

# The *Public* University: Recalling Higher Education’s Democratic Purpose

by Michael T. Benson and Hal R. Boyd

The modern university has been called, “a series of separate schools and departments held together by a central heating system,” and, in a play on this line, “a series of individual faculty entrepreneurs held together by a common grievance over parking.”<sup>1</sup> Whether parking, heating, or, more probable today, WiFi, these tongue-in-cheek caricatures belie a more serious worry that higher education is rudderless, lacking a unifying *raison d’être*. Across the U.S., pockets of politicians view higher education in economic terms, seeking to peg public funding to the size of post-graduation salaries or other criteria ostensibly focused on outcomes more than inputs.<sup>2</sup> Professors and administrators, at times at odds with this perspective on higher education, see cultivating critical thinking as college’s central purpose.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, student feedback demonstrates the vital role relationships play in university life.<sup>4</sup> These and other visions of higher education may initially appear to conflict; yet, we argue that they often operate in concert to serve higher education’s broader public purpose—that of supporting our national democracy.

In Derek Bok’s *Higher Education in America*, the former president of Harvard University divides the historical aims of the American academy into several distinct periods.<sup>5</sup> “Until the Civil War,” he writes, “most colleges in this country

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[had] only one aim—to educate an elite group of young men for the learned professions and positions of leadership in society.”<sup>6</sup> Institutions such as Harvard and Yale strove to “discipline the mind and build the character of their students” through “strict disciplinary code[s]” and “compulsory attendance at chapel.”<sup>7</sup> In the early years of the Republic, however, this monolithic, ecclesiastical form of education began to bifurcate. By the mid-19th century, new ideas about the role of college gained support.

As industrialization and agriculture expanded, demand increased for training in the so-called practical sciences. Benjamin Franklin and the leaders of what

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became the University of Pennsylvania had anticipated this shift by founding an institution to teach “those things that are likely to be most useful,” in addition to the “most ornamental.”<sup>8</sup> This kind of vocational-minded schooling would later inspire the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862 (discussed below), which subsidized the creation of public agricultural and industrial colleges across the U.S. Within only a few decades, other pragmatic programs launched in “domestic science, engineering, business administration, physical education, teacher training, and sanitation and public health.”<sup>9</sup>

Around the same time, historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) proliferated as a result of the Second Morrill Act. The Act required states to either eliminate race as part of admissions criteria or provide a separate state-sponsored institution for African Americans. Finally, in the late 19th century, universities undertook more rigorous scientific research. In 1873, the wealthy bachelor Johns Hopkins bequeathed his fortune to fund a college that made its purpose the discovery of new knowledge.<sup>10</sup> Other schools such as Harvard and the University of Chicago followed by awarding Ph.D. degrees and engaging in extensive scientific inquiry. The American research university was born.

Today, many post-secondary schools trace their origins to one or more of the aforementioned movements. However, in narrating the sweeping genesis of contemporary higher education, scholars tend to overlook the democratic *ethos* woven into its history. In this article we highlight three figures—George Washington, Justin S. Morrill, and Harry S. Truman—and discuss how they envisioned higher education fostering more fulsome democratic engagement, raising the country’s global reputation, cultivating goodwill between states and nations, and expanding opportunities for more Americans. From the founding years of the early Republic, to the Civil War and World War II, they lived during some of America’s most

tumultuous times. Their efforts solidified the long-standing democratic purpose of higher education that still informs its mission today. And yet, as we discuss, when it comes to increasing opportunities for the most economically disadvantaged, higher education desperately needs to regain this democratic vision.

## GEORGE WASHINGTON AND THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Some of America's greatest proponents of public higher education were them-

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selves not college graduates. Harry S. Truman, for example, was the only U. S. president of the 20th century without a college degree, yet he established the highly influential Commission on Higher Education and helped administer the G.I. Bill. These initiatives marked “a substantial shift in the nation’s expectation about who should attend college.”<sup>11</sup> Likewise, U.S. Senator Justin S. Morrill of Vermont was a self-educated merchant and the champion of legislation that helped establish public universities in every state in the union. George Washington’s schooling was similarly limited, but he became the early Republic’s most prominent proponent of a national university and, among the founders, was arguably second only to Thomas Jefferson in promoting civic-minded higher education.<sup>12</sup>

From the beginning of Washington’s presidency to the end of his life, establishing a national university remained a primary focus. Not only did he publicly promote the idea, but he also donated seed money.<sup>13</sup> Washington’s rhetoric on the subject suggests he hoped a national university would assuage inter-colonial discord and ensure that the nation’s future leaders learned a uniquely American political curriculum. In his mind, teaching republican principles and constitutional governance was as vital to protecting liberty as maintaining a skilled army.

Furthermore, Washington’s own lack of formal education likely influenced his crusade to secure for others (albeit exclusively white males) the opportunities he himself never possessed. As one biographer observed, not attending college was “a deficiency that haunted him throughout his subsequent career.”<sup>14</sup> Whether haunting or not, his academic background differed from those around him. Thomas Jefferson, for example, studied at the College of William and Mary and read law under the famous George Wythe; John Adams attended Harvard and learned law from John Putnam; James Madison went to the College of New Jersey (now Princeton) and spent a post-graduate stint studying with the school’s president

John Witherspoon. Both Alexander Hamilton and John Jay attended King's College (now Columbia). Washington undoubtedly observed the role that his colleagues' educations had on our nation's founding.

Although the idea of a national university was discussed by Benjamin Rush and later by the delegates at the Constitutional Convention in 1787, Washington resurrected the proposition throughout his presidency.<sup>15</sup> In his First Annual Message to Congress he observed, "There is nothing which can better deserve your patronage than the promotion of Science and Literature." The acquisition of knowledge, he continued, was the "surest basis of public happiness" and essential

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to the "security of a free Constitution."<sup>16</sup> Whether Congress should help support existing schools or fund a new national university he left to their discretion. Yet, four years later, in correspondence with John Adams, he was unequivocal that "a national University in *this* country is a thing to be desired."<sup>17</sup>

Washington again returned to the idea in his Eighth Annual Address to Congress: "I have heretofore proposed to the consideration of Congress, the expediency of establishing a National University; and also a Military Academy." As he saw it, the former was important not only for "National prosperity and reputation" but also to prepare the "future guardians of the liberties" in the "science of Government." Meanwhile, the military academy would secure freedom through creating "an adequate stock of Military knowledge for emergencies."<sup>18</sup>

Washington wished to insert similar ideas in his canonical Farewell Address, but Hamilton—who helped draft it—thought the proposal was best discussed in his annual message to Congress.<sup>19</sup> For his part, Washington continued to promote the plan well into retirement and went so far as to bequeath "fifty shares which I hold in the Potomac Company ... towards the endowment of a UNIVERSITY to be established within the limits of the District of Columbia."<sup>20</sup> Congress eventually enacted the proposal for a military academy in 1802, but Washington's dream for a national university never came to fruition. It remained a matter of congressional debate well into the late-19th century and is still discussed today.<sup>21</sup> Washington understood how a public university could benefit students, boost prosperity, enhance the nation's global standing, and help diminish provincial tendencies. Along with Rush, Jefferson, Madison, and others, he crystallized the idea that higher education was a public good that could help shape the nation's "future guardians of the liberties."

## JUSTIN MORRILL AND UNIVERSITIES FOR STUDENTS OF TOIL

More than half a century after Washington's death, Congress passed the single most significant legislation for the democratization of higher education. The Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862 apportioned to each state endowments of land to be sold and used for the "support, and maintenance of at least one college" that—without excluding classical studies—would focus mainly on agricultural and mechanical arts, as well as military instruction.<sup>22</sup> It is hard to overstate the public and private impact of this new "liberal and practical education" tailored for the

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"industrial classes."<sup>23</sup>

Today, the original land-grant universities have graduated countless civil servants, business leaders, and luminaries in the arts and sciences. Alumni include more than 500 Rhodes Scholars, 500 federal legislators, 200 governors, and a handful of U.S. Supreme Court justices, vice presidents, and foreign heads of state.<sup>24</sup> Over the years, hundreds of Pulitzer Prize winners and Nobel laureates have affiliated with these institutions as students, professors, and researchers.<sup>25</sup> Currently, the CEOs of Apple, Walmart, Ford, Verizon, BP, Berkshire Hathaway, McKesson, and Koch Industries<sup>26</sup>—eight of the globe's largest companies<sup>27</sup>—are land-grant alumni. The aggregate endowments of the schools total more than \$64 billion,<sup>28</sup> and by a conservative estimate they annually educate more than 1.5 million students. In short, these institutions significantly impact the nation and the everyday lives and careers of Americans.

In Congress, few probably foresaw the long-term significance of the measure when it passed amidst the turbulence of the Civil War. If anyone sensed its importance, however, it was Justin S. Morrill, the congressman who championed the measure. Born in 1810 in Strafford, Vermont, Morrill came from hardscrabble circumstances with little formal schooling. He received a basic elementary education and then attended local academies (akin to high schools) for two terms.<sup>29</sup> On the advice of his lifelong mentor Judge Jedediah H. Harris, Morrill took a job as a local merchant's clerk. Though his formal schooling ended early, he never lost an innate autodidacticism. He borrowed books from Harris on "the History of England, . . . Thomas Jefferson's Notes on Virginia, the Federalist, and various Sir Walter Scott and James Fenimore Cooper novels."<sup>30</sup> While working in Maine he took a class in bookkeeping and spent his Sundays devoted "to study or general

reading.”<sup>31</sup> He later reflected that it took “a long time and much labor” to gain the education he acquired and that “it was a great disadvantage to me that I could not go to school.”<sup>32</sup>

His initial arguments for the “college act” in the U.S. House of Representatives centered on the economic gains that would come by way of better agricultural education. “Other nations lead us ... in nearly all the practical sciences which can be brought to aid the management and results of agricultural labor,” he lamented. “We owe it to ourselves not to become a weak competitor in the most important field where we are to meet the world as rivals.”<sup>33</sup> He also made a broader moral

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appeal for the measure: “We have schools to teach the art of manslaying and make masters of ‘deep-throated engines’ of war, and shall we not have schools to teach men the way to feed, clothe, and enlighten the great brotherhood of man?”<sup>34</sup>

In the Senate, Morrill found an ally in Iowa Republican James Harlan. As if to complement the economic arguments, Harlan discussed how the measure also expanded educational opportunities. “The passage of this bill will be one step in the right direction,” he said to the Senate. “It will be, in effect, a declaration that Congress will no longer discriminate against the people; that the masses, on whose shoulders have been imposed the burdens, shall participate in the enjoyment of some of the advantages of Government.”<sup>35</sup> The measure passed both chambers but President James Buchanan vetoed the bill on constitutional grounds—Congress, he felt, did not possess the power to intervene so directly in the state’s affairs.

Later, as a member of the Senate, Morrill reintroduced a revised version of the bill in 1862. In light of the Civil War, the new bill provided the colleges would also teach military tactics. He once again marshaled arguments about national competitiveness and the need to stave off the deleterious effects of soil depletion. This time he also expressed the bill’s attempt to make education affordable to America’s “sons of toil.” Harlan similarly defended the measure as a way to help “the children of the nation.” The bill passed and was signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln just weeks before the battle of Antietam, the deadliest day of the Civil War. As one historian put it, the Land-Grant Act “forced education to fit the changing social and economic patterns of an expanding nation. It helped to create equality of educational opportunity by offering education at public expense to the industrial classes; it gave some measure of dignity to the vocations pursued by such classes.”<sup>36</sup>

The Act also proved important to the country’s military efforts well beyond

the Civil War. Officers from the schools served in the Spanish-American War and World War I. In the early 20th century, the campus programs evolved into the now-familiar Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). With the outbreak of World War II, thousands of ROTC officers helped America's initial mobilization. More than a decade later, President Dwight D. Eisenhower bore witness of the "efficacy of that training" and the "great services" the land-grant officers "rendered to the United States of America on the field of battle."<sup>37</sup> In addition to military training, Land-Grant scientists engaged in agricultural and engineering research to aid the war effort. Thanks to the G.I. Bill, these schools would greatly expand

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#### THE TRUMAN COMMISSION AND EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

During 1943, the American Legion promoted legislation that eventually became The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (known today as the G.I. Bill). The primary author of the legislation was American Legion leader Henry Walter Colmery. Pitched as a "square deal" for veterans, the bill included, among other benefits, unprecedented educational subsidies for the nation's returning veterans. The measure passed unanimously through both chambers, and—one week after D-day—President Franklin Roosevelt signed it into law. "Ultimately," scholar Suzanne Mettler writes, "more than twice as many veterans used the higher education provisions than the most daring predictions officials had forecast."<sup>38</sup> By the expiration of the first bill in 1956, nearly half of the 16 million World War II veterans received some kind of educational training through the program.<sup>39</sup> In 1947 alone, G.I.s accounted for nearly half of all students enrolled in American colleges.<sup>40</sup> Given this remarkable growth in the nation's post-secondary schools, President Harry S. Truman organized the President's Commission on Higher Education.

Despite having never completed a college degree, Truman, like Washington, led some of the most sagacious and highly educated minds of his age. The cabinet he inherited upon President Roosevelt's passing included Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins (a student of Mount Holyoke College, Columbia University, and

the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania); Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson (a graduate of Yale College and Harvard Law School); Attorney General Francis Biddle (who graduated from Harvard with both undergraduate and law degrees); and Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes (who did the same at the University of Chicago). While a young captain in World War I, Truman grasped the value of a college degree when—as a self-described “old rube”—he was assigned to lead infantry training for “Harvard and Yale boys.”<sup>41</sup> Little did he know then that such experiences might come in handy for his not-so-dissimilar role 27 years later.

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Though Truman did not graduate from college, he held strong convictions about expanding the citizenry’s access to post-secondary opportunities. Addressing graduates at Howard University, the historically black university in Washington, D.C., he expressed remorse at the thought that some of the graduates could be denied opportunities to use their new skills due to racial prejudice. “I wasn’t able to go to college at all,” he confessed. “I had to stay at home and work on the family farm.” While some are denied opportunities for “economic reasons,” he explained, still others are denied opportunities “because of racial prejudice and discrimination.” He continued: “I want to see things worked out so that everyone who is capable of it receives a good education. I want to see everyone have a chance to put his education to good use, without unfair discrimination.”<sup>41</sup> These sentiments exemplified the work of the President’s Commission on Higher Education, which became known colloquially as the Truman Commission.

Assembled in 1946 and active until its last report in 1948, the Commission contained “outstanding civic and educational leaders,” and Truman charged the group with examining “the functions of higher education in our democracy” as well as “the means by which [the functions] can best be performed.”<sup>43</sup> The result was a widely praised and scrutinized six-volume report titled *Higher Education for American Democracy*. The work laid out a philosophical vision for American higher education and provided practical recommendations to confront both contemporary challenges as well as those on the nation’s horizon. “Long ago our people recognized that education for all is not only democracy’s obligation but its necessity,” the report stated. “Education is the foundation of democratic liberties. Without an educated citizenry alert to preserve and extend freedom, it would not long endure.”<sup>44</sup>

Around the same time, and only five years before the famous desegregation

case *Brown v. Board*, W. E. B. Du Bois remarked, “Of all the civil rights for which the world has struggled and fought for 5,000 years, the right to learn is undoubtedly the most fundamental.”<sup>45</sup> These sentiments echoed those articulated in the U.S. more than a century-and-a-half earlier, and yet sadly for most black Americans the struggle for equal educational opportunities was just beginning. In another particularly prescient passage, the Commission’s report warned what bears repeating today: “If the ladder of educational opportunity rises high at the doors of some youth and scarcely rises at all at the doors of others, while at the same time formal education is made a prerequisite to occupational and social advance, then

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education may become the means, not of eliminating race and class distinctions, but of deepening and solidifying them.”<sup>46</sup> Preventing this phenomenon is just as important to strengthening democracy at home in the 21st century as it was in the 20th.<sup>47</sup>

#### HIGHER EDUCATION’S CONTEMPORARY RESPONSIBILITIES TO DEMOCRACY

For Washington and his contemporaries, the case for higher education was not only about “prosperity,” but also about educating youth for political participation, raising the country’s international standing, and diminishing provincialism. For Morrill and his allies, investment in higher education promised to yield agricultural and economic returns and help the nation remain globally competitive; but it was equally about expanding opportunity for the “sons of toil” and helping “enlighten the great brotherhood of man.” For Truman and his commission, economics and global competitiveness played a role, but more important were the ways higher education could help sustain democracy through global understanding and expanded educational access. “Equal opportunity for all persons, to the maximum of their individual abilities and without regard to economic status, race, creed, color, sex, national origin, or ancestry is a major goal of American democracy,” the report stated.<sup>48</sup>

Contemporary universities still aim to boost individual success. Data shows that, even with troubling tuition hikes, the long-term financial returns from a college education far exceed the individual monetary investment for most students.<sup>49</sup> Campus startup incubators and industrial collaboration initiatives help turn university research and innovation into products, services, and new businesses

that help grow local and national economies. Colleges and universities also aim to provide high quality general education and create a campus atmosphere that prepares students for life-long civic engagement and sustained pro-social behavior. Aside from the obvious societal benefits that come with educated surgeons, judges, engineers, and others, studies suggest that those who attend college exhibit increased levels of political participation and are more likely to attend churches and become involved in various social causes.<sup>50</sup> College graduates exhibit better health and contribute to the state through paying their taxes.<sup>51</sup> Meanwhile, study abroad programs and international students help spread goodwill overseas as the

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nation's research production continues to bolster its global reputation.<sup>52</sup>

By these and other metrics, contemporary universities are fulfilling, or actively striving to fulfill, the democratic missions outlined by the likes of Washington, Morrill, and Truman. Fully detailing the promises and perils of contemporary higher education within our democracy deserves more space than we dedicate here.<sup>53</sup> Suffice it to say however, that in some areas universities are faltering and need major improvement. A recent report by the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education says that while the rate of affluent students graduating from college has gone from 40 percent in the 1970s to 77 percent today, the rate has only increased from six percent to nine percent for low-income students over the same period.<sup>54</sup> Other reports have questioned such figures, putting the graduation rate closer to 17 percent for the lowest quintile of students.<sup>55</sup> Even these and other more conservative estimates are sobering in light of the Truman Commission's call nearly 70 years ago to expand opportunity "without regard to economic status." Commenting on the state of inequality in the U. S., the chancellor of the University System of Maryland, William E. Kirwan, recently remarked:

Our public universities—especially our public flagship campuses—have the obligation to help expand access to higher education for more low-income, first-generation, and non-traditional students . . . not just those students fortunate enough to win some sort of "lottery of birth." Our flagship campuses have the broad statewide reach and historic responsibility embedded in our Land Grant traditions to take on this challenge and help reestablish the American Dream for the millions of people who have seen that dream become a nightmare. There can be no more important responsibility and calling, nor a priority more critical for the long-term success and prosperity of our state and nation.<sup>56</sup>

If our system of higher education is to live up to its legacy of supporting democracy and improving the minds and lives of all able and willing citizens, we must solve this challenge. The university, after all, is more than just a place for scholars to share a heating system or a common grievance over parking. It is a sanctuary of citizenship where young and old come to expand their skills, broaden their horizons, and prepare themselves for the rigors of 21st century citizenship. Washington, Morrill, and Truman never graduated from college, but they understood better than most that the aims of democracy are inextricably connected with the aims of the nation's universities. The Morrill Land-Grant Act passed amidst the Civil War while the G.I. Bill came during World War II. This history teaches us that our contemporary political and economic challenges do not serve as a ready excuse to jettison our nation's democratic ideal for higher education; rather, daunting difficulties should remind us just how important it is to recapture the democratic purpose of higher education in America. [nea](#)

## ENDNOTES

1. The former quotation is attributed to Robert Maynard Hutchins, former president of the University of Chicago and the latter comes from Clark Kerr, former president of U.C. Berkley. See Kerr, *The Uses of the University*, p. 15.
2. A majority of states now allocate at least some funding for higher education based on institutional performance matrix. See "Performance-Based Funding For Higher Education."
3. Stassen et al. "Defining Critical Thinking in Higher Education," p. 126.
4. See generally Chambliss, *How College Works*.
5. Bok, *Higher Education in America*.
6. *Ibid*, p. 28.
7. *Ibid*, p. 29.
8. Franklin, "Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania."
9. Bok, op cit.
10. Gilman, "Inaugural Address of Daniel Coit Gilman as first president of The Johns Hopkins University."
11. Hutcheson, "The Truman Commission's Vision of the Future," p. 107.
12. Thomas Jefferson founded one of the first public universities in the U.S., the University of Virginia. He considered the university, including its iconic architectural design, one of his greatest accomplishments in life. It was there he also developed a unique model for higher education, focusing on equipping leaders with tools for political participation and allowing students to elect courses. Jefferson's passion for a civic-minded education is best captured in his famous "Bill for the more general diffusion of knowledge." While the Virginia legislative proposal did not pass, it still serves to document Jefferson's vision for education in the Republic. "[I]t is believed," he said, "that the most effectual means of preventing [Tyranny] would be to illuminate, as far as practicable, the minds of the people at large...it is generally true that people will be happiest whose laws are best, and are best administered, and that laws will be wisely formed, and honestly administered, in proportion as those who form and administer them are wise and honest; whence it becomes expedient for promoting the public happiness that those persons, whom nature hath endowed with genius and virtue, should be rendered by liberal education worthy to receive, and able to guard the sacred deposit of the rights and liberties of their fellow citizens..." 18 June 1779, Founders Online. For more on Jefferson's views on education and the early Republic, see generally Roth's *Beyond the University: Why Liberal Education Matters*.

13. See Washington, "George Washington to The Commissioners of The Federal District, January 28, 1795," p. 36. See also Washington, "George Washington to Thomas Jefferson, March 15, 1795," p. 51.
14. Ellis, *His Excellency: George Washington*, p. 9.
15. See Thomas, *The Founders and the Idea of a National University: Constituting the American Mind*; see also Castel, "The Founding Fathers and the Vision of a National University," pp. 280-302.
16. Washington, "First Annual Message to Congress on the State of the Union, January 8, 1790."
17. Washington, "To John Adams from George Washington, 15 November 1794."
18. Washington, "Eighth Annual Message, December 7, 1796."
19. Washington, "To Alexander Hamilton, September 1, 1796," p. 267 and Hamilton, "From Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, September 4, 1796," p. 316.
20. "George Washington's Last Will and Testament, July 9, 1799," pp. 479-511.
21. Carey, "Fulfill George Washington's last wish—a national university."
22. *Morrill Act of 1862*, Public Law 37-108, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 12 (1862), p. 503.
23. *Ibid.*
24. Estimates based on information from "Colleges and Universities with U.S. Rhodes Scholarship Winners"; "Biographical Directory of the United States Congress 1774-Present"; and "Biographical Directory of Federal Judges."
25. Statistics gathered from "Past winners and finalists by category"; and "All Nobel Peace Prizes."
26. Information obtained from company biographies and other publicly available sources.
27. In 2014 the annual consolidated revenues for each of these companies exceeded \$100 billion.
28. See "U.S. and Canadian Institutions Listed by Fiscal Year 2013 Endowment Market Value and Change in Endowment Market Value from FY 2012 to FY 2013."
29. Cross II, *Justin Smith Morrill: Father of Land-grant Colleges*, p. 5.
30. *Ibid.*
31. Morrill to James Barrett, January 1886, Library of Congress, as cited in *Ibid.*, p. 6.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Morrill, "Speech of Hon. Justin S. Morrill, of Vermont, on the bill granting lands for agricultural colleges; Delivered in the House of Representatives, April 20, 1858," p. 7.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
35. Congress, Senate, Senator Harlan of Iowa, 35th Congress, 2nd session, p. 720.
36. Eddy, *Colleges for our Land and Time: The Land-Grant Idea in American Education*, p. 45, as cited in Cross, p. 88.
37. Eisenhower, "Remarks at Annual Meeting of the Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, November 16, 1954."
38. Mettler, *Soldiers to Citizens: The GI Bill and the Making of the Greatest Generation*, p. 42.
39. "Born of Controversy: The GI Bill of Rights."
40. Mettler, *op cit.*
41. Truman, "From Harry S. Truman to Bess Wallace, June 27, 1918."
42. Truman, "Commencement Address at Howard University, June 13, 1952."
43. Truman, "Letter Appointing Members to the National Commission on Higher Education, July 13, 1946."
44. The President's Commission on Higher Education, *Higher Education for American Democracy: A Report of the President's Commission on Higher Education, Vol. I. Establishing the Goals*, p. 25.
45. Du Bois, "The Freedom to Learn," pp. 230-31.
46. *Education for American Democracy*, p. 29.

47. Truman, "Statement by the President Making Public a Report of the Commission on Higher Education, December 15, 1947."
48. The President's Commission on Higher Education, *Higher Education for American Democracy: A Report of the President's Commission on Higher Education, Vol. II. Equalizing and Expanding Individual Opportunity*, p. 3.
49. Pay Scale, Inc. "College ROI Report: Best Value Colleges."
50. See Baum, Ma, and Payea, "Education Pays 2013 The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society."
51. *Ibid.*
52. The United States research universities account for 11 of the top 20 global institutions ranked for scientific research by the journal *Nature*. See "Table 2: Top 200 institutions."
53. We discuss these topics at greater length in a forthcoming book on the subject.
54. Cahalan and Perna, "Indicators of higher education equity in the United States," p. 30.
55. In scrutinizing the methodology of the Pell Institute's study, cited above, Matthew Chingos of the Brookings Institute and Susan Dynarski of the University of Michigan estimate that the college graduation rate for the top income quartile is closer to 54 percent while the lowest quintile is closer to 17 percent. See Chingos and Dynarski, "How can we track trends in educational attainment by parental income? Hint: not with the Current Population Survey." In their 2011 working paper, Bailey and Dynarski demonstrate "that inequality in college persistence explains a substantial share of inequality in college completion. These differences in persistence may be driven by financial, academic, and social factors." See "Gains and Gaps: Changing Inequality in U.S. College Entry and Completion."
56. Kirwan, "Keynote Address delivered at University of Kentucky Sesquicentennial, February 23, 2015."

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