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## Letter from the Editor: Perspectives of the University: Hearing from Leaders

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## Perspectives of the University: Hearing from Leaders

by

Timothy D. Norton, Ed.D., General Editor

Leaders need to decide what they want to do with their limited time. My favorite occupation, after planning and offering guidance, has been to play the pirate, believing that God gave other people good ideas and insights and also gave me the opportunity to “liberate” them. It may be more elegant to call this part of an intellectual continuum (think of Jefferson learning from Rousseau) or more truthful to say good ideas beg to be borrowed. (An acknowledgement never hurts.) (“Leadership” by Stephen Joel Trachtenberg in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 14, 2008)

It’s easy to assume that leaders are at the top of an organization—a college president, the CEO of a business—but leadership exists at all levels of an organization. Colleges and universities function best with effective leadership at mid-range levels such as department chairs and program directors, coordinators, and supervisors. This issue of *The Journal* gives an expanded voice to these academic leaders who work so closely with the most important constituents in higher education—the students.

Dr. Linda Dunham, chair of the Undergraduate Department in the College of Education at Oral Roberts University, has reviewed Fry, Ketteridge, and Marshall’s, *A Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*. She indicates that the handbook “is about academic teaching and learning practices in Great Britain. It gives faculty a guide to organizing an effective course of study, from planning objectives to determining how to motivate students to reach their maximum potential.” The interesting differences in language between the American and British educational vocabularies are highlighted as is a review of the three sections into which the handbook is divided. Additionally, she presents reasons why the handbook would be an asset to both veteran faculty in reassessing their teaching and to those newer faculty making a transition to higher education.

Dr. Edward E. Decker, Jr., coordinator of the graduate counseling programs in the seminary at Oral Roberts University, offers a critique and some suggestions in response to Dr. Ivan Filby’s, “Using *Lost in Translation* to Prepare Students for the Physical, Emotional, and Spiritual Realities of International Business,” which was published in Volume 4 of this journal. He challenges Filby on his theological comparisons relative to his understanding of the works of others and his interpretation of both Old and New Testament Scriptures. The assumption of the concept that people are body, soul, and spirit is evidence to Dr. Decker that Filby’s “theological anthropology is under-informed,” but he does agree with Filby that international business travelers do suffer fatigue and disorientation from the rigors of travel. Dr. Decker concludes by cautioning academic writers to be “more tentative” when venturing outside their area of expertise.

Dr. Edward W. Watson, who is the former chair of the Undergraduate Department of Theology at Oral Roberts University, serves as Professor of Biblical Literature and Practical Theology in the Graduate College of Theology and Ministry. Dr. Angela L. Watson serves as a graduate professor in the School of Education at Oklahoma Wesleyan University. In their article, “Building Construct Validity for a New Measure of Christian Spiritual Maturity,” they further develop a model of Christian spiritual maturity based upon two dimensions of Bernard of Clairvaux’s staircase of godly love, used in Dr. Angela Watson’s dissertation. The subjects in their study were undergraduates at a private Christian university and undergraduate theology

majors, graduate students, and graduate professors from the same university. Their study attempts to bridge the “understanding between secular psychological theoretical frameworks of development and evangelical Christian frameworks from a biblically-based perspective.” Their findings give insight to “the spiritual development for Christians, including practitioners treating Christian clients, schools serving Christian populations, and Christian individuals striving to understand their own spiritual development.”

Keith E. Gogan, an assistant professor of English in the College of Arts and Cultural Studies and supervisor of the literary journal, *Promethia*, at Oral Roberts University, reviews *Liberal Arts at the Brink* by Victor E. Ferrall, Jr. Professor Gogan reviews some of the causes of the “trouble” presented by Ferrall as “the economic realities facing liberal arts colleges” and the continued “surging demand for career-oriented, vocational instruction.” Gogan indicates that Ferrall’s greatest accomplishment in *Liberal Arts at the Brink* is his philosophical defense of the necessity and beauty of a liberal arts education. Though concerned about the future of the liberal arts idea, Gogan concludes with a sobering thought that “after having read this book, no one will be able to doubt the author’s dedication to the high and noble institution known as liberal arts education, a dinosaur staring extinction in the eye.”

Laura Foote, teaches in the Malone University School of Business and Leadership in both the Malone Management Program, an accelerated business degree-completion program, and in the Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership program. She teaches courses in communication, writing, faith and worldview, and fine arts, and she is also the Prior Learning Assessment Coordinator. In reviewing Parker Palmer’s book *The Courage to Teach*, Dr. Foote points out that Palmer’s book challenges the idea that “values objective knowledge as the preeminent way of learning and knowing.” By turning that notion “upside down,” he reveals “that good andragogy takes the courage to teach from the inside out.” From this point of view, Palmer proposes an educational praxis “that nourishes not only the mind, but also [the] spirit and soul.” He contends that the current academic worldview, in hearkening back to Plato, dismisses emotions and subjectivity. Dr. Foote sees Palmer’s writing as resting “upon the premise that there is an alternative to the dispassionate, detached, and disconnected stance of the academy.” She concludes that Palmer’s philosophy is one that allows for “authenticity in relationships uniting intellect and spirit, soul, and body... through a philosophy of wholeness and representative of an undivided heart.”

Each author, a leader in his or her own academic domain, has demonstrated in this issue of *The Journal* the great value of written scholarship and the best in academic endeavors. Each brings a perspective from a leadership role, and each remains resolute in the desire to bring that excellence to those who share in their love for the academy. Whether a chair, coordinator, or supervisor, each has written with the idea that they should recognize “that God gave other people good ideas and insights” and work to bring out the best in these God-given gifts.

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