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TIAA-CREF INSTITUTE
2007 NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

GENERATIONAL SHOCKWAVES: IMPLICATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The impact of different generations on American society has been well documented. Such books as *Generation X*, by Douglas Coupland, *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*, by Neil Howe, William Strauss and R. J. Matson, and *The World According to Y: Inside the New Adult Generation*, by Rebecca Huntley have established how these different groups affect our nation. The TIAA-CREF Institute 2007 National Higher Education Leadership Conference addressed how these groups are affecting the country's colleges and universities.

The conference drew over 100 college presidents, faculty, and administrators to New York City on November 1 and 2, 2007 to hear a variety of speakers discuss these issues. The dialogue revolved around the impact of three generations currently populating campuses: baby boomers, Generation X, and millennials. Baby boomers make up much of the faculty and leadership of the institutions, and a key issue for this group and their employers is their impending transition from the workforce into retirement. Representatives of Generation X are entrenched in the younger cohorts of faculty members, and millennials comprise the majority of students currently enrolled in colleges and universities.

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Much of the discussion over the ensuing day and a half compared and contrasted these three generations, noting their similarities and differences, and what postsecondary institutions needed to do to meet their various needs and desires. While some may feel that the differences among the groups are so stark as to leave little common ground, the speakers and audience members – who engaged the presenters in spirited question-and-answer dialogues after each session – did find some shared interests and goals that cut across the generations.

There is no question that the challenges in addressing these generational differences facing the nation's colleges and universities, and the people who run them, are quite great. But the speakers and audience members identified a number of opportunities to meet these challenges. There are roles for all parts of campus communities – students, faculty, administrators, and alumni – in helping to meet the challenges.

Session I, November 1, 2007
Defining the Generations – Intergenerational Coherency, Diversity, and Evolution
William Strauss, Author, Historian, Playwright, and Lecturer

TIAA-CREF Institute Executive Director Madeleine d'Ambrosio opened the 2007 National Higher Education Leadership Conference by welcoming the over 100 participants. She noted that in the next three decades, approximately 80 million Americans (some of whom were undoubtedly sitting in the room that morning) will be leaving the workplace and entering retirement. After a few more comments and acknowledgements, she introduced opening speaker William Strauss. The author of numerous books about generations in American society, he is also known as the founder of The Capitol Steps, a satirical musical theatre troupe made up in part of staffers from Capitol Hill.[1]

Mr. Strauss focused his remarks on the generations that have inhabited the United States since the beginning of the 20th century, and how each both helped shape American society and was shaped by it. No generation, he pointed out, lives in isolation; each is the offspring and influenced by prior groups, most strongly by the preceding generation.

The first generation he described, born before the beginning of the 20th century, made great strides in education. Strauss ticked off the high school reform movement, the expansion of education for girls and women, the growth of vocational education, and the radical notion that married women should be allowed to teach in schools.

The next generation he labeled the GI generation, those born between 1901 and 1924. In contrast to others, who have labeled this group as the greatest generation because of their service in World War II, Strauss instead characterized this generation by declining levels of immigration (due to controls imposed by the federal government), as well as improving health status as compared with their parents. He also pointed out that this was the generation responsible for the desegregation of the public schools – both K-12 and postsecondary education – a major accomplishment that affected society for decades.

The next group he called the silent generation, those born between 1925 and the beginning of the

[1] Sadly, Strauss passed away six weeks after the conference.

baby boom. He noted that this group, similar to its predecessor, was one of low immigration, and also reaped the benefits of the post-war economic expansion, faring "better in the economy than any other generation born before or after at every stage of their lives." In the education realm, they accomplished an expansion of special education services throughout the country and implemented Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which helped further to equalize educational opportunity for women at all levels.

In contrast to the official Census Bureau definition of baby boomers, which includes those born between 1946 and 1964, Strauss only includes in this category those born in the eighteen years from 1943 to 1960. For this group (in which he included himself) immigration was again on the rise, and the health trends were worsening in contrast to the previous two generations. He characterized them as "idealists and individualists [who] resist authoritarianism," one for which "everything is defined in terms of the culture."

Strauss next described Generation X, which has received so much attention in the media since the term was popularized by Douglas Coupland in his 1991 book. Key trends characterizing this group include rapidly increasing immigration to the United States, a decline in substance abuse, an increase in crime, and continued improvements in education for women. This group was the subject of many educational experiments, including open classrooms and a decline in the notion of a standard body of knowledge that students are expected to accumulate. This generation also suffered from declining economic opportunities, becoming "the most poverty prone age bracket in our country's history, as teenagers and children became even poorer than old people."

The last generation Strauss portrayed were the millennials, or the children of Generation X. Immigration and other demographic changes have greatly affected this group, he said, noting that this generation was "59 percent Caucasian versus 85 percent Caucasian with the GI generation." In contrast to the 1960s when 43 percent of college students were female (and when, Strauss noted, most of the audience had likely attended college), 58 percent of millennial college students were women.

Culturally, Strauss described this group as having better relationships with their parents than did Generation X and the baby boomers, who tended to rebel more against their parents. This group also enjoys a changed attitude, being "very busy, very upbeat." Positive trends among this generation also include declining rates of serious crimes, teen pregnancy, suicide, and abortion rates. While as students this group also does more volunteer work than prior generations, they are also less likely to be working at a job while enrolled in high school, due to the fact that "colleges don't look at summer [jobs] and Wendy's the way they would look at almost anything else that a young person might do." An unintended consequence of this, he noted, is that it has made it more difficult for some students to pay for college at a time when this generation faces college costs that are proportionally greater than for any of its predecessors.

Turning to the future, Strauss predicted that the impact of rising prices (and costs) in higher education will be felt throughout the academy. He suggested that "we will see a scrutiny of universities with large endowments. . . .You are going to see a push for cash value at every corner of the higher education process and you may also see questions about academic tenure. . .there

could even be questions about the proportion of budgets that are going to retirees as opposed to active programs for students."

Session II, November 1, 2007
Opening Roundtable
Janet Bickel, Principal, Janet Bickel & Associates (moderator)
Steven G. Poskanzer, President, State University of New York at New Paltz
Lee T. Todd, President, University of Kentucky
Jerry Sue Thornton, President, Cuyahoga Community College
Richard Guarasci, President, Wagner College

The next session of the conference was a roundtable with four college presidents describing the challenges and opportunities that new generations of students presented to their institutions. The session was moderated by Janet Bickel, who describes herself as a "career and leadership development coach." She opened the session by comparing and contrasting the last three generations: baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y.

Bickel compared the job attitudes of baby boomers and Generation X. She noted that boomers were loyal to their employers and in return expected a long-term job commitment from them. They expected to pay their dues, make sacrifices, and respected authority. In contrast, Generation Xers expect to hold many jobs over the course of their careers, are not as willing to sacrifice for the good of their employers, and expect to provide more input in the workplace.

While Generation X tended to have parents who were absent, Generation Y feels more protected and pressured by their parents. Generation Y is characterized by multitasking even faster than its predecessor, something those of us who teach college students today have undoubtedly noticed.

Following Ms. Bickel's introductory remarks, Lee Todd, President of the University of Kentucky, discussed how his institution has responded to the pressures of meeting the needs of the millennial generation. He described how former Kentucky Governor Patten set the goal of UK becoming a top 20 research university. Dr. Todd's plans to accomplish this goal include increasing the size of the student body and hiring more faculty. The university also created a marketing plan, called "See Blue," to get the word out to potential students about what it had to offer them.

Todd characterized millennial students as being very civic and community oriented. In response, the university has started a number of programs to help them explore these interests. The Center for Student Outreach provides opportunities for students to serve more than 120 community organizations. UK FUSION coordinates day-long service programs for students connecting with local non-profit organizations.

Todd also described efforts in which UK has invested in order to increase levels of student engagement and empowerment. Each academic year starts off with K Week, where students have an opportunity to engage socially and with student groups before classes start. Some students are selected for a leadership summit.

Todd also explained how the parents of today's students are much more involved in their children's education than were previous generations. He noted, "I can't even imagine my parents sending the president of the university an e-mail or calling them, but I get them all the time now, about parking tickets or anything you can think of." He also noted how today's parents are concerned about campus safety, and described how the university has responded with safety information sessions, theatrical performances, and changes to the physical layout of the institution. The University of Kentucky has also focused on improving the undergraduate experience, creating a Center for Undergraduate Excellence (funded through the donation of an alumnus), undergraduate research opportunities, and living/learning programs.

Todd, an engineer who founded two companies and holds a number of patents, closed by noting that when he was a student, the motto of his generation was, "Go to college and get a job." Today, his advice to students is to, "Go to college and *create* a job." This fits in both with the entrepreneurial nature of today's students, as well as with the changing nature of labor markets where many more people are likely to be self-employed, rather than working in large organizations.

The next presenter was Steven Poskanzer, president of SUNY New Paltz, a comprehensive college in the Hudson Valley north of New York City. He framed his presentation around four themes: "Demographics, how students relate to one another, student learning styles, and student career aspirations."

New Paltz draws the majority of its students from the New York City area and Long Island, and Mr. Poskanzer noted that, "alumni who would return to campus would see one obvious and profound difference in the study body and that's our diversity." Today, 23 percent of undergraduates on campus are minority students, and entering classes in recent years have been predominantly female, with the largest proportion of females at 70 percent. The university has also increased the number of international students.

Turning to how students relate to one another, Poskanzer noted that in the past, many events on the campus – such as moving-in day events or athletic competitions – would draw large numbers of students to share a common experience. Today, however, he noted that "instead of the kinds of shared social experiences that I think students often used to have, we are seeing small networks of students and affinity groups that really characterize all of campus life." He lamented the fact that concerts, plays, and lectures do not draw many students any more.

Poskanzer described how technology has helped facilitate students relating to one another in these smaller, less formal groups. Computers, cell phones, and personal digital assistants (PDAs) help students make friends and maintain them in ways that were not available to previous generations. A problem with this is that students are less likely to engage in face-to-face interaction with other students, even when they are in the same residence hall with other students. He provided one example of a step they have taken to overcome this. The student affairs staff noted that many students were playing a popular football video game on-line, sometimes even with other students right down the hall. In order to create more physical interaction, they created a tournament in the student center where students could come together and play the game for prizes.

The influence of technology is also seen in how students learn in and out of the classroom, Poskanzer observed. His own classroom experience taught him that students "are definitely much more comfortable learning when information is presented visually to them, and they clearly prefer interactive learning as opposed to discussing text on a page." Students expect faculty to make more use of Blackboard, the course management system New Paltz employs, and they are demanding more on-line courses. He noted that the majority of enrollments in their on-line courses is from resident students. Both on-line and classroom courses present challenges for faculty in engaging students, and helping them to understand that a professor who pushes back on a student's comments is not simply criticizing them, but is trying to get them to think more critically about the material.

The last issue Poskanzer addressed was students' concerns about their careers. He noted that William Strauss had told the audience that today, 69 percent of students say that an important reason to go to college was to make more money; thirty years ago, only 50 percent of students responded in this way. Poskanzer said that many students express anxiety about the job search process, and this has influenced the choice of majors students choose. While he would like to see the institution be more of a traditional liberal arts college, the most popular majors at New Paltz are in fields such as business, accounting, communications, and teaching.

Even with all this concern about careers, Poskanzer has seen some encouraging signs. Like Lee Todd at Kentucky, he has seen an increase in the number of students interested in volunteer service. He described a talk he gives during orientation, stating that students should "use their general education to open intellectual doors and not just come to campus being set on a particular career path." He sees more and more parents nodding their heads in agreement with these words, so he hopes this will filter down to the students. He closed by noting that "ultimately, I'm very optimistic about the millennials, about their impact on our colleges, and in turn, about the impact of our colleges on them."

The next speaker was Richard Guarasci, President of Wagner College, on Staten Island in New York City. Dr. Guarasci presented his perspective on millennial students, a group he characterized as having "seven traits: special, sheltered, confident, team-oriented, conventional, pressured, and achieving." Like Poskanzer, he talked about the influence that the parents of millennials have on their children and their postsecondary education.

Guarasci described the efforts Wagner has undertaken to meet the educational needs of this new group of students, what he labeled "millennial pedagogy." Like other speakers at the conference he portrayed this educational experience as one involving multiple forms of engagement of the students with learning. At Wagner, this includes active techniques such as experiential learning, learning communities, internships, student/peer learning groups, and senior theses. Many of Wagner's efforts are aimed at breaking down the larger college into smaller entities for students.

Guarasci spoke with pride about the activities of Wagner students off of the campus. Two thousand students at the college spend 80,000 hours each year engaged in civic activities and experiential learning in New York City and beyond. These pursuits help meet students' desires to "solve real world problems, they want their education to be directly related to real world problems, and they want to see some value added."

The final speaker in the opening roundtable was Jerry Sue Thornton, President of Cuyahoga Community College (CCC) in Ohio. Cuyahoga serves 25,000 students on six campuses centered in and around Cleveland. Like most community colleges, Cuyahoga serves largely a non-traditional student population that is characterized by having a wide range of ages, having diverse educational goals and interests (from vocational to baccalaureate transfer), and being largely part-time with much instruction occurring on weekends and in the evenings.

Because of the wide age range of students served by CCC, it must meet the needs of not just millennial students, but earlier generations also. Dr. Thornton spoke about the challenges her institution faced in trying to meet the needs of these students. She talked, for example, about the impact of technology on each generation, noting that "millennials are actually expecting the digital divide, Generation Xers are tolerating it, and baby boomers in some way wish it would go away."

The issue of multiple generations also affects the faculty at CCC, as the institution has a large number of faculty who first joined the institution in the 1960s who are nearing retirement and being replaced by a younger cohort of professors who are more comfortable with technology. But these younger faculty must understand how to reach the different generations of students they will find in their classrooms, she said, and described how the institution has put resources into faculty training and development. As she noted, "We are helping our faculty move more and more into new ways [of teaching and working]; for many of us baby boomers it is frustrating. We would love to return to the good old days, but we keep saying to ourselves, cherish those good old days, they are not coming back."

Session III, November 1, 2007
Generation X: Redefining the Norms of the Academy
Ronald G. Ehrenberg, Director, Cornell Higher Education Research Institute, Cornell University (moderator)
Joan Girgus, Professor of Psychology and Special Assistant to the Dean of the Faculty, Princeton University
Linda Hunt Bunnell, Chancellor, University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point
John Lombardi, President, Louisiana State University System
Kenneth P. Ruscio, President, Washington and Lee University

The session on Generation X focused on this generation as faculty members, and was opened by moderator Ronald Ehrenberg of Cornell University. Dr. Ehrenberg described himself as having been born at the front end of the baby boomers, a group he described as "having had no trouble finding good academic jobs and committed to our institutions as well as to our disciplines." He contrasted this perspective with those of his younger colleagues, many of whom are now coming from Generation X. These new professors, he noted, are more likely to be female, come from two-career households, and face a more uncertain academic labor market. These factors have led them to have a different view of institutional commitment than the earlier generation to which he belongs.

Ehrenberg then introduced Linda Bunnell, Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point. A master's institution in the UW system, Stevens Point is located in the center of the

state. A member of the baby boom herself, Dr. Bunnell described how her senior leadership team at UWSP and the older faculty – also baby boomers – will soon be outnumbered by faculty on the campus who are from Generation X. Positive characteristics of this new generation include that "they are tech-savvy; they communicate constantly through e-mail and telephone, rather than in person. They have access to information in ways that many of us baby boomers are simply not accustomed to."

Another positive characteristic of this group, Bunnell noted, is that they are better at balancing work and family than was her generation. She described her life as a young academic, where "I did not dare mention that I had family responsibilities to attend to, I had to get those done out of the purview of my professional practice." In contrast, the new generation of faculty expect much more accommodation of their family and other lives outside of the institution.

Drawing on data from a survey of UWSP faculty conducted by the University of California Higher Education Research Institute, Bunnell described how Generation X faculty report high levels of stress due to household and childcare responsibilities, as well as financial issues, than do those of the baby boom generation. Professionally, however, the younger faculty group reported a greater sense of job security than did baby boomers, and higher levels of satisfaction with career opportunities. Part of this may be due to the fact that 40 percent of the UWSP faculty reported receiving at least one job offer in the prior two years, and more of the Generation X faculty reported that they were looking for other positions and/or were considering leaving academe for other positions.

Bunnell described other efforts her campus has undertaken in order to try to address the needs of the Generation X members of her faculty. She has brought in speakers and programs focused on managing finances and household responsibilities. They have expanded their orientation program for new faculty members, and they have initiated a program where deans meet individually with assistant professors to offer career support and assistance. The campus also offers a number of programs that seek to involve the families of faculty members, including assistance with job placement for spouses, a dining facility where professors can eat with their spouse and children, and a childcare center that has recently expanded to include children up to kindergarten age.

Stevens Point has also worked to offer professors on campus more flexible work arrangements, including part-time appointments, offers of leave for faculty who want to explore other job opportunities, and a "faculty consulting practice" for those who want to combine faculty work with other opportunities.

Joan Girgus of Princeton was the next speaker, and she too focused her remarks on the challenges for Generation X faculty in balancing work and family life. She began by presenting the audience with a portrait of Generation X today. They are roughly 25 to 45 years of age, and are more ethnically and racially diverse than earlier generations, with roughly one-third being members of minority groups. They are more likely than earlier generations to have spouses or partners who are employed, and employed in full-time jobs, and men of this generation are as likely to feel the challenges of balancing work and family or household responsibilities as are women.

Dr. Girgus noted that universities like hers have focused much energy in the past on addressing the work side of the work-life balance. She noted that "I want to argue that what we need to do now is to work on the life side, because faculties historically were almost entirely male and the wives took care of the family side. . . .I don't think we can do that anymore. If we want our faculties to do their best work, we need to provide support for the family side of the work life equation." She also argued that colleges and universities could not simply wait until individuals stepped on to the campus as new faculty members; they need to begin to address these issues while prospective faculty were still graduate students.

Girgus described a set of policies that Princeton put into place to try to help faculty do a better job of balancing the demands of their careers with their home lives. Included are:

- enhanced maternity benefits, including leave with pay for birth mothers for three weeks before and up to 10 weeks after birth
- automatic one-year extension of the tenure clock for each child born or adopted (for both men and women)
- "backup care," for those who have a disruption of child or elder care services
- assistance with funding for childcare while traveling
- a plan to double the number of on-campus childcare spaces
- counseling on work/life issues for all employees
- spouse/partner job placement assistance

The next speaker was John Lombardi, president of the Louisiana State University system. He opened his remarks by noting that it is difficult to speak about higher education as a single entity in the United States; the industry is characterized by great diversity of institutional types, missions, and access to resources. Dr. Lombardi focused his remarks on raising concerns about some of the issues addressed by the conference and some of the trends noted by earlier speakers.

Lombardi addressed the issue of rising prices and costs in higher education, and the impact these were having on institutions and their students. He noted that many of the efforts described by the other speakers – those directed at meeting the needs of faculty, particularly Generation X faculty – served to increase the cost of higher education. While these may help faculty feel good, he said, they ultimately become part of the cost base that everybody (including faculty) complain about.

At least part of the motivation for universities to keep faculty happy, Lombardi said, came from the external pressures of moving up in the various rankings systems. "We all want to be in the top 10, that's a competitive goal. . . .We want to get the best faculty in the western world so we go out and pay top dollar. . . .and we pay them whatever the hell we can because we want the best." He noted that these same trends are found in the competition for students, with institutions spending more and more money on recruiting students and the amenities that will help bring them to their campuses.

Lombardi urged the audience to step back and think about the impact all of this was having on colleges and universities across the country. His concern is that if the cost and price trends continue, universities will become the refuge of the rich.

The final speaker on this panel was Kenneth Ruscio, president of Washington and Lee University, a liberal arts college in rural western Virginia. Dr. Ruscio described himself as a "recovering political scientist" who framed his remarks through the lens of democratic and political conflict theory.

He described the members of Generation X as "coming of age in a time of mistrust. . . not only in institutions of education but across the board." He argued that faculty in this group had less of a lack of trust in individuals but put more emphasis on the importance of institutional processes. He gave the example of tenure and promotion processes, which in the past were much more influenced by individuals, but today, are more systematically codified and regulated. Much of the push for this, he said, came from the members of Generation X.

Session IV, November 1, 2007
The Millennials
Donald Harward, Senior Fellow, Association of American Colleges and Universities, and President Emeritus, Bates College (moderator)
Debra W. Stewart, President, Council of Graduate Schools
Lou Anna K. Simon, President, Michigan State University
Andrew K. Benton, President, Pepperdine University
Julie K. Little, Interim Director, EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative

Donald Harward opened up the fourth session with a few of his perceptions on millennial students. One characteristic of this group he has noted is a "pattern of disengagement." As former president of Bates College, he described how many of the faculty on that campus were concerned about students' unwillingness to accept the challenges inherent in academic work. He does not hold the students alone responsible for the problem. Rather, he said that what had occurred was "a kind of bargain that if the faculty person doesn't bother the student, the student won't bother the professor, and the professor can get on with his important work of research and other activities."

Dr. Harward noted that this pattern of disengagement manifested itself in other ways also. About a third of students engage in aggressive use of alcohol and drugs, and almost half report "an episode of depression significant enough to interrupt their academic work," and that campus counseling centers are experiencing great demand.

Harward then introduced the first speaker, Andrew Benton, president of Pepperdine University in southern California. Mr. Benton described his experiences as a campus president with millennial students, as well as from the perspective of being the parent of two members of the millennial generation himself. While noting that at times they "may drive me to mental distraction, I believe in this generation and I love this generation."

Benton framed his remarks largely through his experiences in teaching and interacting with millennial students. He described a "remarkable" experience he had taking 53 Pepperdine students to Florence, Italy on a study tour. He sought out this experience because, as he put it, "I wanted to understand my students better, I wanted to live with them, I wanted to travel with them, and I wanted to eat daily with them." After the experience, he told the Pepperdine governing board

that he found the students to be "gifted intellectually" and that they are much more sensitive to other cultures than are earlier generations. He also teaches a law course at Pepperdine, and in the classroom he was surprised to find that millennial students were much more able to deal with ambiguity than was his baby boom generation.

At the same time, however, he finds that the parents of millennial students are much more involved in their education than were those of prior generations. He related the story of two parents who accompanied their child to a meeting with him. As he asked the prospective student a series of questions, each parent responded to each question in turn, until finally he politely escorted the student alone into another room in order to try to elicit answers from her. His concern is that this level of parental involvement has caused millennial students to be less aware of the expectations for performance once they arrive on campus as compared to earlier generations.

The next speaker was Julie Little of EDUCAUSE. EDUCAUSE is a non-profit, membership organization that seeks to "advance higher education by promoting the intelligent use of information technology" (EDUCAUSE website). She discussed the role of technology in the lives and learning of millennial students today, and began by presenting the results of a survey on technology use by individuals in different age groups. Across most technology uses – including on-line gaming, instant and text messaging, and downloading music and videos from the Web – younger groups participate at higher rates than older generations.

Dr. Little described how technology is facilitating relationships between students who otherwise would never have been able to connect with one another. These types of relationships are forming between students as young as elementary school age, and as they progress through our educational system, they expect to continue such forms of communication. She also noted that millennial and younger students also expect quick turnaround on requests for help and have little patience for delays, an expectation that may cause problems for universities that staff helpdesks and other services only during regular business hours.

These students' interactions with both technology and other individuals via technology also create expectations for the learning environment they expect to find when they reach college. Little explained how colleges and universities are trying to change the undergraduate experience to offer more interactivity, as well as more collaborative and distributive learning. The old method of sequential learning – where material was presented in a particular sequence and students were expected to follow along in that same manner – needs to give way to hyper-learning, where students can be allowed to jump around through the material.

Even though millennial students appear to be – and are – quite tech savvy as compared to prior generations, there is still work for colleges to accomplish in helping to educate them technologically. As Little described it, "We need to make sure that students can find and use information, along with thinking about it critically. It's one thing to be able to access information, it's another to be able to use it appropriately."

Following Little, Debra Stewart of the Council of Graduate Schools addressed the audience. In contrast to most of the discussion in the session, which had focused on undergraduate students, Dr. Stewart switched the focus to graduate education. She raised four questions for the group to consider:

1. Is the millennial challenge real to U.S. graduate schools?

2. How well positioned are graduate schools to respond?

3. What are areas of vulnerability?

4. What is at stake in meeting the challenge?

She answered the first question with an emphatic "Yes." The challenge from millennial students is based largely on their differences from previous generations. As she describes them, they are more into multitasking, they are more technologically savvy, and they are more collaborative learners. It is this last characteristic that creates a key challenge for graduate education, because professors are not always collaborative teachers.

Stewart feels that American graduate schools are well positioned to respond to the challenge presented by millennial students. As evidence, she pointed to how graduate programs have adapted in the past, explaining how initiatives in interdisciplinary curricula, life skills courses, and distance learning have helped to reform graduate education over the past ten to fifteen years.

A key vulnerability facing American graduate education is the decline of the representation of U.S. citizens (and permanent residents) among recipients of doctoral degrees in the sciences and engineering. From a high of 78 percent in the 1970s, the proportion of doctorates awarded to U.S. citizens (among all doctorates awarded by American universities) has dropped to 57 percent. Stewart expects American graduate programs in these fields to face increased competition from those in other countries, especially as more and more graduate students come from abroad.

The final speaker in the session on millennial students was Lou Anna Simon, president of Michigan State University. Dr. Simon described a number of characteristics of millennial students that she had noticed. She has found that today's students do not know how to make mistakes, and how to deal with them once they do occur. She blames the anonymity provided by technology at least in part for this.

Simon also contrasted survey data from students on her campus in 2000 and 2005 to demonstrate that in just a short period of time students' attitudes and beliefs can change quite a bit, and thus, it is important for institutions to be able to respond to these changes. In 2000, only 45 percent of MSU students expected to participate in a face-to-face study group; by 2005, this had increased to 75 percent. There was also an eleven percentage point increase over this period in the proportion of students who expected to utilize academic support services while enrolled at the university. Interestingly, however, the proportion of students who expected to have contact or conversation with a faculty member outside of the classroom dropped from 70 percent in 2000 to 40 percent in 2005.

Like other presidents, Simon talked about the influence parents have over their millennial children as they experience postsecondary education, a relationship that far surpasses those of prior generations. She provided a number of examples of this, ranging from a parent's complaint

that her child's residence hall is "smaller than her daughter's closet," or parents who fought over "how to organize their son or daughter's room while the kid is sitting in the hallway with her hands folded." She gives these parents advice on how to help facilitate their children's transition to college, including not asking their children if they are homesick; visit, but not too often; and expect change, but not too much.

Session V, November 2, 2007
Baby Boomers
Carol Cartwright, President Emeritus, Kent State University (moderator)
Father Lawrence Biondi, President, St. Louis University
Nancy Uscher, Provost, California Institute of the Arts
Michael K. Young, President, University of Utah

Carol Cartwright, retired president of Kent State University, opened the next session by acknowledging that she was one of the few people in the audience who came from the generation before the baby boomers, the group that William Strauss had labeled the "silent generation." She told the audience that the panelists were asked to address how baby boomers would be moving into retirement, as well as how philanthropy may be impacted by this transition by boomers. Dr. Cartwright then introduced the first panelist, Nancy Uscher.

Nancy Uscher, provost of the California Institute of the Arts, discussed the transitions being faced by baby boomers by examining the role of the six deans at CalArts. She described research that examined what baby boomers were looking for at this stage of their lives; the study found that "boomers want peers who share the same passion and interest. They want to belong to a group where members want to make a difference in their own lives and the community at large. They want to come together around an activity. There is a strong need for a sense of community."

Ms. Uscher noted that all six of the deans fall into this generation, and their activities and interests align very closely with the findings of that study. She described how each of them, even though they are academic administrators and well into their careers (and perhaps not that far away from normal retirement themselves) are actively engaged in the community of CalArts and the broader artistic community around the nation and the world. In fact, she said they "are actually at the peak of their artistic careers."

Uscher also described how the work of this group cuts across generational boundaries; she provided examples of how some of the CalArts deans were collaborating in performances and exhibitions with younger colleagues, even former students of theirs. CalArts as an institution has helped foster these connections by "providing them with a fertile environment for growth through creative leaves and considerable flexibility to be away from campus as artistic demands dictate, sometimes even for extended periods of time."

Lawrence Biondi, president of St. Louis University, discussed how baby boomers can help the nation's colleges and universities as they transition from the workforce into retirement. Echoing the words of others at the conference, Father Biondi provided demographic data to indicate the impact boomers will have on retirement. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, there are approximately 78 million baby boomers in the country, and almost 8,000 of them will reach age 60 each day.

Biondi described how baby boomers' retirement is likely to be quite different from previous generations. Unlike the earlier groups, boomers "do not see themselves escaping to the beach or the golf course or the rocking chair or never to sit in a board room again." Rather, they expect to be engaged in a variety of activities during their retirement, and they plan to link their philanthropy with this engagement. Universities, he said, should not expect baby boomers to simply write a check and hand it over. "They're giving only begins with their checkbook," he noted, "In fact, often the skills and the knowledge that they contribute are much more valuable than the dollars they donate."

To bolster this prediction, Biondi presented examples of alumni of St. Louis University who did more than just donate funds to the university. One retired businessman helped the university establish an incubator for new businesses in the St. Louis region, lending his expertise to supplement the generous donation he provided. Another alumnus, who had amassed personal wealth in the area of behavioral health, donated a large sum to the university but also helped it expand its behavioral services to students, faculty, and staff.

Biondi's advice to the audience was to reverse the normal process of fund raising; instead of asking for money first, he suggested, colleges and universities should first ask baby boomers to lend their expertise to the institution. Once they are engaged, he said, "their gift of treasure will truly follow."

Michael Young, president of the University of Utah, was the last speaker to discuss the impact of baby boomers. He echoed the words of Father Biondi, noting that in his experience, potential donors to his university from this generation were very different from those of earlier groups. They not just expect, but demand, to be more engaged in the life of the university. They do not believe in just handing over a check and then sitting back and watching; they want to be involved in what the university does with the money, he said.

Beside discussing the role of baby boomers as philanthropists, Mr. Young talked about how colleges and universities can help serve their desire for learning during their retirement. He described a study conducted by the AARP that found that almost three-quarters of those over the age of 50 expected to have a new hobby or interest during their retirement years. Young predicted that many of these individuals will flock to our campuses in order to take courses, and unlike today's traditional-aged students, "these are not passive learners. . . .They will be directed, focused, and they will want to be active participants that shape their own educational experiences."

These generational differences, however, provide a great opportunity for colleges, Young said. The experience and engagement of the older generation can be combined with the "wonderful naïveté, optimism, and idealism of the younger students. . .to create some really extraordinary exciting learning experiences."

Young did provide a cautionary note to the audience. While much of the discussion had focused on the great wealth the baby boomers as a generation had amassed, he told the audience that within this group, "there will be those who will have a great deal of wealth to transfer and those who will not be able to retire because they don't have the resources to do so."

Session VI, November 2, 2007
Reports of Conference Breakout Sessions
Robert Glidden, President Emeritus, Ohio University (facilitator)
Madeleine d'Ambrosio, Vice President and Executive Director, TIAA-CREF Institute (facilitator)

On the first day of the conference, the participants were divided into groups and sent into breakout sessions where they were asked to engage in small group discussions about how colleges and universities can and should adjust to accommodate the needs and aspirations of the three generations discussed at the conference: Generation X, millennials, and baby boomers. The reporters of the breakout sessions were:

Mark Heckler, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, University of Colorado at Denver & Health Sciences Center
Virginia Michelich, Vice President for Educational Affairs, Georgia Perimeter College
Teresa Sullivan, Provost and Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs, University of Michigan

In this session of the conference, the presenters reported back to the audience about the discussion that occurred in each. The following are highlights of those discussions.

Millennials (reported by Mark Heckler)

The millennial generation is composed largely of current students enrolled in colleges and universities across the nation. The participants in the breakout sessions made a number of observations about these students and their interactions with the older faculty they encounter on our campuses:

- Monolithic strategies responding to perceived generational shifts may neglect generational heterogeneity and the increasing population of non-traditional and returning students, retirees, and others who are entering higher education in increasing numbers.

- Rapidly changing demographics and generational needs of potential and actual students must be part of institutional planning.

- Increasing disparities in college readiness complicate institutional strategy.

- Student recruitment and retention are increasingly competitive and students are becoming increasingly mobile—student mobility also complicates institutional strategy.

- Tension is increasing between the expectations of students and parents and the faculty reward system.

- Tension between baby boomer faculty who do not embrace new pedagogical strategies and learning technologies and student demands is increasing. Pedagogical and curricular changes are necessary to align with changing learning habits and needs of millennials.

- Social networking tools are increasingly important in the lives of students.

- Patterns of alcohol use may be changing – some institutions see greater binge drinking, sometimes encouraged by and including parents.

The groups also made a number of recommendations for coping with these issues:

- Align the faculty reward system with institutional priorities and – as appropriate – with student and parent expectations.

- Evolve pedagogical approaches to embrace interdisciplinary, problem-based, and experiential learning and research opportunities for millennials – consider alternatives to "majors" for future generations.

- Focus increasingly on learning outcomes to ensure that multi-modal learning strategies, responsive to changing student learning styles, yield successful outcomes.

- Exploit opportunities to encourage meaningful live, face-to-face interactions among students and faculty as education shifts increasingly toward technological solutions.

- Leverage technology, including more sophisticated student portals, emergent media, and changing social networking conventions for student recruitment, retention, and education. Use open source technology whenever possible.

- Expand 24/7 student services using technology selectively and carefully.

- Expand matriculation agreements to respond to student mobility patterns and increase the efficiency of the higher education system.

- Explore multi-institutional consortia and collaborations to increase efficiency and respond to the contrary demands to increase services and amenities while "holding the line" on tuition.

- Focus new initiatives in response to changing student needs driven by changing demographics.

- Expand faculty development programs focused on preparing baby boomer and Generation X faculty to respond to millennial, baby boomer, and Generation X student needs.

Generation X (reported by Virginia Michelich)

On college campuses, members of Generation X largely are found among the younger cohorts of faculty members, though some members of this generation can still be found among the student body. The focus of these breakout discussions was on this younger group of faculty members. Observations of the participants in the sessions included:

- Generation X faculty are ambitious, but they maintain a healthy dose of skepticism.

- Members of this group live to work, rather than work to live; they believe their parents suffered from "vacation deficit disorder," and they do not want to wait until their retirement to enjoy their leisure time. They feel great pressure over childcare and family responsibilities.

- They expect their job responsibilities to fit within a standard workday; they are not interested or willing to spend extra hours and weekends on job tasks.

- Generation X faculty want a job where they can have the flexibility to work alone, and with flexible hours. They want a job that provides a particular lifestyle.

- This generation embraces technology, and is comfortable with using the Internet for everything from retrieving information to shopping.

- These faculty members require frequent feedback on their performance, and do not want the feedback restricted to annual reviews or traditional career benchmarks (such as fourth year reviews or tenure reviews).

- This group feels great pressure to "do it all," and feels that the demands on their time to both do quality teaching and conduct research may be unreasonable. There is a concern that there is too much emphasis on research productivity, and that excellent teachers are not rewarded in the same manner as are research "stars."

The participants in the breakout sessions identified a number of activities in which colleges and universities could engage in order to address the concerns of Generation X professors, in contrast with the prior, baby boom generation of faculty:

- Because of their concern over responsibilities outside of the job, institutions should provide assistance with childcare and other services that can help faculty manage the competing responsibilities of work and family life.

- A climate of collegiality should be fostered and younger faculty should be provided with adequate mentoring to help them develop their careers.

- Opportunities for collaboration with more senior faculty should be encouraged and enabled.

- Academic administrators need to ensure that expectations for the quality and quantity of faculty work are reasonable, as Generation X faculty are more likely to be in two-career households and have more responsibilities outside of their faculty work.

- Institutions should consider multiple faculty tracks, with reward systems and promotion opportunities that are equivalent. For example, separate tracks for faculty who want to focus more on teaching or on research should be investigated.

- Colleges and universities should also work to instill a sense of service in younger faculty. This generation will be the future academic leaders, so leadership training at the departmental and national levels is critical.

Baby Boomers (reported by Teresa Sullivan)

The baby boom generation is widely represented on most college campuses by the older cohort of faculty, and in the administration. The breakout sessions collected the following observations about baby boomers on campus:

- The first observation is that this group represents such a large proportion of the employees on campuses today, and many of them are just beginning to reach retirement age. As the boomers transition out of the workforce and into retirement, this will have a large impact on these institutions.

- A related concern is that many of the individuals heading into retirement will be among the most productive in the academy; encouraging these people to continue working (where appropriate) could be a challenge.

- As the older and more experienced faculty and administrators retire, they will take with them a great deal of institutional memory, as well as relationships built over decades (in some cases) with donors and alumni. Senior faculty are also the ones who provide much of the university service and faculty governance.

- The mass retirements of the baby boom generation will result in great financial consequences, due to retirement benefits and health benefits due to them. Depending upon the institution,

and the nature of public retirement programs, the financial consequences may be felt either directly or indirectly by the institution.

The groups also recognized that the transitioning of the baby boomers presents unique opportunities for colleges and universities:

■ Large numbers of retirements offer institutions an opportunity to review the curriculum and to consider hiring in new fields, especially interdisciplinary fields, rather than merely replacing the retirees in an existing department with younger faculty with similar specializations.

■ Younger faculty are more likely to be at the cutting-edge of their fields, to know the latest methods of their disciplines (both in research and pedagogy), and to be adept at information technology. Younger faculty are also likely to be up to date on curricular innovations such as service learning, collaborative learning, distance learning, and accommodating differences in learning styles.

■ New hiring among a younger cohort of scholars may provide opportunities for increased diversification of the faculty. As the student population has become and will continue to be more diverse, this will provide an opportunity for the faculty to more closely mirror the students they teach.

■ Retirement of unproductive and alienated faculty may also be an opportunity. Some older faculty are stuck in dated pedagogies. They may have entered the academy when standards were lower, and with their truncated professional preparation, some of them are not good teachers and they were never active researchers. And while some have become adept at using the new technologies in the classroom, others have not and have instead become increasingly remote from the interests of today's millennial students.

In order to take advantage of these opportunities, the participants in the breakout sessions made the following recommendations:

■ It is valuable for all institutions to consider the typical life cycle of faculty members and provide opportunities for professional renewal in teaching and research. In tandem with these opportunities, institutions also need to develop realistic plans for succession.

■ Institutions of higher education should consider routinely sharing best practices for phased retirement and for the recognition of emeriti faculty and retired administrators and staff members.

■ It may be tempting, in terms of the institution's bottom line, to consider replacing retirees from full-time employment with part-time employees (with or without benefits) or with full-time employees at a lower level of benefits. However, especially among faculty, there may be serious repercussions from grandfathering health care and retiree benefits for some faculty while phasing them out for others.

■ Providing incentives for early retirement for some employees may be an attractive idea, but institutions must be cautious about so routinizing such incentives that they lose their effectiveness. The most beneficial incentive may be providing honor and respect to retired colleagues and finding ways to maintain their beneficial association with the institution.

■ An idea that may help all institutions is to create flexible on- and off-ramps from employment,

making part-time work attractive and honorable. Being able to selectively rehire some retirees on a part-time basis may help ease issues of succession and continuity.

■ In general, it is beneficial for colleges and universities to consider how they can create or enhance the portability of retirement and health plans. Risk-sharing consortia of colleges and universities would be a vehicle for strengthening academe's negotiating position for health insurance.   Where laws or policies reduce flexibility, institutions are likely to be more successful in lobbying for change if they work together.

Session VII, November 2, 2007
Closing Speaker
F. King Alexander, President, California State University, Long Beach

King Alexander, President of California State University, Long Beach, closed the 2007 Conference with a speech that addressed the responsibility of the nation's college and universities to help address the increased stratification in American society. He called on the baby boomer generation – who represent the bulk of the political and educational leadership in the nation today – to play a key role in fulfilling this responsibility.

Dr. Alexander discussed the importance of a postsecondary education, and in particular, a post-secondary credential, in today's labor markets. He noted that earnings data indicate that students who attend college but leave without a credential earn little more than do those who enter the workforce with only a high school diploma. Attaining an associate's degree, however, increases average earnings by approximately 40 percent, while a bachelor's degree increases earnings by 80 percent. And higher level degrees increase wages even further. He related the story of an economist who was asked if, "Horatio Alger exists in America today?" The economist responded, "Yes, he exists – but he has to go to college today." Alexander went on to note that not only does he have to go to college, but that he has to graduate.

Alexander framed his discussion by noting the increasing centralization of resources that has been occurring in the United States. Looking first at families, he noted that the top 10 percent of earners in this country now constitute 42 percent of all income, and the top 1 percent hold 32 percent of the nation's wealth. He related the findings of a study conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development which examined income inequality among 30 countries, noting that, "The United States ranked third worst; only Russia and Mexico are worse than us." Colleges and universities can be social mobility agents, he said, helping those from the lower income brackets to move up to join the middle class and beyond.

The ability of postsecondary institutions in the country to help address this stratification is threatened, Alexander argued, by the increasing stratification within the higher education industry. He noted that the amount of money colleges and universities spend on a per-student basis ranged from as low as $10,000 to as high as $100,000. This variation in spending rates leads to large differences in the price charged to students seeking a baccalaureate degree, from as little as $3,000 to as high as $50,000 per year.

Another threat to higher education's role as a social mobility agent has been the declining support from states to public institutions. He argued that this decline in support (as measured

by state appropriations as a proportion of all institutional revenues) has occurred with little engaged debate about the purpose of public higher education and its role in helping to promote access for those populations of students who have been underserved in the past. Alexander noted that while historically, the states invested more tax dollars in higher education than had the federal government, those roles are now reversed, when you include the federal role in student loans.

Alexander also maintained that many of the nation's most prestigious and elite public institutions, those "that were started to provide access to low-income students and to give them a leg up have also moved away from these responsibilities." As examples, he noted the Universities of Virginia and Wisconsin, where only 6 percent and 9 percent of students, respectively, qualify for federal Pell Grants, an often-used indicator of low-income access.

Acknowledging the responsibility of many in the audience, Alexander noted that, "At your institutions, you have an important role to play as faculty members, ensuring that we do not turn our backs on these issues. Tenure is not just a job entitlement, but it is also a responsibility and an obligation of every faculty member who has it, to challenge society, to make sure that we are doing what we need to do to address these issues."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Donald E. Heller teaches and conducts research on higher education economics, public policy, and finance, with a primary focus on issues of college access and choice for low-income and minority students. He has consulted on higher education policy issues with university systems and policymaking organizations in California, Colorado, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, Tennessee, Washington State, and Washington, DC, and he has testified in front of Congressional committees, state legislatures, and in federal court cases as an expert witness. Dr. Heller earned an Ed.D. in Higher Education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and holds an Ed.M. in Administration, Planning, and Social Policy from Harvard and a B.A. in Economics and Political Science from Tufts University. Before his academic career, he spent a decade as an information technology manager at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In July 2007 he was named Director of the Center for the Study of Higher Education at Penn State.

Dr. Heller received the 2002 Promising Scholar/Early Career Achievement Award from the Association for the Study of Higher Education, a scholarly society with over 1,500 members dedicated to higher education as a field of study. He was also the recipient in 2001 of the Robert P. Huff Golden Quill Award from the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, for his contributions to the literature on student financial aid. Dr. Heller is also a TIAA-CREF Institute Fellow.