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## HISTORY IN HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS: DIALOGUE AND DISCOURSE

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### ABSTRACT

Aim/Purpose	This paper encourages the reader to think about the role history, or foundations, plays in graduate programs in the field of higher education. In so doing it looks at the types of conversations scholars in other fields and disciplines have had concerning the value of teaching students to think historically in settings where history is not the primary mode of scholarship, before thinking critically about the conversation we have had as it concerns higher education graduate programs.
Background	In many ways higher education programs have a complicated relationship with history. In some ways it can be seen as a central pursuit and in other ways it can be seen as a marginal scholarly activity. These two conflicting paradigms of central and marginal reflect a lack of scholarly discussion on what the field wants and expects from history.
Methodology	This paper considers the scholarly discussion that has happened in three fields apart from higher education administration in an attempt to suggest ways that scholars in higher education programs might conceptualize the value and role that history should play in our graduate programs.
Contribution	This paper invites scholars to think about what they want and expect students to gain from coursework on the history of higher education in comparison to what other fields have seen as the major reasons for including similar coursework.
Findings	Despite a generalized commitment to teaching the foundations of higher education, the field has not been clear about what it expects students to gain from this type of coursework. Although it is easy to suggest that teaching foundations is important, there has been limited scholarly work that meaningfully grapples with questions about the value of foundations in higher education programs.

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Recommendations for Practitioners and Researchers	As practitioners and researchers, we need to better articulate what we think foundations brings to graduate students in higher education programs and we need to do so in a manner that creates a single coherent paradigm for students.
Keywords	higher education, foundations, graduate education, higher education programs

## INTRODUCTION

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For some scholars (Janak 2015; Nash, 1964; Violas, 1990; Zey, Labaree, Gleason, & Golub, 2006) history, or foundations as it is sometimes called, is a core component of teaching graduate students in education more broadly. Although the term foundations is sometimes used more expansively to encompass history, philosophy, and a broad range of other topics, here I interpret it as more narrowly confined, and consisting mainly of the history of higher education. Fully half of the most prestigious programs in higher education offer a course on the history of higher education, and Card, Chambers, and Freeman (2016) identified the history of higher education as the single most prevalent type of course across higher education PhD programs with fully 68% of all programs surveyed offering such a course. History is also given a prominent place during the CAHEP (Council for the Advancement of Higher Education Programs) preconference at ASHE where they include a session on teaching the history of higher education. We can see the promotion of history in this setting as the promotion of historical teaching by senior scholars, in a way that is designed to facilitate the teaching of history by non-historians. Kris Renn explained the tension in her CAHEP session on teaching history in 2015 as attempting to balance the forces of pure history (or history for history's sake) and applied history (or history informing our applied field) (K. Renn, personal communication, December 3, 2018).

The above description suggests that history is indeed central to the teaching of students in higher education programs. However, at the same time we can also see history as a marginal activity that does not play a large role within departments of higher education. The 2018 ASHE conference had 11 papers presenting historically oriented work out of approximately 600 total papers. The lack of historical work at one of the major higher education-oriented conferences is mirrored by a similar lack in prestigious higher education journals. The six higher education journals Bray and Major (2011) identify as having the highest level of prestige published only four articles I would identify as historical between 2016 and 2018 (Graves 2018; Hevel 2017; Hevel 2016; Ris 2016). These six journals are *The Journal of Higher Education*, *Review of Higher Education*, *Research in Higher Education*, *Journal of College Student Development*, *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*, and *Higher Education*. This lack of historical scholarship is not limited to our journals. Many departments (including my own) lack an historian and those departments that do include an historian typically have only a single such scholar. Furthermore, many of the most prestigious programs do not include or offer a course on the history of higher education at the PhD level. I identify the most prestigious programs according to the US News and World Report rankings and include the top 12 programs. While these rankings are problematic in a number of ways, they do offer a heuristic to scaffold any discussion. Indeed, a simple analysis of publicly available information on program websites shows that of the twelve most prestigious programs only the University of Michigan, Vanderbilt, and Harvard require a course on the history of higher education. This lack of history is not limited to the lack or presence of an individual course centered on history. Indeed, half of the courses I took as part of my graduate studies included no readings that could be considered historical in nature, and I suspect my experience is not unique.

So then, which of these two alternatives for the place of history is correct? Is it marginal or is it central? For me, the prominent place given to history within CAHEP serves to highlight the marginal status history occupies. A session on teaching history has been offered for the past 5 years. Although it is possible to see the regular inclusion of these sessions at CAHEP as a statement about the need for history and the central place it occupies, my contention is that the regular inclusion of this session at CAHEP suggests something different. Specifically, history is so regularly included because

early career faculty are uncertain about the place history occupies. After all, if faculty were more familiar with history, more certain of what role history occupies within the curriculum, and more familiar with the scholarly conversation about the use of history it would not need to be revisited every year at CAHEP. Furthermore, the lack of faculty doing historical work suggests that when such a course is offered, it is typically taught by non-specialists who may be less familiar with historical research and historical thought. And indeed, the need to include sessions on teaching history at CAHEP bears this out.

My argument here is not that history is central or is not central. Although to be clear, I do think that history has value in the study of higher education, and I would like to see it included within a wide variety of coursework. Instead, my argument is that the field of higher education has not adequately discussed what to do with history and what place it should occupy within the field. Departments and faculty are operating within two conflicting paradigms that simultaneously assert that history is a core component of our teaching and that history and historical work is not something that is published or advanced. It is my contention that this contradiction persists because there has not been an open and public debate within the higher education community about the value of history. This type of open discussion on the value and place of history has happened extensively in other fields, most notably science education where there has been a lengthy and recurring discussion that can be traced back to the 1960's (Kauffman, 1980; Klopfer, 1969; Monk & Osborne, 1997; Weinberg, 2005). This type of discussion has also occurred in the field of Music (Natvig, 2002), Literature (Graff, 2008), and Law (Phillips, 2010; Woodard, 1967). It is my hope that by organizing a literature review centered on the value of teaching history and the place it should occupy in the curriculum, higher education as a field can begin to clarify what place it wants history to occupy within the field and within the curriculum.

## TEACHING HISTORY IN OTHER FIELDS

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Given the lack of discussion within the field of higher education, my own analysis will draw, in part, on similar discussions that have happened in other fields. This will guide my analysis of what limited discussion has happened around the inclusion of history in higher education programs. The discussion that has happened in different fields can help us understand the role that history can play in our own curriculum. First, science; second, literature; and third, history itself. Each of these discussions is different, although all three are focused on what value history brings to students who are not necessarily looking to become historians. The discussion in the sciences is primarily focused on the value of teaching students about the historical progression of science through different paradigms, much as Thomas Kuh understood them in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuh, 1962). The discussion in Literature revolves around the need to teach the historical controversies and changes that have occurred within the curriculum, rather than hiding those controversies and presenting a single canon of works. And the discussion in history centers around questions related to how history can help students develop critical thinking skills and draw connections with other areas of study.

### *HISTORY OF SCIENCE*

In many ways the space the history of science occupies is quite similar to that occupied by the history of higher education. In both fields, history is described as central (Card, Chambers, & Freeman, 2016; Popper, 1957), yet in both, it is fundamentally different from the work in which more normative scholars are engaged. Nonetheless, the scholarly discussion around the role history plays in science education has occupied a more prominent role than in higher education. Here it is important to further clarify that I will be restricting my analysis to scholarship that is concerned with educating students at the post-secondary level. There is an equally rich discussion about the role history of science can play in primary and secondary education. As early as 1947, James Conant described a method of teaching science which he coined as case history. This method envisioned college students

learning about the evolution of major scientific ideas through an analysis of their historical progression. For Conant (1947), such an organization of the curriculum was not thought of as separate from more traditional science education. It was not conceptualized as a course on the history of science, but instead as a means to organize and teach science content that conveys information about “the process of science, the scientific enterprise, and the characteristics of scientists” (Klopfer 1964).

By the 1980’s this centering of history within science education was no longer as widely practiced. Kauffman (1980) noted the average graduate from a science program had only the most minimal understanding about the history of their specialty. Kauffman’s analysis of history in the science curriculum was more balanced than that provided by Conant (1947) or Klopfer (1964) in that he recognized that the viewpoint of the historian and the viewpoint of the scientist were in many ways opposed. However, for Kauffman (1980) any disadvantage that might arise out of this opposition was outweighed by the manner in which history is able to portray science and the scientific process, not as a dull and unimaginative process, but instead as a human activity and a process of continuous revision.

The late 1990’s saw another change in the attitude about teaching the history of science. For scholars such as Weinberg (1998), the history of science represents an ideal space to teach non-specialists about a specialty. The emphasis history places on story and narrative offers a way into the sciences for individuals who may not have the same obsessions as specialists. At the same time, Weinberg (1998) sees the teaching of history to specialists as potentially problematic because it suggests a valorization of the great, heroic achievements of past scientists and prevents us from thinking critically about ways in which the associated theories are no longer accurate within the scope of modern advances. The tension inherent in Weinberg’s (1998) conceptualization of the history of science is dealt with by Holton (2003) as a matter of curriculum. For Holton, the lack of teaching on the major works of science is best addressed by familiarizing students with major scientific works such as Galileo’s *Two New Sciences* or Archimedes’ *On the Equilibrium of Planes and On Floating Bodies*. Holton (2003) quotes an early advocate of history of science education James Clerk: “It is of great advantage to the student of any subject to read the original memoirs on that subject, for science is always most completely assimilated when it is in the nascent state” (p. 607). For Holton (2003) this means not only including original source materials, but also presenting the humanistic aspects of science. Indeed, his own textbook first published in 1952 and now rebranded as *Physics, the Human Adventure: From Copernicus to Einstein and Beyond* (Holton & Brush, 2001) continues to advance just this aspect of post-secondary science education.

The manner in which the history of science has been incorporated and limited since Conant’s (1947) description of case history demonstrates a process of discussion among scientists as to the proper organization of the history of science within the curriculum. The general trajectory demonstrates an awareness that the history of science offers students the opportunity to think critically about current science and to otherwise interrogate accepted practice within the field.

### ***ENGLISH LITERATURE***

The discussion around teaching the history of science is expressed in obvious terms. The discussion of teaching history within literature is not as clear. Instead, the conversation revolves around, what is referred to by Graff (1993), as teaching the controversy or teaching the conflicts. This discussion begins much later than that surrounding of history of science and comes about as a result of a fragmentation of disciplinary knowledge that occurred during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century (Novik, 1988). Graff sees the literary canon as something that no longer can be agreed upon by scholars, and so literature comes to have a number of competing canons (Graff, 2008). However, the great debate that happened among academics about the canon was not something that was typically shared with students, and so the image that was presented was one of agreement. Graff (1994) suggested that forcing students and faculty to discuss important ideas and social issues around the curricular choices that are made would produce courses with a much more powerful effect. The type of discussion Graff envi-

sions would include a serious analysis about previous curricular choices that have led us to this moment. Indeed, this progression of curricular choices is the focus of Graff's monograph *Professing Literature: An Institutional History* (1987/2007).

To some extent, the disagreement over teaching this type of history as part of the literature curriculum is not actually a disagreement. Harold Fromm (1994) observes that the controversy over the curriculum is already out in the open, particularly for scholars teaching courses grounded in feminism or post-colonial theory. Thus, the conversation around the need to incorporate this type of historical discussion takes a different form for Fromm (1994), specifically, an argument over whether or not the field is already doing just such a thing. Fromm (1994) sees the diversity of voices within the academy and the curriculum as serving to highlight the role of history within the literature curriculum and so the need Graff (1993) identifies is wrong.

Friedmann Weidauer (1996) offers an altogether different rationale for teaching this history and disagrees with Fromm (1994) that the field is already adequately doing so. Weidauer asserts that the field is providing the diverse types of courses that would seem to make this history apparent. However, he observes that these courses are far less popular because students understand neither the role these diverse voices play within the curriculum, nor the role they play in defining the canon. For Weidauer (1996), teaching the history behind this conflict is imperative to creating equal representation. However, this should not be understood as an attempt to expand the canon. Instead, for Weidauer (1996), the true goal and need driving the teaching of history in literature is to create an understanding that the types of works in the canon and/or excluded from the canon are themselves historically determined. By drawing the attention of students to this one simple fact, Weidauer (1996) hopes to create a space that opens literature to diverse writers, and more importantly, diverse genres of writing.

The discussion of curriculum and history in literature happens in an altogether shorter time frame than in science. An astute reader will notice that the entire dialogue I have outlined occurs over just three years. Furthermore, the argument taking place is not a focused one on the argument to include or exclude this type of history in the literature curriculum. Even Fromm (1994) is generally in favor of its inclusion. The argument is whether this is already being done in a sufficient manner and what the goal of any such inclusion should be. This illustrates even more clearly the role history can play within a curriculum that would not seem to be historical in nature.

## ***HISTORY***

It may seem somewhat perverse to include history in this discussion. After all, what else could history departments be teaching if not history? In this case the scholarly discussion has not centered around whether or not to teach history, but rather around the question of why history matters and why it is worth paying attention to for students that are in fields and disciplines where history might not seem entirely relevant. As such, this discussion is not an argument where two camps of scholars disagree fundamentally about the incorporation of history. This specific focus is particularly relevant for us in higher education programs given that the students in our programs are not historians, but typically social scientists.

One of the most prominent sites for the discussion about the value of history to the wider scholarly audience has been in the pages of *Perspectives on History*. *Perspectives* is published by the American Historical Association (AHA) and the journal regularly gives space to questions related to teaching and learning within the discipline. Simply having this regular space to ask questions about teaching history and the value of doing history has clearly energized the debate. One particularly active voice therein is the former Vice President of the AHA's teaching division, Peter Stearns. For Stearns (1998), the value of studying history can be difficult to elucidate. After all, historians are not doctors saving lives or engineers making sure buildings are safe. The lack of an obvious outcome doesn't make history dispensable, but it does make historical work and historical study less tangible. Stearns

(1998) suggests that anytime we are thinking about change, change in elections, change in our military, or even change in the way we interact with the rest of the world, we are essentially asking questions about history. History gives humans “access to the laboratory of human experience” (Stearns, 1998, para. 14). Without it we would in many ways be unable to understand how the world really works. History acts as an aid to individual memory and to collective memory, not by ensuring we have a fixed account of events, but by providing us with a serious attempt to understand the complicated interplay between change and continuity.

William H. McNeill (1985) offers a rather different defense for the value of history. His defense is laid out as a series of statements or hypothetical problems facing history as a discipline. McNeill first suggests that historians are unable to compile a single definitive historical answer to almost anything other than the most basic of facts. And so, if historians are not some sort of objective tellers of the truth as it really happened, McNeill asks, why should we bother with history at all? The author responds to his own question by asserting that the systematic sciences – be they the hard sciences or the social sciences – discount time and therefore oversimplify reality. McNeill then suggests that history has become fragmented and thought of as being composed of many smaller histories instead of a single essential narrative. He again asks if this is the case, if one history is as good or as true as any other, why should we consider history? His response is that history allows humans to understand the three spheres of our lived experiences: the local, the national, and the global. For McNeill (1985), without history we would have no opportunity to connect ourselves to the rest of the world in small or large ways. History allows us to make yet another attempt, in a seemingly unending stream of such attempts, to understand ourselves and others.

The American Historical Association has offered a far more recent and altogether more utilitarian defense of history. Rather than the types of rhetorical, almost aspirational defenses mounted by Stearns (1998) or McNeill (1985), the AHA introduced the 2016 History Discipline Core which attempts to define what history does in a succinct way and then also identifies a number of competencies and learning outcomes associated therein. In this instance, I would like to focus on just two of the core concepts as they most strongly connect with my own question about the wider use of history. First, history is identified as an inquiry into human experience that demands and directs attention to diverse human experiences across both time and location. Second, history is a public pursuit that makes the past accessible and enables individual persons to become active citizens. History is not about placing dates on a timeline as is often assumed, but instead about the ability to identify and explain continuity and change over time (American Historical Association, 2016).

It is not surprising that all three of these perspectives begin with an assumption that history has value. They are, after all, being advanced by historians. However, it is surprising that even within a field that we can safely assume sees value in history, there is a wide degree of separation in relation to why teaching history matters. For the AHA it is about explaining continuity and change over time. For McNeill it is about understanding ourselves and others in the world. This diversity will prove instructive as I move away from the discussion other fields and disciplines have had about the place of history and move into the discussion higher education programs have had.

### *WHY CONSIDER THESE THREE ACCOUNTS*

Before returning to the place of teaching history in higher education it is worth taking a moment to consider these three accounts – science, literature, and history – and to otherwise ask what each of them suggests about the use of history. The manner in which the history of science has been incorporated, or not incorporated, within post-secondary science education has changed quite a lot since James Conant first proposed case history in 1947. However, this process of change, and the degree to which it was discussed in science publications illustrates just how fruitful a scholarly discussion about the place history should occupy within a field can be. In contrast to this discussion in science, the discussion among literature scholars illustrates how the curriculum itself can be thought of as history. Within this framework history is seen as something that directly impacts what is taught within a

field that is not expressly historical and similarly impacts what gets held up as valid knowledge within the field. Lastly, the discussion amongst historians about the value of history illustrates how divergent two supposedly similar viewpoints can be. One would, after all, expect historians to agree on the value of history. But instead the value of history would seem to have changed (at least among these scholars) from an aspirational value focused on self-understanding to a utilitarian value focused on a skill or series of skills. Now, it is possible that for each of the discussions I have laid out, the result would have been the same had the scholarly field not engaged in an open scholarly debate, i.e., the field would have arrived at the same conclusion without any type of discussion. However, it seems far more likely that this open scholarly debate drove the change as it altered the way individual scientists, historians, and literary scholars felt about the place history should occupy and the skills it should make available to students.

## TEACHING HISTORY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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As I have said previously, discussion about the place history should occupy in higher education programs has not adequately happened. I have included only a small portion of each of the above scholarly conversations to give the reader a sense of how this type of discussion has taken place in other disciplines and fields. However, in the case of higher education, the three articles I am including below are in many ways the entirety of the conversation; a conversation that has taken place off the beaten path as part of ASHE or in our less prestigious journals. One impediment to the type of scholarly discussion for which I am advocating is that it does not seem to fit within the pages of the *Review of Higher Education* or the *Journal of Higher Education* in the same easy way that it does in disciplinary journals such as philosophy or history (Freeman, 2016).

The *Journal of Postsecondary and Tertiary Education* represents one such outlet for scholarship that thinks about the field of higher education. And indeed, it seems to have made a conscious attempt to make space for scholarship that is focused in that way. Nonetheless, this journal represents a lone voice in a space that otherwise tends not to focus on the field, much less the place history should occupy within the field. To restate what I hope to have already made clear, this article seeks to move the metaphorical needle and stimulate debate on the place history should occupy in our teaching on higher education. Although I do think history has great value, I am not seeking to advocate for a greater inclusion of history in our curriculum, but instead to suggest that a rich debate about what we want out of history and what we should include or not include would clarify the seeming contradiction inherent in history as both a marginal activity in higher education and as a central component of our programs.

One instance where scholars have thought about the place history should occupy in higher education programs was published in the inaugural issue of this journal (Nicolazzo & Marine, 2016). Although the article takes the form of a critical duoethnography – essentially an extended ethnographic conversation between two faculty who were each teaching a course section – the content of their discussion really attempts to grapple with why history matters for the study of higher education. For the authors, (Nicolazzo & Marine, 2016), the central tension or problem with the inclusion of history is that it is most often approached and conceptualized through covering content or transmitting knowledge. This places the “banking model” of education (Freire 1970) in conflict with their desire to see history as a vehicle for critical pedagogy and the history classroom as a location particularly well suited to critical pedagogy. Nicolazzo and Marine (2016) deal with this conflict in two ways. First, they move away from a focus on covering content and transmitting knowledge about the history of higher education to instead conceptualize the teaching of history as a process of sense making and interrogation. And second, they acknowledge that in some ways covering content is necessary, and so they attempt to navigate the tension between these two poles of content coverage and critical pedagogy. In so doing, they reimagine the process as one of “both/and” that attempts to convey content while also working with students to interrogate it and understand the ways in which history is socially constructed.

A second attempt to really think about the place of history in higher education came about as part of an online symposium organized by H-Education entitled “Where do historians of education live?: Disciplines and interdisciplines in the academy” (Zey, Labaree, Gleason, & Golub, 2006). This symposium brought together historians of both higher education and teacher education. One of the central themes of this conversation was the distinction between where the history of education is housed (ed. schools) and where those individuals who are interested in the history of education “fit in” (nowhere). One of the central aspects of this lack of fit is the nature of historical courses in the context of an applied program. History does not always look as if it is relevant to the work practitioners are doing, and so history often looks as if it does not belong. However, for Adam Golub (Zey, Labaree, Gleason, & Golub, 2006), the manner in which history and historians do not seem to fit highlights exactly with what history can do in the context of the educational environment, bring together areas typically kept separate and engage in conversations with diverse audiences. In essence, history can act as an interdiscipline, connecting diverse locales within our ostensibly interdisciplinary higher education programs.

The notion that coursework in history does not offer a great deal to the practitioners in our graduate programs is the central focus of Janak (2015). Janak is primarily an historian working in teacher education, but he reflects quite effectively on the role history plays in the educational policy arena. Many of the most well-known surveys on the history of higher education tell a particular narrative that forms around a lack of central policy directives (Labaree, 2016). This lack within our survey texts may contribute to the more general failure to incorporate history within higher education programs. Janak (2015) also observes a second role that history plays in the curriculum – one which merges well with Golub’s (Zey, Labaree, Gleason, & Golub, 2006) suggestion that history can bring separate areas together – that history often falls somewhere in between the more clinical/practical side of higher education and the critical/theoretical side. By effectively straddling these two sides of the higher education research landscape, history can effectively bridge a divide in an extremely effective way. However, this ability to bridge any such gap is by no means guaranteed. Indeed, the emphasis Janak (2015) and Zey, Labaree, Gleason, and Golub (2006) place on fit within the college of education suggests that simply maintaining a place for history is by no means guaranteed.

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

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As I have said earlier, I do think that history has value within the landscape of higher education programs. It is also my belief that the lack of space given to history in our programs and scholarship does not represent a fundamental belief that history does not bring value to our research and teaching, but instead represents a lack of time and effort spent discussing what place history can and should occupy within the field of higher education. Given this lack of discussion, I have chosen to draw heavily on discussions that have happened in the sciences and literature, as well as that coming out of discipline of history itself. Each of these conversations brings an important realization about the role of history within the curriculum. The history of science and the way much of the discussion therein revolves around how to integrate it with the wider curriculum suggests that although many programs offer a history of higher education course, we have not properly considered how we organize the history of higher education within the curriculum as a whole. If my own education is at all typical, the history of higher education is largely self-contained within a foundations course (this was no doubt done with the best of intentions to give the history of higher education a real outlet), but then not dealt with in any meaningful way in other courses. However, if we take the attempts to integrate history within the teaching of science seriously, they provide us with an example of one attempt to bridge this gap, much as Janak (2015) has suggested in K-12 programs.

Whereas the discussion amongst the science community suggests that we may have been too restrictive in how we have organized our curriculum, the discussion amongst literary scholars suggests an altogether different concern with the role of history: the privileging of certain narratives and the role a dominant canon can play therein. In some respects, this is already a concern for scholars of higher

education. The concerns Nicolazzo and Marine (2016) voice within their pedagogy seem remarkably similar to the concerns voiced by the literary community. However, if we look more closely, it becomes clear that the literary community's focus is somewhat different. Yes, they are worried about questions of canon and representation, but their concerns go beyond that. Graff's (1993) notion of teaching the controversy suggests that we need to do more than expand the canon. Indeed, we would need to go even farther than Nicolazzo and Marine (2016) suggest when they advocate for history as a process of sense making and interrogation. Instead, history needs to be a process that opens higher education up to multiple competing narratives, much as Weidauer (1996) would have opened literature to diverse genres of writing. The way we have conceptualized the history of higher education as either the dominant narrative told in normative texts such as *A History of American Higher Education* (Thelin, 2011) or as an opposition to that dominant narrative told in texts such as *Ebony and Ivy* (Wilder, 2013) or *Disrupting Postsecondary Prose: Toward a Critical Race Theory of Higher Education* (Patton, 2015), limits the way we conceptualize history and essentially forms a different canon, rather than truly expanding the canon to encompass diverse narratives.

Science and literature both suggest ways of thinking about the curriculum and the place history can occupy within fields not otherwise focused on historical teaching and scholarship. In contrast, the discussion taking place in history gives us three different explanations of what historical thinking brings to students, and why it matters over and above specific curricular concerns. Stearns (1998) draws our attention as educators to the role history plays in studying change and the obvious questions about why history matters at a time when we are failing underserved students and have other seemingly intractable problems within higher education. The American Historical Association (2016) directs our thinking in a different direction suggesting history can connect with the type of social science research that engages many students and scholars in higher education. It does so by alerting us to the human aspects of history as it connects the great diversity of human experience across space and time.

Neither the conceptualization of history provided by science nor that provided by literature should suggest that we, in higher education programs, are doing something wrong. Instead, both suggest that we need to more fully interrogate the choices we have made, continue to make and will make in the future. Similarly, the conceptualizations put forward by historians suggests that we have too greatly limited our thinking when we have considered what we want history to provide our students. It can do far more than tell us about previous generations and the origins of higher education in the US. Rather, history can help us understand the role time plays in the changing higher education environment and otherwise connect us as learners to a diverse set of human experiences that span both time and place.

This literature review represents a first step forward. It is not an attempt to advocate for policy changes within departments or to suggest ways that faculty might think about history in courses. Instead, it represents an attempt to open a space for a critically important dialogue about what place we want history to occupy in our higher education programs and what we want that history to do for our students. In keeping with my desire to open space for this dialogue, I am consciously choosing not to advance policy recommendations of one sort or another. However, I do wish to suggest three platforms for this conversation. First, I would like to suggest that we create space within our conferences. The nature in which conferences enable live, real-time conversation is vitally important for this discussion. Second, I would like to suggest that scholars need to consider publishing peer-reviewed journal articles that discuss both the content of innovative courses, and that also ask more fundamental questions about why we think these courses belong, or perhaps do not belong, in a curriculum that is otherwise focused on social science research. And third, a special topics section within a specific issue of a journal. This would more directly put scholars in conversation with one another and otherwise allow higher education as a field to more effectively think about the types of questions I see as necessary. Although I would encourage scholars to respond in the pages of *The Journal of Postsecondary and Tertiary Education*, I would also suggest that as scholars we need to push the

bounds of acceptable discourse and otherwise expand the spaces where we think about the content of our programs. In a field that is intensely focused on the study of students and institutions, advancing the field requires that we open the space necessary to talk about the field itself.

## A CONCLUDING REMARK

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Within the confines of this paper I have made every attempt to separate my particular opinions on the value of history from the position I advance here. In so doing I have tried to keep the focus of my argument on the need for the field of higher education to engage in a conversation about the place we want history to occupy, and what in particular we want our students to gain from the study of history. However, I do want to take a moment and suggest that maintaining the status quo will do more than preserve an environment where we tell our students two conflicting stories about the place of history within their education and their research, and these stories will do more than generate confusion as our students internalize the notion that history is central and yet simultaneously marginal. Muddling through and telling our students these conflicting stories risks requiring our students to do something -- situate their studies within historical contexts and understand how the problems facing higher education have changed over time -- while not providing those same students with the training and coursework that enables them to consider these problems from an historical perspective. We will essentially be setting students up to fail as we require them to think and solve problems in a way we no longer teach them to do.

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