

CHAPTER TWELVE

Multiple Routes, Alternative Learning Experiences

Developing Analytic Abilities, Practical Skills, Creativity, and Self-Reflection at Hampshire College

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Each year 1,400 students design 1,400 distinctive undergraduate educations. Hampshire empowers students to take responsibility for their education, create interdisciplinary and individualized academic concentrations, and produce extraordinary independent work. Working with faculty mentors, Hampshire students create rigorous programs of study designed to identify and accommodate their most passionate interests and concerns. The Five College consortium (Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, and Smith Colleges, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst) provides an environment of unmatched learning resources. Hampshire students qualify for the Bachelor of Arts by successfully progressing through three levels of study, called Divisions.

—2012 Admissions Materials

Each year 1,400 students design 1,400 distinctive undergraduate majors. This is a cornerstone of the Hampshire College educational system. Individualization and independence have driven the Hampshire curriculum through its initial conceptualization in 1958, its founding in 1970, and up to the present day. At the same time that individualization is an incredible strength of the institution, it poses challenges and raises questions. How do 100 faculty members mentor 1,400 students through this process? What is the tradeoff between individualism and collaboration? How can this many independent majors connect to the central questions in any field or interdisciplinary endeavor?

Supporting 1,400 students in negotiating their own concentrations (majors), followed by their own full-year capstone projects, challenges the College's resources and poses logistical problems. Yet we believe there is every reason to go this hard way. We hope to show this through some examples of student work. But first we begin with a bit of history of individualization at Hampshire and with a description of our program of study. We discuss the centrality of engaged advising relationships to student-driven education and describe what we see as strengths and tensions involved in supporting an innovative, engaged education that is driven

by the goals of students. We end with some important lessons we have learned that we expect might be helpful to others.

A Brief History of Individualization at Hampshire

For over forty years students have been drawn to Hampshire for its commitments to inquiry education, social justice, interdisciplinarity, and to an individualized curriculum with close mentorship by faculty in a graduate school model. Some students are drawn only to one of these characteristics of Hampshire, others to all four. Likewise, faculty members are invested in different components of the curriculum, but all stay on at Hampshire out of a deep dedication to the College's educational values. The College's commitment is not just to individualization (though that is our focus here), but also to a wholly different kind of educational experience for students and faculty alike.

The crux of Hampshire's motto, *Non Satis Scire* ("To Know Is Not Enough"), invites students (as well as faculty and staff) to go beyond the passive acquisition of received knowledge to extend and augment knowledge through the student's own creation, inquiry, critique, invention, and informed action in the world. Hampshire aims to transform students into independent thinkers and doers, starting with the types of courses and experiences they have in their very first semester at the College. Just as we state "to know is not enough," we believe that coursework is not enough. Students integrate a wide range of practical experiences in laboratories, agencies, theaters, and studios, and through internships and pre-practicum experiences. It is the integration of these experiences with coursework that forms the foundation of a Hampshire education.

Hampshire College was conceived in the late 1950s by representatives of the other four colleges in what is now a five-college consortium (Five Colleges, Inc.) with the purpose of reinvigorating private liberal education in America for a number of reasons. One of these stated reasons (Patterson and Longworth, 1966) was that the culture of institutions of higher education was out of step with the culture of the larger society. Specifically, Patterson and Longworth noted in *The Making of a College* that, in American culture, the notion of identity had changed drastically. They argued that young people understood identity as defined by the *experiences* of an individual. Many youth had become disaffected with business as usual, and were looking for the experiences that would distinguish them from those in their parents' generation. The College, then, was intentionally created in order to give individuals a place to pursue their own interests, articulate their own questions, reflect on what they learned, and to act. Hampshire was created specifically as a place of independent inquiry and an institution that supported bringing new ideas to fruition through individually conceived endeavors that addressed social needs.¹ It was not intended to be an "alternative college," always standing in opposition to what other colleges offered, but rather to be an incubator for ideas that would transform college in the United States.

By the time the College opened in 1970, its founders also saw the *content* of liberal arts colleges as being out of pace with the changes in American schooling. High schools had been substantially reformed as a result of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Students were now taking courses in high school that mimicked the traditional introductory years at college. Having already taken reformed physics, chemistry, mathematics, biology, geography, anthropology, psychology, history, economics, and social science, incoming students

would be ready to tackle more advanced work. Students would come to college ready for new experiences in learning that did not begin with survey courses (Patterson and Longworth, 1966).

To the College planners, changing the role of students in knowledge generation from one of a somewhat passive stance to co-creators of knowledge alongside faculty also entailed developing a curriculum that engaged learners in explicit conversations about *how* knowledge is created. Early college faculty adopted an approach to teaching using primary research literature with students following the model originally set by Epstein (1972). In this model, even first-year courses are run in the style of graduate seminars, with students generating questions and interrogating the literature to build the best possible analysis. First-year students in Hampshire's Natural Science courses, for example, make significant progress in understanding primary research articles. In particular, they emerge with a greater understanding of how hypotheses are related to research methods and how data are interpreted to support knowledge claims (Wenk and Tronsky, 2011).

Coming from an inquiry stance and using primary literature, a student should emerge from a biology course at Hampshire not only able to answer exam questions about biology but also able and inclined to think as a biologist when reading a newspaper, talking to a physician about a medical problem, designing a project, or creating a sculpture.² This belief also speaks to the interdisciplinary intentions of the founders. To them, it was quite conceivable that a biologist would bring her understanding to the creation of art, policy, and business. The fertilization of ideas across fields and media was structured into the foundation of the curriculum.

It is important to note that individualization does not have to negate collaboration among students or mitigate against the development of common learning experiences. At Hampshire, building cross-college programs has created intellectual homes that support student exploration while laying out possible pathways. Collaboration is also built in to course projects and joint alternative learning experiences. As you will see, although students do negotiate their concentration/major, they have ample opportunities to work and create with their peers and mentors.

Hampshire's Program of Study

Hampshire students progress through three levels of study: Division I, II, and III (or Div I, Div II, and Div III). Students receive narrative evaluations rather than grades. Hampshire does not rank students. Faculty provide students with rigorous, constructive evaluation on every assignment and at the end of every course and learning activity. Progress toward graduation at Hampshire is measured by the development of intellectual skills as articulated in the narrative evaluations, rather than through the accumulation of credit hours or earning a particular grade point average. Among other things, the lack of fixed credit hours and course requirements gives students enormous flexibility to incorporate learning opportunities from outside the classroom into their program of study. For example, students complete independent study projects with faculty, internships, study-abroad experiences, community-engaged work (often called "Community-Based Learning" or "CBL" at other institutions), and so on, that are evaluated by outside supervisors. These alternative learning experiences are more than add-ons or résumé padding. They are intentionally and thoroughly integrated into students' educational programs and are documented on the students' transcripts.

In Division I, students practice the major approaches to scholarly inquiry guided by faculty within courses across a distribution, work to develop fundamental academic skills, spend at least forty hours collaborating on campus projects with their peers, and, perhaps, complete independent studies. The distribution requirement in Division I allows students to explore varied interests or begin to take an interdisciplinary approach to a set of questions. In either event, the coursework and collaborative campus engagement is designed to get students to shift from learning as mastering a body of content to asking their own questions and finding methods of answering them.

Division II is the independent major or concentration. Students develop a contract in negotiation with a committee of two faculty members (chair and member) that includes a description of the concentration motivated by the student's questions and goals. These goals might include ideas a student would like to engage with, skills to develop (for example, research methodologies, second languages to strengthen, artistic skills, and so on), and types of experiences to incorporate (for instance, study abroad, internships, and teaching assistantships). The contract also outlines possible courses and out-of-class experiences that would help students reach their goals. Division II includes two college requirements: (1) that students engage with multiple cultural perspectives³ and (2) that students complete at least forty hours of community-engaged learning.⁴ These are both done in ways appropriate to each student's concentration.

Division III is a capstone project accompanied by at least two advanced learning activities, which can be upper level courses, teaching assistantships, or internships. In their final year at Hampshire, all students work with their faculty committee to design and complete a year-long, independent study project that usually builds on their work in the concentration. It is generally of a larger scope than an honors thesis at another institution, as it constitutes the bulk of a full year of college work. At Hampshire, this level of initiative and independence is considered a necessary feature of an undergraduate education and so is expected of all students, not just honors students.

At the completion of Divisions I and II, students present full portfolios of work for comprehensive, diagnostic evaluation by their advisors. At the end of Division III, they have a final meeting akin to a defense and often present their work at a series of Division III public presentations. At each of these junctures, students are asked to reflect on the meaning of their learning and to set goals for the next division, school, or career path. Student reflections and constructive conversation between students and faculty mentors is essential for making this individualized system work. Students have many choices and put their ideas together, often in novel ways, and yet are guided to challenge themselves in fruitful directions. Hampshire's commitment to developing students' intellectual independence through the individualized divisional system and through narrative and portfolio evaluation is foundational to a Hampshire education and continues to be an important innovation in undergraduate education well-worth of further dissemination.

Why Individualization Matters

Most college curricula that are organized into majors are based on a belief that college faculty can organize knowledge in a sequence that will build specific kinds of understandings for all their students. In fact, the term "curriculum" is derived from the Latin *currere*, meaning to

run; a “curriculum” is a course for running. The implicit meaning is that individuals can move efficiently through a defined course of study and end at a predetermined place. In this view, the curriculum itself is the focus of an instructor’s attention—laying the course rather than thinking of whether/how the students connect to the material, or of all the different directions in which the material can set the learners running. At Hampshire, we focus on individuals and think of their curriculum as the sum total of all their experiences—in class and out—including the very messages they receive from the structure of the curriculum about their role as learners in making meaning. The focus is not on the exact path, but on the quality of the faculty–student relationship and the types of experiences that make sense for the particular learner.

Expanding the view of curriculum and turning over that creative process to students has had benefits both intended and unexpected. We expected student engagement to be high, as students would be motivated by their own questions and would find connections among ideas that we as faculty could not have anticipated. We have promoted the College from the time of its founding by telling potential students how they can come to the College to ask their own questions and develop their ideas, and to do so in order to engage with and respond to the problems of society. Our focus on inquiry as a process was articulated as the best way to contribute to important ideas. Even our expansion of the arts and humanities from its usual place in the traditional liberal arts canon was meant to bring the heart and emotion to bear on important questions of our time—that is, to help with analytical thinking about big ideas. Implicit in a Hampshire education is the assumption that students will see the connections among concepts across the disciplines—they will take what they need from one discipline and use it to make sense of an idea not generally studied together in a traditional college curriculum. This has produced wonderful, though unexpected, benefits.

One unexpected benefit of a Hampshire education is the potential to attract students to a new field and change the culture of that discipline. In 1990, Sheila Tobias argued that the culture of science at most institutions appeals to students who reproduce that culture—typically white males who persist in the face of a competitive and sometimes hostile environment. Women and students of color were, and still are, often closed out of that culture (Hurtado et al., 2009; National Science Foundation, 2012).⁵ As a result, we as a society are missing out on a lot of potential science talent and may be narrowing the concerns of the sciences, since it is typically minority scientists who take up the needs of communities of color. Hurtado and her colleagues found that a number of college experiences helped underrepresented minority students feel they could pursue a career in science. Chief among these are involvement in undergraduate research and the development of scientific self-confidence (Hurtado et al., 2009).

At Hampshire, students who have had neutral-to-negative experiences with science in their K–12 education, and so would not select a science course of their own accord, often find they need a science course to help them understand a social, political, economic, or creative problem. In taking Hampshire inquiry science courses that allow them to define their own question, engage with the primary literature, develop research skills, and consider the social and political context in which science is carried out, “non-science” students (as they think of themselves) often come to appreciate, like, or even concentrate in the sciences. For example, a recent graduate, Steven Martinez, began his studies with an interest in education reform and HIV/AIDS prevention. As he moved through his Division II, he took courses mainly related to the sociological and political concerns relevant to these areas, and he extended the creative tools he had to express his ideas about HIV/AIDS and prevention education. However, emerging

from coursework and internships, Steven realized that he needed to have a solid understanding of the public health literature in order to fully engage with his questions. On the advice of his committee, Steven took a series of courses in epidemiology and statistics to help him research and understand the spread of HIV within queer communities of color. Toward the end of his studies at Hampshire, Steven was driven to understand and document the experiences of queer youth of color and their struggles to access health care and housing. Steven's concentration shifted as he navigated his courses and academic experiences, and in so doing, science became a meaningful arena in which Steven became an active participant.

Of course, the interest in new fields is not confined to the sciences. Students who do not think of themselves as artistic or creative might take courses in the arts or develop projects that incorporate creative elements such as media production or creative drama. For example, in 2006, students in Kristen Luschen's education reform course conducted videotaped interviews with teachers about their experiences navigating the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) legislation in their small rural schools. Media Services staff helped students learn the basic elements of video recording. The footage and interview transcripts from the project were utilized within the course to orient students both to the complexity of teachers' experiences and qualitative research methodologies. When the course concluded, five students with very different backgrounds in education opted to continue working with the footage through an independent study directed by Dr. Luschen. With continued support from Media Services staff, the student and faculty team developed *The Cost of Accountability*, a documentary about educators' experiences navigating NCLB in small rural schools. Students held several local screenings of the video that drew a large turnout, and presented their work at state and national conferences. This example illustrates how students actively develop their course of study, follow their questions, collaborate, and, in this case, recognize the significance of creative methodologies to engage others in the topics that they feel need broader attention. Here we see that another consequence of the negotiated nature of a student's individualized concentration with an inquiry orientation is the development of the practical skills necessary to conceive of and carry out inquiry. We are not only advancing students' analytic abilities and their creative abilities, but also giving them the practical skills to embody the College's motto, "Non Satis Scire."

Of course, there are some tensions created by the individualized curriculum. One is the tension between individualization and collaboration. Another is the tension between pursuit of individual interest and obtaining a liberal arts education. With regard to the first issue, an individualized curriculum does not have to mean that students are isolated in their studies. In addition to working closely with faculty advisors, Hampshire students regularly propose and organize group independent studies, internships, and community-engaged learning projects. They work in lab groups, serve on student governance committees of all sorts, participate in one another's film or theater projects, and organize large collaborative events on campus. Students are doing more than taking classes when they come to campus. They are building community, negotiating relationships, and learning how to harness the resources necessary to develop their ideas. Through many of these routes, they are developing the logistical skills that will serve them through the independent Division III project and into their careers. Through community-engaged learning experiences and the integration of alternative learning experiences, we are ensuring that students develop a wide range of skills, and at the College we are valuing the work they do in the different arenas of their lives.

Individualization can exacerbate a tension between focused study in an identified area of interest and being broadly educated in a liberal arts tradition. For this reason, the Hampshire curriculum imposes a requirement perhaps not present at other institutions with individualized programs of study. Our first-year program (Division I) contains a distribution requirement. And although the distribution requirement for some students constitutes an exploration and potential for identifying new interests, a number of our students do express frustration with the distribution requirement while they are meeting it. Many come to value the distribution only later in their college career, or even post-college (Weisler and Trosset, 2006).

We know that our students all come to our courses with different knowledge and experiences from which to draw. They raise questions and are interested in pursuing different questions than those we pose. Some can see the implications of theory or research findings for practice right away; others will be interested in an explanation of why things happen the way they do only after they have had a practical experience. By individualizing, we are able to support our students in pursuing the type of experience they need in order to advance their thinking and their skill development. We are able to help students see the usefulness of a different disciplinary lens turned onto their questions.

The result of individualization at Hampshire is that, given some similar concerns and questions at the start of Division II, students will integrate very different types of courses and alternative learning experiences to create completely unique paths and develop distinct skill sets. For example, Vic D’Elia and Caitlin Martin both began their Division II with an interest in the education of youth in under-resourced urban communities. Both had questions about the role of race and social class in children’s school experiences and the ways that the *No Child Left Behind* legislation affected schooling. Both wanted to find ways to bring children’s voices and ideas into the educational environment. Both were interested in the positive development of children and youth, and both created a number of community-engaged alternative learning experiences for themselves at K–8 schools in Holyoke, Massachusetts. Vic’s work brought her into the social studies classroom, creating digital stories with middle school students, and into the afterschool program, developing a leadership program using lacrosse for middle and high school students that will endure beyond her graduation. Caitlin’s work brought her into early childhood elementary classrooms where she observed, assisted, and completed interview research to be able to describe the impact of federal and state educational policy on a particular teacher’s practice and on the education of children. She is completing the requirements for teacher licensure and will do her full teaching practicum in grades K–2 at the same K–8 school where she has cultivated relationships over the past two years. Two students who might have felt compelled to select the same major have developed vastly different paths for themselves through a negotiated, individualized concentration and capstone experience.

The Centrality of “Engaged” Advising Relationships

As others note in this volume, close advising is foundational for rigorous, high-quality, student-centered education. We use the term “engaged advising” here to distinguish it from the more typical college advising that, at least in the authors’ experiences, are more formulaic. In general, advising at Hampshire not only focuses on the level of the major or specific courses to take; it also considers the development of questions, the selection and creation of experiences to try to answer those questions, and about the development of intellectual skills. While these

are some characteristics of advising that are uniformly necessary to support individualized education at Hampshire, good advising takes on a different meaning and commitment depending on the students' location in Division I, II, or III.

At Division I, advising occurs in the relationship between a student and the faculty member. The faculty advisor is also the instructor for the 12–14-person tutorial class in which the student is enrolled. At this stage, advising involves helping students navigate Hampshire academic requirements (the most numerous and explicit of any of the divisions), Hampshire-specific language, and resources, as well as supporting the student in understanding what doing college-level work entails. Advising in Division I is also linked to student life through events that are designed to be intellectually stimulating while also serving to build a community among students, staff, and faculty. Another key aspect of Division I advising involves the transition to Division II. Faculty advisors help students conceptualize their Division II concentration and identify faculty who can advise them in their work. Faculty advisors coach students to write drafts of their contracts and speak to faculty about their ideas and preliminary plans for learning activities in Division II.

Good advising at the Division II level starts with helping students think about their initial questions from which they will craft their concentration. It entails working with students to extend their ideas in order to be more expansive, to intersect with fruitful or cutting-edge questions in current literatures and research, and pushing students to understand how their own perspective limits their questions. Of course it also requires keeping an open mind toward students' novel approaches, as individual innovation has often led to new advances. Good advising at Division II means knowing about the courses, internships, and other resources available to students, so that their list of evaluated learning experiences is rich and provides appropriate depth. Overall, advising at Division II requires faculty to be mindful of the shifts in students' interests and abilities, knowing that the initial Division II contract will change over time. The questions students have when they write their contract are only starting points; we cannot know where students will end, and so the contract is regularly revised. Traveling this path with a student is, indeed, engaged advising.

Individualization at the level of the concentration requires matches between students and advisors who have some expertise in the student's area of interest. This does not have to be as close a match between intellectual interests as in Division III, where a faculty committee oversees a specific project, but it does require an understanding of the ways that student questions can be extended and how their interests could intersect with multiple cultural perspectives and community-engaged learning. The committee may review advisees' work throughout Division II, but faculty advisors at least are aware of the content of student evaluations and, most often, have been acquainted with the quality of a student's work through courses that student has taken with them. Similar to Division I, Division II advising involves helping the student to conceptualize and begin the preliminary planning for the next division, in this case, their Division III independent project.

At Division III, as in Division II, advising takes place within a committee structure. The committee meets regularly to move a student's independent project forward, identifying resources, methodologies, and experiences that are necessary to the successful production of an independent project. Committee members regularly review and comment on drafts of student-generated materials, including both those that will be in the final version of the project and those that support the students' growth in their area of interest.

Individual faculty members are not the only advising support. The Center for Academic Support and Advising (CASA) provides overarching support, training faculty about advising, meeting with students who are struggling academically or who have missed divisional filing deadlines and the like, offering workshops about divisional contract development, and so on. CASA is a crucial piece of the advising process at Hampshire. They work with faculty to develop individualized contracts for students who have difficulty progressing, whether they have not completed coursework, failed to file a contract, or the like. As with other aspects of a Hampshire education, students on probationary contracts also have highly individualized contracts created between CASA staff and the faculty advisor, with a great deal of thought about what the student needs in order to advance his or her work.

The Benefits of the Committee Structure to Individualization

Progress at most other colleges is dependent on completing course and graduation requirements and acceptance into a major, and these steps tend to be somewhat inflexible. At Hampshire, considerable imagination, discussion, negotiation, evaluation, and revision are necessary to proceed through each stage—from Division I to II to III. This process, like nearly every step at Hampshire, supports individuation, intellectual growth, and the articulation of student ideas and needs, as well as collaboration with faculty, staff, and student. As a result, the intellectual community at Hampshire is characterized by discussions about intersections with each of our areas of scholarship and production. The committee work with students brings faculty together across departmental units, leading to the development of new courses, programs, and events. A recent visiting scholar from a prestigious West Coast institution remarked that his time at Hampshire had been intellectually very stimulating for him. While at Hampshire he engaged in numerous discussions with faculty and students about intersections with his work, whereas at his home institution he felt that people tended to shut their doors and do their own work. Interdisciplinary discussions are part of the fabric of the institution.

Committees also support students in pushing their questions in new directions. If students worked with only one faculty member, they would of course receive excellent advising. But selecting two faculty members who might represent different aspects of the student's work means that the student is encouraged to explore ideas that would not have occurred to any one faculty member. It also means that students see modeled a discussion about their work by two scholars and enter into the discussion as the third. It is an enriching experience.

Divisional Transitions and Committee Development

For a variety of reasons, however, a key challenge to the divisional structure has been in the transition from one division to the next. Logistical concerns for the Hampshire curriculum entail the mechanics of getting students to file their Division II and III contracts. They have to be supported in identifying their questions and goals, and they have to find the appropriate faculty to help them through the next phase of their work. Students who are less sure of what or with whom they want to study can feel anxious about the next step, and students who are inattentive to details can miss deadlines or fail to file the appropriate forms. For these students we have had to create a number of supports and contingencies that bring CASA and faculty

advisors together to get them back on track. For most students the transition times are exciting, offering new discussions about their direction and opening up new possibilities.

Most students make the move from Division I to Division II relatively easily with the support of their faculty advisors and workshops provided by the Center for Academic Support and Advising (CASA). However, each year CASA assists a small fraction of the student body in finding a committee. Our experience suggests that the process of identifying, discussing one's ideas, and negotiating an academic contract is likely more familiar to students with a greater sense of entitlement—that is, students who are more comfortable knocking on doors, sharing their ideas and questions, and asking faculty to be on their committee. Regardless of personal differences in ease of contacting faculty, over the past five years the student body at Hampshire has grown in size, and the faculty-to-student ratio has decreased. This is bound to create issues for students in forming their committees.

There is a tension between fostering independence (a characteristic that is allied with individualization) and creating institutionalized supports for students through the transition from division to division. Hampshire's internal self-image is one of fiercely independent students and faculty. To some faculty and students, those who are able to negotiate the system independently are the "real" Hampshire students; to others, the system is in need of clear supports to balance the challenges of forging one's own program of study. We believe that it is a question of equity to think about how a Hampshire education can work for all students who want to enter into the process and not only those who have grown up in white, middle-class families whose parenting style is one of concerted cultivation (Lareau, 2002).

In the 2011–2012 academic year, the College's Educational Policy Committee began to assess the institutional structures that assist students in doing this work. The College has already begun to shift the timing and mechanisms for finding a Division II committee and filing the independent concentration in order to create greater consistency across advisors and ease the transition. That same year, a Division III student created a "faculty finder" on the central website used for registration and advising called "The Hub." Students using it should more easily find faculty mentors with whom they are unfamiliar but who can support their divisional work. This is the beginning of the process, as students still meet with faculty to discuss their interests and form their committee through communication and negotiation.

A second issue in committee creation is one of faculty availability and equitable distribution of students across the faculty. Although some of the disparity can be explained by the existence of high-demand areas and faculty "likeability," there is also pressure on faculty to increase scholarly productivity, which comes at the expense of advising. This is a pressure throughout academia (Arum and Roska, 2011), but is a particularly important issue in institutions like Hampshire. Engaged advising has to be preserved to make individualization work.

In some disciplinary areas, faculty-designed programs have developed procedures to help distribute students across available faculty.⁶ While students are not turned away from a program, this mechanism allows faculty to assign an appropriate chair or member to a student committee, thereby sharing workload more equitably. In recent years, the College has adopted a similar practice of asking all students to generate pre-DIV II and III filing forms. This allows school deans and faculty to gain insight into student interest and hire visiting faculty or recommend less-utilized faculty to accept additional student committee memberships. Program applications may result in less flexibility for an individual student in identifying and securing

a faculty committee. However, it also avoids hours of effort and frustration spent identifying and talking with faculty who will not be available to sit on committees.

Workload problems are resource issues that must be dealt with at the College: Thinking about high workload areas and how to create new FTEs or hire strong adjuncts who understand the system and can advise are central to solving this problem. In addition, the College has begun to think about ways to distribute students more equitably at the Division II level. For example, at the end of the first year, students are asked for the names of faculty with whom they would like to work, but are also asked whether they would like to be assigned a chair or member of their committee.

There are changes we can and have made to help students make the transitions between Divisions I and II and Divisions II and III that do not compromise individualization. Regularizing and simplifying the process of forming new committees would ease the advising load, as students would need less mentoring through the process and would likely increase the number of students who make the transition easily.

Faculty and Student Perspectives on Individualization

Student expectations and experiences of individualization map well onto faculty beliefs about what should be true of a Hampshire graduate. An interview study of students and faculty (Payne, Rhodes, Weisler, and Trosset, 2011) shows strikingly consistent expectations of faculty for student outcomes with regard to individualization. Faculty's top-tier concerns were for developing independence and confidence and for improving a host of academic skills that are unlikely to be different from those at other liberal arts colleges (for example, reading, writing, research, critical thinking, and oral presentation). There were, of course, other goals listed as middle and lower tier, but the strong emphasis on independence is of interest here.

Similarly, students come to Hampshire with the primary expectation that they will find their interests and passions and then explore them with a great deal of freedom. They overwhelmingly said that their expectations of being able to follow their interests were exceeded because of the lack of requirements. Many credit their reported increase in independence and ability to advance their ideas to this freedom to create their own program of study. Of course, there are some students who were not able to marshal the resources needed to take full advantage of the system as early in their college careers as they would have liked. So, for some students, learning to really complete a research project or identify their true interests happened during their Division III projects rather than squarely in Division II. In some interviews, students talk of multiple faculty who have advised them well and pushed them in productive directions; in other interviews they feel that they "fell through the cracks." This speaks to a need for the College to ensure that all students receive strong, engaged advising, and that students understand their responsibility in seeking out advising and using the CASA office if they do not feel they have sufficient supports.

Conclusion

We originally conceptualized a college based on individualization because we believed in the power of individuals to chart their own courses, build their interest in different ways, and ask and answer their own questions. In creating a college wherein all students create individual-

ized concentrations and major capstone projects, we as faculty have seen the vastly different products, skill sets, and pathways that students have taken to fulfill their requirements for graduation. We have seen students grow in their practical, analytic, and creative skills, as well as in their ability to reflect on their own learning and set goals for their next steps. And, of course, growth in each of these domains is not the same for all students. Rather than expect it to take place, we have learned to help students expand their repertoires across these varied skill sets while also building their own specific pockets of deeper expertise. The very nature of individualized student concentrations supports a broader view of learning outcomes than is typically articulated at the college level.

As Robert Sternberg (1997) points out, creating curricula that require practical, analytical, and creative skills allows more points of entry and engages more diverse learners. It also validates what many of us know, but do not necessarily admit when talking about college outcomes—successful lives are built in different ways. Not everyone finds work and meaning in his or her life by engaging in analytical thinking about ideas. Some do. But others build careers that depend on excellent practical skills or creative endeavors. Individualization allows us to build those strengths instead of ignoring them.

At Hampshire, individualization is accomplished through a divisional system that requires close advising. But it is not done as an isolated curricular element. It is done in concert with inquiry teaching and learning and the valuing of alternative learning experiences. As a result, students learn to pursue their own questions and develop methodologies to answer them. When they leave they are very capable of acting on their ideas, whether it be in graduate school, organizations, or entrepreneurial pursuits.

Notes

1. Hampshire's social justice origins emerged from post-World War II atrocities and McCarthy-era censorship. In this context, independent critical thinking and informed action is both significant and quite radical.
2. In this example, we use primary articles in the sciences. In other disciplines, students use literature used by experts in the field, such as primary documents in history, cases in legal studies, and so forth.
3. The multiple cultural perspective requirement asks students to engage one or more of the following critical areas in their Division II concentration, though they are encouraged to integrate all three: non-Western perspectives, race in the United States, and the relationship of power to the production of knowledge. This requirement is integral to how students develop the questions of their Division II portfolio at both its inception and completion. Student portfolios must show evidence of how they have engaged one or more of the critical areas and include reflection on the requirement in relationship to their concentration in some component of the Division II portfolio (<http://www.hampshire.edu/academics/multiple-cultural-perspectives.htm>).
4. Aligned with Hampshire's commitment to engaged scholarship, "students are asked to design opportunities and seek innovative ways to help address critical needs as defined by communities and organization" in and outside of the College (<http://www.hampshire.edu/academics/CEL-2-requirement.htm>). These opportunities may be linked to a course or developed independently. Similar to the multiple cultural perspectives requirement, the CEL requirement must be documented and reflected upon in the student's Division II portfolio.
5. National Science Foundation statistics show that women are awarded bachelor's degrees at least as often as males. Students of color are woefully underrepresented in pursuing degrees in science and engineering fields. Of course, receiving a degree is only one metric in shifting the culture of science, as retention and advancement are equally important. Also, separating women and students of color is a false dichotomy, as women of color face unique obstacles entering STEM fields.
6. Examples of such programs are The Critical Studies of Childhood, Youth and Learning, Film and Photo, Music, and Theatre.

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