

# The Corporatization of Antioch

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**Bob Devine 2/10/11**

The corporatization of Antioch began during the time I was president (1996-2001), and the push from the University and Board (particularly the Vice Chancellor with the cultivated support of the Finance Committee) was relentless. Those of us in senior administrative roles at the College spent substantial time and energy in policing the boundaries and maintaining the integrity of the College as a not-for-profit, national, liberal arts institution that didn't quite fit with either the model of the adult campuses or the new corporatism. The specific manifestations of this disjuncture, from the perspective of the University Administration and perhaps a majority of the Board:

1. Donative resources are not a reliable or consistent source of support, and so should not be a major component of budget or financial planning.

***Income should be earned income.*** Donative resources are a "windfall". This orientation persisted in spite of all of the comparative research that indicated that for private liberal arts institutions, less than half of the revenue is earned income.

2. ***Financial aid is a major waste of resources,*** except as necessary to compete for the best and brightest students.

3. ***Overhead expenses in a residential institution are too high.*** In comparison to the cost-per-student at the adult campuses, the College was seen as extremely wasteful. The costs of cafeteria, housekeeping, maintenance (37 buildings), DOS staff, counseling, security, a library, etc. drove the cost-per student too high.

4. Labor should be as inexpensive as possible. ***The unions and tenure have driven costs too high*** and locked the administration into an untenable level of compensation and benefits.

5. **Tenure renders the College less than nimble**, less than able to adapt to changing market conditions, and if necessary, to discard majors and programs while developing those that would attract students.
6. The various governance councils of faculty, students and staff should be consultative but have no final decision-making authority in campus policy, budget and personnel. **Participatory decision-making is ineffective, unaccountable, and volatile, and is no way to run a business.** What was missed in this line of criticism was that **meaningful** participation in governance (Algo Henderson) was a **pedagogical strategy** as well as an operational method. I can't remember how many times I was told by my colleagues from other campuses that bringing forth budgets crafted in AdCil or policies crafted by the community and/or ComCil, were a sure sign that I "was living in LaLa land."
7. Majors that don't produce graduates are unproductive and should be eliminated. If there are no graduates in Physics or History, why would we have programs in those areas? **Those programs don't produce should be eliminated.** The subtext of this line of criticism had to do with the mission of a Liberal Arts education (to prepare students to be critical thinkers, enlightened citizens and leaders) versus the more business-oriented mission (to educate students for specific professions and economic development).
8. **Risk management always trumps pedagogical strategy.** Science programs, theater programs, AEA programs and even co-op programs are on the margins of being too risky to continue. The educational goals and outcomes are irrelevant where risk is involved.
9. **An independent community press, without administrative control, is untenable** for several reasons. First, without administrative oversight, there is no possibility for risk management. Second, whatever is produced by an independent press reflects on the Antioch brand. If direct administrative control is not possible, a faculty advisor should be held accountable for the community press.
10. **Engaging with or supporting the Yellow Springs community or various organizations, and sharing College facilities with them is secondary to Return on Investment.** While the College was trying to build social capital and mutually beneficial collaborations, the University was more concerned with charging fees.

Bob Devine, Email

**Differences between the College and the "Adult" Campuses**

**Contributing to the Split between Corporate and Liberal arts**

1. The College is a residential undergraduate institution; the adult campuses are not saddled

with the expense and management responsibilities of a residential population.

2. The College serves traditional-aged students; the "adult" campuses serve a clientele of

diverse-aged students at various stages of their lives and careers

3. The College draws on a national catchment, drawing students from all over the U.S.; the adult campuses serve primarily regional populations.

While the College competes nationally with

quality liberal arts institutions, the adult campuses compete regionally with state institutions

and community colleges

4. The College offers a full undergraduate liberal arts program; the adult campuses offer degree

completion programs, certificate programs, graduate programs, and specialized career track and

certificate programs.

5 The College's faculty has been predominantly full-time because of the residential

liberal arts nature of the program, the need for continuity and close advising, and

participation in shared governance; the adult campuses rely primarily on adjunct faculty.

6 The College's faculty has tenure; the adult campuses have at-will and contingent faculty labor.

7. The College maintains, operates and depreciates a 37-building campus and a 1,000 acre nature

preserve; the adult campuses have limited physical plants and/or rent their facilities.

8. The College's endowment is \$30 million (as of 6/01) and the College's endowment comprises

more than 95% of the University's endowment; the endowment of the adult campuses

comprises less than 5% of the University's endowment.

9. More than 50% of the College's revenue is derived from donative resources (gifts, annual fund,

grants, endowment earnings); the overwhelming majority of the revenue of the adult

campuses is derived from earned income

10. The College's Administrative Council deliberates on matters of budget, policy, the hiring,

review and renewal of faculty and administrators, and campus planning and provides recommendations to the President. The College's tradition is that the President is bound by the decisions of AdCil, and only rarely contravenes their decisions; the adult campuses are governed administratively with no similar mechanism of shared governance.

11. The College's shared governance extends to Community Council, comprised of elected

representatives of students, staff and faculty, including an elected Community Manager

that oversees the social, political and cultural life of the campus; the adult campuses have

no similar mechanism of shared governance.