

Revisiting Bradley's Special Emphasis
on
"Building a Foundation for Student-Faculty
Creative Collaboration"

A Culture of Student Engagement

Bradley University has a century-long tradition of *active student engagement* in and outside the classroom. It takes many forms, involves all courses of study, and enhances student learning by engaging students as emerging professionals in their disciplines. Opportunities for student engagement are unlimited, spanning experiential and service learning projects; consulting; participation in problem-based learning, practica and internships; cross-disciplinary collaborations; and research and creative production with faculty, staff and other professionals.

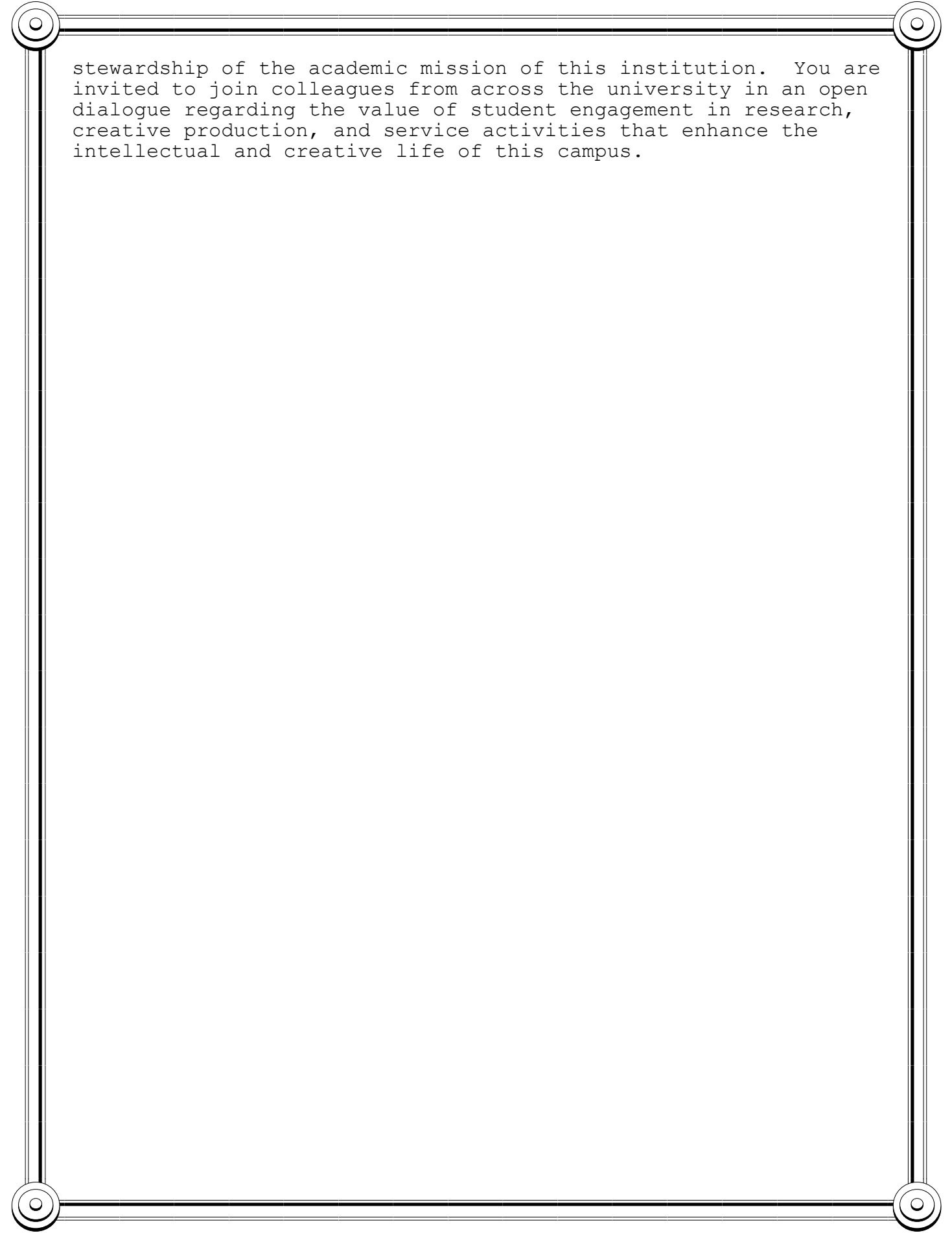
Faculty and professional staff know from experience that these activities mutually benefit students, faculty, and the University. These benefits accrue to:

Students, who gain discipline-specific experience; solidify interests; develop professional behaviors; learn to use specialized methods; strengthen problem-solving, creative and critical thinking skills; satisfy intellectual curiosity; learn to work constructively as members of a team; build self-confidence and leadership abilities; and heighten their competitiveness in job and post-baccalaureate environments.

Faculty and Professional Staff, who gain professional time by involving students in research and creative production activities, increasing their ability to make significant contributions to their field while remaining current; create synergies between scholarship and teaching that enhances teaching and learning; share in the excitement created by intellectual activity and participation in new discoveries; have the opportunity to mentor enthusiastic and curious students; benefit from funding opportunities for student engagement projects; and promote the concept of lifelong learning to their students.

The University, that gains from scholarly interactions between faculty and students in many ways: high student satisfaction; strong student recruitment and retention; increased faculty/staff morale; strong alumni and employer support; and a vigorous campus-wide intellectual climate.

The faculty and professional staff of Bradley University have the opportunity and obligation to provide the leadership and



stewardship of the academic mission of this institution. You are invited to join colleagues from across the university in an open dialogue regarding the value of student engagement in research, creative production, and service activities that enhance the intellectual and creative life of this campus.

Who are we?

In October of 2005, six faculty members from across the university (George Brown, SCFA; Marlene Davidson, FCBA; Alexey Sverdlin, CEGT; Marjorie Getz and Kelly McConnaughay, CLAS; Molly Cluskey, CEHS) were invited by the Deans and the Provost to participate in a national workshop on Institutionalizing Undergraduate Research. During this workshop, we met with professional colleagues from around the United States excited by the prospects of strengthening student engagement on their campus. The charge to our group was to develop a plan of action that would heighten current activities on our campus and further student engagement. We share that proposed plan of action for your consideration and comment.

Proposed plan of action

1. Involve faculty, staff and students across all disciplines in an on-going campus-wide dialogue regarding
 - a. the value of student engagement in research, creative production, consulting and service as a pedagogical tool,
 - b. examples of successful models of student engagement appropriate to the breadth of disciplines at Bradley University, and
 - c. existing barriers to developing and implementing student engagement projects.
2. Create a central “Office of Student Engagement” with an associated Advisory Committee to facilitate and assess student engagement in research, creative production, consulting, and service.
3. Provide institutional support for student engagement projects through
 - a. allocating additional funding,
 - b. realigning annual performance reviews and tenure and promotion policies to reflect faculty/staff involvement in student engagement projects, and
 - c. incorporating faculty/staff involvement in student engagement projects into existing workload models.

How to participate in the dialogue

1. Respond to this document via surveys and discussion threads on our BlackBoard site. To enroll in the BlackBoard site, go to http://blackboard.bradley.edu/bin/common/enroll_accept.pl?er_id= 2721_1&course_id= 27065_1 and enter the requested information.
2. Add examples of ongoing student engagement projects to the list on our BlackBoard site.
3. Talk with your colleagues about this document, and about the role of student engagement at Bradley University.
4. Participate in the open meeting to discuss the role of student engagement at Bradley, on Wednesday, May 3, 2006, at 10:00 a.m. in the Marty Theater.

