

LEADERSHIP

This issue features the concept of resilience in two different articles—one relates to the person and the other to society. Wheatley and Kellner Rogers (*A Simpler Way*, 1996), in their exploration of a simpler way to organize human endeavor, conclude that resilient systems result from exercising their freedom to explore new connections, new information, and new ways of being. This means focusing on opening the system in all ways so that it will grow in health and capacity.

Bouncing Back From Bad Times

Excerpted from the February, 1998 issue of the *Harvard Women's Health Watch*, ©1998, Presidents and Fellows of Harvard College. Individual and bulk subscriptions available; contact the Harvard Health Publications Group at 164 Longwood Avenue, Boston, MA 02115; (617) 432-1485.

Life is formed by two forces: the events that take place and the way in which we react to those events. Some people are laid low by relatively minor reverses, such as getting a traffic ticket or being passed over for a promotion. Unavoidable losses, such as children leaving home or the death of a parent, may send them into depression. However, others are undaunted by terrible misfortune—catastrophic illness, the deaths of loved ones, financial collapse.

One quality that separates the first group from the second is resilience.

What Is Resilience?

Resilience is the ability to recover from an adverse change. The trait is as important to human beings as it is to rubber balls. We don't bounce back well without it.

Although some people seem to be innately better at coping than others are, resilience isn't established at birth. It can be enhanced or eroded later in life. Experience is a great help. Recovering from one setback makes it easier to come back from the next.

Recovery from any significant loss, be it of a loved one, a relationship, a job, or one's health or possessions, usually entails passing through the stages listed below

- ◆ *Shock and denial*. At this, the initial phase, it is impossible to fully assimilate the event. The cancer diagnosis, the pink slip, the report of a partner's infidelity are terrible mistakes or bad jokes.
- ◆ *Acknowledgment*. During this phase, there is recognition of the loss, but it still hasn't fully registered emotionally. Patients numbly make appointments with oncologists, the unemployed feel as though they are on vacation, the betrayed anticipate apologies, recriminations, and new beginnings.
- ◆ *Pain*. The loss is fully recognized, and it hurts. The necessity of treatment removes patients from the ranks of the "healthy"; the paycheck, prestige, and professional identity are sorely missed; the partner's absence leaves a hole in one's existence.
- ◆ *Adjustment*. The loss is incorporated into one's life and plans are made to recoup. Patients may adjust their schedules, enroll in support groups, or explore new methods of healing; jobseekers may take advantage of professional contacts, talk to employment

counselors, investigate the possibility of temporary work or self-employment; single people may begin to divert the time formerly spent with their partners to other interests and activities.

- ◆ *Moving beyond*. At this stage, life has been reconfigured around the loss and can be even better than it was previously. Patients often report finding a higher purpose in life or a sharper clarity of vision than before their illness; people who were laid off have used their severance period to obtain new skills or to redirect their careers; those who have lost partners have forged new lives on their own or developed new, stronger relationships.

Recovery needn't follow this chronological course. Some stages may be experienced simultaneously or in a different sequence. They may even be revisited. Nevertheless, how rapidly one reaches the last stage and moves beyond the loss is a measure of one's resilience.

Contributing Factors

Because it is so important to success and even survival, psychologists have devoted quite a bit of attention to defining resilience and to investigating ways to

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enhance it. Much of the information on resilience has come from studies of people who are unusually resilient: concentration-camp survivors; children of broken, impoverished homes; people with severe physical handicaps; and others who have succeeded against the odds. These people share many of the following characteristics.

Authenticity. Being the same person inside and out contributes to resiliency. The person who is content to be herself doesn't waste time and energy maintaining a facade or trying to conceal an unappealing "real" self. Nor is her identity dependent upon external factors, such as money, position, or association with others. Thus, she isn't likely to be devastated by the loss of these factors.

Willingness to accept responsibility. Resilient people don't see themselves as victims, even when they find themselves in circumstances for which they are in no way to blame, such as a natural disaster or a serious illness. Instead, they think of themselves as confronting a challenge. In doing so, they "own" the experience by addressing the situation with a positive action. When they err, they acknowledge their mistake and use the experience as a learning one.

Acceptance of change. Like it or not, change has become one of life's constants. Moreover, it's occurring at an accelerating rate. The resilient see change not as frightening but as presenting new opportunities.

Responsiveness. Resilient people are attentive to their environment. They are aware of the world around them. They listen to others and are open to new ideas. This gives them the flexibility to adapt to changing technology, social customs, and economic climates.

Faith in themselves. Resilient people are self-confident. They don't fret

about whether or not they can rise to the challenge; they just take it on. They remind themselves that if others have bounced back from adversity, they can as well.

Ability to take risks. Although they aren't daredevils or given to foolhardy endeavors, the resilient are willing to strike out into the unknown if there is a reasonable chance of success. They are often creative or entrepreneurial in spirit.

Belief in the transcendent. This is often manifest as religious faith, but it may also be a love of nature, art, music, or humanity. A sense of purpose beyond oneself often produces the unflagging conviction that life is worth living.

Becoming More Resilient

Resilience is to a certain degree an innate characteristic. Studies of children indicate that those who become resilient adults are resilient in childhood. They are likely to be outgoing rather than shy—evidence that they are comfortable with themselves and willing to greet and adapt to new situations. They will often try to figure out a problem or put together a new toy, rather than ask someone else to do such tasks for them. They develop a commitment to an ideal, to a project, or to other people, which gives them a sense of purpose.

However, research also indicates that resilience can be engendered in children who do not have that quality. There are numerous examples in which a parent, teacher, or relative has taught a child to appreciate his or her strengths, to be more adaptable, and to face challenges. In other instances, an adult has helped a child to learn resilience simply by setting a good example.

Even in late adulthood, it's still possible to increase one's resilience. If you feel that you aren't able to

recover from setbacks as rapidly as you'd like, you should consider seeing a mental health professional for an evaluation. Impaired resilience is often a sign of underlying depression, a condition that robs one of self-esteem, the energy to take on challenges, and a faith in life. Depression, which affects about 25% of women at some time in their lives, can be successfully treated in 80-90% of cases. (See HWHW, November 1997.)

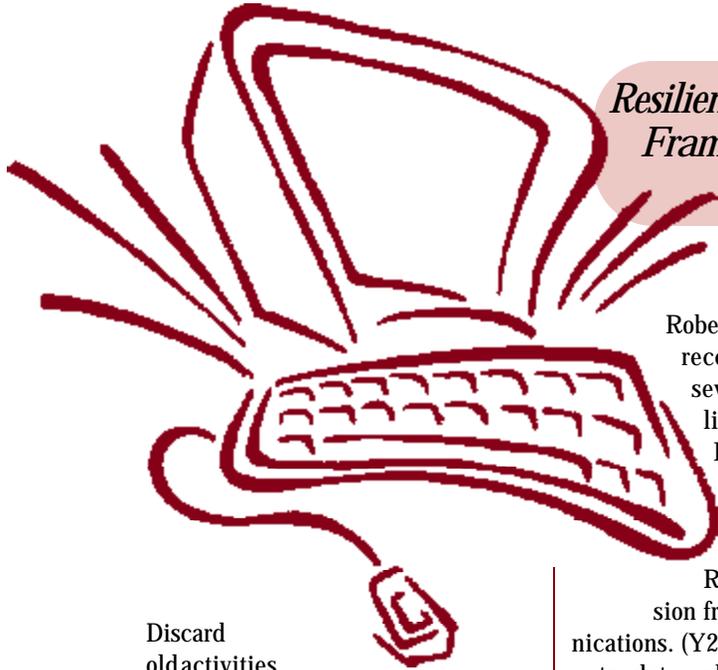
If you're not depressed and just want to bounce back faster from the next crisis, you may want to do the following.

Be real. Develop your true self. If you have spent a lifetime cultivating a false identity to accommodate family members or to mesh with societal ideals, you may need professional help to uncover your genuine feelings. You should also be willing to experience some anxiety and even a sense of loss in the process. But the result will be worth it; authenticity is key to resilience.

Own up. Accept responsibility for your life. Make decisions that affirm your values and standards. Recognize that while some things in life may be beyond your control, you can still influence most situations.

Tune in. Be more attentive to life around you. Listen closely to your family, friends, and associates. Take an active role in community activities. As daunting as the task may seem, try to keep abreast of political, social, cultural, economic, and technological developments. Few things are more disconcerting than finding oneself operating in a world that is no longer comprehensible.

Accept change. Although we may seek stability, we are more likely to find change—in all facets of life. Periodically reassess your approaches to everything from house-keeping to health care to office procedures as new options emerge.



Resilience: A Broader Framing for the Y2K Issue

Robert Theobald

Robert Theobald was recently nominated as the seventh most influential living futurist by the Encyclopedia of the Future. His most recent book is *Reworking Success*.

Reprinted by permission from his e-mail commu-

nications. (Y2K: Year 2000 computer date code problem.)

The response to my recent Y2K op-ed piece has reminded me of the story of the blind men and the elephant. I have had responses which have ranged from the issue deserves no attention to the sky is falling. My own personal opinion at this point is that it may still be possible to prevent significant breakdowns BUT only if we pay attention to the issue in a quite different way to what is happening now. I am also convinced that the worst case could be very serious, and possibly catastrophic for a significant number of people.

As I have struggled to make sense of this issue—and it has been a struggle at both the personal and the intellectual level—I have also become convinced that we need a larger frame for the discussion. This is particularly important to me at this moment because I am committed to presenting my best thinking at a meeting which is scheduled for mid-June.

Here's the set of ideas that are currently developing for me. Y2K is one of a growing number of forces that are disrupting past realities. The Asian collapse is one ongoing element in the mix. So are climatic instabilities. These, and many other

factors, mean that prediction is quite simply impossible. It no longer makes sense to aim to anticipate the ways in which the many strong trends now running will interact. Rather we must position ourselves to deal with the challenges as they emerge.

Several years ago I published a book with the title *The Rapids of Change*. I find the implications of this image increasingly useful. One does not run the rapids knowing how a river will react at a given moment. One is alert to what is happening and one places competent people in the key positions in the boat, canoe, or raft so they can avoid spills and possible disaster. If we are to run our societies in the future, we shall have to organize in similar ways.

Systems designed to run the rapids are *resilient*: they are designed to take shocks and come back from them. Our bodies and ecosystems are also *resilient*: they are capable of dealing with abnormal conditions and recovering. The social systems we have created in the industrial era are brittle: the range of conditions in which they are viable is dangerously narrow and the resources which are available for recovery are thin. We are dependent on large-scale systems that we do not control.

I do not intend this piece to draw all the implications of this stance. Rather I want to look at the tasks that it implies. The absolute necessity if my overview is accepted is to recognize that the systems and structures we currently have cannot be assumed to have validity for the future. For example, the current rhetoric is that "social security" must be saved. This assumes that both retirement and continued growth will be the norm in the twenty-first century—both of these beliefs need to be critically examined.

The other absolute necessity is to recognize that we now live in an

Discard old activities that have become inefficient but retain those that preserve a sense of continuity, such as a daily stroll through a favorite park.

Increase your assets. Address your insecurities and take measures to build self-esteem. Doing so may entail anything from becoming fluent in a foreign language to learning to change a tire to mastering the art of negotiation. Any new skill or knowledge can enable you to handle the next crisis with greater confidence.

Exercise your beliefs. If your strength springs from religious faith, spend more time in prayer, contemplation, or meditation. Take time to enjoy art, music, literature, a walk outdoors, or any activity that elevates the spirit. Explore community service; giving to others reaps great rewards.

For Further Reading:

Necessary Losses by Judith Viorst. 1986, Fawcett Gold Medal Books.

Resiliency: How to Bounce Back Faster, Stronger, Smarter by Tessa Albert Warshaw, Ph.D., and Dee Barlow, Ph.D. 1995, Master Media, Limited.

interdependent world. The old saw that we shall either hang together or hang separately is no longer a neat aphorism but a critical truth.

Here are the steps that seem to me to be critical both for Y2K, and for the other crises that lie in the wings:

- 1) Enable conversations between open-minded people who are competent and are more interested in the truth than in their current stances. Close down the gaps between pictures of reality so that the public and decision-makers have a place to stand.
- 2) Determine the potential seriousness of the issue under discussion and its probability. Recognize that a catastrophic scenario, even if it has a low probability needs to be treated seriously.
- 3) Mobilize available resources to deal with the issue. If the resources are inadequate, face the issue of triage and deal with those aspects that will have the maximum favorable impact and/or minimize damage.
- 4) Rebuild resilient systems so that disruptions can be managed at the smallest scale and the local level so that the damage caused by large-scale system collapses can be contained.
- 5) Provide knowledge and wisdom to everybody in the society so that they are aware of the realities of our times without being overstressed by them.

I do not need to stress that this approach challenges our current political and decision-making systems at every level. It implies a massive shift in the ways we think and act. The fact that the Y2K issue has a definite date could make it the defining issue that forces us to accept that current governance and political structures must be dramatically changed in the near future.

This is how I shall deal with this issue in the context of the June 12-14 meeting to be held in Spokane. Here are the three issues that I shall tackle:

- 1) an overall framework for understanding the fundamental shifts which are taking place,
- 2) the way in which we can begin to move toward more resilient systems

at the sub-neighborhood, neighborhood, community, bioregional, national, and global level,

- 3) A vision of what it would take to affect "political" dynamics in a significant way.

Let's think of the next hundred years as "The Healing Century" and live with honesty, responsibility, humility, love, and a respect for mystery.

Editor's note: Robert Theobald was a speaker at a recent AAFCS annual meeting and a workshop leader at the 1998 CAFCS meeting. His ideas and focus on transformational change appear to be relevant for our future.

Announcing *Toward a Theory of Family Well-Being II*

*Margaret I. Henry, Dorothy I. Mitstifer, & Frances M. Smith,
Editors*

*Supported and Published by Kappa
Omicron Nu Honor Society*

This publication is a follow-up to a dialogue session at the 1997 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences in Washington, DC. The second in a series, this publication continues the examination of family well-being from several perspectives. Margaret Henry summarizes the 1997 dialogue and raises some issues for further consideration. Frances Smith describes family well-being and the process of using the Habermasian framework with faculty and students to develop a guide for practitioners. Donna Pendergast shares curricular development (in Australia) that uses a family well-being perspective. Edith Baldwin expands her earlier work in conceptualizing family well-being. Barbara McFall describes a person-environment model for examining well-being and quality of life. Bonnie Braun and Jean Bauer report on the work of Extension and NASULGC in providing a well-being framework for public policy decisions arising out of welfare reform. Judith Breland shares her concerns as a practitioner about developing a benchmark for family well-being.

Because every family and consumer sciences professional has an interest in the notion of family well-being, this publication serves a broad audience. The editors and Kappa Omicron Nu offer this publication for the further development of the conceptual framework of the field.

(See page 6 for order form)

1998-99 Fellowship and Grant Recipients

Fifty-one Grants for Chapter Scholars

*Kappa Omicron Phi/
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Carson-Newman College

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University of Arizona

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Kansas State University

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Christine A. Johnson
Oklahoma State University

*Kappa Omicron Nu/New
Initiatives Grant*

Marsha L. Rehm, Barbara
Allison Carol Darling, and
Bonnie Greenwood
Florida State University

Coordinating Council of Honor Societies

*Undergraduate Student
Research Paper*
Shana Lim, Oregon State
University

1999-2000 Kappa Omicron Nu Fellowships/Grants

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Eileen C. Maddex Fellowship,
\$2,000 - awarded annually from
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National Alumni Fellowship,
\$2,000 - awarded by the
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Doctoral Fellowships -
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Hettie M. Anthony Fellow-
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her as founder of Kappa
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require a matching grant from
other sources. These awards
are from the Named

Fellowship endowment
in the Kappa
Omicron Phi
Fellowship Fund
in honor of her service
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Omicron Phi.

Research/Project Grants -
application deadline February 15

One or more grants are awarded
annually that meet the criteria of
the Kappa Omicron Nu research
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integrative research is the
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National Alumni Chapter Grant,
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Applications and further information
about fellowships and grants may be
secured from the Kappa Omicron Nu
National Office, 4990 Northwind
Drive, Suite 140, East Lansing, MI
48823-5031 - Telephone: (517) 351-
8335; Facsimile: (517) 351-8336.
Applications may be downloaded
from the Web Site (www.kon.org).

Announcing
*Reflective Leading in
the Public Interest: a
dialogue about practice*

*Bonnie Braun & Dorothy I.
Mitsifer, Editors*

*Sponsored and Published by Kappa
Omicron Nu Honor Society*

This collection of essays focuses on application of the Reflective Human Action theory in the public policy arena. The following questions are addressed: "How are individuals and institutions in family and consumer sciences contributing to the public good?" "How is action moderated by reflective human action?"

Authors wrote about personal experiences in public policy development and implementation and reflected on action. A course which prepares students for family advocacy roles is also described.

Because every educational program within the

field has a public policy interest, this collection of essays serves a broad audience. This publication is a "must" as an undergraduate or graduate student textbook for understanding the professional role in the public policy arena. It will also benefit professionals in gaining new insights for their own roles in public policy formation and implementation.

Order Form

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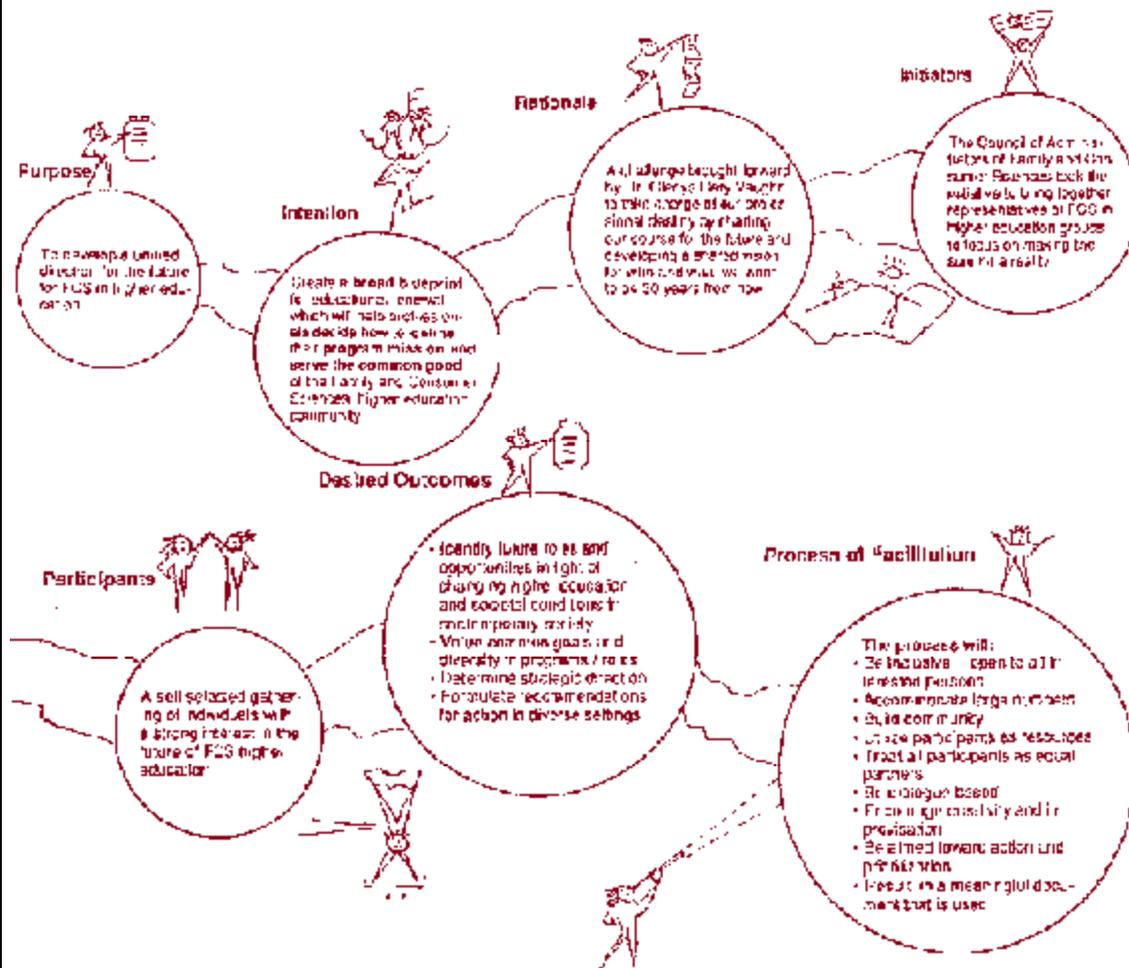
More Info Coming Soon!

Family and Consumer Sciences in Higher Education: An Open Summit on the Future

More Info Coming Soon!

February 3-6, 1999
 Radisson Suite Hotel, Arlington, TX
 Open to all interested persons

Facilitator: Carol E. Anderson and Associates, Ann Arbor, Michigan



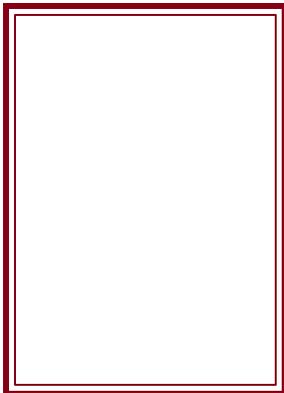


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Message from Fran Andrews
 Chair, Board of Directors

The challenges in higher education and the implications for honor societies were the major focus at the recent Association of College Honor Societies Meeting in Nashville. University presidents detailed the issues higher education must address:



life-time learning needs, cultural diversity, nature of students, independent learning, greater expectations vs. changing demands, jobs vs. the world of ideas, critical thinking, collaborative learning, mastery vs. GPA, grade inflation, quality indicators, extrinsic motivation, stratification in higher education, virtual universities, accountability and measurement, the cost of education,

impact of technology, and the environment of an increasingly polarized society. In a "Hatfields vs. McCoys" debate, honor society administrators considered the implications for these issues and concluded that relevance of honor societies could only be maintained by promoting them as learning communities. Honor societies, including Kappa Omicron Nu, were challenged to honor and recognize excellence in scholarship, leadership, and service and to play an ever increasing role in the preservation of the world of ideas.

What does this challenge mean for Kappa Omicron Nu? It means that we must continue to recognize scholarship but we

must play a leadership role in development of an active learning environment. Let's assess what efforts we have made already to "step up to the plate" and respond to this challenge.

Kappa Omicron Nu has developed a cutting edge theory of leadership, *Reflective Human Action*, that integrates concepts from such leaders as Lee Bolman and Terry Deal, whose work is used in leadership programs at Harvard; Margaret Wheatley, the most often quoted author and consultant on leadership practice; and Robert Terry, whose leadership definition is grounded in the writings of Marjorie Brown and Beatrice Paolucci, outstanding leaders in home economics. Recent issues of *FORUM* have focused on timely topics such as reflective human action, legacies, building community, empowerment, and collaboration. Under the auspices of the Leadership Academy, Kappa Omicron Nu has sponsored publications on *Family Well-Being* and *Reflective Leading in the Public Interest*. Development of an interactive distance learning course on reflective human action is the newest "thing on the block." And, our modules on writing, ethics, mentoring, and cultural diversity support professional education balanced with education of the mind.

Proudly, we can claim a leadership role in development of an active learning environment. However, we cannot become complacent and embrace a "been there, done that" attitude. Our mission, empowered leaders, requires ACTION, ENGAGEMENT, and PARTICIPATION so that out of many perspectives comes action for the common good.