

**What Does it Mean to be Liberally Educated in the 21st Century?  
National Conversation Task Force**

January 8 - 10, 2005

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has invited a small task force to orchestrate conversations around the country on the question: "What does it mean to be liberally educated in the 21st century?"

NSF's interest in this question is three-fold:

- First, to generate informed and visible discussion in local, regional, and national venues about this critical question facing 21st century academic leaders
- Then, to capture, distill, and disseminate some of the good answers to this question, which are emerging as 21st century academic leaders build and sustain strong undergraduate learning environments
- Finally, to analyze how creative programmatic answers to this question, suggest new directions for NSF funding opportunities, given their charge to (i) prepare a science-literate citizenry, and (ii) increase the quantity and quality of U.S. citizens interested in pursuing careers that require scientific/technological skills of the highest quality

NSF has asked Project Kaleidoscope and the Independent Colleges Office to coordinate conversations in two specific sectors of higher education: liberal arts institutions and comprehensive universities. (Other sectors have other coordinators.) The planning of these conversations will take place at the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College.

As a first step in the planning process for the PKAL-sponsored conversations, we seek existing essays and reflections from academic leaders who have thought deeply on such a question, particularly in considering the role of science (STEM-Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) as a central liberal art in the 21st century.

Project Kaleidoscope - Sponsor  
The Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College - Host

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Institution</b>
William David Burns	Executive Director and Principal Investigator, SENCER National Center for Science and Civic Engagement
John Churchill	Executive Secretary Phi Beta Kappa Society
Virginia M. Coombs	Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs University of Wisconsin-River Falls
Beth A. Cunningham	Associate Dean of Faculty Bucknell University
Elizabeth M. Dorland	Professor of Chemistry Department of Physical Sciences Maricopa Community Colleges
Daniel J. Hornbach	Dean of the Faculty & Provost Dewitt Wallace Professor of Biology Macalester College
Debra Humphreys	Vice President for Communications and Public Affairs Association of American Colleges and Universities
Gregory S. Mahler	Provost Kalamazoo College
Jeanne L. Narum	Director Project Kaleidoscope

Ralph J. Rascati	Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs Professor of Biology Kennesaw State University
Herbert H. Richtol	Program Director Laboratory and Technological Development Division of Undergraduate Education National Science Foundation
Adolfo J. Rumbos	Associate Professor of Mathematics Department of Mathematics and Computer Science Pomona College
Peter N. Saeta	Associate Professor of Physics Department of Physics Harvey Mudd College
Patrick A. Wegner	Professor of Chemistry California State University-Fullerton
Neil B. Weissman	Provost & Dean of the College Department of Academic Affairs Dickinson College
Charlie Blaich	Director of Inquiries Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College
Mauri A. Ditzler	Dean of the College Wabash College
Andrew T. Ford	President Wabash College

## Agenda

### Saturday, January 8th

- 5.30 Reception, *Trippet 2nd floor rotunda*
- 6.15 - 8.00 Dinner (assigned tables; identified facilitators), *Trippet Dining Room*  
 Introductions  
 Table discussions:
- Are there qualities of the liberally-educated person that can be taught/learned through the study of all disciplines?
  - In making the case for liberal education in the 21st century, what are the eternal verities, what are the new challenges?
  - In making the case for liberal education in the 21st century, what is the role for learning/teaching in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields?
- 8.00 Presentation: Research on the effects of liberal arts education. *Trippet 123*  
 Charlie Blaich, Director of Inquiries, Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College
- 8.30 Reporting back from dinner discussions, *Trippet 325*

### Sunday, January 9th

- 8.00 Breakfast (informal conversations), *Trippet Dining Room*
- 8.45 Dialogue on the question: "What does it mean to be liberally educated...?"  
*Trippet 325*  
 Facilitators: Andrew Ford, President - Wabash College  
 Mauri Ditzler, Dean of the College - Wabash College
- 10.00 Break
- 10.30 Panel: Contextual issues that drive attention to the question:  
 "What does it mean to be liberally educated...?" *Trippet 325*
- The shrinking world
  - The changing demographics for "all" students
  - The increasing influence of science and technology
  - The challenges of the workplace
- 12.00 Break

- 12.15 Lunch, *Trippet Dining Room*
- 1.30 Working groups: understanding how to explore and interpret the question at the institutional level and translate answers into an agenda for action, *Trippet 325*
- Institutional strategic planning/community building
  - Story-telling
  - Curricular programs for non-STEM majors
  - Curricular programs for STEM majors
- 3.30 Break
- 4.00 Working groups: planning the four regional/local conversations, *Trippet 325*
- Working toward:
- Identifying time, place, facilitators, invitees, promotion, etc. (logistics)
  - Identifying and annotating resource material
  - Identifying and preparing facilitators/leaders
  - Preparing preparatory and follow-up materials
- 5.30 Reception, *Trippet 2nd floor rotunda*
- 6.30 Dinner and reporting back, *Trippet Dining Room*  
Informal discussion about the list of qualities/characteristics of the 21st century liberally-educated person

*Monday, January 10th*

- 8.00 Breakfast, *Trippet Dining Room*
- 8.45 Monday sessions to be planned: responding to what needs to be done to complete the work of the planning task force, *Trippet 325*
- 12.00 Depart