



ONE WORD

# WORTH YOUR CONSIDERATION

A Conversation About A Shared Value

October 10, 2014

# WORTH YOUR CONSIDERATION

A Faculty Value

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An Administrative Commitment

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A Faculty Value

An Administrative Commitment

An IR Priority

A Conversation About A Shared Value

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It's not . . . .



The Graduate 1968

# The word for today



# INTENTIONALITY



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- In the design and delivery of degrees

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- In every academic program, *especially general education*

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- In every academic program, *especially general education*
- In every major

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- In the design and delivery of degrees
- In every program, *especially general education*
- In every major
- In institutional planning

# INTENTIONALITY

- In the design and delivery of degrees
- In every program, *especially general education*
- In every major
- In institutional planning *and operations*

# Coherent, Connected, Coordinated

Degree Level Outcomes

Associate

Bachelor's

Master's

Programmatic Outcomes

College

Department or unit

Course level outcomes

Stated in the syllabus

Regularly assessed



A Hypothetical Letter  
from a Faculty Member  
to a Learned Journal

Department of Ethereal Studies  
Upper Midwest State University

Professor U. R. A. Pedant  
Editor, *Journal of Esoteric Study*  
University of the Lower Midwest  
Springfield, Iowa 77777

Dear Professor Pedant,

It is with pleasure that I attach  
to this covering e-mail an  
article for publication in the  
*Journal of Esoteric Study*.

To avoid any misunderstanding, I want to make it clear that **the objectives of this article are nowhere clearly defined or stated.**

Please respect my lengthy experience as a scholar. Assume that **my intent will emerge in due course.**

Because **I do not clarify the structure of my argument**, a reader may not understand how its different elements add up to a coherent whole. They should work at it! There's nothing wrong with a little work! I can't hold every reader's hand! They are adults, after all.

Readers who fail to understand my argument **may in time—perhaps many years later**—come to appreciate its importance. In the short term, who is a better judge of my effectiveness than I am?

Any effort to evaluate my article would be at best premature and at worst a violation of my academic freedom.

I will look forward to seeing my article in print as soon as possible.



Ridiculous, but . . .

Ever hear . . . ?

*The following are statements  
made and recorded  
at faculty senate meetings  
at three public universities*

“Memorable courses evolve. If you’re too definitive at the beginning about what you hope to accomplish, you leave no room for spontaneity and exploration.”

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“I have had alums tell me that it wasn’t until years later that they appreciated what they had learned in my course.”

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- “When I close the door to my classroom, I expect—and my students expect—to be left alone.”

- “My syllabus is between me and my students. I don’t want the bloody provost telling me what it supposedly should include.”
- “When I close the door to my classroom, I expect—and my students expect—to be left alone.”
- “Learning outcomes? That may be the latest jargon, but there’s nothing new about that. Students have been learning stuff for thousands of years.”



“Of course I’m in favor of assessment.  
I give grades, don’t I?”

# Care to comment? A grain of truth in some of these statements?

- *Courses should be allowed to evolve.*
- *Realizing and confirming learning may take years.*
- *A syllabus is a private communication.*
- *The classroom is a privileged enclave.*
- *There's nothing new about "learning outcomes."*
- *Grading is a form of assessment.*

By contrast, a commitment  
to intentionality might sound  
something like . . . .

(First class meeting)

Here's our syllabus. First, let's discuss what we will be learning together in the course of the semester—and how we will be able to demonstrate what we have learned.

(First week of the semester)

How many of you are sociology *majors*?

Would you be willing to share with the class your view of what someone with a bachelor's degree in sociology should know and be able to do?

That's great. Now let's discuss how this course helps to get you there.

(Class meeting during the semester)

Good morning! Today we will look at the important role of rewards in society and consider how changing the rewards can lead to a change in behaviors. By the end of the hour, we should all be able to offer an example of this phenomenon drawn from our own observations.

Care to comment?

From your IR perspective, what *should* intentionality sound like in the classroom?



# Intentionality

*An Administrative Commitment*

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
Upper Midwest State University

MEMO TO: The University Council  
FROM: President Cheatem N. Howe  
SUBJECT: University Operations

With the inauguration behind us, it is time to buckle down to the challenge of leading the university through a difficult period. I know that I can count on your support in the days ahead.

To avoid any misunderstanding, I want to make it clear that **we will henceforth disregard the mission statement of the university.** Such statements are constraining. They assume a fixed landscape, and they inhibit creativity. We will rediscover and rearticulate our mission every day.

Please respect my lengthy experience as an administrator. **Assume that a sense of direction will emerge in due course** from the sum total of the priorities we share and the actions we take.

Because I do not believe either in strategic planning or in a clear statement of the university's objectives, some members of the university community may not understand how the different actions we will take add up to a coherent whole. They will just have to work at it! I can't hold everyone's hand. We're adults, after all.

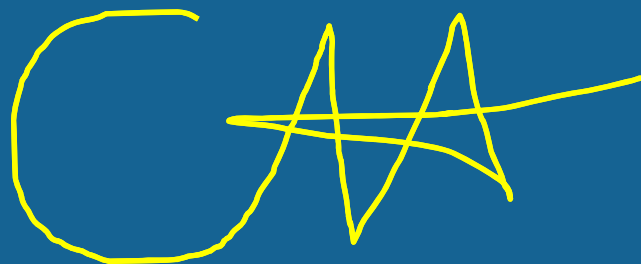
While we're at it, **I'm cutting the budget for institutional research.** We'll do the minimum required for our accreditors and for the state. Frankly, studies of this or that are rarely helpful and often inhibiting. We'll use the savings to remodel the president's home.

Those in the university community who fail to appreciate my approach to agile and creative leadership **will in time—perhaps many years later**—come to appreciate its importance. In the short term, who is a better judge of my effectiveness than I am?

Any effort to evaluate my performance would be at best premature and at worst a violation of my contract.



Please let me know if you have any questions.

A handwritten signature in yellow ink, consisting of a large, rounded 'C' followed by a stylized, overlapping 'AA' and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Ridiculous, but . . .

Ever hear of . . . ?

A university whose mission statement is so vague and undifferentiating that it is useless for meaningful planning?

*(Here's a test: block out any references to the university name in the mission statement and ask whether anyone would be able to identify the university.)*

# *NAME THAT UNIVERSITY!*

The XXXXXXXXXXXX, founded in the belief that all people are enriched by understanding, is dedicated to the advancement of learning and the search for truth; to the sharing of this knowledge through education for a diverse community; and to the application of this knowledge to benefit the people of the state, the nation, and the world. The University's mission, carried out on multiple campuses and throughout the state, is threefold: **Research and Discovery, Teaching and Learning, Outreach and Public Service.**

Ever hear of a university . . .

without a clear statement of the learning outcomes consistent with its award of its degrees?

Ever hear of a university . . .

that fails to ask its departments and academic programs to define their learning outcomes in terms that invite assessment?



Ever hear of a university . . .

that fails to assess student accomplishment according to clearly defined outcomes at the degree and programmatic levels?

Ever hear of a university . . .

that fails to assess student accomplishment according to clearly defined outcomes at the degree and programmatic levels . . . or that conducts assessments only to ignore the findings that result?

Ever hear of a university . . .

that fails to require that faculty members make explicit at the beginning of the term the learning outcomes the course will seek to ensure?

There are rumors  
there may be  
such universities  
out there somewhere.

Not in Ohio, of course.

Not in Ohio, of course.

But thinking of such universities in *other* states, we might well ask . . .

What are the potential costs of President Howe's "flexible and creative" approach to leadership?

For example . . .



Curricula that reflect faculty members' interests, not student needs.

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Poor persistence. Students who cannot understand the point of what they are learning and thus learn far less effectively.

Budgeting to support what the university *does*—rather than *what the university might be doing*

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Ineffective marketing that fails to differentiate the institution

An inability to document  
institutional performance  
convincingly—thus a weak case to  
put before the legislature

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An inclination in the absence of reliable evaluation to take arbitrary and capricious actions

Instead of strategic actions

Instead of strategic actions

inaction



Instead of strategic actions

inaction

and reaction

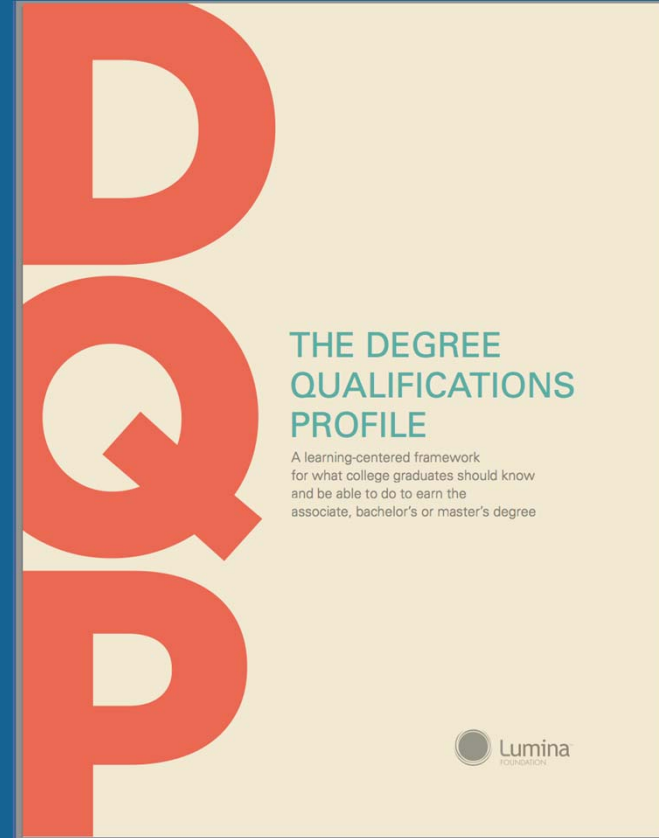
Care to comment?

From your IR perspective, what are other symptoms of a university that is running a deficit in intentionality?

# Two Contributions to a Discussion Concerning Intentionality



# *The Essential Learning Outcomes*



# ELO's and DQP: “Kissing Cousins”

- A strong family resemblance—but distinct identities
- Two of the authors of the younger cousin (DQP) are connected to the parentage of the older cousin (ELOs)

*The DQP was conceived and developed **not** as an alternative to the ELOs but as a complement.*

Neither the ELOs nor the DQP  
is “about general education” —

but both address general education as a critical component of meaningful degrees, one in active relationship with the major and with high impact practices in the curriculum and co-curriculum.

The ELO's and the DQP raise the same question—but they ask it in different ways in pursuit of related but different priorities.



The question: what should a 21<sup>st</sup> century college education signify in terms of student learning?

# But the asking is different

## ELO's

What are the liberal learning objectives that represent broad requisites for effective degree programs—and that all students should be enabled to achieve?

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## ELO's

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## DQP

What learning—specifically—should degree recipients be able to demonstrate? And how should they be able to demonstrate this learning?

and the tools are aligned

**ELO's**

The **VALUE rubrics**

“contain the most broadly shared criteria . . . Critical for judging the quality of student work in a particular outcome area”

# and the tools are aligned

## ELO's

The **VALUE rubrics**

“contain the most broadly shared criteria . . . Critical for judging the quality of student work in a particular outcome area”

## DQP

An **“assignments library”**

now being developed by NILOA offers a resource to faculty members seeking to student accomplishment of DQP proficiencies



This note is to provide a “heads up” alert to all AIR members and encouragement to actively review the new DQP materials. It is my hope that every AIR member will be prepared to engage in discussions of DQP and Tuning with senior campus leaders, faculty, student affairs officers, Boards, and other key stakeholders.

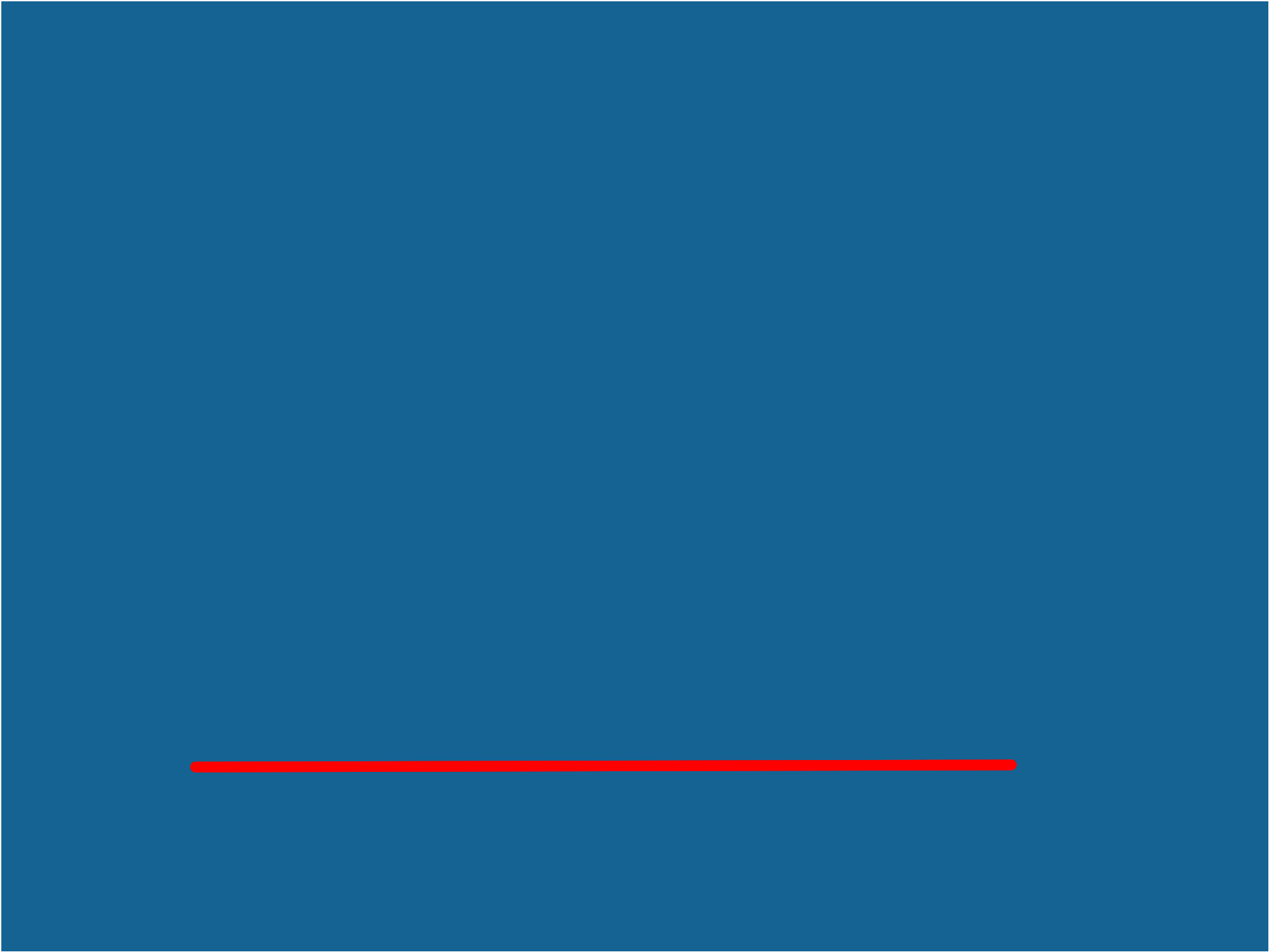
*Randy Swing, AIR Executive Director*

*October 9, 2014*

Care to comment?

Do you have experience with either the ELO's or the DQP? Or both?

If not, do you believe that they might be useful in enhancing institutional intentionality?





(the bottom line)



# Plastics

~~Plastics~~

What higher education needs . . .

What higher education needs . . .

What students require . . .

What higher education needs . . .

What students require . . .

What the public and opinion  
leaders demand . . .

# Intentionality

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# Intentionality

- In an expression of institutional mission that is differentiating and determinative
- In the articulation of degree-level learning outcomes in terms that prompt assessment
- In the mobilization of departments to define program-level outcomes in terms that prompt assessment
- In the expectation that faculty members will define course-specific outcomes in terms that allow evaluation

# Intentionality

Achieved through

# Intentionality

Achieved through  
meaningful investment in IR

# Intentionality

And through

meaningful investment in IR

systematic attention to the findings, analysis,  
and recommendations of IR

# Intentionality

And through

meaningful investment in IR

respect for the findings, analysis, and  
recommendations of IR

a commitment to act on the implications of IR  
findings, analysis, and recommendations to  
effect improvement

Final subversive question



Final subversive question:  
How much more effective would  
colleges and universities be if  
Institutional Research were  
enabled not only to offer support  
for leadership--

Final subversive question:  
How much more effective would  
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support—but to help provide  
leadership.

Your questions and comments?

