

to more specialized knowledge domains. In addition, at this age, students are still developing their senses of self, purpose and relation to the world. These dynamics combine to make the post-secondary experience one of tremendous change as each student (re)defines his/her affiliations, life goals, perspectives and relationships to others.

The third metaphor, “temple,” refers to the function of universities as the arbiters of what constitutes objective knowledge (i.e. subjects, domains, theories, concepts, etc.) and who has a right to influence the evolution of knowledge development (i.e. professors). In this role, professors in higher education are often seen as an apolitical, unbiased and trustworthy assessor more than a government bureaucrat, a parent, or an employer.

Fourth, Stevens et al. refer to the “hub” metaphor. Universities are unique physical spaces that bring together elites from almost every sector of modern society. At the most prestigious universities, there is an unparalleled density of national sports stars, Nobel laureates, Fortune 500 executives and political leaders that are within shouting distance of each other and sometimes even collaborate with each other. This phenomenon seems spur a positive feedback loop—the more prestigious the university, the greater the density of elites which leads to more prestige for the university which attracts more elites, and so on.

Student's Responses on Piazza

Key Questions and Comments Emerging from the SIEVE Metaphor

Hsiaolin Hsieh

A “Social Sieve”

Formal education has been less of a ladder than a “social sieve” (Jencks & Riesman 1968), regulating access to privileged social positions. Max Weber’s core insight that education has a dual character—both facilitating and constraining social opportunity—has informed most subsequent stratification scholarship...(Stevens et al. 2008)

A university is an unjust social sieve? (Jason Oscar Randolph)

I grew up in the eighties in Oakland and both of my parents coming from lower socio-economic status backgrounds always described the experience of being tracked in high school by their guidance counselors. My mom wanted to be a journalist and her guidance counselor suggested cannery worker. My dad wanted to be a lawyer and his counselors and teachers suggested trade school. Although our class lecture referred to the idea that our matriculation to Stanford was

actually supported by the thousands of other students that were not accepted to Stanford, I don't view a lot of institutional admissions decisions as legitimate and that makes me question the idea that our matriculation was supported by their rejection.

While I obviously hold some animosity for what I view as a discriminatory practice, I don't believe that the sieve function of higher learning institutions will ever be affected by the extraction of any part of the institution itself.

Is physical presence at universities necessary for them to function as sieves? (Albert Lim)

In the last few decades, as university enrollment increased through greater access, the nature of the university as sieve has also evolved. A college degree no longer guarantees privilege and social positions. The particular university matters, and privilege is today restricted to a handful of universities (think Stanford and Harvard). Given how things stand, I suspect it may be difficult for new virtual universities without physical buildings to break the stranglehold these existing brand-name universities have on granting privilege. Virtual universities in such a future, would probably be viewed as inferior to those with physical co-presence. That in essence, would differentiate the universities with physical presence from those without. In fact, their physical presence would only enhance their role as sieve.

"Years of Schooling"

The meaning of "years of schooling" has become ever more variable in the face of the myriad ways to participate in postsecondary education. Even among four-year institutions, widened diversification increasingly undermines the analytical coherence of the meaning of a bachelor's degree. (Stevens et al. 2008)

What is a community college? (Jason Sellers)

I took notice when I read in Regina Deil-Amen's paper that 57% of first-year college students enroll in community colleges, making community college

students a "marginalized majority" in national discussions about higher education. I've also noticed that we seem to have overlooked community colleges in our class discussions these past two weeks; however, assuming that community college/"nontraditional" students potentially stand to benefit the most from online instruction (...that's a big assumption, but that's where my mind has been going, since these students require the greatest flexibility in terms of instructional time and location), it might be worth discussing how we conceive of community colleges as well. So, I'm wondering how a community college might align with Mitchell's classifications?

Key Questions and Comments Emerging from the INCUBATOR Metaphor

Tyler McNally

(1a) What is the role of co-presence?

“I'm struggling to think of examples of incubators that incubate talent as well as a university does, that manage without the co-presence of residential dorms and a physical, immobile campus.” (Dan Meyer)

“The personal growth that universities offer is closely related to the intensity of the campus experience, especially at elite schools. Academic instruction is a key part of this social experience that universities provide. **Taking away traditional classes and the co-presence that goes with them** (closely intertwined with the sense of intellectual challenge for students and the joint quest for knowledge) **would dilute that social experience, even if the non-academic experiences remain** (e.g. athletics, dorm life).” (Patricia Young)

“Part of the incubation is giving students the space to imagine and build the future they want for themselves. They meet others with a broad range of goals and experience, try out different components of potential lives, practice and prepare for doing that in the "real world," and gain cognitive, intrapersonal, and

interpersonal skills they need to pursue that future.” (Betsy Williams)

(1b) But can technology reduce the importance of co-presence on incubation?

“We should expect to see the best examples of non-copresent incubators in the field of technology where members are extremely comfortable with the technologies that facilitate non-copresence. But as often as we find people working and learning remotely in the field of technology, Google, Apple, and Microsoft still have enormous home offices in Mountain View, Cupertino, and Redmond, with comparable satellite offices around the globe. Even smaller firms like 37Signals, who make their friendliness to remote workers a point of pride, still maintain an office in Chicago. Imagine K12 and Y Combinator both call themselves "startup incubators" and both have physical offices and host events in the same physical location.” (Dan Meyer)

“You can't eliminate courses and pretend universities will be the same. However, **partly online courses** (with lectures, learning tools, assignments, background materials etc. all online) **can enhance learning and the academic experience as long as academically-centered interaction/co-presence is still part of the campus experience.** Such co-presence would become more efficiently focused on small-group problem-solving and discussion sessions that build on the online materials.” (Patricia Young)

“[Perhaps] successful copresence simply needs to be—in the words of Bill Bowen—the opportunity for minds to rub together... I have often worked remotely and the entire team (up to five people on a project) would simply keep Skype and/or other video-chat services on throughout the day. I felt very tapped into the minds/people with whom I was working. A few of these individuals—who I worked with daily for three or so years—I have yet to meet in person...thus, I do think an incubator can survive without copresence, but there needs to be a "there" there, even if it's via remote access and some type of face-to-face relationship (and no those faces, in my opinion, need not necessarily be in the

same room).” (Laura Moorhead)

(1c) Beyond co-presence, what specific elements are critical for the incubation function?

All [universities] offer some way for students to mix in organizations with goals that are hobbies for most and pre-professional activities for a very select few. These activities foster students' interpersonal abilities, organizational skills, self-knowledge, time-budgeting, and narrow trivia knowledge. Some provide athletic or spiritual development. Having activities available lets students try out their new selves, fail at organizing projects where it doesn't matter, win and lose elections for leadership, and think about what they need from later life besides just a job. (Betsy Williams)

What if the University moves to a more cost-effective set of office buildings? Students will lose the sense of familiarity they have built up with the space, but otherwise nurturing can go on unimpeded. Raze the dorms and dining halls? Students must suddenly deal with the quotidian hassles that accompany staying sheltered and fed. A number of them will be less healthy and more stressed, and the incubator will no longer do as great a job. They will spend less time with others students, and some of their development may be lost. (Betsy Williams)

Perhaps the most essential part of the incubator is the societal expectation about what it means to attend a college or university. There are free museum admissions and discounted movie tickets. There is a freedom of action, of lifestyle choice, and from responsibility that is granted to students. While not universally respected, students are accorded space to grow and experiment. They may say intemperate things or make unfortunate hairstyle choices. They have the time and space to think about concepts and theories and alternatives. Within the university, they meet more people like this, but they are allowed this freedom most of the places they go while students. (Betsy Williams)

The idea of the university is ultimately the vital incubator for students. Trappings

like student organizations or labs or familiar surroundings may help students take advantage of this nurturing space. The better the incubator and the more students can engage with it, the better. But ultimately the societal stamp of approval on students exploring, experiencing, and growing is what gives the university most of its power as an incubator. (Betsy Williams)

(2) Marketing Messages vs. Resource Allocation for the Incubation function?

“The idea of a university as an incubator was perhaps not the only original reason for a university, but its probably the ostensible reason that parents and college age kids reflect on when they pick a university. The problem is that picking a university, in the current environment, is a bit like buying a used car.”

“You walk onto the show room thinking about things like personal and cognitive development of the student, but the university talks about the 40,000 seat football stadium, the lavish dorms and the Nobel laureates... much of the communication about a university focuses on the NCAA championships, the Nobel prizes, the size of particle accelerators and endowments (perhaps correlated?) or the range and sophistication of exercise equipment. How does this factor into the incubation of students?”

“The sign says, "come to [Insert Prestigious University Here] we teach and develop leaders who will change the world," but the focus (resource allocation) is on a whole host of other activities which sound nice, produce tremendous benefits for the university and the world, but perhaps don't truly result in better teaching, learning and development for the students.” (Tyler McNally)

(3) How does the incubation function vary across societies and national boundaries?

“Most European non-Anglo-Saxon universities [are] set up very different from Stanford University [and other US universities]... Undergraduate studies in many of the US universities... are much more flexible: students can decide up to 2 years into the studies what to focus on. As such, the process of "soul searching" which underlies the "development of modern selves" is, I would argue, much more

integrated into the functionality of undergraduate studies in the US, while in Europe, the purpose of studies is much more restricted to the educational content, with the goal of becoming proficient in a field.... Thus, the assumptions about the developmental level of the students differs strongly between the US and the mainland European universities.” (Engin Bumbacher)

“Furthermore, as most mainland European universities were founded in the cities, their infrastructure is much more interwoven with the cities themselves (also US universities like NYU), and only few universities have their own campuses, distinct from the non-university environment.” (Engin Bumbacher)

“There are [also] many more facilities in (top) US universities that foster extracurricular activities... [and] the identification of students with their university is so much bigger in the States than for example in Switzerland or Germany. That might be because most extracurricular activities in the mainland universities happen outside of the university, as opposed to the US campus-universities. (And it could be argued that this sort of identification might play a crucial role in the incubator concept of the US universities.)” (Engin Bumbacher)

“What makes both the Anglo-Saxon universities and the Europe universities (when looking at the "top tier places") incubators are two main factors:

1. Historically, many political and social movements of change originated in universities, across the globe. Thus, inherently, society perceives universities as hotbeds of explosive social ideas, of change and rebellion. This legacy is nurtured thus by a reinforcing cycle of student dynamics and social perception, as communicated through media, etc. . That way, students automatically have a sort of intellectual freedom that you don't get in work environments.
2. Inherently, studying at such a university, one not only gets challenged to think critically and to support whatever claim with strong arguments. In being challenged that way, one learns to analyze oneself in the context of

the others, to engage in self-reflection constantly, and thus to grow as an individual, modern self.” (Engin Bumbacher)

Key Questions and Comments Emerging from the TEMPLE Metaphor

Brian Perone

Alternatively, we can define a university as a temple “for the sacralization of knowledge as substantive value of modernity” (Stevens). Here they function as arbiters of what constitutes objective knowledge and who has a right to influence and control the evolution and re-definition of knowledge. In this role, professors in are often seen as an apolitical, unbiased and trustworthy assessors, answering to a higher authority of “true knowledge.” Society as a whole looks to universities for answers and, generally, trusts those answers as objectively correct. “A university is a place where knowledge is revered, made visible to those who want to worship it, decorated and embellished to emphasize its importance. The campus is the sacred space itself, festooned with traditional trappings like a church. Professors are the priests, working in the church, sharing the sacred works, participating in and passing on the traditions of the religion. Students are worshipers of knowledge, traveling to the sacred campus to partake in the rituals. The rest of society views the university as an authority on its subject of worship and values the subject even more because such tangible examples of its importance exist” (Perone).

Part of the definition of this role is the university as a beacon of knowledge to society at large. And yet we could also consider a sub-genre of the university as a temple, the university as a monastery, isolating itself and its workings from society at large, while still venerating and, in turn, causing society to venerate, its object of devotion. “But a temple can be isolated from most of its followers (think monasteries of old) and still perform the work of its faith” (Perone). Consider the experiences at St. John’s College, which deliberately tries to stand apart from the outside world:

“The question, then, is what is essential to the University (or College) if its primary role is that of monastery?

- A campus clearly is, though a monastery needs seclusion more than it needs beauty. That those often coincide is fortunate, if not necessary.
- It certainly needs students, since it exists primarily for its monkish younglings.
- It also needs faculty, so that the students can learn from someone and have monasterial rules enforced upon them, even if that enforcement is indirect.
- It needs some kind of credential, I think, to signal that a student's period of monkishness has ended.
- It benefits, similarly, from rituals on intake and output of students.
- As for what such a place does not need, I think the list of things that St.

John's does not have is interesting.

- There is no interscholastic athletics program, though there is a gym and vague gestures at various intramural happenings.
- There is no research. The faculty are responsible only for teaching. Tenure is granted based largely upon the results of student-run committees.
- There is no variety in the academic program: everyone takes the same courses and receives the same degree.” (Franz).

And yet, “...even though St. John's works as an institution without many of the trappings of the University, it is marginal in large part because it lacks those very trappings. Without a research faculty or an athletic program, what public face can a place like St. John's depend upon for publicity?” (Franz). Clearly the lack of attributes we associate with a university hurts schools like St. John's that chose to distance themselves.

Like public engagement, the other characteristics of a university are important in its role as a temple. Faculty, students, rituals, campuses, none is necessary on its own but all contribute to the overall role. “A university with no students would be different, but still could be an institution for the development and preservation of knowledge... Conversely, a university without professors would be different, but could still work to share and value learning among peers” (Perone). One or two of these can be removed, especially from an established institution, but not without a cost. “[Y]ou can take pieces of a University away one at a time without losing too much, but do it enough and you end up losing everything” (Franz).

Key Questions and Comments Emerging from the HUB Metaphor

Max Alexander

A university is a place where elites from virtually all sectors of modern society intersect (Stevens. et. al. 2008)...

A hub without and Endowment (Joshua A. Mendoza)

But would this still be so if Stanford did not have the large endowment (through The Stanford Fund) that it is privileged with? It's likely that it wouldn't since The Stanford Fund is one of the primary reasons, if not *the* primary reason, that Stanford has been such a successful hub. The hundreds of millions of dollars that

are constantly poured into Stanford help fund, among many other things, the very research and extracurricular activities that make Stanford a world-class institution. This research and extracurricular activities, not just the “smart kids” here, make it highly desirable to employers and attracts several different industrial sectors from all over Silicon Valley because it shows that the students here are capable of academic excellence and excellence in real-world research and applications as well. Without the endowment to fund all of these things, it is unlikely that Stanford would be the institution that it is today.

An elite hub w/o the elite (Rene Kizilcec)

1. What is a university (hub) if there is no elite coming together to network and interact, but a group of ordinary people instead?
2. What becomes of a university (or hub) when all its elite has left?

The notion of the modern university as a hub connecting multiple institutional domains was implicit in the benchmark analysis of U.S. higher education by Jencks & Riesman (1968) (Stevens. et. All 2008)...

The spokes-free hub (anonymous)

To function as a hub, the university requires the continued upkeep of several key elements. Specifically, it requires maintenance of the spokes which encourage elites from the tire (the 'outside world') to travel to and spend time at the university. Let us take the example given in class of members of the Stanford community. Would Condoleeza Rice stay connected to the institution if it lacked a physical campus, or would she prefer to spend her time in Ithaca or Hanover? Would Andrew Luck have chosen to attend Stanford if it didn't have a football team? Probably not. (Would he have chosen to attend if it did have a football team but that team was mediocre-to-middling? Probably not.)

But would Stanford be able to serve as a "hub" as effectively with online classes, and how highly valued is that function compared to the others? (Class discussion)...

A hub without a hub (Benjamin Williams)

When considering the university as a hub for innovation—specifically innovative ideas that lead to entrepreneurial ventures—it is initially difficult to imagine how effectively an institution would be able to accomplish this goal with the support of a physical campus. A shared space where students can openly and informally share ideas, stories, problems, solutions, etc. After further consideration, however, I wonder how much attribution can really be given to a physical campus. Surely, it must be a part of it, but perhaps it is a much smaller portion than one would initially assume.

Historical scholarship makes clear that early Americans patronized colleges and universities, both public and private, partly to aggrandize the cultural stature of particular cities and regions, partly to seed regional economies, and partly to enable elite social networks to coalesce (Baltzell 1958, Story 1980, Thelin 2004, Wechsler 1977)...

Rituals in the Hub of the University (David Ayrton Lopez)

For one thing, rituals create distinct classes and roles within a university. At any given ceremony in a university it is very clear who is in charge and who has the most power—both by dress, and by location. (For example: at graduation, the deans and president sit on an elevated stage, and wear colored robes, with different tassels, ornaments, etc.) If you get rid of rituals, you are getting rid of a power structure in the process.

Rituals are also inherently an important part of the community and familial environment of a university, especially a private one. Rituals are significant in that they connect students to legacy, and a history of greatness. By participating in something ritualistic, they are asserting that their standings are comparable. Rituals also heavily hinge on historicity and “buy-in”—if you participate in one ritual, you can automatically connect that every past year of ritual as well.

The modern university commingles a wide array of elites. Privileged families and those who wish someday to be counted among them send their children to the most selective (and often the more costly) undergraduate programs to which they are afforded access. (Stevens. et. all 2008)...

A hub w/o an admissions process (Johnny Winston)

The University as a hub for societal elites depends on high probability of face-to-face co-present intellectual and social interactions between the elite. The hub thus depends on a high concentration of elites and not just their sheer presence.

Without the high concentration the University as a hub for elites is no more.

Hubs and the Honorary Degree (Liam Aiello)

How does a university's ability to function as a hub, at which elites from a variety of sectors of society gather, relate to the granting of honorary degrees?

What are the benefits from granting of honorary degrees, from this unique form of association with luminaries in the areas of academics, politics, the arts, humanitarian good? Perhaps the newly-declared doctor volunteers his or her time to speak at the university, or even lecture or teach for a prolonged period. Maybe a graduating student, upon learning of the honorary degree recipient's contributions to the humanities or sciences, begins reconsidering his or her own work in light of this eminent academic. Maybe the graduates are inspired or emboldened by knowing this celebrity is now, albeit tenuously, a member of their coterie. Maybe this university-as-hub is benefitting from the financial contributions of their honorary degree recipient. Or maybe the university simply wishes to extend its reputation as a place where these elites gather, a site where, at one point, Salman Rushdie or Steven Colbert gave an address.

Key Questions and Comments Emerging from the MANGLE Metaphor

Brian Perone

We can also define the university as a mangle, a “web of systems, held together by a specific organizational form, through which knowledge is produced” (Pickering, 1995). Just as a toaster is the object that holds together a web of systems for producing toast, a university is the object/organization that holds together a web systems to ultimately product knowledge. Much like in the university’s role as a temple, part of the job of a university is to manage the definition of knowledge across this diverse web. How does society know when something is legitimate knowledge? When a university endorses it as such. But there are other organizations in this system that can serve similar purposes. When potential knowledge is produced, “one signal is whether these actors [who have created potential knowledge] participate in the formal academic discourse - the world of publishing and conferences is another "specific organizational form" that serves as a legitimizing mechanism for certain types of investigatory approaches. But this sphere is also exhibiting fluidity, supporting a more expansive discourse with an increased move towards online, open-access journals. Other knowledge-oriented discourses take place in the blogosphere, in news journals, in popular non-fiction. There are "public intellectuals" who are unaffiliated with the academy” (Schneider). Such a view of a university, as a central part of a web rather than the entirety of the web, suggests a more robust organization, one capable of weathering its changing roles more effectively.

Key Questions and Comments Emerging from the QUASI-SOVERIGN Metaphor

Ivy Manwen Guo

Quasi-Sovereign means that formal organization that performs as a stage and is given ceremonial deference by other polities, such as, citizenship rules and rituals, admissions tests as symbolic boundaries, special national laws, and ceremonial warfare with competitors/peers. It is important because it gives universities peculiar powers and probably fateful autonomy going forward—they can "act in the world" in ways that other organizations cannot.

The quasi-sovereign University without sports? (Kristen Howell)

The idea of a university as a quasi-sovereign entity is perpetuated by the various identity confirming rituals, rules and boundaries that create a dichotomy of inclusion versus exclusion. Everything from the weight that the name holds in the outside world to the admission process to certain rights of passage that are awarded to “members” further establish the sovereignty of a university. Members are differentiated from others from the outside or other universities and participate in an internal society of sorts. While attending a university, this is particularly poignant. The rules, rituals and customs that

are operative on campus and signify citizenship define your life. However, after the incubator years as a student, the status shifts to alumni, which carries similar yet less tangible forces that signify membership to the institution.

To me, an archetypal instance of this us/them in/out “othering” power that universities have is in the athletics. I am particularly thinking of both elite and state universities here where athletics play a large role in defining the institution both publicly and internally. Alumni crowd into “Stanford” bars or “Cal” bars adorned head to toe in school colors across the country (arguably the world) to support their alma mater. Students flood stadiums, games get national coverage on prime time sports stations. The rituals involved with sporting events are a huge cohesive force for students, alumni’s and fans across the globe. Sports are emblematic to institutions.

Likewise, sports have an incredible ability to promote a quasi sovereignty in institutions. Sports add to the diversity of the student body and create cohesion between members. Through sports, differences between universities are polarized and the rituals and symbols of each institution are hyperbolized. So the question is, what would a university be without sports?

I argue that the university would go on, as many higher education institutions are not sports-centric. But the rites of passage, the differentiating and defining that are involved in membership would not be as nearly as strong, nor would the ritualistic nature of the sovereignty. Alumni “pride” would be much less empowering and essentialized. Without sports, the connection between alumni’s and the institution would not be nearly as strong. Financially, sports are a huge revenue builder for universities. Without that revenue, schools would have to operate on much tighter budgets.. The physical presence of stadiums and sports facilities would greatly reduce the size of campuses.

Conclusion

Brian Perone

All these different definitions of a university, some overlapping, some not, some focusing on student output, some on connections to society at large, is this all just (pardon the pun) an academic exercise? Can’t we just say that a university is what it is and leave it undefined? Yes, except that we are in an era when we believe that technology will allow us to redefine the university. If you believe the hype, technology, in one form or another, will lower university costs, will increase instructor efficacy and efficiency, will bridge physical campuses, may eliminate physical campuses altogether. Technology will

increase access to universities, bringing quality education to previously unreached populations, and give new students the tools they need to get to university. But will the university of the future, digital, analog, online or off, be recognizable as a university? Will we need to redefine the university as it gets its digital makeover? More importantly, can we redefine something that we never defined in the first place?

As these digital transformations take place, it is important to remember this multiplicity of definitions of a university. As existing universities are changed and new ones created, they will likely lose some attributes that our current universities have. Whether or not they are still universities, or still fill the role in society that we believe universities fill, may depend entirely on what we think a university is. Or, to look at it from the other side, as innovators and educators modify or create universities in the future, it is their own definitions of a university that will determine what attributes stay and what attributes go. For example, if a university is defined by instruction and examination, then maybe it can be replaced by a relatively simple model of online instruction. If, on the other hand, it is defined more by the social interactions between its students, then community-building isn't expendable, and an online university begins to take a different form. Such choices will depend on the role we believe universities play.

Fortunately for existing universities, we believe that there is some core essence of a university that can survive the loss of what might be considered essential assets, almost regardless of your definition. Stanford University, with its rich history and strong reputation, would likely still be a university even if it shed a department, or lost a piece of its campus, or even shifted online. Too many cuts and it will fall apart, of course, but history brings with it endurance. Newly created universities will not be so lucky. Without history to fall back on, missing pieces will be felt all the more acutely in a new school.