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In PLACE: September 24, 2017

PLACE

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IN PLACE

September 24th, 2017

Welcome to the PLACE newsletter! We will send out semi-monthly emails during the 2017-18 academic year to keep you informed about everything PLACE-related. We'll try to keep these relatively short and focused, while also providing useful information about PLACE activities happening throughout the Linfield community and ways to bring the program into your classes.

Want a primer on PLACE? Check out the description [here](#).

PLACE: What's in it for Faculty?

One thing that unifies the student experience at Linfield is our liberal arts core. The purpose of PLACE is to help students make the most of their liberal arts education and connect it to civic discourse and real-world application. PLACE creates a metaphorical coral reef from which courses, conversations, and distinctive learning experiences can occur. It connects students and faculty from different disciplines, fosters cooperation with many of our extra-curricular programs, and promotes effective citizenship from all. The PLACE theme serves as a focal point for collaboration and discussion, but it is secondary to the broader mission of the program. You do not need to have any expertise or interest in the theme to participate.

Aside from engaging in a program that is attempting to provide a public good for the community and promoting effective citizenship, there are a

number of reasons why faculty may benefit from the program. **PLACE provides opportunities for faculty to:**

Generate valuable material your promotion file. PLACE faculty fellows frequently create innovative courses or assignments in ways that link their course material to civic engagement. It also offers easy ways to enhance service to the college and our mission. Consider advertising an upcoming course (any course that links liberal arts and civic engagement) with PLACE— we will list “theme-related courses” and a more general category of courses. Or perhaps reach out to PLACE director (pcottre@linfield.edu) with ideas you have to help facilitate connections between other faculty, staff, and students.

Participate in interdisciplinary exchange. Join a *What’s the Big Idea* learning community (note that we are going to try to start one in Portland)! Or discover integrated learning opportunities with a collaborative event or loosely coordinated coursework or assignments.

Share ideas for future classes, assignments, activities, and themes. PLACE attempts to create and share pedagogical approaches to liberal arts education and civic engagement. Many faculty on campus have conducted successful experiments and are great resources. Moreover, you could work with other faculty and students to propose a potential theme for future inquiry.

Advertise and enhance upcoming courses or events. Do you have a course or upcoming event that connects liberal arts to civic engagement? Let us know! We can help advertise and, if you like, identify other connections on campus. For example, before registration opens this fall, we will be circulating an email to students with course descriptions for both “theme-based” and other courses that connect the liberal arts and civic engagement.

Walk the walk. We frequently tell students that they should be life-long learners and seek to become effective citizens in a pluralistic society. PLACE helps us, as faculty, model the way.

Your contributions to this program will also help the institution. We live in a moment of time in which civic discourse and engagement is more important than ever before. Please help make this a point of distinction for our beloved college.

Have something you want to include in the newsletter? Let us know!

PLACE: What's in it for Students?

There are a number of reasons why students may benefit from the PLACE program. PLACE provides:

Distinctive learning experiences that will help separate you from the pile. The PLACE program provides a number of events that engage with hotly contested current issues, for example free speech compared to hate speech; the manipulation of science for political leverage; and the role of whistleblowers in society. On top of this, student-run PLACE talks, as well as PLACE's integration with WTBI—a faculty-student discussion group—provide unique opportunities to explore current issues, all the while making you a better, more unique candidate for the American workforce.

A diverse dialogue that enables you to build skills allowing more effective interaction with people who might not agree with you. The political divide in our country today demonizes disparate viewpoints, shutting down civic discourse. This is unhealthy, and therefore PLACE seeks to provide a forum for different perspectives, allowing students to respectfully engage and challenge various viewpoints with candor (and pizza). Keynote speakers serve as an extension of this dialogue, providing students with a discourse that goes beyond our community. In the spring semester, PLACE will also be sponsoring a workshop series on "Rhetoric and Civic Responsibility" with the goal of allowing you to interact with those you disagree with.

Civic encouragement. By various metrics, civic engagement has declined over the past fifty years: Fewer people vote in presidential elections, and even less participate in regional politics. With this in mind, PLACE hopes to enable individuals to recognize the potential power they have affect change in their communities.

PLACE in the News

On Wednesday, September 27th, PLACE is hosting a discussion of the politicization of science through Pizza and Politics. To complement this event, we have provided two curated stories on the subject.

The first, entitled [“America Wasn’t Built for Humans”](#), investigates the impact of tribalism on American society. The topic of tribalism intersects with the politicization of science. “One of the great attractions of tribalism,” the author Andrew Sullivan wrote, “is that you don’t actually have to think very much. All you need to know on any given subject is which side you’re on.”

The second story we have chose to share with you this week is a series of interactive maps from the New York Times investigating [“How Americans Think About Climate Change”](#). This regional breakdown of a grave issue provides critical insight into Americans’ opinion of the central politicized scientific topic.

The third story we have selected continues the discussion of tribalism, expanding upon the drawbacks of the politicization of science. In [“Tribal Politics Is Turning Us Against Each Other—and Science”](#), the author argues that agendas are a human error, and have no place in science, provocatively stating that science cannot be allowed to divide Americans.

The last story for this week serves as a foil to the third story, putting the spotlight on individual scientists who have taken steps to politicize scientific debates. [“In Age of Trump, Scientists Show Signs of a Political](#)

Pulse” is an article which assumes that politicization is necessary—is it? You decide!

Last Week in PLACE

September 18th: An Introduction to PLACE (For Colloquium)

A special thanks to Professors Chuck Dunn, Emina Musanovic, and David Sumner for providing such engaging "TED-style" talks introducing our first year students to the liberal arts. We are also indebted to Jackson Miller, Mary Veden, and the Linfield forensics team for staging a provocative debate on the resolution: Edward Snowden should be pardoned.

Professor Pat Cottrell’s opening remarks from this event highlighted the importance of PLACE to the Linfield education: “The United States Department of Labor has reported that 65% of jobs *you* will get have not been created yet. This means that you will need to adaptable and cultivate skills most coveted, including: writing, communication, creative and critical thinking, social intelligence. This is precisely what a liberal arts education does.”

“PLACE is also about civic engagement...working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference which is especially critical today...According to a 2016 Washington Post poll, 86% of Democrats have a negative view of the Republican Party. And 41% of Democrats think that the GOP poses a threat to the nation. Similarly, 91% of Republican Party have a negative view of Democratic Party and 45% view a threat to the nation. Most of the problems we face as a society will require bridge building and fostering a sense of mutuality, not demonizing through mental shortcuts that too often rob us of our humanity.”

“I am hoping you will also take some ownership over this program. Your engagement, ideas, and participation are critical to crafting the best possible liberal arts education for yourselves and your peers.”

September 21st: Persuasive Speaking Competition

Six Linfield students were nominated by Linfield faculty to speak on the question “*How ought we, as members of the Linfield community, live together? In other words, what values ought to guide us as members of our campus community?*” Their answers were all thought provoking and unique, a reflection of the diversity of thought on campus.

Ben Bartu, for example, gave a speech on the meaning of freedom in America from an international perspective:

“So when we talk about freedom in America, we are always speaking in binary terms. Some speak of the Freedom to, as in to do as we please. If you stand against this, then you stand with old Europe, a tyrant, a believer in monarchy and divine right and that democracy is useless and never won us anything but trouble. Some speak of Free from, as in the freedom from being harangued, controlled, or oppressed by those perceived to be luckier. If you stand against this, then you stand with the Jim Crow South, the border patrol, with Timothy McVeigh and institutionalized racism, which, spoiler alert, is a very real thing. It’s a tricky situation, and we see it playing out today on a national level.”

Chase Stowell gave a speech on the drawbacks of values for society, encouraging empathy as an answer to the question posed:

“To live together, we must understand one-another. Values do little to help build understanding, but practicing empathy does. We must emerge from behind our moral shields, less safe and more exposed than we may want to be. We must consider others’ values. And we must be skeptical of our values. This practice, the practice of attempting to understand one-

another, generates empathy that will help build a community that truly 'lives together.'”

Keri Dixon’s speech used Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre* as a literary framework to suggest that our ambition to achieve liberty can be undermined until one is reconciled to subservience:

“Our internal dialogue can easily convince us that we may not be entitled to the full ‘blessings of liberty.’ It is up to us to counteract this. We must ask, ‘Do our words and actions cultivate liberty or do they foster oppressive principles? Do they help or hinder?’ As an institution, our goal is to support the personal growth and education of all, but it is up to us, the individual constituents to uphold the ideal so Linfield is foundation for every student.”

Watch for future newsletters to learn more about PLACE events, teaching resources, and details on your PLACE Faculty/Student Fellows! Thanks for reading, and please feel free to send me questions and suggestions.