



The Modest Scholar

The Official Newsletter of the Association of Graduate Students of Politics at UIC

Honey and Vinegar:

Collective action and the GEO's quest for a contract

By Dianne Selden

Something's been buzzing among University of Illinois at Chicago graduate students, something vague and fuzzy involving the word "contract" with little whispers of another word, "strike." Just what is the buzz all about, and why should political science graduate students care?

Political scientists have a long history of dealing with collective action problems, and, if you are a graduate or teaching assistant at UIC, you are embroiled in one right now, whether you know it or not. Graduate employees

are automatically included in the Graduate Employees Organization (GEO), which is an AFL-CIO affiliated labor union that claims to represent about 1,400 TAs and GAs. The organization has two staff members, but is otherwise run by a volunteer student steering-committee and other interested TAs and GAs.

Since last fall, GEO has been seeking increased wages and frozen fees. However, the administration was adept at sidestepping these issues. By March 11, GEO members met to plan a strike. Yet, so far, only a fraction

(perhaps several hundred of 1,400 graduate employees) has participated in this quest for what GEO calls a "fair contract." This collective action problem has meant that GEO's bargaining with the university has been slow, with the university often backing out of bargaining sessions at the last minute. The bargaining process began in May 2012, three months before the previous contract expired. Yet August came and went, the old contract expired, and bargaining continued into April 2013.

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TMS graciously accepts all comments, critiques, and suggestions. Please contact the Editorial Board via email at: dselde2@uic.edu
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All current and past issues of TMS are available through the Graduate student page of the Department website: pols.las.uic.edu/political-science/programs/graduate

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Taking it to the Streets: The Long Road to Pushcart and Food Truck Vending Formalization

By Amy Schoenecker

Food trucks enjoy a lively existence in Los Angeles, lining up on city streets to sell hot and cold, high-end and low-end food. Pushcarts selling fresh fruit, bagels, and gyros abound in New York City, and hot street food is a popular commodity in megacities like São Paulo, Mexi-

co City and Mumbai. Yet Chicago has one of the most tightly restricted nontraditional food markets of any large city on the globe. Selling most food items from pushcarts is illegal, and despite the recent legalization to cook food onboard licensed trucks, only one food truck vendor has mounted the bureaucratic hurdles to

become legal. Keeping an eye on both pushcart and food truck vendors, Liz and I decided to study the process to legalization these two groups have faced and continue to face. Both groups have encountered serious pushback in their quest for formalization, but they have also weaved through the Chicago bureaucra-

Conference Presentations

MPSA

Missy Mouritsen Zmuda. *Suburban Voting Patterns: Really that Different.*

Thursday, April 11, 12:45PM

Roberto Rincon. *Hegel, Levinas, and Melville's "Benito Cereno": Thinking Beyond Recognition.*

Thursday April 11 12:45PM

Amy Schoenecker and Liz Alejo. *Street Vendors and Food Trucks: Mapping the Policy Process of Food Vending in Chicago.*

Thursday April 11, 2:40PM

Sam Basset. *Opportunities for Economic Revitalization: Leadership, Quality of Life and Globalization.*

Friday April 12, 2:40 PM

Zach Gebhardt. *Local Fiscal Policies and Midwestern Migration.*

Saturday April 13 12:45PM

Other Conferences

Clifford Devin Deaton. *The Vertical Geography of Protest.* To be presented at the 2013 Urban Affairs Association Meeting, San Francisco CA.

Clifford Devin Deaton. *Carre Rouge! The Spatial Challenge of the 2012 Anti-Austerity Movement in Montreal.* To be presented at the 2013 Western Political Science Association Meeting, Hollywood CA.

Political Science Graduate Officer Elections

Do you want to mold your graduate experience? If you are interested in getting more involved, consider being an officer for Graduate Association of Political Scientists. All offices are up for grabs, including The Modest Scholar board. Talk to Leslie, Eddie, Sam, Liz, or Dianne, and come throw your two cents in at the meeting!

Elections are April 19, 1 pm

Congratulations...

TMS would like to extend our congratulations...

To Maya Evans on her recent placement as Assistant Professor at Rhodes College in Fall 2012

To Clifford Devin Deaton on his forthcoming publication: "The Memory of May '68: The Ironic Interruption and Democratic Commitment of the Atelier Populaire". *Design Issues* No. 29, Issue 2 (2013).

To Ion Nimerencu, for admission with a full scholarship to the 2013 Central European University Summer Program on the Politics of Citizenship.

Editor's Notes

In March, I attended a talk where the guest lecturer discussed the importance of balancing research, teaching and collegial life. Of particular focus throughout this talk was the need for daily writing. According to the lecturer, daily writing must be enforced through some accountability mechanism—that of a friend or colleague. This talk inspired me: if I just write for one hour every day, and get a fellow grad student to police me, the process of completing all forms of academic work is drastically simplified! This seemingly common sense advice is one that not only serves as a nudge to get a move on but it also emphasizes the importance of community. After an entirely too short spring break, we all hit the ground running, with the pressure increasing as the semester winds down—just remember colleagues/friends are great proof-readers.

The stress and frustrations of graduate student life has touched us all so I am especially grateful to this edition's contributors who took time out of their busy schedules to write up something interesting for this hearty edition of TMS. Notably, we have expanded the tradition of "The Interview" with an extended discussion between Eduardo Salinas and Dean Tantillo of the Graduate College.

One more thing: it has been a pleasure serving as the Editor-in-Chief for our graduate student newsletter these past two years. The honor of putting together this "modest" newsletter is one that has come with many frustrations as well as much pride and I am excited to see it continue to grow, attracting new perspectives and new voices under new leadership.

—Liz Alejo

Book Review: *A Theory of Fields*

Fligstein, Neil, and Doug McAdam. *A Theory of Fields*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Review by Marcie Reynolds

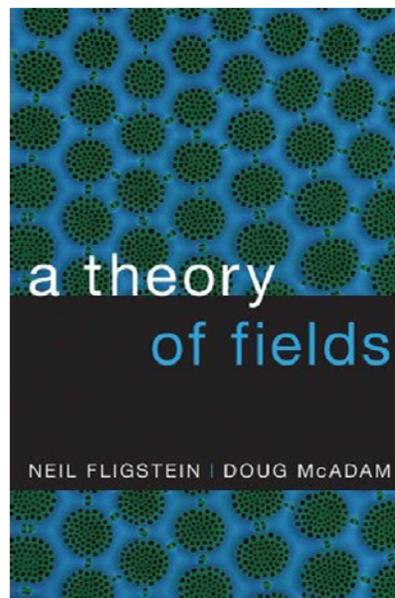
The intent and achievement of Neil Fligstein and Doug McAdam's *A Theory of Fields* is to "explicate an integrated theory that explains how stability and change are achieved by social actors in circumscribed social arenas" (3). These arenas, or fields, form the basic structures for modern political/organizational life. Fields are meso-level social constructs defined by institutional structures as well as existential relevance. The authors put forth the concept of *strategic action fields* to demonstrate that within fields, social actors order relationships with the cooperation of others (17).

Field theory includes the totality of relevant actors at all levels of analysis. Actors may be individuals, organizations, and nation-states acting within recognized areas of interest (such as the higher education textbook publishing field). Subsequently, field theory also spans across levels of perspective and action. The authors do not explain how agency translates from one level of analysis to another; rather, there is an implicit assumption of agency within each entity. Yet this may be a necessary assumption when considering the totality of actors within a social arena.

After an introductory chapter explaining theoretical elements, Fligstein and McAdam discuss microfoundations and macroconsiderations to explain the tri-level perspective of field analyses. Strategic action fields are built on microfoundations and are embedded within a broader environment of proximate and distal fields. Fields emerge when institutional entrepreneurs find a "social space where rules do not yet exist" (87). Elite preferences are then codified in rules that subsequently establish institutional structures within fields. As the field develops, actors fill roles of incumbent, challenger, and internal governance units

(upholding rules and regulations). Fields arise and exist in relation to other fields reflecting dynamics similar to ecological and niche-seeking approaches. Moreover, some fields are embedded within larger fields in a "Russian dolls" multi-layered structure (60).

Perhaps the greatest promise of *A Theory of Fields* is the explication of how social actors establish and maintain stability within a field while confronting endogenous and exogenous changes. Endogenous change is often incremental—indicative of the con-



stant jockeying by incumbent and challenger actors seeking to improve their position and react to other actors' moves. Incremental dynamics sometimes reach a "tipping point" that mobilizes challengers and changes the field. More frequently, destabilization is due to exogenous shocks such as invasions by new organizations, war, and changes in related fields. After destabilization, the reestablishment of the old social order is the most frequent result. Incumbents possess the resources and motivation to protect the status quo and resist pressures toward field change. In order to overcome incumbent advantage, challengers must break through a cognitive barrier to contentious action, provide a convinc-

ing alternative of control, form coalitions, gain state allies, and achieve a final acquiescence to change (107). The uphill battle faced by challengers frequently discourages engagement and promotes field stability—findings that are consistent across a variety of social science research projects. Therefore, field theory has great potential for multi-disciplinary and meta-analytical work regarding stability and change.

Fligstein and McAdam provide empirical support for field theory with two detailed case studies—the Civil Rights Struggle, 1932-1980, and the Transformation of the U.S. Mortgage Market, 1969-2011. Their evidence illustrates how fields were successfully reorganized in each case study. Unfortunately the retrospective application of two successful examples of destabilization and change weakens theoretical legitimacy, especially of the core concept pertaining to field stability. Also there is an obvious lack of institutional entrepreneurs exercising social skill in the Civil Rights analysis. Perhaps more attention to an ethnographical approach would aid understanding of how social actors changed the Civil Rights field. Additionally, shifting the investigative lens to an "inside actor" perspective may add empirical support for field theory's existential elements. Even with these omissions, the two case studies present a useful roadmap for future field-level investigations.

A Theory of Fields closes with methodological considerations and an appeal for collaborative research in the study of fields. The authors' integrated theory advances the conversation between too often divergent social science research programs and herein may lay the book's greatest strength. Fligstein and McAdam propose a "more general field theory" (221) representing significant research potential awaiting further empirical validation.

Honey and Vinegar, Cont'd

What exactly does working without a contract mean for graduate students? Michael Muñiz, a second year PhD student in the Sociology who has been involved with the GEO bargaining committee and negotiations since Fall 2012, said, "This means that our wages



have been frozen and we do not technically have the protections we would under a contract. ... Our working conditions (aside from our coursework as grad students) are determined by this contract: if we are sick, if someone we love is sick or dies, if we feel we are being harassed or discriminated against... We have rights and protections from our contract."

In a Valentine's Day letter to Chancellor Paula Allen-Meares and Board of Trustees president Christopher Kennedy, the GEO stated that:

"Wages, health care, and fees are of the greatest concern because currently, our minimum wage is \$14,565, well below your administration's own calculation of \$17,958 for the cost of living in Chicago. Considering the fact that our members teach a disproportionately large number of the undergraduates and perform a wide range of the administrative duties for your university, our wage seems especially inadequate. Add to that the exorbitant cost of tuition differentials that many of us have to pay on a semester-to-semester basis simply to go to school at UIC as well as the rest of the fees which can run in excess of \$500 per semester and you can see why it's immensely difficult for us to make ends meet. That's why it's frustrating and baffling when we offer a wage proposal that's below the cost of living in Chicago and your administration maintains it's 'too high.'"

Graduate students cannot deny that universities are facing budget cuts, but they also cannot deny that finances are pretty tight. Muñiz said the GEO's main goal is to get living wages for graduate employees, or at least to make sure employees do not end up in debt. With differentials, fees grad students pay, some graduate student end up with an income of \$8,500 per year, he added, yet "The administration wants to freeze our wages (which is effectively a cut considering inflation). The most the University has offered us so far is a \$435/year raise from the \$14,565. When we rejected that and brought our proposal down \$1,000, they counter-proposed an extra \$70 per year."

The threat to strike hangs heavily in the air. It is a last resort, and not something GEO wants to do, Muñiz said, but "we are willing to take drastic action to get what we feel we deserve as integral workers."

It might interest students to know that the GEO has been in this situation before. Political science grad student Heidi Lawson was involved in the 2009-2010 campaign, commented that it "seems like it went really similarly to this one." After more than a year of bargaining, circumstances came to a head: a two-day strike of the GEO at University of Illinois at Urbana which resulted in a decent contract (which, Lawson said "the university promptly violated") led UIC officials to assume that a GEO rally was the start of a strike.

The strike was actually not pegged to begin until the next day.

But UIC folded. A mediator came in and the parties negotiated until after 10pm, when compromises were reached on a number of issues, including wages.

Now, with the 2010-2012 contract expired and the current buzz about striking growing with each failed bargaining session, the question might be asked: If it comes to it, how many dedicated TAs and GAs would strike against the institution to which they devote so much time and care? Even if the GEO can surmount the collective action problem, would a strike actually result in a paycheck increase?



There is an old saying that one wins more flies with honey than vinegar. Even though a year of negotiations did not work, many graduate students have remained silent on this issue precisely because they are too busy plugging along, worker bees buzzing, keeping UIC (especially our BSB hive) running smoothly, hoping that their hard work will pay off. Will the fruits of their labor lead to a sweeter contract?

Timeline of GEO Negotiations

- April 2010:** UIC and GEO's bargaining committee met with a federal mediator for 13 hours at the table; GEO came out with tuition waiver protection, increased job security, two years of raises to their minimum stipends, and an increase in the university's contribution for health insurance.
- May 2012:** GEO begins bargaining for new contract
- August 2012:** 2010: contract expired
- Fall Semester 2012:** University officials repeatedly cancelled bargaining sessions last minute.
- February 12-14, 2013:** "Quit Playing Games with Our Hearts, UIC" - Valentine's Day card campaign
- February 26, 2013:** rally for graduate employee rights in the UIC Quad
- March 7, 2013:** bargaining session planned, 9am-5pm; students and supporters encouraged to wear red GEO t-shirts to support contract campaign and to sign a large solidarity letter for Chancellor Paula Allen-Meares and Board of Trustees President Christopher Kennedy
UIC administrators canceled next pre-spring break bargaining session.
- March 13, 2013:** Around 250 GEO members, faculty, undergraduates, and allies rallied at the Quad, drumming, chanting, and speaking to urge the University to settle contract disputes before it comes to a strike. The University rescheduled its bargaining session.
- March 20:** Bargaining session, wherein University's counterproposal includes a \$150 increase to the previous minimum wages (\$15,065), a four year contract, and the same health care premium waiver as their last proposal.
Responses on Facebook include:
"Our minimum wage is 124% of the federal poverty line, situating us between 'very poor' and 'poor.' How dare the University propose such low numbers? \$150???. This is beyond insulting."
"The 'increase' is actually less than a cost of living adjustment. We would end up being paid less than what we currently earn."
"Don't back off until you see somewhere above \$17K and at least an annual increase tied to the CPI. Most of the admin can afford to skip a couple of paychecks."
"alternately, offer the same type of health insurance as the state employees without a co-pay."
- March 28:** Letter of support: "I wholeheartedly support my brothers and sisters of the UIC GEO! Stay strong and stand tall! Love, Cornel West"
- April 4:** GEO voted to file an intent to strike

Books for Africa

By Leslie Price

Books For Africa is a program that collects and distributes books throughout the continent. The last shipment Dr. Simpson and Leslie Price helped send out in February contained 65 boxes and around 2000 pounds of books.

BFA chooses areas that have been plagued with famine, war, or other problems that have created what they call the "book gap." If you do not have access to books, it is difficult to become educated, so they try to fill that education gap by stocking libraries, orphanages, universities, and elementary and high schools with books.

It is an amazing program built on a simple concept, and it is easy to get people to buy into the idea of donating books they no longer need for people who may be able to use them. Programs such as BFA allow for the goods to be directly donated to a local community, bypassing officials and others who might exploit the program for the own gain. This sort of volunteering helps us connect to not only the communities we live and work in, but communities around the world through projects such as this. For more info, check out: <http://www.booksforafrica.org/why-books.html>.



Taking it to the Streets, *Cont'd*

cy at surprisingly different rates and in different ways. Figuring out *why* has become the central focus of our latest research venture.

Liz and I began this journey by bonding while cleaning the refrigerator in the graduate and faculty's shared lounge space in 2011. I heard through the grapevine that she was interested in informal economies—the same subject I was writing my master's paper about. Fortune spun a web for us at the dirty fridge and with the announcement of the departmental Milton Rakove Memorial Research Award. We decided to collaborate on a research project about Chicago's informal economy and used the announcement of the Rakove Award as an opportunity to write up a research proposal. Fortuitously, we won the award, forcing us to get the project under way. For the past year we have attended weekly meetings of a street vending association, the *Asociacion de Vendedores Ambulantes* (AVA), located in Little Village. In addition we have attended rallies, alderman meetings, and other coalitional or support meetings that AVA has organized. We have interviewed street vendors who are members of AVA, non-member street vendors, organizational leaders, and expect to continue by interviewing food truck vendors and policymakers in the city in order to follow the policy process of nontraditional food vendors.

The Facts

Currently, the only two items one can legally sell from a pushcart are desserts and whole, uncut fruit. If you want to sell these items, you must be 200 feet from any establishment selling food. In the summer of 2012, Mayor

Rahm Emanuel announced an 'exciting new change' to this provision for street carts. He created vending 'hot spots' where vendors could sell whole, uncut fruit without regard for the 200 foot rule. Most of these spots are concentrated in busy, tourist areas like Navy Pier. Despite this, the majority of food vendors working in neighborhoods like Pilsen, Little Village, and Humboldt Park are doing so without any legal protection or permission.

Food trucks have recently scored some success with a new ordinance giving these vendors permission to prepare food on the truck and sell it to the public. Prior to this, anything being sold out of a food truck had to be prepared in a licensed industrial kitchen. As part of the ordinance, the city requires all licensed food trucks to be equipped with GPS devices so that their location can be tracked, thus ensuring continued adherence to the 200-foot rule. The new ordinance passed City Hall in July 2012, yet only one food truck has since become legal. Many food truck vendors have argued that they simply have not been able to afford or properly navigate the vague hurdles required to become legal. For example, to outfit a truck following code rules on ventilation and gas line equipment tacks on costs ranging anywhere between \$10,000 and \$20,000. In addition, vendors have to contract with a licensed local commissary for daily services like wastewater and grease disposal. Ironically, prior to January 2013, no such commissary even existed in Chicago.

Vendor Profile

Doña Maria* wakes up while most of the city is still asleep. Sometimes with the help of her daughter, Doña Maria cooks and prepares traditional Hispanic street food including tamales, elotes, atole champurrado, and milk-rice to sell throughout the day. From 5 am until 10 am she sells tamales. After 10, if she hasn't yet been chased off the streets, she sells elotes. Doña Maria has worked as a street vendor for 13 years in Chicago's Little Village neighborhood. After working some time for another female street vendor, Doña Maria eventually acquired a cart of her own. Being especially enterprising, she now has three tamale carts and three elote carts. In addition, she has employees to help her work these carts. During an interview with Doña Maria, Liz asks her about the police. Here, Doña Maria describes how she is constantly ticketed and harassed by the police. Liz asks if, despite these hassles, is it worth it? Is it worth it to continue to vend? She looks at the both of us, laughs, and without hesitation says



A food truck meet up hosted by the University of Chicago. My Eats, My Streets Mobile Food Symposium. April 14, 2012

Taking it to the Streets, *Cont'd*

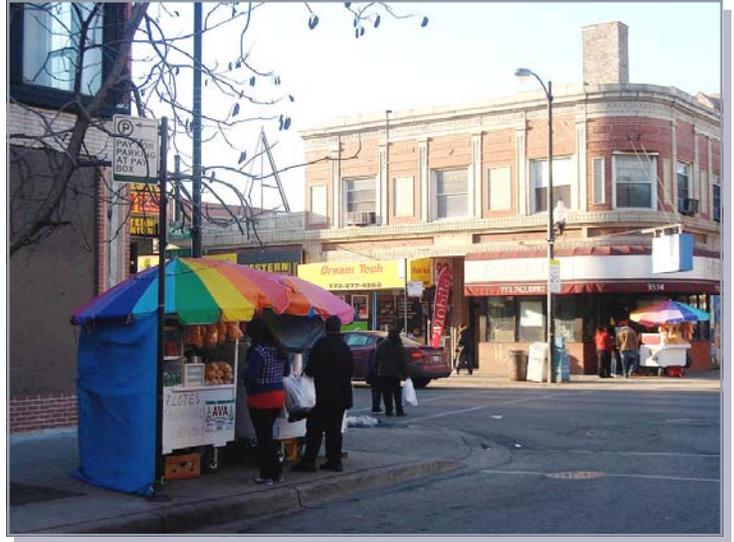
yes. The work has given her the ability to provide for her family, be her own boss, be there for her children when they need her, and has given her a sense of pride that is evident upon speaking to her about her business.

Policy and Urban Governance in Chicago

Watching the dizzying maze that both food truck and push cart vendors have had to go through in order to gain formality and legality begs the question: why. Why is the process so laborious and restrictive? In addition, why has the policy process been so different for these two groups? AVA has been in existence for 18 years, fighting for legality and formality for the city's street vendors, yet they are still extremely restricted in what they can sell. Meanwhile, food truck vending legalization legislation was passed relatively quickly through city council. While numerous factors have come together to create these disparities, we have narrowed our focus to what seem to be the most important phenomena shaping these policy battles. First, as Pagano and Bowman (*Cityscapes and Capital*) explain, leadership matters. Urban leaders create a vision for their city, and take concrete steps to fulfill this vision. In the 1990s Richard M. Daley cleared the streets of vendors. People were no longer allowed to sell food, flowers or art work in front of places like the Chicago Art Institute. This seemed to correspond to a vision he had of a global city free from meddlesome peddlers and vagrants.

Current Mayor Rahm Emanuel also has a vision of creating a global city, and what that entails is somewhat different from what Daley pursued. Part of his vision, in line with many other urban leaders worldwide, is a focus on tourism-creating a space that is vibrant, unique, inviting and safe. Thus, we have the incorporation of vending hot spots for pushcarts in busy tourist areas, and the legalization of trendy food trucks. Even if a mayor has a vision for their city, fulfilling this vision is not an easy process. Many other factors are important in shaping the trajectory of a policy proposal, sometimes coinciding with this vision, sometimes conflicting with this vision.

One of these factors is entrenched or existing partnerships. In the case of food vending, one of these partnerships that has shaped the debate is the relationship between the Illinois Restaurant Association and that of the mayor and certain aldermen in City Council. The Association has lobbied hard to keep nontraditional food vendors out of the Chicago scene, fearing the competition from these vendors. In light of the legalization of food trucks, the GPS tracking system was a sine qua non if policymakers wanted to count on continued support from the Association. This does not mean that these relationships are set in stone, or that new partners cannot access policymakers; rather, it just means that new partnerships may be slower to form, and policy on behalf of these



new partners may be fraught with inconsistencies and/or hurdles.

The third factor seeming to create discrepancies between the groups is the inequality of class. By this we mean that the two groups of vendors have different resources based on their position in the economic sphere, as well as perceived differences of social standing. Most of the pushcart vendors are immigrants, speak little to no English and are concentrated in the city's poorer communities. In addition, their work is often perceived less respectably than their food truck counterparts. Despite these deficiencies, this group has a large umbrella of organizations and alliances that one would assume could make up for the social resource deficit. Given that the group is going on 18 years, encountering the same battles, and seeing little progress, it seems that who they are as a group, and how they are viewed within the city creates significant hurdles to progress. Again, we are not convinced that this means no progress will be made, or that this group cannot access the political world, only that they are at a significant disadvantage due to perceived (or real) resource deficiencies.

These findings, and the way that leadership vision, entrenched relationships, and group resources, have the potential to help us better understand the policy-making process of urban areas. Liz and I will be presenting our complete findings at MPSA in April, and look forward to shedding more light on the relationship between the informal economy and urban governance.

Special Feature Interview: *The State of Higher Education*



By Eduardo Salinas

The January 2013 issue of *PS: Political Science & Politics* featured a symposium titled “The Troubled Future of Colleges and Universities” (1). The articles in this symposium focused on the state of today’s higher education system and stemmed from university presidents, deans, and professors. Taken together, the authors dealt a hopeful warning; they emphasized that the U.S. education system has weathered similar storms in the past, and argued that today’s crisis offers unique opportunities for students of higher education if we only seize them.

Recently I sat down with UIC’s Astrida Orle Tantillo – Professor of Germanic Studies, Professor of History, and Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences – to discuss many of the themes found in the *PS* symposium.

Dean Tantillo’s scholarship specializes in the work of Goethe. She served as President of the Goethe Society of North America from 2010 – 2012, and has authored numerous articles and three books on Goethe’s writings including her most recent, *Goethe’s Modernisms* (2010). During our conversation the tone ranged from philosophical and quixotic (when discussing the decline of a “liberal education” and considering its relevance in today’s STEM-society) to practical and realistic (when discussing the “nuts and bolts” of U.S.

education policy, decreased federal funding, and the contemporary political culture).

Overall, however, our dialogue on the state of higher education served to illustrate a recurring theme in many of Goethe’s writings, the principle of compensation. This principle advances the idea that every choice or action involves trade-offs; some good and some bad. This is true whether speaking of simple matters such as alternate routes to work, or complex phenomena such as government budgets and systemic trends in higher education.

At the outset, I ask her to further elaborate on this concept through several examples from Goethe’s *Modernisms*:

ES) In your most recent book you revisit three of Goethe’s most well-known works and use them to analyze several divisive elements of modern society with which we are all familiar: ‘technology and humanity’ through *Faust*, ‘religion and secularism’ through *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, and ‘education and commerce’ through the *Wilhelm Meister* works. Can you explain a little on how each of these works relates to these themes of modernity?

AOT) *Faust* is such an interesting character; he does a lot of despicable things and he still remains human. He really is struggling to find beauty, to find poetry, to find love. But once he gets excited about capitalism, technology, and domination that’s when beauty ends, that’s when poetry

disappears for him, that's when his soul dies. Nothing else could destroy him but that moment.

As to the character of Werther, I feel that the hyper-emotional hyper-individualistic society Werther longed for has come to pass, in a sense. And I find interesting parallels between the Pietism and evangelical Protestantism in Goethe's Werther and the 'spiritualized secularism' of modern times such as various New Age spiritualities, transcendentalism, yoga, and other trendy philosophies. It seems kind of radical to think of them as similar because they end up at two very different points, but if one looks at the source of where these movements got their impetus it goes back to this German Protestant idealization of the self over the community, and the concept of the self being able to attain a closer communion with God alone rather than through a community. In America, this concept gets transmitted in large part through Ralph Waldo Emerson and ends up in a very different form although at the core they have a common ancestor.

The character of Wilhelm Meister, to me, best represents an adept use of the "principle of compensation". He educates his son in a way that strives to bring these conflicting tensions [arts/commerce, individual/society, theory/practice] into balance. I think what's unique about my interpretation of Wilhelm Meister and my argument concerning education is that I don't just focus on the student-centered versus teacher-centered debate because that debate has been around for a long time. Rather, I think what's more interesting is what I call a "business-modeled education" which essentially takes the worst features of the student-centered and teacher-centered models and combines them. If you start evaluating education by looking only at things that can be measured, for example take standardized tests, suddenly you are ruining the area where American students used to excel; the areas of innovation, and a bold attitude towards trial-and-error. If you start saying that education needs to be more homogenous, or start teaching students based off a test, or start evaluating essays through computer-generated models, you are inhibiting student creativity. And it's all done for very good reasons, you want to make sure students can read, that they can write or do math or get a job; but this practice of molding students into a few pre-selected careers ultimately inhibits potential. That's one of the dangers that Goethe points out through the Wilhelm story, there are advantages and disadvantages in teacher-centered, there are advantages and disadvantages to progressive ed., but if you get stuck in this idea of just teaching students for a career down the line, then that is going to be extremely limiting, not only to the individual but to the society.

ES) Your concept of a "business-modeled education" brings to my mind many debates in politics (both nationally and locally), especially in regards to the idea of 'efficiency'. You hear this a lot nowadays not only when speaking of education but also when looking at the role of government—the idea that schools and universities should be efficient, that governments should be efficient. What's your

take on this?

AOT) You're right, and it always becomes more difficult when there are tightened budgetary concerns as there are now. When the economy is better then there's more room for flourishing, or more room for the edges, or more room for allowing things that don't fit neatly into a predetermined career path. It's interesting when I speak to business executives they tell me it is a liberal education that they really value in their workforce, because whatever you're learning in school is not really going to be that applicable once you're in this particular company or that particular work-setting. Even lawyers, for example, who you think of going through a very specific education experience, learn most of their craft on the job. But, to these CEOs, what does matter is things we've been talking about, like learning to communicate your ideas clearly, learning to work with and respect others, etc.

Being "trained to do something" can become obsolete depending on how technology changes, but if you've been taught how to ask questions and to think big and to think broadly; these are skills that are transferable and useful in a large number of areas. It becomes difficult sometimes to get legislators to see that, because many of them have the mindset that the university is a place to train for a career, and the conversation doesn't revolve around the university as a place for life-long learning or enrichment.

ES) That's the danger I see in the current "STEM-society"; that's where the funding is and that's where the emphasis is, and you're right it's increasingly a 'career-track' mindset. So how relevant are the humanities and the liberal arts/sciences in this environment, when a student has only to learn advanced mathematics and secure a high-paid engineering job?

AOT) Those of us who see its value, we have to be educating everybody on the advantages of a liberal education and the advantages of a well-rounded education. What further complicates the matter is that more and more people are going to college with a specific job in mind, and they mentally shut everything else out. Don't misunderstand me, we want students to prosper and have good jobs, but we also want students to develop, to lead fulfilling lives, and to be useful to their society beyond what they do when receiving a paycheck. So, of course, I definitely see the humanities and the liberal arts/sciences as important as the life sciences, physical sciences, and the mathematics.

ES) In your experience working in a university setting, do you see a crisis in the availability of tenure-track jobs focused on the humanities and the social sciences?

AOT) There's been a crisis in general because university budgets have been increasingly cut. For instance, the state of Illinois currently pays only 15% of our total budget yet the state still controls so much of what we do. The state controls how we set tuition and it controls our procurement. In the old days, for a state to have only a 15% stake in a university pretty much meant that was a private institution. In the last 10 years, we've lost 20% of our faculty while at the same

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time our student numbers have either grown or been stable. So the funding crisis is real and it affects departments across the board, and that's a huge part of this. For these reasons one has to be very realistic, it's a very tight job market. But I know with the foreign languages, for example, because they keep track of this, the market has improved over the past two years as we have begun pulling out of the recession.

ES) So, in your opinion, what are the things that can be done about rising tuition costs and matters of access? And do you see the role as more of a federal or more of a state matter, or a combination of both?

AOT) I think, with good reason, everybody is protesting how much tuition rates are increasing. The purpose of land-grant universities was to educate those who did not come from elite families, and if you believe that education is supposed to be a public good, then where does all this leave us? The reason for this is a continued decrease of state funding. For example, just 10 years ago the state of Illinois provided UIC with a much higher level of support. Combine this with a level of federal funding that is also increasingly cut and you see the situation.

ES) That's true, I recently read that the sequester cuts could cost UIC a possible \$24M in funding. But I want to point out something here because President Obama noted in the State of the Union address, that the government will leverage \$10B in annual funds to lower university tuitions by funneling money away from colleges that fail to keep net tuition down, and toward those colleges and universities that do their fair share to keep tuition affordable, yet the main reason universities are having to raise tuition rates is decreased funding levels. It's a vicious circle.

AOT) Exactly, and that's why our Board of Trustees decided to tie our tuition rates to these two price indices that are used in higher education [the Higher Education Price Index or HEPI and the Higher Education Cost Adjustment or HECA] and refrain from raising rates higher than those indices unless the state cuts funding (2). In a large part, the future of trends in tuition costs is going to be dependent on how quickly the economy continues to grow. But universities also have to come up with creative solutions such as forging ties with community philanthropists or successful alumni.

ES) This is a more pointed question relating to UIC. Can you tell us about the "cluster hires" as a strategy that the university is using to hire new faculty?

AOT) Last year the Chancellor's Office selected 6 cluster proposals to support. Each cluster will consist of 3 – 5 hires, and LAS secured 5 of the 6 clusters and will share the 6th cluster with the College of Medicine. Each cluster has at least one senior hire, some of them two, and the way the

university is encouraging involvement from the colleges is if the hire contributes directly or indirectly to diversity —then the university will pay 70% of the salary, if not, the university still pays 40% of the salary. Either way, it leaves the college with room to maneuver because it does not bear the full brunt of the cost. But it's been very exciting because the proposals have all come from within UIC faculty, there were Wikis setup, Google documents shared, and a whole array of collaboration in forming these proposals and I believe that really says a lot about the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences and LAS faculty that we were awarded 5 out of the 6 cluster seeds available.

ES) What other insights or sneak peeks can you give us into the future of LAS, or UIC overall, as you see it?

AOT) I think one of the things that's really exciting is that the University as a whole is entering a stage of maturity where we can begin telling our story better, we have second-generation alumni, many of them successful, that we can begin reaching out to. You have to remember UIC is a relatively young university, it wasn't until 1982 that we became a full-service university with a medical center. Our faculty, students and staff are now beginning to draw attention;

in the last five years we've received money for four new endowed chairs: \$10M for two chairs in Polish Studies, over \$2M for a chair of Social & Emotional Learning from the NoVo Foundation (3), and \$2M to establish a chair in Russian & Eastern European Intellectual History. These kinds of things really make a difference because, again, the funds are not drawing on our budgets and it gives the University prominence to have these senior-named chairs. I really think we're reaching a "next stage" in where we are growing as a university. For example, the London-based 'Times Higher Education' released a report last year of the 100 best universities under 50 years old to give a sense of the rising stars of the next generation, UIC placed 3rd in the U.S. and 11th worldwide (4). That shows who we are.

1) King, Gary & Maya Sen, eds. "The Troubled Future of Colleges and Universities" in *PS: Political Science & Politics* 46 (1): 81 – 113

2) For a critique on using these indices in this manner see a report titled "Stop Misusing Higher Education-Specific Price Indices" (2011) by Andrew Gillen & Jonathan Robe, from the Center for College Affordability and Productivity.

3) See NoVo.org

4) "The One Hundred under Fifty", *Times Higher Education*. <<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/2012/one-hundred-under-fifty>>

