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Thoughts on Academic Quality

In this edition of the *Faculty Forum*, a2uhum 10.02 197.640 ()Tj10.02 0 0 10.02 169.1735 409.6198 Tm(yet)Tj10.02 0 0 10.02 183.8806

tation in
the meaning of the term: on the one hand, learning pursued
at the highest level; on the other, the exclusivity of the

of wisdom.” (This is no doubt
connected with the fact that the terminal academic degree in
most disciplines is still the “Doctor of Philosophy.”) As
virtually all Hellenic thinkers made clear, “wisdom”
involved a dynamic combination of knowledge of what is
true, understanding the broader principles underlying why
and how the truth can be known, and sound judgment in
relating the two and applying them to one’s own experi

definition or reliable evaluation. Certainly as

In my area of research methods, measurement, and st

the PINS program has been essential in providing funds to support undergraduate research; continued support and expansion of the PINS program would benefit the academic quality of the University. Further, emphasis on understanding the creativity of the past, will prepare students for their own creative work.

In the past year, tve work.

discuss the way these ideas are embedded in a set of variables that require negotiation and compromise in terms of their implications. For example, in order to meet student projections, a department may admit students of questionable academic talent. Once in the program, however, what obligation does the department have to help these students succeed? In this scenario, "the academic enterprise" raises interesting questions about "academics toward what end?" Is academia for the end of student development assisting society, or for the growth of disciplinary knowledge? The answer is probably some combination of these.

As intriguing as I find the above, I've decided to focus on a different point, one that addresses issues of theory and practice. In short, I believe that a university needs to address both. In doing so, the university expands its notions of "academia," and increases its vitality and overall purpose. My line of reasoning is as follows:

1) The Theoretic

Theoretic knowledge is useful for solving problem ideas of the mind. Theoretical problem

that serves individuals, families and groups, neighborhoods and communities, and societies. Social work is a *professional* discipline. We are very much committed to the quality of the professionals we graduate. Social work is an *integrative* discipline, seeking both to develop its own knowledge base as well as use and contribute to the many allied social sciences with whom we collaborate. Social work scholars seek to make a difference, so we place emphasis on the social utility of our work. Given this propensity to actually do things that affect people, social work scholars and social work professionals must be held to a high quality standard for our scholarship and for our teaching. That is, we may be more potentially dangerous scholars than your average poet (with apologies to Bill Zaranka).





