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The Antioch Way

At the 2010 Antioch College Reunion, Interim president Matthew Derr urged Antioch alumni to back away from the College now that we have saved it. He said, in part:

Although not everyone assembled here today is in fact an alumnus of Antioch College, I want to speak specifically to the alumni in the context of our reunion. We are in the process of developing a new community for ourselves. Having stepped up to come to the rescue of our alma mater, and been galvanized by our partnership with faculty, staff, students and friends of the College, we must now also prepare ourselves to step back. While we are, in fact, Antioch College reborn, we are not in fact The Community. The privilege, of being a student at Antioch is fleeting, a part of one's life. Some will be fortunate enough to teach or work at the College for their entire careers. Our alumni community must support the Antioch College Community. In doing so, we also need to ensure that we do not blur the boundaries and the definition of community. Agency and authority must remain on the campus, and it should be among our greatest commitments to protect that arrangement for our future students, faculty and staff. We have too many sad lessons, too many failed renewals under our belts to do otherwise.

There is more than a little irony in these statements. "Some will be fortunate enough to teach or work at the College for their entire careers," but evidently the former faculty of the College -- whose tenure was ignored by Antioch University, who boldly soldiered on as the Nonstop Liberal Arts Institute (Antioch in Exile), and who

thus far have received a cold shoulder from the new College's Board Pro Tem, not even having been granted library privileges - - are not among the fortunate few. President Derr asks the alumni to support the campus community, and proceeds to define that community as the future faculty and students of the College. Obviously, we cannot make decisions for them, because they apparently don't exist yet (despite the fact that the former faculty and students of the College who had organized themselves as the Nonstop Liberal Arts Institute remain in Yellow Springs, and want to actively participate in getting our alma mater up and running; Antioch College has faculty and students, just ones that the new administration refuses to recognize). So, who, exactly, is the community we are being asked to support by "leaving well enough alone" (another quote from the State of the College address)? It appears to be a very small cadre of decision-makers. There are presently no mechanisms of democratic, deliberative decision-making at Antioch College; no AdCil, no Community Meeting, no transparency, no accountability (just accountants). So, it is not just ironic, but actually Orwellian, for President Derr to invoke the image of the failed Renewal Commission, to act as if the current administration of the College by the Board Pro Tem is any less autocratic and arbitrary than the Renewal Commission had been, and to pretend to protect Community and Democracy by insisting on their deferment.

The huge banner of Arthur Morgan that gazed across the horseshoe lawn at Antioch Hall during Reunion 2010 is also somewhat ironic. There is no doubt that Morgan was a pragmatist of the finest kind, a man who put his considerable skills in the service of others (at Antioch, at the Tennessee Valley Authority, and at the Seneca Nation, among other places). But Morgan also believed in Community, and this strand of his philosophy is carried on by the Arthur Morgan Institute for Community Solutions, a non-profit organization focused on sustainability issues at the local level. In the book *The Distinctive College*, Burton Clark gives 1926 as the year that Arthur Morgan created the body that became AdCil, which was written into the charter of the College in 1930. But AdCil was advisory in nature, and Clark suggests that Morgan himself was authoritarian and paternalistic:

The instrument of involvement and governance developed gradually, coming on strong after the departure of Morgan. In its formation in 1926 it was an expression of the ideal of a campus as a united, small community. Morgan, as ideologue, thought it a good idea that students participate in the governing of the campus. If students learn by doing, they ought to learn democracy by participating in campus forms of it. But Morgan, as participant, was temperamentally unsuited for such a system. A towering patrician, sure in judgment, he had a dominating presence. . . . When the leader was permanently gone, these emerging forms found resonance in his successor, [Algo] Henderson, who was committed to the ideals of democratic participation and was temperamentally suited to the persistent and often exasperating work necessary to embody them in campus practices and traditions. During Henderson's tenure, community government moved from a minor place in the philosophy, imagery, and administration of the campus to being *the* expression of the social consciousness of the college, a hallmark of Antioch (55-6, 1992 [1970]; emphasis in original).

So, we may well ask, in celebrating Arthur Morgan, which of his values are we celebrating? His paternalism? His belief in small communities? Or his nascent commitment to democratic self-governance? More ironies from President Derr (albeit from earlier in his address):

While we more often quote the great Horace Mann and visionary Arthur Morgan, one of my favorite quotes comes for a president with a brief term of service, Frank Shea. At yet another period of crisis for the College in the late 1970s, he stated: "Antioch is a place where megalomania is complicated only by its insolvency."

This begs the question, whose megalomania are we talking about? To be sure, Arthur Morgan was an amazing person, and one of the most important figures in Antioch history. But the enormous banner with Morgan's image evoked nothing less than images of Chairman Mao, or stained-glass renditions of Jesus Christ. Cults of

Personality and Strongman Governments are fundamentally antithetical to the basic principles of democracy: that all persons are created equal, have the capacity to govern themselves, and can best achieve reasonable solutions to problems through deliberation and open debate. Both the New Left movement of the 1960s and the right-wing Libertarian/Small Government movement of the 1970s and 80s were animated by the idea that people should have some say in the decisions that affect their lives. If liberals and conservatives can agree on this point, why can't Antiochians? If people should have some say in the decisions that affect their lives, why can't the former faculty and students of Antioch College be heard by the Board Pro Tem?

If Community Governance became a hallmark of Antioch under Algo Henderson's administration in the 1930s, that means that the majority of living Antiochians have both the experience and expectation of participation in decision-making at the College. Each of us arrived at the College and found a living tradition of Shared Governance, and we learned how it worked because it was modeled for us by those who came immediately before us. Certainly, alumni should defer to Faculty and Students for campus self-governance to have any real meaning. But President Derr tells us there are no students or faculty, nobody to carry the traditions of self-governance forward. In their absence, why shouldn't there be an interim version of AdCil (AdHocCil?) and CG, to show the new students (if and when they arrive) the Antioch way of doing the business of democracy? In the absence of students and faculty, who else could possibly be considered the legitimate members of the Antioch community if not the alumni? And if the college administration thinks the alumni are too far away from Yellow Springs, or too removed from the realities of life at Antioch, then why not recognize the former faculty and students of the college, and empower them to act as an interim version of AdCil and CG? Either way, if the college is to maintain a commitment to democracy that is more than just lip service, there should be some mechanism for Antiochians to help chart the future of the college, especially now, at so crucial a time. And such mechanisms must do more than merely give the appearance of community participation; writing our

ideas on a flip chart and getting back to us later (after decisions have been made) is not participatory decision-making. By excluding all other stakeholder groups whose efforts were essential to the liberation of Antioch College, the current administration and the Board Pro Tem look as if they are primarily interested in preserving their own prerogatives. Is such exclusion the Antioch Way? Do we really think that narrowing the number of voices being heard is the way to reach the best decisions? Is the exercise of power without appropriate checks and balances (such as public discussion) symptomatic of the nation in which we want to live?

Antioch College has plenty of experience in its recent history of what can happen when a small group of decision-makers, isolated from their constituency, makes decisions that affect the lives of everyone connected to the institution. There are also examples from recent history of how a grassroots model of participatory governance can make Antioch stronger. A brief review is in order.

Two Models of Leadership, One Failed (An Historical Narrative)

Contrary to the dominant narrative of pre-strike Antiochians, the college has not been locked in a death spiral since 1973 (although it certainly has been under-resourced), and the campus culture has not been characterized by acrimony since then, either. One of the more interesting things to come out of the Community Governance group session held on Sunday morning at Reunion 2010 (where we were divided into generational groups by decade, and our feelings and ideas about CG were dutifully recorded on flip charts) was that the group that was least enthusiastic about CG was the cohort from the late 1960s, when the student body was largest. In his book on the 1960s, Todd Gitlin (former president of the SDS) lamented the splintering of the New Left into multiple, increasingly doctrinaire and ideologically extreme juntas at the end of that decade; it is easy to imagine what the political culture of Antioch College must have been like at that time. And I suspect that the way in which latter-day Antioch culture has been characterized by people who were not actually on the ground is, at least in part, a projection on their part of this late 60s experience.

There have been two popular characterizations of the Antioch College community in recent years. One (perpetrated by former Antioch president Steven Lawry) cast Antioch students of recent vintage as toxic, locked in a tooth-and-nail culture of conflict, presumably around identity politics and ideological differences. The other (rehearsed by George Will and other conservative mouthpieces) characterizes Antioch as a Marxist indoctrination camp, with both faculty and students in ideological lockstep. Both characterizations cannot be true, and it seems most plausible that neither of them is (or, alternatively, that both of them are distortions of actual experiences, improperly magnified and generalized). In the three years since I have been involved in efforts to save Antioch, I have not met any students whom I would regard as either anti-social or intellectually soft, and as an instructor at a large State school, I would consider myself fortunate to have any of the recent Antioch students I have met in my classroom (out of the 140 or so students I teach each semester, I have maybe two or three whom I think might pass muster at Antioch). I remember my own experience as an Antioch student as involving quite a lot of contentious discussion, but that is what happens when people are stimulated to intellectual debate about issues that really matter. And if an Antioch education does not teach students to ask Socratic questions about society and the universe, and to speak truth to power, then what is the point of our distinctive educational enterprise?

On my most recent visit to Antioch (as a guest speaker for an installment of the excellent Freedom Summer series), I collected some archival data on enrollment and accreditation. The enrollment figures are interesting, albeit somewhat confusing. The figures include actual headcounts of students at the College, but also figures for FTE (Full-Time Enrollments). Because FTE is a number reached by calculating full-time students (counted as a whole) and half-time and part-time students (calculated as fractions of a whole), the FTE figure is usually numerically smaller than the actual headcount number. I will use the headcount numbers, however, because the most recent set of enrollment figures I found is labeled as “Five Year Detail of New

Entrants as Matriculants,” and does not say whether or not it is distinguishing between full-time and part- or half-time students. Since it is a set of data from Admissions rather than the registrar, and since “matriculants” probably refers mostly to students in the full-time undergraduate program, I am assuming those figures are about headcount rather than FTE (having worked in Admissions, we tended to think more in terms of actual students than FTE, which is an abstraction of actual students). So, I will use the headcount figures from the data, in an effort to be as consistent as I can.

When I arrived as a student at Antioch in Fall of 1988 (the middle of the Guskin years), headcount for the undergraduate degree program was 560, up from 473 (almost 100 students!) just three years earlier in 1985. By Fall 1990, headcount had climbed to 722, with 651 being full-time and 617 of those being in the undergraduate degree program; the FTE figure given is 570 (see how the numbers change, depending on what you’re counting?). A document titled “Indicators of Progress, 1994-1995” gives the following figures for headcount, for Fall semester for each of the following years: in 1991, 716; in 1992, 744, in 1993, 762 (the high water mark); in 1994, 740; in 1995, 703. Another document, titled “Antioch College Quarterly Enrollment 1991-92 to 1995-96” prepared for a faculty meeting on 4/13/95, gives the FTE numbers for those same years: in 1991, 554; in 1992, 570; in 1993 (the high water mark) 592; in 1994, 551. There are a couple of points to be made here. First, that even during the Guskin years (which most alumni tend to think of as a period of healthy growth for the College, whatever we might think of Guskin personally), there was always fluctuation in the headcount of actual students, sometime by as many as 30 or 40 students. Second, depending on how many of those students get counted as wholes or fractions, the disparity between the headcount and FTE numbers can be substantial (in the high water mark year of 1993, the disparity is 170; in 1991, the difference is 162. In 1992, 174; in 1994, 189).

The aforementioned “Indicators of Progress” document has some other interesting figures. Admissions inquiries rose steadily, from 9,318 in 1991 to 16,606 in 1995. Applications look more like a bell curve, with 712 in 1991, peaking at 934 in 1993, and then back down to 660 by 1995. Among the data not presented in this document are the figures for tuition and tuition discount, which might go a long way toward explaining why fewer students were choosing to attend Antioch, even though Inquiries continued to rise. Significantly, attrition dropped steadily each year. In 1991, attrition was 45.7%, which is not surprising to those of us who were on campus during Fall of 1990, and who survived the deaths of two popular students and the tumult surrounding the initial controversies about the Sexual Offense Policy and the military build-up in Kuwait in advance of the first Gulf War (overall, the Antioch community lost four or five students to the Grim Reaper during the years I attended, three of them between Spring and Fall of 1990). The next year’s rate of attrition was similar although slightly smaller, but in 1993 it dropped to 22.2%, and in the subsequent two years was 15.8 % and 18.6%, respectively. So, while fewer students were choosing to come to Antioch, more were choosing to stay; such figures do not indicate a steady worsening of the culture of Antioch, at least as far as students were concerned. The figures for New Matriculants are another modest bell curve: 234 in 1991, peaking at 252 in 1993, and down to 193 in 1995. The class for 1995 is only 14 students smaller than the class for the previous year (207), but is down 59 new students from the 1993 peak (the same number represents the difference between the total enrollments given for 1993 and 1995, since these are headcount figures). That fluctuation is roughly twice that of the flux in Admissions headcounts experienced during the Guskin years, but not an insurmountable number to recruit, and it would not have represented a crisis if the College had a larger endowment and was less dependent on tuition revenues for its operating budget.

Nevertheless, the College moved expeditiously to rectify the situation, and it did so in classic Antioch fashion. In Fall of 1996, under the leadership of Interim President

Bob Devine and Dean of Faculty Hassan Nejad, AdCil created a Task Force to create a Strategic Plan. Nejad wrote,

... [A] decision was made by Bob Devine and myself within days from assuming our new responsibilities to launch an effort to develop certain long-term goals (five to seven years) for the College and to describe the particular actions, programs, and/or activities required for achieving them. We were committed to develop the plan within the context of the College's mission and curricular goals as well as the overall values and objectives as articulated in several documents approved by AdCil. We were also committed to make this a truly community plan rather than our plan and hence decided to involve the community from the conceptualization to implementation of the plan.

The methodology for developing the Strategic Plan was to conduct "listening sessions" with students, staff, and faculty, and to open frank discussion about Antioch College's strengths and weaknesses. Some 240 Antiochians participated in the listening sessions, including 128 students, 57 staff persons, and 55 faculty. These included representatives from Co-op, Financial Aid, The Caf, The Physical Plant, Area Assistants, AEA, Student Affairs, Development, Alumni Relations, and Admissions; 3rd and 4th year students, Transfer Students, Students with Learning Disabilities, representatives from the UIG, Off-Campus students, and students residing in Birch, North, West, and Spalt. Nejad estimated over 80% active participation, and wrote "The community was extremely civil in dealing with conflicting ideas and interests. There was no hostility and aggression in our deliberations."

In short, Antioch used Antioch processes to try and solve the problems of Antioch; this is precisely how Antioch is supposed to work. This is exactly how young people come to understand their own capacities to conceive and articulate a vision, to work with others unlike themselves, and to make change happen in a way that benefits and honors everyone in the community. Horace, Arthur, and Algo would've been

proud. Community has a great way of leveling-out megalomania. Among the goals the Antioch College community defined in the Strategic Plan was increasing enrollment to 800 students by the year 2000. The College also asked the Board of Trustees to work to increase the endowment to 100 million dollars. The Board approved the Strategic Plan in February of 1997, and pledged itself “to working with the College community to achieve these goals.”

Under the Strategic Plan, the College hoped to increase its new students enrollments by 13% annually (this according to a document titled “Enrollment Model to Achieve 800 Students by 2000,” dated 2/27/97). While I would regard any annual increase above 5% as unusually ambitious, it’s helpful to consider that the actual number of additional students that needed to be recruited in each successive year (i.e., new students who were not replacing students who were graduating) was not beyond the realm of possibility: 26 the second year, 29 the third year, 32 the fourth year, 37 the last year. In fact, these expectations were not out of line with the standard Admissions flux of the presumably stable Guskin years.

A memo to the Antioch College faculty from the Faculty Executive Committee, dated September 21, 2000, includes data from Michael Murphy, then Dean of Admissions; this is the data titled “Five Year Detail of New Entrants as Matriculants.” New student enrollment for 1996 (the semester in which the Strategic Plan was launched) was 192 in the Fall, up to 205 by the end of the academic year (nine students had entered in the Spring, and four in the Summer). The target for the following year was 218, and Antioch met that benchmark, enrolling 219 new students in 1997. The following year, the target number was 247, but the College enrolled only 192 new students. By the end of academic year 1999, the College had recruited a total of 215 students, but the target for that year had been 279 (interestingly, the number for actual first year admissions in 1998 and 1999 were exceeded; 186 projected vs 192 actual in 1998, and 211 projected vs 215 actual in 1999. The shortfalls in the admissions numbers appears to have been caused by over-estimating the numbers of incoming transfer students. While transfer students

have been a population Antioch has typically done well with, they cannot be marketed to as easily as graduating high school seniors can be). Fall 2000 saw 169 new students entering Antioch College.

If we add the Fall 2000 New Matriculants to those of the previous three years (that is, if we compute the total number of students for each entering class), the number we get is 795; almost the 800 the Strategic Plan was shooting for. However, these numbers do not match up with another set of numbers; these are from the Antioch Papers site, and summarize data from the College and University Institutional Research office. This data includes headcounts, FTEs, and percentage of retention (the opposite of attrition) for the College in the years 1997-2001, and the same information plus the number of new students each year for the years 2002-2007 (another five year detail; I wish it had figures for new matriculants, to compare with Michael Murphy's numbers). Student retention was 67% in 1997, and increased to 76% by 1999, during the first two years of the Strategic Plan. Retention was 74% in 2000 and 70% in 2001, and fell back to 68% in 2002 (after which it dropped like a rock; see below). According to this document, headcounts were as follows: In 1997, 435; in 1998, 504; in 1999, 512; in 2000, 518, and in 2001, 556 (oddly, the FTE figures are larger, which makes me wonder how they were calculated, or how many half- and part-time students were taking classes at the College). So, the figure of 556 students in 2001, while below the desired 800, is virtually identical with the 560 student headcount from when I entered in 1988, during the heyday of the "successful" Guskin administration. This is an odd perspective from which to reckon the Strategic Plan a disaster. What has changed in the intervening years? Surely, the overhead costs of operating a small liberal arts college must have increased, and maybe 556 students in your gas tank wouldn't get the College as far down the road as they used to. But surely, tuition must have also increased.

While I was a student, the tuition for Antioch College increased 1,000 dollars each year, and this increase was the cause of student activism (in which I was involved), because we were concerned about the net effect that continued increases would

have on the racial and economic class diversity of the student body over time. We were told not to worry about the increases, because they would be paid for through the College's generous Antioch Tuition Grants. Eventually, we fell for the oldest trick in the anti-labor tactics handbook: current students were assured that their tuition would not be increased, but incoming classes would pay a higher rate. This made student solidarity around the tuition issue impossible. After the troublesome cohort had graduated, the Dean of Administration and Finance announced the need to reconsider the generosity of the Antioch Tuition Grant, and suggested that Antioch needed to recruit a student cohort that could afford to pay a larger chunk of Antioch's tuition (in other words, recruit more privileged students, and fewer underprivileged students, which was exactly what we had been concerned would happen). Is it possible that Antioch's tuition increases had priced an Antioch education beyond the reach of a sufficient number of students to keep the College afloat? Had the tuition increases required the Antioch Tuition Grant to be ever greater, creating a sea of red ink? More about the Antioch Tuition Grant in the section on accreditation (pg. ##).

Back to enrollments: the data from the Antioch Papers charts a precipitous drop in both enrollment and retention after 2001. In 2002, 190 new students entered, for a total headcount of 591 (the high point, with the FTE given as 593, which is identical to the FTE figure for 1993). In 2003, 182 new students entered, for a total of 576 (still above the 1988 figure). In 2004, 124 new students entered, for a total of 449; by then retention had dropped from a high of 76% in 1999 to 62%. But the killer year was 2005, the year in which the Renewal Commission's mandated (but unnecessary and incomprehensible) curriculum revision was rushed into implementation. That year, only 57 new students entered the college, and the retention rate was 60%. The total number of students dwindled to 373. The College recruited 120 new students the following year, but their retention rate was only 41%, leaving a total of 330 students. In Fall of 2007, even after the University announced Antioch College would be closed, 64 students entered Antioch. There

were only 226 students in all. The school had lost more than half of its enrollment in five years' time.

Was all of this the result of the College's inability to reach the Strategic Plan's goal of 800 students by 2000? It seems unlikely for several reasons. First, we must consider that shortfalls in Admissions were not the only failure; as far as I can tell, the Board of Trustees did not raise enough money to increase the endowment to 100 million dollars. Second, as an American Studies scholar, I think we should place these numbers in the context of economic history. The enrollment high point for the 1990s was Fall of 1993, one year after the election of Bill Clinton put an end to a dozen years of disastrous Reagan/Bush economic policy. The significant downturn in Fall of 1995 occurred one year after Newt Gingrich and his posse secured a Republican majority in the 1994 Congressional elections, forcing Clinton Administration policy toward the right as President Bill moved toward the center in the politics of compromise. Additionally, the Economic Policy Institute has reported that, despite the Dot Com boom, the 1990s were less rosy economically than most people thought. They wrote,

Recent increases have been insufficient to counteract a 20-year trend of stagnant and declining wages Factors contributing to these wage declines include: a steep drop in the number of and bargaining power of unionized workers; erosion in the value of the minimum wage, only partially corrected by recent increases; a decline in manufacturing jobs and the corresponding expansion of lower-paying service-sector employment; globalization; and increased nonstandard work, such as temporary and part-time employment A family's ability to plan for the future and cope with financial emergencies is strongly affected by its wealth – tangible assets such as a house and car, plus financial assets like stocks and bonds. Distribution of wealth remains more concentrated at the top than distribution of income, and in fact wealth inequality has worsened in the 1990s.

- Projections for 1997 indicate that since 1989 the share of wealth held by the top 1 percent of households grew from 37.4 percent of the national total to 39.1 percent.
- Over the same period, the share of all wealth held by families in the middle fifth of the population fell from 4.8 percent to 4.4 percent. After adjusting for inflation, the value of this middle group's holdings actually fell nearly 3 percent, primarily due to increased indebtedness.

The highly publicized stock–market boom has had little impact on majority of Americans because most working families own little or no stock.

- While the share of households owning stock has risen in the 1990s, the most current available data show that in 1995, almost 60 percent of households owned no stock in any form, including mutual funds and defined–contribution pension plans.
- In 1995, less than one third of American households had stock holdings greater than \$5,000 and 90 percent of the value of all stock was in the hands of the wealthiest 10 percent of households.

Jobs | Growth down, insecurity up

The average unemployment rate during the current business cycle has been lower than during any such cycle since 1967–73, with joblessness falling to about 4.5 percent in mid–1998. But even this historic low has not fully restored workers' sense of job security or reduced the share of workers in contingent and other nonstandard jobs.

- Displaced workers face difficulties finding new employment, with more than one–third out of work when interviewed one to three years after their displacement. When they do find work, their new jobs pay, on average, about 13 percent less than the jobs they lost, and more than one–fourth no longer have employer–provided health insurance.

Work in the 1990s is of an increasingly contingent nature, with almost 30 percent of workers employed in situations that were not regular full-time jobs in 1997 (www.epi.org).

In such an historical circumstance, in which the Middle Class is being stretched and strained, it is not surprising that a number of families could not afford to send their children to an expensive, private liberal arts college. When I was teaching at the University of New Mexico in the mid-1990s, I had two excellent students (Ruby Kopelov and Aja Oishi) who had transferred out of Antioch after their first year because they could not afford it. A similar fate had befallen the person who had first recruited me to Antioch. The drop in enrollment following 2002 is partly the result of the economic crash following 9/11, and probably partly because insecurity about personal safety made the co-op program less attractive to students and parents. But, as we shall see, these are only partial explanations.

The Faculty Executive Committee memo from 9/21/2000 provides a provocative but misleading snapshot. It asks, "What are the implications . . . of our failure to meet one of the most basic goals of the Strategic Plan? . . . Is the goal of 800 students still viable given our enrollment history over the past twenty years?" While these questions were both urgent and sincere, in point of fact the College had already sustained the blow from which it would never recover.

Antioch's dance with death began as an administrative waltz with the University in 1999, when the University changed its accounting practices and began posting depreciation figures to the budgets of the five AU campuses. In a letter dated February 22, 1999 (from the Antioch Papers site), President Devine explained how the University's management decision would permanently cripple the College:

The top-down implementation of the plan to charge depreciation to each campus is, for the College, the crushing blow. It renders the challenge of building a healthy and viable College a Sisyphean nightmare, in that it means that the College's Revenue over Expenses will *never again* be a positive number By adding a 1.3 million depreciation expense at the College, we will (a) completely demoralize a staff and faculty that has

worked very hard to put the College in the black, to build a foundation for capital fundraising, and to strengthen all aspects of our operation without significant increases in our resource base, (b) make it virtually impossible to approach foundations – who always look at the accrual line as a sign of fiscal health, (c) make it extremely difficult to undertake the sort of major fundraising that is *essential* to the College's survival (it's not easy to convince donors who suspect that they are finding a chronic deficit) . . . Further, it seems odd (as it will to University critics) that the depreciation is shifted to the College, while the assets (the College's endowment and the buildings) are not similarly shifted to our balance sheet. (*Depreciation*, Antioch Papers.org, emphasis in the original)

And so it began. Devine stepped down in 2001, the last President who was a passionate advocate of the College. He was followed by four presidents in six years, the last of whom had no prior experience leading an institution of higher education, did not work well with faculty, and disparaged the student body to anyone who would listen. After the stock market crash that followed 9/11/2001, the University assumed control of the College's budget; in February of 2002, the University moved to consolidate some administrative functions of the University and the College. In so doing, the University closed the College's office of Administration and Finance. By June of that same year, the endowment stood at 23 million, some 75 million dollars short of the goal the trustees had pledged themselves to achieve back in 1997.

In 2003, the University Leadership Council of the Antioch University Board of Trustees formed the Antioch Renewal Commission, whose report was issued in 2004. Much of the impetus for the Renewal Commission appears to have been motivated by the NCA accreditation review of 2002, and I will discuss this in some depth later in this document. Despite the fact that the NCA external review found no fault with the College's curriculum, the Renewal Commission embarked on a curricular revision that was mandated by the trustees from the top down, and that was rushed into implementation in 2005. That was the year of the lowest student enrollments and the greatest student attrition. The trustees had promised the faculty to raise funds to cover any enrollment shortfalls caused by the new curriculum for five years, but in 2007 they reneged and pulled the plug on their own plan. In early June of 2007, without consultation with the faculty, students, alumni,

or donors, the trustees announced plans to suspend operations at Antioch College.

The historical record is clear, if you know how to read it. In the latter half of the 1990s, when the Antioch College community was involved in formulating and implementing the Strategic Plan, enrollment at the College went up. Retention went up the first two years, and remained at 70% or above. In the early 2000s, as the University assumed increasing control of the College and eroded its traditions of Shared Governance and co-participation in decision-making, enrollments at the College declined dramatically, entering a death-spiral with the implementation of the Renewal Commission's curriculum plan. Likewise, retention dropped at an alarming rate during those years. There can be little doubt as to which model of leadership at Antioch College is ultimately beneficial to its bottom line. A bottom-up model of greater co-participation in governance is good for the College. A top-down model not only violates our cherished Antioch traditions, it is bad for the bottom line. Authoritarian styles of leadership nearly killed the College, and constitute bad management.

Before the surprise announcement of closure in 2007, about 150 Antiochians (including myself) were registered to attend Reunion later that month. Almost 700 of us showed up to rescue our alma mater. We put on our Antioch thinking caps, met in Antiochian committees, and developed an agenda of Antiochian solutions to solve Antioch's problems. We raised 400,000 dollars in a weekend (ten times what we had been told we'd have to raise for anyone to take our cause seriously). We resolved to secure the College's independence from the University; to support its students, staff and faculty; and to fight for the continuation of its educational program without interruption. It was a glorious effort.

Alas, several key players were about to make the same mistakes that the University had made.

My Axe to Grind: A Personal Tale of Disenchantment (An Hysterical Narrative)

When I was a student at Antioch, I co-oped at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change. One of the central tenets of nonviolence is that one should not try to defeat (or even humiliate) one's opponents. Instead, one should take care to defeat unjust policies (which one's opponents may also be the victims of; MLK was convinced that racism was just as harmful to whites as blacks, in that it conferred on many a false sense of superiority). However, I think it is also true that there is no peace without justice, and no justice without truth. What follows, then, is a personal account of my interactions with the Save Antioch movement from June of 2007 to the present. However, I have observed the tradition of ethnographic reportage, and have altered the names of the participants (including my own). I have done so not to protect the innocent or mock the guilty, but in the hopes that changing the names will give the readers some distance, help the parties involved to not take things personally, and encourage all of us to consider the actions and behaviors rather than the people and the personalities (this is the only reason for the pretense of disguise; anyone familiar with the events will know who is being discussed). And, of course, since everyone is the hero of their own narrative, I concede that others would likely tell this story differently.

I have already described above how I, Danny Cobbler, attended Antioch Reunion 2007, at which we alumni determined to wrest the College from the University. This effort appeared to be led by members of the Alumni Board (notably Dick Bailey and Jocelyn Borden), who resolved to start a separate, non-profit agency called the College Revival Fund (CRF). I was pleased that nobody to whom I spoke at reunion subscribed to Chancellor Joanie Turlock's plan to close the College, move administrative and curricular operations to the new Campus West building of Antioch McGregor/Midwest, and repurpose the old campus as a retirement community (this is not a joke; these were the plans recommended by the University Leadership Council). Only a handful of alumni were permitted to ask questions of the few trustees who were present at a public meeting in Kelly Hall, and I gained some notoriety among the alumni for asking the Chairman of the Trustees, Bart

Drucker, if he thought that closing the College was really the best way to increase enrollment. My notoriety increased (i.e. was made worse) when the New York Times chose my picture to illustrate their narrative of bloated, aging liberalism. Their story wrote of the 1960s generation being taught to “smash the system” a characterization I resented, having been to the King Center and having graduated from Antioch 22 years after the end of the 60s. They also misspelled my name, even though it was clearly visible on the nametag I was wearing in the photo.

On Friday night, I crashed a meeting of former CMs and Record Editors, despite having never been either. On Saturday afternoon, I participated in the Community Meeting led by co- Community Managers Elsie Darden and Jorie Evans-Meacham (their third co-CM, Laurie Frederick, was still on co-op); they were just beginning their term, and had been CMs for less than a month. Despite having more than 600 alums and a crisis of major proportions dropped in their laps, Elsie and Jorie both exhibited cool heads and mad facilitating skills. We divided into task-specific break-out groups, and I worked with both the Legal Strategies and Communications groups. By Saturday afternoon, we had developed an action plan that was subsequently approved by the Alumni Board, and Saturday evening we raised \$400,000.00 from those among us to save our alma mater. On Sunday morning I listened to Matt Glauer’s advice on how to start an alumni chapter, and on Monday I went home, evangelized, and ignored that advice by single-handedly trying to organize alumni in Wood and Lucas counties (our first meeting yielded only five alums, including myself and the couple who had agreed to host the event, Vic and Lucy Busker). I subsequently had more success working regionally with alums from NW Ohio and SE Michigan, and we were able to raise about \$45,000.00 on our nationwide fundraising day in August.

Between June and December, I also wrote about 50 pages of material defending the College. I sent these essays to the trustees, and published some on the electronic discussion boards that had been set up, for free, by alumni like Patrick Maya and Derek Meyerson (among others; sorry, guys). I was heartened by our early

successes, and I was disappointed when Dick Bailey was dismissed as counsel to the CRF and Franny Byrd produced an agreement with the University that did not provide for its independence. I was not the only one, as this development led to the formation of both the Antioch College Continuation Corporation (with which I was not involved) and the Antioch College Action Network (with which I was). The latter organization was formed to provide direct material and moral support to the Antioch College community as it faced what might be its last semester. These were projects that were initiated by either students or alumni, and were supported by ACAN members on an ad hoc basis. Throughout late 2007 and early 2008, I was on campus several times, and participated in Antioch Homecoming, the ACAN-sponsored teach-in, a guest lecture in my capacity as an academic, and Madeline Benson's "Antioch Is My Home" publication project.

In early 2008, there was an Alumni Board meeting that was a turning point for me (I think it was in late February). ACAN had scheduled some events, piggy-backing on the Alumni Board Meeting schedule, and using gaps in the latter schedule for ACAN events. Since many of us had planned to attend the Alumni Board meeting, it made sense to us to have events while we all were on campus. However, this plan did not sit well with everyone. In a conference call I was invited to take part in, the Director of Alumni relations, Lisa Dimes, objected to ACAN's proposed events. She argued that (a) nothing on campus involving the alumni can or should happen without the involvement of the Alumni Relations office; and (b) the Alumni Relations staff was too small and already overburdened to take on any additional tasks. To me, this argument seemed like a recipe for paralysis, and suggested that the Alumni Relations and Institutional Advancement office thought that it was the boss of the alumni. This top-down attitude clashed with ACAN's ad hoc, grassroots ethos, and these different orientations would continue to be the cause of friction in the Antioch community.

During the Alumni Board meeting, I suggested that as long as the University refused to surrender the College, we were their alumni body, and that represented a certain

amount of leverage. I proposed that we have College alumni distributing informational leaflets in front of each of the other AU campuses. My thinking was that we could make the University want to give us the College by telling the truth about them (the thing that made me most angry was that Joanie Turlock and Bart Drucker were punishing the College for the University's mistakes, and would get to keep their jobs while the faculty, staff, and students of the College were sent packing). This suggestion led to my inclusion in a side meeting with Jocelyn Borden, Maura Krackauer (who had been performing extremely valuable institutional research on AU and AC), and Jerry Lubin (a long-time labor activist, who had marched with MLK in the 1960s). Jerry jumped down my throat every time I opened my mouth, and I could hardly finish a sentence, so I stopped talking. When he paused, expecting an argument and getting none, I told him I was listening to him (which I was). However, it was apparent from the start that Jerry and I had drastically different concepts about the methods and meaning of Direct Action. So I was very surprised when, a couple of weeks later, Jerry phoned me and asked me to be co-chair with him of CRF's Direct Action Committee. I had reservations, but my sense of obligation outweighed them, so I accepted the offer. My appointment as co-chair was announced on the discussion boards. Antiochian friends of mine, like Krishna Frankenstein, asked me what the plan was. I did not know the plan, so I asked Jerry. Zen-Master Jerry explained to me that there was no plan; any Direct Action would have to be generated by the Alumni Chapters, and most of them were too fractious to agree on a plan. I suggested to Jerry that we expand the Direct Action Committee (which was really just the two of us) to include Antiochians with experience in mediation and consensus-building, so as to help the Alumni Chapters develop plans appropriate to their desires, capacities, and contexts. My suggestion went nowhere, as did almost every other suggestion I made while co-chair of the Direct Action Committee.

For a brief time that Spring, I was made privy to conference calls of the CRF. Helen Sorenson, who had courageously put her law practice on hiatus to move to Yellow Springs and become President of CRF, would give reports on the progress of raising

funds for and organizing Nonstop, the Antioch-in-Exile organization that the Alumni Board had approved as Plan B if the ACCC's negotiations with the University fell apart. It troubled me that Helen's reporting to CRF was structured exactly the same way as Joanie Turlock's reporting to the AU trustees: all the information was channeled through one person, who became the privileged cataract of knowledge. Most of the calls were about the necessity of raising funds to support Nonstop, and I began to suspect that CRF did not have as much money on hand as they said they did, and it appeared to be mostly from a small handful of large donors (perhaps this was the meaning of the phrase "low-hanging fruit" that I'd heard Lisa Dimes and some other fundraisers using). Negotiations with the University had stalled, despite ACCC's generous offers, and while reading about game theory for an academic project, I had an epiphany: Chancellor Turlock was not interested in a Win/Win situation for the University and the College; she was playing a zero-sum game, in which she could only win if the College lost (I did not know why at the time, but I think I do now; stay tuned for the next section). I immediately fired-off an e-mail to CRF, arguing that our posture had to be more aggressive; for my troubles, I received a response from an alum in San Francisco whom I did not know, who wrote to me as if I was a hot-headed anarchist, and who suggested I read Saul Alinsky's "Rules for Radicals." No other response from CRF was forthcoming (perhaps because Kathleen Schlessner had already convinced CRF that Joanie Turlock was trying to provoke us).

That Spring was a flurry of activity, as the alumni pressured the Trustees to meet face-to-face with ACCC (once again, Joanie Turlock had positioned herself as the cataract of information, this time through a stranglehold on the small Work Feasibility Team). Jerry and I organized a protest in front of AU McGregor's Campus West in Yellow Springs, which was attended by a hundred people or so. It was good for our morale, like all protest theater is, but I wondered how much pressure we had exerted. Jerry Lubin and Larry Englebrecht lobbied Capitol Hill and leafleted Dupont Circle in DC, but Jerry disappointed me by telling me that the real purpose of the action was just to get press; it was a photo-op for a PR stunt. My understanding of Direct Action, based on the history of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, was that it was

more effective when it was sustained (the boycott lasted a year). Meanwhile, Ted Kwiatkowski was talking to Jerry about lobbying NCA's conference in Chicago, and I talked with Matt Zefferelli of the NY alumni chapter about the event that eventually became "Stan Callan Appreciation Day" in front of the Carnegie Foundation. I think I was helpful, although that event certainly exceeded my advice and expectations.

Still, I was frustrated that we were not doing more. I wanted to provide material support to chapters, in the form of printed matter (a series of pamphlets and fact sheets) that could be handed out in front of AU campuses over a sustained period of time (like a picket) and delivered to media outlets in the locale of AU campuses ; I even wrote a few. I did not have any traction with CRF. Alumni were still asking me what the plan was, and I had to explain that there was none. I wrote CRF that Jerry and I were not a committee; at best, we were consultants. I explained that I thought it was counter-productive to say that we *were* a committee, because it gave the alumni the impression there was a standing committee that was drafting plans, when in fact there was no such committee, and no such plan. The only response I received was from Jerry Lubin, who politely enumerated our accomplishments to date.

May came and went, and with it the students and accreditation of Antioch College. Never once had Chancellor Turlock broken her stride in her plan to close the College. Pressure on the trustees increased. ACAN mounted a petition calling for Turlock and Drucker's resignations that was signed by more than 800 Antiochians and friends of the College. Lisa Dimes suggested we all phone the University and ask to be permanently removed from their fundraising lists. The Keene Six, an intrepid group of Antiochians (including alumni, recent students, and Yellow Springs villagers) traveled to the AU trustee meeting in Keene, New Hampshire that June; they distributed printed material (including some of mine), held a teach-in about the College's predicament, and met with faculty of the Keene campus. An "official" delegation from CRF, comprised of Lisa Dimes and Patrick Burr, met with the Trustees, as did Chancellor Turlock. To everyone's surprise, the Trustees appeared

to reject Chancellor Turlock's plan, and directed the Alumni Board to draft a plan to receive ownership of the College. We had accomplished our goal, but it didn't stop the Chancellor from closing the campus and shuttering the buildings.

Looking back, I was a dolt. It was not until Reunion 2008 that I wised-up. The event was simulated to resemble the grassroots success of the 2007 Reunion, but was a top-down puppet show with little meaningful participation by alumni. The break-out group on Direct Action in which I participated was a charade: Jerry Lubin insisted that we could not mount any direct action because the majority of alumni thought we had already won the college (even though no concrete agreement was in place, and even though several of the faculty – including one of the architects of the Strategic Plan, former Antioch President Hobson R. Sublime, Jr. – had been denied emeritus status by the University trustees shortly beforehand, adding insult to already considerable injury). Lisa Dimes insisted that Direct Action by alumni had been completely ineffective, and that the Keene agreement had been achieved through interpersonal schmoozing (evidently forgetting her own mobilization of the alumni in her phone campaign). Those in the direct action breakout group who wanted to mobilize and act were told there was nothing to do. It began to dawn on me that the real purpose of the Direct Action Committee had been to *discourage* (or, at least, carefully manage) alumni in regard to direct action, and mostly to give the *appearance* of fighting, without really putting up a fight (possibly because CRF did not have the money to put up a real fight). I was sickened by the thought; I felt used and stupid.

Later that same day, ACAN met to discuss ways in which we might capitalize on the presence of the alumni; there were fewer than the previous year, but still a lot of us. About 30 people attended this ACAN meeting, which took place around the picnic tables in front of the Student Union, in broad daylight. The consensus was that we should use our numbers to mount a direct action, and several options were considered. Tom Gentry, a fourth-generation Antiochian and a veteran of the tent city protests of the early 2000s Consolidation Plan budget cuts, suggested we

organize a tent city on the horseshoe lawn, (to dramatize being locked out of the buildings by the Chancellor) and that we mobilize to secure local press coverage. I opined that support from CRF was unlikely to be forthcoming. We saw no harm in taking our own initiative, but others did. The following day, even though the event was a success (from a morale and press coverage standpoint), Lisa Dimes was observed to be enraged. "Who are the leaders of ACAN?" she wanted to know, totally missing the point of ACAN: there were no leaders, there was just community. We organized initiatives if there was consensus for them (much like the listening sessions of the Strategic Plan had done so). The events of the evening did not calm her any, as an ad hoc Re-Graduation Ceremony mounted by a couple of ACAN folks unintentionally displaced a more formal fundraising event, but raised both money and spirits. By that time, Nonstop had been launched, and one heard rumblings about organizational wrangling between ExCil (AdCil in Exile) and CRF over who was in charge, and who had the authority to set priorities.

Late in the summer, Professor of Environmental Science Keith Entwistle observed that the manner in which the University had shuttered the historic campus buildings would put them at risk for serious damage during the winter, unless they were properly heated. The University had no intention of heating them as Prof. Entwistle said they should be. Franny Byrd, president of the Alumni Board, was quoted in *The Yellow Springs News* as saying that she trusted the University to do the right thing. My head exploded. I fired-off an e-mail to members of CRF; how could Franny have possibly said such a thing? What evidence of good faith did she have? The alumni still did not own the College, and the Chancellor seemed bent on neglecting the campus to death. I argued that Joanie Turlock had never once slackened her pace in her plans to close the College, and if the buildings were damaged over the winter, she would have accomplished her final blow and been given an excuse to knock down the buildings and flip the real estate (or, at the very least, make it difficult for anyone else to use the campus as a school). I received a polite e-mail from the CRF treasurer, suggesting that I was over-reacting to the situation. I received no other personal response from anyone in CRF, but Franny Byrd said publicly that we

should keep our eyes on the prize and not get distracted. Or, as Maura Krackauer characterized it, we were being told to shut up and let the grown-ups handle things. Negotiations between Pat Burr and Steve Brogan (heir of the inventor of the Antioch Shoe) and representatives of the University, and between their lawyers, dragged on.

Following my September rant, I became persona non grata with CRF. Nobody outside my chapter in the official structure of Antioch would answer my e-mails. I continued to worry about the state of the buildings, even though (as I have remarked several times), buildings have never educated anyone, and the educational enterprise of Nonstop was thriving in downtown Yellow Springs, in any nook and cranny where people could share intellectual discourse. Wherever two or more were gathered together in Antioch's name, it was there. In December, pipes burst near the top of Antioch Hall, creating a waterfall inside the building. Other buildings were similarly damaged. This was entirely preventable. In January, I participated in a fundraising event in Detroit organized by our chapter, but it was sparsely attended, and we raised only ten percent of the amount we had raised in August of 2007. By June, somebody (who?) had decided to stop funding Nonstop, and suddenly (after having been told they were the DNA of the College) the faculty of the College were persona non grata, too. The Board Pro Tem were more concerned for the welfare of the campus buildings than they were for the faculty and students who made Antioch happen, who *were* Antioch. Patrick Burr and Steve Brogan smiled for the cameras when the keys were handed over, but they used them to lock people out.

In fact, marginalization of the alumni was epidemic, at least among those whom I knew. Stalwart Antiochians like Patrick Maya and Maura Krackauer, each of whom had invested countless hours and essential expertise in efforts to rescue Antioch, were being frosted out. Those who remained in Yellow Springs, like Tom Gentry and Matt Zefferelli (both of whom, like Helen Sorenson, had left their other lives to move to Yellow Springs), and whose expertise had been essential to establishing the

physical plant and IT structure of Nonstop, experienced troublingly ambivalent treatment at the hands of the College as freelancers. Volunteer efforts were disparaged as unprofessional. Franny Byrd dismissed Antiochians like me, who deviated from the party line, as part of a “vocal minority,” and those members of the Alumni Board who posed thorny questions were referred to as “obstructionists.” Having disappeared behind closed doors to talk with the lawyers, the decision-makers at Antioch never re-emerged, and public relations replaced public discourse. If we wouldn’t tolerate George W. Bush telling us that he was The Decider, we shouldn’t tolerate anyone else telling us, either. The big tent of Reunion 2007 shrank: in 2007, almost 700 people attended; in 2008, about 500. In Fall of 2009, 400. This year, 300 or so. I no longer see alumni whom I know love Antioch, because they were my comrades: Madeline Benson, Nolan Dreiser, Liz Subelius, Fred Ribble, Faith Anne Aaron, Patrick Maya, Julia Alvarado, Heather Rubenstein, Aaron Gault, Gloria B. Lubin, Preston Beale, and many others. Tom Gentry has left town. Former president Hob Sublime, who has devoted more than half of his life to Antioch, can’t even get a hearing with the BPT because that august body won’t recognize him, along with the rest of the faculty. Antioch has shed more than half of those alumni who showed-up to save it in 2007; where are they now? Are they part of the dead skin that the Honorable Evelyn Jones Horton said Antioch was better off without at Reunion 2010? I guess we are all expendable, if Lisa Dimes thinks a handful of wealthy donors are providing enough low-hanging fruit.

The boulder will not roll itself up the hill; it will take people. More people would make it easier, both in terms of sharing the effort and contributing expertise. How many people are working on re-establishing Antioch’s accreditation? It is a shockingly small number for so important a task. Money is necessary, but throwing money at the boulder will not make it roll up the hill. A handful of people, however wealthy and well-intentioned, simply cannot pull an entire institution of higher education from their bodily crevices. While an institution may be greater than the sum of its parts (especially one like Antioch), parts are still required. Colleges don’t appear out of thin air, like Athena springing from the brow of Zeus. They need to be

staffed, there needs to be a faculty, students need to be admitted; right now, the only Admissions person is a high school guidance counselor from Southern California who sits on the Alumni Board. If Antioch intends to recruit students for Fall of 2011, that needs to begin happening soon. Likewise, the hiring cycle for professional academics happens a year in advance, so if Antioch wants to hire faculty for 2011, they had better get to it shortly. But who will hire these new faculty? In academia, new faculty are hired by members of academic departments, to complement the strengths of current faculty; President Burr tells us that Antioch has no faculty to undertake this task. Many decisions have been deferred until the BPT hires a new President of the College, but no president of a College (not even our legendary Luther Brogan, architect of the co-op plan) has ever hired an entire faculty, because there's simply not enough time in the day for one person to do that. One reason I have gone into so much detail in this narrative is to demonstrate the number of people who have been involved in making significant contributions to saving Antioch; it's not just the members of the Alumni Board, CRF, and the BPT. It's all of us. And I have barely scratched the surface. We all deserve recognition, and due consideration: students, staff, faculty, administrators, alumni. Why will the BPT not recognize the former faculty and students of Antioch College, who want nothing more than to help Antioch College be a viable institution?

Antioch should not be afraid of Antiochians. In a context of democratic leadership, dissent is not a problem (which is why it is protected under the First Amendment). Dissenting opinions broaden the discussion and help generate options, which leads to more thoughtful deliberation and better decision-making (as long as people are actually listening to each other, and have not dug-into their positions). It is only in the context of Authoritarian models of leadership that dissent must be squelched, questions must remain unanswered, and silence must be maintained. For Authoritarian regimes are preoccupied with power and control, rather than truth and justice. MLK believed that means had to be in keeping with desired ends, so one cannot hope to use Authoritarian means to develop and secure a Democratic institution.

The problem appears to be that the BPT has imbibed Joanie Turlock's Kool-Aid, and believe that the students, faculty, and curriculum of Antioch College all were substandard. But this is not the truth of the matter, as I will argue in the following section.

A Plausible Explanation for Bizarre Institutional Behavior (Another Historical Narrative)

We now return to an Historical narrative, featuring the real names of real people, and citing actual, documented historical events.

One of the things that had always puzzled me was the Renewal Commission's fixation on the physical plant of the College. To be sure, years of deferred maintenance had taken their toll, and the state of the physical plant was (and remains) a serious concern. But in 2004, the year of the Renewal Commission Report, the campus was in much better shape than when I had attended Antioch between 1988-1992. During those years, South Hall, Pennell House, and Spalt (then Corry) were all closed. Since then, all of those buildings had been refurbished and reopened. Additionally, Weston (formerly the Horace Mann bldg.) had been remodeled as an office for Admissions, and several of the campus's older buildings (Connor House, Day House, and Norment), in various states of dilapidation, had been demolished. In short, the campus looked significantly better in 2004 than during the Guskin years, so I did not think that the Renewal Commission's preoccupation with the buildings made much sense.

It turns out that the Renewal Commission's concerns and priorities were directly motivated by the 2002 NCA accreditation review. I am not certain of the history, but my understanding is that, because the University was spawned by the College and uses its credentials in experiential education to grant academic credit for work experience, *the whole University* is accredited through NCA (or was at the time; I

believe AU Southern California now has independent accreditation). The passages I will be quoting come from a document titled “Report of a Commission-Mandated Focused Visit” authorized by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, and authored by the (external) Evaluation Team the HLC sent to Antioch. The evaluation visit took place April 10-11, 2006, and the Report is dated 5/30/06, but the data in the report includes information about the 2002 accreditation review (since the Focused Visit is a follow-up to that). Along with the Exit Interview from the same Focused Visit, this document is the smoking gun that explains most of Antioch University’s bizarre behavior of the past several years.

From a section headed “Context and Nature of Visit,” the 2006 Focused Visit Report explains,

In October 2002, Antioch University (AU) underwent a comprehensive evaluation visit as the five campuses welcomed a total of fourteen peer reviewers. While not all evaluators visited the Yellow Springs, OH campuses, it is interesting to note that there was agreement on the many challenges facing the University. The team recommended the next comprehensive visit for 2012-13 with a focused visit early in the ten-year cycle. The focused visit was unusual in its extent as it covered several areas of key importance to the ongoing health of AU. The 2002 comprehensive recommended a focus visit in three areas: 1) adequacy of resources to achieve institutional objectives; 2) effectiveness of linking planning, budgeting, development and enrollment management; and 3) implementation of assessment of student learning. In the team’s report there was the challenge that if AU “does not show adequate progress in these areas, the date of the next comprehensive visit should be moved forward.” The leadership of Antioch University took these challenges seriously, and was well-prepared for the [2006] focus visit.

So, basically, Antioch University had been put on notice in 2002 that it needed to get its act together in these “areas of key importance,” or risk losing its accreditation at

the next comprehensive review. Another HLC document, the “Antioch University ---Exit Interview,” dated April 11, 2006, makes clear that the earlier comprehensive visit “noted concerns in the areas of finance (lack of financial resources and operating deficits) and facilities (deferred maintenance and deterioration of existing facilities).” This, then, explains the fetishizing of the campus buildings in the 2004 Renewal Commission Report. The state of the buildings had become evidence in the University’s case to receive (or be denied) accreditation.

Likewise, the concerns about assessment explain the Renewal Commission’s mandated curriculum change. The Focused Visit Report explains that the 2002 comprehensive visit had revealed problems with assessment of student learning at the College and University. The process of Narrative Evaluations “was unevenly applied and interpreted across the College. Across the University, it was noted that the multiple methods used to assess student learning were inadequate in some areas and unevenly applied in other areas.” I take that to mean that assessment issues at the University level were worse than at the College level. As evidence of adequate progress in assessment since 2002, the 2006 report notes “From October 2003 to March 2004, a nationally recognized expert in educational evaluation undertook an extensive assessment audit of the entire University. This expert is on the staff of AU...”. The document does not name this expert; if anyone knows, please speak up. The focus on assessment explains why the 2006 Antioch College Catalog contains two pages on Learning Outcomes and six pages on the Structure of the curriculum, but almost nothing about program content. The list of majors toward the end of the catalog includes the following note:

Beginning in fall 2005, the faculty, departments, and majors were redesigned. For students who entered before fall 2005, the interdisciplinary majors and concentrations listed below comprise the major curriculum. For students entering after Fall 2005, the majors and concentrations provide information about the areas of focused study and disciplines students may incorporate in their individually guided major. (errors in original)

Evidently, the vagueness of the program content involved with the new curriculum's "individually guided majors" was secondary to concerns about assessment of student learning. To some extent, this is the tail wagging the dog, as graduate programs or employers would like to be able to have a reasonable expectation of what someone holding an Antioch degree has actually studied, and the specific academic discipline(s) in which they have received training. The focus on outcomes and structures at the expense of majors makes it appear as if familiarity with a discipline or field of knowledge is beside the point. Having worked in Admissions and talked with many parents, I suspect that the inability to answer the question, "What will my child learn? What can my child major in at Antioch?" was a huge factor in the new curriculum's lack of appeal (at least, to those who would be paying for it), especially compared to more comprehensible programs at other GLCA schools, or more affordable state schools. Total costs for attending Antioch in 2005-6 were \$32,936.00, a figure that exceeds the median income of American taxpayers by nearly \$3,000.00 annually (that is, half of all American taxpayers make less than \$30,000.00 annually). However, the new curriculum bought the University some time. The 2006 Focused Visit Report stated:

Antioch College has just completed its first year of the revised curriculum that included first-year learning cohorts. With an assessment committee and plan in place, more years are needed to show evidence that the plan is functional and driving the improvement of student learning and curricular revision.

The expectation of the 2006 Focused Visit by the HLC Evaluation team may also have been a factor in the decision to rush the new curriculum into implementation in 2005, a year ahead of schedule.

Although I have looked, I have been unable to find documentation of the actual learning outcomes assessment for the first year of the new curriculum. I contacted Ann Filemyr, who was the Acting Dean of Students in 2004-5 when the plan was being developed, but who left before its implementation in 2005-6; Dr. Filemyr is no longer associated with

Antioch College, and is not among the faculty seeking to have their tenure honored. In response to an inquiry sent via Facebook, she wrote:

Here is my recollection. I was Interim Dean of Faculty and had been asked to attend a meeting of the Renewal Commission and the Capital Campaign as the two groups were trying to connect the dots so funds could be raised based on the "plan." Prior to this meeting the idea was that half the Fall 05 entering class be put on the "new curriculum" i.e. into learning communities and half of the entering class be on the old curriculum or enroll in individual gen ed classes. The Director of Admissions then reported how very small the numbers of the incoming class were. A discussion ensued about how to split such a small entering class and whether that was viable. Out of this discussion the idea was advanced to simply focus on the learning communities and have all members of the entering class be part of this new educational model. This was then seen by the faculty as a 'speed-up.' I have long faulted the Renewal Commission for focusing on the curriculum. The curriculum was not the problem at Antioch College. The structure was the problem. The university structure and its inability to grasp and respond to the needs of the College was the problem. The Renewal Commission had on their list of tasks to discuss this. . . I later learned that the discussion was tabled and as time tells, the Board refused to enter into a serious discussion of the flawed structure and the strained relationship between the university units and the college. This, not the curriculum, not learning communities, not co-op, is what ultimately led to the university decision to close the college. An independent Antioch College is viable and I hope it is able to re-position itself and flourish.

Thanks for asking!

This meeting to "connect the dots" speaks to the third area of concern expressed in the 2002 comprehensive review: effectiveness of linking planning, budgeting, development and enrollment management. Evidently, this was a persistent

weakness on the part of the University.

There was, then, a lot at stake in the Focused Visit of 2006. The evaluation team praised the University and College for the seriousness with which they had responded to the concerns of the 2002 review (including capital investment to IT infrastructure in the Science Building). However incompetent they may have been, University officials were able to convince the Evaluation Team that they were serious and committed in their plan to turn things around at the College. What changed? Two things.

The Focused Visit Report includes a list of interviewees to whom the Evaluation Team spoke. It identifies one participant as “Acting Chancellor/President, Seattle Campus.” That would be Toni Murdock. The Report states, “Antioch University has an acting Chancellor and is close to naming a permanent one.” So, I assume this means that Chancellor Murdock was not offered the job until after the Focused Visit Report was published. Since her degree is in Finance, it would have been especially embarrassing to her if the University had lost accreditation because of problems with finances. Who wants to be Captain of a sinking ship?

The second thing must have come as an unpleasant surprise. The 2006 Evaluation Team made the recommendation that two progress reports be required, due July 31, 2009 (three years away). These reports were to be on Finances and Assessment.

The Exit Interview ends as follows:

The visiting team believes that Antioch University has sufficiently demonstrated that the criteria for accreditation are being met in four of the six focus areas. The two remaining areas reflect a basic meeting of the criteria. Therefore a monitoring report will be required in July 2009, to demonstrate the continued progress in the assessment of student learning at Antioch College especially in light of the new curriculum. A second monitoring report from the University demonstrating the continued fiscal responsibility and improvement of existing facilities

(especially at the College) will also be due in July 2009.

And so, my hypothesis: the impending 2009 progress reports motivated the University's abandonment of its own Renewal Plan, and disposal of the College. Antioch University was one step away from losing its accreditation for *all* of its campuses and programs. If the University failed to pass muster on *either* its financials or on assessment, that would be the end of it all. If most of the financial burdens (including the crumbling facilities) were at the College and could not be rectified in three years' time (or, if the assessment of the first year of the new curriculum indicated that it was a failure in achieving the desired learning outcomes), then the College had to go, as far as the University was concerned. We might pause here and ask, as well, why the University would change its accounting practices and divide depreciation expenses among the budgets of multiple campuses (but keep the College's endowment on its own books) if the finances were really in good shape (and had not merely been made to seem so on paper). If the University was wobbling, then the elimination of the College and the liquidation of its assets would have been that much more attractive a proposition. The 2006 Focused Visit Report acknowledges, in reference to the 2004 Renewal Plan, that

To protect the other campuses, the Board of Trustees has taken invasive action to correct the problems at Antioch College (the undergraduate campus) and in essence protect and save the University... So much so that the Board and the Renewal Commission bypassed the lengthy shared governance process for which Antioch has been known.

So, the near-demise of Antioch College can be explained in terms of two pernicious trends in American culture: (1) bottom-line logic (or, valuing instrumental reasoning over moral reasoning); and (2) expedient measures (invasive action) driving out good measures (shared governance). Let us learn a lesson from this.

The specter of losing accreditation in 2009 is the *only* thing that explains *all* of the University's bizarre institutional behavior. It explains the Renewal Commission's

rejection of “incremental change” at the College after 2002, because there was a deadline of 2006, followed by 2009. It explains the focus on campus facilities, and the IT overhaul of the Science Building. It explains why the new curriculum was mandated (worries about assessment across the University) and rushed into implementation (worries about having adequate data for the 2006 Focused Visit from HLC). It explains why the University blamed the students and the faculty for their mistakes, and it explains why the University mouthpieces were continuously quoted as saying they wanted to test-market a new curriculum when the College reopened in 2012. It explains AU’s Big Lie that they were not directly responsible for the financial crisis at the College. It might explain why financial exigency was declared for the College, without there ever having been a transparent audit of the University’s finances. It explains why the new building for AU McGregor was built, why Chancellor Murdock planned to reopen in 2012 at Campus West, why she wanted to redevelop the campus and repurpose its buildings (now a liability), and why the buildings were not adequately protected during winter. Most significantly, it explains why the University stalled ACCC and then rejected its generous offers until after the College had lost its accreditation: in order for the University accreditation to be untainted by the College, the College had to lose accreditation on its own, first. For the University to win Toni’s zero-sum game, the College had to lose (i.e., close). Plus, the plan to close the College and re-organize may have looked like fiscal responsibility from the outside, and had the benefit of avoiding that pesky 2009 Progress Report (which is why the College had to be closed before the 2008-9 academic year, which in turn is why financial exigency was not lifted even while ACCC was waving money in the University’s face).

One last, interesting tidbit: remember the Antioch Tuition Grant? The 2006 Focused Visit Report has this to say about that:

Antioch College, in an attempt to increase enrollment, has embarked on a challenging journey when it comes to the tuition discount rate with an anticipated ceiling of 41% in 2009-2010. The entering class of 2001 had a discount rate of 57% so Antioch College is walking the

tightrope of increasing enrollment in a competitive market while at the same time facing the realities of budget shortfalls.

It's worth noting that Fall of 2001 was the last time the College was in control of its own budget; thereafter, the University was in control. If by decreasing the tuition discount, the University set the stage for the drops in enrollment and drastic increases in attrition that began after 2002, that is hardly a decision that can be blamed on anyone at the College.

Conclusions

(1) Shared Governance is an intrinsic part of Antioch College. Not only is it essential to Antioch's educational model; it is good for Antioch's bottom line (as demonstrated by increases in enrollments and low attrition during the Strategic Plan, and catastrophically low enrollments and high attrition after the University overrode shared governance beginning in the early 2000s). In this light, it would be a mistake to continue top-down, authoritarian management practices at Antioch. History shows us that democratic deliberation and participatory decision-making will strengthen the institution. As the historian Stephanie Coontz points out, nobody raises a barn by themselves.

(2) An examination of the enrollment figures proves that Antioch has not been steadily declining since 1973. While there have been fluctuations in enrollments, the figures for the 1990s are not appreciably worse than those for the 1980s (the Guskin years, seen as a growth period by many alumni). The crisis in enrollments does not really begin until after the University assumed control of the College budget, and culminates in a spectacular death-spiral after the introduction of the Renewal Commission's curriculum revision in 2005.

(3) If the drop in enrollment was precipitated by the University's usurping authority over the College's budget (and making unwise changes in both tuition

increases and cuts in Antioch Tuition Grant tuition discounts, effectively raising the price of an Antioch education), then that is a decision that cannot be blamed on the students or faculty of the College. If the plummeting enrollments were caused by the Trustee-mandated Renewal Commission curriculum revision, then that is a decision that cannot be blamed on the students or faculty of the College. If the crisis at the College was caused by the Board of Trustees' inability or unwillingness to raise money to increase the endowment over a number of years, or the University's arcane accounting practices, or any other various forms of mismanagement and malfeasance, then these are not decisions that can be blamed on the students and faculty of the College. So, stop blaming the students and faculty of Antioch College for other people's mistakes. The students have done nothing to embarrass you. In fact, during the whole year that the College was facing closure, the student body of Antioch College acted with remarkable restraint and self-discipline, with creativity, and with maturity. Likewise, the faculty have done nothing to embarrass you. They have maintained their composure and professionalism, have borne their numerous burdens with grace, have innovated under intense pressures, and have been the best possible role models for Antioch students. The students and faculty of Antioch College are owed your thanks, appreciation, and respect. The people who have behaved most horribly in all of this are those in positions of power. That is why our founding fathers created a system of checks and balances on those in positions of power.

(4) If CRF had implemented my plan to use alumni groups to apply pressure by handing out information about the University in front of their campuses (thereby raising legitimate questions about their educational and management practices, and potentially threatening their local markets for enrollees), it is possible that the Trustees would have been motivated to grant our divorce and accept ACCC's offer in Spring of 2008, before the College closed and lost its accreditation. If we had ignored advice to "keep our eyes on the prize" in September of 2008 and had mounted an effort to protect the campus buildings from the University's neglect, we would have saved a lot of money we are now spending; had we offered any meaningful

resistance, we might have kept the University from dragging its feet. In short, using Direct Action on those occasions could have greatly improved our position now, and liberated the College at an earlier date. Instead of using an inclusive model of community, and using a large number of alumni to save the College, CRF and its successors have used an exclusive model of community. They have excommunicated the former students and faculty of the College, and have shed more than 300 alumni reunion attendees (half in three years, beating even the dismal attrition rate of the College after 2002); they have narrowed the circle of discourse and decision-making to exclude the expertise of a majority of the alumni (a valuable source of human capital, since most of us have gone on to graduate school); their reliance on and obeisance to a tiny cadre of large donors has been indolent. These are failures of leadership. Moreover, they represent a model of leadership that prioritizes power and control, rather than collaboration and stewardship of Antioch's most treasured tradition, Community Governance (the part of the curriculum that teaches us how to take responsibility for our society; the part that most binds us together as Antiochians, across academic disciplines and generations). Control freaks never want more people at the table; real democrats welcome a plurality of voices and ideas. The fundamental absurdity of our predicament since 2007 has been the necessity of justifying the Antioch Way to Antiochians.

Apology

Thank you for your patience. I am sorry this document is so long. I hope it is the last thing I will need to write about Antioch for some time. I apologize to anyone whose feelings I have hurt. It is not personal. I have no doubt that almost everybody involved with this saga did what they thought was best, or did what they thought they had to do. It is grim testimony to the paucity of our collective imaginations (or will?) that we have not developed better options for the care of our alma mater.

According to the psychologist Wayne Kritsberg, the four rules of the dysfunctional family are as follows: Denial (there is no problem), Silence (there is a problem, but we're not going to discuss it), Blame (the problem is someone else's fault), and Rigidity (there is a problem, but we can't do anything to change it). If

Antioch College is to succeed, these absurdities must cease.

I will continue to believe in Antioch College until I no longer believe in human dignity, reason, and the creative potential of human beings to solve problems and better the world. Let Antioch Be Antioch!

No rest for the weary,
No peace for the wicked,

Dan C. Shoemaker, Ph.D.

Antioch College 1992

August 18, 2010.

Addenda

ANTIOCH COLLEGE HONOR CODE

Antioch College is a community dedicated to the search for truth, the development of individual potential, and the pursuit of social justice. In order to fulfill our objectives, freedom must be matched by responsibility. As a member of the Antioch Community, I affirm that I will be honest and respectful in all my relationships, and I will advance these standards of behavior in others.

COLLEGE GOVERNANCE

Antioch College believes in democratic processes and their educational value. Governance is designed so that all voices in the community can be heard and considered. Students participate in a uniquely high level of decision-making concerning the governance and shaping of academic and community life. Participation in governance by voting, serving on committees, and keeping informed is important not only for learning the responsibilities of freedom, but also for keeping college life vital.

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL (ADCIL)

AdCil advises the President on general College policies and participates in important administrative functions, such as developing the College budget, and the appointment, tenure, and promotion of faculty members. In addition, many of the committees at Antioch report to AdCil. AdCil is comprised of six faculty members, three students, one staff member, the Community Manager, the Dean of Faculty, and the President.

COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT (CG)

All students, faculty, administrators, staff (who choose to be), and their partners are members of Community Government (CG). Supported by fees from all its citizens, CG directly addresses the quality of life on campus through such avenues as the campus newspaper, movies, cultural events, dances, and other activities.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL (COMCIL)

ComCil, the legislative body of CG, has primary responsibility for campus life. ComCil is comprised of seven students, three non-students, one union member, the Community Manager, and the Dean of Students. Usually a student or recent graduate, the Community Manager is elected by the College community and manages community life and standards much as a village manager does.

CIVIL LIBERTIES CODE

Antioch College, as an educational institution, is dedicated to the search for truth and to the development of individuals for their roles in society. This educational function demands a community in which mutual tolerance and understanding flourish. It depends upon freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom to assemble, freedom of conscience and opinion, the rights of members to the same freedoms that all citizens have in carrying beliefs into action, the right of privacy, and the right to fair hearings. We regard these as fundamental necessities of genuine education, individual worth and dignity, and democratic government. The nature of the Antioch Community demands these freedoms and obligates its members to maintain them in practice and to observe the responsibilities that go with

these freedoms in all phases of the Antioch experience.

Community members, individually and as groups, are free to state and discuss their opinions openly. They shall be free to publish and distribute publications, posters, and handbills. Community members have the right to free association with individuals or groups and the right to organize and conduct their own meetings.

Community members and recognized groups are free to invite speakers of any persuasion to campus.

Members of the Community are free to reach, hold, and state their own beliefs — religious, moral, political, economic, or educational.

Entirely consistent with the openness of the Antioch Community is its respect for privacy. Confidential communication should be respected.

Community members have the right to take lawful social or political action to express or further their beliefs. Community members have the right to participate in groups for the purpose of furthering their beliefs. While such groups are not required to furnish lists of their membership or participants, the openness of the Community requires that there be no secret organizations, and the welfare of the Community requires that it know at all times the responsible leaders of all groups that use campus facilities.

Individuals and groups, in exercising their civil liberties, are expected to act in accordance with Community standards and are accountable to the Antioch Community for their actions.

Community members and groups have the right to fair hearings at all levels of the Community process. (A booklet of guidelines for the Community Standards Board is available from the CG office.)

A person who joins the Antioch Community is expected to abide by common agreements and Community Standards, with or without full concurrence with them, so long as the agreements are in effect.

(from the Antioch College Catalog, 2006)

