

Mitigating Ethical Costs in the Classroom

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Students from disadvantaged backgrounds often find that succeeding on the path of upward mobility through education requires that they distance themselves from their communities, family, and friends. This distancing often involves the weakening or loss of aspects of their lives that are meaningful and important to them: their relationships with family and friends, their connection to their communities, and their sense of identity. These goods, by their nature, are not ones that are easily replaced. Yet their loss can be mitigated by the development of new relationships and new communities. In this essay, I argue that colleges and universities have an obligation to facilitate the mitigation of these costs for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Doing so, however, is not as simple as it might seem. These students often feel alienated from campus life outside of the classroom and many do not even attend residential colleges. These two factors suggest that universities and professors will need to take more seriously the classroom as a central site for giving students from disadvantaged backgrounds opportunities to enter into new relationships and find new communities.

The degree to which students feel connected to each other, to faculty, and to campus life has important implications for student retention, academic engagement, and learning.¹ Well-endowed colleges and universities invest significant resources in fostering community on campus by building student centers, financing student clubs, and enabling a rich array of extracurricular activities. Some organize the first-year academic experience around learning communities: cohorts of first-year students who take several classes together or, as in my institution, are enrolled in a small and academically intensive writing seminar with a faculty member, ideally one in the tenure-stream. Learning communities are intended to encourage students to develop relationships with each other and with a faculty member. But for universities with limited resources, learning communities are an expensive scheme. On my own campus, our tightening budget inevitably leads

administrators to question whether we should reconsider raising the student cap on first-year seminars.

The small, discussion-based seminar with a tenure-stream faculty member can easily seem like an expensive luxury rather than a necessity. There are excellent reasons to resist this thought. As William Bowen, former president of Princeton University, and Michael McPherson have argued, one of the biggest problems confronting higher education is the alarmingly high dropout rates, especially for low-income students.² If, as the research suggests, learning communities can lead to higher graduation rates, then they are an important investment. In the City University of New York (CUNY) system, where I teach, the four-year baccalaureate graduation rate is around 25 percent and the six-year graduation rate hovers around 50 percent.³ These data give institutions like mine sufficient reason to continue to invest in learning communities.

I argue that there is an additional yet often overlooked *ethical* reason for institutions of higher education to foster community in the classroom. It is a way for them to mitigate the ethical costs that students from disadvantaged backgrounds bear in the path of upward mobility. Strivers, as I call those students who seek mobility through education, often find that succeeding on their paths requires that they distance themselves from, and thus weaken or lose, aspects of their lives that are meaningful to them: their relationships with family and friends, their connection to their community, and their sense of identity. This is what I call the ethical costs. Unfortunately, the nature of these costs is such that they are not easily replaced by the many gains that a college degree affords. Nonetheless, universities have a compensatory obligation to mitigate these costs by facilitating the development of new relationships and new communities for these students. Doing so, however, is not as simple as it might seem. Strivers often feel alienated from campus life and culture; many do not even attend residential colleges. These two factors suggest that universities and professors will need to take more seriously the classroom as a central site for giving students from disadvantaged backgrounds opportunities to enter into new relationships and find new communities.

I teach at the City College of New York (CCNY), which is part of the City University of New York system, one of the largest public systems of higher education. CUNY comprises community colleges, four-year colleges (like my own), and a graduate center with internationally renowned scholars. Our students are as diverse as the city we serve. Forty-two percent of them are the first in their family to go to college, 38.5 percent come from families that make less than \$20,000 a year, and 78.2 percent are students of color.

Beyond the numbers, my students are a joy to teach. They have full, complicated lives and, when the circumstances are right, those experiences enrich the classroom in immeasurable ways. But they also struggle to complete their degrees. Many of them work more than twenty hours a week, live at home, and have obligations and responsibilities that pose obstacles to their academic success. Students will miss exams and assignments for a myriad of reasons: taking their grandmother to the hospital, working full-time to support their family, or escorting a cousin on her first day of preschool. In the most recent class I taught, I was offered all three of these reasons. Many of my students are caught in a difficult dilemma: prioritizing their obligations to their family, friends, and communities over their education can set them behind and endanger their academic success, but renegeing on those responsibilities also comes at a significant cost.

Strivers are much more likely than other students to face conflict between their relationships with their family, friends, and community and their educational paths.⁴ Upward mobility for strivers often involves sacrificing aspects of their personal lives that are important to them. These are *ethical costs* because they concern those elements of a life – friendship, family, community, identity – that are valuable to most of us. Many college students make difficult sacrifices in the pursuit of higher education, but these ethical costs are disproportionately borne by strivers.

Understanding why these costs fall on strivers requires that we situate the ethical costs in their socioeconomic context.⁵ Briefly, I'd like to draw our attention to three factors: socioeconomic segregation, the inadequate safety net for poor families, and the mismatch between the culture prevalent in middle-class institutions and that of lower-income communities. We have good evidence that a large share of students born into disadvantage grow up in communities where poverty is concentrated.⁶ These are communities in which educational opportunities are limited and middle-class professional jobs and housing are rare. Furthermore, it is not unusual for students born into poverty to also be a part of families that lack adequate health care, elder care, child-care, and other forms of support. Students born into these circumstances, like many I have encountered at CUNY, end up filling these gaps in the safety net by providing care or financial support to their families. Finally, there is compelling evidence that many students from disadvantaged backgrounds experience a cultural disconnect in college.⁷ They have little familiarity with the culture that dominates the college campus, which can hinder their social and academic paths through college.

Against the background of these factors, finding opportunities for further education and socioeconomic advancement requires that strivers distance

themselves from their communities literally and metaphorically. They must find their way into other communities – in which educational and career opportunities reside – that are very different from their own. In the process, they are often unable to continue to provide the same level of support to their families. And as they make their way through college, they have to navigate a culture with which they are unfamiliar. This process can require painful sacrifices in relationships and identity, yet these ethical costs are often overlooked in discussions about the challenges low-income and first-generation college students face in pursuing higher education.

One might be tempted to treat these ethical costs like other costs that students face on the path of upward mobility, such as time and financial investment. But ethical costs are not easily accounted for. The financial cost of going to college, for example, can be offset by the economic gains that a college degree affords. When one's relationship with a family member or friend is lost or weakened, however, a new relationship does not simply erase the loss. We value people in their particularity: it is *this* sibling or friend who matters to me, not just anyone who plays that role.⁸ An important part of our well-being is composed of goods that cannot be simply substituted or swapped by other similar goods.⁹ I have provided extensive arguments for these claims elsewhere, but the important point here is that strivers often pay painful ethical costs to find a better life through education, and these costs are not easily compensated for by the material gains that a college degree may bring.

Much of the meaning and value in our lives, from very early on, is derived from our sociality.¹⁰ Friendships and our connections to others in our community are central to leading good lives. Consequently, the ethical costs that strivers shoulder concern deeply important aspects of their lives. For many students, the initial financial cost of college is an investment that is offset by the many economic, educational, and social gains of a college degree. But it would be a mistake to try to account in a similar way for the ethical costs that disadvantaged students bear.

Notwithstanding this crucial point, ethical costs can be mitigated to some degree. A cost is mitigated when a new value or good comes into a person's life that makes his or her life better in a similar dimension to that undermined by the loss. Consider the immigrant who leaves his home out of necessity. In the process, he loses his connection to his community. This loss is not fully compensated or replaced by what he has gained from immigrating, but finding a new community can mitigate the loss. To see this point more clearly, consider what would happen if the community he seeks to join is hostile and rejects him; even if his life were greatly improved materially, immigrating would

have made his life worse along a very important dimension. In contrast, if he had found a new welcoming community, he would have gained something valuable that would not replace, but would mitigate, what he had lost.

Ideally, colleges and universities could mitigate the ethical costs that strivers bear by offering value along a similar dimension to the loss, such as new friendships and communities. Indeed, colleges often portray themselves as places where students can enrich their social lives; this is an important part of their marketing strategy. Residential colleges often feature student clubs, activities, and socializing prominently in their brochures and websites. And large public universities persuade out-of-state students, who often pay full price, to enroll by promoting Greek life on campus.¹¹ Unfortunately, though this might be good advertising, the reality for strivers bears little resemblance to the social world of college depicted in marketing materials. There are many reasons for this, but let us focus on two here: cultural mismatch and nonresidential colleges.

Psychologists and social scientists have been studying the cultural mismatch between the culture that dominates many colleges and universities and that with which low-income students have grown up. Psychologist Nicole Stephens and colleagues have shown that first-generation college students are much more likely to have an interdependent cultural model that emphasizes one's relationships to others and one's place in one's community, whereas students who are better off tend to arrive at college with an independent cultural model that emphasizes individual achievement. Stephens suggests that because colleges and universities tend to be built around the independent cultural model, first-generation college students tend to find college a difficult place to navigate academically and socially, with negative effects on first-generation students' academic achievement.¹² But Stephens's work also helps us understand why many strivers find it difficult to make those connections that would mitigate the ethical costs they bear.¹³

Some of the barriers strivers face are the result of cultural differences, but some of them are quite directly the result of the ways in which universities organize the social life on campus. Sociologists Elizabeth Armstrong and Laura Hamilton have shown how large public universities that seek to attract out-of-state students (and their tuition dollars) end up organizing the campus to serve those well-off students' social needs in ways that marginalize and underserve low-income and first-generation college students.¹⁴ Greek life, for example, attracts students who are shopping for a college that offers a certain kind of social experience. But the creation of what Armstrong and Hamilton call the "party pathway" attracts students from wealthier families at the expense of serving those students who see the university as a path to upward

mobility. Students from lower-income backgrounds either end up participating in the party pathway at the expense of their academic and professional success, or they are alienated by it at the expense of their social and emotional well-being.

These barriers also affect the ability of strivers to develop relationships with professors. For students who have not had the opportunity to interact with many upper- and middle-class professionals or with wealthier peers, it can be difficult to figure out how to talk to their professors outside of the classroom. As one student explained to sociologist Anthony Jack:

My being uncomfortable going to office hours: that's the [social] class thing. I don't like talking to professors one-on-one. That's negative because [Renowned University] really wants you to be proactive. And raise your hand. And talk. Freshman year, I didn't say a word. People who I had small classes with, if I see them on the street, I recognize them. They won't recognize me because I didn't speak.¹⁵

The kind of mentorship that a professor might offer is not only important to one's academic success, but to feeling a sense of belonging. And it is these forms of socializing that are the entry point into building the relationships and communities that could provide new sources of meaning in a striver's life.

As we have seen, cultural and organizational barriers can make it difficult for strivers to find new communities and build friendships. But even if we were to set aside those factors, there is another reason why strivers can have a hard time mitigating the ethical costs they face on the path of upward mobility: many do not attend residential colleges. Among all college students, more than half live off campus, while one in four lives at home with their families to save on costs.¹⁶ Many are nontraditional students who have children of their own or are working many hours a week.¹⁷ For these students, the culture around which the university is organized poses a challenge, but the biggest obstacle to finding those meaningful connections is that their time on campus is a precious resource. Commuting, obligations to family, and work all impinge on a student's ability to do anything but focus on schoolwork while on campus. Participation in student clubs, campus events, and other activities in which students might socialize requires students to find time in their already overburdened schedules. For some students, the "campus community" is a misnomer.

I have suggested that colleges and universities cannot assume that strivers will find those friendships and communities outside of the classroom. If we are going to provide students with entry points to building those relationships and finding those communities, we need to seriously consider the classroom as the place where ethical costs can be mitigated. But this requires that

we rethink what obligations universities and professors have to facilitate certain experiences for students in the classroom.

Before considering how the college classroom can play a role in mitigating the ethical costs of upward mobility, we need to establish that colleges and universities do have an obligation to mitigate these ethical costs. One might argue that because the factors that lead to disproportionate ethical costs for disadvantaged students are structural features outside of the university's control and purview, no university or individual professor has an obligation to mitigate those costs.

Let me articulate this concern more vividly. Consider a student who is failing my class because she has to work a full-time job to support her family or misses an exam because she has to take care of her sister's children. It's hard to see why the obligation to mitigate these costs should fall on the university or on me as her professor. The argument is *not* that I have an obligation to give her a pass on her assignments or to give her a grade she does not deserve. The argument is rather that, should this student cut back on her work hours or reject her sister's request for help in order to do well in my class and succeed in her path through college, the university and I have an obligation to structure her experience in the classroom to foster her sense of connectedness to the college community. That is, if the students who are making these difficult trade-offs do prioritize their educational paths over these other aspects of their lives, then we have an obligation to mitigate what they're losing.

Philosopher Gina Schouten has argued that an important function of higher education is to play a compensatory role in our society.¹⁸ Wealthy parents can invest in better education for their children, educate them with the cultural capital that will give them a leg up in college and beyond, and advise them about how to get the most out of the college experience. Meritocratic admissions into university is meant to mitigate these inequalities by facilitating social mobility and improving the life prospects of those who are talented and willing to work hard but are born into disadvantage. The university is supposed to counteract those deep and pervasive inequalities, even though other social institutions, such as K–12 education, income inequality, and housing policy, are more directly responsible for them. Based on this argument, Schouten makes a persuasive case for why elite universities have an obligation to steer their students toward public service as a way of compensating for the significant positional benefits they confer on students who are already privileged by other institutions outside of the university.

Yet we care about equal access to higher education not just because we hope to counteract financial or educational advantages that are available

to those who are fortunate to be born into positions of privilege; we aim to equalize life prospects. Family, friendship, and community are crucial to leading good lives. Sacrificing in these areas of one's life for the sake of educational and career opportunities is a serious form of inequality borne overwhelmingly by students who are already disadvantaged. While a few strivers might come back to their communities as teachers or social workers, the socioeconomic structures are such that a middle-class life is more easily found away from their home communities, effectively making these sacrifices permanent. Consequently, if institutions of higher education are in the business of counteracting inequality in access to good lives, mitigating ethical costs is well within the purview of that compensatory function.

But we need not even resort to this compensatory argument in order to understand why the university has an obligation to compensate for the ethical costs disadvantaged students pay. Universities play a direct role in exacting these costs from students. As we saw in the previous section, the culture around which universities organize their operations often assumes a cultural model that is difficult for students from less advantaged backgrounds to navigate. Selective colleges and universities admit a disproportionate number of students from the wealthiest sectors of society and enable the operation of social clubs and fraternities that exclude and marginalize those who have grown up in disadvantaged circumstances. Furthermore, universities and colleges often make it difficult for students to attend part time or transfer between institutions; they provide little flexibility for those with family obligations. All of these factors make it difficult for strivers to keep their connections to their families, friends, and communities and succeed at school at the same time. And, as Laura Hamilton has argued, many universities increasingly rely on parents to do much of the advising and networking for their children, but this unfairly benefits those students with college-educated professional parents.¹⁹ Strivers who need college to offer them an introduction to professional communities end up being left behind. Thus, universities have a duty to foster relationships and a sense of community for those strivers on their campuses, not just because universities generally play a role in our society as compensatory institutions, but because they play quite a direct role in exacting ethical costs from strivers.

The research on campus climate and belonging suggests that fostering a sense of belonging is important for the persistence and academic achievement of minority, first-generation, and low-income students.²⁰ My argument in the previous section is different insofar as I've made an ethical case for why universities have an obligation to mitigate the ethical

costs strivers might incur on the path of upward mobility. I have suggested that enabling strivers to find new friendships and new communities in the classroom might be the most effective way of doing so. One might ask whether universities should focus on structuring activities outside of the classroom that achieve this goal instead of putting the onus on professors to change what they are doing in their classrooms. I argue, however, that professors *do* have an obligation to mitigate ethical costs in their classrooms.

The first reason why they have such an obligation stems from how much control professors have over the dynamics in their classroom. Professors often play a direct role in making the classroom environment a place in which strivers are at a disadvantage. A class in which the professor mostly lectures and only takes questions from the most eager students is bound to replicate the class and racial inequalities we have discussed thus far. It is the students who already know how to navigate the campus culture that are more likely to participate in such a class and to take advantage of opportunities to attend office hours as a way of developing a relationship with the professor. Unfortunately, this kind of teaching is the path of least resistance for many in the academy who have themselves been educated in this way and who have succeeded despite it. For example, as a graduate student assistant at Stanford, I was told explicitly by the professor for whom I was teaching a section that I would only really teach the top 10 to 15 percent of the students who “got it.” The rest, presumably, had to figure it out on their own. But the rest are often the students who have not gone to the private schools or upper-middle-class high schools where they were taught how to get the most out of a college classroom. A professor that teaches in this way is replicating problematic inequalities in his or her classroom that universities were meant to combat, and should take responsibility for doing so. In order not to replicate those problematic inequalities, a professor has to create a teaching environment that is inclusive of all students. Allowing strivers the opportunity to build connections with other students is one solution.

The second reason why professors have an obligation to think carefully about building an inclusive classroom community stems from their pedagogical obligation to be effective teachers for all of the students in their classroom. One might worry that seeing the classroom as a place for students to gain those interpersonal connections is incompatible with effective pedagogy. But, as I will suggest, it is in fact crucial to being an effective instructor.

For the final week of class, the students in my philosophy of race course were required to choose an artifact from contemporary pop culture such as a song, an advertisement, or a clip from a TV show, and explain in a five-minute presentation how it connected to one of the ideas we had discussed in class.

The point of the exercise was to get students to draw a connection between what they learned in class and what they were experiencing outside of the classroom. Students chose a diversity of cultural artifacts – episodes from the ABC show *Scandal*, lyrics from Migos and Kendrick Lamar, and even Kim Kardashian’s cornrows – and most presentations, like my students, were engaging, thoughtful, and funny.

A few of the presentations challenged the class to approach the reading we had done in a different way. I had assigned philosopher Tommie Shelby’s groundbreaking work on the inner city.²¹ Shelby argues that those in the inner city often do not receive their fair share of the social contract and so do not have the same civil responsibilities as those of us who do benefit from society. A handful of my students had grown up in the Bronx and still lived there. Shelby’s work was, in a sense, about places like their home. For his presentation, one of those students told us about how he was the only one in his neighborhood living a “civilian” life; so many of his friends had had encounters with law enforcement, it was as if they lived outside of civil society. He connected Shelby’s works to the lyrics from a song he liked, but it was the tears in his eyes as he told us about how difficult life was for those friends, whom he so clearly loved, that left the class silent. I held back my own tears. And after a few seconds of silence, the class erupted in applause.

This moment was pedagogically important, but it was also the culmination of something that had developed throughout the course of the semester: the class had bonded. And it was this feeling of belonging that contributed to this student feeling comfortable enough to share his experience with his peers. It is this sense of connection or community that is so elusive and, yet, so critically important to the strivers’ college experience. Another student in that class sent me an email after the course was over to thank me. She wrote that she learned a lot in the course, “but also about the students in our class. . . . I . . . also formed valuable friendships which is actually quite hard in an urban college where a sense of community is almost non-existent.” This is only an example, but it lends support to what research on effective pedagogy already shows: that a classroom in which all students, including strivers, learn is one that is inclusive of the perspectives of all students.²²

Connecting what students learn to their lives and sharing those connections with other students is just one example of good pedagogical practice that enables student learning while also making the classroom more inclusive. There are many more than I cannot detail here.²³ The point is rather that the pedagogical obligation that teachers have is not incompatible with the goal of building community in the classroom; it is reinforced by it. Of course, one has to balance the different goals at stake. For example, the success of

the presentations in my philosophy of race class relied on there being a background of knowledge that students had acquired in more traditional ways: reading, a bit of lecturing on my part, and asking questions to get clear on the concepts. But fostering an inclusive classroom community was a critical part of the pedagogical process.

Even if one grants that professors have an obligation to create inclusive classrooms in virtue of the power they hold in the class and their professional obligations as teachers, one might worry that professors lack the skills needed to fulfill this obligation because they are not trained to engage in community-building in the classroom. This is a genuine worry. However, we should note that professors are also generally not trained in conventional pedagogy either. As Harry Brighouse argues in this issue of *Dædalus*, the academy is an odd institution that rewards professors for developing knowledge and skills that are not centrally related to their capacity as teachers, though teaching is a primary part of the job. Tenure committees at many universities and colleges expect excellence in research, but only minimal competence in teaching. This is not true across the board, of course; some community colleges and a few liberal arts colleges expect excellence in teaching. Yet across much of academia, teaching is disvalued. The answer to this situation is not to give up on our pedagogical goals, but to change graduate student training and the incentive structure within the university to encourage pedagogical development among faculty.²⁴

This last point shows us that mitigating ethical costs in the classroom involves institutions, administrators, and professors working in tandem. In order for professors to successfully foster inclusive communities in the classroom, they must receive adequate training to do so. But we also need to think about who is being hired to teach. Educationalist Lisa Delpit has made the argument, in the context of K–12 education, that teachers from communities similar to their students' are more likely to recognize the cultural competencies that students bring to the classroom. Consequently, teachers who mirror the diversity of the student body are likely to be better teachers for those students who come from marginalized communities than those who do not share those experiences.²⁵ Might the same be true at the level of higher education? Perhaps university students are different because they are older and thus able to advocate for themselves in a way that children are not. But as we have seen, cultural mismatch can be a barrier to students' achievement even at the level of higher education. The evidence on this point is by no means conclusive, but I venture to suggest that having professors who are first-generation and/or low-income themselves might play a significant role in creating more inclusive college communities for strivers.

The same semester that I taught the philosophy of race class described above, I taught an eighty-person introduction to philosophy course. That course was meant to fulfill the writing requirement, yet I had no teaching assistant. I did not learn my students' names except for those of the few who talked to me after class or came to office hours. I lectured, a lot. I was behind on several research projects and I was investing a lot of pedagogical energy into my other class. My guess is that most students learned a bit about philosophy, few improved their writing, and even fewer got to know each other. Their experience of the classroom was starkly different from that of the students in my other class.

College students experience this kind of subpar classroom experience too often. I am not proud that I occasionally fall prey to it. But it is important to understand what factors contribute to this situation at precisely the sorts of colleges and universities that disadvantaged students attend: cash-strapped public institutions. The first semester I arrived at CCNY, introduction to philosophy courses were capped at twenty-five students; as the financial situation at our institution worsened, the cap increased. It is now thirty-eight to forty students. Double courses, like the one I taught, used to have a teaching assistant, but the university can no longer afford to pay for one. Financially strapped institutions often end up saving money by increasing teaching loads and student caps per course. Though this means that professors are teaching more students, it undermines the quality of that teaching and it makes it less likely that those professors will find the time to invest in pedagogical development, mentor students individually, or participate in campus activities. In fact, data suggest that increasing the funding that such institutions spend per student has a greater effect on student completion than giving that money to the students themselves.²⁶

Financially strapped colleges and universities are also increasingly reliant on adjunct teaching and online learning. But these methods of cost-cutting make it more difficult for students to find those elusive connections. Adjuncts, who are underpaid and overworked, are often working multiple jobs at various institutions and unable to fully invest their time on any one particular campus as a consequence. This makes it difficult for them to mentor students, participate in campus life, or feel a sense of belonging within the college community. In other work, I have criticized online courses for not providing students with the space in which they can do much of the social and emotional learning that college can provide.²⁷ Another problematic dimension of online learning is that it does not require students to be on campus where they might find the kinds of relationships and community connections that might mitigate what they have lost. This is not to say that strivers cannot find communities or form friendships online; clearly students do. What I am suggesting is

that these are unlikely to provide a source of value in the same dimension as the friendships and communities that strivers sacrifice on the path of upward mobility.

Public universities and community colleges serve the vast majority of strivers and yet they are the institutions that have the most challenges in building community on campus. But without a flourishing community, students are unlikely to find the friendships and connections that will mitigate the ethical costs they bear. In addition to the research showing that the feeling of belonging is important for strivers' persistence and success in college, there is an ethical imperative for making sure that students develop deep connections with each other.

I have suggested that strivers are likely to face ethical costs – weakening of family relationships, loss of friendships, and severing of ties with one's community – on the path of upward mobility. Some of these costs are due to structural factors that extend well beyond the campus walls, but some of them are the result of social and cultural dynamics within the university. These costs affect important and valuable dimensions of a striver's life. Universities and colleges can be places where strivers find new connections that can mitigate, though not replace, the costs they pay. However, as I have suggested, it is difficult for strivers to find those elusive connections outside of the classroom. The college campus is often not a welcoming place for them, and many do not live on campus. Institutions of higher education and professors have to take the classroom more seriously as the place where those connections are fostered. However, doing so requires reconceiving of the role of the professor. Confronted with the far-reaching changes that such a refashioning of the classroom and of the professor's role in it would require, some might reject the role that the university should play in fostering community. But as I have suggested, the university has a compensatory obligation to do so.

Let me close with one further reason why it is important that strivers enter these new communities. A key factor in the ethical costs that strivers face is entrenched segregation in American society along class and racial lines. This segregation starts early with the neighborhood in which a child grows up and the school she attends. If we want to build integrated neighborhoods and integrated schools, we have to start with building integrated communities where they can thrive. Strivers are uniquely positioned to foster such communities, and universities are uniquely positioned to encourage them to do so. But it is not something that universities do simply by admitting more students from marginalized communities; it requires that administrators and professors be purposeful about encouraging those connections on campus and, in particular, in the classroom.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ See Vincent Tinto, *Student Retention and Graduation: Facing the Truth, Living with the Consequences*, Occasional Paper 1 (Washington, D.C.: The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, 2004); Vincent Tinto, “Learning Better Together: The Impact of Learning Communities on Student Success,” *Higher Education Monograph Series* 1 (8) (2003); and Vincent Tinto, “Taking Retention Seriously: Rethinking the First Year of College,” *NACADA Journal* 19 (2) (1999).
- ² William G. Bowen and Michael S. McPherson, *Lesson Plan: An Agenda for Change in American Higher Education* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2016).
- ³ CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, “System Retention and Graduation Rates of Full-Time First-Time Freshmen in Baccalaureate Programs by Year of Entry: Total University” (New York: CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2018), https://www.cuny.edu/irdatabook/rpts2_AY_current/RTGS_0007_FT_FTFR_BACC_UNIV_TOT.rpt.pdf.
- ⁴ The argument in this section is drawn from my book *Moving Up without Losing Your Way: The Ethical Costs of Upward Mobility* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2019).
- ⁵ I discuss this in much more detail in chapter two of *Moving Up without Losing Your Way*.
- ⁶ Gary Orfield, Mark D. Bachmeier, David R. James, and Tamela Eitle, “Deepening Segregation in American Public Schools: A Special Report from the Harvard Project on School Desegregation,” *Equity and Excellence in Education* 30 (2) (1997); and Gary Orfield, John Kucsera, and Genevieve Siegel-Hawley, *E Pluribus . . . Separation: Deepening Double Segregation for More Students* (Los Angeles: Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles, 2012).
- ⁷ Nicole M. Stephens, Stephanie A. Fryberg, Hazel Rose Markus, et al., “Unseen Disadvantage: How American Universities’ Focus on Independence Undermines the Academic Performance of First-Generation College Students,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 102 (6) (2012); Nicole M. Stephens, MarYam G. Hamedani, and Mesmin Destin, “Closing the Social-Class Achievement Gap: A Difference-Education Intervention Improves First-Generation Students’ Academic Performance and All Students’ College Transition,” *Psychological Science* 25 (4) (2014); Anthony Abraham Jack, “(No) Harm in Asking: Class, Acquired Cultural Capital, and Academic Engagement at an Elite University,” *Sociology of Education* 89 (1) (2015); Anthony Abraham Jack, “Culture Shock Revisited: The Social and Cultural Contingencies to Class Marginality,” *Sociological Forum* 29 (2) (2014); Anthony Abraham Jack, “Crisscrossing Boundaries: Variation in Experiences with Class

Marginality among Lower-Income, Black Undergraduates at an Elite College,” in *College Students’ Experiences of Power and Marginality: Sharing Spaces and Negotiating Differences*, ed. Elizabeth M. Lee and Chaise LaDousa (New York: Routledge, 2015); and Anthony Abraham Jack, *The Privileged Poor: How Elite Colleges Are Failing Disadvantaged Students* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2019).

- ⁸ See Harry G. Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004); Troy Jollimore, *Love’s Vision* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011); and Monique Lisa Wonderly, “Love and Attachment,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* (forthcoming).
- ⁹ This sets my view apart from other notions such as Amartya Sen’s capabilities or John Rawls’s primary goods, which are not particular in the way that the goods in question here are. Thanks to Michael McPherson and Sandy Baum for urging me to clarify this point.
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- ¹¹ Elizabeth A. Armstrong and Laura T. Hamilton, *Paying for the Party* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013).
- ¹² Mickaël Jury, Annique Smeding, Nicole M. Stephens, et al., “The Experience of Low-SES Students in Higher Education: Psychological Barriers to Success and Interventions to Reduce Social-Class Inequality,” *Journal of Social Issues* 73 (1) (2017); Stephens et al., “Unseen Disadvantage”; and Stephens et al., “Closing the Social-Class Achievement Gap.”
- ¹³ See also Jack, *The Privileged Poor*; and Krista M. Soria and Michael J. Stebleton, “First-Generation Students’ Academic Engagement and Retention,” *Teaching in Higher Education* 17 (6) (2012): 673–685.
- ¹⁴ Armstrong and Hamilton, *Paying for the Party*.
- ¹⁵ Jack, “(No) Harm in Asking,” 9–10.
- ¹⁶ National Center for Education Statistics, *Profile of Undergraduate Students: Attendance, Distance and Remedial Education, Degree Program and Field of Study, Demographics, Financial Aid, Financial Literacy, Employment, and Military Status: 2015–16* (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, 2019).
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- ¹⁸ Gina Schouten, “Higher Education, Distributive Justice, and Positional Goods,” unpublished manuscript.
- ¹⁹ Laura T. Hamilton, *Parenting to a Degree: How Family Matters for College Women’s Success* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).
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- ²² Robert B. Barr and John Tagg, "From Teaching to Learning—A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education," *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* 27 (6) (1995).
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- ²⁶ Thanks to Michael McPherson for calling attention to this point. See Commission on the Future of Undergraduate Education, *The Future of Undergraduate Education, The Future of America* (Cambridge, Mass.: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2017).
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