 we opened both Glendale Prep and Scottsdale Prep, each with full enrollment and long waiting lists; in Summer 2009 we opened Teleos Prep in the urban core of Phoenix, with a student population substantially comprised of significantly under-served children. We are continuing to take classical education directly into the headwinds of modern academic and cultural challenge. As you can readily see throughout these pages, our early results are quite strong.

We have come this far through the generosity of some other inspired institutions, most notably the Walton Family Foundation and the Charter School Growth Fund - both national players - and some similarly generous foundations and individuals here in Arizona. Our continued success, though, will increasingly depend upon local support. Those who share our vision for improving Arizona education through a rediscovery of Classical thought and inquiry, delivered through a unified faculty-student culture of study, learning, athletic excellence, and extracurricular pursuit, must take a stake in our work and give us a vital hand.

Great Hearts is neither a wealthy organization nor a large one. Our annual faculty payroll is now at $8 million, on its way to $25 million once the Phoenix network is fully opened and operational. We will always support that core operating cost with the per-student funding we receive from the taxpayers. But currently that funding is not adequate to support even the relatively modest facilities necessary to fulfill our mission. To continue serving our students, and to continue making Great Hearts' contribution to Arizona's institutional velocity, we must find additional financial support from both the families at our academies and from the broader community.

Every dollar given to Great Hearts or its academies is spent wisely and within tightly managed, meticulously audited budgets. Further, every dollar given to Great Hearts is not only tax deductible, it is also "tax leveraged." Our schools are public schools making use of public education dollars to serve not only the students we have capacity to seat, but all students who benefit from the constructive, competitive energy we bring to the education marketplace. Every gift we receive is force-multiplied, working in synergy with tax dollars to create something critically important to the future of our youth and our community.

There may be places where one could get a better "return" on a charitable dollar, but there can't be many. If you would like to help, please contact me personally at jjheiler@aol.com, or our Chief Development Officer Jeff Van Brunt, at jvbrunt@greathearthsaz.org. Come and be part of something that will last, and lift.

Jay Heiler is President of the Great Hearts Academies Board of Directors.
Making Education a Priority

Education has always been a high priority in our family. Growing up in the Midwest, we didn’t have any choice regarding our education. You went to the local district school where the offerings were average at best. Having experienced this for ourselves, we wanted our children, Sammi and Danny, to have a different type of education. Being in Arizona and having the right to choose, we decided to take the steps to find that perfect education for our kids. Our first step was to look for a school with smaller class sizes. We were lucky to find that in a charter elementary school.

But by the time our daughter was ready for junior high, we found ourselves facing the same dilemma. Where could she get the best education? We were afraid that she would get lost in the crowd at the local district school. And while there were now several charter schools available for the elementary grades, there were few choices for the middle school through high school grades. When Sammi saw a Humane Letters class at Tempe Prep and the Socratic Method of teaching that was used, she knew that this was the type of education she wanted. We knew it was the type of education we wanted for her. Fortunately time was on our side; Chandler Prep (CPA) was opening in the Fall of 2005 and Sammi was accepted. Attending CPA has been nothing but a positive experience for Sammi; she has more poise and self-confidence and it has changed how she interacts with others.

When our son Danny was ready for the transition out of elementary school, we still had some concerns. CPA was a good fit for Sammi, but Danny is his own person with his own personality. It really helped that he had seen what his sister had been through and knew what to expect. He has adjusted and did well in his first year at CPA.

One of the best things about Chandler Prep are the teachers. They are so enthusiastic about their subject areas, and this enthusiasm passes along to their students. With the Socratic Method of teaching at CPA, the students are not only learning the subjects, but they are learning how to think and communicate. Coming from the field of engineering, we know that being able to think critically and communicate effectively is the difference between those who succeed and those who don’t. In addition, our children have not been lacking in extra-curricular offerings at CPA. Sammi is involved in Student Senate, Latin Club, Math Club, Drama, Girls Choir, and Mentoring after school. Danny is active in the Latin Club and plays basketball.

We believe our children are receiving an education on-par with the type that is provided by costly private schools. We wanted a school that offered small class sizes, a small school environment and excellent faculty. Chandler Prep provides this and more for our children. We understand that these priorities of a Great Hearts education cost the school more money than the state of Arizona provides each year. We are happy to give financially to Chandler Prep’s Community Investment campaign and Tax Credit drive to support this education for our children and their classmates. We know where our support goes and we trust CPA to spend it wisely. We also know how lucky our family is to be involved in the Chandler Prep community. Education should always come first, and because of Chandler Prep, our children are able to receive the best.

Mike and Katy Wreschner are the parents Chandler Prep students Sammi (11th Grade) and Danny (8th Grade).

“We understand that these priorities of a Great Hearts education cost the school more money than the state of Arizona provides each year. We are happy to give financially to Chandler Prep’s Community Investment campaign and Tax Credit drive to support this education for our children and their classmates.”

— Mike and Katy Wreschner
Campaign Donors as of June 30, 2009

VERITAS PREPARATORY ACADEMY
Herbert and LeAnne Abel
American Express Gift Matching Program
Charles and Maria Baler
Roman and Flavia Baltmann
Stanhope and Diana Boatswright
John Brogley
Mike and Pam Burgner
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Lazar Iamov
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Shawn and Karen Tidbitso
Daniel and Susan Valdez
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Carla and Wendy Astala
Antonio and Christine Barbosa
Royce and Carolyn Barnes
David and Susan Barrett
Stephen and Janet Barrett
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Charles and Jennifer deLeon
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Luis and Lori Lai
Mark and Elena Mann
John and Laurie Marrama
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Glen and Kyoko Olson
Rupal and Elizabeth Paetel
A.W. and M.J. Peters
Donald and Janice Peter
Troy and Wendy Powell
Mark and Anna Puzak

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Charles and Denise Adams
Alpertors
American Express Gift Matching Program
Steven and Joan Andreassian
Philip and Coleen Austin
Tim and Shari Ayers
Steve and Denise Zabikski

Great Heart Foundation
contributors
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Paul and Don Schuh
Sue and Tracey Sherman-Gin
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Steve and Alice Siler
Gene Parrish and Judy Starr
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Scott and Elizabeth Taylor
Jay and Joanne Turpi
Scott and Janice Urick
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Geoffrey and Jennifer Wall
Jason and Joni Wenzel
Hermann and Lori Wedema
John and Tam Wheat
Barrie and Susan Wheeler
James and Ken Wilson
Gard and Wolf Ward
Mike and Kelly Werner

MESA PREPARATORY ACADEMY
Alan and Roxanne Abi-Hai
Ed and Francine Babcock
Terry and Karen Belew
Catherine Biet
The Boeing Company Gift Matching Office
Don and Susan Beets
Gaetano and Debora Bongiorno
Anthony and Melba Borba
James and Mary Brennan
James and Millie Bray
Jack and Sherri Burnside
Shawn and Karen Tibbitts
Pedro and Kitty Samaniego
Raffy and Mary Safarian
Roberto Lopez and Josefina Rivera

Great Heart Foundation
contributors
James and Kelly Flaherty
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Don and Barbara Hiatt
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Honeywell Hometown Solutions
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Intel Foundation Gift Matching Programs
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Kenneth and Darra Kurbat
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John and Tom Lavoie
Robert and Michelle Lawrence
Kevin Lee
James and Jan Lew
Jennifer Lindberry
Mark and Renier Ling
David and Tina Lopez
Jens and Julie Malmborg
Phil and Rose Marby
Brand Martinez
Terry and Suzanne May
Tom and Christie McClanahan
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Dennis and Melissa Minichella
James and Lisa Mohr
Motorola Foundation
Jay and Laura Most
Carol and Diane Muecke
Steve and Amy Nichols
Basil and Maria Noori
Carlos and Diane Nunez
Steve and Amy Ostwick
Narendra and Anna Ostrov
Dave and Ruma Patel
Roy and Hilary Parker
Tad and Christine Peltz
Greg and Laura Perschbacher
Robert Glover and Melanie Peters
Mark Fathauer and Maria Peterson
Donald and Cindy Peyton
Jim and Kelly Plocco
The Prudential Foundation
Ruston and Melanie Rieke
Don and Jean Scharn
Emmanuel and Myrna Diaz
Roy and Hollie DiCicco
Eugene Dube
Eye Foundation
Jeff and Sonja Espinosa
Patrick and Julia Falls
Wells Fargo Endowment
Allen Flores
Andrew and Keishia Gin
Alan and Keishia Gin
Holly Kampa and Lisa Gopal
Seth and Amy Granger
Scott and Joan Gregory

Each academy conducts its annual Community Investment Campaign to support the core priorities of Great Hearts education that are not paid for by the Arizona pre-student-assignment. Great Hearts would like to thank and recognize the following families and friends for investing in our schools during the 2008-09 school year.

Great Fall 2009
As the Building Great Hearts campaign transitions to the Community Gifts phase at each academy, Great Hearts is grateful to the many individuals, foundations, and corporate partners that helped fund these critical campus expansions through their leadership gifts.

- **Teleos Prep** completed key improvements to its campus on the Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church property in Phoenix, including the construction of a 3,500 square foot administrative space, in time for its opening in July 2009.
- **Chandler Prep** is in escrow on the purchase of a 104,000 square foot, 9.8 acre site on Alma School and Warner Roads. This campus will serve grades K-12 and will include science labs, a gym, performing arts center and a full-size sports field. As of September 1, 2009, the remaining funds needed to complete the construction on the property is the city’s approval of a use permit to operate on the site.
- **Scottsdale Prep** was able to complete a full renovation of its 22,000 square foot campus to provide for 18 classrooms, an assembly area, and faculty and administrative space for its August 2008 opening.
- **Glendale Prep** completed construction of a new 7,000 square foot building for its campus on the Dove of the Desert United Method Church property to provide critically needed classroom and administrative space for its campus.

Building Great Hearts Capital Campaign Donors

Campaign Donors as of July 7, 2009

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<td>Sean and Diane Lille</td>
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<td>Veritas Prep Parent Organization</td>
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<td>The Walton Family Foundation</td>
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Great Hearts Academies wishes to publicly acknowledge the generosity and commitment of the following donors to the **Building Great Hearts** capital campaign.

**Founding Funding Partners:**

- Charter School Growth Fund
- Helios Education Foundation
- Vivian and Lionel Spiro Fund
- Arizona Diamondbacks Foundation
- The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust
- The Steele Foundation
- The Walton Family Foundation

**These founding partners were vital in the early support of the vision and start-up of Teleos Preparatory Academy.** Great Hearts wishes to thank them for their generous support.

**Founding Funding Partners:**

- The Charter School Growth Fund
- Helios Education Foundation
- Vivian and Lionel Spiro Fund
- Arizona Diamondbacks Foundation
- The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust
- The Steele Foundation
- The Walton Family Foundation

**Veritas Prep and Mesa Prep continue to lease space from their valued church landords. Both schools are currently deciding between expansion at their lease sites and the purchase of a permanent facility if the right property and transaction can be found in the evolving real estate market.**
Great Hearts schools achieve academic excellence while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

As charter schools, each Great Hearts academy is funded primarily with public dollars. Each school receives approximately $6,600 per student for the 2009-2010 school year. This amount actually represents a drop of over $100 per student from what the schools received in the previous school year. Despite the drop in state funding, Great Hearts maintained its teacher salary levels and offered a modest raise of 1%. Approximately 16% of the annual funds needed to operate the schools as comprehensive preparatory programs come from sources other than state and federal sources. As such, each school relies on its regular parent donors and external grants to maintain the integrity of its academic and extra-curricular offerings.

It is worth noting that, on average, 78% of the expenses for the schools are directly related to salaries and benefits for the teachers, headmaster, assistant administrators, and front office personnel. Included in this 78% are also classroom materials, equipment, and extra-curricular expenses. On average, about 15% of the expenses are apportioned to facility costs, including rent (or mortgage), maintenance, and utilities. The remaining expense of the Management Services Fee is paid to Great Hearts Academies which in turn provides central services back to the schools including business management, faculty recruiting and training (with the headmasters), human resources, fundraising, marketing and public relations, curriculum development, state and audit compliance monitoring, IT, performance reporting, and exceptional student services management.

The schools access these exclusive Great Hearts services at a lower cost than they could achieve if they were sought by each school alone. Ultimately, the headmaster and teachers at each school can focus on their individual community and instruction while also benefiting from the economy of scale by being a member of a larger organization tailored to serve them.

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<td>56</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<th>Program - Other</th>
<th>Non-Program - Personal</th>
<th>Non-Program - Other</th>
<th>Facility Cost</th>
<th>Management Services Fees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program - Personal</td>
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<td>2,024</td>
<td>1,081</td>
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<td>TOTAL EXPENSES</td>
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<td>1,674</td>
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| CASH FLOW FOR RESERVE OR DEBT SERVICE | 291 | 317 | 174 | 368 | 243 | 121 | 1,514 | 714 |
Members of Veritas’ Class of 2009 were accepted to the following colleges and universities. Graduates will attend the schools listed in bold.

Albion College
American University
Arizona State University – Barrett Honors
Belmont Abbey College
Brandeis University
Brigham Young University
California Lutheran University
Coe College
Colorado State University
Dartmouth College
Fordham University
Gonzaga University
Grand Canyon University
Hope College
Kenyon College
Knox College
Lipscomb University
Loyola Marymount University
Macalester College
New York University
Northeastern University
Northern Arizona University
Occidental College
Paradise Valley Community College
Phoenix College
Regis University
Sant Olaf College
Savannah College of Art and Design
Scripps College
Seattle University
Seton Hall University
Skidmore College
Swarthmore College
The College of William and Mary
The Johns Hopkins University
The King’s College
The University of Arizona
The University of Arizona - Honors
The University of Texas at Austin
University at Albany, SUNY
University of Chicago
University of Cincinnati
University of Dallas
University of Denver
University of Notre Dame
University of Oregon
University of San Diego
University of San Francisco
University of Southern California
Utah State University
Vanderbilt University
Wayland Baptist University
Westmont College
Wheaton College
Whitworth University

2008-2009 Satisfaction Survey Results

My school challenges me academically. (Student)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Favorable</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Unfavorable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Glendale Prep</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veritas Prep</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandler Prep</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottsdale Prep</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mesa Prep</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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My child’s school is following its mission to provide an academically rigorous liberal arts education. (Parent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Favorable</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Unfavorable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Veritas Prep</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandler Prep</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottsdale Prep</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glendale Prep</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mesa Prep</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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I participated in at least one extra curricular activity at my school this year. (Student)

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<th>Music</th>
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I support the mission of Great Hearts Academies to create a network of schools like my own. (Parent)

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I support the mission of Great Hearts Academies to create a network of schools like my own. (Faculty)

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The Senior Thesis is a yearlong project that culminates each student’s time at a Great Hearts academy. The student writes, and then defends before a faculty panel, a 20-page paper that develops the student’s own well considered philosophy on one of what Mortimer Adler called the “Six Great Ideas” of humanity: truth, justice, liberty, equality, beauty, and goodness. Completion of the thesis, in addition to regular course work, is a requirement for graduation.

Veritas Preparatory Academy
Class of 2009
Senior Thesis Titles

- Absolute Freedom in Society
- All You Need is Love: On Goodness
- Attainable Wisdom
- Beyond the Boundaries
- Brutalization in a Tyranny
- Can Ends Ever Justify the Means?
- The Consequence of Unjust Social Values
- A Discourse on Freedom
- A Discourse on Liberty
- The Dissolution of Equality in Modern Society
- The Early Development of Reason as a Necessary Component of Goodness, and Subsequently, Happiness
- The Efforts of Society
- Enquiry Concerning Human Character
- Federalism is a Humanism
- The Grasp of a Beautiful Life
- Halls of Justice Painted Green
- The Just Judge
- Liberty
- Man’s Right to Beauty
- The Misuse of Democratic Justice
- The Morality of Equality: On the Natural Equality of Man
- The Necessity of Truth
- On Goodness
- On Good and Evil
- The Pursuit of Liberty
- The Sound Of Truth

Attainable Wisdom
Acting as a short philosophical discussion influenced by Aristotle, Dante, and Shakespeare, this paper reached critical conclusions when comparing the afterlife to the life on Earth. It explored the meaning of Wisdom and how it is related to virtue, knowledge, and the Aristotelian idea of “the Good”. This project was intended to connect the Greek philosophical principles to Dante’s idea of the afterlife, as seen in the Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso. It also showed the practical uses of wisdom in the scenes of Shakespeare’s play The Tempest, in which art imitates life very clearly.

The Early Development of Reason as a Necessary Component of Goodness, and Subsequently, Happiness
With the intention of exploring the concept of the good and how goodness can be attained in human lives, and by studying Aristotle’s Nicomachaean Ethics, Wuthering Heights, and The Return of the Native, the author came to the conclusion that man can only become truly good through the use of reason. However, the author disagreed with Aristotle’s contention that the teaching of reason is wasted on the young by arguing that the earlier the teaching of reason begins the better it is for the student. Happiness is only achieved through the pursuit of the good. The pursuit of false goods can be avoided if the student is habituated to the use of reason from an early age.

The Morality of Equality: On the Natural Equality of Man
This paper asserted that the natural equality of man — the “part” of man which makes him equal to all other men — is found in the equal potential for virtue. Granted, the vast inequality of man’s physical and mental abilities is easily seen. However, in the universally acknowledged natural law one discovers man’s equal, natural rights, and thus suspects an underlying equal potential. Through an examination of the mind’s non-physical nature, the thesis suggested that there is an underlying and sometimes unobservable equal potential in all men to become virtuous. This equal potential for virtue is the potential hinted at in Natural Law.